

McVay avoids simplistic interpretations of Esenin as the peasant poet longing for the past world of the village, noting, as several critics have done, that, although he may have mourned the village, he lived in the city (p. 142). But he does not take Esenin's nostalgia and self-pity to a deeper psychological conclusion—that Esenin's tragedy may have been primarily that of a man without a home in any part of society, a man totally and irrevocably alone. Esenin's obsession with the theme of the prodigal son in his later poetry stresses the poet's idea of homelessness—that there was no place for him at all in Soviet society, a conclusion which led to his suicide in 1925.

McVay explains Esenin's extreme swings in behavior as a struggle against death (pp. 147–48), although his struggle with anomie may be more to the point. In the last chapter McVay, through carefully juxtaposed memoir material and quotation, skillfully brings his hero to his foredoomed end. But once again, McVay gives everyone's opinion on the reasons for Esenin's suicide except his own.

The book includes an excellent set of photographs (some previously unpublished), a very useful select bibliography, and notes. Unfortunately, McVay does not footnote his numerous quotations in the text, leaving the reader to rummage around in the bibliography in order to locate them. Yet despite such minor problems, this is not only an extremely useful research tool but a fascinating and entertaining account of Esenin's life as well.

LYNN VISSON
Bryn Mawr College

FOR WIKTOR WEINTRAUB: ESSAYS IN POLISH LITERATURE, LANGUAGE, AND HISTORY PRESENTED ON THE OCCASION OF HIS SIXTY-FIFTH BIRTHDAY. Edited by *Victor Erlich et al.* The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1975. 621 pp. 180 Dglds.

Most of the Polish-American academic establishment is represented in this book. The *Tabula gratuloria* includes forty-one names, from the eminent and distinguished to those who are somewhat less so, but who may expect to join the ranks later. Victor Erlich declares in his preface that other scholars were invited to contribute but were unable to do so for various reasons. Some of the contributors have already died. In any case, the contributors were drawn from a wide and cosmopolitan range: literary historians, linguists, and historians, from Harvard and Yale to Brussels, London, Warsaw, Lublin, and Belgrade. The majority of essays reflect Weintraub's own interests: Jan Kochanowski, Adam Mickiewicz, and comparative literature.

We have long since ceased to expect anything strikingly new or original in a Festschrift. At a reported price of \$70.00 (the publisher fails to state it anywhere), this one is more outrageously expensive than most publications of its kind. No individual is going to buy a copy, and libraries can surely find better ways of spending funds. Yet the compilation of such volumes is a well-intentioned gesture, and Festschriften will no doubt continue to be published, to the gratification of all concerned.

It would be invidious and indeed impossible for this reviewer to award "grades" to such distinguished scholars for their work. Most of the contributions in literary history are decidedly old-fashioned, as befits this particular establishment. (This epithet is not intended to disparage, for in the past forty years, since Weintraub published his *Styl Jana Kochanowskiego* in 1932, "old-fashioned" literary scholarship has laid very solid foundations for later scholars and literary critics.) Examples include George Grabowski's essay, "Samuel Twardowski's *Wojna domowa*, literary context and aspects of genre" (pp. 189–99), Evelyn Jasiulko Harden's "The dependence of Apollo Korzeniowski's *Komedia* on Griboedov's *Gore ot uma*" (pp. 209–26), and Stojan Subotin's "Wokół zagadki wpływu *Satyra* Jana Kochanowskiego na *Satyra* M. A. Relkovicia" (pp. 504–15).

Other essays are somewhat peripheral to Weintraub's main interests, although the editorial board obviously could not dictate topics. For example, Henryk Baran, in "Some materials from the archive [*sic*] of the Tropovskij family" (pp. 59–64), prints one letter from Orzeszkowa (1904) and two from Reymont (1904 and 1910) to their Russian translators. The essay, though painstaking, provides little of interest. Czesław Miłosz on "Bronisława Ostrowska and *Miguel Mañara*" (pp. 293–306), deals primarily with Miłosz's family tree and admits that *Miguel Mañara* is "a rarity accessible to no more than a few connoisseurs." Nevertheless, Miłosz succeeds in illuminating an obscure corner of Polish literary history.

Two essays stand out in the collection. Jerzy Krzyżanowski's "Men at war: the Polish version" (pp. 239–50) takes a far-ranging yet close look at contemporary Polish novels and collections of short stories in terms of themes. Krzyżanowski draws on his expertise in comparative literature and provides relevant quotations from Grass and Hemingway to support his arguments. He offers the first critical and unbiased survey of an enormous and complex field, wisely excluding the prisoner of war camps in Germany and the Soviet Union as well as accounts of the forced establishment of the Communist regime in Poland after 1944. The other contribution of outstanding interest is Jerzy Peterkiewicz's "Simultaneity in a sequence; the time pattern of a mediaeval poem" (pp. 333–44), in which he establishes the unique place of the "Lament of the Mother of God" ("Żale Matki boskiej pod krzyżem") in the Polish vernacular tradition and locates the poem in its European context. Neither of these two essays can be summarized here: they are too closely argued.

The "Bibliography of the publications of Wiktor Weintraub," compiled by Nancy Shields (pp. 605–21) constitutes something of a curiosity. It lists 373 items published between 1929 and 1974 (a list which already requires updating). Most items are book reviews published in such literary papers as *Wiadomości literackie* and *Wiadomości* (London). These reviews reveal Weintraub's enormous range in contemporary and early literature and politics, and include such surprises as reviews of Rudyard Kipling, Graham Greene, Orwell, Waugh, Virginia Woolf, as well as theatrical reviews. It is to Ms. Shields's credit that she has unearthed them. On reaching Harvard in 1952, Weintraub was able to abandon such projects, and concentrate on Slavic literary studies, a collected volume of which would be invaluable to scholars and students alike.

Papers on linguistics and history come from such scholars as Zbigniew Gołąb and Alexander M. Schenker, and Piotr Wandycz. Maria Zagórska Brooks's essay, "The Bear in Slavic and Polish mythology and folklore" (pp. 107–12) adds a touch of the bizarre to the volume.

The usual peevish complaint must be registered about the number of misprints.

DAVID WELSH

University of Michigan

PROFECJA I PROFESURA: MICKIEWICZ, MICHELET I QUINET. By Wiktor Weintraub. Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1975. 170 pp. 35 zł., paper.

In the impressive scholarly work of Wiktor Weintraub which covers a wide spectrum of problems in Polish literature from the Renaissance to the present, Adam Mickiewicz occupies a special place. Besides an extensive study devoted to Mickiewicz's poetry, Weintraub has also written a series of studies of other aspects of the poet's work in which, among other problems, he analyzed most revealingly those related to Mickiewicz's mysticism. Particularly important and fruitful is his *Literature as Prophecy: Scholarship and Martinist Poetics in Mickiewicz's Parisian Lectures*