

Miłosz makes extensive, if enigmatic, use of the critical literature, often prefacing his statements with: "Critics like to explain. . . ." When he agrees with the critic's argument, he quotes him extensively and often identifies with him. For instance, in the section on Kochanowski, Miłosz identifies himself with the interpretation of Backvis. In this way Miłosz presents not only writers, but insights into the critical literature about them as well. Doing so, he never relinquishes his own right to define, offering such excellent formulas as: "Różewicz is a poet of chaos with a nostalgia for order. . . . [He is] an antipoet writing poetry, defending man, to whom he refuses dignity" (p. 464).

The impact of Christianity on Polish culture is one of the best elaborated motifs of Miłosz's book. Discussing the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as the formative period of Polish literature, its "Golden Age," he stresses the role of the controversies surrounding Hus, Luther, and Calvin in the development of the vernacular, which had earlier been suppressed by church Latin. He connects the tradition of intellectual rebellion in Polish letters with this largely Protestant period, and the tradition of emotional moralism with the Catholic Counter Reformation.

Understatement—which is not at all a Slavic virtue—is at Miłosz's command in this book and happily defines its style. In a genuine and organic way Miłosz has successfully incorporated in his opus all conclusions of the latest research with his own insights as a sensitive reader, poet, and skillful essayist.

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RUSSIAN FOLK TALES. Translated by *Natalie Duddington*. Illustrated by *Dick Hart*. New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1969. 144 pp. \$4.95.

This book, a selection of twenty-two tales taken from A. N. Afanasiev's classical collection (1855–63), represents a small segment of Russian folk tales—some animal tales and tales of magic ("fairy tales"). Both of these types are international. The only tales that are typically Russian are the realistic tales and anecdotes that constitute over half the Russian folk-tale repertoire. However, none of these have been included in Miss Duddington's collection.

The selection of tales in this collection is apparently random. The animal and magic tales that enjoy the greatest popularity in Russia have been omitted, but curiously enough the literary reworking of a tale called "Vassilissa the Fair and Baba Yagá" is included. Thus the editor's claim that she had "simply tried to select stories which are . . . peculiar to Russian folklore" is not quite justified. The tales in English translation are slightly shortened and simplified. They are often stripped of their beginning and concluding formulas and other stylistic adornments that give Russian tales their characteristic flavor.

The introduction consists for the most part of misstatements. Pushkin is said to have put into verse several folk stories told him by his nurse, Arina Rodionovna. Actually, only one of Pushkin's verse tales may have been based on what he heard from her. The others are reworkings of the French translations of the Grimms' tales, the tales of *A Thousand and One Nights*, and the stories of Washington Irving. Listing Afanasiev as the initiator of Russian folk-tale collecting ("Afanasiev, and others after him . . .") is misleading. Afanasiev himself collected only about ten folk tales and compiled his famous collection from tales recorded by others. The remark that the editor has not seen any reprints of Afanasiev's collection is puzzling, to say the least. This collection has been printed six times in Russia,

including two reprints during the Soviet era (1936–40 and 1957). Some statements made by Miss Duddington show her to be an outsider to the field of folklore. For example, her statement, “Much [folklore] material has been gathered and published, but probably much still remains as oral tradition,” is devoid of any sense. Inferences about the Russian national character—the Russians’ wonderful staying power, their great fortitude in facing suffering and death, and their nonresistance—made on the basis of certain tales of magic, have hardly any validity, since these tales are international. It is true that folklore can illuminate certain national traits, but the clarification of such insights requires painstaking comparative research, as Miss Duddington herself finally admits.

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THE DICTIONARY OF EXCEPTIONS TO RULES OF RUSSIAN GRAMMAR. By *Sigrid Schacht*. New York: American Elsevier Publishing Co., 1968. xxvi, 196 pp. \$9.50.

This dictionary is intended to relieve the reader of having to memorize the “irregular” forms of the twenty thousand most frequently occurring words in Russian. “Irregular” forms or “exceptions” are taken to be those forms manifesting any sort of alternation that might frustrate identification with the dictionary form. Thus ХОЖУ, ОЦА, ВЕЛ, and ВЕДУ are considered “irregular” in the face of “regular” forms such as ХОДИТЬ, ОТЕЦ, and ВЕСТИ. The reader is advised to memorize the “regular” basic paradigms and to rely on the book for the rest.

From a linguistic point of view such a notion of irregularity is absurd; there are perfectly good general rules governing transitive softening (Д ~ Ж, Т ~ Ч, С ~ Ш, etc.), fleeting vowels, and consonantal substitution or truncation, and these are mentioned in most modern handbooks and grammars. This book, however, is designed neither for linguists nor students, the author’s recommendations notwithstanding. Rather it is intended for the linguistically naïve reader with a scanty knowledge of Russian grammar who is interested only in reading, not in speaking or producing actual forms.

For such a reader the author is probably correct in segmenting nominal, verbal, and adjectival endings from an orthographical rather than phonological perspective. Her basic paradigms contain “hard,” “soft,” and “mixed” declensions, the last concerned with the written representation of vowels after velars, hushings, and the affricate Ц. Linguists, of course, recognize a single set of endings underlying each of the traditional declensions of nouns and adjectives. The vowel at the beginning of an ending can be represented orthographically by “hard” or “soft” vowel letters indicating the hardness or softness of the preceding paired consonant, for example, *kómnat-a* / КОМНАТА, *nedél-a* / НЕДЕЛЯ. It is probably easier for the reader under discussion to learn two sets of endings, “hard” and “soft,” since it facilitates segmentation into stem and ending. But the author only confuses the unsuspecting reader by mixing orthographical and phonological segmentation and thereby produces a motley and inconsistent set of paradigms.

The stem for ‘week’ is given (p. xiii) as НЕДЕЛ], to which the soft feminine nominal endings are added, thus nominative singular НЕДЕЛ]Я, accusative singular НЕДЕЛ]Ю, and so forth. Inexplicably the genitive plural stem is given as НЕДЕЛ]Ь with a zero ending instead of the expected НЕДЕЛ]Ь. Schacht’s presentation is char-