

LETTERS

TO THE EDITOR:

I was unpleasantly surprised reading a recent article by Caryl Emerson, entitled "Grinev's Dream: *The Captain's Daughter* and a Father's Blessing" (*Slavic Review*, 40, no. 1 [Spring 1981]: 60–76). My surprise, however, was not caused by the content of this article or by its conclusion, but by a concern rather different.

Every scholar is obliged to know what was said on his subject before him. Yet Professor Emerson missed an important contribution devoted to her subject, made in the various publications by Alain Besançon in which he also deals with Grinev's dream. The works were published in the early 1960s and were printed in French.

This is a notorious example of a persistent trend in American Slavic studies to ignore most of what is being done in France, Germany, Italy, and other countries. The most obvious explanation for this is the difficulty many American Slavicists have with foreign languages. Many evince a lack of interest in any scholarly work appearing outside of the Anglo-Saxon countries as well.

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PROFESSOR EMERSON REPLIES:

I am familiar with Besançon's excellent work (I assume Professor Agursky has in mind, among other pieces, "Fonction du rêve dans le roman russe" [1968]), but it was not my intent, in an interpretive article, to provide an inventory of scholarship on Russian literary dreams. Besançon's reading of Grinev's dream is certainly a possible one, but it relies too literally on details of the Freudian primal scene for my taste; I prefer Bachelard. Certainly all of us (including Americans) would benefit by reading more competently in more languages, but I am somewhat at a loss to understand why a given article must make reference to all earlier research to make its own point or to legitimize the independent insights of its author.

TO THE EDITOR:

In her review (*Slavic Review*, 40, no. 4 [Winter 1981]: 683–84) of Anna Swirszczynska's volume of poetry on the Warsaw Uprising *Building the Barricade*, translated by Magnus J. Krynski and Robert A. Maguire, the reviewer Alice-Catherine Carls mentions the fact that the "volume won the Polish Authors' Association ZAiKS Prize . . . but this honor was withdrawn after Krynski published an article about the emergence of uncensored literature in Poland."

I am pleased to inform the American scholarly community that during the Solidarity period Krynski and Maguire were informed in a letter of July 14, 1981 by Witold Kolodziejewski, the Director-General of ZAiKS, that they had been officially awarded the prize.

For the record I would like to mention that the prior withdrawal of the prize was not instigated by the writers' community in Poland but by the Ministry of Culture and Art which blocked the prize for political reasons. The minister responsible for this decision designed to extend censorship beyond the borders of Poland and to intimidate foreign

scholars was Zygmunt Najdowski. Najdowski lost his position during Solidarity's ascendancy, but he is likely to return to power under the Jaruzelski martial regime. American scholars should be familiar with this infamous name.

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