

alignment of transrational speech and the Soviet championing of world literature offers Emery a deep well of theoretical and literary material to set the stage for other twentieth-century developments. Primary among those is the Stalin era totalitarian regime. Our guide through the morass of art, culture, and politics in this chapter is Osip Mandel'shtam, whose complicated interactions with both the state and the reader provide Emery with visions of totality in unexpected places.

The self appointed carrier of culture through the long night of Soviet barbarism, Mandelstam even before the revolution was wont to metaphorize, his poetry as a fragile vessel lost in the vastness of world history—a message in a bottle floating in the ocean of time or an ancient clay jar buried in archaeological layers—which paradoxically contains a totality as vast as the medium in which it is tossed or embedded (120).

The ubiquity of totalizing worlds did not stop at the edge of the iron curtain but pursued the nomadic life of the émigré writer. The book's final chapter reads Nabokov's *Lolita* as a study in the manipulative powers of language and the ways commercial culture allows literature to "ensnare [its] audience so fully in a false reality that the purchaser will take the material product for a transcendental value" (149). The messy boundaries of art and reality continue to haunt the reader and enmesh them in structures and systems designed to take over all aspects of life.

These final three chapters, rooted in the twentieth century, provide a lens through which the first two chapters can be viewed. This hindsight illuminates how, in opening with Batiushkov, Fedor Dostoevskii, and Lev Tolstoi, Emery utilizes the aesthetic, cultural, and political terms of the nineteenth century to anticipate the totalities of the twentieth. Readings of the scientific and religious discourses of the era are paired with the more modern perspectives of Sigizmund Krzhizhanovsky and Konstantin Sorokin. The resulting folding of time amplifies a sense of the inescapable presence of deterministic structures and universalizing projects. *The Vortex That Unites Us* is a testament to the productive interactions between literature and the world and the new and insightful observations that come through embracing the capaciousness of art.

Annelie Bachmaier. *Fremdes schreiben—fremdes Schreiben. Konzeptionen von Alienität (in) der Prosa Aleksandr Grins.*

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The focus of Annelie Bachmaier's voluminous monograph is the category of the alien (*das Fremde*) which appears as an object of writing (*Fremdes schreiben*) as well as its characteristics (*fremdes Schreiben*). In the first case we deal with the process of writing, in the second case

with its result, the substantivization of “writing” as an action. The writing subject under investigation is the Russian-speaking writer Aleksandr Grin (1880–1932), and the category of alienness (*Alienität*) is stated in the title of the monograph as both the theme of Grin’s prose and its immanent feature. Bachmaier’s study is the first German-language monograph on Grin, but the author emphasizes in the first introductory chapter that the aim of her study is not only to present Grin’s life and work in their entirety, but also to contribute to the theory of the alien—a promise that the book successfully keeps.

The alien can indeed be a kind of key to Grin’s work: his prose is well familiar to Russian-speaking readers primarily as a neo-romantic guide to “Grinland”—Grin’s fictional country, one of the most famous inhabitants of which is the girl Assol’, a character in Grin’s widely popular novel *Alye parusa* (*Scarlet Sails*). In the second chapter of her study, Bachmaier not only convincingly shows that the scope of Grin’s work is much wider than that, but also traces the way in which Grin was “sovietized.” The book reconstructs his reception and appropriation, the result of which in the mid-1950s Bachmaier defined as “inclusion through partial exclusion” (179): Grin’s works that did not fit into the after-war Soviet conception of Grin as mainly a children’s and youths’ author, remained “unnoticed.” According to Bachmaier’s calculation, only about 10 percent of Grin’s literary corpus attracted the attention of Soviet literary scholars (185–186).

In this regard, Bachmaier’s conclusion seems logical: the category of alien is immanent to all of Grin’s prose as a literary and sociocultural phenomenon. In the third chapter, Bachmaier lays the theoretical and methodological foundation for her analysis and, noting the blurriness of the concept of the alien, examines it from a phenomenological-structuralist perspective. The semiotics of the alien includes for her not only the linguistic component in its semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic dimensions, but also something especially important for Grin’s prose, the spatial component. The latter is dominant, since Bachmaier, following Bernhard Waldendfels (*Topographie des Fremden*. Frankfurt a.M., 1999), defines the alien primarily through space and time.

More than half of the monograph (269–604) is taken up by the analysis of nine individual works by Grin. The analysis is conducted according to Bachmaier’s proposed systematization of the alien as domestic, structural, radical (viewed primarily in terms of the fantastic), and intersubjective, problematizing various conceptions of identity. The rigid framework of systematization sometimes dictates the emphasis of the study: in a few cases methodology comes to the fore and literary texts are analyzed through the predetermined prism. But the irreducibility of Grin’s poetics to this scheme is fully realized by Bachmaier (269), and she generally succeeds in balancing between theory and analysis. Thus, the study of the concept of “Grinland” itself and the close reading of several works in Ch. 4.2 (“The Way,” “The Distant Way,” “Night and Day”) reveals the chronotopography of the alien stated in Ch. 3.2. The theme of the fantastic is examined in Ch. 4.3.2 on the example of the pre-revolutionary stories “The Incident in Dog Street” (1909) and “Murder in a Fish Store” (1915), which illustrate two types of the fantastic as the marvelous and the uncanny (Tsvetan Todorov’s *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*). Adjoining the realm of the fantastic is the motif of the Doppelgänger, which Bachmaier examines through the lens of intersubjectivity, drawing on the stories “A Rope” (1922) and especially “Birk’s Story” (1910)—the most extensive and comprehensive analysis in the monograph.

The monograph closes with a summary about Grin’s poetics. The established features of the alien manifest themselves through negation: unfamiliar, extra-spatial (*Atopie*), and uncertain. Especially valuable is Bachmaier’s observation that Grin’s poetics is characterized “not only by the chronotopography of the alien, but also at the level of literary devices” (607). To follow the unfolding of how Grin “writes the alien” (*Fremdes schreiben*) is a real pleasure. Bachmaier’s work offers a rare opportunity not only for Slavic scholars to enrich their understanding of Grin and Russian modernism, but also for a broad specter of philologists who are interested in the thematization of the alien in the twentieth century.