The world is not treated with rose-colored glasses. The author acknowledges the problems of corruption that permeate the system as she writes, based on the views of focus groups: "There was literally no element of Russian institutional life that they did not view as being susceptible to corruption" (121). Citizens took for granted that corruption was endemic both in the medical profession and in insurance companies, key points of interaction for citizens. Yet citizens' attitudes towards corruption are a weak predictor of whether they will use the courts to address their problems (49).

The legal world that Hendley describes is one far removed from the legal treatment of political opponents or wealthy businessmen who are subject to corporate raids. Those individuals cannot expect justice and require extensive hours of highly-paid legal assistance. But the individuals that Kathryn Hendley describes live very different lives where incomes are limited, individuals still inhabit their apartments from the Soviet era, and private enterprise has left them behind. They represent a large share of the current Russian population.

Hendley finds important differences among those using the courts. Women were "almost 50 percent more likely to have initiated a claim in court than men" (54). Those who are employed are also more likely to use the courts. This is not an expected result because of the time-consuming efforts required to obtain court-needed documents. Nor is their greater use of courts explained by their larger personal assets because, as the author points out, the costs of litigation in Russia are low. Economic stability, she suggests, is a predictor of one's reliance upon the legal system. Another important determinant of whether the courts are used is age. Those most ready to turn to the courts are the older generation, whereas younger people, those born after 1988, are least likely.

The author humanizes the interactions of citizens and the legal process by following actual cases that reveal the reality of daily life at the low end of the legal spectrum. Some pensioners, with little to fill their daily lives, seek encounters with state lawyers more for the interactions than the need to resolve some pressing problem. But for many others, the courts perform more than a social function. She gives examples of how leaks in apartments and the resulting damage can be resolved and provides illustrations of successfully-negotiated settlements of automobile accident claims, although some resolutions are clearly disadvantageous to less sophisticated victims.

Hendley is very careful not to treat the Russian legal experience as some exotic environment removed from a reality known to many of her western readers. Using a wide range of western sociology of law and society literature, she helps us understand that Russian lawyers are working in a context that shares features common with our system. Her well-written book will be accessible and useful not just to specialists of Russia and Russian law, but to a larger community of research specialists. Its nuanced understanding of Russia today is a much-needed antidote to a lot of what we are exposed to in the contemporary popular press.

Louise Shelley
George Mason University

Waiting at the Prison Gate: Women, Identity and the Russian Penal System. By Judith Pallot and Elena Katz. London: I. B. Tauris, 2017. xx, 252 pp. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Photographs. Maps. $100.00, hard bound.

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This new study by Judith Pallot and Elena Katz examines the effects of the Russian Federation's penal system on female relatives of male prisoners. The source

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material consists of qualitative interviews conducted in various cities in the Russian Federation, as well as postings in online forums. The authors relate this material to two historical stereotypes: the Decembrist wives, who followed their husbands into exile for participating in the 1825 Decembrist Uprising, and the nurturing and self-sacrificing maternal figure embodied by *matreshka* nesting dolls. The authors argue that the *dekabristka* and *matreshka* figures are "deeply embedded in Russian culture" and that "their strong association with prison . . . is indicative of the prominent role that penality has played in shaping gender identities in Russia" (xi). Often invoked to give meaning to suffering and to justify standing by a man with a prison sentence, the *dekabristka* and *matreshka* ideals comprise a background against which the experiences of female relatives of prisoners are imagined, expressed, and understood.

The opening chapter traces the trope of the Decembrist wife in Russian culture, from the nineteenth century through the Stalinist era to the present day. The authors show how the image of the *dekabristka* has been desacralized during the post-Communist period. Yet, numerous literary depictions and more recently television series attest to its enduring appeal. The authors attribute this to two factors: 1) the longevity of traditional gender stereotypes, according to which women are believed to be fulfilled by self-sacrifice and devotion to men, and 2) the comparatively high level of incarceration in Russia, "where one in five families have, or have had, a family member in jail" (17).

The subsequent chapters focus on different types of relationships with prisoners. Wives and girlfriends are divided into three subgroups: the wives/partners of ordinary prisoners; "social media wives" (*zaochnitsi*), whose relationships began while the man was in jail; and wives/partners of high-ranking men within the "thieves-in-law" prison subculture. Further chapters consider the experiences of mothers, daughters, and other female relatives (sisters and mothers-in-law). The final chapter considers the plight of political prisoners' families, whom the authors view as "the true heirs to the *dekabristki*" (174), exemplified here by the highly-publicized cases of Igor Sutyagin and Aleksei Kozlov.

The interviews are recounted in the words of the authors, with the inclusion of brief, direct quotes. Topics include the circumstances of arrest; the history of the relationship with the prisoner and the motivations and means for maintaining it; and the difficulties experienced by the female relative as a consequence of her "secondary prisonisation" (xix). As the interviews show, women who seek to maintain relationships with prisoners face considerable economic and social obstacles, often exacerbated by the long-held practice in Russia of sending prisoners to remote regions. The study focuses on the respondents' practical and discursive strategies for negotiating these challenges, and how these influence their identity construction. Throughout, the authors provide relevant historical and sociological backgrounds on the prison subculture, political imprisonment, and the institutional structure of the Russian prison system. The authors also relate their findings to sociological research on western prisons.

Despite differences among the various subgroups examined here, a common picture emerges of inadequate societal support for prisoners' families, who suffer economically, socially, and psychologically as a result of the incarceration of a relative. Many respondents also express a distrust of the criminal justice system and describe the humiliating treatment and harassment they have been subjected to by prison authorities and police. In the words of the human rights activist Olga Romanova, interviewed for this study: "Prison is a leveler" (202).

Occasional references to the women interviewed in the study as "twenty-first-century *dekabristki*" (16) who "perform the *dekabristka* role" (57) have the effect of blurring the distinction between stereotypical representations and the experiences

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of real women. While cultural representations may reflect and influence views of imprisonment, the responses of individual women often contradict traditional gender roles. As the authors observe in the epilogue, these women "have nuanced and complex relationships with the person in jail, other family members, society at large, and the institution of the prison" (201). The text also suffers from numerous stylistic and typographical errors, which detract from its valuable content. These points notwithstanding, this interesting study offers a multifaceted picture of the far-reaching consequences of the Russian Federation's inhumane prison system.

Julie Hansen
Uppsala University

Disrupted Idylls: Nature, Equality, and the Feminine in Sentimentalist Russian Women's Writing (Mariia Pospelova, Mariia Bolotnikova, and Anna Naumova). By Ursula Stohler. Trans. Emily Lygo. Slavische Literaturen: Texte und Abhandlungen 47. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Academic Research, 2016. 357 pp. Appendix. Bibliography. Index. $90.00, hard bound.
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This book examines Sentimentalism as a contradictory movement that, under the influence of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, limited women to the domestic, private sphere at the same time as women could develop "their" sphere as women, wives, and mothers into new areas of public, moral agency as published writers. This well-worn approach to women writers in Europe and America, by for example Jane Tompkins (1985), reframes national canons to include women. Building on Michelle Lamarche Marrese's work (2002), Ursula Stohler notes that unlike women elsewhere, Russian noblewomen had legal privileges that included ownership of land and serfs. Yet, they negotiated new cultural, moral norms that focused on their virtue and love, which were attractive, yet threatened to restrict their access to the public sphere (37).

With examples from French and English women's poetry, Stohler examines the different careers of three writers for their accommodations and challenges to Sentimental norms for women in both their poetry and its circulation and publication. In an appendix that is a real contribution to the field and a tribute to the seriousness of this series, Stohler includes eighteen excellent translations that aim for meaning, with Russian texts of the poems she analyzes. Especially the eleven poems by Anna Naumova complement Amanda Ewington's recent volume (2014) of fifty poems by seventeen women (but not Naumova) with English translations.

The first half of the book is diffusely argued around Rousseau's influence, in particular *Émile*'s (1762) separate, unequal education for Sophie in virtue and obedience as wife and mother. Under the weight of a dissertation that strikes out into relatively new territory in Russian literature, Stohler ventures widely to reinvent the wheel and set up such related terms as nature, equality, public and private spheres, love, and virtue under the umbrella of a limited, literary view of Sentimentalism, which in fact engaged the greatest minds of the eighteenth century. Stohler does not question Rousseau's importance in an old European debate about women that long preceded him and continued after him (see Karen Offen's *European Feminisms, 1700–1950: A Political History*, 2000), and in Russia, which Thomas Barran's study (2002) shows was equivocal over Rousseau. The second chapter examines equality for women and serfs in the Russian context. There is an irony in representing noblewomen, who might own serfs, as Mariia Bolotnikova and Naumova's families probably did, as generic "women" who are, with serfs, oppressed. Lastly, Stohler summarizes how

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