

Several years later Arkadii Belinkov explained to me that his book on Tynianov was conceived as a case study of a literary intellectual honestly loyal to the Soviet regime. There were to be two others, a study of Solzhenitsyn, an open foe of the system, and one of Olesha, a non-Communist ready to make whatever concession the Communist rulers demanded. The Solzhenitsyn book will never be written. His health ruined by prolonged confinement in Soviet camps, Belinkov died in America only two years after his escape from the USSR. The study of Olesha, however, was written some years earlier and the manuscript was smuggled out of the USSR. After a delay of several years it has now appeared in the West in the original Russian, thanks to the heroic efforts of Arkadii Belinkov's widow Natalia.

Iurii Olesha is not, strictly speaking, a book about *Envy* and its author's other writings, nor is it a systematic biography of Olesha. Rather, it is a portrait of *un enfant de son siècle*, with most of the attention devoted to the depressing background of Stalin's Russia. As Belinkov put it: "I wrote a book about [Olesha], a wretched human being (as were all men of his social milieu and generation), and not a very good writer (as were all writers of his social milieu and generation). I did it because I believe that the task of a historian of literature is not the analysis of artistic devices and imaginative works, but the study of causes that condition the appearance and the character of a work of art. And these depend strictly on the relationship between the artist and society" (p. 457).

Iurii Olesha is, above all, an impassioned tract about the tragic and pitiful fate of a man whom Belinkov considers a typical Soviet intellectual. Conventional accounts of his life maintain that sometime in the 1930s Olesha grew silent and did not write or publish until after Stalin's death and shortly before his own in 1960. Not so, Belinkov demonstrates. Olesha never stopped writing. Quite to the contrary. It is simply that the author of *Envy*, "stepping on the throat of his own song," dutifully produced ever larger quantities of obsequious political drivel. In contrast to such courageous authors as Bulgakov and Akhmatova, Olesha surrendered to the "social command," and in the process he also destroyed himself both as an artist and as a human being. Belinkov's book, conceived in pain and in anger and surreptitiously written in the USSR, bristles with sarcasm and defiance. Its countless digressions, multitudes of secondary subjects, and bewildering array of references (ranging from Freud to chess manuals and from the Bible to matchbook labels) occasionally disorient the reader. Yet, in the final analysis, what emerges is a massive study of a totalitarian regime brutally crushing anything it cannot fully control. In the short story "The Cherry Pit," Olesha's protagonist expresses the hope that utilitarian society in its wisdom would allow art a minimum of autonomy. Belinkov's thesis is that beasts and bulldozers cannot be swayed to moderation.

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VALERY BRIUSOV AND THE RISE OF RUSSIAN SYMBOLISM. By
Martin P. Rice. Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1975. iv, 155 pp. \$2.95.

Martin Rice's book is a welcome addition to the literature on Briusov. It is neither a biography nor a critical evaluation, but, as its title suggests, an appraisal of Briusov's role as a literary organizer and editor who mobilized the various forces that loosely constituted the Symbolist movement in Russia. Focusing on a single figure is a very defensible and perhaps the only way to present with any clarity the growth of such a complex, controversial, and untidy movement; thus the more general aim of the book should certainly be taken seriously. Overall the work is well organized and well re-

searched, despite the initial impression that may be given by an introduction that relies a little too much on secondhand generalizations. Some caution is required, however, in reading Mr. Rice's account, because he is inclined to exaggerate both the originality of Briusov's contribution to Russian Symbolism and his impact on the wider literary scene of his day. To describe Briusov at any stage in his career as "the arbiter of Russian literary taste" is surely to overstate his importance, and in a later chapter Mr. Rice himself implicitly negates this description by pointing out how slowly Briusov achieved even a moderate degree of acceptance among his contemporaries. Likewise, the claim that Briusov's views placed him "in a position diametrically opposed to that of the other leading figures of Russian Symbolism" as early as 1899 is excessive, and, in any case, is contradicted a page later when "the real beginning of his break with Symbolism as it was then known" is set at 1905.

In fairness it should be noted that the short conclusion is more balanced and admits some reservations about Briusov's role. Ardis is to be congratulated on producing another inexpensive but attractive volume without typesetting, but attention should be drawn in this case to the typographical and editorial mistakes which are numerous enough to be irritating.

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BARATYNSKII: A DICTIONARY OF THE RHYMES AND A CONCORDANCE TO THE POETRY. By *J. Thomas Shaw*. Wisconsin Slavic Publications, 3. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1975. xxxii, 434 pp. \$36.95. (Available from Xerox University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan.)

BATIUSHKOV: A DICTIONARY OF THE RHYMES AND A CONCORDANCE TO THE POETRY. By *J. Thomas Shaw*. Wisconsin Slavic Publications, 2. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1975. xxxii, 358 pp. \$31.95. (Available from Xerox University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan.)

While engaged in the project that led to *Pushkin's Rhymes: A Dictionary* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1974), Professor Shaw decided to obtain comparative data by also investigating the rhymes of Batiushkov and Baratynskii. The result is a pair of volumes which are similar in format to the book on Pushkin, although the latter does not contain a concordance. The introductory material is a little more extensive in *Pushkin's Rhymes* than in the two subsequent works, but otherwise—except for obvious differences in the statistics—the explanatory sections in all three books are virtually identical. Thus, once the would-be user has mastered the intricacies of deciphering the entries in any one of the volumes, he can turn to the other two with little difficulty.

Each rhyme dictionary actually consists of two parts: a lexicon of endwords and a concordance of rhymes. Since the methodology is the same, the strengths and weaknesses of the Batiushkov and the Baratynskii volumes are the same as for the Pushkin dictionary. The amount of information provided is admirable. The lexicon offers grammatical information about each endword and shows the frequency of its occurrence. The concordance not only lists each of the rhymes—arranged alphabetically by rhyming segments, with separate lists for masculine, feminine, and dactylic rhymes—but also manages to describe in detail the grammatical and syntactic characteristics of each endword. Furthermore, the arrangement of each entry makes it easy to spot such features as homonym and repetend rhymes, consonant enrichment, the size of rhyme sets, and differences in the rhyme elements of a set. There is a great deal of