

John Garrard, ed.

*THE RUSSIAN NOVEL FROM PUSHKIN TO PASTERNAK*

New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983. Pp. 300

Reviewed by Vasa D. Mihailovich

The Russian novel, more than any other genre, has contributed to the fame that Russian literature enjoys abroad. Even though Russian poetry stands at the same level as the novel, it has fared less well, undoubtedly because of the difficulty of adequate translation. The short story, except for Chekhov, Babel, and a few others, has never reached the heights of the novel. It is no coincidence that some of the greatest among Russian writers—Gogol, Turgenev, Dostoevsky, and Tolstoy, for example—are best known as novelists. It is not surprising, therefore, that scores of books and an untold number of essays have been written about the Russian novel in all languages. The book under review represents a collection of such essays, written for the most part by Slavists teaching at American universities.

The twelve essays, skilfully edited by John Garrard, are arranged organically and more or less chronologically. The introduction by the editor, instead of giving a threadbare rundown of the novelistic achievements, acquaints the reader with the beginning of genre and with the conditions leading to the phenomenal rise of the Russian novel in the nineteenth century. Further development is taken up by the essays that follow. They are grouped into four sections. In the first, Donald Fanger and Edward Wasiolek discuss the general features of the Russian novel, especially its significance not only for literature but for the society as a whole, as the conscience of the entire people, and as one of the main sources and conveyers of ideas and ideals. After these introductory and general discussions, Kahryn Feuer, Patricia Carden, and Robin Feuer Miller discuss in the next part, appropriately entitled "High Noon," the three giants of the Russian novel, Turgenev, Tolstoy, and Dostoevsky, respectively. While Feuer concentrates on *Fathers and Sons* and Carden on *War and Peace*, Robin Feuer Miller treats the aspect of terror, or the Gothic tradition in Dostoevsky's works. The third part, "Decline and Renewal," deals with the novels of the twentieth century: Bely's *Petersburg*, Pilnyak's novels, Fedin's *Cities and Years*, three postrevolutionary Utopian novels (A. Tolstoy's *Aelita*, Zamyatin's *We*, and Platonov's *Chevengur*), and Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago*. The book concludes with two essays on criticism—"The Theory of the Novel in Russia in the 1930s: Lukács and Bakhtin" by Michel Aucouturier, and "The Nineteenth-Century Russian Novel in English and American Criticism" by Rene Wellek. The book is appended by a useful, though somewhat confusing, chronology of Russian novels and novelists and by recommended translations into English.

The book has many wholesome facets. Even though it does not pretend to be a historical survey of the Russian novel, it often makes historical references enabling the reader to orient himself. And although it avoids overly reliance on theory and non-literary connotations, it does not fail to include them where pertinent. One could argue, of course, why some other novels have not been discussed (Sholokhov's *The Quiet Don* comes to mind), but given the fact that the scope of the book was not to be all-inclusive, such omissions are understandable. What the book does offer is a dozen discerning, thought-provoking, and well-written essays that will be of immeasurable use to the student and the lover of Russian literature alike.

Atma Ram, ed.

*PERSPECTIVES ON R.K. NARAYAN*

Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1982.

Pp. xxxii + 222.

(Also issued by Vimal Prakashan Ltd.)

Reviewed by Uma Parameswaran

R.K. Narayan has long been the best known of Indian writers in English and has been the subject of more critical work than any of his compatriots. Professor Atma Ram's collection of