

Puškin, Gogol', and Lermontov with distinct historical roles, not only in the development of Russian literature but in the very development of the Russian national consciousness" (p. 64).

The best virtue of this work is, in fact, its unswerving determination to zero in on the central trait of Belinsky's criticism: its "organicism." (The classroom teacher's repetition of a main point marks the discussion in many places. Chapter 4 begins: "Belinskij's world view always remained 'organic.'" Chapter 5 begins: "Belinskij's conception of the work of art is organic from beginning to end.")

What does "organic" mean? Two related things: seeing literature "as a function of both nationality and society, on the one hand, and as 'a living whole,' on the other" (p. 119); seeing Russian literature as an integral part of the national life and national consciousness, to which it gives both expression and direction. This is the essence of Belinsky's message as a critic. Everything else is commentary. And this book derives its unquestionable validity from its concentration on this main critical argument of Belinsky's work.

This study in the development and latter-day fortunes of this critical tradition in Russia raises, in fact, a very big question (a question one could wish to offer to Belinsky for his answer): Is this "organic" emphasis in the conception of Russian literature something that Belinsky created or something that he reflected? Does Belinsky's real significance reside in his special ability to elaborate and transmit a view of literature that was growing in the national soil? Are the moral earnestness and ethnic concern that both glorify and imperil Russian literature a result of historical conditions that also created Belinsky?

For example, didn't Pushkin and Gogol and Lermontov and Turgenev and Dostoevsky and Goncharov provide the foundation for Belinsky? Shouldn't their work be listed among his "sources"? To wonder if there may be something characteristically Russian in Belinsky's critical emphasis is of course only to add lustre to Belinsky's fame as a national critic (unless one prefers to denounce Belinsky and his influence and turn away from this controversial Russian seriousness about literature).

Both the friendly and the unfriendly student of Belinsky will find this study useful. Nowhere else is so full a treatment offered of most of what one needs to know about this famous spokesman of Russian literary thought.

One nagging query: How should one pronounce "Schellingian"?

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DIE ENTDECKUNG DER UNTEREN VOLKSSCHICHTEN DURCH DIE RUSSISCHE LITERATUR: ZUR DIALEKTIK EINES LITERARISCHEN MOTIVS VON KANTEMIR BIS BELINSKIJ. By *Wolfgang Gesemann*. Veröffentlichungen des Osteuropa-Institutes München, vol. 39. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1972. 315 pp. DM 68, paper.

There is hardly any writer in Russia in recent centuries who has not dealt with the lower strata of the population (referred to as *muzhiki*, *podlyi narod*, *prostoi narod*, *chern'*, and so on). Gesemann, in his *Habilitationsschrift*, examines the treatment of this theme in literary works, travelogues, and diaries of writers and literati in general, from the first quarter of the eighteenth century until the middle of the nineteenth. Terms such as *narod*, *narodnost'*, *narodnyi*, *natsional'nost'*, and

prostonarodnyi are central to his discussion. The themes of serfdom, poverty, and excessive drinking and other vices are followed in detail. Occasionally the discussion, supplemented by quotations, becomes too elaborate (for example, the descriptions of *sokha* and of peasants tilling the land, pp. 126–27). Especially fascinating are the numerous parallels given from West European literature. An interesting point raised is that some authors (like Fonvizin) tended to see and criticize the social evils in the West when they were traveling there, although the same evils were present in Russia.

The milieu of the lower strata of the population is the one that is instrumental in creating and carrying on the folklore tradition, and Gesemann's work familiarizes us with this breeding ground. Frequent references to folklore make us aware of its close connection with the literature reflecting the "lower depths." A case in point is M. D. Chulkov's short story "Gor'kaia uchast'," a combination of literature and folklore. Gesemann makes an interesting observation that the horrifying ending of this story, in which everyone loses his life violently, is an example of the "international migratory motif," and he gives a parallel from Italian balladry (p. 134, n. 466). This motif goes back to Claudius Aelianus's *Variae historiae* (third century A.D.) and is well known in German folklore (Grimms' *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, old popular comic books, and so on). It obviously came to Chulkov's attention in a Russian comic-strip rendering.

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NINETEENTH-CENTURY RUSSIAN LITERATURE: STUDIES OF TEN
RUSSIAN WRITERS. Edited by *John Fennell*. Berkeley and Los Angeles:
University of California Press, 1973. 356 pp. \$15.00.

This volume consists of eight studies of Russian writers—seven prose writers and three poets—by six British Slavists, four of whom are associated with Oxford University. The three poets—Lermontov, Tiutchev, and Fet—are the subject of one essay by Dr. T. J. Binyon. And two non-Oxford scholars are responsible for two essays each: Professor H. Gifford, of the University of Bristol, on Goncharov and Turgenev, and Professor E. Lampert, of the University of Keele, on Dostoevsky and Tolstoy. The volume opens with the editor's essay on Pushkin. He is followed by Dr. A. de Jonge on Gogol. And the closing essay is by Dr. M. H. Shotton on Chekhov. The essays vary in length. The longest (fifty-seven pages) is the one by Binyon, but then it deals with three major poets whose work spans over half a century. Next (also over fifty pages) come the essays on Pushkin and Gogol. The remaining ones are much shorter.

As the editor says in his introduction, the purpose of this volume is "not to provide the reader with anything like a history of Russian literature in the nineteenth century, but to investigate certain aspects of certain writers." The choice of writers was restricted by space, as was the choice of aspects to be examined in depth. Of his own essay Professor Fennell says that Pushkin's prose, his lyrical poetry, his *skazki*, his so-called miniature dramas, have all been sacrificed for a study of *Evgenii Onegin*, *Boris Godunov*, and the narrative poems, and these were examined primarily in their formal aspects, while, for instance, in the essays on Tolstoy and Dostoevsky the architectonics of their novels is "not given more than a cursory mention." And since not all the contributors approached their subjects in