

STUDIEN ZUR GESCHICHTE DER RUSSISCHEN KLASSIZISTISCHEN ELEGIE. By *Bernhard Kroneberg*. Osteuroplastudien der Hochschulen des Landes Hessen, series 3. Frankfurter Abhandlungen zur Slavistik, vol. 20. Wiesbaden: Athenäum, Franz Steiner Verlag, 1972. xi, 243 pp. DM 56, paper.

Professor Kroneberg selects for his study the period from 1735, when Trediakovskii published his two elegies in *Novyi i kratkii sposob . . .*, to about 1774, when the journal *Vechera* signaled a retreat from the classical standards of elegy, a retreat accompanied by the appearance of parodies and of elegies containing elements of sentimentalism. The main authors included are Trediakovskii, Sumarokov, Rzhevskii, and Kheraskov.

The author chooses this particular time span because of his conception of the classical Russian elegy. He rejects G. A. Gukovskii's "purist" approach of 1927, where Sumarokov's love elegies of 1759 were held to be the best classical model of the genre. Kroneberg, relying on empirical evidence from ancient to modern times, prefers a broader definition of the function of the classical elegy encompassing the portrayal of "leidenschaftlicher Liebe oder leidenschaftlicher Klage um eine verstorbene Person" (p. 13), utilizing the rhetorical devices of passionate monologue, and introducing complications in the form of nature descriptions and elements of conflict or rivalry. From these premises, the author proceeds in chronological order, first analyzing each elegy separately and then in relation to its place in the total picture. His analysis takes into account both the developing norm and the deviations. Sociohistorical factors, as they relate to the formation and modification of normative standards for the Russian classicist elegy, are also considered.

Kroneberg's method works well and produces a meticulous, closely-reasoned description of a number of elegies linked together in historical perspective. One hesitates to call this true analysis, however, because the author's model is pragmatic and empirical, rather than theoretical in the sense of an ordering philosophical principle. It is a journeyman's approach, and as such it lacks the master's touch that would transform mere "Studien zur Geschichte" into a scholar's vision, an encounter, via the classical elegy, with the deeper human purposes of art.

The volume is essentially a useful reference tool. It provides a careful index, an extensive bibliography, and thoughtful prose translations of the Russian elegies into German.

RIMVYDAS SILBAJORIS
Ohio State University

THE DACHA AND THE DUCHESS: AN APPLICATION OF LÉVI-STRAUSS'S THEORY OF MYTH IN HUMAN CREATIVITY TO WORKS OF NINETEENTH-CENTURY RUSSIAN NOVELISTS. By *E. C. Barksdale*. New York: Philosophical Library, 1974. ix, 144 pp. \$7.50.

Professor Barksdale's study seeks to apply a structuralist model of myth to a common thematic question of nineteenth-century Russian literature—tension between old agrarian and new urban values. The Lévi-Strauss paradigm of binary opposition and synthesis through some third mode is exemplified in the Pandora myth: pastoral utopia denied by Pandora's arrival with hope being the synthesizing mode. The Pandora myth (with utopia representing agrarian Russia

and Pandora the city) is applied directly to Goncharov's *Oblomov*, and to a variety of diverse writers (Aksakov, Tolstoy, Gogol, and Dostoevsky) in much more general terms.

The structuralist model is neither consistently applied nor does it provide an enhanced understanding of the Russian works in question. Barksdale's treatment of Goncharov, and of the other writers, is mostly a string of fragmented clichés, strained Pandora parallels, summarized information theory, and a parade of unexplained charts. For example, the similarity of the death motif in *Oblomov*'s pastoral utopia and in Stolz's squirrel cage of urban industriousness is discussed at length. But, as the author himself maintains, agrarian "death" and urban "death" are ironically similar and have no effect on each other. There is no reference to any structural harmonization of these opposites as Lévi-Strauss's system projects in the Oedipus myth or as the Pandora example promises to illustrate.

Barksdale's remarks about the other authors quickly dissolve into arbitrary and, in terms of myth theory, extraneous pronouncements: Aksakov created an epic encomium to the country (no city images are treated); Tolstoy used agrarian images rhetorically to preach a moral message (a truism that is not enhanced by any myth reference); Gogol inverted the value of both city and country, making them surrealistic "nightmares" (how does a double set of negatives fit the structuralist tensive system?). Dostoevsky's famous lack of agrarian settings does not deter Barksdale from maintaining that Dmitrii Karamazov's love for nature and Myshkin's exit from the city for recovery in the Swiss mountains are significant within the Pandora question. Private symbolism and the collective aspects of myth become hopelessly mixed throughout the book.

The study of myth, structuralist or otherwise, is too important an approach to literary criticism to be stretched into the Procrustean bed this book offers.

ROGER B. ANDERSON
University of Kentucky

ALEXANDER BESTUZHEV-MARLINSKY. By *Lauren G. Leighton*. Twayne's World Author Series, no. 344. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1975. 161 pp. \$7.50.

Russian Romantic authors of the second rank have been sadly ignored, and even when they have been the object of special study by Russian scholars, the particular critical approach has left much unsaid. The appearance in English of a monograph devoted to Alexander Bestuzhev-Marlinskii is, therefore, a welcome event, and doubly so, because Professor Leighton has presented us with a comprehensive, balanced, and informed study. My only caveat is that the work is rather short, though, undoubtedly, this is not the author's choice but that of the editors, whose World Author Series tends toward brief monographs.

In five major chapters we learn of Alexander Bestuzhev's biography, his activity as a critic, his pre-Decembrist prose tales (1820–25), his contribution after 1830 (which Leighton terms "The Extravagant Prose [1830–1837]"), and, finally, about Bestuzhev-Marlinskii as poet. There is a selected bibliography, and a list in English and Russian of Bestuzhev-Marlinskii's titles, arranged according to cycles and/or genres (for example, the Livonian cycle of Historical Tales, Sea Stories, Tales of Horror, Tales of Men and Passions, the Caucasian Cycle, and so forth). It is often difficult to categorize works of Romantic fiction, given the habit