

in der Sowjetunion war keinesfalls nur ein US-Import während des Kalten Kriegs (Hester).² Zum weiteren Nachdenken regen die Beiträge von Anastasiia Maršheva und Viktoriia Grivina an. Maršheva analysiert qualitative Interviews mit jungen Menschen aus Russland und stellt dabei u. a. fest, dass vor allem Russinnen und Russen ohne Auslandserfahrung ihren Landsleuten eine zunehmende Europäisierung attestieren. Grivina nutzt Bruno Latours Konzept der apokalyptischen Zeit, um die Zerstörung von sowjetisch-konnotierten Denkmälern in Charkiv nach der Ausweitung des russischen Angriffskriegs gegen die Ukraine im Februar 2022 zu analysieren. Wenngleich Grivina nicht abschließend klärt, inwieweit sich Latours Konzept, das sich ursprünglich auf den Klimawandel bezieht, auch auf eine durch russischen Imperialismus entstandene apokalyptische Zeit übertragen lässt, stellt sie doch anschaulich dar, wie Akteure aus Charkiv die aktuelle Lage nutzen, um in der städtischen Denkmallandschaft Fakten zu schaffen.

Der positive Eindruck, den der Sammelband insgesamt durch seine vielfältige Themenauswahl hinterlässt, wird bei der Lektüre leider von einigen redaktionellen Unsauberkeiten getrübt. Die Texte enthalten zu viele Grammatikfehler und unpassende Sprachbilder. Bezeichnend ist zudem, dass der Text von Bickhardt einige russische Zitate ohne Übersetzung wiedergibt. Somit konterkariert sie die von Franziska Davies im Vorwort angemahnte Dekolonisierung der Osteuropastudien, der Kindler in seinen Schlussbetrachtungen noch konkrete Handlungsempfehlungen für die universitäre Lehre an die Seite stellt.

In diesem Kontext stellt sich die Frage nach der übergeordneten Intention des Bandes. Der Titel „Generationenwechsel in den Osteuropastudien“ deutet an, dass hier eine neue Generation von Osteuropa-Forscherinnen und -Forschern ihr Gesellenstück präsentiert. Der Untertitel verspricht „Studentische Perspektiven auf Bruchlinien und Kontinuitäten in Osteuropa“; „Bruchlinien und Kontinuitäten“ könnten also das vereinende Motiv des Sammelbandes sein. Der Entstehungskontext, die Umschlaggestaltung mit dem „Boryviter“-Mosaik sowie Vor- und Nachwort legen schließlich nahe, dass sich das Projekt zusätzlich der Dekolonisierung der Osteuropastudien verschreibt. Das sind drei hehre Ziele, von denen der Band jedoch keines wirklich erreicht. „Bruchlinien und Kontinuitäten“ sind nur in wenigen Beiträgen explizit Thema, und die programmatische Dekolonisierung greifen eher die den Aufsatzteil rahmenden Texte auf als die studentischen Beiträge selbst. Im Endeffekt sind die meisten Beiträge zu kurz geraten, um ihre Argumente wirklich entwickeln zu können und erinnern eher an zusammengekürzte Studien- oder Abschlussarbeiten. Das ist besonders zu bedauern, denn die große Mehrzahl der hier präsentierten Forschungsansätze sind durchaus spannend und als Leser würde man sich wünschen, mehr zu erfahren. Der Sammelband kann also wohl am besten als ein erster Ansatz verstanden werden. Auf die tatsächlichen Gesellenstücke der nächsten Generation der Osteuropastudien muss die Fachöffentlichkeit wohl noch etwas warten. Aber Vorfreude ist bekanntlich die schönste Freude.

München

Matthias Melcher

2 Siehe z. B: BRIAN PORTER: *Faith and Fatherland. Catholicism, Modernity, and Poland.* Oxford 2011; STEPHEN FREDERICK STARR: *Red and Hot. The Fate of Jazz in the Soviet Union, 1917–1991.* New York 1994.

Anna Nasilowska: A History of Polish Literature. Aus dem Poln. von Anna Zaranko. Academic Studies Press. Brookline 2024. 702 S. ISBN 979-8-887-19277-2. (\$ 169,-).

In the age of the Internet, much less AI, it is a legitimate question to ask whether a book like Anna Nasilowska's *A History of Polish Literature* is needed. After all, there are innumerable sources available on-line for interested readers, especially for students with access to library databases. This is something N., professor at the Institute of Literary Research of the Polish Academy of Science, acknowledges in the preface to her very welcome new history

of Polish literature, for “today’s readers have Wikipedia, of course, should they choose to use it” (p. xv). In her acknowledgements, she underscores her experience in writing “numerous encyclopedia and handbook entries as well as a school textbook and two compendia of 20th c. Polish literature” (p. xi), which indicates that she is fully aware of her target audience. While this book could certainly be used by specialists in the field of Polish literary studies, this “one-volume outline of Polish literature is addressed to the reader who is largely unfamiliar with the subject” (p. xv).

This is perhaps the greatest strength of this book. By beginning her discussion with a biographical outline of the work and oeuvre of the writers she discusses, she captures the ways in which writers’ biographies inform their work, combine to create a “mosaic, an overview of an epoch,” and function as an “element of culture on which later writers draw” (p. xv). Linking up these various biographies in a chronological narrative allows N. to show how the “voices” of Polish literature “link up various questions which appear alongside the basic thread of deliberation” (p. xvi), from the medieval period to the present. For readers who are unfamiliar with Polish literature or lack a clear sense of the “story” of Polish literature and culture, this is an indispensable gift that cannot be easily replicated by scattered reading of on-line sources or even selected articles by specialists.

N.’s book also serves as a useful complement to other histories of Polish literature in English, such as Czesław Miłosz’s *The History of Polish Literature*, Michael Mikoś’s series of anthologies of Polish literature (from the medieval period to the year 2000 in six separate volumes), and the more recent *Being Poland: A New History of Polish Literature and Culture Since 1918*, edited by a series of modern Polish scholars. While each of these sources has its strengths, N.’s book has the advantage of being new, available in a single volume, comprehensive in its scope (both in hard copy and as an eBook), and easy to navigate because of its combination of chronological organization and use of biographical outlines. Miłosz’s history is now a bit dated as it cannot speak to the ways in which problems and ideas in Polish literature extend beyond the communist period. Mikoś’s anthologies are also quite useful, but they are broken down into separate volumes, stop at the year 2000, and require more work on the part of the foreign reader to follow the thread of Polish literary voices over time. Lastly, *Being Poland* offers something that N.’s book does not, a multitude of scholarly approaches to “the continuities, paradoxes, and contradictions of Poland’s modern and contemporary cultural practices, and challenges the narrative typically prescribed to Polish literature and film,”¹ but it largely frames this discussion within the context of the past century. For the newcomer to Polish literature, N.’s book offers a broader scope, even if at times that comes at the expense of deeper discussion or critical reflection. By her own admission, her book is “meant to function as a guide: mastering a map of the highways makes it easier to navigate the byways” (p. xv). One could easily jump from this overarching highway to these other sources or to more specialized studies, and that is precisely the intent of this history of Polish literature.

The combination of chronological organization and biographic narrative makes it quite easy to get oriented in the periods under discussion and to situate the various writers N. highlights in both space and time. This is especially important when it comes to Polish literature and culture as there are numerous instances in history when Poles either found themselves far from their country’s borders, or living for extensive periods in a country that no longer exists on the collective map of Europe. As N.’s narrative progresses, readers are directed to the ways in which Polish writers build upon, depart from, or polemicize the works of writers who came before them. Whether it is the evolution of Polish as a literary language from Mikołaj Rej to Jan Kochanowski in the Renaissance era, or the ways in which contemporary writers such as Olga Tokarczuk engage with more obscure figures like Józef Baka, Elżbieta Drużbacka,

1 TAMARA TROJANOWSKA, JOANNA NIŻYŃSKA et al. (eds.): *Being Poland: A New History of Polish Literature and Culture since 1918*, Toronto—London 2019, p. xvi.

and Father Chmielowski from the Baroque period, N.'s narrative allows the careful reader to develop an understanding of the ways in which conversations involving Polish identity, expression, and the continuity of literary culture have evolved over time.

In each of the chapters of the book, N. is also at pains to draw connections between the work of Polish writers and artists to other writers, movements, and developments outside of Poland. Caught up in the expanse of Polish history, the newcomer to Polish literature gains an appreciation for the way "Poland is situated in a place of peregrination from East to West [...] constituting a crossroads of various cultures, and has for centuries cocreated a common space of European culture, and thus a background beyond its exclusively native elements" (p. xvii). In some cases, these connections are dynamic and wide ranging, spanning Europe from Ireland to Crimea, as in the case of Adam Mickiewicz and the nineteenth century Polish Romantics who wrote against a backdrop of partition, revolution, displacement, and memory. In others, the connections N. notes are surprisingly negative, such as in the case of Karol Irzykowski's seminal novel *Paluba* (The Hag), which "had [it] appeared in one of the better-known European languages [...] would be a universally familiar title in the history of the genre" (p. 357). For all their complexity and incomprehensibility, James Joyce's novels *Ulysses* and *Finnegan's Wake* at least had the advantage of being part of the stream of modernism in the English language, whereas the innovations of Polish writers like Karol Irzykowski, Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, and Bolesław Leśmian, just to name a few, are known largely to Polish readers alone. This ebb and flow of connection and rupture is yet another aspect of N.'s book, for she also touches in important ways on the pivotal moments in the history of Polish literature when questions of continuity and fracture arise, such as the partitions at the end of World War II, when "many aspects of post-war culture in the country could not be based on a sense of continuity [...] but demanded a break from it" (p. 472). The history of Polish literature, much as the history of Poland, is complex, and N. does a good job of maintaining a coherent narrative that is easy for readers of all backgrounds to follow.

As with any work of this kind, there will inevitably be questions about omissions and organizational choices. N. addresses the problem of expectations regarding authors and works in her preface, but there are a couple of curious omissions that might strike those familiar with Polish literature as significant and which could leave the novice reader with a less complete picture of the period in question. Two examples from the postwar era come to mind here: Jerzy Andrzejewski's novel *Popiół i diament* (Ashes and Diamonds) and Sławomir Mrożek's collection of short stories *Słoń* (The Elephant). Given N.'s keenness to draw connections between works by Polish writers and filmmakers, on the one hand, and the ways in which Polish writers struggled to navigate the complicated ideological realities of postwar Poland, on the other, such omissions are a bit surprising. There are also a few instances in which writers are introduced in one section only to be picked up again in another. While this is not problematic for those familiar with Polish literature, it could prove confusing for the novice reader. It is also somewhat unfortunate that N. chose not to write more about the ways Polish literature has continued to evolve since the collapse of communism in 1989. As this is somewhat of a blind spot when it comes to the history of Polish literature and culture, it really would have been welcome. In her defense, though, N. does acknowledge the post-communist transition as being fundamentally different from previous periods in Polish history. Lastly, in this translated version of *Historia literatury polskiej*, it might have been helpful to include more English sources in the three-page "Recommended Bibliography" at the conclusion of the book. If this is meant to be a launching pad for newcomers to Polish literature, it would be nice to have a few more resources on which they could land.

Chicago

John A. Merchant