

Sweet Darusya: A Tale of Two Villages. By Maria Matios. Trans. Michael M. Naydan and Olha Tytarenko. New York: Spuyten Duyvil, 2019. xvi, 208 pp. Notes. \$16.00, paper.

doi: 10.1017/slr.2021.45

Another important addition to Spuyten Duyvil's list of east European titles, *Sweet Darusya*, originally published in 2003, is the best-known work by Mariia Matios, one of Ukraine's leading contemporary women writers. Matios grew up in Bukovina and published her first story in 1992; for the rest of the 1990s she focused on poetry. A short story collection titled *Natsiia* (Nation, 2001) first attracted considerable notice to her. *Solodka Darusia* cemented Matios's reputation as a major voice in Ukrainian literature; it won multiple prizes, became a bestseller, and was successfully adapted for the stage. A deftly put-together magic realist novel, *Sweet Darusya* has already been translated into several other languages; its French translation became the first Ukrainian title brought out by Éditions Gallimard. Two other books by Matios were published in English earlier, translated by Yuri Tkacz, but have so far attracted limited attention. With her most famous novel out, Matios can now expect a fuller, more nuanced appreciation by English-language readers.

The cover identifies *Sweet Darusya* as a collaboration of two translators, but the preface and the translator's notes are presented in the first person singular. While unattributed, they are presumably by Michael Naydan (earlier publications of fragments from the novel identify them as translated by Michael Naydan with Olha Tytarenko, suggesting that he was the primary translator). The notes are helpful and used sparingly, although the translator appears to have missed that the novel's mention of *Chapaev* (53) is for absurdist effect only. Without revealing key plot details, the preface introduces the author and orients the reader in the text's complex structure: the three parts of the novel unfold in reverse chronological order. It does not explain why the English translation has a different subtitle from the original: in Ukrainian, it is *Drama na try zhyttia* (A Drama in Three Lives), while in English it became "A Tale of Two Villages." The change refocuses attention from the book's temporal organization to its spatial setting, in what could be considered either one or two villages: just like Matios's native Roztoky, the novel's Cheremoshne is situated on the two banks of the Cheremosh, which between the two world wars served as the border between Poland and Romania, bisecting the part of the Carpathians that is home to the Hutsuls, a distinct Ukrainian ethnographic group that is perhaps best known internationally thanks to Sergei Parajanov's film *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors* (1965), an adaptation of Mykhailo Kotsiubyns'kyi's eponymous Modernist novella. *Sweet Darusya*'s theme and setting, however, are closer to another prominent work of Ukrainian poetic cinema, Yuri Illienko's *The White Bird with a Black Mark* (1971), likewise unfolding before, during, and shortly after World War II.

The novel tackles the traumas that befell this region during and immediately after the war, as the Soviet and Nazi interventions led multicultural spaces to collapse, the local Jewish community to be wiped out, and the rules structuring the locals' lives to be brutally destroyed. As Oleksandra Wallo notes in her study *Ukrainian Women Writers and the National Imaginary* (2020): "The personal drama of Darusia's family takes place against the background of this border dissolution and boundary collapse. However, Matios shows that while some boundaries disappear, others are constituted. National imaginings and brutal technologies of power, brought into Cheremoshne by war, draw sharp national fault lines, including right through women's bodies, which in this new discourse come to symbolically represent their community and its territory" (106). In the novel's first part, set in the 1960s, Darusya's neighbors treat her like a holy fool. She appears to be mute, which the reader later learns is a consequence

of the horrific trauma that befell her in her childhood, but the narrative gives insight into her rich inner life.

Like Kotsiubyns'kyi's novella, Matios's text offers the reader an insider's perspective on the world where the events unfold, with the help of a *skaz*-type narrative interspersed with a Greek chorus of locals commenting on the events. However, there are significant differences between the narrative voice and reported speech of the principal characters; the latter is quoted sparingly but with great effect, as when we first hear Darusya's lover Ivan speak in Part II. Here the original presents unadulterated Hutsul dialect and vocabulary unfamiliar to many Ukrainian readers. Representing this in English is a formidable challenge, and the translators generally privilege content over style and register, but the results are occasionally puzzling, as when they render *nenzo liesta* as "wicked wench" (39). At times, the translation experiments with using American dialectisms, but with questionable success, as in having a character who speaks fairly standard Ukrainian say "they was goin' to a weddin'" (125). Such problematic choices, however, are few; overall, the translation is fluent and engaging.

With *Sweet Darusya* and Oksana Zabuzhko's earlier translated *Museum of Abandoned Secrets* (2009), two key texts by Ukrainian women focused on the traumas of World War II and Stalinist repression and their enduring effects published in this century's first decade are now available in English. As the world pays increasing attention to Ukraine's current challenges and dramatic history, *Sweet Darusya* is essential for understanding the lasting impact of past traumas on the complex socio-political landscape of Ukraine, and of post-totalitarian eastern Europe more broadly.

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Vera i lichnost' v meniaiushchemsia obshchestve: Avtobiografika i pravoslavie v Rossii kontsa XVII-nachala XX veka. Ed. Laurie Manchester and Denis Sdvizhkov. Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2019. 408 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. ₴288, hard bound.

doi: 10.1017/slr.2021.46

For a long time, historians have been thinking over the question of why the "silence of Muscovy" persisted after modernity—an age of self-expression—began in the eighteenth century. The authors of this collection decided to find an answer to this question. Their goal was to research the role of faith in the establishment of personal selfhood under imperial Russia.

The collection was named after the issue at hand, which, in turn, marked it as an innovative work in this field of research. Relying on the studies of Protestant autobiographies of the Modern Age, research in history has long ago refuted the traditional opposition between modernity and religiousness. Due to meager source base, searching for religious autobiographical individualism in texts written during the Russian Synodal Era has been difficult for a long time, though this did not prevent the emergence of several detailed, comprehensive works by such authors as Laurie Manchester or Nadieszda Kizenko. The authors of articles in this collection undertook two tasks based on the suggestion that "the autobiographical vacuum as such does not allow a conclusion that the clergy did not write texts on themselves" (61). The first was to outline the complex of genres which focused on self-presentation; and the second was to show how to read them as ego-texts (62).

The articles in this collection are chronologically divided into three large sections: "From the beginning of the Modern Age to the 19th Century," "From the Great Reforms to Revolution," and "An excursion: after 1917."