I was pleased when Charles Schlacks, Jr., offered me the opportunity to edit this issue of Canadian-American Slavic Studies devoted to Russian Romanticism. Not least because Romantic studies has not fared as well as it might have in the past and is not in a state of growth now. Modernism, Bakhtin, semiotics, contemporary literature—these are the deep literary mines where our graduate students choose to keep their patience proud nowadays. True, Pushkin, Lermontov, and Gogol’ still attract talented young scholars. But Pushkin studies, Lermontov studies, and Gogol’ studies have not necessarily been, and sometimes are distinctly not, Romantic studies.

Romanticists need not complain about this untoward condition. We have moved past the tedious argument about Romanticism versus Romanticisms, stopped saying that, yes, there is no Russian Romanticism, dispensed with the silly question “What is Romanticism?” We know enough about the process of literary history to suggest that it as not as reasonable and orderly as theorists sometimes tend to want it to be, and that, indeed, it might very well be as contradictory as the Romantics showed it to be. We may now allow Griböedov, Prince Shakhovskoi, and A. F. Merzliakov to be Neoclassicists in the Romantic period without shouting “Aha, contradiction!” and Tiutchev and Fet can be Romantics in the Realist period. We have overcome D. S. Mirsky’s unfortunate characterization of the Russian Romantics as “classical.” We can, while we are at it, permit Pushkin to be a Romantic, even while continuing to admire his Neoclassical precision and to acknowledge that he departed from virtually all of his Romantic contemporaries by insisting on realistic credibility—and not seeing a contradiction in this.

Best of all we have established that the Russian Romantic period is more than what Soviet scholars once viewed as a brief space between Neoclassicism and Realism.” Indeed, after many struggles with the Soviet “ideological-historical approach,” we have even reached a point where Romanticism is no longer defined as “non-Realism.” (Who knows, we might
even reach a point where Realism will be defined, not fully incorrectly, as "non-Romanticism.")

Nor can we say that the Russian Romantics have been ignored. Baratynskii and Tiutchev have been a subject of remarkably revealing theoretical Romantic studies. Zhukovskii has been discovered to be a richly Romantic poet and translator whose invaluable poetic innovations were hidden by continuous definition of him as a "sentimental elegiast." One of the contributors to this collection, Lewis Bagby, has revealed a wealth of new insights about the reality of the Russian Romantic movement by imaginatively applying Bakhtinian theory to the works and, especially, the actual and literary person of Bestuzhev-Marlinskii (and Lermontov as well). We have fairly well met the need for straightforward general introductory or "life and works" studies of many Russian Romantics: Pushkin (Vickery), Lermontov (Mersereau), Gogol' (Setchkarev), Baratynskii (Dee), Zhukovskii (Semenko in translation), Battishkov (Serman in translation), Bestuzhev-Marlinskii (Leighton), V. F. Odoevskii (Cornwell), Tiutchev (Gregg), Fet (Gustafson, Lidiia Lotman in translation). Thanks to the world of Ardis, we have translations of Russian Romantic poetry, prose, criticism, and documents that could not possibly have appeared without this outlet (including the generous Ardis Anthology of Russian Romantic Literature). Thanks also to Ardis, the most extensive, comprehensive study of Russian Romanticism exists not in Russian, but in W. E. Brown's five-volume History of Russian Literature in the Romantic Period.

Still . . . there is so very, very much to do, and so few Romanticists to do it, that Romanticists sometimes worry. Especially because what remains to be done is worth doing. So much must be done that only a small portion of the task can be mentioned, but I would like here to list a few Russian Romantics who, however attentively they have been studied by Romanticists in Russia, remain in need of study elsewhere and promise to offer more than casual knowledge of Russian literature. The poetry of V. F. Raevskii, for example, may not be on a high level, but it has philosophical depth and his metaphoricization of Rousseauian liberty on the one hand, and European science on the other, are intriguing. D. V. Venevitinov deserves a comprehensive monograph comparable to Günther Wytrzen's study in German of his Romantic aesthetics. Venevitinov died too young to develop into a poet, but his philosophical pronouncements are a key to understanding of Slavophilism. His critical undoing of the aesthetics of his teacher Merzliakov is a Romantic critique par excellence of the deficiencies of Neoclassicism, and his other critical essays are a brilliant rationale for retaining Enlightenment ideals in a uniquely Russian notion of Romantic Idealist philosophy. A. I. Polezhaev is a far better poet than has been appreciated—his experiments in metrics and stanzaic articulation are unprecedented and it is