

Mr. Shoolbraid disclaims pursuit of an explicit argument, but he appears to contend, by the choices he makes among certain oral epics of the Soviet East, and through the arrangement of his material, that Buryat epics merit first consideration, and that "Manas," the Kirghiz monument, ranks supreme among Turkic epics. By treating the epics mainly as anthropological material and by adding a specific warning in the conclusion, the author also suggests that the epics may not qualify as "literature."

The transliteration system and the original languages could very helpfully be specified in a work such as this, and for an English-language book, it would seem best to represent sounds approximating those in English with corresponding Roman letters. Thus, Yakut, instead of Jakut; Buryat, rather than Burjat; and so on.

Readers can hope that the author, in his future work with the oral epics, will delve further into the composition and morphology within each epic. Students of epic poetry would also benefit from extended examples in translation, as well as from having details about different versions of the same epic and its significant variants within one tradition. A great deal could also be written regarding the epic performers themselves and the traditions behind them.

EDWARD ALLWORTH
Columbia University

IN SEARCH OF FRANKENSTEIN. By Radu Florescu, with contributions by Alan Barbour and Matei Cazacu. Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1975. xi, 244 pp. Photographs. \$9.95.

Hollywood has immortalized a trinity of monsters: Dracula, Frankenstein, and the Wolfman. Radu Florescu, together with Raymond McNally, began his study of this trinity with *In Search of Dracula* (Greenwich, Conn., 1972). Unfortunately, the present work—which is clearly its sequel—holds no professional interest for the Slavist. The future appearance of *In Search of the Wolfman*, however, would certainly mark a return to Slavic territory. *In Search of Frankenstein* is obviously intended for the general reader, whose first attraction to Frankenstein was the famous Carl Laemmle film. Consequently, it is written with an eye to the sensational, but, nevertheless, in a scholarly fashion. This is not a book of literary criticism, history, folklore, or even cinematography; and it is certainly not a detailed psychological analysis of "fetus envy." Although it contains bits of all these features, it is basically a travelogue, a sentimental journey. Armed with his well-studied copy of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Mr. Florescu sets off on a fanciful journey through space and time, centering on the life and travels of Mary Shelley and the Barons Frankenstein.

Many of Mr. Florescu's basic hypotheses are highly speculative and totally unsubstantiated—for example, Mary Shelley's awareness of the Frankenstein family, the eighteenth-century Swiss androids, and the alchemist Konrad Dippel. He is certainly conscious of this and does not try to deceive us: "Short of written documents the literary sleuth has at least the right to make use of circumstantial evidence and that quality, which for lack of a better term, can best be referred to as 'historical insight'" (p. 58). Once understood in their context, Mr. Florescu's speculations are both entertaining and provocative. Yet there are times when he goes too far: "a Frankenstein may even have ended his career impaled on Dracula's stake!" (p. 73).

The work certainly succeeds as entertainment. It reads well and is profusely illustrated. Although Mr. Florescu has not established all the links in the monster's genealogy, he has found obvious pleasure in seeking them out, as can we by following in his footsteps.

JAN L. PERKOWSKI
University of Virginia

LETTERS

TO THE EDITOR:

Professor Treadgold, in his thoughtful and generous review of my *Russia under the Old Regime*, in the December 1975 issue, raises a major factual objection. He calls "truly astonishing" my statement that "in central Russia the peasants 'simply ignored' the Stolypin reforms." The pertinent passage in my book reads as follows: "In November 1906, the imperial government introduced easy procedures for the consolidation of strips into individual farmsteads. The legislation had a limited measure of success in the borderlands; in central Russia, the peasants simply ignored it" (p. 19). As the language of this passage suggests, I was referring not to the Stolypin reforms as a whole (which included a massive transfer of state lands to peasants, resettlement, and so forth), but specifically to those measures intended to transform communally-controlled strips into individual farmsteads known as *khutora* and *otruba*. As considerable confusion exists on this subject, I hope you will allow me to cite a few pertinent statistical facts.

If by the term "central Russia" we understand that area which it is also customary to call the "central industrial region," we are talking about seven *gubernii*: Iaroslav, Kaluga, Kostroma, Moscow, Smolensk, Tver, and Vladimir. In 1905, this was an area in which communal landholding was nearly universal: according to S. M. Dubrovskii's data (*Stolypinskaia zemel'naia reforma*, Moscow, 1963, p. 570), 99.3 percent of the households here were communally run, and only 0.7 percent belonged to the category of *podvornye* or individual farmsteads.

Now in January 1916 this region had 1,602,790 peasant households. Of this number, 363,178 (or 22.6 percent) had the petitions to take ownership of their strips approved (Dubrovskii, table 32, p. 247)—a figure which, on the face of it, suggests considerable success for the Stolypin legislation, and accounts, I suspect, for Professor Treadgold's astonishment at my bold statement. However, an analysis of the figure indicates something quite different. One must not assume that all or even a majority of the households that availed themselves of the provisions of Stolypin's law consolidated their holdings into individual farms. Many peasants, especially the poorer ones, petitioned for title to their land merely to be able to sell it and move out; the exact number of these people is not known but it must have been high judging by the results of the polls taken by various economic societies. Of the rest, a large proportion continued, after acquiring title to their land, to till it exactly as before, that is, communally. As a consequence, the proportion of peasants who between 1906 and 1916 separated themselves from the commune to form the "individual farmsteads" to which I refer in my book, was indeed