

Reprezentacje Europy w prozie polskiej XXI wieku

(Representations of Europe in the Polish prose of the twenty-first century) By Sławomir Iwasiów. Zielona Góra: Zielonogórski Univ. Press, 2013. Bibliography, index. 360 pages. ISBN 978-83-7518-619-2. Paper. In Polish.

Bożena Karwowska

The tenth anniversary of Poland's accession to the European Union is an occasion to look back and reflect on the changes and challenges connected with the enlargement of the previously Western European EU. The addition in 2004 of ten new countries formerly belonging to the Soviet bloc brought changes to both old and new EU members. Although there is considerable scholarly interest directed at these issues, academics tend to focus on political and sociological studies leaving the question of an emerging common European literature and culture at the margins of their interest. Sławomir Iwasiów's aim is to examine the issues connected with the cultural identity of Poland within the European Union. His work is worth a second look not only because of its timing, but also because it is an attempt to look at Polish literature and literary studies from the point of view of both European and national perspectives.

Iwasiów's study is grounded in the idea that the concept of a united Europe was not shaped exclusively by Western thought. The critic underlines the involvement and impact of Polish intellectual émigré circles on the ideas that brought the unification of Europe. He does not view the process of the 2004 expansion as a show of Eastern Europe (including Poland) joining "the West"; rather, he sees it as Poland's return to Europe. This makes it possible for Iwasiów to liberate social, cultural, and literary processes from the former shadow of their political connections and meanings. Iwasiów looks at the critical models outlining Europeization. He begins his study by outlining the recent Europe-oriented discourse in Poland

and writes about "philological Europeism" using the example of Andrzej Borowski's *Powrót do Europy*; "post-Romantic Europeism" represented by Maria Janion's *Niesamowita słowiańszczyzna*; "cultural studies Europeism" represented by Andrzej Mencwel *Rodzinna Europa po raz pierwszy*; "biographical Europeism" that follows Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz's biography as presented by Piotr Drobniać in his *Jedność w różnorodności. Europa w twórczości Jarosława Iwaszkiewicza*; and "comparatist Europeism" as proposed by Tomasz Bilczewski in his *Komparatystyka i interpretacja. Nowoczesne badania porównawcze wobec translatologii*. These texts provide Iwasiów with a variety of critical concepts that allow him to move freely in the field of literary and cultural studies.

His excellent categorization of available critical tools followed by case studies of Europe-oriented discourse in two periodicals, *Zeszyty Literackie* and *Kresy*, leads to a presentation of ways in which political processes affected not only literature but also literary studies. Iwasiów shows how political and social divisions influenced critical and scholarly thought that in turn has played an important part in the political and social processes. He recognizes the importance of the main question concerning "Europeization": how to preserve national identity and at the same time transcend national borders in the process of forging a common European identity. Instead of looking for standard answers he presents a broad range of available approaches, including voices coming from outside Poland (such as *The Sarmatian Review* and its editor).

Thus the question of the identity of Poles as Europeans is viewed from various perspectives, from literary and cultural to political and sociological. Iwasiów presents three distinctive strategies of reading Polish literature in the context of the European political landscape. He uses as examples the works by Maciej Urbanowski, Agata Bielik-Robson, and Przemysław Czapliński. These three writers represent different visions of postcommunist Poland. Iwasiów's interest in critical thought is related to his assumption about the contemporary blurring of boundaries between literature and literary studies (here he follows

Danuta Ulicka's views). This allows him to easily move from critical and scholarly discussions to literary works and their European dimensions. Following Anna Lebkowska's and Erazm Kuzma's work, Iwasiów examines presentations of Europe in contemporary Polish literature and the myth of the opposition between East and West in the studies of European literature. In this context the three main representatives of the "European" approach are Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, Witold Gombrowicz, and Czesław Miłosz. It should be noted that this classification takes for granted the importance of émigré literature for the processes of Europeization of Polish culture. In fact, Iwasiów's later analysis shows his skepticism toward the category of "émigré literature"; he considers it invalid in the context of Europeization. He fully incorporates the émigré tradition into the national one.

In Iwasiów's interpretation, the literary works written in recent years by Andrzej Stasiuk, Olga Tokarczuk, Andrzej Niewrzęda, and Manuela Gretkowska show significant changes in looking at the Old Continent. They also show major differences between several Polish generations. Writers belonging to the present generation travel freely through Europe and frequently change their domicile, thus further invalidating the category of émigré literature. It is no longer the place where the work was created, but rather what is depicted in it and how that matters. Iwasiów often and successfully employs the terminology of social geography, with notions such as space, place, city, and travel. Through the term "representations of Europe" he understands not only presentations of Europe or ways of depicting Europe, but also the creation of European discourse of which literature is a part. In his view, the categories of travel, city, and identity lead to the fourth and generalizing category, namely representation. When discussing travel the critic invokes prose works by Stasiuk, Tokarczuk, and Niewrzęda, arguing that their works describe contemporary Europe from the point of view of a tourist or a traveler. The city, understood as a European metropolis, interests him in the depictions in the works of Brygida Helbig, Krzysztof Varga, and Izabela Filipiak. The category of identity, seen in a European context as movement and the search

for a new place to live, leads Iwasiów to the prose of Janusz Rudnicki, Manuela Gretkowska, and Dariusz Muszer. Although his literary choices are arbitrary, as he freely admits, his study presents a panoramic and interesting view of the literary landscape of Poland as a member of the European community. It should also be noted that Iwasiów no longer clings to the category of "postcommunist Poland," but shows Polish literature as a part of European culture and an exchange forum of national and pan-European ideas. Its scope and openness to various points of view make Iwasiów's study a much-needed history of Polish literary processes at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Δ

The Lost German East Forced Migration and the Politics of Memory, 1945–1970

By Andrew Demshuk. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (www.cambridge.org), 2012. 302 pages. Bibliography. ISBN 978-107-02973-3. Hardbound.

Maciej B. Stępień

“**T**he politics of memory” or “historical politics” is a politically motivated activity that is intended to shape individuals’ image of the past. Andrew Demshuk’s book is not about political games over history, however. It is a study of human memories that—although exploited to the highest degree by politicians—are perceived by the author as ultimately divorced from politics. Demshuk is interested in the memories of Germans expelled from their eastern lands after the Second World War. He concentrates on the inhabitants of Silesia and tries to show on what basis they accepted the loss of their *Heimat*.

Numerous theorists have already tried to explain how Germans acquiesced to their loss. The most significant explanation has been that Germans lost interest in the revanchist agenda of their leaders: the prosperity of the expellees’ new Fatherland, West Germany, and their being cut off from the lands of their ancestors by the Iron Curtain played a role. Demshuk argues that this theory is false.