

Native Land," "Riddles," and "Here and Now." The desire to de-emphasize the separate nationalities of the authors and to stress their common interests may also explain why the nationality of the writers is not listed with each work, but in the biographical notes about authors, found at the end of the volume. It is here that a word of caution ought to have been addressed to the reader. The notes (and the five essays) have been reprinted without correction or updating (some were inaccurate even at the time of first publication). The special Polish issue appeared in 1967, the Yugoslav issue in winter 1967, and the Soviet issue in spring 1970. It might have been better to omit the notes than to mislead readers in 1977. Conditions have changed greatly since 1968, as we are reminded when we read, in the present tense, that Havel's "critical essays appear regularly in the magazine *Divadlo*," or that Josef Skvorecký "has published three books: *The Cowards*, a novel which appeared when he was 25 . . ." (he has by now published more than a dozen books and lives in Canada; moreover, he wrote *The Cowards* when he was thirty-four). The editor's article is entitled "Soviet Literature Today" but mentions that the news of "Anatoly Kuznetsov's defection broke during the final stages of writing this article" (he defected on July 30, 1969).

When we look up the issues of the *Literary Review* in which the translations first appeared, we come to understand other features of the selections and translations which are puzzling when we read the book alone. The Czech issue, we are told in the magazine but not in the book, was "compiled by the Union of Czechoslovak Writers" before "the upheaval" (the Soviet occupation in August 1968). Thus, we are presented, in 1977, with works and biographical notes written before 1968; since then, much new literature has been written, and many writers have been silenced, or have emigrated. In addition, the book does not give the places and dates of publication of the original versions, information which would have been useful to the serious student.

In a short review, one reviewer of limited competence cannot even begin to discuss the quality of translations or the selection of works from five countries, in nine languages. One very general comment can be made, however: some of the works read very well indeed, but the translations are uneven. This is not surprising, because the Russian works seem to have been translated as a project by students at the University of North Carolina, and the Czech works by translators in Czechoslovakia about whom the editors themselves were unable to obtain any information.

Slavic literatures, particularly the non-Russian ones, have been neglected by American publishers, and this attempt to make a selection of recent writing available is certainly welcome. Much of this volume makes excellent reading, for the general reader and for the browser, and the book will be useful for courses in East European and world literature.

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POLISH ROMANTIC DRAMA: THREE PLAYS IN ENGLISH TRANSLATION. Edited, selected, and with an introduction by *Harold B. Segel*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1977. 320 pp. Photographs. \$17.50.

The rhetoric of Polish Romanticism is unconvincing. Mickiewicz's *Forefathers' Eve*, part 3, contains magnificent poetry, and its anti-Russian sentiments were inflammatory in People's Poland, yet the play fails to move us. Much the same could be said about Krasiński's *The Un-Divine Comedy* and Słowacki's *Fantasy*. After all, how chauvinistic was Byron or Schiller? Those schooled in the Western Romantic tradition may find the deeply felt patriotism of the Polish Romantic trinity artificial. "Trinity" is an apt word, because these three writers have become sacrosanct; they need to be demytholo-

gized. Only then can the aesthetic merit of these and other important works such as Mickiewicz's *Konrad Wallenrod*, Krasiński's *Iridion*, and Słowacki's *Kordian* be evaluated and the matter of the three writers qua writers be explored.

By making the works of this celebrated group more accessible, Professor Segel's anthology will hopefully elicit such a salutary critical response. Two of the dramas in the collection, *Forefathers' Eve*, part 3, and *The Un-Divine Comedy*, are archetypal. The third, *Fantasy*, a comedy which appears for the first time in English translation, parodies the ethos of the other two. Count and Countess Respekt know Major Vladimir Gavrilovich because of time spent in Siberia as exiles. The Russian officer, an ex-Decembrist, is a good man. He shoots himself to help fellow good man Jan. *Fantasy* and *Idalia* have grown weary of Romanticism. Self-mockery has become their specialty. We may object to the play's mechanical love intrigue, but this too is a parody of vapid eighteenth-century comedy.

In his fifty-page introduction, Segel places both writers and dramas in historical context. *Forefathers' Eve*, part 3, he tells us, "has to be read as a personal apologia" (p. 39) since in it Mickiewicz tries to assume simultaneously the incongruous roles of Vergil and Aeneas. Segel's analysis of *The Un-Divine Comedy*, the Polish Romantic drama best known outside Poland, is succinct. *Fantasy*, however, because it is less familiar, should have been given additional commentary. Jan and the major pale as representatives of Romantic virtue, while *Fantasy's* and *Idalia's* verbal cavorting is more spoof than sham. The eight pages devoted to the stage history of these and other Polish Romantic plays are very much in order. Since these dramas were written primarily to be read, directors who stage them enjoy maximal flexibility. Consequently, their productions frequently have been striking.

Segel's textual work is admirable. His version of *The Un-Divine Comedy* is a great improvement on the 1927 British translation with its many errors and distortions. It is no small accomplishment to render the long self-parodying speeches in *Fantasy*. The updated English of *Forefathers' Eve*, part 3, makes the play's brilliant but hard to translate poetry less quaint. All three works, however, suffer from a shortage of notes. Only trained Polonists will be able to catch many of the references. Good notes could elucidate the complexity and profundity of these plays which have been selected for serious perusal.

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TWENTIETH-CENTURY POLISH AVANT-GARDE DRAMA: PLAYS, SCENARIOS, CRITICAL DOCUMENTS. Edited and with an introduction by *Daniel Gerould*. Translated by *Daniel Gerould* in collaboration with *Eleanor Gerould*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1977. 287 pp. Illus. \$15.00.

Professor Gerould's book deserves close scrutiny and the greatest interest, particularly because of its revelatory character. Equipped with knowledge based on many years of concentrated study, a deeply sympathetic insight, and an excellent historical orientation, Gerould has revealed to American literary scholarship an original and sharply outlined phenomenon—the contemporary experimental drama of Poland. This field has been rather unfortunate up to now, as far as foreign reception is concerned. For a variety of reasons, modern Polish drama missed recognition at least twice. Neither Romantic drama (one of the peaks of Polish literature) nor Symbolist drama was introduced to the general, non-Polish public immediately. This came later and is currently being done in a far from satisfactory way. The situation is much more normal with regard to twentieth-century avant-garde drama. It is closely watched and intelligently interpreted