



Brodsky Abroad: Empire, Tourism, Nostalgia

Sanna Turoma

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Expelled from the Soviet Union in 1972 and honored with the Nobel Prize fifteen years later, poet Joseph Brodsky in many ways fit the grand tradition of exiled writer. But Brodsky's years of exile did not render him immobile: though he never returned to his beloved Leningrad, he was free to travel the world and write about it. In *Brodsky Abroad*, Sanna Turoma discusses Brodsky's poems and essays about Mexico, Brazil, Turkey, and Venice. Challenging traditional conceptions behind Brodsky's status as a leading émigré poet and major descendant of Russian and Euro-American modernism, she relocates the analysis of his travel texts in the diverse context of contemporary travel and its critique. Turoma views Brodsky's travel writing as a response not only to his exile but also to the postmodern and postcolonial landscape that initially shaped the writing of these texts.

In his Latin American encounters, Brodsky exhibits disdain for third-world politics and invokes the elegiac genre to reject Mexico's postcolonial reality and to ironically embrace the romanticism of an earlier Russian and European imperial age. In an essay on Istanbul he assumes Russia's ambiguous position between East and West as his own to negotiate a distinct, and controversial, interpretation of Orientalism. And, Venice, the emblematic tourist city, becomes the site for a reinvention of his lyric self as more fluid, hybrid, and cosmopolitan.

Brodsky Abroad reveals the poet's previously uncharted trajectory from alienated dissident to celebrated man of letters and offers new perspectives on the geopolitical, philosophical, and linguistic premises of his poetic imagination.

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