

trickster and oscillates between the communism of the past and the nationalism of the present. As in Lebedev's case, the result is a grotesque and satirical structure of the text.

Heinritz reads Svetlana Aleksievich's collage of voices, which she published under the title *Vremia sekond khend*, as an example of a documentary representation of communism. Heinritz is aware of Aleksievich's stylistic and rhetorical work on her original sources. However, she could have reflected more intensely on the effect that such emendations have on the documentary character of the presented source material. Ilja Trojanow pursues a different goal in his novel *Macht und Widerstand*. He constructs a fictional case of the Bulgarian secret police under communist rule. In Heinritz' interpretation, Trojanow makes a moral example and tries to define a correct way to come to terms with the Bulgarian communist past.

Paul Greveillac depicts the clash between the private adventures of his hero and a historiographic rendition of the communist past in his *Les âmes rouges*. In Heinritz's view, the effect of this gap oscillates between the documentary and the satirical. Finally, Heinritz analyzes Viktor Erofeev's provocative novel *Khoroshii Stalin*, which unearths the luxurious life of the privileged elite in the Soviet era. However, she pays too little attention to the strong autobiographical underpinnings of this text.

The merit of Heinritz's book lies in the detailed case studies. The added value of the comparison is of limited value. The book is not free from repetitions and would have benefitted if there was less theoretical jargon.

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***Queer Transgressions in Twentieth-Century Polish Fiction: Gender, Nation, Politics.*** By Jack J. B. Hutchens. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2020. v, 143 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$39.99, paper.  
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*Queer Transgressions in Twentieth-Century Polish Fiction: Gender, Nation, Politics* (2020) is an important and timely text that responds to the rise of right-wing populist governments' crackdown on queer existence by focusing on literature as a site of political and imaginative possibility. Drawing on Polish queer, feminist, and literary studies in combination with queer theory more broadly, Jack Hutchens's monograph "interfere[s] in the cultural life of Poland," considering queer and national transgressions as necessarily interconnected, and challenging the heteronormativity of nation building (123). In Poland, as well as in many other nation-states where right-wing governments hold political if not cultural sway, queer and trans people—along with religious, ethnic, and racialized minorities—are often held to be trespassing on citizenship and despised for how they trouble the very boundaries of nationality, being met with homophobia and transphobia. Hutchens's important contribution is to think deeply, carefully, and intimately about how national boundary-making and heteronormativity are tied together in the context of Poland through turning to twentieth-century Polish fiction. Additionally, Hutchens challenges the canon of Polish literature by highlighting the work of Polish queer and queer-adjacent writers who have questioned and troubled the terms of Polishness as it adheres to heteronormativity, with a special focus on autofiction as a genre that fuses fiction and autobiography.

Beginning with his introduction, Hutchens makes clear that studying queer Polish literature is a political undertaking, arguing that "repressing non-normative sexualities is one of the cornerstones of modern nation building" and that studying

queer literatures in a context affixed to narrow visions of nationalism “challenge[s] the proliferation of nationalism and homophobia” (12, 1). The introduction, as well as the book more broadly, is particularly useful for how it links histories of Polish nation-building rooted in narratives of messianic suffering and struggle with the enforcement of rigid gender roles and “Polish heteronormativity” (7). Further, Hutchens puts forward a transgressive reading practice to study the “convergence between national and gender identities” (7) and to pry apart the ways narrow gendered possibilities are fused with ways of being Polish, including through enforced heterosexuality.

Hutchens’s chapters undertake close readings of a variety of fiction and autofiction texts, including: in the first chapter, Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz’s novella *Nauczyciel* (The Teacher) from 1936 and Witold Gombrowicz’s novel *TransAtlantyck* (1953); in the second chapter, three novels by Julian Strykowski (1974, 1982, 1993); in the third chapter, several works by Marian Pankowski with a focus on the novel *Rudolf* (1980); and in the fourth, Olga Tokarczuk’s earlier work comprising the three novels of the “Silesian Trilogy” (1995, 1998, 2004). In the epilogue, Hutchens also discusses why he was not able to pursue a chapter on Jerzy Nasierowski, due to the difficulty of undertaking research on him from outside of Poland. The earlier chapters explore the panic and silence around queer possibilities and reflect how nationalist ideals rooted in Polish Romanticism encouraged homosocial bonding between cisgender men on narrow terms aimed toward defending and recuperating the sovereignty of the nation-state, warding off sexually-based homosociality between men as destabilizing to the Polish nation. The latter chapters explore how writers braved narrow understandings of nation, gender, and sexuality to transgress borders, articulate “bodily joy and pleasure,” and envision Polish queer subjectivities (88). While each chapter offers a set of important contributions in its own right that deserve to be widely read, taught, and analyzed, together the chapters also make, in my reading, key contributions.

The chapters renegotiate the Polish canon by both emphasizing sometimes lesser-known queer texts as well as by demonstrating how very central queer and transgressive writing is to Polish literatures. Here, Hutchens’s carefully selected texts and authors represent a robust and multifaceted sense of Polishness and queerness including diasporic (Gombrowicz), Jewish (Strykowski), and various political standpoints such as socialist and feminist (Iwaszkiewicz, Strykowski, Pankowski, Tokarczuk)—“illustrating the dissident power of queer transgressive literature” (51). Through this, Hutchens challenges “a unitary, homogenous mode of identity formation” as it is linked to Polish nationalism (122). Here I will say that I do wish that in this spirit Hutchens had included more texts by women (rather than focusing primarily on cisgender male authors in his chapters), as well as more secondary literary theoretical work from postcolonial, transnational, and decolonial feminist and queer studies, especially by Black, Indigenous, and Of Color writers. All the same, this is not to say that Hutchens’s book is not intricately feminist and invested in studying the complexities of masculinities in dialogue with patriarchal nationalisms—which it is.

Hutchens reads Polish twentieth-century fiction through an interest in the convergence of nation and sexuality, as well as nation and gender. This is especially useful not only to the study of Polish literatures, and the study of nation-formation in dialogue with gender and sexuality, but also to honing a deeper understanding of how Polish values, so deeply ingrained as a project of Polish sovereignty, can and have been limiting and constraining to how gender and sexuality are and can be lived. In this sense, reading texts through Hutchens’s transgressive reading practice allows for a vibrant multifaceted set of possibilities to emerge around how Polish forms of gender and sexuality can be lived, written about, and imagined today.

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