

intern with Soviet government agencies, mistakenly believes that J. Peters, who headed the CPUSA's "secret apparatus," was a key figure in the Comintern, mistakenly claims that we reproduce "only" one stolen government document and totally confuses what we say about Alger Hiss and Whittaker Chambers. Professor Reiber also had the bad fortune to have his review ridiculing the notion that there was serious Soviet espionage directed against the US in the 1930s and 1940s appear just as the US government released the first 49 of some 2,000 decrypted Soviet cables from World War II detailing "the KGB's extensive contacts with the American Communist Party." Historians, of all people, ought to be open to new evidence. They also ought to be able to describe accurately the books they review.

HARVEY KLEHR
Emory University
JOHN HAYNES
Library of Congress

Alfred Reiber replies:

Professor's Klehr's intemperate response to my review of *The Secret World of American Communism* is a good example of the tone that pervades his scholarship. He accuses me of all sorts of confusions. But it is he who is confused. First of all I nowhere ridicule the notion that there was serious Soviet espionage directed against the US in the 1930s and 1940s. What I ridicule in his attempt to assign the major role in this espionage to the American Communist Party. As for J. Peters, I never said he was "a key figure in the Comintern," but rather "a key figure in the clandestine activities of the American Communist Party." In other words, it is Professor Klehr and not I who cannot keep track of the difference between the Comintern and the CPUSA. Nor did I claim that there was "'only' one stolen government document" reproduced, but only one dealing with "political espionage." If I "totally confuse" what he and his colleagues "say about Alger Hiss and Whittaker Chambers," then the responsibility is his; my review quotes exactly what he has written on the relationship. In other words Professor Klehr's recital of my "so many mistakes" turns out to be another set of tendentious judgments to match those he scatters throughout his published commentary.

ALFRED J. RIEBER
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To the Editor:

In her recent review of Daniel Rancour-Laferriere's *Tolstoy's Pierre Bezukhov: A Psychoanalytic Study* (*Slavic Review* 54, no. 1 [Spring 1995]), Anna A. Tavis with gratuitous snideness dismisses the book as "a case of critical narcissism" and casts aspersions on a project that deserves praise for its originality and the scholarly dedication with which it is carried out. Whether one agrees or not with Rancour-Laferriere's proposition that a character can be psychoanalyzed (and shown to be a narcissistic personality), he has made a strong test case for it and thereby a valuable contribution to our field. Why should it be subject to (the reviewer's) ridicule that according to a psychoanalytic critic, "Tolstoi [...] may be a master of representation, but he is a poor therapist, he only leaves signs which are for the critic to interpret"; that the critic "gives the story [of Pierre's maturation] a freudian twist"; or that "[t]he character [Pierre] whom we meet in these pages is not Tolstoi's or the reader's but Rancour-Laferriere's own"? Does this mean that all criticism should have stopped after Tolstoy's 1878 letter to Strakhov about critics trying to "know better" than the author? I find the book straightforwardly written (not "meandering"), informative, useful in many ways, stimulating, at times brilliant (especially the interpretation of Karataev's death and Pierre's attendant dreams as Pierre's symbolic loss of mother in childbirth).

One passage in the book, however, does require correction. On p. 233, the author draws far-reaching psychoanalytic conclusions from the fact that in the Epilogue, Pierre's and Natasha's infant son Petia seems to say to her: "You are [...] jealous, you would like to pay him [Pierre] back [...] but I am he, I am he [a ia vot on. A ia vot on] ..." In equating, on the strength of this, Petia ("I") with his father ("he"), Rancour-Laferriere finds himself in the good company of the Maudes, W.W. Norton, and George Gibian (p. 1286). I believe he is also right on a symbolic level; indeed, on the next page, as Pierre finally arrives, Natasha refers to him in the same words ("Vot on"). However, linguistically this is a mistake. The Russian phrase "A ia vot on [ia]" means strictly "Here I am [right here]." The use of the pronoun "on" is similar to that in the

current American English phrase “This is he/she” used in answering the phone: it refers to the speaker and not to any third person.

ALEXANDER ZHOLKOVSKY
University of Southern California

Daniel Rancour-Laferriere responds:

I am grateful to Alexander Zholkovsky for pointing out the translation error, which is mine (throughout my book—as noted on p. ix—I made slight changes in the Maudes’s translation). The Maudes’s original reads: “but here am I! And I am he.” The Rosemary Edmonds translation is: “but he is here in me, he is here in me.” Ann Dunnigan gives: “but here am I—and I am he!” Now we know that all of these are wrong.

Anna Tavis has misquoted page 1 of my book, where I wrote *not* about “the innate personifying powers of Tolstoy,” but about “the innate personifying powers of Tolstoy’s reader.” Quite a difference there, for one of my main points is that Pierre is so “real” that he belongs as much to the interior lives of countless readers as to Tolstoy’s interior life. Tavis is disturbed by the fact that many of Pierre’s personal attachments have homoerotic overtones (e.g. in a dream Pierre gets into bed with Osip Bazdeev). I hope this does not mean that Tavis is homophobic. There is nothing morally *wrong* with Pierre being bisexual, or with Tolstoy for having made Pierre so. As for Pierre’s narcissism, that too is not a bad thing, but an integral part of his appeal to readers. And on the relationship of his narcissism to my own narcissism, I refer the reader to my (edited) volume, *Self-Analysis in Literary Study: Exploring Hidden Agendas* (1994).

DANIEL RANCOUR-LAFERRIERE
University of California, Davis

Anna Tavis replies:

I cannot agree more with Alexander Zholkovsky’s observation that Daniel Rancour-Laferriere demonstrates a remarkable dedication to his subject matter. Indeed, he is consistently freudian and kohutian in his treatment of sexuality in Tolstoi. Nonetheless, freudian speculations and “object psychology” just do not answer Tolstoi’s most important questions and I choose to disagree with Rancour-Laferriere’s choice of critical method. His insistence on applying his model is to me a case of what psychology knows as an “escalated commitment to a failing cause.” On the subject of morality, I would like to add that there is nothing morally wrong with showing Pierre’s homoerotic tendencies. There is everything wrong, however, with denying his sexual and platonic desires and the organic complexity of which they are a part. In his opening remarks, Rancour-Laferriere promises a breakthrough in the treatment of Tolstoy’s “most beloved character.” What we end up with, however, is yet another case study, narrower than life and lesser than literature.

ANNA TAVIS
Fairfield University