

Stalin's betrayal of the Resistance, then the increasing schism between those who followed Moscow and those who did not. Czechoslovakia decided him definitively against the former, but he has recently renounced all Communist ties, and now is determined to create a New Greek Left dedicated to reconciliation.

As in Theodorakis's career, so in this book, the three forces of art, politics, and individual talent are inseparable, yet never confused. Nor does the author's obvious adulation for his subject lead him either to sentimentalized excess or to rhetoric. What could have been an overemotional tract remains rational throughout.

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LITERATURA ROSYJSKA: PODRĘCZNIK. Edited by *Marian Jakóbiec*. Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe. Vol. 1: 1970. 631 pp. 80 zł. Vol. 2: 1971. 1,004 pp. 100 zł.

In the name of a team of collaborators, the director of this enterprise, Professor Marian Jakóbiec, for many years the chief editor of the *Kwartalnik Instytutu Polsko-Radzieckiego*, points out in the preface why a new voluminously detailed handbook of the history of Russian literature is an urgent desideratum. He hints at the comparative dearth of comprehensive Polish studies in Russian literature—citing, in guarded language, the historical reasons for this circumstance. It turns out that so far the only really authoritative presentation of Russian literary history, written in Polish as well as in German, came from the pen of the great Alexander Brückner, until 1924 professor of Slavic philology at the University of Berlin. The lapse of time, however, new viewpoints and insights, more advanced methodological approaches, and the total change in the political and social situation of Poland make it clear that the precept of the hour is a complete revision of older Polish views concerning Russian literature and society, even if they were expressed by such venerable authorities as Brückner.

The upshot is this recent ambitious presentation of Russian literature in two volumes, comprising the period from Kievan beginnings to the October Revolution of 1917. Faithful to the principle of collectivity, and also in view of the monumentality of the project, a team of Polish experts in the field of Russian literary studies was assembled to cope with this task, among them noted scholars such as Wiktor Jakubowski, Bohdan Galster, Antoni Semczuk, Zbigniew Barański, Andrzej Walicki, and Ryszard Przybylski. The book is subdivided into four parts dealing with Old Russian literature, the literature of the eighteenth century, Russian letters during the first half of the nineteenth century, and Russian literary developments in the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Individual chapters treat aspects of Kievan and Muscovite literature, the seventeenth century, the baroque in Russia as well as the various facets and modes of expression of classicism and sentimentalism, romanticism, realism, symbolism, and futurism. Methodologically the work is determined by a "personalistic" approach, as the successive chapters are devoted to the life and work of individual authors from Derzhavin to Gorky and Alexander Blok. Special chapters introducing a group of authors belonging to a given period undertake to provide a general sociohistorical characterization of the times during which they lived, and are also concerned with literary problems such as poetics, stylistics, and literary genres in their specific Russian manifesta-

tions. Also, trends and tendencies in literary criticism come under consideration, although it is significant for the whole tenor of this handbook that a long chapter concentrates on Belinsky, while Apollon Grigoriev is treated as a mere appendix, as it were, to a detailed discussion of the radical critics.

Selective bibliographies, a chronological synopsis, and an index contribute to the usability of the handbook. However, the principles according to which the bibliographies were compiled remain obscure. After allowance is made for the restraints imposed by a selective bibliography, the choices all too often seem random, biased, or erratic, especially as far as Western and Russian émigré studies are concerned, with the exception of the chapter devoted to Dostoevsky.

On the whole, the reader derives more profit and satisfaction from the first volume, which is mainly the work of Professor Jakubowski. The majority of the chapters dealing with older Russian literature are distinguished by solid scholarship, sound information, and clarity of presentation, even though controversial issues, such as the authenticity of the *Lay of the Host of Igor*, the *Zadonshchina*, and the correspondence between Ivan the Dread and Prince Kurbsky, are not discussed in detail. But given the character of the book as a general outline, it was not necessary to go deeper into these special problems.

It is a different story with some of the sections pertaining to facts and figures of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Here the authors again and again waver between a sociologicistic and a formal-aesthetic approach, without striking a happy balance. One is painfully aware that the contributors often had to adhere to directives and standards of judgment imposed from without. Certain writers who present an embarrassment for a rigidly ideological interpretation, like Konstantin Leontiev, are hardly mentioned. Others who are either second or third rate, or do not belong at all in a history of literature *stricto sensu*, are lengthily and superfluously discussed. For these reasons, some chapters, like those on Gogol and Leskov, are surprisingly colorless and conventional.

The same is true of the numerous sections dealing with Russo-Polish literary relations. These discussions are of eminent interest to the Slavist as well as the student of comparative literature, and it must be admitted that they contain, in terms of authors cited and pertinent excerpts quoted, a mine of useful and occasionally revealing information. But the tendency is evident to gloss over the tragic complications in the history of the two nations. They are not by-passed in silence; that would have been impossible in light of the historical evidence. They are discussed, however, so as to serve the purposes of a new *ugoda*. The treatment is "dialectical" in the worst sense of the word. The stereotyped antitheses "progressive" and "obscurantist" or "chauvinistic," "reactionary," and "revolutionary," and so forth, clatter mechanically on and on *ad nauseam* in an ideological fog in which "tous les chats sont gris." These chapters, their wealth of material notwithstanding, are the greatest disappointment the book has in store for the unwary reader.

Far above the level of the second volume looms Przybylski's article about Dostoevsky, the man and his work. In spite of a few grating notes of an inappropriate sociologism in the interpretation, and the fact that in the discussion of *The Possessed* there is no mention of the name of Shigalev and all it stands for, this essay is profound, and written with an admirable breadth of vision, insight, and penetration. The lucid discussion especially of the literary, social, philosophic, and religious problems facing the young Dostoevsky makes it evident that Przybylski, himself the author of a book called *Dostoevsky and the Accursed Questions* (*Dostojewski i*

"*przekłete problemy*," Warsaw, 1964), knows his hero thoroughly and understands him to the very bottom of his predicaments and problems.

Otherwise, the book is skillfully edited and well printed, and the illustrations are selected with taste and circumspection. But as far as originality, empathy, and the unflinching courage to face the facts of history are concerned, it does not measure up to the standards set by Brückner. The last word of Polish scholarship in this field has not yet been said. This handbook is rather a beginning, and as such, despite much honest, expert work and good will, is not a very promising one, especially in its second part.

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THE BROKEN ICON: INTUITIVE EXISTENTIALISM IN CLASSICAL RUSSIAN FICTION. By *Geoffrey Clive*. New York: Macmillan, 1972. xxi, 233 pp. \$7.95.

One of the outstanding features of Russian literature is its dramatization of what, in modern philosophy, has come to be called "existential" problems. Partly as a result of its delayed development, the classical Russian literature of the nineteenth century was in the same phase that major Western literatures had reached during the Renaissance. This accounts for the special explosive force and spiritual freshness and intensity of the great Russian novelists, who portray the fundamental antinomies and dilemmas of human existence with a vividness and directness that their Western contemporaries are no longer able to command.

Geoffrey Clive has obviously felt this quality of Russian literature, and has been led by this perception to approach a series of important novelists in terms of modern philosophical concepts. Existentialism is a philosophy that attempts to analyze and systematize the same sort of spiritual experiences to which only Russian literature in modern times has succeeded in giving convincing artistic life. Each of the chapters begins with a discussion of one or another existential category or issue (the absurd, boredom, the inauthentic, the hubris of pure rationalism, the ultimate "subjectivity" of the truth about human life), and correlates this with the work of Russian novelists (Gogol, Goncharov, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Solzhenitsyn). The result is a suggestive and continually interesting book, extremely well written, and quite illuminating within the terms of the task that Professor Clive has set for himself. It provides an excellent introduction to some of the leading existentialist ideas as well as to the interplay between philosophy and literature.

For the specialist in either field, however, the work will probably prove less satisfactory. Anyone acquainted with existentialism is not likely to find anything new in Clive's discussion; and his use of it in relation to Russian literature, though deft and skillful, will seem partial and fragmentary to the literary critic. One could also quarrel with points of detail (such as Clive's cautious but unmistakable acceptance of Shestov's view that Dostoevsky was of the devil's party); but this is not the place to discuss problems of that kind. A more general criticism would be that Clive tends to separate the existential and the sociohistorical off too sharply one from the other. Thus he loses some of the *existential* specificity—the rootedness in concrete life—of the literary works he is discussing. In analyzing such works only as examples of presumably universal existential categories, he tends to revive the