

The historical and intellectual context of Russia in the second half of the nineteenth century is the material proper with which Blankoff is occupied in his discussion of the writings (artistic and publicistic) of Saltykov-Shchedrin, Uspensky, and Pisemsky. Each of the three sections of his study is appropriately titled to illustrate his approach: (1) "La Russie après la guerre de Crimée," (2) "Les écrivains et leur temps (1. M. E. Saltykov-Ščedrin, 2. Gleb Uspenskij, 3. A. F. Pisemskij)," and (3) "La société vue à travers les oeuvres." Certain works (Pisemsky's *Troubled Seas*, Saltykov-Shchedrin's *Provincial Sketches*) which provide particularly abundant sociological material are discussed at length. But there is an equal breadth of discussion on the polemics with regard to social issues in the sixties and seventies carried on between individual periodical publications and between the three authors and other contemporary writers.

The value of this richly documented study (forty-six pages of bibliography and notes) will be recognized by anybody with a serious interest (historical, literary, or both) in the period between 1855 and 1881, which spans the years of the reign of Alexander II and the most productive years in the lives of Pisemsky (1820–81), Saltykov-Shchedrin (1826–89), and Gleb Uspensky (1843–1902). Blankoff's integral approach combining history with literature in a sociological analysis demonstrates anew that the various disciplines which in the United States are often separated into the humanities (literature) and social and behavioral sciences (history) can be fruitfully combined in the pursuit of ideas and new syntheses if the pursuit is strictly scholarly and does not proceed from a priori ideological positions.

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NIKOLAY GOGOL. By *Thais S. Lindstrom*. Twayne's World Author Series, no. 299. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1974. 216 pp. \$6.95.

In his review of Victor Erlich's *Gogol* (*Slavic and East European Journal*, Winter 1970, pp. 522–24) Hugh McLean also perceptively (and with considerable academic humor) summed up and criticized the other two important Gogol studies in English—those by Nabokov and Setchkarev. Now with this concise monograph by Professor Lindstrom, TWAS has finally attempted to grapple with the enigmatic Ukrainian-Russian genius.

Lindstrom declares it one of her purposes to treat the "many contradictory and complex features" of Gogol's art and "through a careful examination of the major works, give reason and plausibility to the multiple facets of cumulative Gogolian scholarship" (p. 7). Other elements to be stressed are Gogol's "essential modernity," with particular regard to Existentialism, and his use of the grotesque (pp. 8–9). After a preliminary treatment of Gogol's emergence as a writer, Lindstrom proceeds with brief plot summaries and analyses of his works in a more or less chronological order. The scope of the present review does not allow substantive discussions of these critiques, but I can touch upon at least some extrapolations of the leitmotifs mentioned above.

Gogol's psychological make-up, for example, is succinctly caught in the description of his relationship with the Aksakovs, wherein he "received more than he offered" (p. 45). And later, with regard to Rome, the "child's need for a static world in Gogol was fulfilled by the Eternal City" (p. 127). I would even

agree with Lindstrom (and some others) that *Selected Passages* indicates that Gogol had never really shifted from his deeply conservative ideological position. With respect to an intrinsic analysis of the creative works themselves, Modernism and Existentialism are often encountered, particularly in stories such as "The Diary of a Madman" and in *The Inspector General*. It is here, too, that the device known as the "grotesque" (previously mentioned by Eikhenbaum, Günther, Erlich, et al.) is highlighted. Another dimension is brought out by the title of this chapter, "The Theater of the Absurd," and parallels are drawn with Ionesco and Beckett.

In her overall critical approach Lindstrom seems to favor the Formalists but also fairly presents the thought of Symbolists, Freudians, and even (albeit begrudgingly) the Belinsky-Chernyshevsky-Marxist line now orthodox in the Soviet Union. Her book, in fact, could be termed "eclectic," and perhaps this way is best in approaching its will-o'-the-wisp subject.

Lindstrom's text is followed by reasonably complete notes, a well-annotated, selected bibliography, and an index. Of course, only a few books and articles could be mentioned, but it is puzzling to note the omission of such important twentieth-century Gogol monographs as those by Pereverzev, Danilov, Mashinsky, Lavrin, Iu. Mann, Gerhardt, and Günther. Robert Maguire's collection of diverse modern essays on Gogol (Princeton, 1974) obviously came out too late for inclusion. Typographical errors are rare—for example, the misspelling of "Razboiniki" (p. 21) and "by" (p. 54), as well as the addition of a gratuitous "s" to the name of F. D. Reeve (pp. 177, 207, 215).

Because of its largely synthetic nature, I would rank Lindstrom's study somewhat lower than the three books analyzed by McLean, but it is definitely superior to the prolix, superficial works by Magarshack and Troyat. Her brief monograph is closer in scope and merit to Janko Lavrin's book (1951), though of course more up to date and, I think, better written. We all hope for a Gogol study someday which will be both lengthy and profound.

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*Macmillan Educational Corporation*

E. A. BARATYNSKY. By *Benjamin Dees*. Twayne's World Authors Series, no. 202. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1972. 160 pp.

IVAN KOZLOV: A STUDY AND A SETTING. By *G. R. V. Barratt*. Toronto: Hakkert Ltd., 1972. viii, 252 pp. \$12.00.

A central problem in dealing with the Russian poetry of the first third of the nineteenth century is its relation to the poetry of the eighteenth century, especially French Neoclassicism. Much of the Russian scholarship and criticism on the subject, until recently, tended to equate the eighteenth century with Neoclassicism and to take the position that Romanticism came into Russia only when the Liubomudry imported Schelling's transcendental aesthetics. On the other hand, especially since World War II, Russian scholars have more and more seen Romanticism—as most Western scholars and critics have long seen it—as being centrally involved with the poet's *self* and with the nonrational and irrational, not necessarily including the transcendental. From this point of view, Zhukovsky's translations, even of Preromantic poetry, are adaptations that reflect his own inner world, and the small but excellent body of his mature original poetry is Romantic.