

The translations, especially in the early chapters, are wooden and glued to the syntax of the original. And nonreaders of Russian will be very perplexed by the many quotations about *narodnost'* (pp. 34 ff.), which is translated variously, even within the same paragraphs, as "national spirit," "indigenouness," "nativeness," and "nativism."

Every author is ultimately responsible for what is printed over his name, but at the same time a publisher has the duty to provide any scholarly work with a knowledgeable and conscientious editor. Anyone who has published knows how obvious errors, inconsistencies, redundancies, misspelled words, and stylistic collisions somehow hide in manuscripts and then jump out from the printed version to mock the author. It is too bad Mr. Baer didn't have editorial assistance. My point made, I still applaud his effort in affording us this study of a significant but neglected author.

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GLEB USPENSKY. By *Nikita I. Prutskov*. Twayne's World Authors Series, no. 190. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1972. 174 pp.

The decision to bring out a book on Uspensky in this series is a courageous one. Although he was clearly a most important figure in nineteenth-century Russian literature and social thought, no one could say that he is widely read today, especially in the West. Yet his agonized investigations of the life of the post-Emanicipation peasantry tell us much not only about the Russian village in those years but also about the spiritual conflicts of the radical intelligentsia. At their best, his works are impressive literary monuments of a new type, the semidocumentary sketch, which has undergone a considerable revival recently in the Soviet Union. Even his ideas are not as dead as they might seem: they have certainly influenced Efim Dorosh, and perhaps some of the other "village prose" writers currently enjoying an extended vogue among the Soviet intelligentsia.

Nikita Prutskov does not take aboard much of this. His book, a translation and adaptation of one published by "Prosveshchenie" in 1971, is a succinct and well-documented study of Uspensky the writer and man, but it is unlikely to make many converts. He presents Uspensky as a man who wanted to be a populist, but was too honest and clear-sighted to become one. According to Prutskov, Uspensky, while still attached to the ideal of the commune, lucidly analyzed its shortcomings and showed that it was in any case collapsing in the face of the development of money relations and capitalism; he became a materialist in outlook, but retained certain "utopian" and "moralist" illusions which were characteristic of the democratic intelligentsia and which hindered him from developing into a thoroughgoing Marxist. Prutskov shows how he evolved the genre of the sketch in order to cope with the complexity of his perceptions and to be able to respond immediately to the reality around him and to bring it to his readers, many of whom he hoped would be ordinary working men or even peasants. This conception of Uspensky is a plausible one, and it has been presented before by Prutskov in three books and a series of articles.

Nevertheless, one wonders whether this is the best way to present Uspensky to the Western reader. More important, I do not find the conception itself wholly satisfying. A notable omission in Prutskov's account is Uspensky's interest in the

sectarian communities of the Caucasus and southern Russia and in the Old Believers of Siberia (the main works on this subject are also omitted from the otherwise pretty full nine-volume collection of Uspensky's works issued in Moscow in 1956). Uspensky was always fascinated by religious practices and folklore, partly for their own sake and partly as a source of the social cohesion which he felt the commune was failing to provide. His "utopian" and "moralist" illusions were, in short, perhaps more central to his thought than Prutskov allows. This is certainly the view of Jean Lothe (*Gleb Ivanovič Uspenskij et le Populisme Russe*, Leiden, 1963—a work not even mentioned in Prutskov's bibliography), who sees Uspensky as a subjective, ethical socialist of the school of Mikhailovsky, devoted all his life, in spite of his bleak clear-sightedness, to the ideal of some kind of communal peasant agriculture, illuminated by its own inner ideals and served by an altruistic intelligentsia. Another interesting recent Western approach is that of Richard Wortman, for whom Uspensky is representative of a crisis in the populist outlook, a man driven by feelings of personal guilt and unworthiness to report faithfully on every phenomenon that ran counter to his own deeply held ideals, and who therefore raised questions that no populist could answer. To give the reader a wholly convincing survey of Uspensky's work, Prutskov should at least have taken these views into account.

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ANNA AKHMATOVA. By *Sam N. Driver*. Twayne's World Authors Series, no. 198. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1972. 162 pp.

Akhmatova has always been one of the most accessible of all the great modern Russian poets. Her poetry is widely known and loved in the Soviet Union; she is probably the best-known modern Russian poet outside Russia—among readers of Russian, at least. A recently published selection of her verse in the exceedingly good translations of Stanley Kunitz will make her audience abroad even larger. In great measure, what makes Akhmatova accessible also makes her poetry both difficult to translate and difficult to write about. A translation, for instance, of the intimate narrative of her early poetry is possible, but it can easily be rendered into another language without touching the essential stuff of the poems at all. The accepted scholasticism of formal analysis easily gathers the poet's work together, reshuffles and sorts out neat piles of themes, lexical items, and devices, but also can leave the essence untouched.

This brief study of Akhmatova's poetry starts with something of a stacked deck by dealing mainly with Akhmatova's early poetry (through *Anno Domini*, 1922), a severe limitation. The approach is the familiar one, and as a practitioner Mr. Driver is no cardsharp. His treatment is straightforward—orthodox, therefore systematic and informative. There is something to be said for this. The reader gets a brief account of Akhmatova's life, a quick survey of Acmeism by way of literary background, and then a careful sorting of suits and sequences. It is unfortunate that the book treats mainly Akhmatova's early verse in any detail and, in a short closing chapter, only surveys her later work.

Akhmatova would have protested this emphasis. It may be so, as Driver asserts, that not all her later poetry has been published, but surely enough is available for us to know beyond doubt that the poet herself was right. Though