

realms of communication—and create new forms that would integrate different genres (Science Fiction, Pornography, and Westerns) into the literary discourse. Unfortunately, Thaidigsmann's study lacks any discussion of such related phenomena and, hence, a broader contextualization of cross writing. That said, her book is nevertheless a profound and pioneering study on crossover fiction in Polish literature and will surely instigate further research.

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Postkommunistische Schreibweisen: Formen der Darstellung des Kommunismus in Romanen zu Beginn des 21. Jahrhunderts. By Alena Heinritz. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2021. 391 pp. Bibliography. €54.00, hard bound. doi: 10.1017/slr.2023.312

Alena Heinritz's book is a modified version of her PhD thesis at the University of Graz. She analyzes different modes of the representation of communism in postcommunist novels at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Her choice of texts is rather heterogeneous and surprising. She deals with Ol'ga Slavnikova's *2017*, Sergei Lebedev's *Predel zabveniia*, Jáchim Topol's *Kloktat dehet*, Svetlana Aleksievich's *Vremia sekund khend*, Ilja Trojanow's *Macht und Widerstand*, Paul Greveillac's *Les âmes rouges* and finally with Viktor Erofeev's *Khoroshii Stalin*. It seems that maximal difference in genre, language, and cultural context was the most important criterion of selection for Heinritz. Such a methodological procedure may have its merits, but in Heinritz's case, the material just seems to be too different in terms of genre, literary style, and political situation. The cultural contexts in Russia, Belarus, the Czech Republic, Germany, and France are very diverse. Moreover, the communist past has quite different intensities of presence in all these cultures. To complicate things further, Ilja Trojanow is of Bulgarian descent, grew up in Kenya, attended German language schools, and writes in German. Heinritz cares little about the political, social, and cultural framework of her source material. She focuses exclusively on the literary level of the texts. That would have been justified if she had only scrutinized novels from one single cultural context. The comparability of the mentioned novels, however, needs to take into account the general framework. For Heinritz's topic, especially the very different debates about lustration in these countries, should have been addressed.

Heinritz begins her book with a good presentation of theoretical approaches. She highlights the notion of the "postcommunist situation" that defines the conceptualization of communism in a given national context. In the next step, she gives an apt description of three modes of literary representation: the grotesque, the documentary, and the satirical. In all three cases, she displays a sound command of the existing research literature and successfully embeds her own approach into the state of the art.

The main part of the book, which constitutes almost half of the written text, is dedicated to the seven case studies. Heinritz classifies Slavnikova's *2017* as a mixture of the grotesque and the satirical. She convincingly argues that the genre of utopia (Slavnikova's book was written in 2006) may lead to this amalgam of non-realistic scripts. The main topic of the novel is the "strong state" that holds a strong grip on Russian society.

Heinritz' second example is Sergei Lebedev's *Predel zabveniia*. She points to the central role of the narrator, who serves as a kind of a linchpin between present and past. The clash between these two levels of time creates a grotesque situation. She characterizes Topol's novel *Kloktat dehet* as a piqueresque novel. The main hero is a

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