

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).

The stories are all well crafted; the anthology easily demonstrates, to any who still doubt, that well-written fiction by women is no rare occurrence. Several of the stories, including one of those in the first person, are told from a man's point of view. The majority of the stories, however, are told in the third person—some by an omniscient narrator, and many of the most recent from the point of view of the female protagonist.

Each story is preceded by a short biography of its author. The stories are arranged chronologically according to the author's year of birth. Dates of first publication are given occasionally but not for every story. The selection is restricted, with the exception of one story by Colette, to works written originally in English. The only experimental work is a story by Gertrude Stein. This second limitation is perhaps the more serious, suggesting as it does that there are no living women who write experimental short fiction in English—which surely cannot be true in a society that is producing such experimental novelists as Christine Brooke-Rose and Madeline Gins.

Emma Kafalenos

**HARTMUT STEINECKE**  
*Romantheorie und Romankritik in Deutschland: Die Entwicklung des Gattungsverständnisses von der Scott-Rezeption bis zum programmatischen Realismus. I.*  
Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1975.  
Pp. XII, 340.

In his Ph.D. thesis (Queen's University, Kingston, 1975), Manfred W. Heiderich lists all novels which had appeared in the year 1800 in Germany. He has read all extant ones and classifies these according to their contents. What an immense heap of literary trash! No wonder, almost nobody at that time took the German novel seriously—in fact, the genre "novel" was considered in Germany to be on a lower literary level than drama and poetry. Publishers paid less per sheet in the case of a novel than in the case of a play or a book of poems.

Steinecke describes in detail how the prejudices against the genre novel slowly disappeared—from the time of the early

translations of Walter Scott's Waverley Novels (the first German translation was *Der Astrolog*, 1817) to about 1860. Steinecke relies not only on the contemporary theories of the novel (mostly well known by now), but on the prefaces to novels, reviews in periodicals and articles in newspapers and encyclopedias. He has assembled an impressive amount of hitherto unknown material which he uses objectively and convincingly. Steinecke's book is well written and can be read without difficulty by nonspecialists: he uses little of today's literary jargon.

The book is at the same time a *Quellenstudie* and an interpretation of sources. It contains statistics on the number and type of novels which appeared in certain years. In 1780, for instance, about 60 novels were published; in 1800, 100; in 1820, 150; in 1830 ca. 280-300. In the same decades, dramas and books of poetry lost readers proportionately. Up to 1830, few novels had had editions of more than 750-1000 copies, but each copy was read by many people—especially the copies bought by lending libraries. A novel had, on the average, ten times as many readers as a drama or a book of poetry. Still, only 25% of Germans could read, and only 10% of those had an opportunity to read novels on a regular basis.

Steinecke disagrees with those who condemn the quality of the German novel outright—by comparing German 19th century authors to Balzac, Sand, Dickens, and others. Nor does he agree with the simplistic statement that Goethe's Wilhelm Meister novels have had a disastrous influence on the *Bildungsroman* (Steinecke prefers the term "Individual-roman"). His knowledge of details allows him to judge much more carefully, to qualify general statements by others, to present new and well-formulated ideas on many aspects. But the book does not change any of the major and accepted facts about the German novel 1820-1860. The German novel cannot compare, in quality, with the contemporary novel in France and England. This was not Goethe's fault and—probably—not a consequence of lack of talent in individual German authors. The novel also depends on social factors which characterize a certain period—and on the social consciousness and ambitions of a people. And it was certainly also true that Berlin—in 1830—could not compare with Paris or London.