

whether tractor driver Ivan Nikolaevich (Nikolai Ivanovich?) married or divorced milkperson Evgeniia Aleksandrovna (Aleksandra Evgenievna?). Regardless of what the Dewey Decimal System ordains, on my bookshelf Rogers's book will repose next to a trusted copy of the *Thesaurus of Book Digests*.

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SLAVIC POETICS: ESSAYS IN HONOR OF KIRIL TARANOVSKY.

Edited by Roman Jakobson, C. H. van Schooneveld, and Dean S. Worth. Slavistic Printings and Reprintings, 267. The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1973. viii, 575 pp. 180 Dglds.

The publication of Kiril Taranovsky's pioneering study *Ruski dvodelni ritmovi* in 1953 firmly established his reputation as a leading theorist of Russian metrics. Since then this book and the numerous articles in which he has extended and refined his ideas have provided, along with the work of the late Boris Tomashevsky, the major impetus for recent significant advances in applying the statistical method to the study of Russian versification.

The fifty-one essays in *Slavic Poetics* for the most part closely reflect Professor Taranovsky's interests. Indeed, many of them express a specific debt to remarks made by him either in publications or in seminars he has taught at Harvard University. A brief review cannot list, let alone discuss, all the contributions, but the majority can be placed—albeit arbitrarily—into several categories. Metrists and others interested in a formal analysis of the poetic text have lately been paying more attention to developments in the twentieth century and correspondingly less to the nineteenth. Thus it is not surprising to find only a few items treating poets of the nineteenth century but a large number devoted to a wide range of problems in twentieth-century figures. There are single studies on a number of modern poets, while Pasternak, Akhmatova, and Mayakovsky are each the subject of more than one article. Osip Mandelshtam, to whom Taranovsky has been devoting an increasing amount of attention in recent years, perhaps deserves a category of his own, since no fewer than six scholars have provided careful exegeses of single poems by Mandelshtam or of specific problems in his complex poetry. Ranging farther afield, several authors have looked at topics in Slavic verse traditions other than Russian, most notably Czech and Serbo-Croatian.

Perhaps the book's chief significance is that it marks the first appearance in a single volume of nearly all the leading metrists both within Russia and without. As a result it presents, as no other collection has, a panorama of recent scholarship and of the advances that have been made in the study of Russian poetry since the early scientific studies of the 1910s and 1920s. The only previous publication to provide a hint of the enormous efforts now under way is *Teoriia stikha*, which came out in 1968 and contained only the works of Soviet scholars. Four of the major contributors to that volume appear here as well. Ivanov and Kholshchevnikov, discussing quite different topics, both manage to show that there is still ample room for research on the most common of Russian meters, the iambic tetrameter; Taranovsky's influential 1963 article "O vzaimootnoshenii stikhotvornogo ritma i tematiki" is the model for brief investigations by Gasparov and Rudnev into problems of verse and meaning. Works by scholars outside the Soviet Union include Roman Jakobson's perceptive examination of the relatively weak stress on

monosyllabic words and the consequent effect on their position in the line. James Bailey, who also compiled the bibliography of Taranovsky's works that concludes the volume, analyzes a poem by Mayakovsky as part of an effort to define the distinction between stricter and freer types of accentual verse. Both Soviet (Zhovtis) and non-Soviet (Isačenko) scholars look at the fate of rhyme in twentieth-century poetry; at the same time Dean Worth—whose major article on the topic appeared in *Russian Literature* (no. 3)—presents another bit of evidence that supports his findings regarding rhyme in the eighteenth century.

In short, *Slavic Poetics* is a valuable sourcebook not just for its specific articles but also for indicating the current state of research in the field it covers. As such it is a fitting tribute to the man whose own work has, for many years, pointed the way for others interested in Russian versification and in poetics in general.

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A TRAVELER DISGUISED: A STUDY IN THE RISE OF MODERN YIDDISH FICTION IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY. By *Dan Miron*. New York: Schocken Books, 1973. xv, 347 pp. \$10.95.

Sholom Yakov Abramovitsh, widely known by the name of his fictional narrator-character Mendele Moykher Sforim, is acknowledged to occupy a place in Yiddish literature comparable to Pushkin's place in Russian literature and Bialik's in Hebrew literature. Certainly in the 1970s a book on Abramovitsh's literary art or on the "rise of modern Yiddish fiction in the nineteenth century" should be of interest to Slavists, especially since it deals with Russia. Yet somehow Jewish contributions to the cultural life of tsarist Russia have remained beyond the ken of most Slavists. Unfortunately, the book under review does little to reverse the course of neglect.

Miron argues that the narrative persona Mendele served as a catalyst in developing language and literary norms for Yiddish and that Mendele is neither of the Jewish community nor of the outside world, since he parodies and satirizes both worlds from his position as a marginal man. Unhappily, these and the book's other theses are developed somewhat chaotically and differ little from earlier appraisals of Abramovitsh by others; but a few interesting sections do emerge, including the one about problems Jewish writers faced in choosing a language for literary expression (in which Miron discusses the "aesthetics of ugliness," pp. 43–63), and also the sections dealing with Mendele as an intermediary, or *eiron* (peacemaker), between the characters and the reader and between the characters themselves (pp. 161, 201).

The following are some of the book's major defects. Miron is obviously knowledgeable about Yiddish literary history, but he has not sifted or organized his facts so as to produce a unified and clear presentation. As it is, the title and subtitle indicate only two of the several unrelated and nonunified strands that run through the book. Miron seems to want the best of both worlds, the scholarly audience *and* the general reading public (Jewish and non-Jewish). The surgery performed on what was his doctoral dissertation has left a heavy-handed and at times incoherent essay which can satisfy neither audience and can only bore both with its redundancies, mishandling of critical terminology, misinformation (e.g., pp.