

niscences are included, although each receives only passing or invisible reference. Meanwhile, Turgenev's own *Literary Reminiscences*, while often quoted, is not listed.

Introducing his study, Pritchett writes: "There has not yet been a definitive biography of Turgenev in any language." The implication that this volume will fill the gap is outrageous. Of course Freeborn's study has its deficiencies, but it is sound, scholarly, and insightful. And much fine work has been done in Soviet Turgenev scholarship. Pritchett's inability to distinguish between the good and the charming, and his dismissal of scholarship in a language he does not read, is shockingly condescending. Indeed, neither he nor his editor has taken the trouble even to standardize or correct transliteration—for example, "Acia," and many others. French sources are extensively used, but the author has not bothered to translate them, although his book is directed to a popular audience. Even the title exudes superficiality. Turgenev was submissive and "gentle" and generous; he could be cruelly malicious also, as in his treatment of the young Dostoevsky. "Barbarian" reveals only the provincialism of Turgenev's French literary friends. Pritchett substitutes the hoary, outworn Goncourt phrase for any real analysis of the true ambiguity.

Pritchett has written fine short fiction, and in this volume, scattered like spoonfuls of real whipped cream on a sea of Cool Whip, are some penetrating observations—especially about the stories and novellas. Turgenev's letters are well used and effectively quoted, although even here one must cavil a bit: the fiction is overbiographized.

In sum, a disappointing book. I greatly admire some of Pritchett's stories, his brief essay on Leskov, and most of all his autobiographical *A Cab at the Door*. But I do wonder if he would wish that, a hundred years hence, a talented writer—but non-reader of English—would undertake his "definitive" biography?

KATHRYN B. FEUER
University of Virginia

SUR SOLJENITSYNE: ESSAIS. By *Georges Nivat*. Lausanne: Editions l'Age d'Homme, 1974. 208 pp.

DUKHOVNYE OSNOVY TVORCHESTVA SOLZHENITSYNA. By *T. Lopukhina-Rodzianko*. Frankfurt/Main: Possev Verlag, 1974. 180 pp. DM 12.80, paper.

Georges Nivat's *Sur Soljenitsyne* may well be the best book on Solzhenitsyn to have yet been published by a single author. Nivat brings a first-rate mind, formidable erudition, literary sensitivity, and experience as the translator of several of Solzhenitsyn's novels to this fine collection of essays on the 1970 Nobel Prize winner. The critical breakthroughs in the book are many, and Nivat often succeeds in articulating what other critics have at best groped toward but have been unable to formulate. One sentence by Nivat can be worth whole chapters (Dare I say entire books?) by less gifted commentators.

This is high praise, but Nivat is deserving of it. Several examples must suffice as "evidence": Nivat's discussion of Solzhenitsyn's narrative treatment of character and use of "polyphony"—subjects much raked over by critics—bristles with insights and serves to move Solzhenitsyn criticism several important steps forward. Equally stimulating is Nivat's skillful and detailed examination of Solzhenitsyn's use of irony. And there is Nivat's treatment of Solzhenitsyn the "portraitist" in which he notes perceptively that the novelist tends *at the same time* toward the "ponderousness of caricature" and the "mysterious profundity of the symbol." Nivat also discourses helpfully on Solzhenitsyn's use of literary models (such as the *byliny* in *August 1914*) and of various source materials (for example, the memoirs of Protopresbyter Shavel'skii, also utilized in *August 1914*). While Nivat's comments range over the whole corpus of Solzhenitsyn's writings, he is particularly incisive when treating *The Gulag Archipelago* and *August 1914*.

Despite my admiration for this excellent book, I find myself in disagreement with certain of Nivat's interpretations and formulations. For example, the author's discussion of literary "types" in Solzhenitsyn's works strikes me as somewhat flat and lacking in subtlety. His comments on the traits of passivity and heroism in Solzhenitsyn's "positive" characters tend slightly to denigrate the former and inflate the significance of the latter, with the result that Nivat somewhat misinterprets Solzhenitsyn's religious views. In a few places Nivat may have been led astray by his sophistication as a critic; I, at least, do not discern the literary "buffoonery" which he sees at work in Solzhenitsyn's *Letter to the Soviet Leaders*. Occasionally, Nivat also has an unfortunate tendency to elevate an insight—one valid in itself—into a symbol or law governing an entire Solzhenitsyn work. Thus he sees the symbol of the ark as "organizing the whole structure" of *The First Circle* and asserts that the novel is "centered" on two banquets—that of Nerzhin and his friends and that of Prosecutor Makarygin.

All criticism of this collection must, however, pale when its impressive achievements are taken into account. *Sur Soljenitsyne* is a must book for any serious student of Solzhenitsyn's writings.

Dr. Lopukhina-Rodzianko's study concentrates on the ethical and spiritual dimensions of Solzhenitsyn's *oeuvre*. In so doing, it provides a useful summary of the writer's views in these areas and also serves to communicate to Russian readers some of the findings of Western Solzhenitsyn scholarship.

Lopukhina devotes a great deal of space in her book to discussing *pravedniki* (righteous men and women) in Solzhenitsyn's works. I find that I cannot agree with some of her interpretations. Is Ivan Denisovich, as she claims, a *pravednik*? I would prefer to see him as a "survivor" who has guarded his basic humanity against great odds. One also wonders whether Solzhenitsyn shares Lopukhina's unqualified enthusiasm for Alesha the Baptist (she terms him "samyi prekrasnyi obraz pravednika v tvorchestve Solzhenitsyna"). In addition to obvious attractive qualities, is there not a certain smugness and narrowness about Alesha which even Ivan Denisovich can sense? Matrena in "Matrena's Home" would, it seems to me, be a more complete *pravednik*.

The virtues of Lopukhina's book stem from its thorough treatment of a restricted but important theme. On the other hand, her study does not offer many genuinely new insights into Solzhenitsyn's writings.

JOHN B. DUNLOP
Oberlin College

LEXIKON DER RUSSISCHEN LITERATUR AB 1917. By *Wolfgang Kasack*. Kröners Taschenausgabe, vol. 451. Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner Verlag, 1976. 457 pp. DM 28.50.

Reliable reference works in the field of Soviet and East European Studies are few in number, and if one were to subtract from that number the otherwise accurate volumes that are merely selective in their coverage, the number would shrink even further. In the field of literature, the most recent Soviet source is *Kratkaia literaturnaia entsiklopediia*, which began to appear in 1962 and which completed publication in 1975 with volume eight. The Soviet encyclopedia, however, follows the standard Soviet procedure of ignoring many of the writers it finds uncongenial and of dismissing others with a few disparaging epithets. Also, its entries on Soviet authors systematically ignore the large body of Western scholarship.

Wolfgang Kasack, the well-known German specialist in Russian literature, has placed us all in his debt by compiling a concise dictionary of Russian writing of the post-1917 period. Its approximately six hundred entries, of which about one-tenth deal with special subjects and the rest with individual authors, is a gold mine of information