

essential part of the re-invented Jewish tradition within a Russian-Soviet mythological framework.

Christina Parnell uncovers the bygone multiethnic space of Jewish life in Lithuania in Grigorii Kanovich's novel *The Devil's Spell* (2009). Kanovich's dirge-like prose about the extinction of Lithuanian Jewry from 1941 on evokes the fictional *shtetl* Mishkine as a place both of evil and of longing. Kanovich, a Jewish-Lithuanian, Russian-language author living in Israel today, creates a literary space of high mnemonic potential interspersed with idyllic evocations of nature. Along with aesthetic and topological characteristics, Parnell gives an insight into the political dimension of Kanovich's writing in contemporary Lithuania.

The last two articles in the volume are inspired by a performative approach to Jewish spaces in eastern Europe or are related to it. Tanja Zimmermann analyzes the politically and socially engaged video project by Artur Żmijewski, who reveals the mnemonic energy of Polish songs and language by contrasting it to the evanescent bodies of Polish Jews having immigrated to Israel. In a radical subversion of Zionism, the art group *Jewish Renaissance Movement in Poland (JRMiP)* calls for a return to Poland. It debunks totalitarianism and cautions against the compulsion to repeat historical cataclysms. By citing the ambivalent fusion of Jewish and Polish history and messianisms, both projects create intense "resonance chambers" (221) of spatially-bound remembrance.

Monika Bednarczuk acquaints the reader with the performative and pedagogical memory work on the Holocaust anchored in local history and topography by the *Zentrum Brama Grodzka—Theater NN* in Lublin, Poland's "little Jerusalem" (248). The center (re)produces Jewish-Polish culture and the Shoah experience in its theater plays and oral and living history projects. By evoking the narrative and material cultural archive, it (re)vitalizes a common history that, topographically, has become invisible.

The volume gives an interesting overview of topographical topics in Slavic-Jewish Cultural and Literary Studies in Germany and Austria today. A more methodical reflection of the spatio-temporal entanglement and mnemonic potential would be a desirable for the introduction, however. Despite the fact that the volume might appear as thematically and methodically heterogeneous, this edited volume by Klavdia Smola and Olaf Terpitz offers valuable (re)evaluations of Jewish (in-between-) spaces in various media and in various historical, literary and epistemic contexts.

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***The Far Reaches: Phenomenology, Ethics, and Social Renewal in Central Europe.***

By Michael Gubser. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014. xvi, 335 pp. Notes. Index. \$90.00, hard bound.

Michael Gubser approaches central European philosophy in a fresh, "non-continental," manner. Luckily, we obtain more than just another useful introduction to *Phenomenology, Ethics, and Social Renewal in Central Europe* for English-speaking readers. The book offers inspiring new insights for continental readers, too. In addition to his thorough understanding of the scientific core of phenomenology, Gubser's competences lie in the field of intellectual and political history. This allows him to sally out for the "far reaches," which, in geographic terms, are the extensive landscapes of *Germania* and *Slavia* that intellectually stand for a political history of phenomenol-

ogy. The “far reaches” as presented by Gubser, however, are a truly philosophical concept. The “far reaches” thus signifies the worldliness of man as an ethical being. Brilliantly outlined, this approach is instructive but, of course, not entirely new.

Gubser’s real interest seems to be in explaining how this worldliness could arise in the background of the alleged unworldliness of Edmund Husserl. Therefore, the book starts with a chapter on the “solicitude of the father” and develops a perspective in which the legacy of Husserl’s *Logical Investigations* needed to be overcome in an “ethical turn” towards new worldliness.

First, Gubser’s detailed reconstruction focuses on realistic impulses brought to the phenomenological movement by such thinkers such as Adolf Reinach, Nicolai Hartmann, and Roman Ingarden. An outcome of their analyses was a realistic breakthrough which, as early as during Husserl’s lifetime and largely in opposition to him, opened the way towards “phenomenology without reduction,” a somewhat problematic concept proposed by Gubser. Two instructive chapters are dedicated to Max Scheler and Edith Stein.

The second part of the book deals with Czech and Polish philosophy under communism. Gubser unveils the critical function of phenomenology in an ideological society: it helps to preserve the idea of intellectual independence. He consistently argues that this was due to a worldly turn that led phenomenologists towards ethics and politics. However, from the perspective of a central European reader with a clear memory of communism, it was, in fact, unworldliness that helped people to emancipate themselves from an all-too-ethical ideology. In this process, contrary to Gubser’s assumptions, the technique of reduction played an irreducible role.

These critical remarks refer to Gubser’s general understanding of the role played by phenomenology in communist societies, rather than to the philosophical and analytical layers of his narration. The author himself precisely unveils the “Cartesian” force helping people to regain their own *ego* as the starting point of an ethical and political realm, for example in presenting Jan Patočka’s crucial concept of negative Platonism as “distance from all objectivities” (166). The central chapter on Patočka shares its title with the whole book, which indicates its major role in the reconstruction of the “far reaches.” Finally, it leaves the reader stimulated and inspired but somewhat undersupplied with conceptual knowledge. This makes it more difficult to understand “phenomenology’s impregnation of Czech dissidence” (177). On the other hand, especially in the case of Václav Havel, Gubser created a highly suggestive image of the encounter of manifold intellectual traditions in the melting pot of Czechoslovak dissidence. Evidently, this is one of the numerous strengths of the book.

The discussion of Polish phenomenology focuses on Karol Wojtyła and Józef Tischner. Wojtyła the personalist searched for fundamental ethics as *philosophia prima*, somewhat in the sense of Levinas’s re-foundation of philosophy by an absolute ethical principle and, if one refers to Heidegger, competing with the project of *Fundamentalontologie* developed by him. Gubser is able to indicate well the phenomenological roots and the Thomistic context of this personalism.

The book’s last hero is Józef Tischner. In the 1990s, he was a partly non-academic philosopher rooted in phenomenology and philosophy of dialogue. From today’s perspective, Tischner seems to embody a short liberal period in Catholic social philosophy in Poland. Gubser does not follow the long itinerary of Tischner’s thinking but focuses on his *Ethics of Solidarity*. This political manifesto, written hastily and with evident political intentions in 1980, is best known to western readers, in particular the English speaking ones. In Tischner’s philosophic oeuvre, however, it remains a kind of bycatch. Thus, the “Polish” chapters of *The Far Reaches* tend to define a well-chosen starting point for more comprehensive analyses.

In summary, Michael Gubser has delivered an instructive and very readable

reconstruction. His conceptual analyses are brilliant. The historical perspectives are rich (although partly expandable). Given that no one expects a single publication to end the controversial debate concerning Husserl's worldliness or unworldliness, Gubser's approach is helpful because it is consistent. Both as a historical compendium and as a philosophical problematization, *The Far Reaches* is a highly recommendable publication.

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***Spring Shoots: Young Belarusian Poets in the Early Twenty-First Century.*** Ed., Trans. Arnold McMillin. Publications of the Modern Humanities Research Association, vol. 19. Cambridge, UK: Modern Humanities Research Association, 2015. viii, 191 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations. \$44.99, hard bound.

McMillin's book *Spring Shoots: Young Belarusian Poets in the Early Twenty-First Century* has a somewhat unusual cover for a publication dealing with the post-Soviet context: Vincent Van Gogh's painting *The Sower* (1888). The cover contextualizes the book from the start, however, as it introduces poetry from forty promising young Belarusian poets. They were all born during the glasnost and perestroika period, and have grown up under the present regime, developing their poetry during the twenty-first century. They represent the young literary talent sprouting up in post-Soviet Belarus, to continue the allegory further.

The book consists of an introduction, eight chapters, an epilogue, a bibliography, and an index of names. McMillin divides the poets into thematic chapters, which seems a somewhat arbitrary approach. The author himself acknowledges the loose nature of this division, and it would have been helpful if he had provided a brief link to guide readers from one section to the next. However, the chapters are written in a clear order, which leads you through the volume. Each chapter has a similar structure—a short biography of each poet, followed by the title/s of their poetry with some examples contextualized by McMillin and clarified further (where possible) via interlinear translations in English. The first chapter, entitled "The Historic Heritage," presents works by three poets. Chapter 2, called "Religion and Various Forms of Piety," discusses the work of seven poets. Chapter 3, "Protest at Alienation and Repression," also includes seven poets. Chapter 4, "The Use and Defence of Language," unites four poets. Chapter 5, "The Lyrical Impulse," discusses the initial legacy of three poets. Chapter 6, called "Humour," incorporates seven poets and Chapter 7, "Performance Poetry," includes three poets' first editions. The final chapter, "Writing and Poetic Inspirations," examines the work of six poets.

Throughout the book, McMillin shows that this younger generation of poets is a diverse group with distinct voices, unified by pronounced spiritual and socio-cultural convictions. The young poets cover a variety of themes and genres (some in free verse), and they write using different versions of the Belarusian language (*narko-mauka* and *taraskievica*). In some cases (especially in Chapter 4), it is not entirely clear which version of Belarusian the poets have used, because the author provides short quotes in Latin transliteration and longer pieces of poetry in Cyrillic. Some of the Belarusian Cyrillic versions of the poems include typos (such on pages 8, 79, and 155). Even though all the quotations are interesting to read and provide an overview of each poet's style and range of topics covered, some of those selected do not illustrate the point being made by McMillin. For instance, he alleges that the open discussion of lesbian love in N. Mancevic's poetry (Chapter 4), represents resistance to and protest