Nevertheless, as Bullock points out, ‘it is striking that the rehabilitation of Russia’s own Silver Age was in part begun in the prefaces to mass-circulation editions of the more widely read and more carefully canonized Wilde’.

Another aspect of Modernism that needed some accommodation if it was to have an impact in Russia was the free verse of much Western poetry. Emily Lygo shows how difficult it was for some poetic translators in the Thaw years to follow their originals and abandon the time-honoured habits of traditional prosody, which still in the twenty-first century retain a considerable power in Russia. At the same time, however, backed by creative translation theorists such as El’ga Linetskaya and Efim Etkind, some translators seized the opportunity of translating figures such as Pablo Neruda or Nazim Hikmet in order to experiment with the still generally unacceptable free verse, and so to recover something of the formal explorations that had flourished in the first decades of the twentieth century, which in its turn helped to rehabilitate such poets as Khlebnikov, Buriuk, Kuzmin, and Kruchenykh.

This final essay raises very interesting questions, then, but it contains no examples of the actual work of the translators, as opposed to the debates about translation. The same applies, *grosso modo*, to the volume as a whole, with some exceptions in the case of Lukin, Zhukovsky, and particularly Tynianov. It is valuable to study the political and cultural context of translation, of course, but this study would have been illuminated if the reader had been shown more often just what accommodation (or the lack of accommodation) might mean in practice. How free was the translation of William Carlos Williams? How did *The Importance of Being Earnest* sound in Russian?

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Through the 1970s and 1980s Seamus Heaney developed an increasing interest in poets from (as the phrase then went) ‘the other Europe’. The expression had gained a certain currency to refer to writers from central and Eastern Europe who had suffered the constraints of the Cold War placed upon cultural communication across and within the continent, and in particular the disadvantages of living and working under communist regimes. For Heaney, who got to know
their work through the anthologies in English that appeared from the late 1960s onwards, the commitment shown by such poets to their vocation proved inspiring, as did their talent for devising strategies of indirection that allowed them to express themselves in the face of censorship and other forms of oppression.

Indeed, their plight and their practice seemed to Heaney to provide an enabling precedent for the Northern Irish writer who, while appalled by the sectarian landscape of the Troubles, could not but experience the ‘call of the tribe’, an expected allegiance to the community of his/her origins – offset throughout by a wariness of becoming factional, of enlisting his or her voice on behalf of a sectarian cause. The analogy did not fail to raise a few eyebrows: after all, the self-imposed censorship of the Irish writer, who nonetheless operated in a democratic environment that ensured freedom of speech, might seem a luxury when compared to the predicament faced by writers who bore the full brunt of totalitarian rule. Be that as it may, Heaney’s attraction to the work of East European poets as a model for writerly strategies defined by indirection and mediation, rather than by explicit pronouncements on a dire political situation, proved imaginatively empowering, and yielded memorable results in his writing. These are found in genres ranging from critical prose to elegiac verse – perhaps most famously with the citation and celebration of Czesław Miłosz, in Station Island (1984) – and poems that addressed politics and history with an obliqueness inspired by what Heaney admired as a mid-twentieth-century East European poetics of evasion. Such were the civic allegories in The Haw Lantern (1987), those pieces that balanced opacity against transparency in their description of imaginary locations (utopian or dystopian?): ‘From the Land of the Unspoken’, ‘From the Republic of Conscience’, ‘From the Frontier of Writing’, ‘From the Canton of Expectation’. Heaney’s sense of rapport with Polish, Russian, or Czech poets also yielded a substantial critical output – most prominently in his collection of essays The Government of the Tongue (1988), which acknowledged and discussed the impact not just of Miłosz but also Osip Mandelstam, Miroslav Holub, and Zbigniew Herbert, celebrating their ability to show that, in the face of ‘inhuman tyranny’, ‘lyric action constituted radical witness’, and to write out of ‘the mutually indifferent intersection of art and suffering’.

In the book under review, Carmen Bugan interrogates and discusses the tangle of influence and emulation generated by Heaney’s intense and sustained familiarity with his admired East European models – of which she chooses to focus on Mandelstam, Brodsky, Miłosz, and Herbert. For Bugan, their influence on Heaney is pervasive,
resonating with his broad understanding of the link between a poetics and a civic/political concern – ‘merging the personal with the public in art’ – and consolidating some of his conceptual, rhetorical, and stylistic options. Her book reflects a deep engagement with the various dimensions of Heaney’s work – including his critical prose (which is so often, as Bugan convincingly argues, self-commentary) – as much as with the vast scholarly processing of his œuvre. Her argument is duly supported by clear organization of the volume, guiding the reader through the different ways in which the four East European poets contribute to the delineation of a ‘poetics of exile’ illustrated at key points in Heaney’s work.

Throughout, Bugan understands and practises criticism as discrimination. She predicates her argument on a broader distinction between, on the one hand, the formative significance that certain poets had for Heaney – the English Romantics, Yeats, Hopkins, Kavanagh – and on the other the influence he acknowledges of these poets from central and Eastern Europe, with several of whom he developed ‘more of a peer relationship’. This sense of a deeper affinity allows Bugan to demonstrate how Heaney understands his East European models as a congenial ‘poetic family’, finding in them a confirmation (rather than merely an extension) of his poetics, ethics, and politics. This is productively related in the book to the long-established perception (endorsed by the poet himself) that Heaney’s acknowledgement of other writers, in his verse as in his critical prose, often involves an element of self-vindication.

Bugan’s declared (and indeed hardly ever qualified) admiration for Heaney is arguably a source of critical energy in the book, but some of its manifestations may appear excessive to sections of her potential readership. Although she states from the outset that she does not ‘make such strong claims [as Heaney] for the influence of East European poetry on the English-speaking world’, the rest of the book does little to support this proposition. In fact, much of it reads like a structured account of Heaney’s own recognition of the impact of East European poetry. When Bugan describes ‘the main question’ addressed by her study as understanding how ‘Heaney achieves a poetry that equally delights and instructs’, readers may feel they have entered the territory of literary hagiography. While it is true that the author is only applying to Heaney a model (the Horatian dichotomy of dulce and utile) that Heaney himself invokes in his critical discussion of his East European models, there is nonetheless a difference between a scholarly analysis conducted by an academic reader and the licence proper to what Eliot once called ‘the criticism of the practitioner’. Elsewhere in the book –
which also pays significant attention to biography – we are told that ‘Seamus Heaney is a poet of tremendous moral strength and humility’ who ‘offers us a parable that has timeless and universal meaning’. Through his encounters with Mandelstam and Brodsky, Milosz and Herbert, he ‘rejuvenated the timeless dreams of poetry’. The author’s enthusiasm for this leading poet of our time has a refreshing simplicity which is unusual because the prevalent critical ethos of our time has been sceptical as regards aesthetic value. Yet readers may at points yearn for some of that scholarly fastidiousness which Heaney himself endorsed, even if half-ironically, when he acknowledged, in his 1988 interview with Rand Brandes, the structuring values of ‘my New Critically trained generation’.

One of Heaney’s commitments this book honours is translation: the late poet’s interest in it, both as concept and practice, was evident in his versions of poems or plays originating in a variety of languages and traditions, in his criticism, and even in the recurrence throughout his poetry of tropes of rewriting. Heaney was aware of how his access to the work of fellow-poets writing in other languages was made possible only by the mediation provided by translators, some of them poets in their own right, and he was often explicit about this. Carmen Bugan’s title suggests that Heaney’s encounter with these poets in translation, rather than in the source languages, affected his assimilation of their various examples. However, there is very little in the book about the translations qua translations. The passages on the available versions and their translators tend to be factual – names, dates, editions – rather than critical. True, Bugan duly acknowledges the importance, for her own purposes, of registering ‘the translators’ characteristic use of language as well as their understanding of the poems in the original’. Furthermore, the book’s chapters highlight her unquestionable familiarity with a wealth of textual and paratextual information relating to the translators and their texts. She does not, however, discuss how the available versions relate respectively to the source and target literary systems – whether, for instance, they abide by strategies of ‘adequacy’ or ‘acceptability’ (to resort to just one of the models developed within Translation Studies for characterizing such strategies). Confronting such issues in a sustained, rather than incidental way (even if the range of languages involved might mean sometimes working at second hand) would enrich not only her assessment, but more specifically our understanding of how Heaney relates to a variety of poetic traditions. Even in the case of Milosz, some of whose poetry is read throughout Chapter 3 with a detailed attentiveness not accorded to the other three poets, the discussion does
not include a consideration of the fact that it is translations we are reading. A few pages within the chapter on Herbert, which ostensibly address ‘the issue of reading’ his poems ‘in translation’, at first seem another exception. But the passage in fact echoes paratextual and critical sources, while offering merely general dicta on how ‘the poems appear well constructed in their English versions’.

These remarks in no way detract from the book’s abundant positive qualities: Seamus Heaney and East European Poetry in Translation is a densely researched and lucid study of a poetic congeniality that Heaney experienced with four East European poets as a result of (a) reading their translations, (b) personal acquaintance, and (c) familiarity with their critical reputations; a congeniality that, indeed, made them models for the Irish poet’s self-fashioning and imaginative empowerment. Published in the year that saw the death of this most influential of contemporary poets, it represents a fitting tribute to Heaney’s relational poetics, especially the creative ventriloquism highlighted in his version of Anna Blandiana’s ‘Inhabited by a Song’: ‘The song isn’t mine, | It just passes through me sometimes.’

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Among contemporary Spanish writers, Javier Marías undoubtedly has the broadest international appeal. His books have been published in more than fifty countries, they have been translated into more than forty languages, and they are the subject of a growing corpus of critical discussion in newspapers, literary magazines, essays, scholarly monographs, and doctoral theses. In addition, 2013 saw the inclusion of Marías’ work in the Penguin Classics series, which accommodates only three other modern Spanish authors – Cervantes, Pérez Galdós, and Lorca. In this sense, Gareth J. Wood’s contribution is timely and significant, given that among the dozen or so existing books on Marías’ œuvre, his is the only one dedicated to a crucial facet of the novelist’s career: the profound impact that his task as a translator of English works into Spanish has had on his literary style. Indeed, Marías’ fiction, which from the outset and for a long time thereafter received the censure of those who saw in it disloyalty to the Spanish novelistic tradition – his technical repertoire seemed imported, his