

seemingly active participant in the events he is describing. His role is in part conditioned by the child's age; with increasing maturity the boy is able to contribute more actively to the analysis of his own situation and feelings. That Tolstoy would elect to present the account as reminiscences is, of course, not surprising, for it would have been most difficult to include all of the insights into the child's environment if he had restricted his point of view to that of the boy narrating in the present tense. Although a catalogue of the narrative devices may thus be considered a useful if somewhat mechanical first step, it needs to be complemented by a discussion of their significance.

Having assumed a resolutely formalistic stance, however, Zweers assumes that the analysis is complete. He does not simply overlook the complex of implications arising from the adult narrator's contemplation of his former actions, but rather explicitly rejects the question of psychological interrelations as unimportant to the total effect. (At one point he even chides Boris Eikhenbaum, whose work on the trilogy he otherwise respects, "because he had not left alone the psychological aspect.") To support his own narrow reading, Zweers cites Kenneth Burke to the effect that the artist's means tend to become ends in themselves. Had he chosen to read further, he would have discovered that Burke sees the exclusive concern with form as an extreme which the artist would do well to avoid. There are, Burke notes, "two extremes or unilaterals: the extreme of utterance, which makes for the ideal of spontaneity and 'pure' emotion, and leads to barbarism in art; and the extreme of pure beauty, or means conceived exclusively as end, which leads to virtuosity, or decoration." As Burke quite clearly indicates, the true realm of art is to be found between these extremes. Zweers, unfortunately, has failed to heed the message of Burke's essay in his own analysis. In his failure to relate structural features to the experiential content, he denies the trilogy that aesthetic vitality which is fundamental to any reading of it. Although his title promises much, Zweers has, in fact, little to offer the reader who is interested in the literature of childhood as an artistic experience.

PIERRE R. HART

State University of New York at Buffalo

THE OXFORD CHEKHOV. By *Anton Chekhov*. Translated and edited by *Ronald Hingley*. London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press. Vol. 1: Short Plays. 1968. xii, 209 pp. Vol. 2: Platonov, Ivanov, The Seagull. 1967. xiii, 362 pp. \$10.10. Vol. 5: Stories, 1889–1891. 1970. xi, 257 pp. \$5.95. Vol. 6: Stories, 1892–1893. 1971. xiii, 316 pp. \$16.00. Vol. 8: Stories, 1895–1897. 1965. xiv, 325 pp. \$5.60.

Do we need yet another translation of Chekhov, since Chekhov's works have been rendered into English so many times since Constance Garnett's stilted Victorian version? Yet, looking over the crowded shelves of existent translations, one must conclude that none of them is satisfactory and that to all of them applies, in larger or smaller measure, the saying that reading literature in translation is like kissing a woman through a veil. Frequently, in translations of Chekhov, the veil is rather heavy and opaque. Some twelve years ago this reviewer evoked strong criticism in the USSR for his negative comments on the quality of English Chekhov translations. Yet there is no question that there has been no coherent unified translation of evenly high quality of Chekhov's work. The reason must be sought in the special

elusive quality of Chekhov's style, with its ambiguous, and often many-layered, meanings and subtext. In this respect, Chekhov presents many of the difficulties of translating poetry, and it is little wonder that no translator has been able to cope with these problems entirely satisfactorily.

Now Ronald Hingley has set himself the aim of putting before the English-speaking reader the complete works of Chekhov. Hingley is uniquely qualified for this challenging task. As a scholar of Russian history and literature, and an expert on Chekhov's works, he has a signal advantage over most of his predecessors. By and large his preparation has served him exceedingly well; and though no translation, by its very nature, can ever be completely satisfactory, the volumes under review present a most significant and welcome advance.

The present five volumes are part of a "Complete Chekhov" in English, which is planned to encompass all dramatic works and all fiction, including those works not included by Chekhov in the first edition of his collected works. The text of this series, which is envisaged as a ten-volume edition, is based on the twenty-volume Russian edition (*Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem*, Moscow, 1944–51), and is planned as a complete translation of this edition, with the exception of the notebooks and letters. Volume 1 contains all of Chekhov's short dramatic works, including their variants. In volume 2 we find *Platonov*, *Ivanov*, and *The Seagull*. Volume 3, which is not reviewed here, contains the other full-length plays. Volume 5 contains Chekhov's fiction of the period 1889–91—that is, the first significant works written after Chekhov abandoned the use of the pen name Antosha Chekhonte. The stories produced in 1892–93 are found in volume 6, and those of 1895–97 in volume 8. Each volume has a brief introduction which sets the works it contains into the frame of Chekhov's *oeuvre*, and a preface in which Hingley notes some technical problems faced in the translation and evaluates the solutions he chose. Appended to each volume are notes on the works, culled from the appropriate appendixes in the Soviet edition. Finally, each volume is supplied with a brief, very selective bibliography.

Hingley's discussions of the technical problems and his solutions are enlightening. One may not always agree with his solutions, but they are consistently applied, resulting in the overall effect of a unified collection. Above all, Hingley mitigates against serving up his Chekhov "quaint" (8:xi–xii); we find no "little pigeons" or "little souls," nor the "little fathers" and "little mothers" which clutter so many translations of Russian literature. Hingley deals radically with the problem of Russian patronymic and hypocoristic names, largely by omitting both. Thus Peter Mikhailych Ivashin (*Sosedy*) becomes simply Peter Ivashin; and this seems a reasonable solution, especially in the plays, if one takes into account the atrociously mispronounced names of Russian characters on the English-speaking stage or television. This reviewer, however, is not entirely happy with the rendering of Fedia as Fred (*Noch' pered sudom*).

A serious problem facing the translator of Chekhov is the rendering of substandard Russian (especially in the stories set in a peasant milieu), and Chekhov's verbal acrobatics, his puns and word games. Hingley's solution to the first problem, to try to use regional and substandard English, seems to yield good results, although as he remarks (8:xii), there is no ideal solution. More difficult is the rendering of Chekhov's word games. How can one do justice to the famous *renyxa* (the Cyrillic characters for *chepukha* read as though in Latin script) in *The Three Sisters*, or to his play with semieducated speech, such as the use of *malaftit* for

malakhit and *lerigiia* for *religiia*, the equivalent of which Hingley presents contextually, rather than rendering the Russian malapropism which would make no sense. So for instance, “the pillars was done to look like malachite,” where the Russian has *malaftit* (8:52) seems not too happy a solution, but then this is a seemingly insoluble problem. The titles of Chekhov’s stories are often important, for they are most intricately connected with the substance of the stories. Some of them are puns, such as “Anna na shee,” which Hingley misses by the smoother-sounding, and semantically quite correct, “The Order of St. Anne.” His choice of “The Butterfly” for “Poprygunia,” seems more successful than the usual version “The Grasshopper” or “La Cigale.”

Although one cannot agree with all of Hingley’s solutions, there is no question that his translations surpass all earlier versions in accuracy and faithfulness to nuance. But, more than that, his translation is the first to be free from the terrible stiffness that has spoiled Chekhov’s wonderfully limpid style in earlier English renderings. We are grateful to Hingley for presenting so well one of Russia’s most elusive writers to a broad English-speaking public, and we look forward with pleasure to the appearance of the outstanding volumes.

THOMAS G. WINNER
Brown University

SOBRANIE SOCHINENII, vol. 1. By *Viacheslav Ivanov*. Edited by *D. V. Ivanov* and *O. Deshart* [*Olga Deschartes*]. Introduction and notes by *O. Deshart*. Brussels: Foyer Oriental Chrétien, 1971. 872 pp. \$29.00.

This first volume of *Viacheslav Ivanov’s Collected Works* contains three sections: a 220-page critical biography by *Olga Deschartes*, the text of *Ivanov’s* novel *Povest’ o Svetomire tsareviche*, published here for the first time (pp. 255–512), and *Ivanov’s* early poetry and essays (up to 1905). Inserted between sections 1 and 2 is the autobiographic cycle *Mladenchestvo* (1918).

Olga Deschartes is uniquely qualified to introduce us to *Ivanov’s* poetic and spiritual world. We have it on *Sergei Makovsky’s* authority that the poet felt he had “entrusted the whole truth about himself and his work to *O. Deschartes*” (see *Aleksis Rannit*, “*Vyacheslav Ivanov and his Vespertine Light*,” *Russian Literature Triquarterly*, no. 4 [1972], p. 267). Her biography of *Ivanov* must be viewed as a primary rather than a secondary source. Many of the facts which she reports are of invaluable importance for the interpretation of *Ivanov’s* poetry and for an understanding of his experience of the creative process (e.g., pp. 213–14, 223). In many instances she gives us the biographic context of poems and cycles of poems. Often she explains for us their philosophic and spiritual background. She is, however, content with the modest role of a disciple who deems it sufficient to reflect the master’s views faithfully. Her frame of reference is the spiritual world of *Viacheslav Ivanov*, rather than the historical panorama of the Silver Age, the European literary scene during the first third of this century, or universal Humanism in whose history *Ivanov* is a chapter of some interest. We learn some valuable specifics about *Ivanov’s* relations with other great spirits of the age, but are not always shown the meaning of these relations in a deeper historical perspective.

It is of course too early to say anything definite about *Povest’ o Svetomire tsareviche*. One thing is certain: *Olga Deschartes’s* labors which have produced the last four books of the novel on the basis of notes and drafts left by *Ivanov*—a task