

Although something could be said about the chapters on Belyi and Blok, the tendency to quote, summarize, and gloss relatively familiar and accessible material—the Belyi-Blok correspondence, Belyi's memoir of Blok, the poems themselves—invites little comment. Generally, the Symbolist debates are oversimplified, and there are startling errors. For example, in an attempt to illustrate the rivalry of Moscow-Petersburg journals, Cioran states that Blok was invited by Briusov “to publish in *Scorpion*”; “*Scorpion*” was, of course, the leading Symbolist publishing house, never the name of a Symbolist journal.

The book's major shortcomings lie elsewhere, however. Just as its major contribution might have come in the chapters on Solov'ev, its greatest weakness is also there. The two major chapters in part I are “The Public Solov'ev,” which expounds the philosophical and theological reasoning concerning Sophia, and “The Private Solov'ev,” which offers an interpretation of Solov'ev's mystical experience of Sophia as revealed in his poetry. In the first chapter, Cioran fails to make clear that Solov'ev's teaching was not a stable doctrine but, rather, the fruit of tortuous thought which underwent considerable change over twenty-five years. He lists the principal works dealing with Sophia—*Chteniia o Bogochelovechestve* (1877–81), *La Russie et l'Eglise Universelle* (1889), and *Smysl liubvi* (1892–94)—and refers to earlier and later phases. Yet his practice of compounding explanations from two or three of these sources at once is confusing.

Worse is to come, however. What confidence can the reader gain from the author's pronouncements—correct or not—upon learning that Dr. Cioran has based his proof on an outdated and unreliable edition of Solov'ev's poetry (not even listed in his bibliography)? The 1974 *Biblioteka poeta* edition, presumably easily available at the time, would have saved him from all his errors. “The Private Solov'ev” (30 pages) quotes at least thirty poems, in whole or in part, to illustrate the development of the Sophia theme in Solov'ev's inspiration and its fluctuations over time. Obviously, then, dating of supporting poems is of primary importance, and earlier editions can err by fifteen years on this point. Still, Dr. Cioran sometimes compounds the error, as when he cites the lyric “Vostorg dushi raschetlivym obmanom” (1885, not 1884) as evidence of Solov'ev's dejected state of mind. That the poem refers to a third person might have urged caution, even without knowing that the subject is the poet Nekrasov (see the *Biblioteka poeta* edition, p. 297).

Dr. Cioran has read his Solov'ev, his Belyi, and his Blok. It is unfortunate that he failed to carry his research a few steps further.

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IZBRANNYE STIKHOTVORENIIA I POEMY [AUSGEWÄHLTE VERS-DICHTUNGEN]. By K. D. Bal'mont. Selected, annotated, and with a foreword by Vladimir Markov. Introduction by Rodney L. Patterson. Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1975. 764 pp. DM 120.

There are books better known for their titles than for their substance; *La Trahison des clercs* is a ready example. And there are writers better known for the clichés of received opinion that encrust them than for their works; Bal'mont is such a figure. Early in the 1890s, Merezhkovskii called for a revival of Russian verse. Bal'mont sparked it, and for some ten years he shone as the very image of the “Poet.” Soon after 1905, however, critics and fellow poets announced his “death” as a writer. Generations of readers accepted this view without bothering to read any but a few anthology pieces or tendentiously chosen examples of his alleged “excesses.” Only recently, a popular history (Harrison Salisbury's *Black Night, White Snow*) identified him in its list of “principal personages” contained in the account as “a decadent poet

and author" (and incorrectly cited the date of his death), and six hundred pages later, in the text itself, called him "a revolutionary who broke with the Bolsheviks." So much for fame.

Something similar happened, sooner or later, to the reputation of all the members of the "first generation" of Russian modernists. It was their tragedy that their renewal of culture developed so rapidly and intensely that each succeeding generation of writers eclipsed the previous one in the eyes of contemporary readers, who were ever avid for novelty. Yet the reputation that declined the most precipitously was Bal'mont's. It was easy to forget what Belyi said (though not specifically about Bal'mont): "One ought not to be brutal with those who walked in front of us. We, after all, are walking over their wounded bodies." A reexamination of Bal'mont's career has been long overdue, especially in the West, where inertia, rather than political considerations, has stood in the way of an unbiased reading of the poet. A prerequisite to such a reexamination is a *vade mecum* for Bal'mont's enormous output: few great poets have written so much verse that is less than first-rate. Vladimir Markov provided such a guide in his exhaustive and provocative "Balmont: A Reappraisal," which appeared in the pages of *Slavic Review* in June 1969 (vol. 28, no. 2, pp. 221-64). Almost simultaneously, the prestigious *Biblioteka poeta* issued a volume of Bal'mont's selected verse in its "large series." Although a welcome sign of the poet's rehabilitation in the Soviet Union, the selections and the critical introduction by Vladimir Orlov once again offered the now traditional estimate of Bal'mont's career (tricked out on this occasion with a *toska po rodine* view of the years of emigration and exile). The number of poems from the post-1905 period was small compared with the much larger number from the earlier, better known period. Consequently, it was impossible to use this collection to test the validity of Markov's "revisionist" thesis that Bal'mont not only continued to grow as a poet, but that many of the post-1905 poems are his very best. And it remained difficult, except for the largest libraries, to obtain the originals of the twenty-odd collections: Bal'mont had not yet benefited from the extensive reprinting projects going on in the West.

This difficulty has now been substantially overcome with the publication of Vladimir Markov's personal choices of Bal'mont's verse, which reflect his careful study and keen appreciation of the poet. The selections are taken from *all* periods of Bal'mont's career and give a far better picture of the richness and variety of his output than does the Soviet collection, which Markov calls, in only a slight overstatement, "colorless and monotonous." (Many of Bal'mont's "decadent" poems—especially the erotic ones—must still be as shocking to the Soviet censors as they were to those of the tsar.) Bal'mont's verse of the post-1905 period is, of course, far more fully represented in the present volume than in the Soviet collection. For example, more than eighty of the sonnets from *Sonety solntsa, meda i luny* (1917) appear here, as opposed to fewer than thirty in the Orlov anthology. (This fact alone would make Markov's work an invaluable addition to the Bal'mont bibliography.) A detailed comparison of the two volumes is impossible in a brief review, but a few examples will perhaps make the point. Orlov's selection from *Pod severnym nebom* (1894) contains twenty-four poems, Markov's only ten: the latter must trim if he is to include so much more of the late verse. Both include the famous "Chaika," "Cheln tomlen'ia," and "Pesnia bez slov," without which no anthology would be representative. But Markov gives two highly characteristic "decadent" poems on death, as well as the erotic "Dyshali tvoi aromatnye plechi" and the sonnet "Koshmar," containing the poet's beloved "alcove" imagery. In addition, this new volume includes a long and informative introduction (more than sixty dense pages) by Rodney L. Patterson surveying Bal'mont's career, and almost forty pages of excellent notes to the poems by Markov.

All in all, then, the Markov volume is preferable, although scholars will certainly want and need both. One must regret the high price of the German edition which will

effectively put it out of reach (except for libraries) for the students who must now proceed with the detailed studies necessary to restore fully this richly gifted poet to his rightful place in the history of Russian verse.

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LEKTSII Z ISTORII UKRAINS'KOI LITERATURY (1798–1870). By *Mykola Zerov*. Edited by *Doreen W. Gorsline* and *Oksana Solovey*. Published for the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies. Oakville, Ontario: Mosaic Press, 1977. 271 pp. \$3.95, paper.

Publication of any of Mykola Zerov's (1880–1941) works is noteworthy, and this detailed historical survey of eighteenth-century Ukrainian literature therefore constitutes a major publishing event. The author held a unique position in the cultural life of the 1920s and 1930s. An outstanding Neoclassicist poet, eminent translator, literary critic and scholar, Zerov was also a most effective lecturer with a large following.

*Lektsii* represents one step in Zerov's plan to publish a textbook on the history of modern Ukrainian literature. In 1928–29, his students at Kiev University devoutly took notes of his erudite lectures and then submitted the text for his elaboration and editing. The censors allowed only three hundred copies of the work to be published in mimeograph form. After Zerov's arrest in 1935 and subsequent death in a Soviet labor camp, no copies of the manuscript could be found in the West until recently, when one appeared in Israel and led to this publication.

In his major works, *Nove ukrains'ke pys'menstvo* (1924), *Do dzherel* (1926), and *Vid Kulisha do Vynnychenka* (1929), Zerov presented studies of various segments of modern Ukrainian literature. In *Nove ukrains'ke pys'menstvo* and *Vid Kulisha do Vynnychenka*, he covered parts of the same period as in *Lektsii*, which primarily discusses the Classical and the Romantic periods from Kotliarevskiy to Fed'kovych. *Nove ukrains'ke pys'menstvo* provides a more analytic approach to the pre-Romantic works, and in *Lektsii* Zerov greatly extends its scope with a thorough discussion of the Romantic writers. *Lektsii* follows a periodization begun in *Nove ukrains'ke pys'menstvo*, which is presented in a historical setting, and includes a comprehensive stylistic analysis and a comparative approach to Slavic literary trends and works. Because it originated in the form of lectures, Zerov's methodology consists of introducing the reader to other leading literary critics' and historians' opinions, correcting some of their misconceptions, and then offering his own interpretations and criticisms.

Many critical works quoted by Zerov had to be written in Russian. The editors of *Lektsii* have supplied translations only of the lengthier quotations. *Lektsii* was initially aimed at readers trained in Russian as well as Ukrainian, but to contemporary readers without a knowledge of Russian, the numerous Russian quotations might prove to be too taxing and onerous. The quotations and poems presented from other literatures should have been translated. In view of the supplementary nature of *Lektsii*, if an English edition is considered, a coordination and incorporation of *Lektsii* with *Nove ukrains'ke pys'menstvo* and *Vid Kulisha do Vynnychenka* would be most advantageous.

Not unlike D. Čyževsky's *A History of Ukrainian Literature* (1975) and its Ukrainian edition (1956), the recent publication of Zerov's *Lektsii* is indeed a rare and priceless contribution to the basic study of Ukrainian literary history.

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