

literary development. The experience is even more intellectually rewarding because of the frequent parallels drawn with other literatures—above all with English literature—and because of Welsh's thumbnail histories of the genres which Kochanowski cultivated, genres that go back to classical antiquity and, in a few cases, beyond.

The Twayne World Author monographs are intended to be short introductory surveys of the lives and works of major authors of world literature. They are aimed at the general reader who presumably knows little (if anything) about the subject. In the Slavic field, few of the Twayne books succeed as the popularizations they are meant to be. For its conciseness, readability, and yet sound scholarship a book like David Welsh's *Jan Kochanowski* can justifiably be held up as a model of what the Twayne volumes should be like.

It is regrettable, however, that the rigidity of the Twayne format did not permit Professor Welsh to include more complete translations of Kochanowski's poetry. Because Professor Welsh is a good translator who works quickly, he could easily have added (and probably was tempted to add) another 25 to 50 pages of translations to the 129 pages of actual text. The only collection of Kochanowski's poems in English (by George R. Noyes et al.), was published in 1928, has long been out of print, and is often difficult to find. In one sense, the Twayne *Kochanowski* was a lost opportunity to rectify the problem of available translations.

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THE ORAL EPIC OF SIBERIA AND CENTRAL ASIA. By G. M. H. Shoolbraid. Uralic and Altaic Series, vol. 111. Bloomington: Indiana University Publications, 1975. xii, 176 pp. \$12.00.

In his preface, the author describes this small work as "a survey and a bibliography." These two parts comprise about 70 and 30 percent of the volume, respectively. The first three chapters touch lightly and generally on epics and their historical underpinnings, the Buryat-Mongol epics, and Turkic epics. Considerably more space is devoted to analyzing a few Buryat *uligers* (epics) than to all the epics of the Turkic nationalities of the Soviet East.

Stories for a selection of epics found in Soviet Asia occupy the remainder of the text. Short synopses of the main action are provided for nine out of the ten oral epics represented in the book. For the tenth, "Kor-oghli," a verbatim reproduction of one chapter is presented. The Buryat and Yakut offerings will prove strikingly alien, but interesting, to persons familiar primarily with the Muslim Turkic epic traditions. Most, if not all, of these brief retellings derive not directly from the originals or translations of them but from summaries published previously in English, German, or Russian. For nonspecialists, it is useful to find the material all in English in one source book. This is particularly true, when such a rich, extensive bibliography is supplied along with the sketches of the epic plots. Although the book's title specifies Siberia and Central Asia for regional identification of these epics, an Ossetian work, "The Narts," from the Caucasus, is included without comment. The author might also have explained why he avoided treating the important south Siberian epic poems of, for example, the Turkic Altay (Oyrot) or Khakass people. This omission is puzzling, because texts in the original Altay and some translations from Khakass into German and English are readily accessible in North American research libraries.

Mr. Shoolbraid disclaims pursuit of an explicit argument, but he appears to contend, by the choices he makes among certain oral epics of the Soviet East, and through the arrangement of his material, that Buryat epics merit first consideration, and that "Manas," the Kirghiz monument, ranks supreme among Turkic epics. By treating the epics mainly as anthropological material and by adding a specific warning in the conclusion, the author also suggests that the epics may not qualify as "literature."

The transliteration system and the original languages could very helpfully be specified in a work such as this, and for an English-language book, it would seem best to represent sounds approximating those in English with corresponding Roman letters. Thus, Yakut, instead of Jakut; Buryat, rather than Burjat; and so on.

Readers can hope that the author, in his future work with the oral epics, will delve further into the composition and morphology within each epic. Students of epic poetry would also benefit from extended examples in translation, as well as from having details about different versions of the same epic and its significant variants within one tradition. A great deal could also be written regarding the epic performers themselves and the traditions behind them.

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IN SEARCH OF FRANKENSTEIN. By Radu Florescu, with contributions by Alan Barbour and Matei Cazacu. Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1975. xi, 244 pp. Photographs. \$9.95.

Hollywood has immortalized a trinity of monsters: Dracula, Frankenstein, and the Wolfman. Radu Florescu, together with Raymond McNally, began his study of this trinity with *In Search of Dracula* (Greenwich, Conn., 1972). Unfortunately, the present work—which is clearly its sequel—holds no professional interest for the Slavist. The future appearance of *In Search of the Wolfman*, however, would certainly mark a return to Slavic territory. *In Search of Frankenstein* is obviously intended for the general reader, whose first attraction to Frankenstein was the famous Carl Laemmle film. Consequently, it is written with an eye to the sensational, but, nevertheless, in a scholarly fashion. This is not a book of literary criticism, history, folklore, or even cinematography; and it is certainly not a detailed psychological analysis of "fetus envy." Although it contains bits of all these features, it is basically a travelogue, a sentimental journey. Armed with his well-studied copy of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Mr. Florescu sets off on a fanciful journey through space and time, centering on the life and travels of Mary Shelley and the Barons Frankenstein.

Many of Mr. Florescu's basic hypotheses are highly speculative and totally unsubstantiated—for example, Mary Shelley's awareness of the Frankenstein family, the eighteenth-century Swiss androids, and the alchemist Konrad Dippel. He is certainly conscious of this and does not try to deceive us: "Short of written documents the literary sleuth has at least the right to make use of circumstantial evidence and that quality, which for lack of a better term, can best be referred to as 'historical insight'" (p. 58). Once understood in their context, Mr. Florescu's speculations are both entertaining and provocative. Yet there are times when he goes too far: "a Frankenstein may even have ended his career impaled on Dracula's stake!" (p. 73).