

Two other essays stand out. Patricia Carden's "Ornamentalism and Modernism" is a valuable discussion of Modernist prose. She concentrates on the writings of Belyj, Remizov, and Xlebnikov (as well as later writers influenced by them), showing their common tendency to use words as motifs in an ornamental pattern and the relationship of this tendency to their Primitivism. Her essay is especially interesting for its insights into this relationship and for its discussion of the nature of their Primitivism. John Malmstad's and Gennady Shmakov's exhaustive analysis of Kuzmin's "The Trout Breaking through the Ice" (the Russian text is in Appendix 2) is at times unconvincing but always provocative, and shows Kuzmin to be a writer of great complexity and erudition. Other essays included in the volume are Wladimir Weidle's "The Poison of Modernism," H. W. Tjalsma's "The Petersburg Poets," and Edward J. Brown's "Mayakovsky's Futurist Period."

The drawbacks of this volume are primarily editorial and are minimal when compared to the contribution of the essays themselves. First of all, the title is misleading and even meaningless, and the introduction is not very helpful in preparing the reader for the essays which follow. The essays, after all, resulted from the 1971 Cornell Conference on Modernism. Perhaps the volume should have been titled as such and the introduction been about the exciting atmosphere of the conference and the insights which came out of the discussions of the papers and art exhibit. Secondly, I would question the inclusion of Weidle's discussion of Blok's critique of Modernism—especially as the first essay. Blok's criticism is too eclectic to be generally valid for Modernism, and placing this essay first is confusing to the reader. Lastly, it is too bad that the volume could not have appeared earlier, for many of the observations made at the conference, while interesting now, were startling then. None of these shortcomings, however, seriously detract from the volume, and all students of Russian culture 1900–30 and others should welcome the essays "for their contribution to the study of some artistic currents of the earlier twentieth century."

Sarah P. Burke, Trinity University

Christopher J. Barnes, ed. *Studies in Twentieth Century Russian Literature*. Five Essays. New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 1976. vii, 91, \$10.50.

The title of this slim volume offers little indication of the contents, for the articles are clustered into two major groups—one dealing with prerevolutionary topics, the other devoted to more recent developments of the 1960s and 1970s. The title also fails to note that the studies are, for the most part, concerned with extraliterary phenomena. The text is comprised of five essays: James West, "The Poetic Landscape of the Russian Symbolists"; John Elsworth, "Andrei Bely's Theory of Symbolism"; Christopher J. Barnes, "Boris Pasternak's Revolutionary Year"; Geoffrey Hosking, "The Search for an Image of Man in Contemporary Soviet Fiction"; and R. Russell, "The Problem of Self-Expression in the Later Works of Valentin Kataev." But if the articles lack a unifying thread, they do offer something for everyone.

The first two works are certain to delight and stimulate anyone working in the area of Symbolism. James West provides an overview of the reception accorded post-Impressionist painters by Russian Symbolist poets and theoreticians. By examining the links between the visual images of Gauguin, Cézanne, and Van Gogh and the verbal images of Brjusov, Belyj, and Ivanov, the author outlines and clarifies many of the aesthetic precepts of the Symbolists' theory of art. This brief but wide-ranging study also accounts for the enthusiasm of the Symbolists for the paintings of Vrubel',

Somov, Borisov-Musatov, and in particular for the work of the Lithuanian artist M. K. Čiurlionis. West also illustrates rather convincingly the affinity of Classicism (the element of myth) as well as Romanticism to Symbolism.

In an article equally noteworthy for its clarification of complex subject matter, John Elsworth notes the difficulties inherent in any discussion of Belyj's theories, but then succeeds in presenting a competent and comprehensible account of Belyj's theory of Symbolism. Elsworth traces Belyj's concept of the "crisis of consciousness" as exemplified in the dualities of contemplation and will, science and religion, morality and beauty, and explains how Belyj resolves these dualities in the synthesis of the Symbol. The author focuses on Belyj's writings from 1902 to 1912 and examines the writer's dependence on and departure from Solov'ev, Schopenhauer, and Rickert. Elsworth concludes that Belyj should be restored to a position of honor alongside Vja. Ivanov as one of the leading theoreticians of the Russian Symbolist movement. Although it fails to deal adequately with the chronological development of Belyj's thought, this treatment is an illuminating synopsis for those who find it almost impossible to follow Belyj's own highly disorganized presentations.

The article by Christopher J. Barnes occupies an intermediate position in the text and in the history of Russian literature of the twentieth century. The author attempts to define Pasternak's personal response, with its subsequent movement from enthusiasm to disillusionment, to the revolutionary events of 1917. Barnes examines passages from *Sestra moja žizn'*, "Dramatičeskie otryvki," and *Doktor Živago* to distinguish between the actual revolution and the poet's desire for a personal revolution. Barnes clearly describes Pasternak's disappointment in terms of the poet's growing awareness of the distinction and distance between the two.

The two final articles are concerned with literary events of the past ten years. Geoffrey Hosking discerns signs of resurgent interest in the identity of the individual as opposed to man in the social context. He illustrates his contention by examining the plot and major characters of four works: Georgij Vladimov, *Tri minuty molčaniya*, Vladimir Vojnovič, *Xoču byt' čestnym*, Vladimir Tendrjakov, *Apostol'skaja komandirovka*, and Vladimir Maksimov, *Sem' dnei tvorenija*. Hosking sees in these works an indication of a new interest in Soviet literature for the "spiritual" and "personal" aspect of man. The author's conclusion goes beyond the data presented in the essay and he fails to distinguish between those works which appeared in the standard Soviet literary journals and the novel by Maksimov which was published by Possev in West Germany. Nevertheless, the article does open up new areas for consideration and is an important addition to our all too often incomplete knowledge of the contemporary Soviet literary scene. The final article is a description of *mauvisme*, "the art of writing badly," as outlined in *Svjatoj kolodec* and *Kubik* by Valentin Kataev. Russell examines some formal features of the new literary style, such as the lack of conventional plot, the intrusion of the author into the narrative, and the attempt to avoid the restrictions of time by memory and free association. He also discusses the content of Kataev's works which reveal concern for the author himself and a new perception of the material world. None of this is new. Russell mentions the ties with Bunin and Oleša (he overlooks the art of Nabokov which contains many of the same elements), but he sees the new style as an innovative attempt to reintroduce elements lacking in Soviet prose since the 1920s.

Studies in Twentieth Century Russian Literature is a valuable, entertaining and informative book, remarkably free of technical imperfections. As is true with any collection of articles its contents will please some and disappoint others. Specialists may wish to debate the merits of the writings in their own areas and generalists will

want to acquaint themselves with this work, which is a recommended addition for any University library.

Thomas R. Beyer, Jr., Middlebury College

Reinhard Lauer. *Gedichtform zwischen Schema und Verfall: Sonett, Rondeau, Madrigal, Ballade, Stanze und Triolett in der russischen Literatur des 18. Jahrhunderts*. München: Wilhelm Fink, 1975. 447 pp., DM 120 (paper).

Readers who can afford this expensive monograph will find Lauer's study of lyric verse in eighteenth-century Russian literature to be a thorough, useful, and stimulating history of genre. The book delineates the life and character from 1730 to 1815 of six genres in Russian poetry which have in common an origin in the Romance literatures of the late middle ages, specific rhyme schemes as a formal trait, and a role in various European literatures during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The author presents a cogent discussion of his extensively researched material and shows rare critical expertise in analyzing the various configurations and historical permutations in what Wellek and Warren have termed the "inner" and "outer" form of genre (*Theory of Literature*, 3rd ed. rev. [New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1956], 231-32).

Although his subject and methodology reflect a bias for the modes of analysis developed by Formalist critics, Lauer provides a well-balanced study of genre history. He notes important events and movements in Russian intellectual and social history and does not exaggerate the importance of his topic. With the exception of the sonnet, for which Lauer exhibits a slight partiality in providing his exegesis of individual poems, the attention devoted to each genre is proportionate to the interest of the poets themselves. According to Lauer's inventory (28-30), the six forms of verse are represented by over eight hundred poems: with genre designations there are attested 237 madrigals, 171 *stancy*, 147 sonnets, 55 rondeaus, 15 triolets, and 7 (lyrical) ballads. At least two hundred other relevant works are without labels but can mostly be classified as madrigals.

Lauer's book has two principal virtues. On the one hand, it serves as a scholarly survey of an impressive number of primary and secondary sources (many not readily available for examination) that are pertinent to the subject at hand. Specific textual analyses occasionally make for painstaking reading, but the commentary is never vague. Questions of literary influence—imitations of foreign (largely French) models or trends manifested in literary circles and journals from the 1760s through the 1790s—are treated fully and skillfully. Specialists as well as graduate students will appreciate Lauer's inclusion of five topical (and reliable) indices; the book can be used as a valuable reference aid in both courses and independent research. On the other hand, Lauer's study of poetic genre contains a considerable number of rare or unpublished texts and presents new information about the practice of major and minor poets who were active after 1755. The critic sheds new light on what happened to poetry from 1760 to 1815, especially with respect to continuity and diversity in the literary circles and magazines identified with certain personalities (in particular, A. P. Sumarokov, M. M. Xeraskov, N. A. L'vov, N. I. Novikov, and N. M. Karamzin). At the heart of Lauer's commentary is a reassessment of G. A. Gukovskij's findings about the importance of the Xeraskov circle, and in particular the example of A. A. Rževskij (1737-1804), vis-à-vis the role of A. P. Sumarokov's poetry in determining the character of genre tendencies during the 1760s and 1770s. Lauer substantiates his claim that Rževskij was instrumental in causing the sonnet, *stansy*, and rondeau to become

more didactic in tone and more programmatic in form than they had been in Sumarokov's poetry and that Rževskij was a poet of greater consequence than has been assumed.

Typographical errors are few. I detected misprints in the German text (98, 151, 304, 306); only two mistakes in Russian transcriptions—*ljubov-ptica* (41) and *Sinbirsku* (163); one upper instead of lower-case letter in a rhyme scheme (285); and incorrect data "(M. 1815-1815)" for "(M. 1810-1815)" (354). In addition, a cursory check of the accuracy of Lauer's documentation yielded one case of a faulty citation. P. A. Ozerov and I. F. Sofronskij who are mentioned in the text (266) as contributors to the journal *Beseduščij graždanin* (1789) are not referred to in the source (footnote 12). The apparent oversight is not important with respect to Ozerov, a likely contributor, but it is misleading about the identity and activity of a "Sofronskij." In all probability, Lauer had in mind the minor poet Ivan Fedorovič Sofonovič, who is known to have participated in M. I. Antonovskij's journal.

Joel L. Wilkinson, Wallingford, Connecticut

William Mills Todd III. *The Familiar Letter as a Literary Genre in the Age of Pushkin*. (Studies of the Russian Institute, Columbia Univ.) Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1976. xii, 230, \$15.00.

It should be stressed at the outset that the subject of this study is not the verse epistle but the familiar letter—what in Russian is referred to as *družeskoe pi's'mo* (8). The thesis of Professor Todd's work is very interesting, for he contends that in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, in that brief period which coincides with the prehistory, rise, and fall of the Arzamas circle, the familiar letter became "literature" and that never before nor after did it attain the same literary importance. He tells us that this metamorphosis could occur "in an age dominated by aristocratic amateurs, respect for the details of everyday life, and a cultural situation in which polite society itself was a work of art" (5).

The study, then, is an attempt to characterize this "elusive genre," which is distinguished, on the one hand, from business correspondence and, on the other, from personal letters. Wisely, the author chooses to use the "exemplary" method to construct his analytic scheme rather than to make an exhaustive survey of the some 10,000 Arzamasian letters in existence. Todd is very deft in tracing the "literary markings" of the genre: the illusion of conversational speech; the stylistic exuberance; the authorial image characterized by a "capacity for love and friendship, love of literature, good taste, delight in the pleasures of the mind and flesh" (103) and rescued from pomposity by self-irony and the pose of effortless creation; the paratactic and associative principles of construction; and the double "radical of presentation"—the immediate audience for which the letter is composed and the larger audience for which it is ultimately intended.

Individual chapters are devoted to different aspects of the genre. While the overview is excellent, the close readings given to illustrate generic features are less successful. Often conclusions are drawn which do not seem to emerge from the individual texts cited. This is not to suggest that the familiar letter does not exhibit the "literary markings" Todd distinguishes, but rather that the author is not as adept in showing how effects are realized in specific instances as he is in characterizing the genre as a whole. Perhaps the weakest section of the study is the lengthy introduction, some fifty pages in all, in which the epistolary tradition is discussed and the Arzamas aesthetic