Russian women poets challenged key Sentimental ideas: 1) their virtues of goodness and religious belief overcome feminine modesty; 2) their poetic gift is spontaneous and they are like muses; 3) their Sappho is not a heartbroken suicide; and 4) their tributes to Antoinette du Ligier de La Garde Deshoulière's (1638–94) "Le ruisseau" (105, 178–79) re-envision the pastoral. Deliberately focusing on themes, Stohler ignores poetic genres, rhyme, and meter, which limits her analysis.

Based on the second half of this book and the appendix, one could argue that Mariia Pospelova, Bolotnikova, and Naumova—as befitting their ranks as the wives and daughters of (most likely) noble servitors to the emperor and the state in the era of the Napoleonic wars, like their French elite counterparts (see Carla Hesse, 2001)—ventured much further, into questions of emotions, reason, human nature and nurture in politics, philosophy, and pedagogy. Provincials, they engaged with Moscow literary life. From Vladimir, Pospelova (1780/83/84–1805) found protectors in the journal editor V.S. Podshivalov and her relative F.T. Pospelov, a translator and civil servant, who had worked for Gavriil Derzhavin. She caught the attention of Derzhavin, Mikhail Kheraskov, and Nikolai Karamzin when Paul I gave her a diamond ring for her ode to him (1796). Continuing to write odes, the highest civic poetic genre, she then dedicated her collection *Luchshie chasy zhizni moi* (1798) to Grand Duchess Elizaveta Alekseevna. From the Orel region, Bolotnikova, unknown even in bio-bibliographical dictionaries, published only a collection *Derevenskaia lira, ili chasy uedineniia* (1817), by subscription, thanking the local governor, Prince I.M. Dolgorukii, who mentions her in his memoirs (1874). Her poems are revelations: in "Uprek mushchinam," she calls on nature's "Holy law," or natural law (misinterpreted as an authoritative nature, 149) to give women "freedom" from men's oppression. In "Razsuzhdenie moego Dvoretskogo," "her" serf criticizes the master and mistress for living a refined life while neglecting their estate and serfs. Anna Naumova (1787–1862) left a Decembrist circle in Kazan, declaring herself a monarchist and retreating to her estate, where she educated nearly thirty wards on what amounted to an institutional scale, not unlike the Dowager Empress Maria Fedorovna, who then presided over institutes for noblewomen. She provided dowries and such poems as "Urok molodym devushkam," teaching them virtue and the dangers of men and love. These poems are in the Sentimental philosophical and pedagogical tradition of the monarchist Madame de Genlis, whose great treatise in letters on women's education in virtue *and* foreign languages, *Adèle et Théodore* (1782), was written against *Émile* and respected in Russia, unlike Rousseau's recipe of ignorant virtue. Russian noblewomen, like men, engaged fully with European Enlightenment Sentimentalism in all genres.

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Teksty-kartiny i ekfrazisy v romane Dostoevskogo "Idiot." By Nina Perlina. Sankt Peterburg: Izdatel´stvo Aleteiia, 2017. Notes. Index. 288 pp. RUB 990, paper.
doi: 10.1017/slr.2018.179

The role of western art in the composition and narrative of Fedor Dostoevskii's novel *The Idiot* has been well-studied; the role of *ekphrasis* somewhat less so. Nina Perlina's monograph *Teksty-kartiny i ekfrazisy v romane Dostoevskogo "Idiot"* is the first book-length study of *ekphrasis* in Dostoevskii's novel and of *ekphrasis* in a single novel in general. Perlina employs the trope to generate new readings of key visual moments in the text. The book presents an in-depth analysis of the pictorial scenes or what

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Perlina calls "living pictures" (*zhivye kartiny*) that structure the novel as complex, inter-textual, inter-medial "productive moments." The study examines each of the novel's four parts elaborating on how these "living pictures" evoke a range of implicit or explicit, notional or actual paintings. Perlina argues that Dostoevskii's visits to the galleries of the major European cities where he lived with his wife during the writing of *The Idiot* supplied all the *ekphrases* in the novel.

This argument is not new but Perlina expands it substantially to include not only paintings and portraits named in the novel, but also omitted, delayed, or insinuated *ekphrases*, verbal portraits of characters' appearance, photograph-like scenes, inserted narratives, and various inter-textual moments. Thus, she relies largely on the classical definition of *ekphrasis* as *enargeia* or vivid description. She posits the characters, along with readers, as viewers or spectators, and contends that like a master painter, Dostoevskii lifts the curtain covering his canvas and shows his artwork to his audience. In fact, she suggests that the entire novel is constituted by a chain of visual scenes—vivid impressions of the great masters "imprinted onto" Dostoevskii's memory in the Dresden, Basel, and Florence galleries.

In addition to a brief introduction, the book consists of six parts. Part 1 presents the historical-theoretical framework informing the study and outlines the arguments developed in the subsequent parts. Parts 2 and 3 comprise new approaches to pivotal scenes in the first half of *The Idiot*. Part 4 turns to Dostoevskii's rereading of *Don Quixote* in terms of parodic *ekphrasis*. Parts 5 and 6 return to the erotic triangle in the novel—Prince Myshkin, Nastasia Filippovna, and Aglaia Epanchina—to analyze it in light of western European religious painting. The book's original contribution to the voluminous scholarship on Dostoevskii's visual imagination in *The Idiot* is found in the readings of particular scenes as based on paintings Dostoevskii saw abroad or evoke specific pictorial genres.

Examples of such readings include: Myshkin's description in the novel's opening paragraph as *ekphrasis* modeled on Annibale Carracci's painting *Christuskopf*; Myshkin's encounter with the three Epanchin sisters as a verbal family portrait based on Palma Vecchio's *Three Sisters*; Myshkin's scrutiny of Nastasia Filippovna's photograph as Johannes Vermeer's *Woman in Blue Reading a Letter*; Myshkin's meeting with Aglaia on the green bench as an *ekphrastic* inversion of Palma Vecchio's *The Mystic Marriage of St. Catherine*. The most compelling inquiry, however, arrives when Perlina investigates delayed or omitted *ekphrases* such as Hans Fries' *The Beheading of John the Baptist*. She terms this lapse in the narration "minus ekphrasis" or a "verbally unfilled gap" between Dostoevskii's personal impressions and his attempt to recreate them textually so that they emerge as pictures in his characters' memories (102). This concept of omitted *ekphrasis* could be especially productive for further scholarly work on the trope.

Perlina's detailed, meticulously researched, and generally innovative study of *ekphrasis* in *The Idiot* contains a few lacunae. To document Dostoevskii's impressions of the paintings transposed in the novel, she uses Anna Dostoevskaia's diaries and reminiscences. But these offer a contradictory account of what husband and wife saw, and are of course filtered through Anna's own subjective vision. Perlina's approach to *ekphrasis* as constituting any visually-evocative scene seems to invalidate the trope, rendering it too broad and capacious. Much relevant English-language scholarship on *ekphrasis* and notably on *ekphrasis* in *The Idiot* (and on *The Idiot* as Dostoevskii's Grand Tour narrative, or on picture frames in the novel) does not appear in her bibliography, thus precluding an exploration of the inter-medial, gendered, and erotic conflict at the heart of the trope. What also seems to be lacking is a contextualization of *ekphrasis* in Russian literature and, for a monograph positing author, characters, and readers as spectators, of a theoretical framework addressing the dynamics of spectatorship, the gaze, and the ways of seeing elaborated in the text. Nonetheless,

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this monograph opens new lines of inquiry into Dostoevskii's novel for scholars of literature, visual culture, and art history.

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Approaches to Teaching the Works of Anton Chekhov. Ed. Michael C. Finke and Michael Holquist. New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2016. viii, 233 pp. Appendixes. Notes. Bibliography. Index. $24.00, paper.
doi: 10.1017/slr.2018.180

As a novice university teacher, some fifty years ago I discovered that Anton Chekhov's work was miraculous both as a subject to teach and as an aid to teaching: by staging *Uncle Vania* (which has only nine speaking parts and which takes even amateurs only 90 minutes to perform), we bonded native speakers of Russian with *ab initio* learners, discovered how to unlock the possibilities latent in a printed script, acquired both literary and colloquial, but living and still contemporary Russian language, and understood an enormous amount about human relationships and how they are revealed in dialogue by Chekhov's sensitivity to idiolect.

This compilation includes articles that have as their aim both the teaching of Chekhov as a way of gaining insight into Russia's most student-friendly author, and as a way of studying something else—medicine, film craft, translation, creative writing, acting, philosophy, environmental studies—by using Chekhov's work as a medium. Michael Finke expands his editorial role with some twenty pages of preliminary information about Chekhov's life, works and critical literature, as well as a short piece on Tolstoian narratological influence on Chekhov. Some contributors are very familiar to *chekhovedy*. Julie de Sherbinin explores Chekhov as a source and teacher for Anglophone short stories (in fact Katharine Mansfield's and Raymond Carver's). One's only regret is that she chose Mansfield's "Bliss," instead of "Prelude," which reworks Chekhov's "Steppe" with such genius. Cathy Popkin deals with Chekhov and medical humanities, which reminds me that several Russian professors of medicine have used the clues in Chekhov's stories, such as "Ward No. 6," to test their students' diagnostic abilities. Gary Saul Morson examines *Uncle Vania* as a study of theatricality (or its absence). Nearly every contributor has something valuable or new to offer, although lack of space sometimes prevents them from giving a fully-rounded view: for instance, Carol Apollonio's point-counterpoint of English translations omits the very best versions by Ronald Wilks, as does Finke in his introduction, which omits both Wilks's version of the stories and Michael Frayn's highly actable versions of the plays.

The volume clearly anticipates that Chekhov will inevitably be taught in English to monoglot students, which means that a lot of valuable French, German and, of course, Russian scholarship is ignored. Still, this is a useful and at times even inspirational guidebook for college teachers and will encourage them to read and teach Chekhov even to students who have no interest whatsoever in literature, Russian or other, but who may discover that Chekhov is unexpectedly relevant to their lives and studies.

Some contributors betray their frustration at student negativity and hint at possible ways of overcoming it: de Sherbinin reports an undergraduate's course evaluation: "The professor wouldn't show us the point of all the stories," (35) and then proceeds to inquire into the problem of indeterminacy and narrative expectations, recommending Chekhov's own mockery of predictable, clichéd narratives, as well as a reading of Chekhov's Anglophone pupils.

Some contributors tend too easily to see Chekhov as a universal panacea for all incomprehension: Thomas Adajian's analysis of Chekhov's "The Beauties" (not one

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