

happens to a literary topos if one takes it out of the original context” and transfers it to “a different stylistic paradigm” (8). The gulag is not discussed as a historical phenomenon but exclusively as a literary theme. For post-Soviet works, the “traditional (meaning documentary) camp literature” (7) is the logical body of reference, as examined in chapter 3. However, while these postmodern texts are analyzed in a nuanced way, the background of the older works of camp literature stays very general. The author speaks of their aspiration to “depict and understand reality in all its complexities” (39), but she rarely differentiates between Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn’s and Varlam Shalamov’s literary positions, and even Avvakum and Anton Chekhov are ranked among camp writers. Moreover, the theoretical explanations are not always convincing: the author speaks—in a misleading interpretation of Walter Benjamin’s notion of *aura*—of the “auratic effect” this literature possesses, which she ascribes to “the authenticity of the events experienced and the disclosure of the facts, which had hitherto been hidden” (7).

The author draws a very distinct line between “classic” and modern camp narratives (36), whereby she clearly emphasizes the differences between them but only rudimentarily discusses the consequences. It is undoubtedly true that the works analyzed deal not with the “real camps” of the Soviet (and National Socialist) past but with their “representation in the culture and in the collective consciousness” (242). Aesthetics has replaced ethics; indeed, postmodernism even appears consciously “immoral” at times through its aestheticization of violence (243). But can we remain content with this finding? Should we not raise the question of the artistic achievements and limitations of these texts? What happens—with historical memory and with the reader—when “truth,” “elucidation,” and “ethics” are suspended as outdated values? What is legitimate, and where is the past being usurped or “cannibalized” (*pace* Ruth Klüger)? Are these the wrong questions? Unfortunately, inspiring as this book is in other ways, it avoids such issues.

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An Empire of Others: Creating Ethnographic Knowledge in Imperial Russia and the USSR. Ed. Roland Cvetkovski and Alexis Hofmeister. Budapest: Central European University Press, 2014. vi, 407 pp. Appendix. Bibliography. Notes. Index. Illustrations. \$75.00, hard bound.

This volume is a worthy contribution to the recent literature on understandings of ethnic diversity within imperial Russia and the Soviet Union. The chapters, written by British, German, and Russian scholars, vary considerably in their content and interpretations but raise important questions and suggest new fields for productive investigation.

The strength of the collection lies mainly in the individual contributions. The overall theoretical framework, laid out in an introductory essay by Roland Cvetkovski, is rather open-ended, leaving the authors ample space to forge ahead in their respective directions. Cvetkovski offers the concept of ethnographic knowledge, defined in rigorously constructivist terms, as the unifying link to hold the volume together. It is clear, however, that the authors’ interests are held by a particular kind of ethnographic knowledge—not just everyday understandings of human diversity, but knowledge validated by the mantle of science. This is not, Cvetkovski asserts, a history of ethnography as such, but the authors do not stray far from its disciplinary boundaries. Alexis Hofmeister, in a second introductory essay, reinforces the orien-

tation toward disciplinary history with a direct comparison to British anthropology aimed at elucidating the distinctiveness of the Russian tradition.

The eleven chapters that follow are grouped into three large sections. The first, titled "Paradigms," engages the frameworks within which ethnographic knowledge was pursued and situates ethnography in relation to associated fields and trends. Alexei Elfimov's very useful article explores the idea of ethnography as a science and its shifting relationship to the social sciences and the humanities. Marina Mogilner looks not so much at ethnography itself but at its scholarly cousin, physical anthropology, discussing how anthropologists defined themselves in opposition to ethnography as practitioners of a more rigorous, objective, and quantitative field centered on the idea of race. Sergei Alymov's and Sergey Abashin's contributions narrow the focus to particular moments in the development of Soviet ethnography. Alymov addresses the relationship between ethnography and Marxism, questioning the widespread perception of a dramatic rupture in the development of ethnography in the late 1920s. Abashin takes us into the post-World War II years with a fascinating account of the writing of the official history of the peoples of Uzbekistan, in which ethnographers played a prominent role.

The second section, titled "Representations," examines modes and media through which ethnographic knowledge was presented to a variety of audiences. Maïke Sach takes up the topic of visual representation up to the late eighteenth century. Concurring with recent scholars who have dubbed ethnographic representations "fictions created in order to construct European identities" (174), Sach explores early cartography, artists' participation in ethnographic expeditions, and ethnographic illustrations in published works, showing how the boundaries of civilization were defined and demarcated through visual imagery. Cvetkovski continues in a similar though somewhat more ambivalent vein in his article about the Russian Ethnographic Museum. Originally envisioned as a microcosm of the empire highlighting the preeminent role of the Russian people, the museum was long delayed in opening, though its original plan was preserved. However, when the public was finally admitted in 1923, the imperial message was practically inaudible. Objects, it seems, do not always cooperate with the narratives imposed on them. Catriona Kelly shifts the focus from objects to people and broadens the scope of representation in her lively chapter on ethnography of childhood. Not only were children, Kelly shows, objects of ethnographic investigation, they were also active participants in the research process, especially in the 1920s, when folklore collection was integrated into school curricula. By the 1930s, however, children had become the audience, as museum displays and folklore specially crafted for young people aimed to inculcate national consciousness and Soviet patriotism.

The final section of the book, titled "Peoples," takes the reader into specific imperial contexts. Sergey Glebov starts with an overview of Siberian ethnography that productively complicates tidy schemes of colonial domination from a monolithic imperial center. The multivalent nature of ethnography is evident as well in Angela Rustemeyer's discussion of Ukrainian folklore, initially a vehicle for the expression of multiple narratives of nationhood that had by the 1930s coalesced into a tool for the expression of sanctioned diversity within the confines of Soviet nationality policy. Christian Dettmering, in his study of nineteenth-century policy toward the Chechens and Ingush, depicts a symbiotic relationship between ethnography and imperial administration. Not only were ethnographic research agendas driven by the needs of the state, ethnographers actively shaped policy, and not, Dettmering implies, in a benevolent direction. It seems the less an ethnic group attracted their attention, as in the case of the Ingush, the better their relations with state authorities. But the power of ethnographic knowledge was not just wielded by the state, as Mikhail Kizilov

shows in his account of the Karaite Jews of Crimea. Seeking to avoid restrictions imposed on Jews, the Karaites, starting in the late eighteenth century, drew on the tools of historical scholarship to construct a separate identity as a nonsemitic people of Turkic origin, even resorting to forgery. The story of the Karaites may be an anomaly in the annals of Jewish history, but it is an all-too-familiar tale in the context of eastern European nationalism, where ethnography served as a tool of nation building and claims to a glorious national past often trumped scholarly scruples.

The diversity of the individual chapters in *Empire of Others* makes it difficult to offer a single overarching assessment. Perhaps the best that can be said is that the volume accurately reflects the range of ideas and approaches evident within the current historiography. For this reason, if nothing else, it is a welcome addition to the literature on the history of Russian ethnography.

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Agitating Images: Photography against History in Indigenous Siberia. By Craig Campbell. First Peoples: New Directions in Indigenous Studies Series. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014. xx, 267 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Photographs. \$81.00, hard bound. \$27.00 paper.

Archives around the world contain photographic collections, but few have received serious attention as objects of study. Craig Campbell takes photographs from the 1920s and '30s preserved on glass plates in the Krasnoiarsk Regional Museum and turns them not into illustrations of a history of indigenous life but into what he terms "agitators": active elements that "undo our meaning-making endeavors" (xiv). Where archives "put boundaries around a subject" (204), archived photographs, by capturing parts of everyday life that do not quite match up with the verbalized descriptions and prescriptions, can "pull out the carpet from underneath the contentment of scholarship" (208).

In order to put images at the center, Campbell gives his book an unusual structure. A brief introduction is followed by a long chapter of 143 pages, which gives a narrative account of Evenki history in the Enisei Basin, from the early Russian fur trade to Soviet attempts to settle the reindeer herders via the establishment of a culture base. Much of the text is based on secondary sources, drawing on the work of Yuri Slezkine, Francine Hirsch, and others. Readers familiar with indigenous Siberian historiography will find little that is new, with the exception of some sections based on written archival documents connected to the work of Innokentii Mikhailovich Suslov. Suslov, the son of an Orthodox missionary, was an early Soviet official in the region who was instrumental in establishing the culture base and collecting the photographs now preserved in the museum. The photographs are presented in this chapter in fragments, extracted from larger images and enlarged to create a close-up effect. Two to four to a page, the fragments are often cropped to yield little information about a subject's location in place and time. According to the author, "The logic of these photographic fragments is to deprive the history of ideological coordinates" (15).

In counterpoint to the familiar history of the Russian and Soviet struggle against backwardness, many fragments present visual signs of hybridity: indigenous children dressed in a mix of homemade and purchased clothing, tin plates and kettles in Evenki camps, medical tools and procedures, and a variety of dwellings ranging from tents to log houses. The conservation and fragility of the photographs is also a theme, with close-ups of signs of water damage and call numbers. None of the fragments