

(reprinted in Dostoevskii's *Canonical Texts* edited by Vladimir Zakharov), and not one of the subsequent versions identified by other researchers.

These questions aside, Titus's study offers an illuminating account of an important moment in Dostoevskii's creative career and sheds further light on the larger question of, to quote Priscilla Meyer, "how the Russians read the French."

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Chekhov's Children: Context and Text in Late Imperial Russia. By Nadya L. Peterson. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2021. xiv, 408 pp. Notes. Index. Photographs. Figures. \$75.00, hard bound.
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"Children are everywhere in Chekhov," aptly notes Nadya Peterson in the opening pages of her compelling study (4). The numbers speak for themselves. There are, as the author reminds us, almost three hundred child characters of all ages and social groups in Chekhov's works. Moreover, there are as many as twenty stories written during his formative years (1880–88) that focus exclusively on children, some of which have long remained on the periphery of critical attention. Peterson's objective in this study goes far beyond surveying this body of work: she attempts to present Anton Chekhov's "model of childhood" within the broad context of his time, including "literary, pedagogical, medical, psychological, and private views on the topic" (22).

This ambitious objective explains the book's structure. The entire Part One is dedicated to the "context." The first of its three chapters examines the "literary constructs" of childhood Chekhov inherited from his "literary fathers," primarily Sergei Aksakov and Lev Tolstoi. The latter appears again, now as an educator, in the next chapter focused on the "pedagogical ethos" of the period, specifically, the opposing pedagogical views of Tolstoi and Konstantin Ushinskii. Finally, the last chapter immerses the reader in the pedagogical psychology field of Chekhov's times. As informed and informative as these chapters are, they would benefit from a closer engagement with Chekhov's oeuvre and his poetics.

It is not, however, that poetics plays a secondary role in this study: "Context, described in the first part, is but a necessary background for an informed exploration of Chekhov's poetics," the author states firmly (22). Moving in Part Two from "context" to "text"—each of the five chapters in this part is centered on the selection of stories grouped around specific topics—Peterson reveals herself as an astute reader of Chekhov's style attuned to its multitude of nuances and subtleties. Acknowledging that Chekhov does not "guide his reader to the 'correct' interpretation of his stories" (246), she seems to make this attitude toward the reader her own guiding principle. An additional bonus is that, as I have mentioned above, many of these stories ("Naden'ka N.'s Summer Holiday Schoolwork," "The Mean Boy," "The Fugitive," "The Cook Gets Married," "The Big Event") have been undeservedly neglected in literary criticism for the sake of his more "famous" works. Peterson's book helps to fill this gap.

This study also confirms the principal unity of Chekhov's artistic world with no clear boundaries between his "humorous" and "serious" works where apparently disparate stories can naturally be viewed as parts of the larger whole. Indeed, extending from early childhood to what Peterson describes as "the afterchildhood" and embracing a broad variety of social experiences, the stories under discussion comprise a coherent and quite comprehensive picture ("the model," in Peterson's terms) of childhood in late imperial Russia.

The book is thoroughly researched and annotated. Some visible omissions in literary criticism include Vladimir Golstein's essay on "At Home," especially noticeable because of the scarce attention this story has received in English, and Michael Finke's study of *The Steppe*. Noting that the protagonist's name in *The Steppe* links the events in this work to St. George begs for a reference to Saveli Senderovich's work (228). At one point, Alexei Suvorin's newspaper *Novoe vremia* is confused with *Peterburgskaia gazeta* (308n2).

Those, however, are just quibbles. Overall, the book succeeds in its presentation of Chekhov's model of childhood and goes even further than that. "For Chekhov, childhood is a continuous process of learning by failing" (252). The same would be true of life in general, as it occurs on the pages of Chekhov's multifaceted oeuvre.

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Eurasia without Borders: The Dream of a Leftist Literary Commons 1919–1943.

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Despite a renewed scholarly attention to the history of the Communist International or Comintern (1919–43), the Bolsheviks' efforts to create a worldwide common "red" cultural space has received little attention. There are several reasons for this, one being that there was no central and permanent organization to rally the cultural practitioners, despite early policy initiatives by the Soviet Russian literary avant-garde and repeated efforts for the stronger institutionalization of a communist literary movement. It was not until the Kharkov conference of internationalist writers in November 1930 that something like a literary international emerged. Even then one must distinguish, as Katerina Clark underlines, the organizations and individuals constituting this literary international, "committed communists or hardcore leftists integrated with Comintern or other Soviet-linked literary bodies" (23) from what she calls "ecumene," a never formally constituted body of like-minded writers, referred to as "leftist cosmopolitans," as opposed to the former "hegemonic cosmopolitans."

The second reason lies in the linguistic requirements necessary to study the dream to create a revolutionary Eurasian cultural space, fired by the official Soviet speeches in September 1920 at the Congress of the Toilers of the East in Baku. The intention to "meld" the cultures of Europe and Asia, as the leading Bolshevik authority on Eastern affairs, Mikhail Pavlovich, declared, serves as Clark's point of departure. But what would the language of world revolution be? Which translations would be necessary? How to translate concepts and tropes from one culture to the other? And, fundamentally, how could a national or ethnic culture be incorporated in a new common culture without losing its distinctiveness? Clark therefore opts for an approach based on individual countries and individuals to delimit her object of research. She is very careful, however, to inscribe her examples in the bi- and multidirectional flows of ideas and literary models, taking into account the complex picture of mutual, if not always egalitarian, exchanges, influences and circulations of concepts and practices between communist and Soviet-orientated institutions as well as horizontal interactions through personal or institutional contacts between Euro-Russian and Asian writers.

Her chapter structure is more or less chronological and divided into two parts, one covering the years 1919–30, when anti-imperialism was a common cement in the communist world, the other one the years 1930–43, when antifascism played this role.