

All told, *The Soviet Gulag* introduces many provocative themes for further exploration—first among them, the role, purpose and practice of secrecy not only inside the Gulag administration, but also between the NKVD bureaucracy and other organs of government, and on the ground, between those overlapping realms of “camp” and “outside” world. Perhaps the book’s greatest contribution is that it encourages scholars to take more risks in the topics they choose to explore by standing as an example of broad and innovative historical inquiry.

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Gunny v Parizhe: K metageografii russkoi kul'tury. By Dmitrii Zamiatin.
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A rapidly growing body of scholarship on the centrality of space to social, artistic, and philosophical discourses has been recently enriched by Dmitrii Zamiatin's book on Russia's cultural geography. His collection of essays, *Gunny v Parizhe: K metageografii russkoi kul'tury*, takes as its structuring frame the concept of *genius loci*, the “genius of place,” in order to delve into Russia's spatial thought and imagination across a broad historical span, primarily the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. If the potential meanings of this originally ancient concept stretch from the designation of a spirit protecting a particular place to the atmosphere of a specific environment, for Zamiatin it also includes those figures who have created poetic spatialities. Artists, philosophers, writers, and filmmakers take central stage in this book, which maps—often with assiduous detail—their production of dense, fragmentary, and at times contradictory places and environments. The result is a richly-resonant study of Russia's cultural metageography that probes the depth and multitude of spatial imagining within the country's cultural traditions.

Gunny v Parizhe discusses an impressive array of well-known figures: Piotr Chaadaev and Aleksandr Blok, Boris Pasternak and Andrei Platonov, Venedikt Erofeev and Kuz'ma Petrov-Vodkin, and Andrei Tarkovskii and Aleksandr Sokurov, among others. Some of the most successful chapters are on Chaadaev and Pasternak, representing two different strands of the author's approach to his subject. Considering Chaadaev's numerous treatises on the specificity of Russia's national identity, Zamiatin zeroes in on the philosopher's preoccupation with “geographical fact”—the physical and material primacy of Russia's expansive space that, in Zamiatin's analysis, comes across as nearly tyrannical: it generates a mentality of political powerfulness, while simultaneously arresting the population's capacity for transforming this material geography into a culturally, spiritually, or ethically meaningful set of ideas. The geographic expanse disperses minds, preventing the formation of “intellectual centers,” which, further west in Europe, act as necessary incubators of ideas. Nevertheless, Chaadaev, Zamiatin contends, identifies this assessment not as a source of despair but as a potentially hopeful point of difference. He argues that Chaadaev's attempt to grant the inassimilable physical geography the status of an equal participant in the formation of civilizational identity (rather than understanding it as always already a product of history and culture, as had been the case in the west) shifts the European parameters by which space—and with it, history and culture—are apprehended.

If the guiding terms of Zamiatin's Chaadaev chapter are rather monumental (east and west, matter and thought, geography and national distinctiveness), the Pasternak chapter addresses the more intimate matter of geography's relatedness to

subjective interiority, experience, and love. The poet's 1917 cycle *Sestra moia zhizn'* is understood here as "an example of an exceptional poetic dwelling in, and experience of, place, in which practically any small landscape detail . . . turns into a powerful geographic appearance . . ." (143). Zamiatin's goal is to investigate by what strategies a concrete, identifiable place becomes a space of emotional experience, and to seek a systematic process for such transformation. He thus identifies Pasternak's initial transfer of particular biographic and topographic details onto the eternal "places" of love—such as the steppe, the garden, or the world at night. This is followed by the blending of this newly-emergent place with local affective histories, easing the intensity of the poet's own emotional experience. The final step, Zamiatin suggests, is "the indifference to place," a creation of a fluid, flexible space in which anything concrete and factual can be endlessly rearranged to suit the poet's subjective pursuits.

One of the book's repeated claims is that its examined works, while studied in regards to the historical and ideological contexts of their spatial particularities, have not been fully analyzed in terms of their spatiality *as such*. Zamiatin's goal, accordingly, is to isolate artistic strategies that perform spatial transformations within a text, which he does in great detail. Yet the disengagement from history and ideology in the discussion generates a blind spot within his argument, with the question persisting *why* certain places and themes, as well as certain modes of creative spatial molding, have been privileged not just in individual artists' works but in specific historical circumstances. The accumulation of interpretative elements, furthermore, occasionally tips the analysis out of balance. Zamiatin's larger goals are not always clear, just as his repeated insistence on a *system*, on the presence of a "strict meta-geographic order," is not always convincing. These shortcomings notwithstanding, *Gunny v Parizhe*, through its combination of broad historical purview and focused textual analysis, illuminates the expansive role played by space in the development of Russian culture, and points to rich directions for further study.

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Rodina: Mark Shagal v Vitebske. By Viktor Martinovich. Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2017. 240 pp. Notes. Bibliography. ₴309, hard bound.
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This book has an ambitious aim—to reconstruct and re-assess the complex relationship between Marc Chagall and his native Vitebsk. The study is supported by a wealth of documentation and archival research—often previously unknown documents, unearthed from various archives in Vitebsk. Despite its modest size, this book is clearly the result of intensive research in Russian archives; it uses a lot of previously unknown primary material and possesses a good scholarly apparatus. It is well documented.

The author clearly knows the subject well and is conversant with the current thought on the subject, showing a detailed knowledge of primary and secondary sources (although I felt that in some cases the author relies too heavily on Alexandra Shatskikh's volume on Vitebsk). Apart from shedding new light on Chagall's life and work in Vitebsk, Martinovich provides a very useful account of street decorations of Vitebsk on the first anniversary of the October Revolution and of Kazimir Malevich's arrival in Vitebsk.

The structure of the book is well balanced, although in the first chapters the author spends perhaps too much space discussing inaccuracies in the information