

the text as well as on to other criticism, all of which is rendered impossible when the references are removed. Or, are we meant to take these 'modern critical interpretations' at face value, uncritically?

Some additional examples of the exciting recent work on War and Peace — by Gary Saul Morson, Richard Gustafson, and Donna Orwin, to name but a few — would have also been welcome. The minimalist bibliography pales in comparison to Munir Sendich's sixty-page-long list of work on War and Peace that was published in The Russian Language Journal in 1987 (the existence of which is not even mentioned in the volume under review).

The editor and publisher of this series need to decide what audience they have in mind; whatever the audience, whether undergraduate or senior scholar, the essays must be published intact. An attempt should be made to include recent criticism, and, finally, there should be an introduction that represents more than a brief session at the word-processor. Even the Sterling Professor of the Humanities at Yale owes Tolstoy and his literary colleagues more than that.

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A.K. Zholkovsky: Two Articles

"Lev Tolstoi i Mikhail Zoshchenko kak zerkalo i zazerkal'e russkoi revolutsii." Sintaksis, 16 (1986): 103-128.

"Three on Courtship, Corpses, and Culture: Tolstoj, 'Posle bala' — Zoshchenko, 'Dama s cvetami' — E. Ginzburg, 'Rai pod mikroskopom'." Wiener Slawistischer Almanakh, 22 (1988): 7-24.

These two articles cover a lot of ground, from textual analysis of particular works to a capsule history of Russian literature and culture. What unifies the articles, individually and taken together is their author's structuralist approach. Professor Zholkovsky takes the trouble to explain his methodology, and even those who do not share the philosophy that underlies it can learn from his application of it both to texts and to culture.

The basic division that Zholkovsky explores in both articles is that between nature and culture, or convention. Applying the insights of V.B. Shklovskii, to whose memory he dedicates the earlier of these pieces, he explores Tolstoy's attack on convention as it manifests itself in ostranenie and in the deliberately awkward speech of certain Tolstoy characters. He places this attack in an historical-philosophical context that goes back to Rousseau, and he also

notes its contribution to the Russian Revolution. To the extent that Tolstoy dedicated himself to the destruction of the conventions which supported prerevolutionary Russian society, he is indeed, says Zholkovsky, the revolutionary moujik that Lenin saw in him. A scene like Natasha's perception of the opera, for instance, which seems to make a moral point only, ultimately has enormous political consequences.

The revolution replaced tsarist "culture" with "nature," which in turn gave rise to the conventions of Soviet society. Without denying Tolstoy's contribution to this new reality (and especially to Socialist Realism), Zholkovsky reminds dissident Soviet intellectuals who reject Tolstoy that the great man had many sides. Lenin's aristocratic moujik was also a Christian preacher of non-resistance. Having sounded this rarely heard note of moderation in the debate among Soviets over Tolstoy's legacy, Zholkovsky goes on to draw "structural" and "historical" parallels between him and Soviet writers, chiefly but not exclusively Zoshchenko. He makes and illustrates a neat point. Soviet writers use ostranenie to criticize the vulgarity and even brutality (Ginzburg) of primitive or "natural" elements of Soviet society which may owe something to Tolstoy. Zoshchenko, directly influenced by Nietzsche, seems to reject prerevolutionary values without embracing the new reality. For Bulgakov and E. Ginzburg, culture replaces nature as an ideal.

What makes these articles so fascinating, and what a review cannot, of course, reproduce, is the rich context in which Zholkovsky places them. Around every point cluster reflections from Russian history or philosophy or even Structuralism. The reader may not swallow all of what Zholkovsky says, but he will certainly find food for thought in these two articles.

Both articles, but especially the second one, contain analyses of Soviet works by which Zholkovsky illustrates their differences and similarities to one another and to Tolstoy on the issue of nature vs. culture. Zholkovsky's later article starts out with a detailed and original analysis of "Posle bala" which will be of particular interest to readers of this journal. Here too, in Zholkovsky's opinion, the dichotomy of nature and culture is at work, with nature in the second half of the story (as revealed in the suffering Tartar's body) undermining the "cultural" love of the narrator for the general's daughter at the ball. The society which provides the congenial setting for the narrator's love at the ball reveals its dark side at the flogging, where its laws forbid any freedom — the Tartar is being punished for desertion — or compassion for the prisoner. The conventionality of the narrator's love for Varenka is signified by his deliberate denial of her (and his) corporeality, while the flogging corrects this idealism by forcing the narrator to contemplate a suffering body. But, according to Zholkovsky, the story is a "soft-sell": "the narrator suspends general judgement about good and evil, making only a personal choice and somewhat naively concluding that the colonel might know something that would justify the cruelty" (10). Zholkovsky shows how

"the Tartar functions as Varenka's counterpart [and] the scene emblemizes the replacement of societal love with love for a suffering Christ" (11). So the closure "reintegrates," that is, redeems, the narrator's ideal love. Zholkovsky remarks in a footnote (19) that neither Tolstoy nor his narrator seem to have returned to "nature" at all: "although [the Tartar's body is] physically bared, semiotically it is clothed in cultural garb — that of the Christian myth. Like Pierre, Tolstoj (and certainly his hero in the story) seems doomed forever to rend the 'bronze garments' of convention after convention only to accept each subsequent painted matreshka-doll as the absolutely natural one" (19).

Zholkovsky has prospected in the rough and little known territory of Tolstoy's late fiction and he has struck it rich. In "Posle bala" he has uncovered a dark little gem which sparkles in the setting his reading provides for it. I would dispute this reading only at two points. I agree that the narrator of the story seems indecisive in judgement if not in action. Tolstoy, however, carefully distances himself from this narrator. He signs and dates his work in historical time and place (Yasnaya Polyana, 20 August 1903); and he or his first person surrogate hears the anecdote rather than relating it himself. (The structure of the story suggests a Turgenev novella, and it may be that Tolstoy intends it as, among other things, a somewhat sympathetic parody of Turgenev.) The narrator seems to have spent his life as a private philanthropist, and the writer (not the narrator) condemns the society whose cruelty repelled such a fine youth. I also think that the distinction between nature and culture as it unfolds in Zholkovsky's reading does not do justice to Tolstoy's intention. The love which the youth feels for Varenka is not merely conventional. It "freed up all the capacity for love hidden in my soul. At that moment I embraced the whole world with my love." At the ball, in deference to young love, the general is willing to break rules at crucial moments (as when he delivers his daughter to the narrator for a dance out of turn). Not the nakedness of the Tartar's body, but the general's unveiled cruelty destroys the narrator's love for Varenka. Zholkovsky is right to compare the flogging to a rape: Tolstoy believed that sexual lust and the lust for power which stands revealed at the flogging as the true force behind society's rules have a common source in our animal natures. After what he has seen, the narrator interprets the joyful smiles and vitality of both the general and his daughter as carnal and, almost in spite of himself, he turns against them and the society they represent. The audience to whom the narrator tells his story equates love and sex (simple nature), and against this attitude the narrator describes "real," that is, ideal love. It returns at the story's end because, as Zholkovsky observes, it finds its true object in a "suffering Christ." So Tolstoy defended the fundamental mysteriousness of the world against the materialism which dominated in his day as it does now. Perhaps the structural approach to literature, which, as Zholkovsky informs us, owes so much to relativism championed by Nietzsche, cannot take seriously the idealism which the later Tolstoy opposes alike to mere

nature and convention.

Whether that idealism deserves serious consideration is a question which a reader might ponder after he has fully understood Tolstoy's argument in "Posle bala" and other stories. Zholkovsky has pointed the way toward such an understanding. Both the reading of "Posle bala" and Zholkovsky's reflections on Tolstoy's place in Russian literature and culture are valuable contributions to Tolstoy scholarship.

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Peter Ulf Møller, Postlude to the Kreutzer Sonata. Tolstoj and the debate on sexual morality in Russian literature of the 1890s. Trans. from Danish by John Kendal. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1988.

Because of its semi-pornographic nature, the Kreutzer Sonata had a unique reception in Russia, becoming simultaneously the first example of both samizdat and tamizdat literature. The "sex question" of the late 19th century manifested itself in eroticism and decadence in the arts, and in evolving socio-political attitudes on women's liberation, including a radical rejection of marriage by thinkers and authors as different as Hardy, Rossetti and Tolstoy. The particular value of this study, which takes as its starting point the social and literary response to the Kreutzer Sonata, is its comprehensive, thoroughly documented and generously illustrated narrative of the shift in public attitudes provoked by Tolstoy's attack on romantic love and marriage.

Essentially a reception study, this book traces the impact of the Kreutzer Sonata on the Russian intelligentsia from the private arena of Sofja Tolstja's repressed hostility and ambivalence while transcribing the manuscript and wrestling with the censorship to the general shock and perturbation of the public. The audience response is made audible in this book through substantial quotations from Tolstoy's voluminous correspondence on the topic, and through detailed descriptions of the gatherings where the manuscript was privately read, discussed, transcribed and circulated.

On one notable occasion, Tolstoy himself read the Kreutzer Sonata aloud to a select group of friends, but only after the women had been asked to leave the room! While gender considerations do not motivate this study (Møller states in the Introduction that "my book is not about sexual morality"), these issues are unavoidable when exploring readers' responses. Møller acknowledges, for example, the difference in male and female responses to the "sexual question" in general and to the Kreutzer Sonata in particular. His survey of the letters Tolstoy received suggests that, on the whole, women readers responded to the work more favorably than men, and expressed greater concern over the problem of sexual morality, a gender-based sensitivity Tolstoy himself acknowledged in his diaries and letters.