

and Pandora the city) is applied directly to Goncharov's *Oblomov*, and to a variety of diverse writers (Aksakov, Tolstoy, Gogol, and Dostoevsky) in much more general terms.

The structuralist model is neither consistently applied nor does it provide an enhanced understanding of the Russian works in question. Barksdale's treatment of Goncharov, and of the other writers, is mostly a string of fragmented clichés, strained Pandora parallels, summarized information theory, and a parade of unexplained charts. For example, the similarity of the death motif in *Oblomov*'s pastoral utopia and in Stolz's squirrel cage of urban industriousness is discussed at length. But, as the author himself maintains, agrarian "death" and urban "death" are ironically similar and have no effect on each other. There is no reference to any structural harmonization of these opposites as Lévi-Strauss's system projects in the Oedipus myth or as the Pandora example promises to illustrate.

Barksdale's remarks about the other authors quickly dissolve into arbitrary and, in terms of myth theory, extraneous pronouncements: Aksakov created an epic encomium to the country (no city images are treated); Tolstoy used agrarian images rhetorically to preach a moral message (a truism that is not enhanced by any myth reference); Gogol inverted the value of both city and country, making them surrealistic "nightmares" (how does a double set of negatives fit the structuralist tensive system?). Dostoevsky's famous lack of agrarian settings does not deter Barksdale from maintaining that Dmitrii Karamazov's love for nature and Myshkin's exit from the city for recovery in the Swiss mountains are significant within the Pandora question. Private symbolism and the collective aspects of myth become hopelessly mixed throughout the book.

The study of myth, structuralist or otherwise, is too important an approach to literary criticism to be stretched into the Procrustean bed this book offers.

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ALEXANDER BESTUZHEV-MARLINSKY. By *Lauren G. Leighton*. Twayne's World Author Series, no. 344. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1975. 161 pp. \$7.50.

Russian Romantic authors of the second rank have been sadly ignored, and even when they have been the object of special study by Russian scholars, the particular critical approach has left much unsaid. The appearance in English of a monograph devoted to Alexander Bestuzhev-Marlinskii is, therefore, a welcome event, and doubly so, because Professor Leighton has presented us with a comprehensive, balanced, and informed study. My only caveat is that the work is rather short, though, undoubtedly, this is not the author's choice but that of the editors, whose World Author Series tends toward brief monographs.

In five major chapters we learn of Alexander Bestuzhev's biography, his activity as a critic, his pre-Decembrist prose tales (1820–25), his contribution after 1830 (which Leighton terms "The Extravagant Prose [1830–1837]"), and, finally, about Bestuzhev-Marlinskii as poet. There is a selected bibliography, and a list in English and Russian of Bestuzhev-Marlinskii's titles, arranged according to cycles and/or genres (for example, the Livonian cycle of Historical Tales, Sea Stories, Tales of Horror, Tales of Men and Passions, the Caucasian Cycle, and so forth). It is often difficult to categorize works of Romantic fiction, given the habit

of authors to mix or modify genres, so I have no particular objection to Professor Leighton's arrangement. I do wonder, however, if works such as "The Test" and "The Frigate 'Hope'" might not be more meaningfully classified as "society tales" rather than being assigned respectively to "Tales of Men and Passions" and "Sea Stories."

The personality which Leighton has reconstructed seems logical and accommodates the excesses of Bestuzhev's personal biography with his literary life, his ethnographic interests, and his critical stance. Some interesting hypotheses are provided which could shed light on Bestuzhev's overnight conversion from active revolutionary on the Senate Square on December 14, 1825, to penitent state's witness on December 15.

Leighton overemphasizes what he discerns as a difference in quality between Bestuzhev's early and late prose. Although Bestuzhev did broaden his scope after 1830 and was a pioneer in certain genres (for example, his society tales), he remained anchored, in my opinion, to early Romantic norms. This may be seen in the arbitrary psychology of characters, the domination of plot over characters, the extreme emphasis on metaphor (both conceptually and stylistically), and a tendency to "tell" rather than to "show"—although in the last instance he does go further than many of his contemporaries (Polevoi, Pogodin, Bulgarin) in using dramatic scenes as a means of delineating the (usually simplistic) personalities of his characters.

While Leighton's statement that *The Traitor* is the best of Bestuzhev's historical tales seems questionable, one must strongly demur when he informs us after establishing the work's derivative essence, that it is "perhaps the best single piece of prose writing in Russia prior to the 1830s. Surely Somov, Perovskii-Pogorelskii, or even Bulgarin might justifiably object, although they would probably all gracefully accede to Bestuzhev's being ranked among the best prose writers of the twenties.

Professor Leighton ranks Bestuzhev's poetry "somewhat below the high standard of his time, but at its peak it compares well with even some of the best." This seems a safe—and fair—statement, but I leave its confirmation to others more qualified than I in this area.

All in all, Professor Leighton has provided a good acquaintance with a significant author whom non-Russian students of Russian literature usually know only from footnotes and random references. In treatment and tone Professor Leighton's study provides a suitable emulative model for a larger series of monographs in English on Russian Romantic fictionists.

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DOSTOEVSKI'S IMAGE IN RUSSIA TODAY. By *Vladimir Seduro*. Belmont, Mass.: Nordland Publishing Company, 1975. xvi, 508 pp. Appendix, "Dostoevski in Russian Émigré Criticism." \$18.50.

This book is a continuation of Dr. Seduro's study, *Dostoyevski in Russian Literary Criticism: 1846-1956* (1957). It is supposed to deal with Soviet post-1956 studies of Dostoevsky, but much attention is devoted to works written before 1956, which have only recently become available. The selection of material was clearly deter-