

from the sale of grains. Gustafson applauds what he calls a remarkable turnaround in Russian agriculture inspired by state policies that subsidized and supported technology, seeds, and chemicals for large industrial farming. Oligarchs close to the Putin regime made fortunes in agro-holdings. Yet, like many places around the world, Russia's existing agricultural territories are not being replenished, and the farms will suffer from more drought and more floods, more warm spells in winter and cold snaps in spring and fall, all of which will make conventional farming precarious. Seventy percent of Russian territory is permafrost which is thawing at accelerating rates, leaving behind large craters of sunken earth. This land presents an unstable foundation on which to build infrastructure or new agricultural terrain. Permafrost soils are made up of ice, rock, and sand, not good for agriculture.

With fossil fuels on the wane, grain sales promise to hold up the Russian economy and thus the present Russian government. Gustafson went to print with *Klimat* before the war in Ukraine, but its major message is prescient. After stalling on taking preparatory measures to deal with climate change, Russian leaders panicked in February 2022. Ukraine offers salvation in the form of the sunny wealth of the eastern Ukrainian breadbasket. With help from Ukraine's fields of grain and its nitrogen fertilizer industries, Russia's portfolio looks much better. We are witnessing one of what will be probably many climate wars over the rapidly shifting landscapes of security and wealth.

KATE BROWN

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Men out of Focus: The Soviet Masculinity Crisis in the Long Sixties. By Marko Dumančić. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2021. xvi, 322 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations. Photographs. \$75.00, hard bound.
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Marko Dumančić's monograph arrives at a most timely moment, given the almost exclusive attention in recent decades afforded to femininity and the portrayal of women in Soviet culture, as well as Vladimir Putin's machismo on show for the world to view in Ukraine in 2022. The book's range is indeed impressive, with investigations of Soviet visual culture that include film, TV, and the popular press. Pride of place (for this reviewer) goes to the many reproductions of satirical cartoons from the USSR's most prominent and popular humorous magazine, *Krokodil*. The author is to be congratulated also for the sheer range of his sources, from literary texts to the cultural media, from discussions of films to their reception by the Party ideologues and the public, and from academic studies to archival and documentary materials. The book also contains almost eighty illustrations, either stills from films or reproductions of *Krokodil* cartoons, some of them very funny indeed.

Men out of Focus is structured around six chapters: Stalinist masculinity (the "positive hero"), two chapters that explore presentations of fatherhood, "the trouble with women," and the portrayal of scientists, all of them male, of course. The final chapter provides an intriguing and innovative juxtaposition and comparative analysis of four Soviet films from the 1950s and 1960s, and films investigating similar themes and motifs from Poland, the United Kingdom, Italy, and Czechoslovakia, all of whom had their own "New Waves" in these years.

It is also to Professor Dumančić's great credit that he has unearthed a raft of documents reflecting the official Soviet and public perception of the "masculinity crisis" in these years, and he engages in extended and focused analysis of some little-known

films, such as Grigorii Chukhrai's *Clear Skies* of 1961, Genrikh Oganessian's *Three Plus Two* of 1963, and Sergei Mikaelian's *Into the Storm* of 1965. The juxtaposition of films and their reception, against the background of public discussion of the issues involved (for instance, weak husbands and their grasping materialistic wives) is both fascinating and incisively analyzed.

The ultimate value of the book's thesis, often argued and demonstrated with painstaking attention to the myriad of sources, is its coupling of the public debate on masculinity with the Party's shifting ideological priorities, as the "soft" masculinity reflected in Nikita Khrushchev's Thaw is replaced by the return to the "hard" man under Leonid Brezhnev and the partial rehabilitation of Iosif Stalin. The detailed discussion of the resourceful Soviet spy *Shtirlits* (Stierlitz), who infiltrates the Nazi high command in the 1973 TV blockbuster *The Seventeen Moments of Spring*, is germane to this narrative, and analyzed in detail here.

On the negative side (and these are more quibbles than serious reservations), the book would have benefited from closer editing, with many misprints and some problems with English syntax and grammar, and the argument does tend to be repetitive in some places. The Index is just about adequate but not very helpful. Also, the "long sixties" is itself a problematic formulation, as the author concentrates his argument on the years 1953–1968 (the discussion of *The Seventeen Moments of Spring* notwithstanding), so the "extended Thaw" may have been more appropriate.

The book closes with a brief statement on Vladimir Putin's "remasculinization of the post-Soviet cultural space" that refers back to the super-hero of Stalinist ideology, with the speculation that in the 1960s the "hypermasculine myths eventually give way to alternative models of masculinity" (263). The 2022 war in Ukraine should provide us with these alternatives, or show that these myths are doomed to self-destruct.

DAVID GILLESPIE
Moscow City University

The Life Cycle of Russian Things: From Fish Guts to Fabergé, 1600-Present. Ed. Matthew P. Romaniello, Alison K. Smith, and Tricia Starks. London: Bloomsbury Academic Publishing, 2022. xii, 248 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations. Photographs. Maps. \$115.00, hard bound.

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Like many conference-based anthologies, this volume's diversity of topics represents its charm as well as its potential weakness. Although each chapter is short (eleven to fifteen pages), several go into remarkable detail about topics such as rendering fish guts into isinglass, or the local characteristics of limestone. Not all readers will wish for this level of detail on every topic; therein lies the potential weakness. Yet many will find themselves unexpectedly intrigued by a fresh look at materials such as limestone that are usually "invisible in their ubiquity," and yet "transform the world around them" (Alison Smith, 35), or by the "thick" meanings of textiles, which Katherine Pickering Antonova reminds us were "so well understood" before industrialization that "describing the technical details of their production or function was like describing breathing" (88).

The purpose of this anthology is to expand notions of material culture to encompass all stages of objects, from conceptualization to materialization, from use to disuse or preservation in memory or exhibit. Each stage changes cultural value, perception, and meaning. The focus on objects' life cycles undergirds the book's structure, with chapters divided into "Transforming," "Making," "Touching," and "Preserving Things."