



University of Oregon

Review

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sensitivity. However, as D. Cizevsky argued in *Hegel in Rußland*, the main "trouble" with the philosophical categories cited in Belinsky's critical essays is often not so much their rigidity as their irrelevance to the problem under discussion. Generally, one of the most distressing features of Belinsky's writings is verbal fetishism, an irresistible urge to invoke in vain the formidable abstractions of German philosophy.

The samples of Belinsky's practical criticism presented here add up to a fairly spotty picture. Clearly, in being one of the first to acclaim Gogol's greatness Belinsky showed a keen sense of literary values. In his interpretation of "The Inspector General" as a series of phantoms emerging from the Mayor's bad conscience, he gave proof of originality and perspicacity. But he was much less astute when he pioneered the immensely influential notion of *Dead Souls* as a realistic portrayal of mid-nineteenth-century Russia. (Since this view has been very effectively challenged during the last fifty years or so, one is a bit surprised to find Dr. Bowman refer casually to Gogol's "realism," as if this quality could be taken for granted.)

Belinsky's reactions to the early Dostoevsky present a similar picture. As we are properly reminded, Belinsky was quick to see in Dostoevsky's modest debut, *Poor Folk*, a promise of greater things to come, and was somewhat more appreciative of *The Double* than has often been assumed. However, Dr. Bowman fails to mention the fact that, in deploring the "fantastic" bent of *The Double*, Belinsky went so far as to declare: "There is no room in contemporary literature for the fantastic; it belongs in the insane asylum." Dr. Bowman does quote Belinsky's description of the Hoffmannesque tale, *The Landlady*, as "dreadful rubbish," but he treats this dictum as "further evidence of the perspicacity of his judgment" (p. 196) rather than as further testimony to the limitations of Belinsky's "realistic" bias.

In dealing with a topic as complex and controversial as Belinsky there is room for many differing emphases and approaches. Whether or not one always agrees with Dr. Bowman, one must admit that most of his points are closely argued and well documented. Indeed, it is a tribute to the essential soundness of his research that the materials which he so carefully assembled can at times provide a viable basis for conclusions somewhat different from his own.

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AUTORES GERMANOS EN EL PERÚ. By Estuardo Núñez, Lima: Ministerio de Educación, 1953. 192 p.

In 1946 Luis-Alberto Sánchez sketched, in a paragraph, a brief history of the literary and intellectual impact of German literature and thought upon Peruvians.¹ One might have expected a book bearing the title *Autores germanos en el Perú* to be an orderly and perhaps even imaginative elaboration (or refutation) of the highly condensed and suggestive statements of Sánchez. This little study by Estuardo Núñez does not fulfill that expectation. Núñez' first chapter, "La literatura alemana en el Perú," is in one way an expansion of Sánchez, since it comprises nine pages; but in another way it is a reduction, since Schopenhauer, Novalis, Stirner, Nietzsche, Wundt, and George are hardly mentioned, though Sánchez had posited their influence. The next three sections of Núñez' study deal respectively with Goethe, Lessing, and Heine. The second half of the book is a "Florilegio de la poesía alemana en versiones peruanas."

¹ *La literatura peruana* (Lima, 1946), I, 248-249.

Mr. Núñez' book suffers principally from a lack of clarity in direction and organization. In his introduction he says that he is going to study not only the Peruvian interest in the Germans, but also the Germans' "emoción del Perú." Possibly finding the emotion awakened by Peru a bit indeterminate, he moves into the broader field of the *hispanismo* of Goethe, Lessing, and Heine, although he has nothing to add to the subject, and fails to acknowledge the best sources of such information. Nor does the long and enthusiastic exposition of Lessing's aesthetic and dramatic theories have pertinence or originality, but rather detracts from our interest in the Peruvians. The focus is disturbed by private and provincial polemics, an understandable national pride (for the Peruvians did produce some of the earliest Spanish translations of German poems, frequently secondhand through French translations), and a less pardonable prejudice against the French classical theater. This last seems to reflect a general Francophobia in Mr. Núñez. How curious that he should say (p. 14) that the free translation of *Werther* by José Mor de Fuentes in 1797 antedates "en muchos años a las traducciones francesas," when there had been at least three different French translations of *Werther* by 1777.

The study lacks a sense of historical perspective that might have indicated the changing influence of the German writers upon the Peruvians, or at least might have made clearer a distinction between the response of the pioneers in the 1870s and that of the poets of the twentieth century. This evolution could be particularly interesting in a country where the enthusiasm for Lessing and Goethe was separated by only a few years from the enthusiasm for Rilke.

The "Florilegio" is an anthology of German poetry translated by Peruvians of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It is in some ways a curious collection, presented without comment, that includes four of Lessing's fables but only the *Ritter Toggenburg* by Schiller, Brentano's *Lorelei* but not Heine's, suggesting questions of initiation and taste. The translations are of uneven quality, which is not surprising in view of the fact that some are translations of French translations. Few sink to the level of More and Haas' (a translating team) "Y corrí, hasta caer en la hondura sutil de la nocturnidad," for von Platen's "Wie rafft' ich mich auf in der Nacht, in der Nacht." There are some misprints ("1763" for "1663" in Rilke's *Canción de los amores y la muerte del abanderado Cristóbal Rilke*, p. 177), and at least one mistaken identification. (The bad translation on p. 119 entitled "Canción nocturna del caminante" is identified by the first line in German, "Der Du von dem Himmel bist," of the "Wanderers Nachtlied," which is almost right. The Spanish poem is a translation of the "Wanderers Nachtlied II," and the line is, of course, "Über allen Gipfeln.")

If Mr. Núñez' book had appeared with fewer pretensions, we should have praised it as a popular introduction to some important Germans in whom some distinguished Peruvians have shown an interest, plus a small anthology of German verse turned into Spanish by Peruvians. For the student of comparative literature, however, the book on German authors in Peru remains to be written.

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HERMAN HEIJERMANS AND HIS DRAMAS. By Seymour Flaxman. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1954. 266 p.

If Herman Heijermans is at all remembered today it is for *The Good Hope* (1901), a crusading socialist attack on shipping conditions, somewhat after the model of Ibsen's *Pillars of Society*. Ellen Terry brought the play to America