

Romantic national literary paradigm, particularly as it applies to the hierarchical binaries of original/translation and author/translator. Baer examines relevant alternatives, like the concept of *imitatio* and the deconstruction of these binaries offered by Russian writers. He also continually takes seriously the Russian discourses that project a Russian identity that is alternate or opposed to the west, and in the process sometimes reveals the difficulty of maintaining a critical discourse that is opposed to the essentialist vision of monolithic cultures and attempts to account for cultural difference, when such difference is often projected against a monolithically conceived other. So, for example, while he begins the chapter on Wilde by discussing the general problems involved in the translation of homosexually-themed literature by examples of translations between English and French (demonstrating diversity within western European cultures), the chapter as a whole examines the reception of “western gay literature” in Russia. Baer concludes the chapter with an exemplary refusal to prefer the gay packaging of Wilde in Anglo-American criticism to the Russian version of the suffering artist, but one wishes this respect for cultural difference and specificity could have also been deployed to critique the Russian discourse on the unitary west.

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Russian Foreign Policy under Dmitry Medvedev, 2008–2012 by Valerie A. Pacer is a useful addition to the long list of volumes in the BASEES/Routledge series on Russian and East European studies. Her primary focus is on the security configuration in the Euro-Atlantic region and Russia’s postures to that configuration. She devotes chapters to Russia’s relationship with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE); to the “frozen conflicts” in Europe and “the Kosovo precedent”; to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO); to a “politically-binding agreement,” the Vienna Document on Confidence and Security-Building Measures; to “two legally-binding agreements,” the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty and the Treaty on Open Skies; and Medvedev’s proposed European Security Treaty and its assessment by western and Russian commentators.

She has in mind three on-going dialogues. One is the description of the interactions between Russians and their western counterparts. She brings to that discussion an impressive effort to interview an array of American, European, and Russian foreign policy experts and/or policy makers. For good reason, who exactly these persons are is not revealed. She generates a nice discussion of Russian and western views concerning NATO expansion eastward in the years after the end of the Cold War. In the process she complicates the claims of those, east and west, who have taken dogmatic positions concerning whether at the end of the Cold War the west made promises not to expand. There were, she reports, conflicting views in this regard on both sides (63).

A second major theme in the book is an interesting effort to sort out the differences in the positions of the various Russian foreign policy institutions, most notably the policy preferences and evolving weight in the decision process of the Russian Ministries of Defense and Foreign Affairs under both Medvedev and Putin. Specialists will find the first two dialogues worth careful attention.

More generally-oriented readers of this journal will probably find her observations about Medvedev's and Putin's foreign policy orientations the most interesting theme. She rightly emphasizes the extent to which Medvedev and Putin had interacted in the mid-1990s while working for Anatoly Sobchak in Saint Petersburg and that those ties continued into the first decade of the new century. Similarly, she reminds us of the specific place of the President in the Russian constitution, and his responsibility for foreign affairs, an institutional distinction that helps to explain the differences between the two leaders in the years 2008–2012: Medvedev had an institutional role emphasizing foreign policy and Putin had a role prioritizing domestic policy. Beyond the differences in role, however, Pacer argues that the two Presidents thought differently about foreign policy priorities with Medvedev placing more emphasis on European security issues (as exemplified by his proposed European Security Treaty) and Putin emphasizing Eurasian cohesion. Her central theme in this third discussion is to argue that Russian foreign policy during the 2008–2012 Medvedev interim, while showing similarities with the Putin years before 2008 and after 2012, differed both in style and in substance from the Putin periods before and after that interim.

This is not a universally held view. The shift in Russian foreign policy after the 2012 election has led to some smoothing over the years 2000–2016. This has resulted in a tendency among some commentators to regard all these years as being cut from the same cloth, with the Medvedev interim 2008–2012 being seen as indistinguishable from what came before it or what has occurred since 2012. Were that view to dominate would be unfortunate. To Ms. Pacer's credit, she makes a case for differentiating Medvedev's style and policies from those of Vladimir Putin. Despite the propensity to assert the contrary as US-Russian relations have deteriorated, the Medvedev years did differ modestly in substance and style from what preceded them and what succeeded them.

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