REVIEW ARTICLE

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The title seems to promise an investigation of a timely and important area of inquiry. Although a few of the contributions come close to fulfilling this promise, the book as a whole suffers from weaknesses typical of Slavic scholarship. Most of the contributors ignore the challenges that imaginative investigations of philosophy in literature offer; instead they prefer to chart cautious lines of influence from the historical, ideological, and biographical angles. In some contributions, literature becomes indistinguishable from ideology, with writers being forced to "assert" their intellectual "positions," and in three or four it vanishes altogether. Although we are offered discussions of the publicist Stanislav Volsky and the minor poet S. A. Andreevsky, some central figures in Russian literature, whose work immediately suggests examination within the framework of Western philosophy, are conspicuous by their absence; for example, Russian post-revolutionary literature, as literature, is not represented at all. Such lacunae are particularly apparent because the table of contents is arranged according to the chronology of the Russian subjects. The title is misleading for a more amusing reason—the attempt to cover Western philosophical *systems* is surely futile; but when in his own contribution the editor bewails the failure of the Soviet dissidents to construct their own philosophical systems, the source of the misunderstanding becomes plain.

Be all that as it may, most contributions are of interest, and several are indeed valuable. I found the two articles on Nietzsche in Russia exceptionally important. The subject itself is vital to the study not only of Russian "modernism" but also of analogous developments in other Slavic literatures: we know that Nietzsche's vast influence on Slavic writers has been minimized for various political reasons, all unfair to the philosopher's heritage.

In spite of the fact that his contribution touches on literature only indirectly, George L. Kline does us a great service by reviewing the ideas of the Nietzschean Marxists (S. Volsky, A. V. Lunacharsky, A. A. Bogdanov, and V. A. Bazarov). In his opening paragraphs, he speculates on possible intrinsic affinities between Nietzsche and Marx, finding their common roots in Hegel. Both believe in the future: Marx emphasizes socio-economic institutions and Nietzsche the individual as the champion of a cultural utopia. Although cultural and aesthetic values in Nietzsche have become

sufficiently illuminated in our "post-structuralist era," his role as heir to the Hegelian dialectic is somewhat problematic: Kline seems to overlook his doctrine of the eternal return, which to my mind puts his whole temporal scheme, albeit it is dialectical, in a rather un-Hegelian perspective.

Kline does well to quote extensively from Volsky: his witty and wise opinions on the early years of the Soviet regime are worth preserving. Finally, Kline outlines Volsky's own imaginative synthesis of Marx and Nietzsche: the individual should temporarily submit to the collective discipline of proletarian morality, in order to pass through the stage of collective freedom to the ultimate realization of the individual's highest value—his freedom of limitless creativity. Among other reasons, Kline's article deserves praise for showing that long before André Breton, let alone the mandarins from *Tel Quel*, some Russians—even without the underpinning of Freud—thought along lines quite similar to theirs.

Betty Y. Forman presents a meticulously documented case to prove Gorky's early fascination with Nietzsche. She is less convincing in her general observations. When, for example, she states that both of her subjects have in common an interest in the individual, and then proceeds to qualify that interest as "the affirmation of man—as Gorky would later observe, 'Man with a capital M' " (p. 161), she not only risks an internal contradiction but a distortion of Nietzsche's central view on personality.

Victor Terras (in his "Apollon Grigoriev's Organic Criticism and Its Western Sources") reviews Grigoriev's indebtedness to German idealism and particularly Schelling, and then proceeds to show that he felt rather uncomfortable in that intellectual ambience. Moreover, although Grigoriev as a matter of course subscribed to the various romantic theories of art, he was dissatisfied with the vagueness of romanticism, the "split personality" of the Byronic hero, and the hopeless striving for perfection in romantic irony. Terras finds similarities in Thomas Carlyle's attitudes to idealism and romanticism; both men "had a strong moralistic strain, exalting sincerity, reality, and 'fact' " (p. 79), and he goes on to speculate on the possibility of Carlyle's direct influence on the thought of Grigoriev. I was particularly happy to find Terras treating Goethe's pervasive influence not only on Carlyle (which is obvious), but on idealism and romanticism in general, with the seriousness that it deserves. For example, the reverence in which many Russian intellectuals of the nineteenth century held him has been all but ignored by recent literary historians.

There are minor flaws in Terras's article. Its bipartite structure creates unnecessary repetitions (Schelling-Grigoriev; Schelling-Carlyle-Grigoriev). And when Terras writes that Grigoriev believed in placing the objective above the subjective artist (p. 73), the specific meaning of "objective," as used in idealistic philosophy and romantic theory (particularly by

Schlegel), should have been reviewed. Finally, Carlyle's bearing upon the doctrine of organic criticism should have been brought into sharper focus.

Jesse Zeldin's "Herder and Some Russians" is an interesting, well-written, and (surely an exception in this collection!) courageous article. Zeldin constructs a provocative ideological circle: to satisfy the Germans' need of a national, if not a nationalist, programme, Herder equated *Nationalität* with *Humanität*, borrowing his examples from the strong "organic" feeling of identity among the Slavs. Although Herder interpreted Slavic culture as essentially lyrical and pacific, the Russians used his ideas to inflate their vision of nationhood to messianic proportions.

Although Zeldin's argument is fascinating enough as it stands, he could have strengthened it by keeping the differences between Russians and Ukrainians firmly in mind—by specifying, for example, whose folk-songs it was, above all, that Herder described. If he had identified that *Volk* correctly, his argument would have acquired heightened piquancy. I would have also liked to hear more about the native tradition of chauvinism that not only welcomed the new seeds of German ideas but promptly set about perverting them. As for Herder himself, more could have been said about his intellectual debts to his younger contemporaries, particularly Goethe, from whom he borrowed the framework for his "ethnological" research.

Like Zeldin, Louis J. Shein is not interested in unearthing direct influences. In his "Kantian Elements in Dostoevsky's Ethics," he comes, after an intricate argument, to the conclusion that Kant and Dostoevsky confronted similar ethical issues: both believed in man's radical evil, and both subscribed to voluntaristic ethics, which could not be apprehended by reason alone. Their differences, the author justly points out, are much more apparent than their similarities: one is an imaginative writer, while the other is a systematic philosopher (a difference, incidentally, that is not stressed nearly enough throughout this collection), and Kant is steeped in the eighteenth-century humanist tradition, while Dostoevsky's anthropology is theocratic and Christocentric.

Some other differences suggest themselves to the reader; these have to do with Kant's universalization and ultimate abstraction of ethics. How would Kant read, for example, Raskolnikov's crime and his salvation, for which the categorical imperative—"vertically" and "extra-causally" motivated as it may be—simply does not suffice, and for which Kierkegaard's "teleological suspension of the ethical" would be more appropriate? Or what would Kant think of Sonya's silent witnessing as an ethical action? On the other hand, Kant's leading idea that the world is constituted by the human mind—and the ethical considerations that this involves—would be abhorrent to Dostoevsky, as the Underground Man's futility and Ivan

Karamazov's damnation implicitly show. Finally, what is said of poetry can also be said of philosophy: here, too, the medium defines the message. This has been ignored throughout the collection (and interesting things might have been done with it), but it is particularly germane to the case of Kant and Dostoevsky.

While, as we have seen, several articles discussed here have little to do with literature, Robin F. Miller's "Rousseau and Dostoevsky: The Morality of Confession Reconsidered" does not touch upon philosophy at all. The author successfully shows that Dostoevsky repudiated the narcissistic exhibitionism of the "literary" confession, and particularly Rousseau's celebrated performance, considering it an act of profound moral dishonesty. On the other hand, the simple but vital confession—"unliterary" to the point of wordlessness—is obviously very important in Dostoevsky's thought: the author nicely calls it "sacramental communication."

Miller is excellent on the "literary" confession. She surrounds her argument with useful observations on the confessional mode in literature, on the romantic uses of confession, on the role of the real and the imagined reader, and on the functions of writing as such. One only wishes that she were equally acute on the "authentic" confession in Dostoevsky. Although demonstrating the function of language in such "sacramental communication"—its radical compression and tremendous dramatic energy—could have been difficult, the effort might have been of enormous worth.

Among the other contributors, James P. Scanlan continues the theme of Rousseau, this time in conjunction with Chernyshevsky. Tanya Page describes A. N. Radishchev's early interest in, but ultimate fear and rejection of, the philosophy of utilitarianism. Such fascination with "dangerous" new ideas emanating from the West, followed by the painful rejection or brutal distortion of them in favour of traditional views of morality, seems to be a recurring phenomenon in the history of this relationship, which is implicit throughout this collection. Utilitarianism is also the subject of Mary-Barbara Zeldin's "V. S. Solovyov's Critique of Utilitarianism." In the course of her interesting discussion, the author develops the provocative hypothesis that in the Russian moral ethos the aesthetic predominates. This is surely disputable. The substitution of aesthetic harmony for moral principles—the "aesthetic level," so categorically rejected by Kierkegaard—can be shown to have been abhorred with equal vehemence by Gogol', Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and Chekhov, though, for obvious reasons, it was attractive enough to the representatives of the "Silver Age." Even the author's remark that the *Primary Chronicle* describes how "in Russia's [*sic!*] first Kievan days" Vladimir embraced the Byzantine rite out of aesthetic considerations (pp.128-29) should be qualified not only on geographical but also on political grounds: such

justifications are frequently used for propaganda (even such elevated forms of it as we find in the *Primary Chronicle*) to support hard-nosed economic policies. In her "Androgyny and the Russian Religious Renaissance" Olga Matich turns to the thinkers of the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. What the reader misses here, however, is a firmer distinction between the primitive-mythical version of androgyny, with its openly sexual treatment of this phenomenon, and the Platonized "elevation" of it into the spheres of mysticism. The author's potentially fascinating story is badly told; the flawed organization and hurried writing should not have been passed by the editor. In his "Bakunin and the Hegelian Dialectic" (a topic again completely severed from literary concerns) John L. Scherer interestingly discusses the notion of negativity in Hegel's dialectic as the justification for Bakunin's anarchism.

The two articles on Schopenhauer in Russian poetry (Joachim T. Baer's on Schopenhauer and Andreevsky and Heinrich A. Stammler's on Schopenhauer and Fet) seem to start from the shaky premise that any sign of pessimism in these poets can be attributed directly to the philosopher. Even granting pessimism the status of a critical category, one would think that Russian poets have enough of it in their own tradition. The authors' insistent and frequently simplistic paraphrases to prove (in spite of Stammler's repeated protestations to the contrary) that every poetic line mentioning death, sadness, the futility of life, or the illusory nature of the world represents Schopenhauer's heritage, dim the interesting things that they say about Fet and particularly the little-known Andreevsky. One could do, moreover, without Stammler's long philosophical asides bearing upon Hegel's responsibility for the messy world we live in or upon Schopenhauer's notion of freedom-that-denies-itself as a forerunner of the existentialists' definitions of freedom.

Against the background of the other articles, whose authors earnestly apply themselves to their respective tasks, the editor's own contribution, "Existentialism and the Soviet Dissent," is an extraordinary performance. To begin with, its very title is misleading: various nationalities are encompassed by the term "Soviet dissent," whose interests differ from, and frequently oppose, those of the Russian dissenters, but the author uses the terms "Soviet" and "Russian" interchangeably throughout. Moreover, even among the Russian dissenters there are distinct factions that disagree on basic issues, but he seems to perceive only one such faction, and that in emigration. With the exception of Amal'rik, the dissenters that the author favours come from under Solzhenitsyn's Messianic flag. As for those who share Sakharov's views, he dismisses them outright, and does not even mention any others.

The author's outlook on existentialism is even murkier. We learn that

his favourite Russian dissidents are existentialists *sui generis* for the following reasons: "for them the basic human values are self-evident" (p. 199); the "real world" for them is not Soviet reality but "their own vision of what a more meaningful existence should be" (p. 200); they believe that "truth is something revealed to man by God, his Creator" (p. 203). They are not yet fully grown existentialists, however, because "unfortunately they have not worked out their ideas into a full system" (p. 209).

Mlikotin uses Sartre's term *mauvaise foi* (choosing to render it as *mauvois fois*). His own "*mauvois fois*" is much simpler than Sartre's conception of it: under the guise of existentialism, he smuggles in a brand of Christian idealism and messianic utopianism. He is right when he claims that some Russian dissidents hold such beliefs. But he has no right to call a body of beliefs by the name of its fiercest opponent, in order to make it more fashionable and thus more palatable.

Besides writing his article and a fuzzy preface (in which he expresses his impatience with "art for art's sake," and perhaps with all good writing), the editor has done little else. There is little evidence of any editorial planning or supervision. The lack of structure in some contributions; the frequent cases of "Pninization" of the English language by foreign-born authors, and instances of careless writing by American-born ones; "poetic" clichés; the mauling of foreign words ("Die Reaction")—such flaws frequently occur in manuscripts but should never appear in books. The proofreading seems to have been minimal: in Scanlan's contribution, the title and the running heads give a transliteration of Chernyshevsky's name based on an incorrect Russian spelling, while in the body of the article we find the correct version; throughout the book, and particularly towards the end, typographical errors occur with uncomfortable frequency.

Western Philosophical Systems in Russian Literature contains valuable material. What is more, the juxtaposition of various ideas between its covers invites us to make interesting generalizations about Russian thought as such, and about the Russians' difficult attitudes towards the West. Despite this, the book should be quietly dismantled and the individual articles submitted to publications where each would get the ambience and treatment that it deserves.