Other articles appearing in the volume analyze the works of Chekhov, Maiakovskii, Akhmatova, Il'f and Petrov, Pasternak, and Aksenov. One study by Shcheglov is devoted solely to the discussion of the motif of fire—"O goriachikh tochkhakh literaturnogo siuzheta (motivy pozhara i ognia u Bulgakova i drugikh)." Shcheglov discusses the motif's functions of realizing two principal themes, that of destruction and regeneration. Concerning the second theme, the critic points out that the motif of fire is frequently combined with other typical themes of regeneration: the fall of a house, the departure of parents, the quasi-death of the hero, and the temporary rejection of the hero. In Bulgakov's fiction Shcheglov briefly discusses the motif in connection with two of the author's favorite themes: 1) the fall of the "old" culture in the face of an onslaught by "barbarians," and 2) the possibility of miraculous transformations as a result of the intercession of higher forces in human affairs.

Although in Mir avtora i struktura teksta Zholkovskii and Shcheglov have sought to moderate the language of the poetics of expressiveness in their analyses, for many readers accustomed to the discursive method of literary criticism some of the articles in the volume might still seem tedious. This will come as no surprise to the authors. In fact, Zholkovskii has remarked that in its present state literary science "should look up to, rather than down on 'dull accounts.' As a genre of writing, literary criticism should compete with Einstein, not Shakespeare" (Themes and Texts, p. 21). The sound literary intuition and acumen of the authors, however, come through in all the articles. Their analyses contain a wealth of usable information. Although much of that might appear as raw data, the information about an author's invariant themes, motifs, and favorite poetic devices will prove equally important to critics using different methods in discussing and appraising the work and psychology of the ten authors treated in the volume. As such, Mir avtora i struktura teksta merits acquaintance by all serious scholars.

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Nikita Lary, who has previously produced a book on Dostoevskii and Dickens, now turns his attention to the influence of the great Russian writer on Soviet cinema, a promising subject given the uneasy place Dostoevskii occupies in the Soviet pantheon of prerevolutionary Russian writers.

Dostoevsky and Soviet Film is composed of eight main chapters, two substantial appendices on Eisenstein, and twenty stills. Six of the chapters focus on the Dostoevskii-influenced productions of single directors (Roshal', Ermler, Eisenstein, Pyr'ev, Kulidzhanov, and Kozintsev), one on Shklovskii as scenarist, and the other on three "lesser" contemporary Dostoevskii films (The Meek One, Nasty Story, and The Gambler). More than a dozen films (several of which are little known in the West) are reviewed; these vivid descriptions are the chief strength of the book. Lary has a real talent for conveying the visual flavor of the films he discusses without resorting to technical shot language.
Lary knows his Dostoevskii, and so the chapters which deal with films indisputably adapted from Dostoevskii are the most convincing. Indeed, the chapter on Ivan Pyr'ev, a major director from the Stalinist period who made three films based on Dostoevskii, is a model auteur analysis. Lary fares less well, however, when he attempts to establish the case for Dostoevskii's influence on directors who did not actually adapt films from Dostoevskii. The chapters on Eisenstein (focusing on Ivan the Terrible) and Kozintsev (King Lear) are labored, the latter heavily laden with direct quotations from Kozintsev's autobiographical writings. While Lary does demonstrate that these directors admired Dostoevskii, the significance is problematic since both men were prodigious readers who admitted to being influenced by many writers, not just Dostoevskii. If the chapters on Eisenstein and Kozintsev are tenuous, then that on Ermler must be considered indefensible. It posits, on the basis of two offhand references, that The Great Citizen is an "unacknowledged" adaptation of The Demons. Accepting this requires an unreasonable suspension of disbelief, particularly from those familiar with Ermler.

Lary’s approach to the directors whose work he examines is in fact generally unbalanced. For example, some receive extensive biographical treatment, although in the cases of Ermler and Kozintsev, much of the detail is irrelevant to their Dostoevskian productions. Others, like Kulidzhanov, whose Crime and Punishment is accorded an entire chapter, remain virtual enigmas.

The extent to which films are situated in their political and cultural contexts is similarly uneven, inexplicable since Lary states (p. 11) that he intends to go beyond the film text and look at "other literary works, official versions of pre- and post-revolutionary history, the daily news, political anecdotes..." Given that Cornell University Press is one of the few scholarly publishers still employing footnotes, the inadequacy of the documentation is obvious. (To mention but one example, on page 25 Lary states without an accompanying note that Fedorov "made drastic changes in [Shklovskii's] shooting script" for House of the Dead, an observation which may have been drawn from a source cited on page 28.)

The book also suffers from stylistic oddities which distract the reader from the substantive material. One is Lary’s practice of appending to the chapters lengthy strings of quotations, which surely should have been integrated into the text if they were worth including; nearly seven pages of such excerpts follow the section on Shklovskii. Another is Lary’s use of what one might call "subchapters"—with titles like "Subhistorical," "Voices," "Ideological"—to buttress his major chapters.

Dostoevsky and Soviet Film has serious conceptual problems as well. Although it is certainly interesting to read such excellent descriptions of films, the book was intended to be more than an exercise in description. The theses advanced in the introduction are, however, somewhat flawed. Lary says, for example, that these Dostoevskii adaptations reveal the deficiencies of Socialist Realism—but so do most films of the Stalinist period. He notes (p. 10) that they provide a "peculiar, inward, close-up view of Soviet culture"—but this is true of cinema in general.

Several alternative approaches to the material might have yielded more intellectually satisfying results. Lary never investigates what would seem a basic point: if the number of times Dostoevskii has been adapted to the screen exceeds that for other Russian and Soviet writers, then we have a fact of cultural import. He also skirts what must be a central issue of any book dealing with literary adaptations in cinema, burying the question in the middle of a paragraph on page