context of Gogol's concerns with imitation in art; and there is a section on the relationship of George Vasari and German Romanticism (especially Wackenroder) to Gogol's "Portrait."

Part three on the word examines Taras Bulba whose hero's "most important attribute is the possession of an effective word" (p. 275) and notes Gogol's identification of the Cossacks with the Asians for their dangerous energy; it interprets Gogol's reading of Shevyrev's comparison of Russia to Rome, and arrives at the "metko skazannoe slovo" in Dead Souls. The distinction is made between the oral and the written word, as well as between the oratorical style and skaz, but without constructing a system or reaching a conclusion. Although there is a section on Gogol's essay "The Divine Liturgy," and a variety of discussions of Christian sources, the possibility that Gogol's work is based in a religious view of the word is not explored in the analyses of particular stories. The book closes with a review of Gogol's attempts to define himself and his audience through his narrative (Donald Fanger's book is not referred to, though Fanger is acknowledged in the preface).

The three sections of the book contain close readings of works "that have been inadequately studied" (p. ix), but Maguire adds "Diary of a Madman" "because I think I have something to add" (p. xi) and omits others "because they do not speak to me" (p. xii). The "explorations" of the book's title describe the mode of Maguire's investigations which make use of heterogeneous materials from painting, philosophy, linguistics, classical history, religious texts, and references to critics from Aristotle to Cathy Popkin in unpredictable ways. Maguire's interpretations are often sexual (Ivan Nikiforovich's gun, Shponka's pancake, Khoma's snuff), although Maguire's "own inclinations point [him] more toward Augustine" than to Freud (p. 199), but Karlinsky is not among the critics cited in the preface. Alexander Zholkovsky's article on Selected Passages is mentioned in one note ("also makes some good points" [p. 371, n. 12]) but not in connection with Maguire's point that "Gogol had become a character in his own fiction" (p. 316).

Maguire's approach is dictated by Gogol's instruction to his readers that "no detail can be overlooked; he does not want to limit a work by looking for "one idea that underlies a given work" (p. 331). Instead, he provides minute analysis of the verbal texture of Gogol's tales, interlarded with materials whose logical progression is difficult to follow. This method generates a degree of detail that may be daunting to the non-initiate while the Slavist might find some of the background superfluous and the use of critical literature idiosyncratic.

Priscilla Meyer  Wesleyan University


In chapter 3 of this book, entitled "Satiric Characterizations: Non-metaphoric Denigration," the author tells us that one can "conditionally divide Saltykov's devices for comic denigration into two basic groups: those devices that denigrate by primitizing
(by demonstrating a character's intellectual limitations, by lowering his activity to the level of simple satisfaction of physiological needs)—that is, non-metaphoric denigration; [and] denigration which suggests that the object of mockery is non-human... that is, a metaphoric denigration." Then, having quoted with approval V. V. Gippius' observation that "the depicting of human types in Saltykov's caricatures [is] often based on the principle of the primitive," Draitser proceeds to divide the first, "primitivizing" group into three sub-categories "1) infantilization; 2) stupefication; and 3) physiologization." Whereupon, having conceded that these divisions sometimes overlap, he gives examples of each drawing from Saltykov's satirical fiction, noting as he goes, however, that the "stupefication" category may be seen to fall into two sub-sub-categories, namely, "disruptions in the logic of thoughts" and "disruptions in the logic of behaviour," while the "physiologization" category can be divided into no fewer than five sub-sub-categories: "physical appearance," "gluttony," "scatology," "intoxication," and "sex." (Note the crescendo.) Here, too, each rubric is accompanied by illustrations.

I have quoted and/or paraphrased in considerable detail this small segment of Draitser's study because, better than any descriptive generalizations, it makes clear both the virtues and the shortcomings of his approach. The virtues first. Draitser is systematic: he proceeds logically and methodically, always letting us know where he is going and why he is going there. Draitser writes clearly: the (Derri)dadaisme which infects so much critical writing these days is not for him. His study is well researched: among his predecessors in Saltykov scholarship Bushmin, Kirpotin, and Nikitina are given generous credit; and, on a broader scale, the comic theories of Aristotle, Hobbes, Kant, Baudelaire, Bergson and Freud are all given their due.

Last but not least, Draitser is thorough. Chapter 1 offers a chronological conspectus of all the satirical works to be considered from Provincial Sketches (1857) to Old Times in Posheknonie (1889), furnishing each with a compendious description. In chapter 2 he seeks to define his often slippery terms with maximal precision, distinguishing "humor" from "the comic," "the comic" from "wit," "wit" from "satire," and so forth. In chapters 3 and 4 he tackles the two satirical categories specified in my opening quotation. Chapter 5 examines and analyzes the purely linguistic aspects of Saltykov's satire, while chapter 6 constitutes a kind of miscellany, in which "special cases" (hyperbole, onomastics, and the grotesque) are considered. In sum, the taxonomy of satire is well covered by the author.

Unfortunately, the important shortcomings of this study cannot be disregarded. For one thing, the author, evidently a recent arrival on our shores, does not write well: his English is wooden, awkward, occasionally incorrect and altogether humorless. (Saltykov's "sea of merriment" has been pumped almost dry.) A second weakness is, ironically, the defect of one of the author's virtues, namely, an excess of system, which prompts him to parse rather than synthesize, split many a hair, and exhibit too often what Wordsworth called "the false, secondary power of multiplying distinctions." As a consequence this monograph sometimes reads more like a catalogue raisonné than an organic whole with an overarching, integrative theme (or themes). Too often, in sum, we feel that we are failing to see the woods for the trees.

The conventions of reviewmanship have long (and rightly) discouraged criticism of an author for failing to do that which he never intended. This said, I cannot refrain