Dirk Uffelmann, *Vladimir Sorokin's Discourses: A Companion* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2020), x+225 pp.

Vladimir Sorokin's Discourses: *A Companion*, published as one of the "Companions to Russian Literatures" series edited by Thomas Seifrid (University of Southern California), is the first English monograph on the works of Vladimir Sorokin, one of the representative writers of contemporary Russian literature. Dirk Uffelmann, the author, is a professor of East and West Slavic Literature at Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen and has published several books on Russian culture and literature. In 2013, he organized an international conference titled "Vladimir Sorokin's Languages: Mediality, Interculturality, Translation" (Aarhus University, Denmark) with Tine Roesen (Aarhus University at that time) and coedited *Vladimir Sorokin's Languages* (2013, Slavica Bergensia, volume 11).

The author chronologically examines the major works of Sorokin in this book, which comprises 13 chapters, from his early novels written in the early 1980s to the most recent novels published in the 2010s. Chapter 1, "Introduction," focuses on the early life of Sorokin and his strong connection with the late-Soviet underground artists in the Moscow conceptualist circle. Uffelmann divides the esthetics of Moscow conceptualism into "sots-art conceptualism," thereby reproducing clichés of Socialist Realism, and the abstract and meta-semiotic "white conceptualism," both of which inspired Sorokin. According to Uffelmann, for Sorokin, the esthetics of Moscow conceptualism can apply not only to Soviet ideology but also to any discourse of post-Soviet Russia. The purpose of this book is "to demonstrate that his oeuvre since 1992 can be read as continuous meta-discursive (and thus subversive–affirmative) approach to changing dominant discourses" (p. 15).

Chapters 2–4 highlight the early works of Sorokin in the context of the late-Soviet era: while his first *tamizdat* publication, *The Queue* (1985, written in 1983), reproduces the collective speech of individuals lining up in a queue, the author points out that Sorokin's interest is not in the content of the speech but in the conceptualization of "the way in which language […] represents social interaction and how the reader makes sense out of sounds" (p. 28). The chapter on *The Norm* (1994, written between 1979 and 1983) discusses the "materializing metaphors" device, a trademark of Sorokin. According to Uffelmann, the sots-art novel *Marina's Thirtieth Love* (1987, written between 1982 and 1984), often considered to contain a twofold structure, contains a threefold structure composed of dissident narrative texts, Socialist Realism, and the official newspaper of the CPSU, *Pravda*. In Chapter 5, which focuses on *A Novel* (1994, written between 1985 and 1989), Uffelmann notes that Sorokin returns to abstract "white conceptualism," mimicking a typical nineteenth-century Russian novel. Chapter 6 compares the novelette *A Month in Dachau* (1992) with several Sorokin plays in terms of masochism and totalitarianism.

Chapter 7 discusses Sorokin's new strategy in post-Soviet Russia. Uffelmann considers the 1990s to be a "novelistic incubation period" for Sorokin and focuses on his television and online media activities. While the eccentric novel *Blue Lard* (1999) became an unprecedented bestseller for Sorokin, Uffelmann regards it as a work of "pop-art conceptualism" and locates its commercial success in its popularity, like pulp fiction (Chapter 8). Chapter 9 discusses the mystic saga *Ice Trilogy* (2002–2005) and considers the scholarly debates on Sorokin's sincerity toward his creation.

Chapters 10–12 analyze a series of novels set in the near future in Russia and Europe. The author is skeptical of the "newness" of Sorokin and asserts that in the (anti-)utopia novel *Day of the Oprichnik* (2006), Sorokin conducts, in the same manner as before, "a conceptualization of satirical *discourses about* neo-authoritarian tendencies in the Putin era and an imitation of the ubiquitous post-Soviet dystopian historical novels" (p. 149). Chapter 11 presents the possibility of an ethical reading of *The Blizzard* (2010), comparing this short novel with Lev Tolstoi's *Master and Man* (1895). According to the author, "in *The Blizzard*, the references to Tolstoi's xenotext and the self-references to Sorokin's autotexts become as indistinguishable as playful seriousness and serious game" (p. 164). Chapter 12 considers the postapocalyptic novels *Telluria* (2013) and *Manaraga* (2017) in connection with the problems of Eurasianism and antiglobalism.

In the last chapter, Uffelmann returns to the problem of the "new Sorokin." In his opinion, it is true that Sorokin, during his long writing tenure, has exchanged Soviet themes for various discursive objects. However, "his meta-discursive poetics […] has been preserved" (p. 179). Moreover, at the end of this book, Uffelmann treats Sorokin as a "classic in his own lifetime" (p. 183) who, like Tolstoi, deserves to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature.

As the "Companion" subtitle suggests, this book, with many references to prior research, facilitates readers with a comprehensive insight into each Sorokin work; unfortunately, there are only four English translations of his novels: *The Queue, Ice Trilogy, Day of the Oprichnik,* and *The Blizzard* (an English version of *Telluria* is scheduled for release in 2022). Therefore, this book is highly appealing to English-speaking readers. Hopefully, in the near future, this reliable "Companion" will encourage English translations of Sorokin's works and earn him an international reputation as one of the most extraordinary modern writers.

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