

155, 210), and organizational shortcomings. (Regarding organization, the reader would do better to read the chapters in this order: 8, 5, 6, 7, 2, 3; 4, 1.) The intense polemics which run through Yiddish criticism are only cursorily discussed, and the various parallels and affinities to the development of Russian literature during the same period are ignored (save for a mention of Gogol that someone else pointed out to Miron).

The "purpose" of the book is thoroughly clouded by a series of disclaimers and hedging statements. The disclaimer about Wayne Booth's *Rhetoric of Fiction* (p. x) is ill-conceived, since Booth's influence is noticeable throughout the book. The discussion of the narrative persona Mendele could only have benefited from a consideration of Booth's and other theoretical books on the nature of narrative. All of the disclaimers merge into the author's statements (for example, on p. 9) that his contribution is almost totally speculative. When Miron says that others must judge whether or not he has acquitted himself in discussing the cultural and historical backdrop to the Yiddish literary scene in Russia, we must sadly conclude that he has not.

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ANTHOLOGY OF CZECH POETRY. Compiled by *Alfred French*. Introduction by *René Wellek*. Michigan Slavic Translations, no. 2. Ann Arbor: Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures of the University of Michigan, and Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences in America, 1973. xix, 372 pp. Paper.

This first volume of a projected two-volume anthology of Czech poetry covers the six centuries between the emergence of poetry in the Czech language in the early fourteenth century and the foundation of the Czechoslovak Republic in 1918. It is an interesting and valuable anthology and represents, both in scope and conception, a considerable advance over most of its predecessors.

The editor, the Australian literary scholar and translator Alfred French, has selected not only the "highlights" of Czech poetry but also poems by minor poets and some lesser works of major poets as well. Of special interest is the presentation of poems by relatively unknown Catholic poets of the seventeenth century who are often ignored in their native country. One of them, Holan Rovenský, is not even mentioned in Novák's standard *Přehledné dějiny*. In addition, in his critical introductions to the individual chapters French repeatedly emphasizes the history of Czech poetry as an art, reserving space for observations on genre, theme, composition, and style. Clearly, in all this he is concerned with the "inner" history of Czech poetry as a specific and autonomous cultural phenomenon. The underlying emphasis proves effective for selection and arrangement of the poems. If the reader closely follows the order of poems, he will indeed be able to perceive how in the history of Czech poetry things cohered, broke apart, and were recombined. As French further implies, the driving forces of the process are to be found primarily within the inner history itself rather than in external events. The influence of external events on the literary structure is not denied but characterized as complex and mediated. This aspect of the inner development is also cogently discussed in René Wellek's introduction.

This being a bilingual anthology, the Czech prototypes are printed side by side

with the English translations, which are the work of a whole team of translators. On the whole, most translations fulfill one's expectations. They are basically true to the spirit of the original and read well as poetry in English. But some instances of mediocre translation do occur. For me, the translations of Neumann, Šrámek, and Toman do not convey the moods of the originals, though at least some of them are well rendered as English verse. Fortunately such lapses are few. Among undeniable achievements I would count French's translations of the medieval aubades (incidentally, French takes a lion's share of the total translating task, and his versatility and competence are beyond doubt), Harkins's witty, inventive, and effective translation of Havlíček's satirical *Baptism of Saint Vladimir*, and Spender-Brušák's translation of the demanding second canto of Mácha's *May*, which compels one's admiration by its sophistication and skill.

The texts are accompanied by many black and white illustrations reproduced from a variety of sources. They reflect the changing aspects of Czech history—cultural and political—from the twelfth century on. Some of them are quite fascinating, such as the public poster from 1621 bearing the names of the Czech Protestant noblemen who were executed that year in Prague for insurrection against the Habsburg emperor. Viewed as a backdrop for the literary story, these reproductions give a touch of local color and enhance the aesthetic appeal of the volume as well. However, I found myself wondering why several items of Slovak origin are among them. After all, there are no Slovak poems in the book. But of course that does not matter very much, because they are so beautiful to look at.

Finally, a remark on oversights and misprints. I noticed a number of misreadings and minor factual errors, yet they are insignificant and have little bearing on the literary integrity of the translations. Misprints, on the other hand, abound. They are largely confined to the Czech poems and are, for the most part, trivial. Still, they are everywhere and distract the reader. If the printer could with impunity Scotticize Ian Kollár and Germanize Karl Macha (to add insult to injury, in Czech *macha* means "hack work"), won't he be tempted to Gallicize Vitězslav Nerval? Who knows? He may even try to convince us, or at least some of us, that *strč prst skrz krk* is bona fide Czech poetry.

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KAZANTZAKIS AND THE LINGUISTIC REVOLUTION IN GREEK LITERATURE. By *Peter Bien*. Princeton Essays in European and Comparative Literature, no. 6. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972. xi, 291 pp. \$9.00.

This is one of the most fascinating and best-written books on Modern Greek literature that I have ever read. Some might construe this as a backhanded compliment, since I am a linguist, and most linguists I know don't read many books on literature. It is emphatically not meant as one.

The book is divided into two parts. Part 1 gives "The Historical Background" to the Greek language question (pp. 13–146), and part 2 deals with the main topic, "The Demoticism of Kazantzakis" (pp. 149–264). There is a brief preface, a prologue (pp. 3–10), a bibliography (pp. 265–77), and an index. Despite Bien's conscientious and not unreasonable efforts to remind us every now and then in part 1 that what is being said is relevant to part 2, I sometimes felt I was reading