

Review

Reviewed Work(s): Kul'tural'nye issledovaniia: Sbornik nauchnykh rabot by Aleksandr Etkind and Pavel Lysakov

Review by: Galina S. Rylkova

Source: *Slavic Review*, Vol. 68, No. 4 (Winter, 2009), pp. 954-956

Published by: Cambridge University Press

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25593799>

Accessed: 09-11-2018 20:50 UTC

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



JSTOR

Cambridge University Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Slavic Review*

BOOK REVIEWS

Kul'tural'nye issledovaniia: Sbornik nauchnykh rabot. Ed. Aleksandr Etkind and Pavel Lysakov.

Trudy fakul'teta politicheskikh nauk i sotsiologii, vol. 8. St. Petersburg: Evropeiskii universitet v Sankt-Peterburge, 2006. 527 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Hard bound.

Alexander Etkind and Pavel Lysakov chose the unusual calque *kul'tural'nye* instead of the more familiar *kul'turologicheskie issledovaniia* to underscore their collection's indebtedness to British and American cultural studies with their diverse approaches, including sociological, anthropological, and ethnographic, along with their insistence on blurring boundaries between popular and high-brow culture. Although the British-American cultural studies are highly institutionalized with various universities, academic centers, and journals serving as their venues, in Russia cultural studies are still a comparative novelty. It is not surprising that the Russian contributors, including both editors, are all related to the same academic institution, namely, the European University (St. Petersburg, Russia), although representing different branches of the humanities—from ethnography to art history. An equally impressive list of the non-Russian contributors consists of literary critics, cultural historians, and one anthropologist.

In his introduction, Etkind gives an overview of the history of cultural studies with particular emphasis on its Russian antecedents, such as Iurii Lotman and the Moscow-Tartu semiotic school of the 1970s and the early 1980s. What differentiates cultural studies from other culture-centered disciplines, such as literary criticism, for instance, is the narrow focus on the present-day interaction between culture and power, and, more specifically, on the ways in which culture endorses and channels power and resists it at the same time.

The seventeen contributions are divided into five thematic clusters. The first, "Results and Memory," features articles by Boris Firsov, Svetlana Boym, and Etkind. Firsov's lead article, "Soviet and Post-Soviet Culture in Historical Dynamics: Modernization and Cultural Differentiation," is a little disappointing (it is too long, too repetitive, and uses too many unnecessary calques). The most interesting implication of Firsov's findings is that, whether we like it or not, only the totalitarian regime was properly equipped to support and sustain high culture (the apparent loss of which is the subject of daily debates nowadays), while the contemporary free-market economy requires and enables a completely different type of culture—a more democratic one, thus making the ongoing revision and restructuring of the Russian cultural canon not only unavoidable but obligatory. In "From De-familiarization to Styob," Boym skillfully traces Viktor Shklovskii's theory of defamiliarization in the works of his contemporaries—Hannah Arendt and Walter Benjamin. In "Crystallization of Monuments in the Grout of Memory," Etkind compares the German and the Russian practices of mourning and commemorating the victims of Adolf Hitler's and Iosif Stalin's regimes. The article is based on an impressive amount of fieldwork and archival material and has far-reaching implications. While the Germans have excelled in commemorative monumental culture, the Russians are still battling with designing expressive monuments that would "satisfy the human need to commemorate without [stirring up] political confrontations" (159), with literary texts continuing to be the most adequate repository of information on Stalinist repressions. Not surprisingly, the most popular monuments remain in the shape of a Greek cross or are taken directly from nature, such as big granite boulders that were brought from the Solovetskii Islands to Moscow and St. Petersburg in memory of the Solovetskii labor camp victims.

The section "Life and Imagination" presents the works of Renate Lachmann, Vadim Volkov, Ekaterina Degot', and Olga Chepurnaia. In "Discourses of Fantasy Literature," Lachmann uses fantasy fiction to delineate the role of literature in the shaping of any cultural landscape. In "Conquest of the Airspace and Mastering the Technique of Personal Improvement under Stalin," Volkov amplifies Oleg Kharkhordin's findings that Stalin's *kul't lichnosti* "was only a constituent element of a larger cultural phenomenon, that is, the all-consuming cult of a [Soviet] personality as such [*lichnosti kak takovoi*]" (194). In "Language of Socialist Realism and the Legacy of the Soviet Avant-garde," Degot' makes a

somewhat belated and in places confusing attempt to vindicate Soviet realism as a legitimate link between the Russian avant-garde of the 1910s–1920s and the new avant-garde of the 1980s–1990s. In “Embracing Faith in Soviet Times,” Chepurnaia analyzes the reasons that lead many young intellectuals to seek solace in religion in post-Stalinist Russia.

The section “Meaning and Means” (*smysl i sredstvo*) moves through discussions of particular case studies. In “Revolution and ‘The Spreading of Mental Infection,’” Liia Iangulova analyzes the circumstances of the incarceration and treatment of Arkadii Tyrkov in a Kazan’ mental institution in 1882–83. Tyrkov was a young “inexperienced” (238) terrorist implicated in the murder of Alexander II, yet as Iangulova demonstrates, his case can be seen as a blueprint for resolving many future confrontations between an individual and the state. From that time onward many opponents of the existing regime were conveniently cast as mentally unstable, which created enough room for the state’s interference in and control of human life. In “How to Save Culture from Civilization,” Irene Masing-Delic explores Maksim Gor’kii’s conception of his “Mediterranean model”—with Italy being its cradle—that he envisaged for saving Russia from decay, while the rest of the civilized world would continue its downfall to complete degradation. In time, Gor’kii became disenchanted with Italy, and as Masing-Delic wittily suggests, might have found consolation, not in the transformative power of the Italian sun, but in the transformative power of the Stalinist labor camps and other coercive institutions. In one of my favorite articles, “Triple Duplicity,” Michael David-Fox discusses Theodore Dreiser’s long visit to the Soviet Union in 1927–28 and the activity of various people and institutions engaged in making that visit as memorable and unproblematic as possible. As can be expected, not everything went according to plan, but both sides learned valuable lessons from this interaction. Most important, Dreiser’s immediate critical account of the Soviet way of life and of the many inconveniences that he had to endure during his trip taught the Soviets to plan any future visits of foreign fellow-travelers with much more care, control, and precision. In a theory-laden “*Eugene Onegin*—1999,” Lysakov compares Aleksandr Pushkin’s classic and its cinematographic adaptation by Martha and Ralph Fiennes that was shown in Russia as part of the Pushkin bicentennial festivities. Lysakov is at his best when discussing the details of translating one art form into the language of another. Some contributors to this volume also benefited from Lysakov’s expert translations of their articles.

The cluster, “Value and Cost,” presents the works of Larisa Shpakovskaia and Ella Paneiakh. In “Social Worth of [Antique] Objects,” Shpakovskaia examines the axiology of antique objects and the structural and organizational principles of the antique markets in St. Petersburg. Instead of debating the murky usefulness of this or that antique object, Shpakovskaia invites us to estimate them in terms of their “historical,” “social,” “human,” and “individual” values. In “The Hidden Transcript of the Fiscal System in the Narratives of the Economically Active [Russian] Citizens,” Paneiakh applies James C. Scott’s concept of “hidden transcripts” to her interviews with Russian taxpayers to conclude that, regardless of their varying wealth, they all see themselves vis-à-vis the state as an “exploited [and] subordinate group of people.” They recognize that the state “acts [largely] in their interests” (395), but they have no means of controlling its activity.

The last cluster, “City and Time,” brings together four articles by Lev Lurie, Boris Kolonitskii, Aleksei Yurchak, and Richard Stites. In “Peasant Fraternities of the Old Petersburg,” Lurie provides an illuminating account of the role of *zemliachestva* in peasants’ adaptation to an unfamiliar life in a growing urban center, suggesting that the uncontrolled influx of peasants into St. Petersburg in the period from 1890 to 1920 created an unprecedented social imbalance and ultimately led to the Bolshevik revolution and its aftermath. In “Nevskii Prospect in February and July of 1917,” Kolonitskii interprets the February revolution as a product of several cultural practices and traditions, with Nevskii Prospect literally situated at their crossroads. This explains why most revolutionary-minded people gathered nowhere else but on Nevskii Prospect, thus contributing to the subsequent myth of the February revolution as being both “organized” and “spontaneous” (434–35). In “Night Dancing with the Angel of Death,” Yurchak offers a close reading of the night club subculture in St. Petersburg in the 1980s and the 1990s. This period was truly unique because it gave rise to numerous “‘temporary autonomous zones’ [i.e., night clubs] that were relatively free from the state and public control and were not yet affected by the emerg-

ing market economy or organized crime" (497). Lastly, Stite's "Cultural Capital [*stolitsa*], Cultural Capital [*kapital*], and Cultural Heritage" is devoted to the selective nature of the process of cultural preservation and commemoration as applied to the lesser-studied heritage of the late eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries.

Although not all contributions to this volume are of the same quality, *Kul'tural'nye issledovaniia* will be a valuable source of information for anyone interested in cultural studies.

GALINA S. RYLKOVA
University of Florida

Development, Democracy, and Welfare States: Latin America, East Asia, and Eastern Europe.

By Stephan Haggard and Robert R. Kaufman. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008. xxvi, 473 pp. Appendixes. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Figures. Tables. \$29.95, paper.

The large and accomplished field of comparative welfare states only recently began to pay serious attention to nonwestern countries. Stephan Haggard and Robert R. Kaufman's book adds a new dimension to this trend with an impressive, *cross-regional* analysis of Latin America, East Asia, and eastern Europe. Adopting a "historical, economic, and interest-based approach" (357), they argue that major divergences in welfare state development—the scope of social insurance coverage; different emphases on health, education, or social security; and contrasting levels of social spending—can be traced back to the critical realignments (redistributional shifts in favor of workers or peasants) and distinct developmental strategies of the second half of the twentieth century. The type and occurrence of a democratic or an authoritarian regime also play a large role. Part 1 analyzes "welfare legacies" (1945–1980), and part 2 examines recent welfare reforms (1980–2005).

Social policy scholarship on eastern Europe (and in general) faces four major challenges: the definition of the dependent variable; the shortage of reliable data; the previous neglect of the domestic political, institutional, and historical contexts; and the proliferation of explanatory variables. This book's particular interpretation of the political economy of the welfare state determines the handling of these problems. It defines the welfare state as an aggregate set of key social programs (measured by coverage and spending levels) stemming from a specific, long-term *economic developmental strategy*. Following a conventional, but frequently contested, methodology it emphasizes all three of the largest categories of programs—pensions, health care, and education. Given the enormous complexity of contemporary welfare systems, such a wide scope of analysis is challenging and has often led to excessive generalizations, especially in larger comparative-historical studies. These main policy areas, especially education, are now almost always handled separately, not because they are unrelated, but rather due to their distinct developmental trajectories and the different constituencies and "stakeholders" involved. The authors themselves seem hesitant about this. Throughout the book they refer frequently, if briefly, also to unemployment, family, and antipoverty programs. Surprisingly, at the end, they omit education policy in eastern Europe after 1989.

The empirical material for the book comes from secondary sources, including previously analyzed but often not very comparable and precise aggregated data sets. The historical comparison suffers the most from the lack of reliable statistics, especially in the case of eastern Europe. Part 2 is much more convincing because it uses recent sources (World Bank and the International Monetary Fund). In this case it would be helpful to use more disaggregated data (from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and local sources) and give more attention to the quality and implementation of specific social programs. This could reveal more information about the development of the east European welfare states and their vulnerability to various crises and perhaps generate valuable comparisons with Latin America.

The book's greatest contribution lies in making a powerful and concise argument in support of the key role of *both* politics and history. As concerns eastern Europe, it constructs