

Title: “The Multitude of Eyes”: Metarealism of Vision in Olga Sedakova’s “The Chinese Journey”

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Abstract:

Olga Sedakova is acknowledged as one of the key figures in contemporary Russian poetry – and one whose work is notoriously difficult to interpret. The problem lies in multivalence of her poetry, which simultaneously embraces simplicity and complexity, abstraction and specificity, lucidity and obscurity, and detachment and engagement. It can be argued that the source of this quality is the poet’s metarealistic vision: a multi-faceted way of seeing things without any discrepancy between reality and its counterparts. Things can be both true and illusory. Based on the material of the 1986 poetic cycle “The Chinese Journey,” this paper examines the way Sedakova envisions multiple worlds from various points of view, resulting in a splintering of her position between self and others; between past, present and future; between Russia and China; and between Christianity and Taoism. Ultimately, the paper shows how the existence of multiple points of view related to identity, space, and time, creates the unique polyphonic quality of the text open to variety of interpretations.