

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

Gogol is often analyzed even by critics whose knowledge of Russian is not perfect. This anthology of essays translated from Russian is directed primarily at such readers and critics of Gogol.

The selection of essays, subjective though it must of necessity be, shows the editor's consummate knowledge of Gogol. He has selected, edited, and translated the following essays: Dmitry Merezhkovsky, "Gogol and the Devil"; Valery Brusov, "Burnt to Ashes"; Valerian Pereverzev, "The Evolution of Gogol's Art"; Ivan Yermakov, "'The Nose'"; Vyacheslav Ivanov, "Gogol's *Inspector General* and the Comedy of Aristophanes"; Vasily Gippius, "*The Inspector General*: Structure and Problems"; Boris Eichenbaum, "How Gogol's 'Overcoat' Is Made"; Dmitry Chizhevsky, "About Gogol's 'Overcoat'"; Alexander Slonimsky, "The Technique of the Comic in Gogol"; Leon Stilman, "The 'All-Seeing Eye' in Gogol" and "Men, Women, and Matchmakers."

Such a wide selection attests to the editor's intention of showing Gogol from several points of view in the twentieth century. Almost every major school of criticism is represented, even the Symbolists, despite the fact that the younger members of this movement are absent. All but one (Eichenbaum) of the essays are translated here for the first time and should be of great interest and help to nonspecialists.

The essays are so distributed as to cover several important facets of Gogol's work. Six are of a general nature; two deal with *The Inspector General* and "The Overcoat" and one with "The Nose." *Dead Souls*, Gogol's greatest work, does not have an essay devoted entirely to it, but the story figures in five of the general essays. The length of the essays ranges from a fifty-page monograph or chapter from a book to a brief analysis of a single topic.

The reader of these essays, fluently translated and adequately annotated, should be able to understand fully why Gogol has always been held in such high esteem by his compatriots. The lengthy introduction by the editor, surveying the critical reception of Gogol since the beginning, makes this valuable book even more useful.

Vasa D. Mihailovich

SUSAN CAHILL, ED.

Women and Fiction

New York: New American Library, 1975. Pp. 379. \$2.25.

Women and Fiction is a collection of twenty-six short stories, about women and written by women. Edited by Susan Cahill, who has selected stories that are "extraordinarily moving and convincing portraits of women and their lives by extraordinary writers" (p. xvi), the collection is successful in its purpose: a two-fold lesson in consciousness-raising. First, it offers in its subject matter a broad and perceptive study of the experience of being female. Second, and this is perhaps even more important, the reader cannot escape the awareness that each of the twenty-six women who have written these stories is a very good writer indeed.

Included are stories that are primarily about marriage (by Katherine Anne Porter), divorce and remarriage (Edith Wharton), marriage and desertion (Grace Paley), and the death of a spouse (Kate Chopin). There is also the loneliness of widowhood (Hortense Calisher and Mary Lavin), the beginning of an affair (Edna O'Brien), and the destructive effects of society on the black family (Ann Petry and Alice Walker). Women are seen in their relationships with children (Eudora Welty, Kay Boyle, and Tillie Olsen), and caught between their relationships with a man and with a child (Margaret Drabble). There are women in social situations, feeling ill at ease at a party (Virginia Woolf) or on what begins as a routine visit to a doctor's office (Flannery O'Connor). A young girl's first experience with death is shown (Katherine Mansfield), a woman's grief for her dead infant (Maev Brennan), and another woman's apparent but unadmitted guilt after an abortion (Julie Hayden).

There are also stories on more unusual situations: a nun who almost falls in love (Joyce Carol Oates), a wife and mother who commits suicide (Doris Lessing), another wife and mother who is a transvestite (Jean Stubbs). Additionally there are stories on the relationship between women and the arts: a pioneer woman's thwarted love for classical music (Willa Cather), an adolescent's difficulty in continuing to demonstrate the talent she had shown as a child (Carson McCullers), a mother's attempt to find an office in which she can write undisturbed (Alice Munro).