

would say, a narrow victory of substance over style, of seriousness and system over numerous infelicities of presentation.

From a mechanical standpoint almost everything that could go wrong does. By loading her text with words and phrases in Russian, German, and French (none of which languages are translated) Mrs. Koehler sometimes makes the reader feel like a United Nations representative trapped in a plenary session without his earphones. The English, moreover, is pocked with solecisms and mistakes of many kinds, ranging from "*clarité*," "catastrophy," and "needles to say" to "heavy [for high] tribute" and—bitterest pill of all—"genre-wise." The haphazard treatment of Russian titles (now in Cyrillic, now in transliteration, now in translation) and several obvious errors in metrical notation are additional irritants. A nonnative with (one supposes) limited experience in scholarly writing, the author was at the mercy of her editors and proofreaders; and they have failed her badly. *Mouton! il faut savoir digérer aussi bien que manger!*

But matters of style and presentation are not all, of course. The basic question which the interested reader is likely to ask about Delvig is simply, What exactly are the ingredients of his universally acknowledged classicism? And here Mrs. Koehler is very helpful. Slowly, methodically, and in great detail she catalogues and describes those stylistic, lexical, metrical, and thematic features which made Delvig a classicist in a Romantic age. To this end she exploits, it is true, an unusually large number of secondary sources. But the quotations are generally apposite, and the quality of her informants (Vinogradov, Eikhbaum, Tynianov, et al.) is impeccable. It is true, too, that her historical introductions to the various sections are not always well digested; still, they provide important information and needed perspectives.

Not surprisingly, the monograph, which bristles with statistics and some pretty heady nomenclature (e.g., polyptoton, epanastrophe, epiphora), reveals a strong formalist bias. With a poetic "technician" such as Delvig this is probably inevitable. Still, it might have been interesting if the author had cast her nets a little wider and speculated—to suggest just one unexplored avenue—about a possible psychological connection between the Oblomov-like character of the man (he was a fat, indolent, sweet-natured cuckold who died young) and the profoundly *escapist* nature of his verse. Be that as it may, her book, whatever its limitations, is a careful and serious study of a unique poetic talent.

RICHARD A. GREGG
Vassar College

TOLSTOY AND CHEKHOV. By *Logan Speirs*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1971. 237 pp. \$8.00.

Naïveté is the word that best characterizes this book. It is divided roughly into two sections—the first treating Tolstoy, with special emphasis on *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*, and the second devoted to some of Chekhov's stories and all the major plays. Professor Speirs continually falls back on simply presenting the plot of a novel, story, or play without effectively showing the connections between its parts—purportedly the reason for such a method. His conclusions all too often verge on what now are commonplaces in Tolstoy criticism—for example, he notes that both *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina* reveal a broad contrast between what Moscow and St. Petersburg stand for (p. 21). He also is hampered by his appar-

ent lack of command of Russian. At any rate, his quotations of statements by Tolstoy and Chekhov are all from English and American sources. This is a serious drawback, because Speirs is especially interested in the literary views of the two writers but seems to be limited to their oft-quoted observations. Naïveté is evident also in his comparison of the two authors in their treatment of the same kinds of social events in similar cultural contexts. The contrasts he notes are obviously attributable to the differences in their ages and social backgrounds. Since one was born in 1828 and the other in 1860, and one was a member of the gentry and the other the grandson of a serf, they were bound to develop different approaches. But Speirs belabors these contrasts throughout his book (for example, see page 172 for his comments on their attitudes toward education).

Many of Speirs's conclusions are questionable. To say that *War and Peace* boils down to a conflict between the Westernized Prince Andrei and the arch-Muscovite Pierre Bezukhov (p. 17) is an incredible distortion of the novel. A large part of Speirs's book is devoted to analyzing the structure of Tolstoy's two major novels, but these remarks fall disappointingly short of those offered by such fairly recent commentators as John Hagan, John Bayley, Albert Cook, and James M. Curtis.

The title of the book would seem to suggest that some grounds exist for an illuminating juxtaposition of these two authors. Yet Speirs overlooks much relevant material. He does not deal with the early stories by Chekhov that may have been influenced by Tolstoy's ideas (a subject treated, though not exhausted, in Thomas Winner's *Chekhov and His Prose*), or the fairly obvious debt of Chekhov to *Anna Karenina* in his stories "About Love" and "Lady with the Dog." He fails to comment on Lev Shestov's incisive remarks about the influence of Tolstoy's "Death of Ivan Ilyich" on Chekhov, although he does compare that work with "A Dreary Story." He also overlooks Tolstoy's possible debt to Chekhov in *Hadji Murad*.

The two chapters on Tolstoy's work after *Anna Karenina* give the impression that the later Tolstoy is being covered, but actually only three works are specifically discussed—the results are a dubious condemnation of *A Confession*, the traditional dismissal of *Resurrection*, and the equally predictable praise for *Hadji Murad*. The Tolstoy half of the book ends with a subessay, "*Anna Karenina* and the English Novel: A Note," which turns into a three-page discussion of why D. H. Lawrence preferred the Russian novelistic tradition to the English one. The author's tendency to want to elucidate Lawrence's debt to Tolstoy rises like a crescendo throughout the book, culminating in an afterword describing the influence of *Anna Karenina* on *The Rainbow*. The reader may feel that in this material Speirs has found a more viable topic for comparison than the one the title of his book proposes.

KARL D. KRAMER
University of Washington

DOSTOYEVSKY: AN EXAMINATION OF THE MAJOR NOVELS. By
Richard Peace. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press,
1971. vii, 347 pp. \$11.50.

In the first of the five sentences that constitute his preface, Mr. Peace surveys the book-length literature on Dostoevsky and, without naming names or recognizing the existence of outstanding problems, finds it good ("His biography; his religious