

ject is the fullest in print. And two of the authors of forthcoming academic books on the subject have borrowed Russian volumes, whose existence they learned of only through that bibliography, from me.

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Ms. Shulman does not feel that a response is necessary.

TO THE EDITOR:

Sidney Monas's recent essay entitled "Fourteen Years of Aleksandr Isaevich" (*Slavic Review*, September 1976) is unquestionably one of the more thoughtful reviews of Solzhenitsyn's provocative thought. Despite the general high quality of Mr. Monas's analysis, one error is particularly jarring to a Solzhenitsyn reader: Mr. Monas contends that in all of the many pages of Solzhenitsyn's *oeuvres* there appears no genuine sexual encounter, and that the reason for this paucity of literary eroticism is Solzhenitsyn's extreme suspicion of "intoxication of any kind." Solzhenitsyn's works, however, are laced with both implicit and explicit sexual scenes, many of which are profoundly moving and evocative.

One of the most subtly erotic moments in all of Solzhenitsyn's published fiction takes place in *The First Circle* between the pursued, distracted Innokenty Volodin and his estranged wife, Dotty. Intuitively sensing his impending destruction by the masters of the Gulag Archipelago, Innokenty unexpectedly rediscovers the great enveloping security and power of his wife's tender sexuality. In a lyrical passage of striking simplicity, Innokenty is seduced by his own wife:

It was easier to talk lying down—for some reason he could say much more, the most intimate things, if they were lying in each other's arms under the blanket rather than sitting opposite each other in armchairs.

He took a couple of steps toward the bed, then hesitated.

She lifted the edge of the blanket for him to come under it.

Unaware that he'd stepped on the book that had slipped from her fingers, Innokenty lay down and everything closed behind him.

Gleb Nerzhin of the same novel is forever luring "Simochka" into an acoustical booth for surreptitious petting, while Ruska is engaged in a love affair with Clara, an MGB employee at the *sharashka* whose job it is to spy on the *zeks*.

Solzhenitsyn deals with youthful sexual naïveté in a tongue-in-cheek episode in *Cancer Ward* (unfortunately, the extensive treatment of *eros* in *Cancer Ward* has been largely ignored by literary scholars) when Dyomka comforts a distraught Asya, who has just learned that she must undergo a radical mastectomy. Passionately flinging her robe apart and demanding that he kiss her "doomed" breast, Asya dramatically exclaims that at least Dyomka will be able to appreciate her "marvel" before it must be removed and thrown into the garbage pail.

In Solzhenitsyn's works, *eros* constitutes the renewal of the elements of physical sustenance, the rebirth of the ecstasy of sensual existence. Nevertheless, sensuality for Solzhenitsyn is only the first tier of the upward spiral of self-realization of the individual personality, and thus is not a theme he feels called upon to elaborately develop.

The ultimate achievement for mortal man is *agape*, the highest form of universal Christian love and brotherhood, which by its very nature transcends the narcissistic immediacy of erotic self-fulfillment.

Despite Mr. Monas's one mistake in analyzing the erotic element in Solzhenitsyn's writings, his treatment of Solzhenitsyn's moral and literary thought is perceptive, making it one of the few recent studies on the Russian author worth reading carefully.

TERRY C. COPPLE
Boise, Idaho

TO THE EDITOR:

I write to you in connection with a review of mine which appeared in the *Slavic Review* (June 1973, pp. 433-34), that is, of the book *Le renouveau de l'art pictural russe* (Lausanne, 1971) by Valentine Marcadé.

After that review had appeared, Mme. Marcadé indicated to me that she found certain parts of the text to be unacceptable. In particular, she was surprised by my tentative accusation of plagiarism: "the second Diaghilev statement concerning Chekhov on page 108 comes, allegedly, from the Manuscript Department of the Lenin Library, although this exact quotation appeared in Lapshina's recent article on the World of Art. . . ." Mme. Marcadé proved to me that she was not guilty of plagiarism and that she had already used this quotation in an earlier text. Hence, I had judged her wrongly.

Although I did qualify my statement by reference to possible coincidence, I felt, upon learning of Mme. Marcadé's indignation, that I certainly owed her an apology for a misguided accusation.

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