

a work, except conceivably as a bibliographical aid. In the end, the volume seems best suited to the needs of the "general reader," but the question can legitimately be raised as to whether this reader will ever seek out the present volume and, should he attempt to do so, whether he would ever find it.

Contributing to the confusion the work creates is the fact that there is no recognizable principle of arrangement of the excerpted critical entries. Sometimes the arrangement seems to be chronological by publication date of the works treated; at other times, chronological by publication date of the review excerpts. This and similar confusion could have been dispelled by including brief biographical and critical sketches as an introduction to each writer's work. But in our view an anthology of outstanding critical pieces—presented in full—would have done a far greater service to the Slavic literatures, even though fewer authors and critics would necessarily have been represented.

WILLIAM E. HARKINS AND HAROLD B. SEGEL
Columbia University

PROSTORECHNYE I DIALEKTNYE ELEMENTY V IAZYKE RUSSKOI
KOMEDII XVIII VEKA. By *Al'f Grannes*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, [n.d.].
282 pp. N.Kr. 109.50, paper.

One of the least studied and at the same time most important periods in the history of the Russian language is the lengthy time span from what is frequently called the Old Russian or Common East Slavic period to the establishment of Modern Russian. The latter is commonly reckoned as the era when the literary language became stabilized, beginning with the writings of Pushkin. Linguists have long argued whether or not the history of the Russian language might best be divided into two or three periods. Of considerable interest to the linguist is the middle period, or in any event, those centuries after which Old Russian could no longer be considered a viable entity and the three separate East Slavic languages had clearly acquired their own peculiar characteristics. This was a period of transition during which many new linguistic features developed, and a period which coincided with the explosion of publishing in Russian. Works by Russian authors, each writing in his own regional dialect, began to appear on the scene. Both Russian orthography and a uniform linguistic system remained to be codified. The emergence of Russian as the vehicle for literary expression culminated in a veritable explosion of writing in the eighteenth century when the process of the Westernization of Russia was in full bloom. Prior to the eighteenth century, an insufficient number of texts exist from which to derive a complete linguistic picture of the state of the Russian language, but this situation was greatly improved by the mid-1800s.

Al'f Grannes has undertaken to expand our knowledge of linguistic facts about the Russian language at the close of the period of transition discussed above. His work on colloquial and dialectal elements of eighteenth-century Russian comedy is in fact his doctoral dissertation from the University of Bergen. It is written in Russian and appears to be a photo-offset copy of the actual dissertation. The author has not succeeded in freeing his work entirely of "dissertationese." On the other hand, a work of this nature is not meant to provide witty insights and clever turns of words: the authors whose language he has studied have already done that. Dr. Grannes's study is a detailed compilation of empirically gathered linguistic facts. It is an extensive sorting and classification of a myriad of linguistic data, all of which together create some kind of picture of nonstandard Russian of two centuries ago. The reader cannot but be impressed with the thoroughness of Grannes's research. However, his endless examples could leave the reader with the impression that Russian literature of that

period was more extensive than it really was. He identifies a linguistic feature, such as *akan'e*, and produces a series of examples from a number of authors. In addition to the author's impressive compilation of data, the work includes a lengthy bibliography of works which are relevant to this particular period in the history of the Russian language.

The book is well written. Grannes defines his terms and genres, discusses sources, and then undertakes a discussion of phonetic features appearing in dialectal and non-standard Russian. After this he tackles morphology, examining each part of speech separately. There is also an index listing words discussed in the section on morphology. One of the problems which Grannes does not explain sufficiently is the question of judging the language of one period from a synchronic point of view. There also exists in this reviewer's mind some doubt as to whether or not a number of quoted forms actually represent Ukrainian or Belorussian, rather than Russian. These, however, do not constitute a serious shortcoming, and the work is a valuable reference source for future study.

WILLIAM W. DERBYSHIRE
Rutgers University

CONTEMPORARY CZECH. By *Michael Heim*. Michigan Slavic Publications. Ann Arbor: Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, University of Michigan, 1976. xii, 363 pp. \$5.00, paper.

Michael Heim's *Contemporary Czech* is the first Czech textbook written for English-speaking students to appear in several years. The textbook is designed for a two-semester college course and consists of a grammar section and a series of review lessons. The book reads well (Mr. Heim has a good ear for Czech), looks good (although the ink in my copy is a bit faded), and is reasonably priced (363 pages for \$5.00). The goal of the text is to give the student a "solid working knowledge" of Czech, yet one wonders whether basic vocabulary items are sufficiently threaded in and out of the exercises and whether the kinds and numbers of drills are equal to the task of reinforcing the vocabulary given.

Czech may be manifested as a written, literary language, as an everyday spoken language, or as various combinations of the two. A major problem for any textbook author, therefore, is to decide what to present, since he cannot ask a student to learn two vocabularies as well as two sets of morphological and phonological rules. The author presents a good mixture of colloquial and literary forms, although not always consistently: he teaches the colloquial first-person singular (*-ju*) and third-person plural (*-jou*) verb endings unless otherwise specified, but gives the written prepositional masculine/neuter singular noun ending (*-ě/-e*) unless otherwise specified.

Although the author evaluates his presentation of declensions and conjugations as "purely pedagogical," "simplified" or "practical" might have been more accurate. For example, rather than give a more complicated grammatical rule, he gives a simplified rule plus a list of deviant forms. Thus, the masculine prepositional singular ending for inanimate nouns is given as **-e*: *mostě*; a rule for choosing the alternant *-u* is given, plus a list of thirty-nine nouns not covered by the rule (14.313). By chance, *hotel* is not among them, and is not included in the glossaries, so that a student would expect the correct prepositional form to be *hotele*. Most Czechs would say *v hotelu* (although some might say *v hotele*), but none would say or write **o hotele*, or for that matter **o mostě*. Such oversimplifications are frequent: the author identifies etymological *ě* with etymological *e*—sometimes (14.321, first half of appendix B) but not always (second half of appendix B); and the "generally" of note 1 (p. 127) and