

Alexanderplatz and his *Travel to Poland* in which he touched—in an almost epiphanic way—the pulse of east European Jewish authenticity.

Because of its multidisciplinary, Molisak's title, which translates as *Jewish Warsaw-Jewish Berlin: A Literary City Portrait in the First Half of the 20th Century*, can be aligned to an interesting group of works that map the built environment of both cities. I would mention in this context Michael Meng's 2011 monograph *Shattered Spaces: Encountering Jewish Ruins in Postwar Germany and Poland* and the studies of post-war developments, especially those occurring during the post-communist period. Examples include, for instance, Agata Lisiak's "Berlin and Warsaw as Brands" (2009) and Ewa Korcelli-Olejniczak's "Berlin and Warsaw: In Search of a New Role in the European Urban System" (2007).

Supported by solid archival and historical research, as well as readings in the theory of Jewish identity and space, this study is more than a foray into a literary sphere of topical urban strategies of representation. Rather, it is an informative reconstruction of the intricate texture of the Jewish world, which was erased from the map during WWII. Subsequently, this valuable monograph and its wide-ranging interventions contribute to the discourse of the less-studied aspects of international modernism.

BOŻENA SHALLCROSS
The University of Chicago

Studies on Socialist Realism: The Polish View. Ed. Anna Artwińska, Bartłomiej Starnawski, and Grzegorz Wołowiec. *Studien zur Kulturellen und Literarischen Kommunismusforschung*, Bd. 3. Trans. Maja Jaros, John M. Bates, Stanley Bill, and Kalina Iwanek. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Edition, 2016. 471 pp. A. Index. €85.95, hard bound.

doi: 10.1017/slr.2018.37

"National in form, Socialist in content"—this formula, or variations on it, was propagated by the Soviet Union to promote the formation of a unified socialist Soviet culture. After the Second World War, this idea was applied during the implementation of Socialist Realism as cultural doctrine in the countries belonging to the Soviet region of influence. The idea of literature that is socialist in content and national in form is evoked by the title *Studies on Socialist Realism: The Polish View*, heading a collection of papers edited by Anna Artwińska, Bartłomiej Starnawski, and Grzegorz Wołowiec. The title seems to announce a present-day assessment of the post-war situation of Polish literature, written in the era of Socialist Realism, adhering to the well-known doctrines of party-ness, folksiness, and understanding for the masses. How did Polish writers address these demands? How did writers who implemented Socialist Realist doctrines fare after the Thaw and de-Stalinization?

While these aspects are touched upon, they are not at the core of the study, so in this respect the title is misleading. The editors aimed at presenting the Polish assessment of the comparatively short episode of Polish Socialist Realism (1949–1956) over the time span from the early 1980s to today. The papers show how from a distance of twenty-five and more years, Polish literary research comes to terms with the period of *Hańba domowa* (civil disgrace), 1986, to quote the collection of interviews conducted by Jerzy Trznadel with protagonists of Polish Socialist Realist literature.

The editors may have decided to opt for publishing a study on the meta-text because of the common negative attitude toward the quality of Socialist Realist literature. They may share the assessment of one of their authors, Anna Zarzycka, who

writes: “We are discussing poems to which little literary value is ascribed and which are usually isolated from the ‘proper’ creations of their authors, as a literary deviation or mistake” (285). In this respect, the contributors to the volume see no difference between Polish Socialist Realist literature and non-literary publications. An example is the *History of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks): Short Course*, which Michał Głowiński re-read in 1991 as a “mythical narrative” and “a clinical example of a totalitarian narrative” (134). Revisiting this text, which he associated mostly with boredom, was an act of revenge. Głowiński wanted to show that the *Short Course* is as horrific as *Mein Kampf* and the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

Publishing the translations of Polish essays into English results from a feeling of being misunderstood. In west European and American-Polish studies, the editors comment: “Polish socialist realism is pulled into new contexts, not always obvious from the Polish perspective” (31). The “Polish view” presented here is that of the Warsaw and Poznań-based schools of communication-oriented structuralism, whose main representatives, Michał Głowiński, Zdzisław Łapiński, and Janusz Sławiński, account for four of the twenty-two texts of the volume and are quoted in most other papers.

Although this seems like a narrow undertaking on a very specific topic with the air of retaliation to research outside of Poland, the volume covers the topic of Poland’s implementation of Socialist Realism and the scholarly confrontation with it. The papers from the 1980s and 1990s are to be read as historical documents, “recording the ambient atmosphere of a part of the Polish intelligentsia and of a large portion of Polish society in the ‘80s and ‘90s” (49). The liminal situation of the authors writing in the 1980s poses a challenge to the present-day reader who, in most though not in all cases, has to look up the date of the papers’ first publications in the List of Polish Editions at the end. This information is vital, however. For example, Zdzisław Łapiński’s irony is clear in “How to Co-Exist with Socialist Realism?” when he remarks that Wiktor Woroszyński “correctly notes: ‘in the adjacency of Polish and Soviet poems extolling the virtues of Dzerzhinsky, we may discern a noble symbol’” (66). Another example is when Łapiński comments on the task of Polish poets “not to offend” the President of Poland, Bolesław Bierut (in office 1947–52), “by excessive homage,” “but even here we can report some success” (67).

The papers are not presented in chronological order, but are grouped in four sections: 1. What Was Socialist Realism?; 2. The Immanent Poetics of Socialist Realism; 3. Socialist Realism—Practices and Variants; and 4. Institutions of Control: Literature Studies, Censorship, Literary Criticism. One point of the debate is the question of the writers’ responsibility for their texts and their degree of conviction. Zbigniew Jarosiński in “Literature as Power” states in relation to, among others, Jerzy Andrzejewski and Ryszard Matuszewski: “It is hard today to assess to what extent the authors quoted here believed in what they wrote” (105). Meanwhile, Anna Zarzycka notes that in hindsight, Wisława Szymborska deserved enthusiastic reviews of her two volumes of Socialist Realist poetry: “Both of Szymborska’s socialist realist tomes were not only marked by her authentic political commitment, in accordance with the spirit of those times, but also by her original style, indicative of her irrefutable talent” (283).

One of the goals that the editors of the volume set for themselves was to show what distinguishes the Polish reaction to the Socialist Realist *hańba* (disgrace). The volume highlights the critical role of nineteenth century classics like the Romantic Adam Mickiewicz and the representative of Realist literature Bolesław Prus. How did Socialist Realist criticism and censorship try to promote Soviet-Polish friendship and at the same time deal with writers whose negative experiences with the tsarist regime led them to pronounced anti-Russian statements? Living writers could be coerced into

self-critical statements, as Grzegorz Wołowicz maintains in “The Ambiguous Charm of Self-Criticism.” The instrumentalization of the classics of Polish literature, argue Zbigniew Jarosiński and John M. Bates in “Censorship in the Stalinist Era,” failed not for lack of trying but due to the impossibility of bridging the contradictory demands on writers and their texts. In explaining the mechanisms and the actors who applied them, *Studies on Socialist Realism: The Polish View* shows the utopianism of Poland’s Socialist Realist interlude.

YVONNE PÖRZGEN
University of Bremen

Cat Painters: An Anthology of Contemporary Serbian Poetry. Ed. Biljana D. Obradović and Dubravka Djurić. Trans. Biljana D. Obradović, New Orleans: Lavender Ink/Diálogos Press, 2016. xliii, 450 pp. Appendix. Index. Photographs. Figures. \$29.95, paper.
doi: 10.1017/slr.2018.38

Translation lies at the heart of *Cat Painters*. Most of the 340 poems by seventy-one poets are, of course, translations from Serbian into English. This is the first anthology of this size, breadth, and inclusivity to feature recent Serbian poetry; the poets come from a rich variety of backgrounds, ethnicities, faiths, secularities, geographies, and one-half of the poets are women.

Biljana D. Obradović took great care in translating the poems—hers being the lion’s share of the translations—joined by thirty other translators. It is worth noting that the anthology also translates in ways other than language. The wars of the 1990s moved some of the poets from Croatia, Montenegro, and Bosnia to Serbia, while others represented here, after starting out in Serbia, moved, during those same wars, to France, Italy, Scandinavia, Germany, Canada, Hungary, and the United States. Each has a connection to Serbia, but they are not all Serbs, nor do all of them live in Serbia today or even write their poetry in Serbian. Indeed one of them hails from Japan. Likewise, thirteen of the thirty-one translators were born elsewhere and learned their Serbian either as Slavic scholars or while living, temporarily or permanently, in Serbia, while the rest are Serbs, some living now in Serbia, others living in the Netherlands, Canada, Australia, the United States, and/or France.

The editors of the anthology, too, personify the intercontinental tie. While Dubravka Djurić, a poet, theorist, and editor, writes in Serbian and lives in Belgrade, Obradović has lived for over twenty-eight years in the United States, where she teaches at Xavier University in New Orleans and publishes her poetry in English.

Even the art used for the cover of the book is, in a sense, a transatlantic translation. The editors approached Belgrade artist Mileta Prodanović to ask if he would allow them to use one of his paintings for the book’s jacket. He suggested *Cat Painter*, a painting referencing the 1942 horror movie, *The Cat People*, in which a poor Serbian artist, while living in New York, supports herself by drafting for fashion journals. The female characters in the film turn into beautiful, ferocious panthers. It was probably based on the life of Serbian-Italian artist Milena Barilli (1909–45). Inspired by the film, Prodanović painted his own version of Barilli’s iconic self-portrait by superimposing the head of a panther on Barilli’s figure. Inspired by his painting, the editors chose *Cat Painters* as the title for the anthology, and used the image as emblematic of their own reading of the stance of poets over the last seventy years: fierce but “beautiful, gentle artists who struggle for survival, for existence” (xvii). The image of the panther-woman artist is also emblematic of