

PUSHKIN ON LITERATURE. Edited and translated by *Tatiana Wolff*. London: Methuen, 1971. xviii, 554 pp. \$24.00. Distributed in the United States by Barnes & Noble, New York.

When N. V. Bogoslovsky's edition of Pushkin's critical prose first appeared in 1934, it bore two titles: *Pushkin-kritik* (on the right-hand side of the page) and *Pushkin o literature* (on the left). Now, after almost forty years, scholarly fission has produced a handsome pair of English-speaking twins: Carl Proffer's *Critical Prose of Alexander Pushkin* (Bogoslovsky on the left) in 1969, and, two years later, Tatiana Wolff's *Pushkin on Literature* (Bogoslovsky on the right).

Twins, perhaps, but not identical twins. For Miss Wolff's compilation is by no means Proffer *redux*. Whereas the American adopted a selective approach to the poet's prose, but included germane essays by several of his more notable contemporaries, the English scholar is encyclopedically devoted to Pushkin alone. The result of her indefatigable combing of his articles, prefaces, letters, notes, and diaries, published and unpublished, rough drafts and fair copies, is a volume that well exceeds her predecessor's in exhaustiveness and length. Moreover, unwilling to accept the limitations of her own title, she has interlarded her selections with a lengthy biographical sketch (ninety pages), appended a catalogue of the non-Russian books in Pushkin's library (thirty-six pages), added to this a solid "Select Bibliography" (ten pages), rounded things off with a voluminous index (twenty pages), and thrown in a batch of handsome illustrations (ten pages) for good measure.

The book is, then, more of an omnium-gatherum than its title suggests. And what—given Miss Wolff's industry and editorial competence—is wrong with that? Her translations are idiomatic and accurate; her selections judicious and independent (she does not follow Bogoslovsky slavishly); her biography, if somewhat rambling, is lively and informative; the seriousness of her scholarship is, in short, evident throughout. The result approximates a "Pushkin handbook," which manages to cram more information about the poet between its two covers than any volume I know of in English. *Molodets!*

One small complaint. Considering how wide Miss Wolff has cast her nets, one wonders that she did not think to include those views on literature which the poet expressed in verse. Some are pointed; many are revealing. Their inclusion would have made this excellent ancilla to Pushkin studies even more complete.

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POLITICAL APOCALYPSE: A STUDY OF DOSTOEVSKY'S GRAND INQUISITOR. By *Ellis Sandoz*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971. xviii, 263 pp. \$8.95.

DOSTOEVSKY: WORKS AND DAYS. By *Avrahm Yarmolinsky*. New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1971. xiii, 438 pp. \$12.50.

Sandoz's thoughtful book deserves careful study. It is concerned with Dostoevsky's "politics" only in the broadest sense of that word, being a study of his philosophical anthropology and religious metaphysics. "Literary considerations are largely left aside as better to be examined by more expert commentators" (p. 83). As a result,

Sandoz brings in a great deal of extrinsic theological, historical, and philosophical material to support his interpretation of "The Legend of the Grand Inquisitor," where intrinsic evidence from the text itself would have served him even better.

Sandoz sees three levels of mythopoeia in "The Legend." The myth invented by the Grand Inquisitor to capture the ignorant masses is the first. Ivan's somber myth of the power of evil is the second. It reflects Dostoevsky's discovery that "not science but a derailed religious enthusiasm lies beneath the façade of the modern mass movement" (p. 237). The third is Dostoevsky's Russian Orthodox myth of redemption through suffering, which exposes the Grand Inquisitor's grandiose swindle and diagnoses Ivan's rebellion as the pathological condition which it is. Sandoz underestimates the intrinsic elements which support his interpretation. The Grand Inquisitor's swindle (p. 113) is mirrored in the "noble" swindle of young Kolia Krasotkin (Ivan's "double"). Ivan's myth is deflated in his interview with the Devil, which shows that his proud rebellion is only a pose: the Devil (Ivan's "double," too) is really sick with lack of faith (from weakness!), negativism, and despair. Sandoz does not fully gauge the irony with which the Devil is treated: he is a washed-up hanger-on, a pathetic has-been. The positive message comes through more strongly in *The Brothers Karamazov* than Sandoz seems to assume. Iliusha's edifying death (presented as a concrete event) counterbalances Ivan's reports of senseless suffering by innocent children (reported from hearsay, in a shrill, demagogic tone). Dmitri's warm and spontaneous compassion in his dream about "the babe" is the positive alternative to Ivan's sterile feeling of outrage and anger. The importance of "Cana of Galilee" cannot be emphasized too strongly.

Sandoz does not see "The Legend" enough in the context of the whole novel. It is in this context that "The Legend" is on God's side, not the Devil's. Told by a breathless and excited Ivan Karamazov, a brilliant but immature and confused young man, "The Legend" is after all a *made-up* story (and with Gothic, melodramatic, and rhetorical traits, too), and as such contrasts with the simple, humble *reality* of Father Zosima and his "Life." It is in the context of the whole novel that Sandoz's intriguing identification of the Grand Inquisitor with Saint John the Baptist (p. 90) seems wrong: Ivan is negative in too many ways to allow this identification.

Sandoz adduces an impressive amount of literature relating to his theme. It would have been good if he had drawn a distinct line between the items that have a direct historical connection with Dostoevsky and those that are mentioned for other reasons. At times Sandoz is carried away by ideas that have no direct bearing on his theme. His excursions into Russian pre-Christian mythology damage rather than enhance his credibility. That Dmitri's name is symbolic is certain (he recites from Schiller's poem "Das eleusische Fest," where the patron goddess is Demeter). Thus Sandoz's suggestion that the name Grushenka (which he translates as "onion" rather than "pear") is symbolic in the same sense would seem credible. But when he asserts that their conjunction at Mokroe "doubly invokes the cosmic-telluric symbolism of fruitfulness, suffering, and cathartic passion," because Mokroe "is etymologically related to *Mokosh* (*Moksha*), which designated 'Mother Moist Earth,'" this is taking speculation too far (p. 238).

But with all that is really important about Sandoz's book I can only agree. It is a distinct contribution to Dostoevsky scholarship.

Yarmolinsky's book is the third, substantially revised version of his original book on Dostoevsky which appeared in 1934. It is well written and makes for fasci-

nating reading. Yarmolinsky, a scholar who has devoted many decades to the study of Dostoevsky, possesses an admirable mastery of his subject. If I am critical of his book, it is largely because of the "life and works" approach as such. In Yarmolinsky's treatment the biographic aspect prevails, and inevitably his attitude toward Dostoevsky the man spills over on Dostoevsky the artist. Dostoevsky was not an admirable human being, and Yarmolinsky's "familiar" treatment of him is perhaps preferable to Mochulsky's discreet tactfulness. But Dostoevsky was also a writer whose amazing imagination and virtuosic skill demand all the intense empathy, observant alertness, and painstaking ingenuity that a critic can muster. Perhaps Yarmolinsky has not quite enough respect for Dostoevsky's craftsmanship. He takes too lightly the many revealing observations made in recent decades concerning the structure, imagery, and style of Dostoevsky's novels. One misses references to the results of investigations by Maximilian Braun, Chirkov, Joseph Frank, Matlaw, Wasiolek, Zundelovich, and others. Bakhtin's seminal work, equally important for its polyphonic theory of Dostoevsky's novelistic technique and for its observations on the Dionysian ("carnival") element in Dostoevsky's works, has left almost no trace in Yarmolinsky's book.

Furthermore, now that we have R. L. Jackson's book on Dostoevsky's aesthetics, no comprehensive work about Dostoevsky can afford to by-pass his aesthetic theory, a subject to which he devoted much thought and on which he wrote a great deal. Finally, I feel that Yarmolinsky fails to give Dostoevsky the existential philosopher his proper due. After Shestov, Berdiaev, and Camus, this must be considered a sin of omission. However, Yarmolinsky is obviously so well informed and perceptive a scholar that he can afford to treat Dostoevsky with less awe and caution than most of us.

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ROMAN UND ROMANCHRONIK: STRUKTURUNTERSUCHUNGEN ZUR ERZÄHLKUNST NIKOLAJ LESKOV'S. By *Bodo Zelinsky*. Slavistische Forschungen, vol. 10. Cologne and Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 1970. xii, 310 pp. DM 48.

This is a book on Leskov in which not a word is said about his original language, in which the word *skaz* does not occur, and in which not a single reference is made to his life, the circumstances under which his works were written, or their socio-political background. It applies modern theories, methods, and terminology of prose analysis to five of Leskov's major prose works: *No Way Out*, characterized as a "time novel," *The Islanders*, a "love novel," *Will-o'-the-Wisps*, a "development novel," and the two chronicle novels *Cathedral Folk* and *A Family in Decline*. The author's aim is to present Leskov's novels as autonomous works of art and to leave out all details about their genesis, psychological aspects, sociological background, and the author's life, because "all understanding of art begins with the individual work and not with insight into the historical context" (p. 3). He admirably adheres to this program, basing himself on a wide variety of scholarly literature on prose and the novel. The result is a highly original and at times revealing book on the artist Leskov which does not trench upon any of the existing Leskov studies.

Welcoming this extremely valuable work, we must also realize that it is one-