

is a better critic than his theory permits him to be, and his many nice perceptions will prove helpful to those who continue to concern themselves with an important modern Russian writer.

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“SUPERFLUOUS MEN” AND THE POST-STALIN “THAW”: THE ALIENATED HERO IN SOVIET PROSE DURING THE DECADE 1953–1963. By *Thomas F. Rogers*. Slavistic Printings and Reprintings, 108. The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1972. 410 pp. 84 Dglds.

The concept of the “superfluous man” is ordinarily traced to Turgenev’s *Diary of a Superfluous Man*, published in 1850. The post-Stalin *Kratkaia Literaturnaia Entsiklopediia* identifies the term with a phenomenon characteristic of Russia in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Although many students may regard this as overly restrictive, no Soviet scholar is likely to concede in print that the concept and the phenomenon it reflects retain their validity in Soviet conditions as well. Thomas F. Rogers of Brigham Young University disagrees. His monograph examines over two hundred works of Soviet prose printed between 1953 and 1963 which feature “fictional characters who—by virtue of their critical or antisocial thoughts, victimized condition, or rebellious action—can be considered socially and/or ideologically alienated.” A survey of these flawed heroes and anti-heroes against a background of their prerevolutionary and earlier Soviet antecedents leads Rogers to the conclusion that “conflicts of integrity vs. duplicity and apathy vs. responsibility” seem in many respects “unique to the ‘Thaw’ period.” Conversely, such traditional themes as “atavism; self-destructive nihilism, the theoretician’s envy of the practical man, etc.,” no longer occur.

With the possible exception of hardened sociologists, most readers are likely to find Rogers’s monograph as difficult to read as the often turgid prose it analyzes. Many may, indeed, be intimidated by tables bearing such titles as “Approximate Ratio of Incidence of Thematic Categories per Total of Situations and per Total of Works Sampled.” The amount of research in secondary sources is huge, though it is not always the most apposite and occasionally is inaccurately interpreted. Thus a verification of the claim that Rufus Mathewson of Columbia discusses “nineteenth-century [Russian] classicism,” reveals, of course, that Mathewson spoke of the “classical tradition,” which is a different matter altogether. There are enough references to this reviewer’s own writings to satisfy his vanity, but these are, alas, to essays only marginally relevant to the volume’s concerns. There is no justification—literary or sociological—for lumping together Soviet novels printed legally in the USSR (and, perhaps even more important, *written* with an awareness of certain requirements and taboos that are all too familiar) and works intended only for *samizdat* circulation (for example, Siniavsky, Daniel, Tarsis). Similarly, in a book published for a Western academic audience, Russian works never translated into English should have been referred to by their original Russian titles. There are more misprints than we have grown accustomed to tolerate, and it is a sad commentary on the decline of national consciousness that a book originating in The Hague refers to a “flying Hollander.”

An unexpected fringe benefit to potential buyers is eighty pages of plot summaries of recent Soviet novels. This offers a unique opportunity for checking

whether tractor driver Ivan Nikolaevich (Nikolai Ivanovich?) married or divorced milkperson Evgeniia Aleksandrovna (Aleksandra Evgenievna?). Regardless of what the Dewey Decimal System ordains, on my bookshelf Rogers's book will repose next to a trusted copy of the *Thesaurus of Book Digests*.

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SLAVIC POETICS: ESSAYS IN HONOR OF KIRIL TARANOVSKY.

Edited by Roman Jakobson, C. H. van Schooneveld, and Dean S. Worth. Slavistic Printings and Reprintings, 267. The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1973. viii, 575 pp. 180 Dglds.

The publication of Kiril Taranovsky's pioneering study *Ruski dvodelni ritmovi* in 1953 firmly established his reputation as a leading theorist of Russian metrics. Since then this book and the numerous articles in which he has extended and refined his ideas have provided, along with the work of the late Boris Tomashevsky, the major impetus for recent significant advances in applying the statistical method to the study of Russian versification.

The fifty-one essays in *Slavic Poetics* for the most part closely reflect Professor Taranovsky's interests. Indeed, many of them express a specific debt to remarks made by him either in publications or in seminars he has taught at Harvard University. A brief review cannot list, let alone discuss, all the contributions, but the majority can be placed—albeit arbitrarily—into several categories. Metrists and others interested in a formal analysis of the poetic text have lately been paying more attention to developments in the twentieth century and correspondingly less to the nineteenth. Thus it is not surprising to find only a few items treating poets of the nineteenth century but a large number devoted to a wide range of problems in twentieth-century figures. There are single studies on a number of modern poets, while Pasternak, Akhmatova, and Mayakovsky are each the subject of more than one article. Osip Mandelshtam, to whom Taranovsky has been devoting an increasing amount of attention in recent years, perhaps deserves a category of his own, since no fewer than six scholars have provided careful exegeses of single poems by Mandelshtam or of specific problems in his complex poetry. Ranging farther afield, several authors have looked at topics in Slavic verse traditions other than Russian, most notably Czech and Serbo-Croatian.

Perhaps the book's chief significance is that it marks the first appearance in a single volume of nearly all the leading metrists both within Russia and without. As a result it presents, as no other collection has, a panorama of recent scholarship and of the advances that have been made in the study of Russian poetry since the early scientific studies of the 1910s and 1920s. The only previous publication to provide a hint of the enormous efforts now under way is *Teoriia stikha*, which came out in 1968 and contained only the works of Soviet scholars. Four of the major contributors to that volume appear here as well. Ivanov and Kholshchevnikov, discussing quite different topics, both manage to show that there is still ample room for research on the most common of Russian meters, the iambic tetrameter; Taranovsky's influential 1963 article "O vzaimootnoshenii stikhotvornogo ritma i tematiki" is the model for brief investigations by Gasparov and Rudnev into problems of verse and meaning. Works by scholars outside the Soviet Union include Roman Jakobson's perceptive examination of the relatively weak stress on