

Tsvetaeva's family . . . were associated as much with the spirit world as with the material world" (96). These photographs are present in the book, and one of them is indeed "ghostly," since—due to double exposure—Tsvetaeva herself is depicted on it, holding (most probably) Gronskii's book.

The third and fourth chapters are dedicated to Joseph Brodsky and Bella Akhmadulina.

Brodsky was the son of a photographer and a photographer himself. He stated: "A good poem, in a sense, is like a photograph that puts its subjects' metaphysical features into sharp focus" (161). In her analysis of Brodsky's poems (especially his *Roman Elegies*), Blasing interprets Brodsky's poetry through this lens. She concludes: "The aspect of Brodsky's photo-poetics that emerges from these drafts [of *Roman Elegies*] is related to the poet's view of the analogical relationship between photography and poetic writing. That is, the drafts reveal Brodsky working through the parallels he sees in the process of taking a photograph and the stages of poetic writing" (170). Brodsky's drafts that are included in the book support her comparison of the processes of photographic exposure and writing.

The chapter on Akhmadulina, like that of Tsvetaeva, takes an apophatic approach. Blasing writes: "[T]his chapter asks: what is the difference between writing a poem about a photograph you hold in your hand, as opposed to one that exists only in the mind's eye?" (180). She compares Akhmadulina's poem dedicated to a known photo of Akhmatova and "I swear," Akhmadulina's meditation on a photo of Tsvetaeva, which after much research, Blasing concludes never actually existed. Her wonderful analysis of this poem gives the reader greater appreciation of Akhmadulina's poetic genius.

The book also mentions more contemporary Russian poets, including Sergei Gandlevskii, Polina Barskova, Arsenii Tarkovskii, Elena Shvarts, Arkadii Dragomoshchenko, Andrei Sen-Sen'kov, and Kirill Medvedev, and their ways of *ekphrasis*—the poetic translation of the visual into the verbal. While Blasing cites Aleksei Parshchikov as a theorist of photography, she misses the opportunity to include his poem describing Perseus as the first photographer, whose shield was his "camera." I highly recommend *Snapshots of the Soul* to all interested in *ekphrasis* and the "development" of Russian poetry.

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Rethinking the Gulag: Identities, Sources, Legacies. Ed. Alan Barenberg and Emily D. Johnson. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2022. x, 320 pp. Notes. Index. Illustrations. \$35.00, paper.
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"The scale of the Gulag contrasted with its futility" (274). So writes Aleksandr Etkind in aptly summarizing why the Gulag remains a complex and important topic in academic studies. From the earliest camps on the Solovetskii Islands of Russia's Far North, to today's male prisons in Russia and former Soviet republics, these sites and their practices have left, for better and worse, a legacy of material for historians, anthropologists, sociologists, literary scholars, and other scholarly disciplines. The significance of this volume is announced in its title—to "rethink" a field of inquiry that was initially largely defined by the (typically privileged) members of the intelligentsia who had been incarcerated as political prisoners. Instead, the fourteen contributors to *Rethinking the Gulag* broaden the scope to include previously understudied groups

such as ethnic minorities, religious inmates, peasants, and criminals. The interdisciplinary nature of the volume requires a broad range of approaches, with everything from close readings of poetry and correspondence to data mining and mapping.

Rethinking the Gulag is organized into three sections, each with three articles and a commentary. Emblematic of the diversity of materials and approaches that characterize the volume, the first section, *Identities*, opens with “Religious Identity, Practice and Hierarchy at the Solovetskii Camp of Forced Labor of Special Significance,” Jeffrey Hardy’s article on shifting relationships between the Solovki camp administration and religious inmates in the 1920s. His careful analysis of the often improvisational nature of these experiences adds an important piece to our knowledge of this under-researched topic. Emily Johnson’s contribution, “Censoring the Mail in Stalin’s Multiethnic Penal System,” addresses the practicalities faced by camp authorities when censoring the mail of non-Russian camp inmates, and the varied uses of Russian and non-Russian languages. Gavin Slade, in his answer to “Who are You in Life? The Gulag Reputation System and Its Legacies today,” examines the role of everyday Gulag criminal practices in the lives of both Gulag and contemporary criminal inmates. As is true of all three sections, the commentator’s, in this case historian Lynne Viola’s, comments provide a concise and insightful overview of the preceding articles.

As its title might imply, the second section, *Sources*, incorporates new quantitative and qualitative methodologies to further illuminate the relationships between the macro and the micro-purposes of the Gulag’s administrators, between the realms of statistics and individual stories, between maps and memoirs. Here, as Judith Pallott summarizes in her excellent commentary, scholars incorporate a variety of computer-assisted techniques to address “the enduring debate about the quantification of the victims of repression” (181). In his groundbreaking contribution, “They Won’t Survive for Long: Soviet Officials on Medical Release Procedures,” Mikhail Nakonechnyi uses archival Gulag mortality and release records for the period 1930–55 to address questions of intentionality and manipulation by the Soviet regime. In her chapter, “Applying Digital Methods to Forced Labor History,” Susan Grunewald uses digital mapping of German prisoners of war in labor camps (as opposed to Gulag camps) in postwar reconstruction. In “Researching the Gulag in the Era of ‘Big Data,’” literary scholar Sarah Young incorporates corpus analysis of the large (almost 43 million words!) body of memoirs and testimonies housed at the Sakharov Center in an effort to understand and explain the subjective role of the Gulag in individual former *zeks*’ lives. The methodologies of these three scholars vary widely but each is representative of the fruitful application of new methods of archival analysis to gain a broader perspective on these rich materials.

The third section, “*Legacies*,” begins with a close reading of one of the most traditional of literary topics: “The Role of Nature in Gulag Poetry,” by Josephine von Zittzewitz, in which she contrasts the use of the topic by two widely known but very different Soviet poets, Varlaam Shalamov and Nikolai Zabolotsky. While certainly a departure from the sweeping reach of most of the other chapters in this volume, it is a refreshing reminder that, as she concludes, “lyric poetry born out of the camp experience can be read as a courageous act of resistance” (214). Shalamov reappears in Alan Barenberg’s chapter on the relatively brief but troubled correspondence in the mid-1960s between Shalamov and fellow *zek* and writer Georgii Demidov. Barenberg’s focus is on the different notions of authorial authority laid out by the two survivors, set against a background of prison fiction, newly emerging in the post-*One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* space. The last chapter of “*Legacies*,” Irina Flige’s “The Necropolis of the Gulag as Historical-Cultural Object,” returns to a broader topic: death and its documentation in the many physical sites (the often secret burial sites,

mass graves and cemeteries) and in the memories of surviving relatives and families. Flige's contribution, part of a book-length project, left me eager for a fuller treatment of this innovative approach to memory studies, and I look forward to the appearance of the book.

Rethinking the Gulag is a model of collaborative, interdisciplinary scholarship. The intersection of multiple generations of experienced and emerging scholars of the Gulag, drawing on diverse scholarly methodologies, is apparent and appreciated. I finished reading the volume wanting to be told by the editors that this is the first in a planned multi-volume project. Certain topics, including the role of gender in the Gulag, remain unaddressed. Others, such as the interrelationships between political and criminal *zeks*, need to be expanded beyond Soviet-era stereotypes. Archives remain to be uncovered and analyzed, for both their nuances and their national level revelations, even though continued access to Gulag archives in Putin's Russia can be hard to predict, as the editors acknowledge in their Afterword. The scholarly work of remembering the unknown and the un-mourned continues.

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The Hand at Work: The Poetics of Poesis in the Russian Avant-Garde. By Susanne Strätling. Trans. Alexandra Berlina. Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2021. xxii, 348 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations. \$109.00, hard bound. doi: 10.1017/slr.2023.154

This book of Susanne Strätling was her *habilitation* thesis from 2014, published in Germany in 2017. Her ambition is intriguing and impressive. After the “philology of the eye” (the pictorial turn) and “philology of the ear” (the sonic turn), she aspires to write an alternative “philology of the hand,” situated between poetics, rhetoric, linguistics, psychology, ergonomics, history of law, philosophy, and the visual arts. This new turn should help to rethink parameters, subjects, and method of philology, to bridge the gaps between voice and writing, letters and images, homo faber and homo ludens, words and deeds, life and death, sacred and secular, and to remap the hierarchies of the senses putting the eye under the control of the hand. This enormous task could obviously not be completed in one book, and Strätling presents some possible directions. The chosen period (1900s–40s) includes artistic experiments (Aleksei Kruchenykh, Mikhail Matiushin, El Lissitzky, Vsevolod Meyerhold, Daniil Kharms), existential reflections (Iakov Druskin) and theoretical concepts of linguists, literary scholars, psychologists, theorists of the scientific management of labor (Lev Polivanov, Nikolai Marr, Viktor Shklovskii, Lev Vygotskii, Aleksandr Lurii, Aleksei Gastev).

In seven chapters of her book, Strätling correlates pairs, such as hand and mouth, hand and writing tools, hand and body, and hand and mind. She goes from representational doubling of words in gestures, naturalization of artificial signification processes in corporeality to differentiations between Tadeusz Zieliński's and Polivanov's sound gestures, Marr's glossogenetic gestures, Sergei Tretiakov's word gestures, and so on. Strätling's material is sometimes expected (Meyerhold's biomechanics, Krychenykh's handwritten books, Lissitzky's new typography), sometimes surprising (Druskin's diaries).

The theoretical framing (Ferdinand de Saussure and Friedrich Engles, Wilhelm Wundt and Siegmund Freud, Ludwig Wittgenstein and Morice Merleau-Ponty, Walter Benjamin, Marcel Mauss, Jacques Derrida, Giorgio Agamben, and Willem Fussel) is a