

dependent demand’), and so on, appear only in the entry for ‘demand’. The Ukrainian reader might therefore find it difficult to translate the English term ‘price-dependent’ if it occurred in another context.

This observation should not be taken as a major criticism. It is inevitable that in a dictionary of this type, where the structure of the entries is complex and the information provided is comprehensive and diverse, there will be some inconsistencies. This is a small price to pay for such a rich lexical resource.

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Maksim D. Shraer and David Shraer-Petrov, *Genrikh Sapgir: klassik avangarda*, St Petersburg: Izd-vo “Dmitrii Bulanin”, 2004, 261 pp.

Genrikh Sapgir (1928-1999) was one of the casualties of the Soviet literary establishment. He was able to make a living within the system as a children’s writer – in which direction he was channelled by Boris Slutskii – but he was prevented from publishing his verse for adults in the Soviet Union until 1988. Thus Sapgir himself, like many others of his generation, was to a large extent deprived of the recognition that might have further encouraged his poetic talent, and the Russian-speaking world was largely denied the opportunity to acquaint itself with his distinctive literary voice. In this respect, to be sure, Sapgir was not quite so badly off as some, since his writing was extensively distributed through *samizdat* and *tamizdat*, particularly in the second half of the 1970s, and his association with the Lianozovo group made him a leading figure of the unofficial avant-garde for several decades. The fact remains that his poetry is only now beginning to secure the critical attention which it deserves.

The present work, by the émigré writers David Shraer-Petrov and his son Maksim Shraer, is a combination of memoir, biography, literary criticism and literary history. It comprises two extended essays: the first an introduction to Sapgir’s life and works; the second an account of the Shraers’ long association with Sapgir from bohemian Moscow in the late 1950s to meetings in Paris and the vastly different circumstances of literary Moscow in the late 1990s. Much is made of the expansiveness of Sapgir’s character, his exuberance and

adaptability, notwithstanding an occasional bitterness towards his ‘official’ contemporaries, the *shestidesiatniki*.

The book’s subtitle, ‘klassik avangarda’ is intended in a double sense. The authors show Sapgir as clearly at the centre of the Moscow unofficial avant-garde, as embodying its bohemian liminality, its independence of thought and its interest in formal experimentation. His success as a *samizdat* writer is an index of his importance in both the history and the mythology of the underground movement. At the same time the phrase points to a double inheritance in Sapgir’s poetry, which was foreshadowed by the different backgrounds of his two early mentors. On the one hand Sapgir was schooled in the rigours of classical verse form as a teenager by the poet Arsenii Al’vig, who had been a student of Annenskii, and thus provided a link to Silver Age St Petersburg and beyond that to Pushkin. On the other hand, after the war Sapgir’s principal mentor became Evgenii Kropivnitskii, a contemporary of Maiakovskii and himself an artist and composer as well as a poet, who represented a connection with the Futurist avant-garde tradition. These different influences show themselves, as the Shraers note, in many varied ways in Sapgir’s work. His linguistic experimentation, for example, reminiscent of Khlebnikov in particular; his sense of the absurd, recalling Zabolotskii and Kharms; his interest in combing poetic and visual material, as with the *Sonety na rubashkakh* of the 1970s and 80s, literally written on shirts – all represent the legacy of the avant-garde. At the same time Sapgir’s rigorous sense of form, and the literariness of such collections of the 1980s as *Chernoviki Pushkina* and *Etiudy na manere Ogareva i Polotskogo* hark back to nineteenth-century models.

The Shraers’ book does not purport to be a comprehensive literary treatment of Sapgir’s work – such a thing indeed is hardly yet possible – but it does provide starting points in numerous areas which will undoubtedly feed further discussion. One area of interest is their treatment of Sapgir’s versification. Noting that the structure of Sapgir’s verse taken as a whole is radically different from the norms for official Soviet poetry, they characterise the sixty-eight per cent of his work that falls outside the borders of definable tonic or syllabo-tonic metres as operating by a principle of ‘(hyper-)micro-polymetry’. According to this theory individual lines or groups of lines can be interpreted as belonging to particular metres, even though poems themselves cannot. Whether this conceptualisation is fundamentally different from

viewing Sapgir's poetry as free verse is not clear, but it does allow for the possibility of the deliberate deconstruction of metrical form, while at the same time privileging the rhythms of everyday speech. Other themes that are covered in greater or lesser detail include the relationship between Sapgir's writing for adults and his writing for children in respect of his use of the absurd and *zaum*'-like language, his affinity for the themes and techniques of 'Moscow conceptualism', the influence of pop-art on his work, Sapgir's Jewish heritage and the example of the Yiddish writer Ovsei Driz, whom Sapgir also translated, and parallels between Sapgir's poetry and the writing of Gertrude Stein.

Overall the book provides a compelling portrait of Sapgir as both a man and a poet, and a sensitive introduction to the circumstances in which he lived and worked.

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Sibelan Forrester, Magdalena J. Zaborowska and Elena Gapova, eds., *Over the Wall/After the Fall: Post-Communist Cultures through an East-West Gaze*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2004, x+320 pp.

In the main, this collection delivers what the editors promise: essays that adopt approaches familiar in cultural studies, postcolonial studies and African American studies in order to inquire into recent or contemporary East European cultural phenomena – objects that, the editors fear, have been addressed by a scholarship 'more traditional ... than [that of] almost any comparable field'. The articles comprising the collection are further unified by the intent of focussing on 'race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, nationhood, dominance, resistance, and oppositional culture' (4). The authors' cultural backgrounds are diverse, we are told, though all have lived or worked in the West and know the customs and preoccupations of Western, especially United States, academe. Hence the 'east-west gaze' announced in the title.

The editors' introduction attributes to the contributing authors 'understandings of culture which must not be allowed to coalesce into a uniform definition' (4-5). Nonetheless, a definition is on offer, though not one that necessarily commands assent: 'We see culture as a mix of high and low