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Re-Writing the Tunguska Event: The icy imagination of Vladimir Sorokin and Jacek Dukaj

The Tunguska event of 1908 in central Siberia has provoked and inspired numerous theories and speculations. And it has had a powerful impact on the literary imagination. Two recent examples from Russia and Poland, the novels *Ljud* by Vladimir Sorokin (*1955) from 2002, the first volume of his Ice Trilogy, as well as *Lód* by the SF writer Jacek Dukaj (*1974) from 2007, revolve around the bright crystalline and the dark and cold side of the Tunguskian ice. While Sorokin's scenario is a New Age parody set in today's Moscow about an esoteric community of fair-haired and blue-eyed brothers and sisters whose mission is to find their still hidden equals, and to "awaken" their hearts by striking their chests with crude hammers made of cosmic ice, Dukaj has created an alternate ("frozen") history of Russia during the 1920s when the mysterious Ice which has put Siberia under constant cold and darkness started expanding westwards, reaching Warsaw, accompanied by creatures known as "lutes" that look like angels made of ice, transmuting iron into a new material, and effecting human psychology. Drawing from these two Ice-thrillers, the paper particularly discusses the literary techniques of transformation as freezing resp. preservation and resurrection resp. renewal. They are the texts' gravitation points from which not only the tension of the plots develops but also their poetics of memory and archiving.