

implication, such an emphasis suggests a rejection of values as they apply to criticism.) These are the (largely unspoken) assumptions which appear to underlie the current interest in Structuralist poetics and its predecessor, Russian Formalist poetics of the 1920s. This interest has been expressed in the reprinting, both in the West and in the Soviet Union, of the work of Formalist critics, especially Iurii Tynianov.

So far, most of the reprints have been of the Russian originals, and the reflection of Formalist work in Western Structuralist poetics has therefore been largely indirect. The volume under review—a scholarly translation into German of Tynianov's *Problema stikhotvornogo iazyka*—brings one of the classical statements of Russian Formalist poetics to a wider audience. The introduction by the translator gives a useful sketch of the history and issues of Russian Formalist poetics. The detailed footnotes are frequently illuminating (although oriented toward the German reader), and the bibliography of Tynianov's works on literature (including translations) is very welcome. The translation itself is of a high standard, especially in the precision with which terminology is handled. Quotations are taken from their original sources (with discrepancies in Tynianov's versions given in footnotes).

Tynianov's text—now over fifty years old—is at times dense and lacking examples, but it still reads as a stimulating and corrective statement on the nature of poetic language. In particular, Tynianov's view of poetry as a dynamic system rather than a static construct and his distinctions between poetry and prose still retain their pertinence and force. Although of obviously limited use in the North American context, Paulmann's translation may be considered a competent and useful addition to Western Tynianoviana.

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FIVE RUSSIAN POEMS: EXERCISES IN A THEORY OF POETRY. By Daniel Laferrière. Foreword by Victor Terras. Englewood, N.J.: Transworld Publishers, 1977. xvi, 154 pp. \$9.50, paper.

Laferrière's book contains a number of original and highly provocative ideas, most of which, unfortunately, are carried to absurd conclusions. The introductory chapter offers a new "psycholinguistic" theory of poetry, a synthesis of Jakobsonian linguistics, Freudian psychology, and some terminology from recent studies in semiotics. In the chapters that follow, the new theory is applied to five well-known Russian poems: Pushkin's "Ia pomniu chudnoe mgnoven'e," Tiutchev's "Son na more," Fet's "Mesiats zerkal'nyi plyvet po lazurnoi pustyne," Blok's "Neznakomka," and Mandelstam's "Tristia."

The idea governing Laferrière's theory is that, for both the reader and the writer, poetry is a kind of controlled schizophrenia. Throughout the poem (text), the poet (addresser) and the reader (addressee) share the experience of *Ichspaltungen*, or split ego. The chief function of form in poetry is "to help protect the ego (of both addresser and addressee) against the potentially dangerous death fantasies [or other appropriate traumas] being elicited by the poem." The function of "the various semantic, syntactic, morphological, and phonological devices of a poem's structure," the object of Jakobsonian analysis, is to defend us from the "underlying semantic material," the raw terrors known to Freudians. By delving sufficiently deeply into the poem, Laferrière hopes to find the point where linguistics and psychology meet. The task, then, of "psycholinguistic" analysis is to uncover the poem's hidden "teleology," the psychosis behind the form.

Laferrière's theory is bold, interesting, and well argued. But in the exercises that issue from it, the "synthesis" of Freud and Jakobson seems more of a misalliance. With the aid of charts, Rube Goldberg diagrams, and citations from the poets' letters,

Laferrière tries to prove that Mme. Kern (*genii chistoi krasoty*) represents a “phallic mother,” and that the hidden purpose of the poem’s form is to shield Pushkin from latent homosexual and Oedipal feelings. “Son na more” masks Tiutchev’s wish to regress into his own personal past, his mother’s womb, and death. The key to Fet’s poem lies in the hidden meaning of “moon” (as in the American college fraternity rite of “flashing a moon”), and the poem masks fantasies of uterine regression. The mysterious woman in Blok’s “Neznakomka” turns out to be the tipling poet’s mother, and the poet fragments his ego (to the extent that he can see his “friend” in the wine-glass) as a kind of “guerrilla defense” against reprisal for his incestuous fantasies. Mandelstam’s ubiquitous references to classical antiquity, his use of “subtexts,” and his fondness for the idea that everything repeats itself are all explained as a beautiful camouflage for the unmentionable longing to crawl back into the womb and die.

One problem with Laferrière’s theory is that it turns the reading of any poem into an exercise in how to get from a given starting point to uterine regression. As Laferrière shows, it can be done—but too often, in this reviewer’s opinion, only by doing violence to the poem. The book has brilliant moments, and even the arguments that common sense may ultimately lead one to reject deserve to be read a second or third time. Laferrière is clearly a talented critic capable of making major contributions to the field of poetics. Unfortunately, too many of the pages of this study read like parodies of misreading, *Pooh Perplex* lampoons of a Freudian semiotics run amuck. From the ambitious goals stated in the preface, it is clear that parody was not the author’s intention.

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PIS'MA A. M. REMIZOVA I V. IA. BRIUSOVA K O. MADELUNGU. Edited by P. Alberg Jensen and P. U. Møller. Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1976. 80 pp. D.kr. 40, paper.

In 1902, friends of the twenty-five-year-old Aleksei Remizov arranged for his place of exile to be changed from Ust'-Sysol'sk to Vologda. There the novice writer found a colony of fellow exiles who were soon to make names for themselves in Russian cultural and political history, and who briefly made this unlikely provincial city—which Remizov only half-jokingly was later to call the “northern Athens”—into a mini-cultural center. Lunacharskii, Berdiaev, Savinkov, P. E. Shchegolev, I. P. Kaliaev, and A. A. Bogdanov, to name only the most prominent, met regularly for discussions, corresponded openly with friends at home and abroad, and published in the legal press. (This makes an interesting contrast to the situation of present-day dissidents in the Soviet Union.)

In Vologda, the young Remizov met his future wife (also an exile) and Aage Madelung (1872–1949), a young Danish butter exporter who dreamed of making a place in Russian literature. They never became close friends; rather, their relationship was mutually beneficial. Remizov lent Madelung a hand with his translations and original stories and helped him establish contact with Briusov and with *Vesny*, that most “international” of Russian journals, in which for a short time Madelung both published and served as “Danish correspondent.” In return, Remizov hoped for Danish translations of his works—in vain, as it turned out. Because Madelung left no mark either on Russian or Danish literature, the letters published in this volume are of primary interest to biographers of Remizov. They establish his places and dates of residence, and confirm or amplify matters mentioned in his often cryptic and elliptical memoirs. The dominant leitmotif is his seemingly endless material difficulties and problems with publishing. Yet the persistent reader will be rewarded with some