

critical questions: What is the work in question *about*? And although one will, inevitably, disagree with particular judgments (is it really Pushkin's poetic personality that holds *Eugene Onegin* together?), the readings are independent, well reasoned, and often—as in the case of *Boris Godunov*, *Poltava*, and the “little tragedies”—stimulating. It is only when he tackles the all but impossible job of discussing Pushkin's lyrical verse with nothing but English texts at hand that—pardonably perhaps—he fails.

It is to be hoped that Vickery's success with Pushkin will prompt the people at Twayne to invite him to tackle another major Russian poet (Derzhavin? Lermontov? Blok?). But if they do, someone should tell them the good news that came out of New Haven some twenty-five years ago concerning the heresy—and the bootlessness—of paraphrase.

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THE CRITICAL PROSE OF ALEXANDER PUSHKIN, WITH CRITICAL ESSAYS BY FOUR RUSSIAN ROMANTIC POETS. Edited and translated by *Carl R. Proffer*. Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1970. xii, 308 pp. \$8.95.

Major criticism sheds light on the work criticized; minor criticism, on the critic himself. If there is any truth in this aphorism (it was the reviewer's; it now belongs to the ages), then Pushkin was a minor critic. It is true of course that his precepts for good prose have found favor with many critics, including Soviet scholars who view his demand for “precision and neatness” in prose as an early signpost pointing in the “Gogolian direction” (as Chernyshevsky was later to call it). But Pushkin's—in many ways *conservative*—ideal of “naked simplicity” found in point of fact few followers in Russia, certainly not among the nascent “Gogolian” school of writers, whose slow, detailed, and ample prose is in many respects the opposite of the terse and rapid Voltairean style which Pushkin praised and practiced. It is true, too, that Pushkin was quick to appreciate the genius of Baratynsky, Griboedov, and Gogol; but what he actually *said* about these writers seldom probed very deep (in this respect Belinsky was undoubtedly his superior). Finally, a critic who preferred Shevryev's poetry to Tiutchev's, Mérimée's fiction to Balzac's, and Sainte-Beuve as a *poet* to Lamartine can scarcely be considered an exceptional detector of literary talent.

Does this mean that Professor Proffer's handsomely produced anthology of articles, letters, and obiter dicta is without interest? By no means. For it is precisely because they illuminate the *critic*, who happens to have been the greatest imaginative writer of his age, that these writings are important. No one seriously interested in Pushkin's theater can, for instance, afford to ignore his reflections on Shakespearean versus Moliéresque drama, just as no student of his prose can overlook his theories on that subject. Moreover, his reflections on such varied subjects as Radishchev, Byron, and contemporary French literature (he had serious doubts about all three) shed important light on his own attitudes and prejudices.

An important reservation about the value of this volume has nonetheless been implied. Judiciously selected, eruditely annotated, and crisply (though not quite flawlessly) translated, the contents should indeed interest serious Pushkinists. But serious Pushkinists know Russian. And in that case one may fairly wonder—

Bogoslavsky's superbly edited and much more exhaustive *Pushkin-kritik* still being available on most of our university library shelves—how many readers this collection will have. Viewed in this cold, pragmatic light, Proffer's book looks—to one reader at least—a little like a well-designed and solidly constructed samovar which has been shipped at considerable time and expense to Tula.

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**TJUTČEV'S KURZLYRIK: TRADITIONSZUSAMMENHÄNGE UND INTERPRETATIONEN.** By *Almut Schulze*. Forum Slavicum, vol. 25. Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1968. 99 pp. DM 18.

This essay (which was submitted as a doctoral dissertation at the University of Heidelberg) is devoted to Tiutchev's shorter lyric verse, a genre in which the poet was an innovator in the context of Russian letters.

Part of the author's purpose is to place Tiutchev's shorter poetry against the background of the European poetic tradition. Opening with a discussion of this *genus humile* as used by Tiutchev, Frau Schulze takes Iurii Tynianov to task for too hastily applying certain concepts to Tiutchev in his essay "Vopros o Tiutcheve" (reprinted in *Arkhaisty i novatory*). Examples of such critical-aesthetic concepts misapplied by Tynianov in this connection are "fragment" and "microscopic ode." The author points out that in contrast with Pushkin, who did essay the fragment as a deliberate and valid device, Tiutchev uses a strict form. Considering the shorter lyric of Tiutchev as a "microscopic" replica of the eighteenth-century ode, she suggests, is misleading; and she detects some further flaws in Tynianov's argument. She shows that Tiutchev's aesthetics is not reducible to any eighteenth-century genre, and cannot be accounted for by reference to critical standards borrowed from eighteenth-century rhetoric. Instead, she connects the development of shorter poetry as practiced by Tiutchev with the renewal of interest in the Greek epigram exemplified by Goethe and Heine (two poets with whom Tiutchev was perfectly familiar) and various Russian literati of the 1820s.

In her analysis of Tiutchev's short poems, the author pays more attention to form than to theme or content. Her conclusion is that these poems are structurally dissimilar to the odes and songs of Russian poetry at that time; they are related to the epigram, the madrigal, the short elegy, the short German *Lied*, and should be thought of as continuing the Greek and Latin tradition of shorter poetry.

Although it retains much of the character and format of a doctoral dissertation, this study represents a notable contribution to the discussion of Tiutchev's poetry, both from the textual and the historical-comparative viewpoints.

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**DOSTOEVSKIJ AND THE BELINSKIJ SCHOOL OF LITERARY CRITICISM.** By *Thekwall Proctor*. The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1969. 198 pp. 32 Dutch guilders.

This volume attempts to study the literary criticism of Belinsky, Chernyshevsky, Dobroliubov, Pisarev, and Mikhailovsky, representatives of the socioliterary criticism "which, in a somewhat different form, continues to be predominant in Soviet