

plot, the role of tension, the development of character, and the use of setting in this genre, and yet is curiously silent in this chapter on techniques of point of view which become crucial for the interpretation of Chekhov later in the book.

Kramer writes in an intelligent, easy-flowing, readable style which permits detailed renarration, where necessary, without laboriousness, and complex argumentation, without obscurity. Despite his deep understanding of and commitment to Chekhov, there is no uncritical idolization. With reference to interpretations of particular stories he is appropriately skeptical of pronouncements made by "authorities" on Chekhov, whether Western or Soviet (though he misjudges the Soviet tradition as monolithic on the evidence of too few books, and those the obvious ones). He rightly pays more frequent tribute to analyses of individual stories by other scholars in articles than to full-length studies of Chekhov, and this raises a crucial problem. In spite of his own many fine detailed interpretations of particular stories, occasionally they have to be squeezed too rigidly into the book's overall interpretation of Chekhov's opus. At other times some of Kramer's best *general* insights about Chekhov's art are neglected in his specific analyses: seeming to lack the courage of his convictions, he stops short of an integrated interpretation.

Perhaps the most serious disappointment in an otherwise excellent book is the author's unwillingness to integrate Chekhov's use of nature, and his attitude toward it, into his overall interpretation. For after the early parodies of the "pathetic fallacy," nature asserts itself as the one static element in a world of chameleons, the one unambiguous element in a world of dreams.

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COMPLETE POETRY OF OSIP EMILEVICH MANDELSTAM. Translated by *Burton Raffel* and *Alla Burago*. Introduction and notes by *Sidney Monas*. Russian Literature in Translation, no. 2. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1973. x, 353 pp. \$15.00.

Mandelstam's poetry is elaborate, sometimes obscure, and often depends on the most delicate counterpoint of nuance for its life. Such living, vibrating poems are likely to suffer grievous hurt in the process of translation. Often the wounding is mortal in Burton Raffel's versions. (His volume of verse from Gumilev, in the same series, is usually much closer to the life of the original.)

To speak about individual lines or words and their mistranslation is not to quibble—Mandelstam lives by his poetic words, or word. Take, for instance, the poem on Venice (no. 110). *Veche*, the popular assembly in medieval Novgorod and other Russian cities, cannot be translated as "political meeting," and *prazdnoe* is not "useless" but "idle." And, in the same poem, the line in Raffel's translation, "But a rose in my hand, a tiny bottle," should not omit the conjunction *ili*. The poet is entranced—drunk with Venice—and cannot tell which it is. Incidentally, *sklianka* must be rendered as phial, for the tiny bottle is filled with poison. It occurs to me that Ezra Pound's Venetian poems are closer to the spirit of Mandelstam's Venice than the Raffel-Burago translation.

Sidney Monas's introduction is also flawed here and there, but it overcomes its occasional inaccuracies. This is an illuminating piece of criticism, written with verve and real love for Mandelstam and with an appreciation of what is involved in the creative act—something so desperately missing in much of what passes for

“criticism” in the Russian field. Monas surpasses the purely formalist or philosophical essays written on Mandelshtam by penetrating close to the essence of what the “hum of time” meant to the poet and by a sympathetic understanding of his deep religious links outside time dimensions. God was revealed to Mandelshtam in the cathedrals of Saint Sophia and Saint Peter. These poems have been noted and discussed previously. Monas also, and here he is virtually alone, notices the central place of the mystery of the Greek Orthodox Eucharist in Mandelshtam; he is right to take seriously what Nadezhda Mandelshtam has to say about this. It is obviously wrong, as one American scholar asserts, that Mandelshtam’s Christianity was a purely aesthetic phenomenon. Monas also understands Mandelshtam’s deep insight into vast Russian space betrayed by the “Judas of the future” and not yet humanized, as are the hills of Dante’s Tuscany.

As for the inaccuracies, I would not call Mandelshtam a Russian holy fool, although once he identified himself with a *iurodivyi* (poem no. 235). And the so-called holy fools had appeared earlier in Byzantium and were well known in Muscovite Russia as early as the fourteenth century. *Iurodstvo* is far more typical of other contemporary Russian poets, such as Velemir Khlebnikov and Andrei Bely. Mandelshtam hailed the “blessed, senseless word,” but there is no glossolalia in his poetry (though he did experience ecstasy akin to mystic transport). “Senseless” here means lacking common sense or the wrong sense of the clichés despised by all good poets. Derzhavin was appointed minister of justice by Alexander I and not by Catherine II. And *gorodki* is a rather democratic game which has nothing to do with the gentleman’s croquet.

Nevertheless, Monas’s Mandelshtam resembles the real one, while Raffel-Burago’s Mandelshtam possesses little by way of identity with the Russian poet, so far as I am able to judge. English-speaking readers will grasp his imagery but not his rhythms and diction—and his unspoken magic.

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SOLZHENITSYN. By *Christopher Moody*. New York: Barnes & Noble Books, a division of Harper & Row, 1973. vii, 184 pp. \$5.25.

Deceptively small in format, this book presents the most thorough general survey of Solzhenitsyn’s fiction that has yet appeared. It concentrates on the works themselves, reducing biographical information to an essential minimum. Although it examines the writings as individual entities, the study is abundantly laced with cross-references comparing and contrasting their thematic and aesthetic characteristics. The book’s most valuable contribution to our understanding of Solzhenitsyn is in demonstrating the multiple correlations of ideas, characters, and creative methods among his various works.

Inevitably the book is somewhat outdated by the swift developments in the author’s career over the past two years. Beliefs of Solzhenitsyn which seemed merely fragmentary or incipient, such as his Orthodox Christianity and his idiosyncratic political conservatism, now stand out in much bolder relief than the present volume is able to supply. Also, we now know that *Gulag Archipelago* is not a novelistic sequel to *The First Circle*, as Moody thought it would be. Other misinformation—for example, identification of the critic Lev Kopelev (the model for Rubin in *The First Circle*) as a poet—would seem to come from insufficiently discriminating use