church to become less rigid and more tolerant of ritual diversity. Remarkably, despite all of its limitations and apparent artificiality, *edinoverie* continues to be a living movement to this very day. White's careful and engaging scholarship, which has mined an impressive number of provincial archives, provides an excellent foundation for further historical and comparative work.

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***A Spy for an Unknown Country: Essays and Lectures by Merab Mamardashvili*.** Ed. Julia Sushytska and Alisa Slaughter. Stuttgart: ibidem-Verlag, 2020. xiv, 248 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Photographs. $32.95, hard bound.
doi: 10.1017/slr.2022.195

Merab Mamardashvili's figure and thought is arousing increasing interest in the international scholarly community. Alyssa DeBlasio's monograph, *The Filmmaker's Philosopher: Merab Mamardashvili and Russian Cinema*, appeared in 2019, as did a special issue of the journal *Studies in East European Thought* on his "philosophical legacy." But only a few translations of the philosopher's original works are currently available in English, as well as other languages. This collection edited by Julia Sushytska and Alisa Slaughter is meant partly to fill this gap by providing the English translation of some of Mamardashvili's works dating back to the last years of his life, which happened to be the last years of the existence of the Soviet Union. Here one finds interviews and papers delivered at conferences and seminars, published between 1988 and 1989, and three lectures on Marcel Proust (number 1, 6, and 11), from a course offered first in 1982 and a second time in 1984. The translation of an unpublished text, under the evocative title of "What Belongs to the Author," is provided together with the fascinating facsimile of the first pages of the original typed draft with handwritten notes. Two essays complete the volume: a brief survey of Mamardashvili's biography and thought by Annie Epelboin, and a very interesting contribution by Miglena Nikolchina on the concept of *Verwandlung* (transformation) from Mamardashvili's early work on Karl Marx's "transformed forms" (*verwandelte Formen*) up to his interpretation of Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis* (*Verwandlung*).

The particular character of Mamardashvili's work explains the editors' preference for interviews, papers, and lectures. In opposition to the dead and deformed language of official Soviet ideology, Mamardashvili practiced philosophy as a "personal experiment." He never conveyed to his audience already established "truths," but offered the concrete experience of thinking, where the living language of thought creates a space for authentic encounters and discussions. Language as a "form of life" can only take place in public conversations, in the *agora*, which Mamardashvili created every time he engaged his audience in his own thinking, during a lecture, a seminar, or an interview (158–62). His philosophy takes shape with an always unconventional and fully deliberate language, in the concrete practice of oral discourse.

Such a combination makes translation particularly difficult. Mamardashvili constantly deviates from the trivialized meaning of current language,

thereby creating a tension that potentially generates authentic and original thoughts. But he does so in the apparently effortless flow of oral discourse, where implicit references, common sayings, and even gestures help destabilize the audience and move them from the dead space of the official language into the living experience of thinking. Here the translators are well aware of such a challenge. In the introduction they offer an interesting discussion, for example, about their handling of the translation of "Russian" in the double sense of nationality and citizenship, and the even more complex rendering of the Russian terms *chelovek* and *lichnost'* as "human being," "individual," or "person" (43–46).

This collection offers English-speaking readers the chance to "hear" Mamardashvili's voice as an important philosopher both within the late-Soviet context, and in himself, because of the depth of his theoretical questions and the originality of his answers. Mamardashvili develops a noncanonical interpretation of Marx, René Descartes, and Immanuel Kant, as well as of Proust and Kafka. Read in the context of the current discussions of nation and freedom, Mamardashvili's idea that "culture as such is an ability or capacity to practice complexity and diversity" (59) points out the role and the responsibility of European traditions of thought in dealing with present-day crises.

The title of this collection alludes to the philosopher's condition, which, "like any human being whose goal is to recreate themself," can be described in Proust's words as a "citizen of an unknown homeland" (25). The spy's strategy to keep oneself invisible is not only a way of life that allows the philosopher to stay free under unfree circumstances, but also provides a diverse point of view from which to observe the whole of European culture. The editors of this collection compare Mamardashvili's belonging to Europe, and at the same time his acknowledgement of his own distance, to some ideas of recent postcolonial studies (50–51), thereby offering new perspectives and new reasons to discover one of the most compelling thinkers of late Soviet times.

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Pamiatnik i prazdnik: Etnografia Dnia Pobedy. Ed. Mischa Gabowitsch. St. Petersburg: Nestor-Istoria, 2020. 416 p. Notes. Illustrations. Photographs. Maps. ₽500 rubles, hard bound.
doi: 10.1017/slr.2022.196

In May 2005, I spent several days observing the annual celebrations of May 9, Victory Day, in St. Petersburg, Russia. Sixty years before, the German leadership had surrendered to the Allied Forces, ending bloodshed, destruction, and genocide on the European continent, although of course violence would last for months, even years, where deportations, forced migrations, or guerilla combat continued to threaten the lives and livelihood of hundreds of thousands. For me, the most memorable sight of that day was the oranges and half slices of bread that had been carefully placed on the stones marking the mass graves on Piskarevskoe Memorial Cemetery. Displaying only numbers—1941, 1942, or 1943—the concrete slabs identify the year in which the thousands of