

Celebrity and Glamour in Contemporary Russia: Shocking Chic.
Eds. Helena Goscilo and Vlad Strukov. BASEES/Routledge
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Bibliography. Index. Figures. List of Contributors. Preface.
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Celebrity and Glamour in Contemporary Russia is a timely volume about a highly visible yet under-examined component of post-1991 culture. The two editors, Helena Goscilo and Vlad Strukov, have compiled a set of wide-ranging articles that together comprise a serious contribution to Russian cultural studies. Goscilo brings to this project her substantial expertise in gender and body studies, while Strukov draws on his publications related to film and visual culture. The Introduction opens with a discussion of the "re-branding" of Russia under Vladimir Putin, who has replaced the national humiliation of the Yeltsin years with a false veneer of stability and prosperity (1). Within this context, Goscilo and Strukov note, glamour and celebrity have become part of the country's rhetoric of excess, strikingly evident in Moscow as the center of post-Soviet power and prestige.

The Introduction gives a concise yet theoretically nuanced history of glamour and celebrity in the 1990s-2000s, discussing, among other things, how the new Russian emphases on opulence and crime-oriented virility crushed the already demoralized intelligentsia (12-13). The volume's first section deals with glamour and politics, opening with Goscilo's discussion of Putin's muscular cult of personality. This is the volume's strongest chapter, dissecting how Putin's image--whether on TV, souvenir dolls, or even impregnated in chocolate--signals the mythology of a new Russia buoyed by inflated national pride and petrodollars. The following article deals with Elena Baturina, the wife of former Moscow mayor Yury Luzhkov; Michelle Kuhn sees her as an inspiration for ordinary Russian women despite negative feedback from bloggers (57, 62).

Part two of *Celebrity and Glamour* discusses the phenomenally successful mystery author Boris Akunin (pseudonym of Gregory Chkhartishvili) as discussed by Brian Baer and Nadezhda Korchagina. Tatiana Mikhailova then outlines the prose of the best-known literary embodiment of glamour: Oksana Robski, who personifies the fictional representation of excessive wealth in the public eye. Mikhailova makes the intriguing but contentious argument that Robski is the first Russian author to positively compare individuals with their property, a claim ignoring the cult of things under Soviet rule as examined by Svetlana Boym and Susan Reid (94). The third section examines film, *estrada*, and media, beginning with Stephen Norris's survey of how mega-director Nikita Mikhalkov presents himself as a simultaneously Soviet, pre-

1917, and contemporary celebrity. Oxana Poberejnaia looks at the bizarre neopaganism of Mikhail Zadornov and how he has skillfully exploited public attention. While her contribution is on solid theoretical footing, the structure of her argument needs much greater clarification, e.g. when she links Zardonov's paganism to the notoriously Orthodox Slavophile movement (131). The following chapter, Strukov's discussion of internet celebrities, is somewhat scattered, although this is inevitable given the multitude of topics covered (glamour in on-line advertising, films, blogs, and the cult meme *Preved, Medved*).

The volume's fourth cluster focuses on gender. Olga Partan explores the bonds between the celebrity of pop queen Alla Pugacheva and her daughter, singer Kristina Orbakaite. The following chapter delves into the campy cross-dressing of the star Verka Serdiuchka, the better-known alter ego of Russian-speaking Ukrainian personality Andrei Danilko. Jeremy Morris limns the (often hilarious) depths of gendered, political, and cultural transgression embodied in this anti-glamour diva. The final section of the volume examines two aspects of what it identifies as "Moscow snobbery": prolific yet misguided sculptor Zurab Tsereteli and the capital's new generation of exclusive restaurants (218). Goscilo's withering analysis of Tsereteli reveals how this celebrity has become, despite his notoriously ugly artworks, a highly visible figure thanks to political patronage. Darra Goldstein's overview of Moscow haute cuisine frames this phenomenon within a brief cultural history of dining in Russia, long her area of research.

Each article concludes with endnotes and a bibliography. The text is clean and only occasionally marred by inconsistencies in capitalization between chapters; a useful index is at the end of the volume. A number of truly memorable images add to *Celebrity and Glamour in Contemporary Russia*: aside from the canonical shirtless Putin, there are several dozen photographs and screenshots, ranging from Tsereteli's bronze statue of Luzhkov to an unforgettable shot of Verka Serdiuchka during the Eurovision contest. The volume is united by a common adherence to Western theoretical underpinnings in celebrity and glamour studies (Chris Rojek's foundational work on celebrity, Daniel Boorstin's discussion of "pseudo-events" as touchstones for media attention). *Celebrity and Glamour in Contemporary Russia* is, as the editors admit, necessarily selective as it tries to cover a glut of image-conscious stars and scandal-mongers. Nonetheless, Goscilo, Strukov, and the book's contributors have produced a key introduction to a part of culture too long ignored by Slavic studies.