losing control over himself, the man falls in love with her, that "things become unpleasant, unmanageable, and eventually lethal" (p. 70). The early tales are rounded out by a most ingenious interpretation of "Viy," not only in terms of the story's hidden homosexual tendencies, but also in terms of its literary genesis and the meaning of its title.

In the St. Petersburg cycle, Karlinsky points to the pattern of alienation, and of lonely males threatened in one way or another by women or inanimate objects that replace them (as in "The Overcoat"). His analysis of the much-abused "Nose" as an exercise in surrealism is imaginative and refreshing. The discussion of Gogol's plays—with their conspicuous absence of any real love interest—is simultaneously a brilliant survey of Russian drama. Gogol's late works, *Dead Souls* and *Selected Passages from Correspondence with Friends,* likewise confirm the author's central thesis and previous observations. Karlinsky points to the strange lack of any sexual adventures in *Dead Souls,* which was written in the tradition of the picaresque novel, and to the fatal role of women (the governor's nameless daughter, Korobochka, the society ladies) in bringing about Chichikov's downfall. The connection made in many cultures between male homosexuality and prophetic and mystic abilities is used as a hypothesis to explain Gogol's later mysticism, as well as his much maligned *Correspondence with Friends.*

This is a brilliantly written, original, and informative book that makes for fascinating (and often highly amusing) reading. Whether one chooses to agree with all of the author's conclusions or not, it is a landmark in Russian literary criticism, and indispensable to any serious and scholarly study of Gogol.

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RUSSIAN VIEWS OF PUSHKIN. Edited and translated by *D. J. Richards* and *C. R. S. Cockrell.* Oxford: Willem A. Meeuws, 1976. xxvi, 263 pp. £8.50, cloth. £3.50, paper. Distributed by Holdan Books, 15 North Parade Ave., Oxford, England OX2 6LX.

This collection of twenty-six essays, according to its editors, "presents for the first time to the English-speaking reader the Russian view of Pushkin as it developed over the last one and a half centuries." The essays included (many abridged) were written by Gogol, Belinskii, Herzen, Annenkov, Dobroliubov, Grigoriev, Pisarev, Turgenev, Dostoevsky, Merezhkovsky, Solov'ev, Shestov, Aikhenvald, Blok, Eikhenbaum, Gershenzon, Tomashevskii, Mirskii, Vinogradov, Lezhnev, Shklovsky, Vinokur, Frank, Stepanov, Slonimskii, and Blagoi. This is a representative group of distinguished men of letters. By their choice of essays, mostly well-known, the editors have realized their first self-imposed goal: "to give examples from each of the most important stages in the development of Russian criticism of Pushkin."

The editors' second goal, "to ensure that the essays, taken as a whole, should reflect the range and many-sided nature of Pushkin's genius," is probably unrealizable because nineteenth-century Russian criticism of Pushkin, with few exceptions, pays mighty little heed to Pushkin. The reader of these essays, as he absorbs one heady draft after another, has the eerie sensation of entering into some never-never land of psychedelic fantasy. Perhaps the most blatant example of this tendency to steadfastly disregard Pushkin the more freely to explore one's own views is Dostoevsky's famous speech—which is "typical of Dostoevsky," as Tomashevskii points out, "and completely misses Pushkin." But Dostoevsky is the rule rather than the exception. (As exceptions I would suggest Annenkov and Turgenev.) The other authors seem mostly

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engrossed in contemplating Pushkin as the embodiment of the Russian spirit, in measuring his closeness to the Russian people and the Russian soil, in regretting that Pushkin did not live a little later so that his art could have provided a satisfactory response to the painful questions of the day, in berating Pushkin for having peopled *Evgenii Onegin* with trivial characters, in touting Pushkin's universalism as a panacea for European sickness, and so on and so forth. But if these nineteenth-century effusions tend to obscure the protean Pushkin by using him as a pawn in their authors' intellectual and emotional game-plans, cumulatively, they do achieve two things: (1) they convey to the non-Russian reader how vitally important Pushkin was (and is) to the Russian mind; and (2) using Pushkin as a sort of catalyst, they yield insights into the types of problems that preoccupied the nineteenth-century intellectual—the main problem being, in the final analysis, Russia.

The twentieth-century essays are more focused on Pushkin, although here too there is room for wild interpretations. Space does not permit recapitulation. Suffice it to say that although the quality of these essays is most uneven (the best, in my opinion, are those by Aikhenvald, Tomashevskii, and Frank), taken together they offer a picture of Russian thinking about Russia's national poet.

On the whole (despite the difficulty for the uninitiated created by some of the abridgements, as in the Annenkov essay), the editors have succeeded in assembling in one volume a representative and interesting body of material.

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A NEW LIFE OF ANTON CHEKHOV. By *Ronald Hingley*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976. xxii, 352 pp. Index. Illus. $12.50.

CHEKHOV: THE EVOLUTION OF HIS ART. By *Donald Rayfield*. New York: Barnes & Noble, Harper & Row, 1975. vi, 266 pp. $17.50.

Nobody knows an author better than his translator. Professor Ronald Hingley of Oxford University has translated all seven volumes of *The Oxford Chekhov* published thus far, and is working on the subsequent volumes. His first book on Chekhov appeared twenty-six years prior to the present study, so his intimate relationship with this writer is of long standing. After a chatty introduction, he gives us a circumstantial account of Chekhov's life—from the early days in the provincial town on the Sea of Azov up to the last scenes in the German hotel room where he died. The life of an interesting personality is always new if told and reinterpreted by an interesting biographer, which is the case here. Most of the material collected and displayed in this book was known and used by numerous other biographers who were attracted by the charming figure of Anton Chekhov; but it is all viewed through Hingley's prism —in the way he arranges, illuminates, and interprets the material, which he does in a fascinating and credible way, making Hingley's Chekhov very much alive.

Yet, the word "New" in the title does not mean that Hingley introduces a completely new approach to Chekhov's biography. On the contrary, his method is rather conventional, although he interlards the story with intelligent remarks and opinions about Chekhov. His first book, *Chekhov: A Biographical and Critical Study* (1950), contains separate chapters on Chekhov's approach to fiction and his approach to drama, whereas *A New Life* presents only brief comments on Chekhov's writings in the context of the life circumstances in which they originated. In this respect Hingley's new attempt does not differ much in method, contents, emphases, tone, and style from other comparable works (in English, for example, David Magarshack's *Chekhov:*

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