

Écrivains franco-russes. Sous la direction de MURIELLE LUCIE CLÉMENT. Amsterdam, Rodopi, 2008. 236 pp. Pb €47.00.

Although some comment on the detrimental effect of linguistic conversion on Nabokov's style, the author of *Loïtta* remains the most successful Russian writer in a foreign language. However, that even Nabokov, who mastered English and French from a very young age, found it hard to change language, metaphorized by his elusive Knight's struggle to embrace Englishness, metaphors by his pursuit of his elusive English mother, that is at the heart of the novel marking the writer's linguistic transposition. To every Nabokov there are therefore dozens of Russians for whom, to use Aleksandr Zimovjev's words, emigration means 'protracted torture' or even 'execution' or, as Mariia Rozanova puts it, 'a very terrible experience'. By presenting 18 Russian-born authors who at some point in their career wrote in French, *Écrivains franco-russes* wants to defy this reality. The long-standing tradition of Russians expressing themselves in French, states the preface, stems from mostly friendly Franco-Russian relations that go back to Anna Yaroslava's marriage to Henry I. Adopting a chronological approach and clearly guided by the principle of diversity, the collection includes essays on both well-known authors (Sarraute, Némirovsky, Troyat) and less famous ones (Comtesse de Ségur, Michel Matvev), presenting novelists, poets, playwrights (Arthur Adamov), explorers (Pierre de Tchihatchef) and salon writers (Zinaïda Volkonskaïa). Just as the level of their success, the authors' involvement with French varies enormously; whilst Nabokov or Rawicz, who, born and educated in Poland, can in any case hardly be considered Russian, barely flirted with becoming French writers, Roman Gary, whose Russian origins are equally disputable, or André Makine never published in a language other than their adopted one. Diverse is also — and this the volume's major weakness — the quality of the articles; whilst most contributors limit themselves to a more or less engaging resumé of the writer's career, a few attempt an insightful analysis of his/her work. What is consistent (and highly irritating), however, is the poor quality of editing and proofing, which results in inconsistent referencing, awkwardly constructed sentences and spelling mistakes, including the notorious confusion between adjectives and nouns referring to nationalities. This is particularly ironic given that one essay investigates Serge Charthoune's violation of French, which Annick Morrad ascribes to the Dadaist's simultaneous unawareness of and desire to subvert grammatical rules. More serious though is the fact that despite being largely responsible for the writers' geographic and linguistic migration, the Jewish origins of most of these Franco-Russians are glossed over by Clément's preface. Yet it is precisely their double cultural *appartenance* that both made these writers subject to anti-Semitism and potentially diminished their commitment to Russian language, or at least made less susceptible to the feeling of betrayal afflicting many Russian émigrés. It is therefore inexact to represent the output of the 18 authors uniquely as the fruit of the Franco-Russian *entente cordiale*, the Russians' Francophilia and the French readers' penchant for Slavic exoticism, as does indeed Clément's introduction, especially since many texts examined by the collection deal with the Jewish predicament, including its apogee, the Holocaust.

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European Literary Immigration into the French Language: Readings of Gary, Krstof, Kundera and Sempurn. By TIJANA MILIETIC. Amsterdam and New York, Rodopi, 2008. 372 pp. Pb €74.00.

This examination of the effects on a novelist of immigration into a new language and a new culture offers valuable insights into the work of many authors who have

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burgh, Edinburgh University Press,

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f, well-informed and impressively
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the margins of the industry. His
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