

history itself" (p. 3). Mr. Eagleton accepts uncritically even the most Utopian features of Marxism. Thus we are told (though not told how) that "socialist society can reproduce a primitive image of 'measure between man and nature' at an incomparably higher level" (p. 13). Critics, he can say, "are not just analysts of texts; they are also (usually) academics hired by the state to prepare students ideologically for their functions within capitalist society" (p. 58), yet he never reflects that critics in Communist societies serve the same purpose more exclusively and explicitly. Mr. Eagleton, a fellow at Wadham College and lecturer in English at Oxford University, can even give a class on Marxist criticism in which Marxist criticism is exalted, to quote the concluding words of the booklet, as "part of our liberation from oppression" (p. 76).

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THE SEXUAL LABYRINTH OF NIKOLAI GOGOL. By *Simon Karlinsky*. Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1976. xii, 333 pp. Illus. \$14.00.

Most attentive readers of Gogol have been struck by the conspicuous contrast between his lively, colorful, and often grotesque male characters, and his beautiful, but pale and lifeless heroines. The usual explanation for this phenomenon has been Gogol's alleged lack of knowledge of women and the fact that he never married. Professor Karlinsky's book is devoted to a close examination of Gogol's sexuality (a subject treated most gingerly until now), and its reflection in Gogol's artistic work. Karlinsky's thesis is that the conflict between Gogol's homosexual desires on one hand, and his dislike of women and revulsion against marriage (strongly championed by social custom and tradition) on the other, were at "the nerve center of Gogol's biography and of much of his creative achievement" (p. 6). He then proceeds to a step-by-step examination of relevant biographical data from Gogol's life, combined with a survey of the writer's work, starting with "Ganz Küchelgarten" and ending with *Selected Passages from Correspondence with Friends*. The book concludes with a summary of Gogol criticism, both in Russia and the West, since the nineteenth century, and a "mini-bibliography" of Gogol in English.

The biographical facts that shed light on Gogol's sexual orientation are carefully and convincingly presented: Gogol's one-sided, frustrating involvements with Gerasim Vysotskii, Mikhail Pogodin, and Nikolai Iazykov, his close friendship with Alexander Ivanov, and his love for Iosif Viel'gorskii, point to the writer's constant search for male companionship and love. Gogol's strong ties to his mother, his brotherly and often piously colored relations with women—such as Nadezhda Sheremeteva, Maria and Varvara Balabin, and Alexandra Smirnova—and his abortive "romance" with Anna Viel'gorskaia complement the picture. Karlinsky's interpretation of Gogol's death as the deliberate suicide of a lonely, frustrated, guilt-ridden man in expiation of his "sins" is utterly convincing.

Karlinsky's analysis of Gogol's art combines a wide panorama of Russian and European literary history (with occasional excursions into the arts and music) with a close review of individual works. Already in the early Ukrainian tales, the author finds several interesting patterns to prove his point: many of Gogol's male characters "who seek love, marriage, or sexual conquest are swiftly and inevitably punished with death, humiliation, and assorted other catastrophes" (p. 35). According to Karlinsky, Gogol's idea of a "happy ending" to a story is "the male protagonist's escape from impending marital involvement" (p. 36). As long as woman is kept in her place—that is, for procreative purposes, or as a vehicle of male pleasure—she is not dangerous. It is only when she becomes an equal to man, or even gains the upper hand, or when,

losing control over himself, the man falls in love with her, that "things become unpleasant, unmanageable, and eventually lethal" (p. 70). The early tales are rounded out by a most ingenious interpretation of "Viy," not only in terms of the story's hidden homosexual tendencies, but also in terms of its literary genesis and the meaning of its title.

In the St. Petersburg cycle, Karlinsky points to the pattern of alienation, and of lonely males threatened in one way or another by women or inanimate objects that replace them (as in "The Overcoat"). His analysis of the much-abused "Nose" as an exercise in surrealism is imaginative and refreshing. The discussion of Gogol's plays—with their conspicuous absence of any real love interest—is simultaneously a brilliant survey of Russian drama. Gogol's late works, *Dead Souls* and *Selected Passages from Correspondence with Friends*, likewise confirm the author's central thesis and previous observations. Karlinsky points to the strange lack of any sexual adventures in *Dead Souls*, which was written in the tradition of the picaresque novel, and to the fatal role of women (the governor's nameless daughter, Korobochka, the society ladies) in bringing about Chichikov's downfall. The connection made in many cultures between male homosexuality and prophetic and mystic abilities is used as a hypothesis to explain Gogol's later mysticism, as well as his much maligned *Correspondence with Friends*.

This is a brilliantly written, original, and informative book that makes for fascinating (and often highly amusing) reading. Whether one chooses to agree with all of the author's conclusions or not, it is a landmark in Russian literary criticism, and indispensable to any serious and scholarly study of Gogol.

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RUSSIAN VIEWS OF PUSHKIN. Edited and translated by *D. J. Richards* and *C. R. S. Cockrell*. Oxford: Willem A. Meeuws, 1976. xxvi, 263 pp. £8.50, cloth. £3.50, paper. Distributed by Holdan Books, 15 North Parade Ave., Oxford, England OX2 6LX.

This collection of twenty-six essays, according to its editors, "presents for the first time to the English-speaking reader the Russian view of Pushkin as it developed over the last one and a half centuries." The essays included (many abridged) were written by Gogol, Belinskii, Herzen, Annenkov, Dobroliubov, Grigoriev, Pisarev, Turgenev, Dostoevsky, Merezhkovsky, Solov'ev, Shestov, Aikhenvald, Blok, Eikhenbaum, Gershenzon, Tomashevskii, Mirskii, Vinogradov, Lezhnev, Shklovsky, Vinokur, Frank, Stepanov, Slonimskii, and Blagoi. This is a representative group of distinguished men of letters. By their choice of essays, mostly well-known, the editors have realized their first self-imposed goal: "to give examples from each of the most important stages in the development of Russian criticism of Pushkin."

The editors' second goal, "to ensure that the essays, taken as a whole, should reflect the range and many-sided nature of Pushkin's genius," is probably unrealizable because nineteenth-century Russian criticism of Pushkin, with few exceptions, pays mighty little heed to Pushkin. The reader of these essays, as he absorbs one heady draft after another, has the eerie sensation of entering into some never-never land of psychedelic fantasy. Perhaps the most blatant example of this tendency to steadfastly disregard Pushkin the more freely to explore one's own views is Dostoevsky's famous speech—which is "typical of Dostoevsky," as Tomashevskii points out, "and completely misses Pushkin." But Dostoevsky is the rule rather than the exception. (As exceptions I would suggest Annenkov and Turgenev.) The other authors seem mostly