

Anatoly Pinsky. *Posle Stalina: Pozdnesovetskaia sub"ektivnost' (1953–1985)*. Izdatel'stvo Evropeiskogo universiteta v Sankt-Peterburge, 2018. ISBN 9785943802423. 454 pp.

“*Posle Stalina: Pozdnesovetskaia sub"ektivnost' (1953–1985)*” (2018) is a collection of eleven essays by both Russian and Western scholars, edited by Anatoly Pinsky, an intellectual historian from the European University in Saint Petersburg. Approaching the topic from a multidisciplinary perspective, the publication presents a breadth of themes, which are connected by the overarching framework of studies on Soviet subjectivity in the post-Stalinist period.

In addition to introducing new research on the epoch, the volume offers a thorough reflection on terminology to comprehend the methodologically disparate field of Soviet subjectivity. The key problem identified in “*Posle Stalina*” (2018) is that the term *subjectivity* itself has been deployed by scholars in different ways. Anatoly Pinsky’s introduction traces the genealogy of the term, establishing its post-structuralist, more specifically, Foucauldian roots on one hand. On the other, accounting for its looser and more broadly used definition, which focuses on how one comprehends the world and his or her place in the community. This analytical overview is particularly helpful in that it encompasses existing scholarship and allows one to contextualize works preceding the “subjectivity turn,” thus creating a cohesive view of the field.

Beyond its methodological intervention, the collection contributes to the field by examining the fate of the Stalinist project of the “New Person” in the post-Stalinist epoch. Informed by a variety of sources including autobiographical literature, oral history and archival materials, the volume demonstrates that in the late Soviet Union the project of creating a distinctly Soviet person not only did not lose its importance, but gained even more urgency as Soviet leaders after Stalin sought mechanisms of influence and control beyond terror. This renewed agenda, as the authors agree, facilitated the growth of state institutions while at the same time paradoxically allowed the subject to become more autonomous and creative. The publication argues that this autonomy was made possible not by the mere absence of terror, but rather by the prevalence of the new and the unofficial (e.g. youth movements or amateur performances) and the unfinished (e.g. the poetics of the fragment or “small” literary genres) among subjectivizing discourses and practices of the period.

The eleven articles are grouped into two parts. The first is focused on the “macro” level and explores the ways in which the post-Stalinist state reached wide audiences in an effort to fuel the “New Person” project, while the second part analyzes the “micro” agendas of groups and organizations that had a more limited impact, but resulted nonetheless in creating distinctly Soviet subjectivities.

Cynthia Hooper’s opening article analyzes how the new parameters of subjectivity, which made the private domestic sphere a crucial venue to the discussion of socialist values, were set by politicians and in the work of cultural figures such as the writer, Vasilii Aksenov, or the director, El'dar Ryazanov. It is followed by an article by Maria Mayofis, who examines the children’s choir movement between 1958 and the 1980s and its function as a socio-behavioral model of *disciplined emotional solidarity* (“*дисциплинированная эмоциональная солидарность.*”) Mikhail Rozhanskiy focuses on changes in the narrative of the New Person and argues that, contrary to the grandiose goals of the Stalinist hero, at the end of the 1950s the Soviet idealist’s search for the real was satisfied by engaging with the unheroic and the quotidian. Anatoly Pinsky studies the diaristic form under Khrushchev, and argues that the growth of this genre during the Thaw was a result of the emergence of a new type of subject who was much more critical toward the shortcomings of the state but at the same time was deeply invested in its agenda. Two articles on the relationship of the Soviet subject and the Western observer by Ilya Kukulin and Alexei Golubev complete the first part. Kukulin’s article speaks of the “inner” image of the self and views the travelogues of Soviet writers who visited the West in the 1950s–1960s as a program of emotional self-regulation tasked with instilling the “correct” sense of self vis-à-vis the phenomena of Western life and society. Golubev analyzes

the image of the self that is directed outwards and structured by the gaze of the Western observer.

The second part on more localized discourses and practices begins with an article by Oleg Leibovitch on new patterns of subjectivity of KGB workers in the 1950s that demonstrates that even they developed distinctly Thaw-associated traits. Daria Bocharnikova, in an article on a group of Moscow architects, demonstrates that the spatial and discursive elements of the project afforded the subject an unprecedented flexibility while at the same time still conformed to the idea of universal needs and thus failed to envision a completely unique subject. Bella Ostromoukhova looks at amateur theater collectives in the 1950s–1960s and explores the “horizontal” dimension of subjectivizing practices in the relationships with one’s closest circle. She argues that it was these horizontal ties that cultivated the loyalty to the values of collectivism and usefulness to society while at the same time instilling a critical attitude toward the Soviet system at large. Susan Reid focuses on environmental influences that modelled Soviet subjects, namely the interiors of the Soviet apartment under Khrushchev. She demonstrates that consumption, arrangement and maintenance of furniture played no less a role in “socialist modernity” than in the West in forming a self-identity, however limited and superimposed by the state these choices were. The volume concludes with an article by Benjamin Nathans, who analyzes the memoirs of Soviet dissidents published in the West. Focusing on the textual practices of self-formation, Nathans traces the process of creation of an alternative, anti-Soviet *I*. Similarly, to the preceding authors, Nathans demonstrates an involvement with party and state discourses and practices, but in the case of his subjects this interaction was that of active resistance. Engaging with Soviet epistemology, Soviet dissidents transformed it into a distinctly different one based on the values of democracy.

Accompanied by an extensive bibliography, the volume will be useful both to specialists in late Soviet history and culture as well as to scholars of Soviet subjectivity, and especially to those newly entering the field.

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Andrei Egunov-Nikolev. *Beyond Tula: A Soviet Pastoral*. Academic Studies Press, 2019. ISBN: 9781618119735. 175 pages.

This translation, by Ainsley Morse, of Andrei Egunov-Nikolev’s *Beyond Tula. A Soviet Pastoral* (2019) is an important addition to our reservoir of Soviet-Russian avant-garde texts of the post-Revolutionary period. Written between September 1929 and March 1930, *Beyond Tula* is an often hilarious, when not tragically grotesque, collision of pastoral romance and production novel. Impossibly marrying Platonov to Turgenev, directly indebted to Vaginov and Kuzmin but also “infantile” in the Kharmis-Vvedensky fashion, and preparing the soil for the literary hijinks of Venedikt Erofeev, this satirical smorgasbord of linguistic play and tender mockery of itself—and the entire Russian literary tradition equally—bears within it a premonition of the cultural catastrophe to come.

There is almost no *fabula* to *Beyond Tula*. On the surface—which is both ubiquitous and non-existent—*Beyond Tula* describes a three-day visit made to the Tula province by one Sergey Sergeevich (of which there are several so-named in the novel), a resident of Peterhof and poet/eternal student, to his friend Fyodor Fyodorovich (several of them too), who is an engineer living in a region rich in ore and undergoing collectivization. Sergey thus comes to Mirandino (evoking Shakespeare’s *Tempest*?) to observe this “Soviet Pastoral” and perhaps learn to become a Soviet writer. The visit is complicated by the addition of Fyodor’s mother, an aging opera singer (adding another layer of language to the text, which is suffused with song), who

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