
The reign of Catherine the Great may well have been the most significant era in the history of Russian culture. And this collection of essays is the first in English to deal extensively with the cultural dimensions of that period. Five of the seven essays were presented in briefer form at a panel session of the International Slavic Conference held at Banff in 1974. The remaining two were commissioned specifically for this collection. Its editor, A. G. Cross, provides readers with a short introduction and, together with G. S. Smith, has compiled a 357 item bibliography of twentieth-century English-language scholarship on eighteenth-century Russian literature, thought, and culture. Included also are a synchronic table of the main literary events in Russia from 1762 to 1796 and an index.

Appropriately enough, the subject of the opening essay by James L. Rice is A. T. Bolotov, whose memoirs covered almost the entire reign. Rice shows how Bolotov's accounts of his own literary experiences can be used to demonstrate the function of literature in Catherinian Russia. Pierre R. Hart then traces continuity and change in the Russian ode, emphasizing the efforts of Lomonosov, Derzhavin, and Kheraskov. Russian prose comes in for study next, as David E. Bugden analyses the novels of Fedor Emin and places them in the context of the history of Russian prose fiction. Further attention is drawn to Kheraskhov in an essay by Stephen L. Baehr, who examines the literary contribution of Russia's Freemasons. He delineates the dominant philosophical assumptions, themes, character types, and imagery of Masonic literature.

Russian and Soviet literary historians are taken to task by W. Gareth Jones for straining too hard to find indigenous sources for the literature of their best-known eighteenth-century writers. Jones uses Lomonosov's poetry and Novikov's journalism to question the idea that Russian Classicism was a product of an organic literary movement, separated from European trends. A. N. Radishchev's attempt to weaken the theistic views of the Sentimentalists is examined carefully by Tanya Page, who treats his Life of Ushakov and especially the famous Journey as important works in Utilitarianism. Finally, since a number of "isms" are featured in the first six studies, it is also appropriate that the last essay, by G. S. Smith, clarifies the ways in which the terms Sentimentalism and Preromanticism have been used by native and foreign critics of eighteenth-century Russian literature.

The articles in this collection have been prepared by experts primarily for a specialist audience. It features Lomonosov, Kheraskov, Derzhavin, Bolotov, Novikov, Emin, and Radishchev. It would be easy to mention other writers, and even some literary genres which might have warranted more attention than they received, but the collection was not intended as a survey of the period. All in all, it serves its expressed purposes very well.

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More than any other Shakespearian play Hamlet has caught the fancy of the Russian intelligentsia and thereby plays a cultural and historical role beyond that expected for a foreign work of literature. The two scholarly works in question examine the phenomenon
of Hamlet from quite different perspectives and attempt to accomplish very disparate purposes.

Hamlet: A Window on Russia "examines Russian life and culture through the perspective provided by Russian's reaction to Hamlet from 1748 to the present" (p. vii). The author traces the fate of Hamlet in Russia from Sumarokov's adaptation in 1748 through Pasternak's 1941 translation and Kozintsev's 1964 film. Chapters deal with topics as diverse as Russian Hamlets and social consciousness of the mid-nineteenth century and the relationship of the character and play to Soviet political reality. In addition there are separate chapters which focus on the use of Hamlet by Pushkin, Gogol', Lermontov, Turgenev, Dostoevskii, Tolstoi, Chekhov, Blok, and Pasternak, and mention is made of allusions to Hamlet and Ophelia, many of them quite minor, in the work of several other writers over the past two centuries.

In broad terms the book is helpful in tracing the presentation of Hamlet and changing critical interpretations since Sumarokov's adaptation. The reader is taken from Polevoi's brooding, weak Hamlet as portrayed by Mochalov through the crisis of Realism and the critical objection to ineffectual social types, to Pasternak's more heroic Hamlet, a character dedicated to duty and self-denial. Yet the broad scope of the book and the avowed ambitious intentions of the author fall victim to a lack of critical breadth and to a catalog of critics' opinions (476 footnotes in fewer than 140 pages of actual text) that too often are unqualified and unevaluated. There is also a lack of measure in separating the seminal—for example, Turgenev's use of Hamlet and the evolution of the Superfluous Man—from the secondary—for example, a brief note on Karatygin's performance in Hamlet found in a letter by Gogol'. Thus, the desire to be thorough results in a clouded critical discernment.

Despite such shortcomings, the book is quite useful and the author has provided a thoroughly researched and documented historical overview of the role and fate of Hamlet in Russia and the Soviet Union. The book will be of use to both Slavists and comparatists and marks the first lengthy treatment of the topic in English. The author must be commended for a work that not only provides excellent coverage of its subject but also points the way to extensive further research.

Professor Kagan-Kans' study focusses on the most important fictional use of Hamlet and Hamletism in Russian Literature, the development of the Superfluous Man and the Hamlet-Don Quixote dialectic in the work of Turgenev. The author asserts the necessity for a reassessment of the whole of Turgenev's work, with an emphasis on the short stories and novellas, in order to bring out features that are neglected in traditional Turgenev criticism. She insists that Turgenev is a philosophical writer because his stories offer a general and consistent picture of life, and that one must approach him philosophically in order to understand his work. Thus, the emphasis must be on the inner life of the characters despite Turgenev's extensive portrayal of social and political activity. The author views Turgenev's philosophical approach as an attempt to integrate the Don Quixote and the Hamlet in man, the heart and the head, into the whole person.

The author accomplishes her purposes well, even though the extensive supporting examples and details sometimes encumber the reading slightly. Her contribution lies mainly in her clarification of the oversimplifications too often made about Turgenev. Through chapters dealing with Turgenev's failing heroes, his women in love, and his attitude toward life, love, death and nature numerous insights are raised. One reads that the male leads in A Hamlet of the Schigrovsky District and The Diary of a Superfluous Man are much closer to Dostoevskii's Underground Man than to the stereotyped Superfluous man; that the traditional dichotomy between Turgenev's pure young girls and predatory older women breaks down under scrutiny and that no absolute dichification of types is possible; that the conception of the female, irrespective of her age and experience, is essentially destructive; that neither his heroes nor his heroines qualify as the integrated