

LETTERS

TO THE EDITOR:

I just received the latest issue of the *Slavic Review*. I was perplexed by a mistake that I had made in my review of the book *Sopostavitel'naia stilistika russkogo i nemetskogo fol'klora* by P. V. Tabakh'ian, in which I used the term "Russian scholars" instead of "Slavic scholars." This would make the Slovenian linguist and folklorist F. Miklosich a Russian. I apologize for this error.

FELIX J. OINAS
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TO THE EDITOR:

I thank Patrick Waddington for pointing out in his review of my *Turgenev's Russia* (*Slavic Review*, 41, no. 1 [Summer 1982]: 383–84) several lapses in my prose, even though some of his own sentences (for example, "All in all, this book disappoints less by its treatment of the chosen subject than by the inability of that subject to convey . . .") tend to undercut his authority on such matters.

In the rest of the review, Waddington largely ignores my specific arguments, preferring to attack my general method, which he interprets in his own curious way. He begins by quoting me out of context to the effect that I discount Turgenev's political significance since he belonged to no party, and does not mention that my next sentence states that we must therefore look for political significance in the novels. It is downhill from there. In his determination to deny that Turgenev was influenced by definable social currents (instead of "being unsure of everything" — which Waddington seems to regard as a compliment), he resuscitates a tired cliché of Turgenev criticism: his novels are "finely wrought" aesthetic creations, free of the taint of a political position. Waddington seems to believe that politics pollute, perhaps because he has read too much Soviet criticism; but it should be possible to stop looking for Socialist Realism under every bed.

If the substance of the review defies discussion, a word might be said about its knowing tone. Waddington says I lack *recul*: anyone making that charge naturally implies he has the quality in abundance, and I went back to Waddington's own book on Turgenev to see what it consisted of — besides using French when English would do as well. I considered the topic which he said I had treated most unsatisfactorily — Turgenev's relations with women. One page 4 of *Turgenev and England* (which I happily admit has portions of real value), Waddington writes: "Some have tried to see in (Pauline Viardot) a replacement for Turgenev's domineering mother. There is truth in that, no doubt; but life is always greater than psychology," and more in that vein. So that's *recul*: the genteel sidestepping of problems, with the implication that wordly men already know the answer anyway.

VICTOR RIPP
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PROFESSOR WADDINGTON REPLIES:

A careful reader of my review will see that Victor Ripp has either misunderstood it or chosen to disregard its most important statements. As in all cases of this kind, a measure of blame lies with the writer, and I gladly acknowledge that some of my remarks may have appeared offensive. I did not intend them to be so, but see that Ripp was hurt and am sorry. It was very hard to get across without seeming pompous my belief that