

the story "Bud' zdorov, shkoliar" (1961), which he contrasts with Boris Polevoi's *Povest' o nastoiashchem cheloveke* (1946). The main character in Polevoi's novel is a positive hero in whom the war brings out the best human qualities. The novel is didactic; it has a positive ending and it conforms to the criteria established for the literature of socialist realism. Okudzhava, on the other hand, concentrates on the depiction of the everyday life of a young inexperienced soldier who is faced with the horrors of war and not afraid to admit that he is scared to death. Okudzhava's story lacks ideological or political motivation; it is, rather, a subjective study of the fate of a teen-ager who is placed in unusual conditions with which he is completely unprepared to cope.

Van Ackern covers a great deal of ground in his study and offers a number of interesting insights. He attempts to investigate the creative evolution of Okudzhava, the writer and poet, with particular reference to the works dealing with war. He also gives attention to the general development of the war theme in contemporary Soviet literature, emphasizing the period ending in the early 1960s. The breadth of the subject matter is, unfortunately, one of the major shortcomings of the book: the reader is given only a partial picture of Bulat Okudzhava, and a fragmentary treatment of the evolution of the war theme.

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NABOKOV: HIS LIFE IN PART. By *Andrew Field*. New York: The Viking Press, 1977. xiv, 285 pp. + 8 pp. photographs. \$15.00.

NABOKOV TRANSLATED: A COMPARISON OF NABOKOV'S RUSSIAN AND ENGLISH PROSE. By *Jane Grayson*. New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1977. xii, 257 pp. \$21.00.

On the positive side, Andrew Field's latest book gives us a wealth of fascinating information, much of it new, most of it apparently quite reliable. Where Nabokov himself disagreed with Field's declarations, the latter openly says so but sticks to his guns. What emerges is a vivid and instructive picture of Nabokov's life, personality, opinions, and interests. Perhaps it is unfortunate that the whiff of betrayed confidence about the book seems to intensify its credibility. Field's style, though self-conscious, is generally felicitous: boldface and italics contrive a lively orchestration of comments by Nabokov, his wife, and others.

Field also offers well-researched and worthwhile discussions of Nabokov's family background, his life as an émigré in Berlin, and several parallels between Nabokov and Pushkin. (But is Nabokov's poem *Lilith* really "nothing if not a parallel to Pushkin's *Gavriliada*"?) Especially enlightening, if occasionally erroneous, is Field's presentation of the numerous interconnections between Nabokov's life and art—although this was apparently one of the latter's major objections to the book (which "does not come with the recommendation of Vladimir Nabokov"). But we are treated to many revealing and entertaining probabilities, including Nabokov's 1928 visit to a lung specialist while writing about the heroine in *King, Queen, Knave* ("I have to kill her," I said to him. He looked at me in stony silence").

On the negative side, Field's book seems proudly haunted by the fear that the author is "too much like Vladimir Nabokov to judge him" (although Field grants that the resemblance may exclude "virtues"). We repeatedly learn how well, and how much like Nabokov, Field looked in one of Nabokov's jackets. Field states that both "do not like biographies," Nabokov is "my competitor," and so on.

The book is further tainted by a fascinatingly brazen self-assurance. Field fancies himself as Nabokov's "Boswell," but one may detect, alas, an unwitting hint of Shade's

Kinbote. He terms Nabokov's threat to resume writing only in Russian "a statement which was made, I judge, primarily in order to surprise or tease his closest confidant, who reacted to this sudden public pronouncement with amused lack of interest." There is also a streak of unabashed cuteness: we encounter "cousins by the dozens"; mention of "chintz" breeds the witticism "chintzy"; the name Yurick inevitably acquires the adjective "poor"; and I shall spare you what is done with the name "Cross."

Jane Grayson's book examines Nabokov's translations (and concomitant revisions) of his own works, with particular attention to resulting alterations of characterization and style. This examination aptly illustrates Nabokov's "developing preoccupation with pattern and artifice," as well as "the increased detachment and stylization of his later writing." Some of Grayson's details and observations (perhaps necessarily) seem to repeat those of other critics. For example, Carl Proffer's article "A new deck for Nabokov's Knaves" (*TriQuarterly*, Winter 1970) also discusses the following material from *King, Queen, Knave*: two allusions to Flaubert, two prophetic clothing associations, and five new sexual details in the English version (see Proffer, pp. 308, 304, 295, 302; Grayson, pp. 92, 93, 104, 112). Grayson repeatedly refers to Proffer's article but does not acknowledge, either generally or specifically, these and other similarities. Credit could also have been given to Dabney Stuart (p. 39) for the detection of three hidden prophecies in *Laughter in the Dark*, to Stephen Suagee (p. 67) for a glimpse of the future in *Despair*, and to Andrew Field (p. 117) for his discussion of the Vasilii Shishkov affair.

Grayson's book contains worthwhile discussions on the use of color in *Laughter in the Dark*, Nabokov's "false alarm device," and the "Tamara theme." A chapter called "Technique of Translation" (treating the problems of "cultural translatability" and of maintaining stylistic effects) and the conclusion are also quite valuable. As could be expected, the reader of this specialized, thorough study should know Russian.

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IZBRANNYE PROIZVEDENIIA. By *B. Pil'niak*. Compiled, with an introduction and commentary by *V. Novikov*. Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1976. 702 pp. 1.41 rubles.

Following his arrest and probable death in 1937, Pil'niak's work was not published again in Russia until 1964, when a portion of the unpublished *Solianoï ambar* (approximately 70 pages of a 442-page manuscript) appeared in the journal *Moskva* (1964, no. 5, pp. 97-132). Only after a further lacuna of twelve years has an approximately 650-page selection of Pil'niak's works become "available" (in a pressrun of 30,000 copies, most of which were distributed through restricted shops for members of the Writers' Union and "Berezka" foreign-currency stores, or were exported to foreign countries). A twenty-six page introduction and twenty-five pages of notes and commentary to the texts accompany the selection of works.

The volume contains Pil'niak's best-known achievement, *Golyi god*, and a moderately good selection of short stories, including "Tselaiia zhizn'," "Smertel'noe manit," "Lesnaia dacha," "Speranza," "Rasplesnutoe vremia," and "Rozhdenie cheloveka," as well as the much less successful publicistic travel documentary about the United States, *O'Kei*, written in 1931. One regrets the absence of such works as "Tysiacha let," "Mat' machekha," "Staryi syr," *Mashiny i volki*, "Mat' syra-zemlia," "Rossiia v pölete," "Povest' nepogashennoi lunny," "Korni iaponskogo solntsa," "Ivan Moskva," "Krasnoe derevo," *Odinnadsat' glav iz klassicheskogo povestvovaniia*, and *Solianoï ambar*.