

Laferrière tries to prove that Mme. Kern (*genii chistoi krasoty*) represents a “phallic mother,” and that the hidden purpose of the poem’s form is to shield Pushkin from latent homosexual and Oedipal feelings. “Son na more” masks Tiutchev’s wish to regress into his own personal past, his mother’s womb, and death. The key to Fet’s poem lies in the hidden meaning of “moon” (as in the American college fraternity rite of “flashing a moon”), and the poem masks fantasies of uterine regression. The mysterious woman in Blok’s “Neznakomka” turns out to be the tipling poet’s mother, and the poet fragments his ego (to the extent that he can see his “friend” in the wine-glass) as a kind of “guerrilla defense” against reprisal for his incestuous fantasies. Mandelstam’s ubiquitous references to classical antiquity, his use of “subtexts,” and his fondness for the idea that everything repeats itself are all explained as a beautiful camouflage for the unmentionable longing to crawl back into the womb and die.

One problem with Laferrière’s theory is that it turns the reading of any poem into an exercise in how to get from a given starting point to uterine regression. As Laferrière shows, it can be done—but too often, in this reviewer’s opinion, only by doing violence to the poem. The book has brilliant moments, and even the arguments that common sense may ultimately lead one to reject deserve to be read a second or third time. Laferrière is clearly a talented critic capable of making major contributions to the field of poetics. Unfortunately, too many of the pages of this study read like parodies of misreading, *Pooh Perplex* lampoons of a Freudian semiotics run amuck. From the ambitious goals stated in the preface, it is clear that parody was not the author’s intention.

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PIS'MA A. M. REMIZOVA I V. IA. BRIUSOVA K O. MADELUNGU. Edited by P. Alberg Jensen and P. U. Møller. Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1976. 80 pp. D.kr. 40, paper.

In 1902, friends of the twenty-five-year-old Aleksei Remizov arranged for his place of exile to be changed from Ust'-Sysol'sk to Vologda. There the novice writer found a colony of fellow exiles who were soon to make names for themselves in Russian cultural and political history, and who briefly made this unlikely provincial city—which Remizov only half-jokingly was later to call the “northern Athens”—into a mini-cultural center. Lunacharskii, Berdiaev, Savinkov, P. E. Shchegolev, I. P. Kaliaev, and A. A. Bogdanov, to name only the most prominent, met regularly for discussions, corresponded openly with friends at home and abroad, and published in the legal press. (This makes an interesting contrast to the situation of present-day dissidents in the Soviet Union.)

In Vologda, the young Remizov met his future wife (also an exile) and Aage Madelung (1872–1949), a young Danish butter exporter who dreamed of making a place in Russian literature. They never became close friends; rather, their relationship was mutually beneficial. Remizov lent Madelung a hand with his translations and original stories and helped him establish contact with Briusov and with *Vesny*, that most “international” of Russian journals, in which for a short time Madelung both published and served as “Danish correspondent.” In return, Remizov hoped for Danish translations of his works—in vain, as it turned out. Because Madelung left no mark either on Russian or Danish literature, the letters published in this volume are of primary interest to biographers of Remizov. They establish his places and dates of residence, and confirm or amplify matters mentioned in his often cryptic and elliptical memoirs. The dominant leitmotif is his seemingly endless material difficulties and problems with publishing. Yet the persistent reader will be rewarded with some

literary nuggets, among them a succinct explanation of the reasons why Remizov continues to be neglected in Russian literary history: "Posylaiu 'Posolon'—kniga uspekha ne budet imet' ; slovom malo kto interesuetsia."

The forty letters, now in the Royal Library in Copenhagen, have been ably edited and are accompanied by an informative introduction and excellent notes. This handsomely produced book also contains seven of Briusov's letters and fifteen of Madelung's replies (only seven of Madelung's letters to Remizov have been located; none are included here). Madelung's short story "Sansara," which he wrote in Russian with Remizov's help, and Remizov and Kaliev's translation of Przybyszewski's "Toska" complete the volume as addenda. No doubt this volume is only a footnote, but it is fascinating in its own right and serves to demonstrate again how cosmopolitan Russian culture once was.

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NEIZDANNYI BULGAKOV: TEKSTY I MATERIALY. Edited by *Ellendea Proffer*. Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1977. 213 pp. Illus. \$12.50, cloth. \$5.00, paper.

AN INTERNATIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY OF WORKS BY AND ABOUT BULGAKOV. Compiled by *Ellendea Proffer*. Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1976. 133 pp. Illus. Paper.

The two books under review are valuable research tools for any specialist or generalist interested in Bulgakov. *Neizdannyyi Bulgakov* is divided into five parts. According to the editor's plan, explained in the foreword, the first part includes material—mostly letters from Bulgakov's correspondence and recollections by the people who knew him—reflecting his personal life. The second part consists of excerpts from a series of recollections, apparently prepared for a book that was never published in the Soviet Union. The third part contains transcripts of rehearsals of the play *Molière* at the Moskovskii Khudozhestvennyi Artisticheskii Teatr (MKhAT) and other records pertaining to Bulgakov's dealings with that theater. The final two sections include, respectively, the play *Batum*, portraying young Stalin's revolutionary activities, and an early variant of a short scene from *The White Guard*.

On the whole, the materials are quite interesting and informative. The recollections of T. Lappa, Bulgakov's first wife, disclose new, if not always flattering, facts of his private life. Bulgakov's own letters give us a vivid picture of the difficulties and frustrations he experienced as a result of not being able to publish his works in the Soviet Union. The detailed transcripts of the MKhAT rehearsals may be used for many scholarly purposes. Some incidents speak eloquently for themselves precisely because they are given without any explanation. For example, one review severely criticized Bulgakov's *Molière* and charged that the play contained transparent allusions to Soviet reality. Bulgakov mentioned this incident in a letter to P. Popov and added laconically that after much thinking he had decided to challenge the form rather than the substance of the review. M. Ianshin voiced his outrage at the "unheard-of insolence" of the reporter who completely distorted his statements to make them appear like criticism of *Molière*, when in fact he had defended the play. There is no explanation, however, as to why no refutation was published.

The sound reasons underlying the classification of the various materials in the book are clear, but why the first part is singled out to be designated as "documents" is less apparent. After all, the same type of documents—private and official letters and recollections—also appear in the second and the third parts. But this is, admittedly, a very minor objection.

The compilation of *An International Bibliography of Works by and about Bulgakov* is an impressive achievement. The bibliography contains citations in twenty-five