

Joanne Shelton: Twentieth-century Russian poets in the post-Soviet school curriculum

This paper will explore changes that have taken place in the Russian school literature curriculum between 1991 and 2008. With a particular focus on school textbooks, this paper will seek to identify which twentieth-century poets have become central to the curriculum and which have been relegated in importance or omitted entirely from the school programme of study. It will examine how the treatment of twentieth-century poets has altered since the collapse of the USSR and it will evaluate the different ways in which their poetry is discussed in the Russian school classroom. Furthermore, this paper will highlight differences in the way that state-approved textbooks present the poets and poetry of the twentieth century compared with the methods used in textbooks that have not received official endorsement from the Ministry of Education. The paper will conclude by offering some thoughts on the ideas the state may be hoping to promote by its selection and discussion of certain poets and poems and to what extent these educational aims are different from those in the late Soviet period.