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Angela Richter with Tatjana Petzer (eds.), *Entgrenzte Repräsentationen, gebrochene Realitäten: Danilo Kiš im Spannungsfeld von Ethik, Literature und Politik. Materialien der internationalen Konferenz vom 4. bis 6. Juli 1999 an der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg (Tagungsort: Lutherstadt Wittenberg)*. München: Otto Sagner, 2001. Die Welt der Slaven: Sammelbände/Сборники, Band 10. 228 pp.

The contributions united under the handsome hard covers of *Unbounded Representations, Broken Realities* form a more coherent whole than is often the case with collections based on conferences. The nineteen authors, most of them university scholars working in Germany, confirm and elaborate what turns out to be a remarkably consensual account of the works of Danilo Kiš (1935–1989) — an account that Barbara Beyer succinctly summarises when she attributes to Kiš a view of the vocation of literary fiction as ‘creating, through subjective imagination, through poetic language, and through the aesthetic (but also ethical) values that that inhere in them, a model of the world that recognizes historical reality afresh and in new forms, and that can work as a corrective *vis-à-vis* (routine) ideas of the authentic’ (128).¹

It is hardly surprising that many contributors reflect upon the tension between Kiš’s work, in which they observe a vigorous enactment of the independence of the aesthetic, and his life, exposed as it was to such buffetings of twentieth-century European history as might afflict the son of a Montenegrin mother and a Hungarian Jewish Holocaust victim. Angela Richter in her introductory essay sets the tone for the collection by quoting approvingly Predrag Palavestra’s judgment that ‘the new literature of critical resistance is not a propagandist political antithesis to violent ideologies, but a moral and creative act of rebellion by the individual artist against any totalitarian claim and any imposition of uniformity’ (12). Kiš’s term ‘po-et(h)ics’ echoes throughout the collection, signalling the contributors’ acquiescence in the (sceptics might

¹ This and subsequent translations from the German are mine.

complain, mystical) thesis that the poetic of itself possesses ethical force. Aleksandar Jerkov insists, indeed, that Kiš's writing, its self-referential qualities notwithstanding, does not lapse into 'poetic autism' or into 'the automatism of postmodern scepticism'. On the contrary, what is at hand here is 'literary work on the text of the world and the continuation of the ancient humanist struggle to write in the interest of something better and more valuable in life' (30).

The theme of Kiš's 'recognising historical reality afresh' is pursued by Tatjana Petzer, who delves into the novelist's practices of fictionalising history and blurring the distinction between document and literary text, and Katharina Wolf-Grießhaber, who compares Kiš's transformation and juxtaposition of documents to Eisenstein's montage technique (while noting that, unlike the filmmaker, Kiš abstains from utilising the propagandist potential of the device).

Several studies make use of the term 'postmodern' in their pursuit of a descriptor appropriate to the specificity of Kiš's prose. Dagmar Burkhart, working with an essentially stylistic conception of the postmodern, believes it to be attested in Kiš's oeuvre through such features as intertextuality, reflexivity, irony and playfulness. Slobodanka Vladiv-Glover sees Kiš's combinatorial, amplificatory artifice — a feature flowing from the predicament of the postmodern writer, confronted with the limitless capacity of signs to be combined — as part of a writerly project of 'chiselling' (74) a reality, both moral and aesthetic, out of the vacuum following upon the Holocaust and Hiroshima.

The collection is rich in detailed analyses of the form of Kiš's works. Mirjana Miočinović identifies and documents the rhetorical figures and tropes she considers characteristic of Kiš's style, while Reinhard Ibler finds what Milan Kundera regarded as the in-principle generic pluralism of the novel to be vividly manifested in Kiš's *Encyclopaedia of the Dead*, and Barbara Beyer diagnoses the narrator of *Garden, Ashes* as transcending the convention of the I-to-I narration in favour of a narrative voice that entertains alternating and shifting points of view, corresponding to a differentiated and mutable notion of subjectivity.

A proportion of the contributions detects and explores connections (biographical links, analogies, similarities, contrasts) between Kiš and others. Andreas Leitner reflects on Kiš's formal proximity and debt to Borges, Alexander Graf discovers thematic correspondences to Dosto-

evsky, Gabriella Schubert contrasts Kiš's endeavours to locate himself in the multiethnic, multireligious and multicultural landscape of Central Europe in the 20th century to an earlier quest for identity — that of the Serbian writer Jakov Ignjatović (1822–1889) within the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Bettina Kaibach observes similarities with Osip Mandelshtam. Jutta Hercher documents the friendship between Kiš and the painter Leonid Šejka, and Kiš's interest in the latter's method of creating art through the collection, classification, registration and ordering of garbage.

The value of *Unbounded Representations, Broken Realities* is enhanced by Tatjana Petzer's select bibliography. The collection is necessary reading for Kiš specialists, but it also presents material of considerable interest to all students of the vexed questions of Central European identity and of the possible relationships between the just writer and the less than just world.

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Vadim Rossman, *Russian Intellectual Antisemitism in the Post-Communist Era*. Studies in Antisemitism, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln and London for the Vidal Sassoon International Centre for the Study of Antisemitism (SICSA), The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2002. 309 pp.

Vadim Rossman's *Russian Intellectual Antisemitism in the Post-Communist Era* is a long overdue study of the upsurge of intellectual antisemitism in post-Soviet Russia. While various scholars of Russian studies, including the author of the current review, have tried to address this phenomenon as it appears in various spheres of cultural discourse, limiting their research to case studies such as antisemitism in literary criticism (Mondry 1989; 1996; 2002) or in Village Prose writing (Parthe 1992), Vadim Rossman has undertaken a more monumental task. His aim is 'to examine the nature and meaning of Russian antisemitism in the perestroika and post-perestroika periods' (p. 1). Rossman devotes his study not so much to everyday manifestations of antisemitism in Russian life, but rather to the articulation of an-