

RECENSIONI

Elissa Bemporad, *Eredità di sangue. Ebrei, pogrom e omicidi rituali in Unione Sovietica*. Castelveccchi, Roma 2021, 266 pp.

Negli scorsi anni nell'ambito della storia ebraica nell'Europa orientale e soprattutto nei territori dell'ex Unione Sovietica sono apparse molte ottime monografie, capaci tanto di confermare ipotesi formulate in passato, quanto di innovare i temi e le interpretazioni usuali della storiografia: fra tutti basti menzionare il volume di Antonella Salomoni sulla memoria culturale collettiva di Babyn Jar (*Le ceneri di Babij Jar. L'eccidio degli ebrei di Kiev*. Il Mulino, Bologna 2019) e l'opera riassuntiva di decenni di ricerche sul coinvolgimento del movimento nazionalista ucraino nell'olocausto ebraico a firma di John-Paul Himka (*Ukrainian Nationalists and the Holocaust: OUN and UPA's Participation in the Destruction of Ukrainian Jewry, 1941-1944*. Columbia University Press, New York 2021). Non casualmente entrambi questi autori sono citati in questo libro di Elissa Bemporad, docente di Storia Ebraica e di Storia della Shoah alla City University of New York, che con essi condivide anche la particolare attenzione dedicata al contesto ucraino: nonostante il clamore causato dalle leggi varate dal parlamento di Kyiv sulla memoria dei regimi fascisti e comunisti, a partire dal 2014 negli archivi ucraini è stato messo a disposizione degli studiosi un numero sempre crescente di nuovi documenti storici, tale da ingenerare una vera e propria rifioritura della ricerca nell'ambito dell'ucrainistica, che è cresciuta per numero di cultori e si è sprovvincializzata nei temi e negli approcci. Ne è una riprova questo volume che, pur non essendo dedicato specificatamente all'Ucraina, trae tuttavia moltissimi dei suoi casi-studio più significativi proprio da questa regione, che del resto era una delle patrie dell'ebraismo europeo prima della Shoah.

Bemporad è una storica di fama internazionale, la cui ricerca sul successo dell'acculturazione sovietica degli ebrei dell'ex impero zarista le era valso sia il National Jewish Book Award sia lo Ernst Fraenkel Book Prize nel 2013. L'influenza di quella prima ricerca si sente molto in questa nuova opera, che tuttavia affronta un tema nuovo, di grande interesse e originalità: le cause e le dinamiche della sopravvivenza e – successivamente – della ripresa dell'antisemitismo in URSS. Se infatti i territori occupati dell'Unione Sovietica sono stati quelli che hanno ospitato fra le pagine più tragiche del-

nografia *Horizonti modernističkog romana* è un arricchimento degli studi sul romanzo modernista e sulla storia del romanzo serbo. Fornisce nuovi spunti interpretativi e approfondisce lo studio di alcuni dei maggiori romanzi del Novecento, inquadrandoli nel loro contesto internazionale, con la solida base storico-letteraria e teorica che contraddistingue gli altri volumi dell'autore. Così Petrović si conferma tra i maggiori esperti di romanzo modernista (o dell'Avanguardia) e di storia del romanzo serbo.

LUCA VAGLIO

Alfrun Kliems, *Underground Modernity: Urban Poetics in East-Central Europe, Pre- and Post-1989*. Transl. Jace Schneider. CEU Press, Budapest 2021, 340 pp.

Alfrun Kliems's most recent published book (although her new monograph is already forthcoming) is an English translation of her 2015 German-language study on urban poetics in Central and Eastern Europe. In line with the German tradition of Slavic studies as an intrinsically comparative discipline, Kliems has delivered an intriguing analysis of the nexus between underground, urban culture and the end of the Hobsbawmian "short twentieth century" – something even better captured by the evocative German word *Wende* ('turn') – in a significant portion of the Central and Eastern European space. Kliems's book takes its readers on a long journey through various decades, countries – both existing and of the past, as in the case of Czechoslovakia – and languages. The chronological framework of the book spans the period from the 1950s up to the first decade of the new millennium, although with frequent references to previous periods, from German Romanticism to the Czech, Slovak and Polish avant-garde of the interwar years.

The book is divided in two parts. The first, titled "Typology", is devoted to a discussion of the main theoretical premises of the book. The second, significantly longer and titled "Figures, Works, Groups", explores a considerable number of authors, groups and texts of various nature pertaining to different languages and national cultures including the Czech, Slovak, Polish, Russian, Ukrainian and (East) German, both pre- and post-1989. Kliems works with a variety of genres, including prose, poetry, music, visual arts and performance. In line with Kliems's research interests, most examples are taken from representatives of Czech and Polish culture, including such prominent figures of East European alternative scene as the guru of the Czech underground Egor Bondy (1930-2007), the leader of the iconic Czech rock band The Plastic People of the Universe Ivan Martin Jirous (1944-2011), the Polish writer and musician Marcin Świetlicki (b. 1961), the lead-

ing contemporary Czech writer Jáchym Topol (b. 1962), his brother Filip Topol (1965-2013) and the no less acclaimed Polish writer Andrzej Stasiuk (b. 1960). Other chapters focus on Peter Wawerzinek (b. 1954) and the Prenzlauer Berg independent culture in 1980s East Berlin, the Slovak poet Vladimír Archleb (1953-2007), the Polish poet Jacek Podsiadło (b. 1964), the Russian writer Vladimir Makanin (1937-2017), the leading post-1991 Ukrainian writer Jurij Andruchovyč (b. 1960), the Wrocław and Warsaw-based visual artist Waldemar Frydrych (b. 1953), better known as “Major”, and the Berlin-based “Klub der polnischen Versager” (Club of Polish Losers, Klub Polskich Nieudaczników). Most chapters also include digressions about other periods, as well as discussions that involve comparison with authors and texts not themselves at the centre of the book, ranging from E.T.A Hoffmann’s romantic tales to Vítězslav Nezval’s Prague writings from the Thirties and Venedikt Erofeev’s cult novel *Moskva-Petuški* (1973), among others.

To analyse the relationship between the underground and the city Kliems works with the concept of verticality, which she integrates with the horizontal axis of the contrast between the city and what is beyond it, the non-urban space. Kliems’s main aim is to understand the nature of underground cultural history in its historical development. Kliems explicitly sets herself the task of confuting Jáchym Topol’s thesis that the underground exhausted its creative potential after the *Wende*. She shows, instead, the ability of the underground, which she sees as a social and cultural expression of modernity, to reinvent itself and survive globalisation. Other complex problems that receive considerable attention in Kliems’s book are those concerning the relation between underground and dissent, and underground and pop. In Kliems’s view, “one of the underground’s main critiques of dissent was that the organizers of “established” samizdat gave recognition to the ‘first circulation’ by seeking dialogue with its representatives. To do so ran fully counter to the ethos of underground radicalism” (p. 33). As for the underground’s stance toward pop, a possibly even more slippery issue, Kliems claims that “Aside from their obvious differences, pop culture and the underground have a number of commonalities. They share ritualized, anarchic gestures of rebellion – with or without a cause. This goes along with an absolutization of the banal, the quotidian, and very often the offensive” (p. 3).

Among the many fascinating issues that Kliems touches upon is the re-evaluation of the urban text in Slovak, a national culture traditionally linked to rural identity and themes. Her analysis of Vladimír Archleb’s *flâneur* poetic characters as “disgusted in Bratislava”, as well as her discussion of previous phases of the Slovak urban text, are sure to prove provocative and stimulating. No less compelling is Kliems’s depiction of Polish-Czech-Slo-

vak contact through her analysis of Jacek Podsiadło's (b. 1964) 2008 fictitious account of a trip to Bratislava to visit Egor Bondy, which she defines as "a poetological discussion about the underground and its absorption or destruction by pop culture" (p. 134).

The complex issue of the relation between the underground and pop culture is most extensively discussed in the chapter on Marcin Świetlicki's poetry of the 1990s and 2000s. Analysing Świetlicki's rebellion against the idea of the poet as the voice of the ailing nation so typical of Polish culture, and observing how especially through music and YouTube his poetry has become fashionable, Kliems concludes that "everything is or becomes pop, or else it dies off" (p. 132). By doing so she delivers an important preliminary answer to the question regarding the survival strategies of the underground after 1989-1991.

Kliems's discussions of the Berlin "Klub der polnischen Versager" and her analysis of the German writer Peter Wawerzinek's 1991 novel *Moppel Schappik's Tätowierungen* (Moppel Schappik's Tattoos) will also be welcomed by many of her readers. The very decision to include an (East) German cultural text in the analysis is a plea for an approach to Slavic studies that sees Slavic cultures as part of a broader East European cultural space. One hopes that it may contribute to (re)launching the discussion about the boundaries and the future of Slavic studies as an area of research and teaching.

One of the many qualities of Kliems's writing style is her ability to be at the same time witty and fully understandable. After finishing the book, the reader is left with a long reading (and listening) list, as well as, for those working on Eastern European independent culture, a possible urge to reconsider one's ideas about the underground. One of the questions that may remain unanswered concerns the representative character of the authors and texts selected, especially as far as the last chapters are concerned. While names such as Egor Bondy and Jáchym Topol are a must in any work of this kind, it is less clear why Vladimir Makanin and Jurij Andruchovyč have been selected, and not others. In the case of Andruchovyč, his cult status in Ukrainian culture may have played a major role. One might wonder if such poets as Attyla Mohyl'nyj (1963-2008) and Hryc'ko Čubaj (1949-1982) might also have been productively included. As far as Russian literature is concerned, one may regret the lack of a chapter on the Leningrad school of poetry. And what can be said about the relationship between the city, the underground and modernity in Belarus and the South Slavic space? Some readers will possibly also ask themselves whether consideration of the underground's trespassing into pop culture has been fully convincing.

Apart from such questions, unavoidable when scholars discuss works and authors from a large variety of cultural and language spaces, one is left admiring Kliems's ability to combine deep erudition, methodological soundness and readability. One also hopes that Kliems's monograph will prompt more scholars in Central and East European literary and cultural studies to dare undertake such large comparative analyses – for both previous epochs and the modern and contemporary age. The skills needed for such an undertaking seem to grow rarer and rarer in a scholarly world increasingly characterised by narrow specialisation.

ALESSANDRO ACHILLI

Dmitrij Strocev, *Terra sorella*. Trad. e cura di Giulia De Florio. Valigie Rosse, Livorno 2020, 122 pp.; Dmytro Strocev, *Pyl, što tancjuje*. Duch i litera, Kyjiv 2020, 128 pp.; Dmitrij Strocev / Dzmitrij Strocaŭ, *Belarus' oprokinuta / Belarus' perakulenaja*. Trad. di Andrej Chadanovič. Novye mechi, s.l. 2021, 131 pp.

Dmitrij Strocev (1963) è forse il più noto poeta bielorusso russofono degli ultimi decenni. Tra i più visibili partecipanti delle proteste del 2020, Strocev è stato un cronista poetico della Minsk di quei mesi, tra entusiasmo, repressioni e delusioni. La sua notorietà come poeta e dissidente è stata ulteriormente consolidata dalle numerose traduzioni della sua poesia pubblicate tra il 2020 e il 2021 in vari paesi, tra cui l'Ucraina, l'Italia e la Svezia. Il panorama delle traduzioni della recente poesia di Strocev mostra alcuni fenomeni interessanti, soprattutto per quanto riguarda le traduzioni realizzate nell'ambito delle culture letterarie geograficamente contigue a quella bielorusca.

In Italia, Giulia De Florio ha tradotto e curato un'ottima selezione della poesia stroceviana dagli anni Duemila a oggi, il primo volume della sua lirica in italiano. La raccolta è uscita nell'ambito della collana poetica "Valigie Rosse Poesia", legata al premio musicale "Premio Ciampi – Città di Livorno" (vinto da Strocev nel 2020) e nata con l'obiettivo di favorire il dialogo tra la poesia italiana e quella straniera. Il libro è suddiviso in quattro sezioni, "Bielorussia", "Guerra", "Pace" e "Poesie di protesta". Nell'introduzione De Florio presenta l'opera e l'attività di Strocev nel contesto della cultura indipendente della tarda età sovietica e della Minsk degli ultimi trent'anni. L'ambiguità di francescana memoria del titolo della raccolta, più chiaro al lettore che conosce il russo e che può comprendere il titolo originale nel verso del frontespizio (*Sestra strana*), potrebbe risultare un punto di forza per attirare anche lettori non interessati al contesto bielorusso o, più in ge-