

Ivask fails to maintain his clear focus when dealing with the nonliterary aspects of Leontiev's life. He discusses his politico-philosophical articles methodically but does not relate the articles to the historical context in which Leontiev wrote. Consequently, Leontiev the thinker remains an enigma, full of contradictions. The insights on the Russian bureaucracy, the Church, press, foreign policy, and intellectual circles which could be elicited from Leontiev's writings, emerge only in sporadic flashes. Although this is the best book available on Leontiev's personality and literary legacy, there is still much to be learned about Russian history by studying Leontiev's place in society.

Professor Ivask's bibliography of Leontiev's works and letters as well as publications about him incorporates and updates Konopliantsev's authoritative bibliographies, making the present list the most complete to date. However, chronological instead of alphabetical order makes it difficult to use. Ivask's remarks on Leontievan archival material are inaccurate and incomplete, but the fault for this lies with the fact that Soviet archives were inaccessible to him: actual research at TsGALI reveals that this archive's guides, the basis for Ivask's discussion, do not reliably reflect the contents of its Leontiev *fond*. In addition, Professor Ivask does not mention important archival sources on Leontiev at the Lenin Library, the Leningrad Public Library, Pushkinskii Dom, and most important of all, the large Leontiev *fond* at the State Literary Museum in Moscow. Despite these flaws, however, this is a valuable study and deserves to be translated.

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CHEKHOV: 1860–1904. By *Sophie Laffitte*. Translated by *Mowra Budberg* and *Gordon Latta*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1975 [1971, 1973]. viii, 246 pp. + 8 pp. photographs. \$8.95.

Although Sophie Laffitte's short biography of Chekhov (recently translated from the 1963 French edition) reveals nothing new to the literary scholar, it does present a highly readable, accessible, and always fascinating picture of the writer she obviously adores. The author presupposes a minimal acquaintance with Chekhov's life and works, and, while essentially covering the same well-known facts available in scores of other biographies, she presents them in a fresh, concise way that makes this book a fine introduction to Chekhov.

In this biography, as in her shorter monograph on Chekhov, *Chekhov par lui-même*, Professor Laffitte skillfully interweaves Chekhov's most interesting letters with her own exposition, showing a distinct preference for letting Chekhov speak *par lui-même*. The book is divided thematically, rather than strictly chronologically, and several of the chapters stress areas of his life that are not usually emphasized in brief biographies. For example, the chapter on Levitan is interesting in its wealth of detail about Levitan the man (as opposed to simply Levitan the friend of Chekhov). A somewhat disproportionately long chapter is devoted to Sakhalin because, as Professor Laffitte admits, she rather eccentrically considers *The Island of Sakhalin* "generally underrated, . . . one of Chekhov's greatest claims to fame." Nevertheless, in this chapter she carefully selects the most chillingly fascinating sections of both Chekhov's book and his letters about Sakhalin, which concentrate particularly on the horrible condition of its children, and of the women who subsisted almost universally by prostitution. Perhaps the best chapter in the

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