

reaction to the metaphysical profundities of some of his contemporaries. The annotations aim "to make available in English much material contained in the nine-volume Soviet *Collected works*," supplemented from other sources. They are extensive, and will be found immensely helpful by the newcomer to Blok.

A couple of dozen well-chosen illustrations enhance the value of the book for the Western student. In particular, the photographs of the poet's childhood surroundings will help the reader to visualize the half-real landscape of Blok's earlier poetic dreams, and Kirill Sokolov's crisp vignettes convey perfectly the unique typographical flavor of contemporary Symbolist publications. The over-long delay in publication has slightly reduced the value of the bibliography. The apologetic addenda cover the period from 1963 to 1968, but there are some puzzling omissions, and some important work on Blok has appeared since 1968. One serious editorial lapse detracts slightly from the usefulness of this otherwise exceptionally well-produced volume: far too many misprints have escaped detection. This is no quibble. Trivial errors in the spelling and punctuation of the introduction merely irritate, but misspelled names and garbled Greek may mislead the exploring student, who can even less be expected to take in his stride misprints in the Russian text of a poem. The editor of a volume that is destined to be a teaching aid surely has a particular duty to provide a text free of traps for the unwary.

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A STUDY OF VASYL' STEFANYK: THE PAIN AT THE HEART OF EXISTENCE. By *D. S. Struk*. Foreword by *G. S. N. Luckyj*. Littleton, Colo.: Ukrainian Academic Press, a Division of Libraries Unlimited, 1973. 200 pp. \$8.50.

D. S. Struk's monograph on Vasyl Stefanyk, the foremost Ukrainian prose writer, is a critical confrontation of the oversimplified and tendentious views on Stefanyk which classify him as either a typical nineteenth-century populist writer or a writer about social injustice, as well as a survey of the views of those critics who have recognized in Stefanyk an author of universal appeal and significance. Since those who hold the latter opinion have failed to corroborate their insights, Struk's main purpose in this study is to provide supporting documentation for Stefanyk's universality as a writer whose prime concern was the portrayal of human pain and anguish, using as his subject the Ukrainian peasant.

In attempting to present the essence of Stefanyk's creative concern, Struk analyzes and divides Stefanyk's themes of pain and suffering into six basic conditions—poverty, loss, old age, death, inescapable situations, and impossible choice. Struk also undertakes to examine and evaluate the artistic features of Stefanyk's style which show him to be a master of the novella genre. Each chapter of the monograph has been well-researched, richly annotated, and presented in a lucid, well-organized manner. At times, however, the author seems to explain the obvious. Appended to the study is also a selection and English translation of thirteen of Stefanyk's novellas, which will amplify the already existing translations of Stefanyk in most of the major languages.

Since a good critical evaluation of Stefanyk's work has been lacking, the present study is a welcome contribution as the first comprehensive work on Stefanyk not

only in English but also in critical bibliography in general, and will serve as a valuable source for students and specialists in Ukrainian, Slavic, or comparative literature.

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DAS MITTELNIEDERDEUTSCHE ZWIEGESPRÄCH ZWISCHEN DEM LEBEN UND DEM TODE UND SEINE ALTRUSSISCHE ÜBERSETZUNG: EINE KONTRASTIVE STUDIE. By *Theodor Lewandowski*. *Slavistische Forschungen*, no. 12. Cologne: Böhlau-Verlag, 1972. vii, 199 pp. DM 42.

This is a careful comparative study of a Russian translation of a Middle Low German dialogue between Life and Death which was made in the last decade of the fifteenth century by a Russian, Dmitrii Gerasimov by name, born around 1465 and educated somewhere in a German school of Livonia where he acquired a good, though not altogether perfect, knowledge of Middle Low German, the business language of the Hanseatic League. For about two centuries there was a lively contact between the Russian and the Middle Low German languages. However, the German contribution to the total of the Old Russian translation literature is rather minimal and the Hanseatic relations show up clearly.

The translation of our dialogue was made in Novgorod and was not an accidental event, but planned by the office of the diocese. Most probably the work was ordered by Archbishop Gennadii. In the late fifteenth century Novgorod was an open gateway for Western cultural influence. It was at that time that the end of the world was widely expected to occur. The catastrophe was predicted for the year 7000 of the Orthodox calendar (which corresponded to 1492 in the West).

The topic of the Middle Low German dialogue is that of a penitential sermon—variously treated in *Dance of Death* woodcuts, for example, by Hans Holbein, the Younger (1497–1543)—in which Death, represented as a skeleton, leads people or skeletons to the grave to suggest the ever-present danger of death. (Cf. L. P. Kurtz, “The Dance of Death and the Macabre Spirit in European Literature,” Columbia University dissertation, 1934.) In the second half of the fifteenth century it became a practice to publish single-sheet prints with an illustration surrounded by a text in prose or verse.

Our Middle Low German dialogue is printed on such single sheets. The German original is in verse form; the Russian translation, however, is in prose. In addition to the actual Russian translation, there are several revisions intended to render the translation more intelligible. There are four groups of text—more than three dozen manuscript copies of the third redaction. The earliest three items are put together under the title *Dvoeslovie*.

Lewandowski's book describes in detail the Middle Low German *Dialog* and the Russian *Dvoeslovie* with a discussion of their relation to the general circumstances of the times (pp. 1–57). On pages 58–80 a transliteration of the texts is given: (1) the Middle Low German form, (2) a modern German translation, (3) the Old Russian translation, (4) the first revision, (5) the second revision, and (6) a modern Russian translation. A linguistic analysis of the Old Russian translation in comparison with its Middle Low German original follows on pages 81–156, in turn followed by a discussion of the literary development of the *Dvoeslovie* (pp. 157–67) and a bibliography (pp. 169–80). In conclusion, there are photographic