

SYMPOSIA

GORSKI VIJENAC: A GARLAND OF ESSAYS OFFERED TO PROFESSOR ELIZABETH MARY HILL. Edited by R. Auty, L. R. Lewitter, and A. P. Vlasto. Publications of the Modern Humanities Research Association, vol. 2. Cambridge, Eng.: The Modern Humanities Research Association, 1970. ix, 321 pp.

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LETTERS

TO THE EDITOR:

Professor Richard Gregg's article, "A Scapegoat for All Seasons: The Unity and the Shape of *The Tales of Belkin*," which appeared in the December 1971 issue of the *Slavic Review*, attempts to apply Northrop Frye's theory of archetypal criticism to the *Belkin Tales*. It would be a serious lapse to allow the article to appear without some kind of public rebuttal of the manner in which Gregg adjusts both Frye's theory and Pushkin's fiction to achieve an erroneous reading of the *Belkin Tales*. Gregg's analysis is outrageous in its distortions of both Frye and Pushkin, and consequently fails to uncover any sort of tenable new approach to the *Belkin Tales*; it demands that we consider the stories in contexts which are nearly always irrelevant and essentially inapplicable. His misconceptions do equal injustice to both Pushkin and Frye; no doubt Pushkin's reputation will manage to survive such tortuous manipulations, but the way he applies Frye's theories discredits a fairly new critical apparatus which deserves more serious consideration.

To begin with Frye, then, I would point to Gregg's own explanation of Frye's theory that "all narratives are reducible to the four archetypal *mythoi*" (p. 753), a bit of clarity on Gregg's part which points to a basic flaw in his theory, obviously: if he is to follow Frye, then "The Coffinmaker" must be accounted for within the schema of the *mythoi*. Frye's hypotheses do not allow for the separate existence of grotesque gargoyles; if he is to designate Frye's rules, then he'd better play by them.