

precedent with Lezhnirov in *Rudin*" (p. 92). Peterson's own caution that "the aesthetic accolades showered on Turgenev as the supreme mentor of the dramatic novel served mainly to mask an extensive borrowing of French narrative strategies" (p. 21) is well taken. Peterson's detailed confrontation of "Asia" with "Daisy Miller" (pp. 64–68) is characteristic of his efforts to show direct influence: it gives a convincing demonstration of the "reformation" of a Turgenevian theme by James, yet manages to do so without touching upon the symbolic national significance of either story, or upon their greatness, for that matter.

The convergences between Turgenev and James are obvious, well known, and have probably been overworked by critics, including Professor Peterson himself. Thus, the notion that the creative personality of both writers was formed by the fact that they were "provincials" and that this "posed a problem which would clearly require some meddling with the size and structure of what passed for 'the novel' in Europe" (p. 72) would seem exaggerated and, perhaps, misleading. In theory and in practice, American and Russian literature of the mid-nineteenth century were as innovative and sophisticated as any Western literature in the period, a fact which is amply proven by Peterson's own treatment of the art as well as of the aesthetic theory of Turgenev and James.

Peterson's observations concerning Turgenev and James as practitioners of the dramatic novel might have been more technical. In particular, one would be interested in the connection between the "novellalike" character of Turgenev's and James's novels (p. 82) and their dramatic structure. In effect, Peterson ignores Apollon Grigoriev's suggestion that a Turgenevian novel is like a large and masterfully conceived canvas, with some parts left bare and others tentatively sketched, and only some key junctures complete. Would this description apply to James, as well?

Peterson's conception of the "clement vision" of Turgenev-Jamesian "poetic realism" (p. 122) is surely well taken. There is indeed a "deep affinity" of vision between Volodia as seen by Turgenev in "First Love" and James's "What Maisie Knew" (p. 123). Perhaps it is even more important to realize that the "epiphany" of which Peterson speaks (p. 124) is in both instances a negative one: it is wistfully hinted at, not joyously produced. All in all, Peterson's study is well informed, competent, and intelligent, one with whose theses one can generally agree. If it does not make for very satisfying reading, it is because of its subject matter, not its execution.

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TWENTIETH-CENTURY RUSSIAN LITERARY CRITICISM. Edited by  
*Victor Erlich*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1975. x, 317 pp.  
\$15.00.

The essays in this collection have been chosen to represent either different approaches to literature (Symbolism, Formalism, Marxism) or historical periods and situations (the "thaw," the emigration). Further restrictions have been imposed because several suitable essays have been preempted for other forthcoming anthologies, and because of the need "to restrict the scope of the volume to major figures, in order to render it accessible to the non-specialist." The translations have been done with varying degrees of success—the prose naturally faring better than the poetry—but here and there the reader with a knowledge of Russian will detect inaccuracies.

The book is dominated by the Formalists, who occupy 40 percent of the total space, though it should be noted that Zhirmunskii's article on Blok and Jakobson's essay, "On a Generation that Squandered its Poets," are not noticeably Formalist in their approach. (Nor, for that matter, is either of the two Symbolist essays on Gogol particularly Symbolist.) Bitsilli's chapter on Chekhov and Aldanov's essay on Tolstoy clearly lose by being taken out of context; Sinyavsky's famous essay on Pasternak has been reduced to a mere twelve pages. A surprising omission is the work of the new Tartu school, although, as the editor says, "it may well turn out to be one of the most vigorous intellectual manifestations of the current structuralist trend in literary studies."

The book is apparently aimed at students taking courses in "Russian Literature in Translation" or "History of Literary Criticism." As such it should be successful (though the price is prohibitive), since few students are likely to be worried by the errors which will disconcert the specialist: Viacheslav Ivanov's date of birth (1866) is given as 1886 on page 7; the date of the Congress of Soviet Writers (1934) as 1939 on page 21; *Rubka lesa* appears somewhat alarmingly on page 98 as "A Wood Feeling"; Babel's character, Kurdiukov, is regularly misspelled in Voronskii's essay; Azef (p. 208) had been unmasked many years before his death in 1918; and, despite the footnote on page 276, Leonov's play *Metel'* was indeed published in 1939, though it was suppressed in the following year and substantially revised before being reissued in the 1960s.

Despite these reservations the selection is a good one, providing pleasure as well as instruction. Not every essay will appeal to every taste, but they are all well written and provocative, and retain their focus on literature. By contrast, the editor's introduction, with its attempt to grade the class for "perceptive *aperçus*" and "informed responsiveness," judiciously qualified by the occasional "to be sure," is a glum piece of mandarinese. It is a relief to turn to the essays themselves and salutary to be reminded by Belyi and Shklovsky that criticism cannot be scientifically objective: "We measure an author by *our* aesthetic standards."

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THE SEEKER: D. S. MERZHKOVSKIY. By C. Harold Bedford. Lawrence: The University Press of Kansas, 1975. x, 222 pp. \$12.50.

Recently there appeared two books devoted to aspects of the work of D. S. Merezhkovsky, an author not spoiled hitherto by too much flattering attention. These studies are: Ute Spengler, *D. S. Merezhkovskij: Versuch einer religiösen Begründung der Kunst* (Lucerne, 1972), and B. G. Rosenthal, *D. S. Merezhkovsky and the Silver Age: The Development of a Revolutionary Mentality* (The Hague, 1975).

Merezhkovsky, although through his entire long creative career a controversial as well as a widely-read author, has remained an underrated and underanalyzed writer and thinker. What was wanting was an intelligent and knowledgeable synopsis of the many facets of his literary and philosophical endeavor. Professor Bedford has now provided such a badly needed summary. In addition to being distinguished for its extraordinary stylistic refinement and suppleness, this presentation—though not devoid of critical detachment when appropriate—excels in thoroughness, sound information, and empathy as well as sympathy.

Bedford's study gives the reader insight into Merezhkovsky's childhood and family background, and deals with his conversion from populism—with its attach-