

With best regards B.H.

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also illuminates popular culture in Russia at the time, and points out that cinema was a crossroads where different social classes might meet, if not physically, due to segregated movie houses for people of different classes, then at least intellectually, by being exposed to the same films. Youngblood argues effectively that the role of cinema in this era can be seen to illustrate Russia's transition to "modernity."

Youngblood's many strengths within this work, such as her vast knowledge of films and the many interesting subjects which she addresses, also seem to be the weakest parts of this work. The great detail in which she describes many films at times becomes somewhat overdone, and the text reads as a synopsis of film after film with little original synthesis. This is to some extent necessary, as most of the films discussed will not have been seen by the average reader, but it could have been minimized. As a reader, I am thankful for those synopses and will make use of them, when teaching courses on Russian film, but they do not make those sections easy reading. In addition to synopses, Youngblood also makes extensive use of cinema journals of the time. Her considerable research has yielded many informative quotations from those journals. At times her use of these quotations seems slightly carried away and overtakes her own observations, though the ones she chooses do accurately reflect or illustrate her points.

Another disappointment is the overall flow of the text. Each chapter reads almost like a separate paper on seemingly unrelated subjects, with weak transitions between them. "Murder and Mayhem" leads awkwardly to "History and Literature," which then segues on to "The Guide to Life." Luckily the information is informative and primarily well thought-out, which makes it easier to forgive the unevenness of the text.

These problems aside, Youngblood presents many stimulating ideas for consideration. The sections "Dream World of Mass Consumption" and "Manners and Mores" invite some very interesting further study. Another fascinating part is a discussion of space as depicted in Russian films of the time (128-31), which raises fascinating ideas. Unfortunately, there are no film frames provided to illustrate these sections. It would be especially helpful to have a frame from one of Evgenii Bauer's films to illustrate his predilection for opulent sets, about which Youngblood often comments.

The Magic Mirror: Movie-making in Russia, 1908-1918 is a fine study that will be an excellent reference for people who have little first-hand knowledge of pre-revolutionary Russian cinema. The many film synopses as well as the cultural discussions of suicide, sex, and class will benefit anyone interested in better understanding Russian society during the pre-revolutionary period. The information, though at times uneven in style, is very useful, whether studying early film as another facet of the Russian silver age or of Russian society toward the Revolution. This work could be adopted as a text in courses dealing with Russian film history, or could be a reference work for courses on Russian culture of the twentieth century; since many of the issues raised relate to Russian culture broadly defined rather than to the narrow area of Russian film alone.

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David Roskies. *The Jewish Search for a Usable Past*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999. Notes. Index. 240 pp., \$24.95 (cloth).

Giving meaning to memory is perhaps at the core of all of Professor David Roskies' works. His books, such as *Against the Apocalypse: Responses to Catastrophe in Modern Jewish Culture* and *A Bridge of Longing: The Lost Art of Yiddish Storytelling* (1995), deal with Jewish memory in various forms. His latest effort, a series of talks in 1998 for Indiana University's Helen and Martin Schwartz Lectures in Judaic Studies, departs from these earlier treatments

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in one important respect. Here Professor Roskies emphasizes the central role of institutions in the creation and sustenance of Jewish memory. "To judge from the Jewish experience, the DNA of group memory is transmitted not through individuals, not even through families, but through institutions, and never with greater mobility than in modern times" (173). Only institutions, he writes, can save Jewish memory, and preserve for the present and future generations some of the creative spirit of Eastern European Jewish life.

Roskies formulates his statements against the backdrop of Jewish loss: loss of Yiddish language and *Yiddishkeit* (culture, community and behavior) in Europe, Russia, and North America, and the loss of an entire people in the Holocaust and in the Communist repressions. In response, Roskies desires to understand the pathways of memory-creation in order to aid the preservation of Jewish cultural life, and reveals his imaginative creativity in his definition of "institution." While he recognizes conventional definitions of institution—for example, the Yiddish day schools in Montreal in the 1930s—Roskies also produces alternatives, such as Jewish cemeteries, folksongs, the "myth" of the *shtetl* in literature, and the image of the Israeli state in public consciousness. I completely agree that concepts can serve as institutions, since these phenomena do the job of shaping human consciousness and behavior, and evolve through time, thereby remaining relevant from generation to generation.

The most obvious example of a project involving memory-creation is the work of Emanuel Ringelblum in Warsaw during World War II. Ringelblum and his trained colleagues collected thousands of details, chronicling the experience of ghetto life under the Nazis. They set themselves the goal of "ensuring that no important fact about Jewish life in wartime shall remain hidden from the world," but they were also obsessed with transferring this information to the future. The antithesis of art for its own sake, this writing project was understood as an attempt to provide for future generations a "living" memorial to Jewish suffering.

Roskies' chapter on Jewish cemeteries typifies his unconventional approach. In the Old Mount Carmel Cemetery in Queens, New York, are buried the greatest Yiddish writers and Bund leaders who died on American soil. Their tombstones are grand homages to self-importance, large granite slabs including etchings, designs and, usually, an august epitaph in both Yiddish and English. Roskies parses the purposes of the cemetery, which he claims forms a site of permanent memory not just for the individuals buried there, but for their political ideas and secular-Jewish orientation. Moreover, he sees a semiotic function in the placement of the graves—the most famous stand at the front of the cemetery. The cemetery, Roskies claims, provides a pantheon of great men and women worthy of emulation. It acts as a permanent reminder of a distinct Jewish past that can be revisited and reintegrated into the present.

An advocate of diaspora Jewish identity and especially secular *Yiddishkeit*, Roskies admires Jewish life in all its facets, refusing to valorize religious over secular, Hebraic over Yiddish, Israeli over American or Russian. For example, he relates the epitaphs of committed socialists as evidence of Jewish life. The headstone of Jacob Goldstone reads, "The Jewish Baker's Union Is My Eternal Monument." For Roskies, the New York Jewish leftists represent an inimitable, and more importantly, absolutely authentic moment in modern Jewish history. One of the fascinating chapters in the book concerns the significance of the state of Israel in the definition of "Galut" (Exile). Although one might think that the dichotomy would be clear—Israel signifies holy space, while diaspora is allied with the profane—the opposition is not at all resolved. In fact, Roskies shows that exile is a literary construct equally useful for Israeli and American artists.

Similarly, the "Holy Land" has taken on opposing meanings. For example, Roskies points to the efforts of Zionists to de-mystify the messianic connotations of the Jewish state and make Israel appear a state like any other. Israel provides a place to live in comfort and security. But there are also other places where Jews live in security and comfort. Jewish holy space is just as likely to be placed in Brooklyn as in Jerusalem. An example is the home of Hasidic Zaddik Menachem Mendel Schneerson at 770 Eastern Parkway in Crown Heights. The rebbe's Israeli

followers have built a Brooklyn brownstone in Kfar Habad on the highway between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. They thought that if they built it, the rabbi would move to Israel, although he never did. In this case, the diaspora attains the meaning of Zion. Roskies interprets this paradox: "From a secular Zionist perspective, building the rebbe a replica of his home in a theologically neutral part of the state might seem quixotic, but it would not be viewed as aberrant—provided the rebbe actually moved there. As an absentee landlord, however, the rebbe stands for the reconsecration of the Diaspora" (161).

Although the book begins with a description of a trip through contemporary Ukraine, I think Roskies ultimately repudiates geography as the most significant factor in memory-creation. Neither New York, Tel Aviv nor Moscow have a monopoly on Jewish culture; the displacements of the twentieth century have taken care of that. Jewish life may no longer be organized into communities, but even in its modern individualized form, memory will still matter. Furthermore, memory as something dead does not interest Roskies. Rather, the reworking of memory into productive cultural creation is essential. In this sense, this book itself symbolizes the productive application of memory and its transformation into scholarly inspiration.

David Roskies is clearly one of the most interesting writers of modern Jewish culture in America today. Moreover, it is not just his ideas that bring him glory, but rather his multifarious examples reveal the fascinating sources that inspire him and can inspire the reader.

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Lindsey Hughes. *Russia in the Age of Peter the Great*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998. Index. Bibliography. Illustrations. xxx + 602 pp., \$35.00 (cloth).

Russian historians remain perpetually fascinated by Peter the Great and his reign: the larger than life figure caused the transition from Muscovy to the Russian Empire, a transition which marks the gateway that separates old and modern Russia. The past few years alone have produced important new works by Evgenii Anisimov, N. I. Pavlenko, and James Cracraft, and at least one collection of scholarly articles dedicated entirely to the Petrine era. To this outpouring we may now add Lindsey Hughes's magisterial *Russia in the Age of Peter the Great*, all 602 pages of it!

As genre, this book falls somewhere between biography and total history. In Hughes's own words, the text "gives due weight to 'traditional' areas of foreign policy, army and navy, economy and government, but it also examines neglected topics such as women and the intriguing subject of pretense and disguise" (xiii). Peter is present on virtually every page, and the summary chapter on his personality ("Peter: Man, Mind and Methods") essentially ties together threads that were woven throughout the previous chapters. Although she does not offer a single, over-arching interpretation of her own, Hughes does incorporate a voluminous amount of scholarship into her narrative, and makes good strategic use of Peter's own correspondence, as well as the accounts of foreigners, especially Charles Whitworth and Friedrich von Bergholz.

By far the most effective chapters are those dealing with "neglected topics," especially when they relate to life at court, the ruling family, ceremony, and ritual. The extensive discussions of the All-Drunken Assembly and of the mock tsars, Fedor Iur'evich and Ivan Fedorovich Romodanovskii, are superb. Previous histories of the period have given scant attention to these threads of Peter's reign, either because they were deemed unseemly (the Victorian and Soviet position) or because they were deemed frivolous against the backdrop of war, politics, and institutional transformation (Pavlenko, Anisimov, Sumner, Anderson, *et al.*). In marked contrast, Hughes dwells at great length—correctly, in my view—on the