

The Journal of the Sylvia Townsend Warner Society

Editorial

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Editorial

Peter Swaab

You can be culturally an Englander without being a little Englander, and this volume of the *Sylvia Townsend Warner Journal* represents the Warner whose outlook, reading and connections were widely European. It's especially pleasing with this in mind to welcome young scholars from Spain and Estonia to the pages of the *Journal*.

The winner of the Society's Mary Jacobs Prize, Alicia Fernández Gallego-Casilda, is based in Barcelona. Her prize-winning essay 'Translation and ideology in Sylvia Townsend Warner: Six *Romances* of the Spanish Civil War into English' focuses on Warner as a translator, a guise in which until now we have known her mainly for her English version of Proust's *Contre Sainte-Beuve*. Fernández Gallego-Casilda analyses Warner's English versions of the six poems and illuminates the political motives behind her translation decisions. In 'Six *Romances* of the Spanish Civil War and their English translations' she has also kindly prepared parallel-text versions of the poems in the original Spanish and Warner's English.

Ksenia Shmydkaya is a researcher at Tallinn University's School of Humanities. Her doctoral thesis explores Warner as a historical novelist alongside two of her notable European women contemporaries little known to English readers – the Polish writer Stanisława Przybyszewska and the Russian Olga Forsh. Shmydkaya's essay in the *Journal* 'Georg Lukács, Sylvia Townsend Warner and *The Historical Novel*' is a wider assessment of Lukács and Warner. It draws on a fascinating exchange from 1938 that she discovered in the Russian State Archive of Literature and Arts within the correspondence of the *International Literature* journal. In it Warner sets Lukács right about his 'grave misunderstandings' of Walter Scott's social and national status, and demurs too at Lukács (in the published excerpt) leaving female figures such as Jeanie Deans out

of his account of Scott's protagonists. Lukács replied to her strictures in *Internatsional'naya Literatura* (he wasn't grateful).

The most important friendship that Warner and Valentine Ackland struck up when they went to Spain in 1936 was with Stephen Clark, a Quaker who had gone to Spain to report on a relief organisation that was supporting the government side in the Civil War. They remained close friends with Clark and his family for the rest of their lives. Among the literary fruits of this friendship is 'Modern Times', a mock-heroic poem about travelling to the moon that Warner gave to Clark in the early days of the space age in 1961. She presented the poem in a large, handsome, home-made album, with the lines of the poem quizzically illustrated with cut-out adverts from *The New Yorker*. We are very grateful to Stephen Clark's daughter, Harriet Hall, for showing us the album and making it available to the *Journal* before it finds its eventual home in the Sylvia Townsend Warner and Valentine Ackland Archive in the Dorset History Centre.

The issue also includes two of Warner's stories that haven't been reprinted. These were published in *Lilliput* magazine in 1948 and 1949, and they too have their European side. 'Cuckoo' is set in a bomb-damaged city in post-war Germany, where the protagonist, Frau Beigel, is trying to keep body and soul together in desperate times. In a very different and rather Voltairean mode 'Philibert' describes the artistic triumphs of the 'Court Hairdresser' Monsieur Philibert, whose ambitious headdresses powerfully determine the life of their wearers in the eighteenth-century French court.

To end on a more regretful note, the *Journal of the Sylvia Townsend Warner Society* is returning to yearly as against twice-yearly publication – but we are keeping the door open to restarting the twice-yearly numbers should there be an increase in submissions and editorial assistance.