

## BRIEF MENTIONS

### HILDEGARD EMMEL

*Geschichte des deutschen Romans. II.*  
Bern: Francke, 1975.  
Pp. 354. Sfr. 29.80.

Professor Emmel concluded the first volume of her history of the German novel with an analysis of Goethe's novels. Volume II opens with a study of Heine's two fragments *Der Rabbi von Bacherach* and *Aus den Memoiren des Herrn von Schnabelewopski*. In connection with the second fragment one would expect at least a reference to Georg Weerth's *Leben und Taten des berühmten Ritters Schnapphahnski*, but Weerth is never mentioned. What was acceptable in the first volume is a weakness in the second: the author devotes her attention exclusively to well-established authors. There are no discoveries and no surprises. Professor Emmel never mentions the really popular novelists—Eugenie Marlitt, Gustav Freytag and so on. She speaks of Sealsfield at length, but neither Kürmberger and his *Der Amerikamüde* nor the most popular author of that kind and time—Gerstäcker—is mentioned. Is it today still legitimate to write a 1000 page history of the German novel without referring—in connection with the *Jahrhundertwende*—to Karl May, periodicals like *Die Gartenlaube*, the *Kolportageroman*, series like *Engelhorn's Romanbibliothek*, and others? What the masses read, in fact, is never mentioned in Professor Emmel's book.

I have highly recommended Professor Emmel's first volume (*JFR*, 1 [1974], 160). However, the second volume must be read in connection with Martini, Meyer, or Engel—for the 19th century has, indeed, more to offer than what is discussed here. Nevertheless, Professor Emmel's book still has its value: among the established authors she places the accents differently than is usual—and with good reason. Goethe, for instance, is treated at length, and his novels are carefully analyzed—so are the novels of Robert Walser, K. Immermann. However, one notes that the popular author Theodor Mügge—whose novel *Afrafra* (1854) is much better than G. Freytag's *Soll und Haben*—is passed over.

As to influences from abroad, Dickens, Scott, Thackeray, Balzac, and Tolstoi receive their due, but Hugo (*Les Misérables*) and Dumas are not there. The fact is that often minor but popular works of a particular literature have a vast effect on works of higher quality in a different literature.

Turning to the 20th century, Professor Emmel devotes her attention to Thomas Mann (Heinrich is disposed of in one page), Kafka, Rilke, Broch, and Musil. All these authors are well interpreted. Professor Emmel writes a straightforward, uncomplicated style; her language is free from jargon and—as said before—a pleasure to read. We may look forward to the third volume which will treat the *gesellschaftskritische Roman* after 1945. Will Professor Emmel take the opportunity to depart from the "established" canon of literary works this time?

Ingrid Schuster

CHRISTIANE ROCHEFORT  
*Encore heureux qu'on va vers l'été*  
Paris: Grasset, 1975. Pp. 259.

After examining the plight of women in *Le Repos du guerrier* (Warrior's Rest, 1959), *Les Petits Enfants du siècle* (Children of Heaven, 1962), and *Les Stances à Sophie*, 1963 ("Stanzas for Sophie"), Christiane Rochefort, a contemporary French novelist, describes in her seventh novel the revolt of another "oppressed" group, children. *Encore heureux qu'on va vers l'été* ("As we go happily along towards summer") records the epic of the class of "cinquième D"—13-14 year olds, a special section for weak students—in a school on the outskirts of Paris who walked out on their teacher after she told them for the third time that they were a stupid, boring group.

The children discover nature, love, and the joy of living along with a certain confidence and self-sufficiency which make them beautiful to behold. Of course, the Forces of Order, especially the bureaucracy called Preparation for Life, attempt to bring the children back. Instead, many other children desert the

schools; and there is a massive clandestine movement South to the sea. For the students the sea is synonymous with summer, and both mean "freedom from school."

The novel is a bitter denunciation of the rigid French school system which classifies children at the age of eleven, closing permanently the doors of higher education and meaningful work to those (often in lower social classes) who are not brilliant, hard working, obedient automatons. Rochefort shows that those who are thought to be idiots and taught that they have no value as human beings can be creative, resourceful, intelligent—and more important—happy, when freed from the stifling atmosphere of the classroom.

Since her second novel, *Children of Heaven*, Rochefort has had a continuing interest in children. Gradually she began to see them as the hope of the corrupt industrial society. In her essay about the nature of writing, *C'est bizarre, l'écriture*, 1970 ("Writing is wierd") she explains that it was at a public discussion on *Children of Heaven* that she finally realized that it was only from the very young that the needed changes in society might come—that was why little children kept popping up in all her books (pp. 35-36).

In two other novels *Une Rose pour Morrison*, 1966 ("A Rose for Morrison") and *Archaos ou le jardin étincelant*, 1972 ("Archaos or the glittering garden") she has maintained that children or child-like adults are more enlightened than others and should lead mankind toward a better future life. Both novels are, in a sense, an indictment of contemporary society. *Archaos* is an anarchical utopia of the Dark Ages which has been "covered up" by historians who had a vested interest in concealing the fact that a society based on free love and free food can work. *Une Rose* . . . presents a future society in an ecological disaster area where the moon is only a fond memory passed on in poetry from previous generations. This society has an Orwellian repressive government run by men and old people. (The despot is named ironically "Sa Sénilité.") In both *Archaos* and the future society of *Une Rose* . . . the women and the young form an alliance to overthrow the dictatorship of the old men.

Yet men are not uniformly condemned in *Encore heureux* . . . There are a few exceptions like the kindly old farmer and

the grandfather of one of the children who remember the good old days—the days before the society of consumption symbolized by the bulldozer which destroys the old man's farm—and who help the children to fight against the establishment. Perhaps Rochefort is even suggesting that the very old, another powerless group, should join with the women and children to bring about a revolution.

Like most of Rochefort's other novels, this one will probably be accused of pornography. Actually it contains very few erotic passages and is more shocking in its philosophy of sexual freedom than in any specific examples of free love. As in *Archaos* . . ., the children's love is cloaked in an aura of innocence and purity which is precisely the opposite of pornography.

Although the thesis of the author is readily apparent to the casual reader, *Encore heureux* . . . is much more than a *roman à thèse* and its message is much broader than a specific condemnation of a specific society or educational system. Its light tone amuses and enchants the reader. With a Pied Piper-like power it calls us away from the boring routine of tradition-bound existence and makes us all want to follow the children on their march to the sea.

Lucy M. Schwartz

ROBERT A. MAGUIRE, ED.  
*Gogol from the Twentieth Century*.  
Princeton: Princeton University  
Press, 1974. Pp. 415. \$17.50.

Every writer should be reexamined by each new generation of readers and critics because tastes and opinions change with new realities. This is especially true about Nikolay Gogol, a leading Russian writer of the nineteenth century. In Russia, he has been considered to be one of the most important writers for a century and a half, but abroad, the interest in him has begun to grow only in the last few decades. The reasons for this may be that good translations of his works were long in coming and that something peculiarly Gogolian is lost in any translation. Now