prostonarodnyi are central to his discussion. The themes of serfdom, poverty, and excessive drinking and other vices are followed in detail. Occasionally the discussion, supplemented by quotations, becomes too elaborate (for example, the descriptions of *sokha* and of peasants tilling the land, pp. 126–27). Especially fascinating are the numerous parallels given from West European literature. An interesting point raised is that some authors (like Fonvizin) tended to see and criticize the social evils in the West when they were traveling there, although the same evils were present in Russia.

The milieu of the lower strata of the population is the one that is instrumental in creating and carrying on the folklore tradition, and Gesemann's work familiarizes us with this breeding ground. Frequent references to folklore make us aware of its close connection with the literature reflecting the "lower depths." A case in point is M. D. Chulkov's short story "Gor'kaia uchast'," a combination of literature and folklore. Gesemann makes an interesting observation that the horrifying ending of this story, in which everyone loses his life violently, is an example of the "international migratory motif," and he gives a parallel from Italian balladry (p. 134, n. 466). This motif goes back to Claudius Aelianus's *Variae historiae* (third century A.D.) and is well known in German folklore (Grimms' *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, old popular comic books, and so on). It obviously came to Chulkov's attention in a Russian comic-strip rendering.

FELIX J. OINAS
Indiana University

NINETEENTH-CENTURY RUSSIAN LITERATURE: STUDIES OF TEN RUSSIAN WRITERS. Edited by *John Fennell*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973. 356 pp. $15.00.

This volume consists of eight studies of Russian writers—seven prose writers and three poets—by six British Slavists, four of whom are associated with Oxford University. The three poets—Lermontov, Tiutchev, and Fet—are the subject of one essay by Dr. T. J. Binyon. And two non-Oxford scholars are responsible for two essays each: Professor H. Gifford, of the University of Bristol, on Goncharov and Turgenev, and Professor E. Lampert, of the University of Keele, on Dostoevsky and Tolstoy. The volume opens with the editor's essay on Pushkin. He is followed by Dr. A. de Jonge on Gogol. And the closing essay is by Dr. M. H. Shotton on Chekhov. The essays vary in length. The longest (fifty-seven pages) is the one by Binyon, but then it deals with three major poets whose work spans over half a century. Next (also over fifty pages) come the essays on Pushkin and Gogol. The remaining ones are much shorter.

As the editor says in his introduction, the purpose of this volume is "not to provide the reader with anything like a history of Russian literature in the nineteenth century, but to investigate certain aspects of certain writers." The choice of writers was restricted by space, as was the choice of aspects to be examined in depth. Of his own essay Professor Fennell says that Pushkin's prose, his lyrical poetry, his *skazki*, his so-called miniature dramas, have all been sacrificed for a study of *Evgenii Onegin*, *Boris Godunov*, and the narrative poems, and these were examined primarily in their formal aspects, while, for instance, in the essays on Tolstoy and Dostoevsky the architectonics of their novels is "not given more than a cursory mention." And since not all the contributors approached their subjects in

the same manner or spirit, "the reader may well be disconcerted by the apparent lack of uniformity in treatment."

This, indeed, being the case, it is not easy to evaluate the individual contributions in a brief review. Suffice it to say that most of the essays contain interesting and stimulating things. I found those of Professor Fennell and of Dr. de Jonge the most satisfying. Fennell begins with Pushkin's narrative poems and dwells at some length on *The Gypsies*. One may perhaps disagree with some of his "critical" remarks, but his analysis will no doubt interest the reader. After speaking briefly of *Count Nulin* and *Poltava*, he devotes more space to *The Bronze Horseman*, in which Pushkin "emerges as the *personal* author, not just the omniscient narrator," and which for him "paradoxically . . . is at the same time the most and the least revealing of all his *poèmy*." He also thinks that here Pushkin "for the first time achieves what might be called a synthesis of authorial intimacy and stylistic polyphony."

To *Evgenii Onegin* Fennell devotes about twenty pages, and again he has much that is stimulating to say. He calls it the "most 'intrusive' of all Pushkin's works," and yet he shows how very intricate and, at first sight, contradictory is the relation between the author and his work, its characters, the events described therein, and so on. About half as much space is devoted to *Boris Godunov*, which Fennell, for all its lack of influence on subsequent Russian drama, sees as Pushkin's "triumph" and as something "revolutionary both in the concept of drama and in the concept of historicity." (One may recall here the very high opinion of *Boris Godunov* held by the Soviet writer Iurii Olesha.)

In Dr. de Jonge's essay on Gogol there is a discussion of nearly all of his works, but the pride of place is given to *Dead Souls*, which can be seen as the quintessence of Gogol's genius. As the author says, "If laughter was the positive hero of *The Inspector General*, then language as it is used here is the positive hero of *Dead Souls*. It is through language, the only thing that Gogol felt he could be sure of, that he reached for the normative reality that he was otherwise unable to attain."

Professor Gifford's article on Turgenev suffers from being confined to the novels and ignoring the short stories. One almost wonders whether it would not have been better the other way round. The same author's piece on Goncharov (thirteen pages) is so short by comparison with all the others that there is little chance of saying anything new or particularly illuminating.

The two articles by Professor Lampert, as the editor himself makes clear, take an approach to Dostoevsky and Tolstoy that is predominantly extraliterary. They go over much ground covered before in the vast literature about both writers. But they are well written, and the author does make some interesting points.

As for Dr. M. H. Shotton's essay on Chekhov, I found it a little too "general" and somewhat pedestrian. Many better things have been written about Chekhov.

Binyon's essay, which stands apart from the rest in that it deals with writers whose work will not be familiar to nonspecialized non-Russian readers (surprisingly enough, the only English book on Lermontov which discusses his poetry along with his novel is a little book by Janko Lavrin), has no unifying theme. It represents, in fact, three separate essays, illustrated by fairly numerous quotations in Russian, with English translations. In his analysis of the poems Binyon touches on a number of formal, stylistic points. Of the three parts of the essay, the one on Tiutchev is perhaps the best.

Along with each essay is a "select bibliography." In some cases it includes both the principal Russian editions and the biographical and critical literature; in some, the latter only. There are a few surprising omissions, such as D. S. Mirsky's book on Pushkin; Donald Fanger's study of early Dostoevsky and his relation to Gogol; Ernest Simmons's book about Chekhov, which is certainly better than Magarshack's; the multilingual volume edited by Thomas Eekman and published in Leiden for Chekhov's centenary; and a few other items. Mirsky's classical *History of Russian Literature*, which would have deserved inclusion in all those bibliographies, found its way only into the Chekhov one.

GLEB STRUVE
University of California, Berkeley (Emeritus)

THE RELIGION OF DOSTOEVSKY. By *A. Boyce Gibson.* Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1973. x, 216 pp. $6.95.

"And just think—for our De Sade the entire Russian prelacy performed memorial services, and even read sermons about the man's universal love! Truly, we live in strange times," wrote Turgenev in his letter of September 24, 1882, to Saltykov-Shchedrin. In so stating, Turgenev did not exhibit much imagination. For Dostoevsky was to grow in stature first of all as a religious thinker, although only a few admirers, such as Vladimir Soloviev and Nicholas Berdiaev, went to extremes when they termed him, respectively, a "prophet of God" and a "sufficient justification for the existence of the Russian people in the world." In the first decades of our century the probings into the complexities of Dostoevsky's religious thought led to various conclusions—at times, that he was the greatest theologian ever produced by the Eastern Orthodox Church, and often just the opposite, that he remained his "man from the underground." In any case, Vasilii Rozanov or Lev Shestov did not interpret him in terms of Orthodoxy.

The orientation of interpreters notwithstanding, all this criticism had in common a search for Dostoevsky's fundamental beliefs or disbeliefs, a method that suffered a serious setback when the presumed unity of his philosophy and his literary work began to be questioned. We know today that any pronouncement found in his articles and even in his notebooks undergoes a transformation as soon as it is incorporated into his fiction. The incessant "pro and contra" in his novels calls for a more cautious treatment than was the case when opinions of his characters were patched up with fragments of his publicism and vice versa. Scholarship that stresses the autonomy of the text should receive here due credit. A new danger, however, threatens those who forget about the Russian messianist from *The Diary of a Writer*, and who, eliminating Dostoevsky-the-churchgoer, concentrate on structures growing under his pen. Dostoevsky, probably more than any other writer, is unable to endure such an operation. He loses much of his meaning, which lies somewhere *between*: between his personal convictions and their profoundly transformed shape in the text of his *oeuvre*.

As we learn from the dust jacket, A. Boyce Gibson was a professor of philosophy at the University of Melbourne and died in 1972. His book is a result of his lifelong interest in Dostoevsky. It compares favorably with the best known of the many essays on the subject by Berdiaev. Gibson is more sober, less eulogistic, and more useful as he presents Dostoevsky's development ("tortuous, retrogressive, but continuous and indomitable") instead of a final credo. Strong in theology,