

editor and translator admits (“the foolhardy effort to translate this has been made only because Maramzin seems so original for contemporary Russian writing”), are not wholly successful. Maramzin’s punning, outrageous style is rendered in a punning, ungrammatical run-on line. The difference between the translation and the original is one of voice. Maramzin’s *skaz* style, like that of Babel’ and Zoshchenko, is based on what Tynianov called the “verbal gesture.” Though written in an invented, artistic language, for their effect such pieces depend on creating a unified tone of voice that will resonate against the reader’s memory of a specific kind of speech. In translating, it is more important to re-create that unity of voice than to find clever correspondences for local effects like puns, solecisms, and malapropisms. Proffer’s translation does not evoke any specific English voice and thus fails to convey the *skaz* effect. Still, it does successfully convey an important quality of the text, that is, its strong irony in which the true morality of Soviet life—honesty with one’s own kind but the state be damned—is unfolded as it exists in the consciousness of the “little man.”

On the whole, the anthology is a useful compilation, although it falls short of the excellence which would make it an enduring classic. Because such anthologies are used for many years, it is time that we began striving for some classics.

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SLOVAK LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE: ESSAYS. By *J. M. Kirschbaum*.

Readings in Slavic Literatures, 12. Edited by *J. B. Rudnyckyj*. Winnipeg and Cleveland: University of Manitoba, Department of Slavic Studies, 1975. xvi, 336 pp. Plates.

The title of the present work may perhaps mislead some readers, since the book is not a complete treatment of the history of Slovak language and literature. Rather, it consists of a number of chapters—mostly reworked from the author’s earlier articles—on various periods of Slovak literary history. The treatment of language is limited, for the most part, to the question of the creation of a standard language for the Slovak people. The topics have been chosen to emphasize those periods that are critical for the creation of a Slovak national consciousness, although the book does jump from Štúr and his school down to Slovak Communist literature, passing over the whole second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century—the period from the 1860s to 1918 which was, of course, a period of critical struggle against the Magyars for national independence.

Professor Kirschbaum’s book has a national bias that one might expect (every history of a national literature has one, and justly so), but at times it seems to get a bit out of hand. Thus, Kirschbaum tends to equate the Great Moravian legacy with an early Slovak one, on the basis of slender and quite inadequate evidence. Moreover, there is no evidence to support his claim that the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition might have persisted in Slovak territory continuously down to modern times; such a claim could conceivably be based only on written sources, but these sources are lacking.

The present book does serve two very useful and important purposes (aside from the fact that it is the largest compilation of information on Slovak literature available in English): it emphasizes the fact that, in the course of their development, Slovak language, literature, and culture were much more independent of Czech influences than many Westerners, including Czechs, have been wont to think; and it emphasizes the importance of Bernolák’s version of standard Slovak, showing that it was not entirely abortive (indeed, without Bernolák’s work, Slovak might have perished, at least as a written language). But here again Kirschbaum exaggerates. In his zeal to

justify the importance of Bernolák's Slovak he tells us that Ján Hollý may well be the greatest Slovak poet (what of Ján Botta, Janko Kráľ, Hurban Vajanský, Hviezdoslav, or Ivan Krasko, not to mention some very sophisticated recent poets)! The statement that "many literary historians consider him [Hollý] so" is almost totally undocumented in the book's footnotes. And the author fails to comment on (perhaps even to notice) the contradiction between Vlček's statement that Hollý worked with "nothing more than a non-literary, formless dialect" (a view that gives very little credit to Bernolák), and Mráz's contention that "Bernolák's movement triumphed in Hollý's achievements and greatness."

The chapters "Contemporary Tendencies in Slovak Philology" and "Slovak Literature under the Soviet Impact" are disappointing because they do not really give us "contemporary" insights. The philological chapter does not even mention the revival of structuralism, and the chapter on the Soviet impact, though it does treat the writers' rebellion of the 1960s and the "thaw" period, does not really help us decide whether or not the writers' rebellion was fruitful. Indeed, Kirschbaum, though sympathetic to the views of Communist scholars where Slovak national traditions are concerned, seems utterly indifferent to the existence of "Communist Revisionism" and the possibility that it might have inspired any literature worth reading. He maintains that it is among the Slovak emigration that a rich literary tradition has survived, and one chapter gives a good account of the development of this émigré literature.

The book contains literally hundreds of misprints, occasionally to the point of unintelligibility; an enclosed errata sheet scarcely makes a dent in the total.

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THE STUDY OF RUSSIAN FOLKLORE. Edited and translated by *Felix J. Oinas* and *Stephen Soudakoff*. Indiana University Folklore Institute, Monograph Series, vol. 25. Slavistic Printings and Reprintings, Textbook series, 4. The Hague: Mouton, 1975. x, 341 pp. 80 Dglds.

In this book Oinas and Soudakoff present a readable introduction to the chief problems and genres of Russian folklore. The collection includes a number of key studies by leading Soviet specialists past and present, among them such familiar names as V. M. Zhirmunskii, A. M. Astakhova, V. Ia. Propp, P. D. Ukhov, K. V. Chistov, and others. Each article is preceded by an editorial commentary giving its background and placing it in context. While heavily emphasizing *byliny*, the volume also includes pieces on folk tales, riddles, songs, and fairy tales.

A few caveats: The book's value as an introduction for nonspecialists is diminished somewhat by the fact that many tales, *byliny*, and other materials often referred to are not summarized. All the pieces predate the mid-1960s, which is, for the most part, not a troublesome point, but it does raise questions about the accuracy of Chistov's title, "Folkloristics and the Present Day," particularly in view of the changes the field has undergone in recent years. Finally, the collection may present Soviet folkloristics in too narrow a scope, because it omits discussion of anthropological and philological approaches, and thus sets aside both the Marr school and the *Trudy po znakovym sistemam*. Nevertheless, the book should provide a useful service in courses on comparative and introductory Russian folklore.

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