

the cycle story—by such writers as Lermontov, Dal, Kukolnik, Bulgarin, Panaev, Nekrasov, and Grigorovich, and by discussing related criticism of the sketch, Peters proves that this genre served a transitional function in Russian literature: it bridged the period between the historical novel and the period of realism that followed. The second part of the book is a detailed discussion of Turgenev's *Zapiski okhotnika*, with emphasis on his *staraia* and *novaiia manera* of writing. The author makes a comparative analysis of earlier and later stories in the cycle in terms of character portrayals, nature descriptions, certain stylistic and linguistic peculiarities, and the role of the narrator. In so doing, he shows Turgenev's gradual departure from the sketch tradition and evolution toward a more artistic style of narrative, which finds full realization only in his later novels.

With this study, Peters demonstrates that the achievements of the realistic period of Russian literature, with its giant representatives, were a slow, painstaking process of correction and broadening of the poetics of the Natural School as well as of borrowing from foreign sources. Along with the informative, excellent bibliography, this study provides an invaluable basis for further research on the development and origin of the great works of Russian narrative fiction.

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LETTERS OF ANTON CHEKHOV. Selected and edited by *Avrahm Yarmolinsky*. New York: Viking Press, 1973. xxi, 490 pp. \$12.50.

LETTERS OF ANTON CHEKHOV. Selected and edited by *Simon Karlinsky*. Translated from the Russian by *Michael Henry Heim* in collaboration with *Simon Karlinsky*. New York: Harper & Row, 1973. xiv, 494 pp. \$17.50.

And suddenly, simultaneously, there were these two bulky, big books with identical titles, both containing a large selection of Chekhov's letters. The coincidence is not so surprising: similar editions have appeared recently in several European countries. Chekhov's letters have now become an indispensable companion to his works—shedding light on these works, the personality of their author, and the times he lived in, and at the same time providing delightful reading.

No reviewer can resist the temptation to compare the two volumes. Yarmolinsky's and Karlinsky's selections (abbreviated Yar and Kar) are of equal size, although Kar is in smaller print, so it actually contains more (note the price difference of 40 percent!). One is surprised to find that Yar comprises 413 letters, Kar only 185. The reason is that Kar used only complete letters whereas Yar abbreviated many. Kar has incomparably more comments, since many more unknown and unimportant persons and situations had to be explained that Yar simply left out. A letter is not, or is usually not, a literary text; therefore, excisions in a publication of someone's correspondence are mostly considered permissible. Yar, following the method of most letter compilers, omitted less-interesting passages; this way he presents a higher concentration of worthwhile material (the omissions are indicated by asterisks; incidentally, in a letter on page 403 a few sentences are left out without asterisks). He has a ten-page-long, matter-of-fact introduction, short explanatory notes, and a name and subject index. Along with his own translations, there are 115 letters translated by Bernard G. Guernsey and 32 by Lynn Solotaroff.

Whereas Yar. thus offers more Chekhov, Kar offers more Karlinsky. His foreword, introduction, prologues to each of the fifteen sections into which he divides the letters, extensive notes to each letter (sometimes several pages long), epilogue, bibliography, and the name index take about half of the book. All this gives an additional dimension to his edition. The introduction is informative (although less valuable for the insider), and it contains stimulating thoughts—for example, the discussion of “The Bride” on page 22 is excellent. However, the statement that “it is invariably assumed . . . in Soviet editions of Chekhov that in *Nadya* he has portrayed an upper-class girl who is about to become a revolutionary” (p. 21) is not true. Most Soviet commentators agree that this would be a hasty conclusion, since the author is silent about *Nadya*’s future. Sometimes they will refer to V. Veresaev’s memoirs, in which Chekhov himself in a conversation is said to have hinted at her joining the revolution.

Karlinsky includes a brief survey of Russian nineteenth-century literary criticism, which has no major relevance for a collection of Chekhov’s letters. In our time of victorious aestheticism, formalism, and individualism, philippics against the socially minded nineteenth-century critics are the order of the day; and by and large they are, of course, true and well founded. Yet, if the “*de facto* unofficial censorship by the anti-government literary critics” was “far more powerful,” “even more oppressive” than the official censorship, and “prescribed rigid formal and aesthetic criteria” (p. 7), the reader must be wondering how Dostoevsky and Leskov, Fet and Tiutchev, Rozanov and Soloviev, the symbolists and Chekhov himself could have survived this ordeal. All right, they sometimes had to fight a powerful trend, but they could do so, as the example of Chekhov shows. It is incorrect that Leskov was “read out of Russian literature” (p. 7): he later became more or less reconciled with the liberal press, and his works were very widely read.

In his comments Karlinsky often voices very personal opinions and *partis pris*—for example, in his diatribe against Stanislavsky (pp. 391–94), in which he denies or is silent about any merits of the famous actor-director for the Russian theater. He has equally strong opinions about the women in Chekhov’s life. He appears to know exactly which ladies were significant (he mentions a few persons whose correspondence got lost or was never published, p. 189) and which were not. Between Chekhov and Lidia Avilova there was absolutely nothing, he decrees (cf. pp. 267, 361), and he is so angry with her (and the biographers who had a different opinion) that he bans all letters to her from his collection, although some of them are among the richest in contents (there are seven in Yar). Lika Mizinova undergoes the same fate; other female correspondents are also under-represented. There are only eleven letters to Olga Knipper (over sixty in Yar). Equally regrettable is the absence of all of Chekhov’s letters to his brother Alexander, some of which are “painfully humorous,” as the foreword admits; they are also highly characteristic. Some letters to his brother Mikhail and his sister Maria are included, but not the lively epistles from his trip through Siberia.

Speaking about Chekhov’s attitude toward the Decadents, Karlinsky quotes Alexander Serebrov-Tikhonov’s notes of a conversation in which Chekhov expressed himself negatively about them (p. 432); however, during this conversation Chekhov reacted negatively to every topic, partly in order to challenge his partner, partly because he did not feel well and was irritated (“It seemed that he did not quite say what he thought,” writes Serebrov). Incidentally, Serebrov’s memoir

of Chekhov's visit to the Urals was first published not in 1955 (Kar p. 389) but in 1935, and again in 1947 in *Chekhov v vospominaniakh sovremennikov*.

Comparing the translations, one is surprised to find that there is hardly a sentence that is translated exactly the same way in both volumes, a fact which attests to the richness of the English language, not to any deficiency in the translations. Yarmolinsky was "guided by the wish to reduce to a minimum any tampering with the text" (p. xvi); Heim even more consistently translated without breaking up long sentences or changing the paragraphing. Perhaps mistakenly, he left out a few words in the often-quoted letter to Ivan Orlov on page 341. In a letter to Alexei Suvorin, Heim translates the words *stoit dorogo* as "extremely valuable," Yarmolinsky as "that cost me plenty" (Kar p. 173, Yar p. 168); Chekhov probably meant "valuable," however much he liked to discuss pecuniary matters in his correspondence. In a letter to Leonid Sredin (Kar pp. 389–90, Yar p. 386) Heim is more correct in rendering a sentence where Chekhov compares Nice with Yalta. But such inaccuracies are not easy to discover. One cannot but conclude that both translations are careful, correct, and graceful.

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THE CHAMELEON AND THE DREAM: THE IMAGE OF REALITY IN CHEKHOV'S STORIES. By *Karl D. Kramer*. Slavistic Printings and Reprintings, 78. The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1970. 182 pp. 36 Dglds.

Dr. Kramer has tackled his detailed exploration of the ambiguity which is central to Chekhov's world view and narrative technique with courage and panache, and his book ranks alongside Alexander Chudakov's *Poetika Chekhova* (1971) as one of the most important studies of this writer to appear for many years.

Despite a broadly chronological approach, Kramer builds meaningful links between the various phases of Chekhov's works and avoids the error of regarding the twenty years of his creative life either as a string of disparate "periods" or as an unflinching evolution from the apprentice's fumbling experiments to the master's chefs-d'oeuvre. The "chameleon" of the early stories is another manifestation of the ambiguity implied by the "dream" in the later stories. Nor is it the case that the "dreamer" is out of touch with the workaday world or morbidly conscious of *poshlost'*, as so many other critics assume: "From his own point of view the dreamer does not sever his connection with reality; on the contrary, there is an intensification of contact—an attempt to find another system of values within the daily sphere." Like Chudakov, Kramer focuses on *point of view*, including the modern phenomenon of multiple point of view as the key narrative device through which the ambiguity is expressed.

Kramer makes many significant observations about Chekhov's technique in his analyses of particular stories. He recognizes the importance of framing devices, parallel passages, the ambiguous reference to many key lines or last lines, the graded revelation, the use of weather as a commentary, the clear marking of time, and the foregrounding of key events by marked syntactic patterns. He refers to early drafts of stories to stress or clarify Chekhov's intentions, and he meaningfully relates much of the discussion to analogous themes and devices in the plays. It is curious, therefore, how little relation his first chapter, devoted to a definition of the short story and its techniques, bears to the rest of the book. Kramer discusses