

Title: Illuminating Consciousness: Pasternak's Poetics of Photography
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This paper presents research from a larger project that examines the influence of photography on the writing of several major twentieth century Russian poets. I draw on materials from the Pasternak family archive and other sources to demonstrate how Boris Pasternak's interest in photographic technology shaped the aesthetics of his early poetry and set the stage for later developments in his work. It is not by accident that Marina Tsvetaeva invoked the word "svetopis" in her essay devoted to one of Pasternak's most important collections, *My Sister—Life*. Indeed, the collection is saturated with images of flashbulbs, fixing solution and animated photographic portraits. I argue in this paper that the photopoetics employed in these early works establish aesthetic principles that resonate with Pasternak's philosophy of history as well as his later works on religious themes. Pasternak harnesses poetic language to portray the world as the camera sees it in infinitely precise detail, and with a sharpness of vision that strives to capture the world in ways that often elude the human eye. What distinguishes Pasternak's photopoetics from those of the other poets I study is that, rather than focusing on tangible, printed photographs, he concentrates on aspects of the photographic process and its technology. Frozen images of the past are of secondary interest in Pasternak's artistic world; instead, his poetics concentrate on light, movement and the creation of a new kind of vision, one that melds with the natural world, serves to illuminate consciousness and places *tvorchestvo* side-by-side with *chudotvorchestvo*. Drawing on Olga Hasty and Olga Sedakova's recent writing on Goethe's influence on Pasternak, I also note connections between Pasternak's Goethean aesthetics and the use of photographic motifs in his poetic world.

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