

Relying on both Gavriil Derzhavin and Princess Dashkova, he defines autobiography as a public stage on which greatness of the soul may be displayed. Prose, however, also has the capacity and, indeed, the responsibility to reflect less admirable aspects of reality. To drive home this point, Levitt draws heavily on Aleksandr Radishchev, whose ill-fated *Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow* (1790) functioned as a mirror, not only of Russia's grand achievements, but also of her squalid failures.

*The Visual Dominant in Eighteenth-Century Russia* is a beautifully written and timely book. The product of exhaustive research and meticulous reading, it will be of interest to all serious scholars of Russian culture.

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*Zrimaia lirika: Derzhavin.* By Tat'iana Smoliarova. Ocherki vizual'nosti. Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie," 2011. 607 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations. Plates. Photographs. Paper.

As Tat'iana Smoliarova's monograph suggests by its title, *Lyrics Made Visible: Derzhavin*, she aspires to unite major fields of study (each with its set of methodologies and scholarly contributions) into a single exegesis of cross-disciplinary significance and to apply such significance to the worldview and poetry of the patriarch of modern Russian poetry—Gavriil Derzhavin. Smoliarova's approach will likely be applauded by those who privilege fresh combinations and startling juxtapositions. As her inquiry proceeds (at times with marvelous readings, at other times in labyrinthine notes of uneven sophistication), she touches, not only on the history of literature and of art, on philosophy and political thought, but also on optics, gardening, architecture, manufacturing, meteorology, and even ballooning. Smoliarova uses this motley assemblage to construct an overview of the European scene at the beginning of the nineteenth century, especially in England. With the poetry Derzhavin produced between 1804 and 1807 as her primary focus, Smoliarova discusses in depth only three creations of this period, *Fonar'* (The Magic Lantern, 1804), *Raduga* (Rainbow, 1806), and *Evgeniin. Zhizn' zvanskaia* (To Eugene. Life at Zvanka, 1807), devoting to each a massive chapter. Citing Mark Al'tshuller's research, she does concede Derzhavin's affinity with the "archaists." She also, however, attempts to depict the great poet as aware of, dependent on, and responsive "to the *mainstream* of western aesthetics *despite* his ideological preferences" (35, emphasis in the original).

Such claims are both far-reaching and debatable. Smoliarova is mostly on firm ground whenever she discusses Derzhavin's manner of writing within the context of Russian theater, painting, prosody, and literary history, and there is indeed much to be learned from the often acute and frequently daring observations with which her book is peppered. For example, Smoliarova's keen eye notes Derzhavin's penchant for almost unintelligible archaisms in *The Magic Lantern*, paradoxically one of the most pioneering texts of the period. On the other hand, such valuable findings get lost in an avalanche of asides, full-fledged essays, and other "apropos of . . ." diversions that often dilute her scholarship. Effortlessly jumping from Derzhavin to Plato, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, and William Wordsworth; from Claude Lorraine to John Constable, or to Erasmus Darwin and Alexander Pope, she assumes—but hardly ever proves—that any or all of these *might have, should have* (such turns abound in her study) prompted Derzhavin to write as he did. Smoliarova poses as an expert in some of the aforementioned fields, but many of her excursions are secondhand and often have, by her own admission, little to do with Derzhavin.

Even accepting Smoliarova's premise that Derzhavin's influences came from the west, which might indeed be her chief contribution to Derzhavin studies, her analytic scope concerning the three texts she scrutinizes is oddly limited. In the discussion of *The Magic Lantern*, for example, she omits nearly all mention of the Italian painter Salvatore Tonci, a westerner whom Derzhavin termed a genius and who in fact could have substantially influenced the philosophical underpinnings of this poem. The poet and the artist were well acquainted, and Tonci created the most famous portrait of Derzhavin. It was well-

known to Derzhavin (even to Alexander I) that Tonci espoused an unusual philosophy, namely that “everything man perceives or senses is *nothing more than an illusion, a mirage*” (cf. commentary by Iakov Grot in Gavrili Derzhavin, *Sochineniia Derzhavina s ob'iasnitel'nymi primechaniiami Ia. Grot*, 1865, 2:402). Here then might also be a thread connecting Tonci to the pathos of *The Magic Lantern's* words: “The world's but dreams: the Dreamer—God.” Similar limitations are present in the other two of Derzhavin's major works Smoliarova selected for discussion, as shown in Joachim Klein's detailed appraisal of her book in *Revue des études slaves* (82, no. 2 [2011]: 311–17).

These considerations constitute a minor reservation, however. Given Smoliarova's interest in Derzhavin's work ca. 1804–1807, it is unaccountable that she simply ignores the incredible wealth of watercolor and gouache vignettes (along with hundreds of other visual materials, drawings, and allegorical explications) that did in fact accompany Derzhavin's poetry in the manuscripts of his *Works* and were prepared under the poet's own direction, precisely in the years of Smoliarova's interest. This work surely should have been brought to the foreground by any scholar studying the visual aspects of Derzhavin's poetry. It is located chiefly in the Manuscript Divisions of two St. Petersburg institutions: The Institute of Russian Literature (Pushkinskii Dom) and the Russian National Library. Omission of this material is especially baffling, since Smoliarova includes several images—without listing their sources—that were derived in Grot's edition from manuscripts now held at these institutions. Not only did these images accompany each of the poems that Derzhavin planned to publish, they often changed Derzhavin's final versions of his own poems. Moreover, there are some poems in these manuscripts, such as “Vodopad” (The Waterfall, 1794), in which the very words “grow out of” the accompanying vignettes or are inscribed in the painted material itself.

Moreover, Smoliarova praises scholars whom she deifies (Elena Dan'ko, Lev Pumpsianskii, Il'ia Serman) but ignores those whose scholarship might have challenged her assumptions. Notable studies of Derzhavin's visual art by Claude Backvis, Elena Grigor'eva, Elena Karpova, Helmut Kölle, and many others are simply absent here. She uses terms such as *baroque* or *paradox* freely, and they clearly do lie at the crux of Derzhavin's mature poetry. But she does not bother to discuss these concepts as defined by such eminent authorities as Dimitri Cizevski or Aleksandr Morozov (both of whom had valuable insights into the subject of her inquiry) and treats the “paradoxes of Derzhavin's late poetry” (34) as chiefly derived from or responding to early nineteenth-century cultural currents, rather than as a late reflex of Derzhavin's potential revival of the baroque sensibility. For instance, had she applied Morozov's definition of the baroque, “sovmeshchenie nesovmestimogo” (combining the uncombinable), her characterization of Derzhavin as a “Européen malgré lui” (35) could have shown the poet responding to modern cultural currents, not “despite his ideological preferences,” but—as an archaist artist keenly receptive to the baroque—in accord with such preferences.

Such reservations aside, Smoliarova's study is a novel and often engaging exercise in interdisciplinary thinking.

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**For Humanity's Sake: The Bildungsroman in Russian Culture.** By Lina Steiner. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011. x, 284 pp. Appendixes. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$65.00, hard bound.

Attention to genre diversity within the canon of the Russian novel is a phenomenon I first noticed in contemporary Russian literary studies about ten years ago, while writing my own book (*Roman vospitaniia—Bildungsroman—na russkoi pochve: Karamzin. Pushkin. Goncharov. Tolstoi. Dostoevskii*, 2008). As a result, I was particularly interested in Lina Steiner's new monograph.

The appearance of this book should be welcomed for many reasons. Steiner dem-