

they perceive and fear. They prefer the façade to the messy reality of political divisiveness. This is a dangerous bargain. (192)

Academic writing can be abstruse and impenetrable but this book is illustrative of the reverse. It completely eschews specialist jargon and favours short sentences, making the book very accessible to the general reader without detracting from its function as a solid piece of research. There were however certain minor presentational lapses which indicated a failure of editorial support or excessive haste in production. The transliteration displayed the idiosyncratic function of incorporating a single instance of transcription (where Russian ‘g’ is pronounced as a ‘v’ it was so rendered in the text). This was explained in the note on transliteration at the front of the book, though the justification for this in terms that Russian has very few gaps between spelling and pronunciation was not one I could concur with. Certain words were not consistently rendered: for instance ‘ich’ and ‘itch’ (51, 56) were used interchangeably in the rendering of male patronymics, while Alexander alternated with Aleksandr. Most curious were the constant references to the Committee to Protect Journalists as the Committee to Project Journalists (21, 22, 34) and in the end-notes (200, 201, 202).

These blemishes apart this is a worthwhile addition to the library of any person with a serious interest in post-Soviet Russian politics and media. Sarah Oates’ analysis is incisive and consistent and the material she presents along with her integration of her analysis into the broader picture of media relations in the west makes this a valuable piece of research.

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Alexandra Smith, *Montaging Pushkin: Pushkin and Visions of Modernity in Russian Twentieth-Century Poetry*, Studies in Slavic Literatures and Poetics, 46 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006), 361 pp.

Pushkin was acclaimed as Russia’s national poet even during his lifetime, and although this loaded term is far from comprising an adequate characterisation of his genius, it is undeniable that Pushkin’s work has exercised an unrivalled influence over his successors, and one that appears only to grow. In *Montaging*

Pushkin, Alexandra Smith's focus is primarily on the period of modernism in Russian poetry, the Silver Age of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. After a spell of relative neglect it was this age of mythologisation which saw the image of Pushkin which we know today gradually constructed and refined in the commemorations of 1880, 1899, 1921 and 1937, and in the poetry and criticism of symbolist and post-symbolist authors. A good deal has been written about the Pushkin myth as a phenomenon and about the influence of Pushkin on specific modernist authors, but Smith goes beyond previous explorations to read Pushkin explicitly through the eyes of modernist theory and to use the insights thus gained to pursue a deeper understanding of the modernists' response to Pushkin and their appropriation of his works in their own poetic systems.

Taking as her guiding metaphor Eisenstein's principle of montage, Smith argues that modernist poets developed a similar technique for juxtaposing themes and images from Pushkin and their own aesthetic, psychological or political ideas, so that their work often takes on a fundamentally dialogic character, repudiating Bakhtin's contention that lyric verse is essentially monologic. Pushkin is the 'other's voice' always accompanying the lyric persona. In this context the iconic Pushkin texts include first of all his 1824 poem 'K moriu', which Smith considers in the light of Donald Winnicott's work on child development and identity formation. Just as children create play spaces as part of the process of establishing their own individuality, so in this poem does Pushkin evoke an imaginary space in which the sea functions as a playmate in the sphere of poetic creativity. That 'K moriu' was highly valued by Marina Tsvetaeva for the invitation to poetic discovery it contains is shown by the attention she gives it in her autobiographical essay *Moi Pushkin*. Smith sees Pushkin's poem also as a voice behind Tsvetaeva's long poem *S moria*, which comprises a creative dialogue with Pasternak, set in a similar imaginative seaside world, and is extended thus by resonance with its Pushkinian model.

It is Pushkin's treatment of the city, however, to which Smith gives the greater part of her attention. Here the key texts are *Evgenii Onegin* and *Mednyi vsadnik*, which Smith reads as exemplifying modernist ideas of urban spectatorship. She applies Benjamin's three urban types of *flâneur*, *badaud* (gaper) and detective to the different visions of St Petersburg embraced at different times by the characters and narrators of these works, and sees Pushkin as a precursor of Baudelaire in his sensitivity to urban life, thus slotting him again into the dominant genealogy of

modernism. In *Mednyi vsadnik* particularly, Pushkin is also seen as the poet of existential suffering and loss, as the enlightenment panegyric of his ode to Peter the Great's St Petersburg contained in this poem is contrasted with Evgenii's madness following the great flood of 1824. This contrast was naturally of particular personal significance to those poets who lived through the upheavals of revolution, civil war and Stalinism, and among the most interesting parts of Smith's book are her analyses of the motif of the bronze horseman in works by Blok, Gippius, Maiakovskii and Reisner. Other poets whose work is examined closely for its approach to the city and modernity in the light of Pushkinian reference include Annenskii, Akhmatova, Pasternak, Gumilev, Khodasevich, Mandelstam and Lifshits.

Smith's final chapter is concerned with rather more disparate groupings of poets, who nevertheless draw substantively on Pushkin as a cultural and psychological reference point. She thus examines Pushkin's role as a focus of identity (representing both authority and the spirit of non-conformity) in the poetry of the Russian emigration, and particularly in works by Adamovich, Nabokov and Tsvetaeva. A final section outlines the curiously similar vision of the Leningrad poets of the 1960s and later.

Smith's work, as always, is full of ideas, making unexpected connections and drawing on a huge range of primary, secondary and theoretical materials in support of her arguments, and it is difficult to do justice to the scope of her thesis in a short review. *Montaging Pushkin* is, however, unfortunately marred by poor editing and poor proof reading; and, annoyingly, even though a list of supplementary readings has been appended to the bibliography, there are still in-text references for which it is impossible to find the complete citation. This is, nevertheless a work that will repay careful study for what it says not only about the Pushkin myth but also about the psychology of Russian modernism and the mechanisms of literary influence.

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Robert Service, *Stalin: A Biography* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004), 715 pp.