

took a resolute stand against "art for art's sake," and echoed, in many respects, both the Slavophilism of Khomiakov and Baratynskii's philosophical lyric. Mr. Knigge insists, convincingly, that Solov'ev adapted to his own needs all that he took from the nineteenth-century tradition.

For the rest, the book traces thoroughly, but readably, the development of certain themes of Solov'ev's poetry in the work of Blok and Belyi. The concentration on two major figures is to be regretted, for the lines Mr. Knigge traces were carried at certain periods by groups of lesser writers, some of whom took them to interesting extremes. A section on Solov'ev's legacy to the theory of symbolism adds little to the book, and, indeed, falls outside its avowed scope. It remains an excellent work, however, inspired throughout by a healthy determination to be clear about what is meant by the "religious" or "mystical" element in Russian Symbolism.

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THE POETIC WORLD OF BORIS PASTERNAK. By *Olga R. Hughes*. Princeton Essays in European and Comparative Literature. Princeton and London: Princeton University Press, 1974. xvi, 192 pp. \$9.00.

We have here a fascinating attempt at interpreting Pasternak's poetic world as a whole, an attempt conducted by a thoughtful scholar, thoroughly familiar with the corpus of Pasternak's writings (including less well-known items). "Poetic world" is taken in the broader sense, and Pasternak's *Dichtung*, as considered here, includes his prose of various periods. While aiming at giving an overall view of the Russian poet's world, the author constantly refers to the rich surface of his poetry. Key passages of this poetry are quoted both in translation and, to the scholar's delight, in the original (printed in Cyrillic). Generally speaking, the book is geared to the sophisticated reader rather than the uninitiated. The volume is divided into four chapters, which are respectively entitled: "The Origin and Nature of Poetry" (dealing with the genesis of poetry according to Pasternak and the birth of Pasternak as a poet), "Art and Reality" (placing Pasternak's realism within the context of Russian literary history), "Time and Eternity" (devoted to the historical and ideological dimensions of the poet's confrontation with his age), and "The Responsibility of a Poet" (the aesthetic-ethical implications of the poet's encounter with his generation).

Although there are a few minor inaccuracies and misprints, these points are of secondary importance indeed, when compared with the positive aspects of the author's achievement. Olga Hughes is very well acquainted with the landscape of Pasternak's biography, and individual vistas within this panorama are brought in time and again as part of the stage setting for the book. In fact, this method is used consistently by the author, who takes her cue from Pasternak's belief in the essential interaction between the artist's life and his work. Thus, specific textual analysis of poems by Pasternak alternates with interesting observations bearing on biographical elements. This reviewer, not being a Formalist, will be the last one to take her to task for this type of approach. On the contrary, such eclecticism is uniquely appropriate to the highly complex topic under investigation. The individual passages on the significance of Scriabin for the poet (pp. 9-14), on such

delicate matters as Pasternak's relationship to Stalin (pp. 102–3), and on Akhmatova's particularly ambiguous characterization of her fellow poet (p. 159) are, among others, particularly insightful.

A possible shortcoming arises from the author's postulating an "all-pervading . . . underlying unity" in Pasternak's work; as a result, the manifest discrepancies within this very unity are viewed by her as proof that the poet "did not aim at theoretical or philosophical consistency" (p. 6). Perhaps such a statement, made in the introduction, is meant to have a propaedeutic value for the reader or a reassuring effect on him (as if giving the impression that there are no *undue* complexities in the poet's work). The net effect is regrettable, in that the statement obliterates a dramatic aesthetic break—the break marking the passage from Pasternak's youthful poetical endeavors while a believer in the primacy of form ("the Word as such") to his later period, when he advocated the primacy of "experience-content" (*Erfahrungsinhalt*, as he once put it). However, in spite of this and other similar statements concerning the overriding unity of Pasternak's work, the author does use such terms as "radical break" in the course of her analysis, and does make illuminating comments (sometimes in terms of categories used by Pasternak himself—for example, on pp. 81–82) on decisive developments in the poet's aesthetic intents. It should be acknowledged that, while no thoughtful reader of Pasternak will deny the importance of the two aspects (continuity and radical change) in the poet's development, Olga Hughes, specifically, is fully aware of the complexities involved in that duality.

Without necessarily claiming that *this* book should have contained more "formal philosophy," one must protest the misinterpretation—qualifying philosophy as "superfluous" (p. 5)—of an oft-quoted passage from *Doctor Zhivago*, in which the novel's protagonists disagree with the *exclusive* consumption of "pure philosophy" (which they liken to partaking of horseradish on its own, without a dish). Their rejection of "pure philosophy" is certainly not tantamount to saying that they object to partaking of reasonable doses of philosophy, *together with* generous slices of life. In such a perspective, sound culinary semantics indicate that seasoning, far from being "superfluous," is a most appropriate thing (though only as a condiment).

The author's ability to conduct her analysis in terms of the main aesthetic trends within the literary history of the period, of social-political realities, and the moral and spiritual dimension of Pasternak's works (of which elements she is highly perceptive) establishes the volume as truly personal and original interpretation. This essay is a most valuable contribution to the literature on Pasternak, in that it helps place his aesthetics in relation to the literary-historical background of his work. Because of the author's unique insight into the interaction of the poet's *tvorcheskii put'* and his *dukhovnyi put'*, it is a rare book.

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