

The book's five chapters after the introduction cover the late eighteenth century through the Natural School. Chapter 2, by N. Stepanov, deals with realistic aspects of writers from Fonvizin to Griboedov, arguing for treatment of "Realism of the Enlightenment" as a period with its own artistic method. The following chapter, "The Role of Romanticism in the Formation of Critical Realism" (S. Turaev and I. Usok), offers material of literary interest, although the interpretation of Lermontov is overly dependent on Belinsky, with consequent limitations. (A curious error concerns Pushkin's well-known comment to Bestuzhev-Marlinsky that the novel requires "chatter—*boltovnia*." The sense is here completely reversed.)

The volume's "centerpiece," however, is a lengthy essay by U. Fokht, chief editor of the volume and later of the series. Entitled "The Formation of Critical Realism (Pushkin, Lermontov, Gogol)," the article reads at first like a relic of the late forties, with its unregenerate Marxist-Leninist jargon and turgid style. Its seventy pages unroll mercilessly without the grace of a single subheading. The entire article illustrates that treatment of structure can be used as well as any other approach to chastise bourgeois critics (and sometimes other Soviet critics) for distortion of literary context and inattention to social reality. On the other hand, the favored concept of "typology" is strained to keep Gogol firmly in the realistic camp.

A welcome change of pace, Mann's essay on the Natural School is a sober, objective study bent on illuminating the process of deromanticization which at the same time involved assimilation of some features of Romanticism. His second article is an extremely well-documented description of the development of the theory of realism in Russia. Drawing in Pushkin, Ivan Kireevsky, Venevitinov, Bestuzhev-Marlinsky, and numerous others, Mann attempts to trace the change of taste and critical demand through the first half of the nineteenth century. (In passing, he labels Belinsky's view of Gogol as limited to exclude any perception of his grotesque qualities.) If the remaining volumes of the series include even a few articles of this caliber, this latest treatment of the much exercised theme will bring some profit to those seriously interested in the on-going literary process.

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LA SOCIÉTÉ RUSSE DE LA SECONDE MOITIÉ DU XIX<sup>e</sup> SIÈCLE:  
TROIS TÉMOIGNAGES LITTÉRAIRES: M. E. SALTYKOV-ŠČEDRIN,  
GLEB USPENSKIJ, A. F. PISEMSKIJ. By *Jean Blankoff*. Brussels: Édi-  
tions de l'Université, 1974. 248 pp.

In defining his method Blankoff says early in his study: "What we are basically interested in in our study is the testimony the writer has given in his work of a sociological process, and not in the strictly literary treatment of things." This sentence sums up very well the approach used by the author: to see how Russian life is reflected in the works of these three writers. His focus is sociological without the Marxist ideological bias to mar its value, and he can build on a long and solid European tradition in this critical methodology, if we may only recall György Lukács, Viktor Shklovsky (in the late twenties), Walter Benjamin, and Theodor W. Adorno. Literary events were seen by these critics not in isolation but in their interrelation and integration with social phenomena and social movements.

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