

Terbish develops a narrative-based understanding of ideology as “a storytelling embedded in rituals, practices, values, and the material world” (7), yet immediately betrays his own method in Chapter 2, titled “Soviet Ideology,” where he focuses on the hackneyed repertoire of Soviet political leaders from Vladimir Lenin to Mikhail Gorbachev instead of the texts that produced this ideology. Throughout this 50-page long chapter, Terbish makes two passing references to a speech by Iosif Stalin and an article by Iurii Andropov and provides one lengthy quote from *The Great Soviet Encyclopedia*; this sums up his primary sources on Soviet ideology as “a storytelling.” Chapter 3 on Russian Cosmism and Chapter 4 on Euroasianism are more substantiated in original texts by the proponents of these movements, yet none of them provides any evidence for the big claim of the reviewed volume: that they have been intricately connected with Soviet state ideology since the moment all of them emerged at the turn of the twentieth century. The only connection that Terbish has to offer is taxonomic. By pointing out that all of them claimed to be “genuine science” and dismissing these claims as false, he characterizes them as “pseudoscience.” Since all of them are pseudoscience, they should presumably have something in common. This taxonomy (state ideology, Cosmism, and Eurasianism as not “real” science) is also about as far as his discussion of “science in Russia” (the title of the book) goes.

Chapter 5 provides a brief historical overview of Kalmykia, the field of the author’s anthropological research, and Chapters 6–9 finally bring us to original and interesting materials on the making and practice of ideology in this republic of the Russian Federation. Reflecting the postmodernist character of Russian politics, the tenure of Kirsan Ilyumzhinov as President and then Head of Kalmykia (1993–2010) saw a campaign to create an official ideology when the position of the State Secretary of Ideology was established in the republic and a textbook on Kalmykia’s ideology was authored by Ilyumzhinov. Unfortunately, this research occupies a marginal place in the book (70 pages in total) and does not develop any argument apart from the author’s observations that Kalmykia’s ideology incorporated elements of Cosmism and Euroasianism and that his informants believe that Russia needs a state ideology.

The book has a number of questionable statements such as that Lenin was a half-Jew (8) or that state censorship was “reintroduced” under Leonid Brezhnev (suggesting that it had been lifted under Nikita Khrushchev [94]), but its real problem lies in its broader conceptual framework that sounds sensationalist yet remains entirely speculative. Scholars of post-Soviet ideology and Kalmykia will find interesting materials in the volume under review, but it can hardly be recommended for any other audience.

ALEXEY GOLUBEV
University of Houston

Dostoevsky as a Translator of Balzac. By Julia Titus. Boston, Mass.: Academic Studies Press, 2022. Bibliography. Index. \$119.00, hard bound.
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Many years ago, Donald Rayfield suggested that Fedor Dostoevskii’s translation of Honoré de Balzac’s *Eugénie Grandet* justifies a bilingual edition. We still do not have, and may, indeed, never have a Balzac/Dostoevskii edition of the novel, but Julia Titus’s *Dostoevsky as a Translator of Balzac*, is, to my knowledge, the first monograph fully devoted to the subject.

It is not, however, the first to appreciate the importance of Dostoevskii’s earliest publication or to consider it a cradle of Dostoevskii’s poetics. Since Leonid Grossman’s

pioneering analysis, Dostoevskii's translation has been the subject of several articles and chapter-length studies (Robert L. Busch, Sergei Kibal'nik, Valentina Nechaeva, Svetlana Shkarlat, Karen Stepanian, Rayfield). It has also been addressed, if less extensively, under the broader rubric "Dostoevsky and Balzac." Although Titus's book traverses some of the same ground, her book complements the existing work in significant and insightful ways.

Titus's scrupulous examination of Dostoevskii's "free" translation reveals a pattern of departures from Balzac's original that allow her to argue that these were intentional choices reflective of the translator's fledgling poetics. She catalogues, for instance, a series of changes in Dostoevskii's depiction of Evgeniia (the Russified name is part of Dostoevskii's effort to domesticate the French original) designed to heighten her religious attributes, spiritual strength, and connection to Christian symbolism. At the same time, as Titus demonstrates, Balzac's Eugénie became a model for one of Dostoevskii's recurring female types. Alexandra Mikhailovna in *Netochka Nezvanova*, the heroine of "The Meek One," Sofia in *Raw Youth*, and Sonya in *Crime and Punishment* are all shaped, in their essential aspects, after Balzac's heroine. As concerns Grandet, his portrait, too, is stripped in Dostoevskii's translation of the modicum of balance imparted to it by Balzac for the sake of highlighting his monomaniacal greed and establishing an even starker contrast with the idealized portrait of Evgeniia. Titus further shows how Dostoevskii's portrait of Grandet reverberates with the echoes of Pushkin's *Miserly Knight*, an instance of literary assimilation also registered by other scholars.

Like Eugénie, Old Grandet, according to Titus, inaugurates several themes that would stay with Dostoevskii for the rest of his writing career: from psychology of an all-consuming passion to money as a touchstone of characters' integrity. In tracing the theme of money in Dostoevskii's later works, Titus, however, notes an important difference. To Balzac's respect for luxury and elegance, which he links with refined sensibility, Titus contrasts Dostoevskii's loftier notion of beauty's inextricable connection to morality and God. This observation occurs within a broader discussion of the two writers' respective approaches to representation of the material world. Although Dostoevskii shares Balzac's interest in the material environment he depicts, their accents fall differently. As Titus points out, Balzac tends to offer detailed descriptions of beautiful interiors and latest fashions, while Dostoevskii is drawn to the squalid, the impoverished, and the ugly. Titus also shows a similar logic at work in Dostoevskii's character descriptions, as illustrated by the example of *The Brothers Karamazov*, where the good-looking (and morally superior) characters are represented in general and compressed terms, while the most detailed and complete portrayals are reserved for Fyodor Pavlovich and Smerdiakov. These portraits, Titus further argues, reflect Dostoevskii's knowledge of the French theories of physiognomy that first reached him via Balzac. Titus offers a useful overview of these theories and uncovers their presence in both writers' works.

It would have been interesting to know how Titus locates her study in relation to prior examinations of Dostoevskii's translation and where she stands on the issues they raise. Are there any Gogolian echoes in Dostoevskii's translation? Or is his idiom influenced largely by Aleksandr Pushkin? Can Dostoevskii's amplification of Evgeniia's virtues be a tribute to Romantic conventions rather than a reflection of the young writer's religious values? Indeed, how deep did these values run in the twenty-three-year-old Dostoevskii? And what do we do with the readings that emphasize the numerous omissions of religious symbolism and rhetoric, including in the representation of Eugénie, like the excision of a lengthy comparison of the heroine to the Virgin? It would also be reassuring to know that the 2014 Azbuka edition of Dostoevskii's translation used in the study is, indeed, the original 1844 text

(reprinted in Dostoevskii's *Canonical Texts* edited by Vladimir Zakharov), and not one of the subsequent versions identified by other researchers.

These questions aside, Titus's study offers an illuminating account of an important moment in Dostoevskii's creative career and sheds further light on the larger question of, to quote Priscilla Meyer, "how the Russians read the French."

ANNA SCHUR
Keene State College

Chekhov's Children: Context and Text in Late Imperial Russia. By Nadya L. Peterson. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2021. xiv, 408 pp. Notes. Index. Photographs. Figures. \$75.00, hard bound.
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"Children are everywhere in Chekhov," aptly notes Nadya Peterson in the opening pages of her compelling study (4). The numbers speak for themselves. There are, as the author reminds us, almost three hundred child characters of all ages and social groups in Chekhov's works. Moreover, there are as many as twenty stories written during his formative years (1880–88) that focus exclusively on children, some of which have long remained on the periphery of critical attention. Peterson's objective in this study goes far beyond surveying this body of work: she attempts to present Anton Chekhov's "model of childhood" within the broad context of his time, including "literary, pedagogical, medical, psychological, and private views on the topic" (22).

This ambitious objective explains the book's structure. The entire Part One is dedicated to the "context." The first of its three chapters examines the "literary constructs" of childhood Chekhov inherited from his "literary fathers," primarily Sergei Aksakov and Lev Tolstoi. The latter appears again, now as an educator, in the next chapter focused on the "pedagogical ethos" of the period, specifically, the opposing pedagogical views of Tolstoi and Konstantin Ushinskii. Finally, the last chapter immerses the reader in the pedagogical psychology field of Chekhov's times. As informed and informative as these chapters are, they would benefit from a closer engagement with Chekhov's oeuvre and his poetics.

It is not, however, that poetics plays a secondary role in this study: "Context, described in the first part, is but a necessary background for an informed exploration of Chekhov's poetics," the author states firmly (22). Moving in Part Two from "context" to "text"—each of the five chapters in this part is centered on the selection of stories grouped around specific topics—Peterson reveals herself as an astute reader of Chekhov's style attuned to its multitude of nuances and subtleties. Acknowledging that Chekhov does not "guide his reader to the 'correct' interpretation of his stories" (246), she seems to make this attitude toward the reader her own guiding principle. An additional bonus is that, as I have mentioned above, many of these stories ("Naden'ka N.'s Summer Holiday Schoolwork," "The Mean Boy," "The Fugitive," "The Cook Gets Married," "The Big Event") have been undeservedly neglected in literary criticism for the sake of his more "famous" works. Peterson's book helps to fill this gap.

This study also confirms the principal unity of Chekhov's artistic world with no clear boundaries between his "humorous" and "serious" works where apparently disparate stories can naturally be viewed as parts of the larger whole. Indeed, extending from early childhood to what Peterson describes as "the afterchildhood" and embracing a broad variety of social experiences, the stories under discussion comprise a coherent and quite comprehensive picture ("the model," in Peterson's terms) of childhood in late imperial Russia.