A DECADE OF EUPHORIA: WESTERN LITERATURE IN POST-STALIN RUSSIA, 1954–64. By *Maurice Friedberg.* Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1977. xii, 371 pp. $17.50.

After reading this book, in which Professor Friedberg (author of *Russian Classics in Soviet Jackets* [1962] and other works about Soviet literature) has assembled rich and varied material on the publication, dissemination, and reception of Western literature, both past and present, in the Soviet Union in the first decade after Stalin's death, one may perhaps feel inclined to question the legitimacy of its title. It is only relatively speaking, as seen in contrast to the preceding period, and especially to the post-World War II years—with their officially proclaimed and enforced slogan of "anti-cosmopolitanism"—that the 1954–64 decade can be treated as "euphoric." Toward the end of the study, in which various aspects of Soviet censorship (the author significantly entitles his first chapter "The Red Pencil"), selection, and adaptation are illustrated by numerous, often not widely known examples, Professor Friedberg himself arrives at the following conclusion which may be seen as contradicting his optimistic title: "In surveying Soviet publishing and criticism of the first post-Stalin decade against the background of the preceding years, the first observation that suggests itself is that the similarities are much stronger than the differences and that although the range of works, authors, subject matter, and styles was significantly widened, the quantitative changes, to paraphrase a Marxist formula, were not of sufficient magnitude to be described as qualitative ones. The essential features of Soviet publishing and criticism, to say nothing of the censorship, remained essentially stable, though at times they became more flexible and more permissive (or less efficient?); these shifts, in turn, could often be traced to the far greater complexity of policy and practical factors that had to be reckoned with."

Among those "policy and practical factors," as Professor Friedberg clearly shows, was the increasing demand, on the part of Soviet readers, for "light reading." This led to the exceptionally large editions of such authors as Arthur Conan Doyle or Alexandre Dumas-*père*, and in more recent years to the growing popularity of Georges Simenon and even Agatha Christie. Friedberg quotes some interesting extracts from two articles by a certain Il'ia Kremlev. In an article in *Kommunist* (June 1957), Kremlev complained of the enormous press runs of works by Mayne Reid and Jules Verne, but was even more indignant about the three million copies of Alexandre Dumas-*père* published in the course of less than a year: "In terms of paper consumption, this means that the novels relating the adventures of the three musketeers and those of Queen Margot used up nearly twice as much newsprint as the Sovetskij pisatel' Publishing House requires annually for all new Soviet literature." Less than a year later, the same Kremlev, in *Literaturnaia Gazeta,* "noted with great sarcasm" (says Friedberg) that the country's publishers must have decided that "no Soviet citizen should be without his own Dumas," and that, consequently, the same publishing house—the largest publisher of Soviet writers—envisaged, for 1958, the publication of eighty-seven new prose works by Soviet writers, the combined press runs of which would fall far below those of the three Dumas volumes in 1955–56.

In chapter 6, called "The Evils of Capitalism," Friedberg provides information about the publication and reception of major nineteenth-century novelists, such as Dickens, Balzac, Zola, as well as those who are nearer to us in time (Thomas Hardy, Oscar Wilde, Galsworthy) and some of our contemporaries, including Americans (Arthur Miller, Saroyan, Salinger), not omitting many little-known writers of various nationalities. It is often the portrayal of the "evils of capitalism" that is particularly brought to the fore and stressed in their work. Chapters 7 and 8 are devoted entirely to contemporary Western writers, divided into "comrades, friends, and kindred spirits" on the one hand, and "traitors and undesirables," on the other. The former include

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German anti-Nazis, such as Heinrich Mann, Lion Feuchtwanger, and others, as well as such Anglo-American sympathizers with the Soviet regime as George Bernard Shaw and Theodore Dreiser, and various French and other European and Latin American Communists and leftists. In the second category one finds such "traitors" as Arthur Koestler, George Orwell, and Howard Fast (the first-named has not even been given a place in the Soviet *Literary Encyclopedia*, publication of which began during the so-called "thaw," nearly ten years aften Stalin's death). Among the writers in this group, a prominent place is allotted to Franz Kafka, whose name figures in the title of this chapter, "Traitors, Kafka, and Other Undesirables." For a long time even after Stalin's death Kafka's work was almost completely ignored in the Soviet Union. His literary resurrection originated in his native Czechoslovakia and has only gradually spread to the Soviet Union.

An important role in the publication of Western literature, and especially in the widening of its volume and range, has been played by *Inostrannaia literatura,* a monthly periodical founded in 1955 and almost entirely devoted to foreign literature and the arts. But other Soviet periodicals, including some provincial ones (*Don, Prostor*), have also helped to acquaint Soviet readers with contemporary Western writers, and Friedberg has made extensive use of these journals in his account of the fortunes of Western writing in the Soviet Union. Even in the face of complaints and laments like those of Kremlev, Friedberg asserts, the periodicals continued their publication of Western literature, and this, at least partly, "in order to boost their circulations."

In a work of such scope and such variety of factual information, certain gaps and disproportions are, of course, inevitable. Among the major modern writers who are —or at least were during that "euphoric" decade—unavailable in Soviet translation one would have liked to read more about Virginia Woolf, who is only fleetingly mentioned by Friedberg on page 286. Her name, he says, is absent from one of the standard Soviet histories of twentieth-century foreign literature by Z. Grazhdanskaia (1963). Yet, in volume 1 of the Soviet *Short Literary Encyclopedia* (published in 1962), to which Friedberg often refers, she is described as a writer who "played a major role in the development of so-called psychological West European novels." Three of her novels (*Jacob's Room, Mrs. Dalloway*, and *To the Lighthouse*) are said to contain "fine pictures of the human psyche, shown however in isolation from all social bonds." This is apparently what made her unacceptable, to which later was added her tendency to "artificial experimentation."

One also regrets that such an interesting writer as the Austrian Robert Musil (1880–1942) is mentioned only in a quotation from one of the most hidebound Soviet literary scholars (M. Gus) who bracketed him with those three notorious bugbears—James Joyce, Marcel Proust, and Franz Kafka (in the index to Friedberg's volume Musil's name is omitted, as are several others). It might have been worth noting that another well-known Soviet critic (N. Veselovskaia), in her article in the *Literary Encyclopedia,* speaks, on the whole, rather favorably of Musil, mentioning his participation in the 1935 Paris Congress in Defense of Culture in which Soviet writers played a conspicuous part, as well as the fact that his work was banned under Hitler, whereupon he emigrated, in 1938, to Switzerland. An article about Musil's principal work of fiction, the unfinished novel *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* (1930–43), described by Veselovskaia as "a sharp social satire about monarchist Austria on the eve of World War I," was published in *Voprosy literatury* in 1962. It is true that no Soviet translations of Musil's works are mentioned in the *Literary Encyclopedia,* and there may have been none.

Professor Friedberg does not go into the problem of the quality of translations and the part played in them by some of the better known Soviet writers, beyond say-

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ing that the art of verse translation is a firmly established tradition in Russia, and listing a few names of well-known twentieth-century poets who helped to uphold that tradition. Of the six poets named, however, two (Bunin and Khodasevich) do not belong to Soviet literature, while Briusov was active in it only in the earliest period, and as a translator belongs really to the prerevolutionary epoch. As for Anna Akhmatova, it is well known that she did not like translating verse and was more or less forced into it after the revolution by the necessities of life. She is also perhaps an unfortunate example of the widespread Soviet practice of translating poetry with the help of *podstrochniki* (interlinear literal translations) which Friedberg mentions in this connection (I happen to know a good Russian connoisseur of Chinese poetry who thinks very poorly of Akhmatova's versions of it done by this method). But, of course, the problem of the quality of Soviet translations, whether of verse or of prose (as well as of the reception of modern Western literature in Soviet scholarship, which Friedberg also barely touches upon) deserves and requires a special study, and it would be unfair to reproach him for by-passing it, though he should have at least mentioned (and even emphasized) the interest which this problem arouses among Soviet writers and scholars, as witnessed especially by the publication of a many-volume series entitled *Masterstvo perevoda*, in which we find contributions by some of the best Soviet literary scholars. Also worth mentioning would have been the book by Professor Efim Etkind (who since 1974 has been living and teaching in France), *Poeziia i perevod* (1963), and his two-volume anthology of poetry translations (published, it is true, in 1968—that is, outside the main period covered by Friedberg's book).

I would also like to mention a minor omission of another kind: in speaking of the growing interest manifested in the Soviet Union in detective novels, and the emergence of homebred competition in this field, Friedberg does not name one of the most successful and ingenious Soviet practitioners of this genre, Julian Semenov.

There are not too many misprints in the book, and most of them are venial and easily corrigible. One strange exception is the name of the well-known French writer Henry Montherlant who has been turned into "Motherland"! Not every reader will guess this, and Montherlant's name is not to be found in the index. There is also a curious *lapsus calami*: on page 170 Primo de Rivera, the subject of Ramon del Valle Inclan's satirical novel, is described as "the *Mexican* dictator of the 1920's."

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STRUCTURALIST POETICS: STRUCTURALISM, LINGUISTICS AND THE STUDY OF LITERATURE. By *Jonathan Culler*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975. xiv, 301 pp. $4.95, paper.

ANALYSIS OF THE POETIC TEXT. By *Yury Lotman*. Edited and translated by *D. Barton Johnson*. With a bibliography of Lotman's works compiled by *Lazar Fleishman*. Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1976. xxx, 309 pp. $16.95.

For the structuralist, man is not just *Homo sapiens* but *Homo significans*—the system-building biped who is constantly giving meaning to arbitrary signs. Structuralism has had great influence on fields ranging from film, art, psychology, anthropology, and linguistics to literary theory—all of which have been united under the term "the sciences of man." As Robert Scholes has noted, structuralism is a methodology with important ideological implications, expressing an almost religious need for a "coherent system that would unite the modern sciences and make the world habitable for man again." The two works reviewed here make a great contribution to structuralist literary theory. They clarify much of the murk and obfuscation of earlier

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