

Wolfgang Kasack. *Die russische Schriftsteller—Emigration im 20. Jahrhundert: Beiträge zur Geschichte, den Autoren und ihren Werken*. München: Verlag Otto Sagner in Kommission, 1996. 360 pp. DM 58,- (paper).

As the Iron Curtain which separated Soviet literature from Russian literature and writers abroad recedes in our memories, it is timely and appropriate that one of the first-hand witnesses of the figures of those times recollects and re-collects his articles that marked those momentous years when Russian literature was a vital and essential aspect of cultural history. Professor Kasack has documented Russian literature in this century with ever increasing scope, culminating in his indispensable *Lexikon der russischen Literatur des 20. Jahrhunderts. Vom Beginn des Jahrhunderts bis zum Ende der Sowjetära* (München, 1992). He has also authored hundreds of reviews and articles and is perhaps the foremost popularizer of Russian literature for the German speaking world. As a scholar, meticulous and relentless, he is wonderfully accessible to the educated reader whose own grasp of Russia and its literature is not necessarily that of the specialist. How fortunate the Germans have been for the last thirty years!

Kasack's most recent collection of works written from 1972 to 1996 breaks down into two parts. In the first he reviews in a series of articles the emigration in general, then the so-called "Third Wave," with special attention to the role played by Russian writers in exile in Germany. As well as documenting the emigrations, Kasack has kept a closer eye than many on the return to Russia of Aksionov and others. With the break-up of the Soviet Union, Kasack questioned many of the key figures to determine if and how the "emigration" had met its end. Other articles recall for us the founding of the journal *Kontinent* and how Russians themselves have evaluated their "problem of emigration." In over a half dozen reviews Kasack highlights some of the leading contributions to our understanding of Russian writing outside of Russia.

In part two there are ninety reviews, ranging from a single page to several where in alphabetical order Kasack gathers his thoughts on Russian writers from Andrei Amalrik to Marina Tsvetaeva. In the encyclopedic nature of the work one quickly forgets that the impetus for most articles was the appearance in German of a translation of some Russian work, or the arrival in Germany or the West of one more Russian writer. Thus there are gaps, but no claim to completeness is made. Yet the picture which emerges is one of depth and breadth—a valuable summation of the dark days of Russian literature in the seventies and early eighties for future generations of scholars and readers. For Kasack the emigration and its literature is a bridge now restored between two cultures. His own careful documentation of that period is equally a bridge across time and space, of faces now almost forgotten.

Wolfgang Kasack has a passion for precision. As the recipient of a number of his requests and beneficiary of his hospitality, I know how relentlessly he pursues the facts and his abiding interest in remaining current. He has carefully reviewed his articles for this collection and when appropriate he has updated the information just prior to publication. So we learn that Vera Lourie is alive and well in Berlin and the bibliography of Wladimir Lindenberg is updated through 1995. As we lose more and more of these, such as Lev Kopelev, the significance of Kasack's effort will only grow.

The original reviews were intended for a general German reading public—collected, they provide a valuable resource for readers and scholars alike. The articles on emigration

apparatus, Siniavskii has continued to publish many of his works under the Tertz pseudonym. What has become increasingly clear is that for Siniavskii, Tertz is much more than a pseudonym, but is in fact a pseudopersona, whose creation was motivated only in part by the exigencies of Soviet repression. Catherine Theimer Nepomnyashchy's book, *Abram Tertz and the Poetics of Crime*, is a thoughtful and exhaustive exploration of the diverse challenges to authority represented by the various works included in Tertz's corpus.

Nepomnyashchy's study is organized chronologically, beginning with discussion of *What is Socialist Realism* (Chto takoe sotsialisticheskii realizm, 1960) and *The Trial Begins* (Sud idet, 1960) and ending with consideration of the novella *Little Tsores* (Kroshka Tsores, 1980) and the novel and memoir *Good Night* (Spokoinoi nochi, 1984). Throughout Nepomnyashchy emphasizes the dynamics of Siniavskii's assault on the would-be hegemony of Socialist Realism over Soviet literature and, more broadly, the writer's conception of authentic literature as crime, as a continual struggle against the confining influence of convention and authority, be it linguistic, political, or metaphysical. In Tertz's more recent writings, this challenge has often expressed itself in an attack on cultural canonization, for example, the stereotyped views of Alexander Pushkin that have long dominated Russian intellectual apprehension of the achievement of an acknowledged genius. In *Good Night*, a retrospective account of Siniavskii's adoption of the Tertz persona, the moral resonance of a writer's struggle against authority, of the desirable independence of art, is examined.

Nepomnyashchy's analyses of Tertz's individual works are both comprehensive and illuminating. The writer's ironic realization of biblical figurae in stories like "You and I" (Ty i ia) and "Graphomaniacs" (Grafomany); his depiction of the genesis and destructive force of literalized metaphor, which occurs in the repressive absence of communication, in works like "Icy Weather" (*Golleditsa*) and *Liubimov*; the multiple implications of sexuality for human relations explored in the generically unconventional *Thoughts Unawares* (Mysli vrasplokh)—all of these subjects are treated with a wealth of detail and insight. One of the most impressive sections of the book is that devoted to Tertz's discussion of Pushkin; here Nepomnyashchy clearly outlines both why *Strolls with Pushkin* (Progulki s Pushkinym) was construed as so offensive by conservative Russian readers and how Tertz's idiosyncratic appreciation of Pushkin contributes to an understanding of the poet's aesthetics. At the end of Nepomnyashchy's meticulous study one misses an equally thorough conclusion giving greater attention to longterm concerns and questions present throughout Tertz's corpus. This criticism aside, however, *Abram Tertz and the Poetics of Crime* provides us with the best examination to date of the creative world of an extraordinary persona.

and those who have followed it offer a starting point for all who would embark on these studies. More important is the gallery of Russian figures often first introduced to Germany by Kasack's own reviews. Here are the major figures Aksionov, Kopelev, Siniavskii, Solzhenitsin and Voinovich, but here too are those who might otherwise remain just footnotes to Russian literature of the twentieth century: Olga Anstei, Wladimir Lindenberg and Vera Lourie.

Kasack is generous in acknowledging his own debt to other scholars, and in his treatment of writers and critics. He, like them, affirms life. Russian literature for him is personal and he can be passionate, as in his defense of Solzhenitsin (see pp. 280-81). Rarely does he criticize, the one notable exception is his opinion of Siniavskii's *Progulki s Pushkinym*. While this book is not only for specialists, who else will preserve so eloquently the memory of Igor Chinnov or Sasha Chorny?

The collection closes with a review of the 1996 edition of *Vstrechi* and a look at the Fourth Wave of Emigration, now post-Soviet and post-*Perestroika*. One can hardly wait for these authors to make their way into the chronicles of Kasack's next set of contributions. There is so much here for specialists and generalists as well, that one can only hope for translations into Russian and English to expand the appeal and accessibility of this work to a wider audience.

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Siegfried Ulbrecht. *Die Dramatik des jungen Vladimir Majakovskij und des jungen Bertolt Brecht: eine kontrastive Analyse unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Verfremdungsverfahrens und der Montagetechnik*. Frankfurt am Main/New York: Peter Lang, 1996. 333 pp. (paper).

This book, initially completed as a dissertation at the University of the Saarland, Germany, in 1995, is a comparative study of "defamiliarization" (*ostranenie*) and montage in the early dramatic works of Vladimir Maiakovskii and Bertolt Brecht. The goal of the book is to demonstrate how defamiliarization and montage were used by the two young playwrights to express in their plays the atmosphere of social, political, and cultural crisis in Europe during and after World War I. Ulbrecht's study focuses on three plays: Maiakovskii's *Vladimir Maiakovskii* (1913) and Brecht's *Baal* (1919) and *Im Dickicht der Städte* (In the Jungle of the City, 1927). Following a one-page introduction, the book's three chapters cover the following topics: "Theory of Contrastive Analysis" ("Theorie der kontrastiven Analyse"), "Elements of Motifs and Themes" ("Motivisch-thematische Elemente"), and "Narrative Structure" ("Sujetaufbau"). The final chapter is a summary. The book closes with a thirty-three-page bibliography.

Ulbrecht's methodological approach is based on formalist and structuralist works by Viktor Shklovskii, Boris Tomashevskii, Roman Jakobson, Jan Mukafovsky, and Iurii Lotman, to mention the most important names. But theoretical works by the German scholar Roman Ingarden and the lesser known Wolfgang Schwartz also play a significant role in Ulbrecht's analysis. From the beginning, Ulbrecht attempts to distinguish three different kinds of defamiliarization. Defamiliarisation in a "wide sense" is purely aesthetic, as un-

used for the purpose of social critique; the third kind of defamiliarization is "autothematic" and constitutes a variant of defamiliarization in the "narrow sense." While allowing for innovation, this third type of defamiliarization de-emphasizes the radical artistic experimentation common among the avant-garde. Thus *Maiakovskii* gravitates toward the first type of defamiliarization while Brecht's two early plays belong more to the second type. The third type can be illustrated by Sergei Eisenstein's cinematic work that preserves a recognizable and sequential picture of the world.

In avant-garde art defamiliarization commonly works through montage which Ulbrecht separates into two forms, illogical and dialectical. Illogical montage produces a radical aesthetic rearrangement of the world, as in Cubo-Futurism; dialectical montage, on the other hand, preserves connectedness with the world and does not rearrange its temporal sequence, as in Brecht and Eisenstein. Despite the differences, however, *Maiakovskii* and *Baal* are similar in their use of defamiliarization through compositional and stylistic grotesque, through costumes, music, sets, inscriptions, and other devices that force the spectators to reexamine the system of values imposed on them by their societies.

Through defamiliarization and montage Ulbrecht analyzes the social significance of Maiakovskii's and Brecht's plays. One of the most important themes in *Baal* and *Maiakovskii* is that of the individual versus society. In both plays the hero is a poet who challenges bourgeois values. Although both heroes are on their romantic quest for happiness, the meaning of their quests is different: Maiakovskii's poet tries to find happiness for everybody. He is a prophet and a martyr who sees the solution for his problematic relationship with the world in art. Baal, in contrast to Maiakovskii's romantic poet, is interested in happiness only for himself. He is the consummate egoist who becomes Brecht's parody of the Romantic and Expressionist image of the poet. In their choice of setting for their plays, Maiakovskii and Brecht are also different. Whereas *Maiakovskii* looks for a technical utopia of the future where everybody will be happy, *Baal's* action is set in contemporary America, in Chicago. Ulbrecht points out that defamiliarization has a stronger social-critical resonance in Brecht than in Maiakovskii since the former seems to be more willing to deal with the real world rather than with the world of the future—despite their equal concern for the moral and social decay of contemporary urban culture.

The use of time is also different in the two playwrights. Maiakovskii's time is lyrical and personal whereas Brecht's is epic and sequential. Both use the structural principle of the central "I" and treat other characters as marionettes. And both use dramatic dialogue innovatively. Maiakovskii dialogized the monologue through the interaction between the poet and the audience, and in Brecht, the dialogue is illusionary because it presents the characters' words as a part of the hero's monologue. Brecht's are monological dramas.

Ulbrecht's analysis concludes that in their early plays both Maiakovskii and Brecht take a significant step toward becoming socially critical dramatists through the use of defamiliarization. In *Im Dickicht der Städte*, Brecht's autothematic impulses are especially pronounced and enhance the play's social-critical significance.

The main contribution of this book is in systematizing and organizing voluminous critical material on defamiliarization and in showing how defamiliarization served both aesthetic and political purposes in the early plays of Maiakovskii and Brecht. The structure of Ulbrecht typological analysis is remarkably coherent and consistent. What this book lacks, however, is a sufficient account of the cultural-historical atmosphere in which the two dramatists were working. In Maiakovskii's case, it is especially important to under-