

book is the one entitled "Chekhov and Women," in which Laffitte accurately observes Chekhov's considerable misogynistic tendencies and recounts major details about the women who were significant in his life.

Her style—captured well in this quite competent translation—is conversational and emotional, sometimes excessively so, as when she rhapsodizes that Chekhov "never sought to teach, moralize, or preach. What he set out to do was to suggest and to demonstrate by his own example, what a man could become by sheer determination, with no outside help from anyone, even God." Despite her occasional lapses into inspirational prose, this undeniable love for her subject ultimately makes Sophie Laffitte's book a compelling introduction to the life and work of an equally compelling man.

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ALEKSANDR SOLZHENITSYN: CRITICAL ESSAYS AND DOCUMENTARY MATERIALS. 2nd edition. Edited by *John B. Dunlop*, *Richard Haugh*, and *Alexis Klimoff*. New York: Collier Books, a division of Macmillan. London: Collier Macmillan, 1975 [1973]. 666 pp. \$5.95, paper.

The first edition of this volume, which appeared before the publication of Solzhenitsyn's *August 1914*, contained a dozen critical essays. For the second edition, the editors have added articles which deal with *August 1914* and (almost as an afterthought) with the first volume of *Gulag Archipelago*. The new edition also includes an appendix containing documents, a critical review of various English translations of Solzhenitsyn's work, and an excellent bibliography. Because the book was conceived and executed in two stages, it seems slightly disorganized (alas, the fate of many collections of this type), and a bit out of touch with Solzhenitsyn's most recent works. For example, how can Solzhenitsyn's "nationalism" be effectively discussed without citing his *Letter to the Rulers*, which had already appeared prior to the publication of this volume? Nevertheless, the book contains many fresh insights.

The reflections on Solzhenitsyn's language are probably the most original aspect of the volume. The articles by Vera Carpovich and by the late Boris Unbegaun, as well as the polemics about the English translations of Solzhenitsyn, provide very interesting observations on Solzhenitsyn's lexical and stylistic innovations. Alexis Klimoff's lively review of the shortcomings of several translations is particularly illuminating. The few statements or interviews which are included—primarily because of the fame of their authors, for example, Heinrich Böll, Milovan Djilas, Czesław Miłosz, George Kennan—should be disregarded, because they fail to live up to expectations.

The discussion of the art of the novel, as linked with Solzhenitsyn's axiological ethics, forms the core of the book. Nearly all of the studies lead to this crucial theme. Richard Haugh makes an attempt to unfold Solzhenitsyn's philosophy: a faith in the absolute, from which the triunity of good, truth, and beauty flows. What may be called Solzhenitsyn's "Platonism" is manifested, to some extent, in his Nobel Prize speech, and three noteworthy essays by Father Schmemmann reinforce this notion, depicting Christian "Platonism" as a triune intuition of creation, fall, and redemption. Paradoxically, it is the "fall" which might well be the weakest point in this construction, because in Solzhenitsyn's world evil is nothing more than a lack

or an absence. Also included are two very interesting studies (particularly the essay on *August 1914*) by Kathryn Feuer, which make the inevitable and fruitful comparison of Solzhenitsyn with Tolstoy.

Curiously enough, some of the articles seem inspired by suspicion or animosity. The studies by Rahv and Mary McCarthy, for example, strike one as categorical, with little attention directed to the Christian symbolism contained in *August 1914*. On the other hand, the articles by Donald Fanger, Milton Ehre, and Victor Erlich offer more balanced approaches. Two studies of Solzhenitsyn's sources are particularly noteworthy: Dorothy Atkinson's study of the sources of *August 1914* (Golovin, Bogdanovich, and so forth) is interesting but incomplete; and Gleb Struve's study directs our attention to the similarities between one of Solzhenitsyn's characters (the engineer Obodovskii) and the Menshevik Volskii.

The essays in the collection are of a high caliber, useful to specialists, but probably a little confusing to nonspecialists. Solzhenitsyn's *modernism*, as Jakobson calls it, is paradoxical for many students of his work, inasmuch as that "modernist" is also a realist, eager not to yield the real to ideologies. It is precisely this concept that is frequently misunderstood, because the real for Solzhenitsyn is prophetic: it includes salvation.

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SELECTED POEMS. Bilingual edition. By *Osip Mandelstam*. Translated and annotated by *David McDuff*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1975 [1973]. xxiv, 182 pp. \$3.95, paper.

For a long time there were no English translations of Mandelstam's poetry, then came a few here and there in magazines, and all of a sudden in the early seventies what appeared, comparatively, to be a flood. Among the recent collections McDuff's volume is unique in several ways. The translator worked alone, the Russian originals are printed *en face*, and the paperback edition under review (reprinted with minor corrections from a 1973 edition published in England) is the cheapest available selection of Mandelstam's poems. The selection is a good one and it is preceded by an introduction that acquaints the reader with essential background information, marred only occasionally by an uncritical or uninformed repetition of certain of the numerous myths that becloud Mandelstam's life.

McDuff declares that he aimed, for the most part, no higher than "to provide a statement of the meaning of the poems." Given the frequent complexity of Mandelstam's imagery and syntax, that aim is by no means so modest as it might appear at first, and as one who has had his own difficulties in trying to achieve it, I have only the most fraternal and heartfelt sympathy for the translator. In the overwhelming majority of cases the poems on the right-hand page reproduce, in a clear and unmannered fashion, the lexical sense of the originals. Occasionally, they are distinguished utterances in their own right, and the felicity of diction and phrasing indicates a more than usual poetic sensibility on the part of the translator himself.

But this volume resembles most other translations in at least one melancholy respect: there are a number of errors, and, although these occur in only a very small percentage of the total number of lines, the reviewer in a journal such as this is obliged to indicate at least some of the more conspicuous shortcomings. *Poluiav' i poluson* means "half reality and half dream," not "half a miracle and half a dream" (p. 23); *posol'stva polumira* means "embassies of half the world," not "the half-