

undertaken with diffidence, to meet the poet's deathbed wish (pp. 222–23)—have been crowned with success. The novel is a torso, but one whose plan, and outline, and meaning have been salvaged. The portion written by Olga Deschartes at times fails to capture, in its syntax, rhythm, and vocabulary, the style of the first five books (see p. 407, last paragraph, for example), but it never leaves the spirit of the whole out of sight. The text contains occasional errors, probably owing to a misreading of Ivanov's manuscript (for example, p. 367, xiv, 4 s/b *priblizhashesia*; xiv, 5 s/b *ukazuia*; xiv, 7 s/b *resha*; p. 368, xiv, 11 s/b *glagoliushche*; p. 369, xvi, 4 s/b *spasetsia*). Ivanov's *Povest'* is written in the authentic manner of a Byzantine romance—relating to, say, the Russian version of *Digenis Akritas* as Lermontov's "Pesnia o kuptse Kalashnikove" relates to Kirsha Danilov's *byliny*. Only the poetry introduced in the text (many of these pieces are from Ivanov's published collections of poetry) is neither medieval nor popular in character. Ivanov's stylized prose has marvelous discipline and a fascinating rhythm, reaching sublime poetic beauty in some passages (for example, p. 433, end of xviii).

Ivanov's *Povest'* may be read on different levels: as a medieval romance; as a religious allegory (with Svetomir the Russian Galahad); as a recapitulation of Russian Symbolism—its imagery, its leitmotifs, its visions, its conceptual patterns; as a philosophical treatise; and, finally, as an account of Ivanov's own searchings, strivings, and ultimate arrival at a mature and secure faith. Such a wedding of Dostoevsky's "accursed questions" and Solovievian Neoplatonism to an Old Russian form and ample motifs from Russian folklore (for example, in an allegory linking Sophia to Mother Earth, pp. 478–79) creates aesthetic problems. This is true of any syncretistic work (compare the second part of Goethe's *Faust*, which Ivanov's *Povest'* resembles in many ways). The plot of Ivanov's *Povest'*, which takes the hero to the country of Presbyter John and to encounters with Philoctetes, Alexander of Macedon (seen as an incarnation of Dionysus), Sir Galahad, and Simon Magus, among others, is representative of the fusion of Neoplatonism, Hellenism, Byzantine, Catholic, and evangelic Christianity, Theosophy, Humanism, and Romanticism which we find in Russian Symbolism. Is this a posteriori synthesis an artistic success? Time will show.

The apparatus to the texts of Ivanov's poetry and prose gives not only variants but also notes and corrections made by the poet in his personal copies. The editor's comments are concise and somewhat sparse, but always useful. Typographically this is an excellent job. Thus the accurate rendition of non-Russian quotations (including Greek) contrasts favorably with the often disgraceful job done by Soviet editions. All in all, this is a volume for which we must be grateful.

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THE THEME OF TIME IN THE POETRY OF ANNA AXMATOVA. By  
*Kees Verheul*. The Hague: Mouton, 1971. viii, 233 pp. 42 Dglds.

What a pleasure it is to have Professor Verheul's book on Akhmatova. Not since the 1920s, with works like those of Eikhenbaum and Vinogradov, has there been such an original study in depth of some particular aspect of Akhmatova's poetry. There have been a number of books on Akhmatova in the last few years, but they

tend to be compilations of fairly well-known facts and critical opinions. A. I. Pavlovsky's work is something of an impressionistic appreciation; E. Dobin's, although a more serious effort, lacks the apparatus that would be of use to scholars. The present reviewer's contribution is very general and introductory in nature. A study such as Kees Verheul's is welcome indeed.

Akhmatova was one of a generation of extremely time-conscious poets, like—in their separate ways—Pasternak, Mandelshtam, and Mayakovsky. The author's principal thesis has to do with that peculiar time perspective, a kind of fusion of past, present, and future, which was characteristic of her later verse and central to the *Poem Without a Hero*. Since Verheul's book also includes under the general theme of time such important related themes as memory, the past, and history, it is therefore quite comprehensive, ranging over the whole of Akhmatova's work. This inclusiveness, which makes the book so valuable as a resource, also constitutes its major weakness. One must readily agree about the significance of the peculiar time perspective for the later poetry, but not all poems with time-related themes employ that special perspective. This is particularly true of the early work (through *Anno Domini*). Moreover, poems from the early period are, often as not, characterized by their fixity in time and place. The short lyric "Tri v stolovoi probilo" comes to mind, or the poem "Pod kryshei promerzshei pustogo zhil'ia," in which the time-span of a brief love affair is fixed in the symbolism of the poem. Although there is a great stylistic consistency throughout Akhmatova's work, one feels that her special treatment of time, as in *Poem Without a Hero*, began to evolve only after the early verses. The few examples cited in support of Verheul's thesis on this point are not entirely convincing.

The second section of the book is highly interesting, with conjectures on the uncompleted *poëma* "Russkii Trianon." There is a good deal of first-rate academic sleuthing here, and there are also some arresting and quite plausible speculations. The remainder—and main portion—of the study deals with the thirties and after, especially that remarkably productive year of 1940. Here, the thesis is entirely consonant with the material. Further studies of Akhmatova's work will certainly depend in good measure on this book.

There are some problems with style. One is less bothered by such eccentricities of vocabulary as the often-used verb "to abstrahize" than by the syntactical problems. The sentences are often long and complex, and difficult to understand on first reading. Still, this is a minor matter in view of the value of the book, and we should be grateful that Professor Verheul has chosen to write it in English.

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#### TWENTIETH-CENTURY RUSSIAN LITERATURE: A CRITICAL STUDY.

By *Johannes Holthusen*. Supplement by *Elisabeth Markstein* on "Censorship, Samizdat, and New Trends." Translated by *Theodore Huebener*. New York: Frederick Ungar, 1972. xii, 320 pp. \$9.50.

This book is a translation of two small volumes, *Russische Gegenwartsliteratur I, 1890–1940* and *Russische Gegenwartsliteratur II, 1941–1967*, published by the Francke Verlag, Bern, in 1963 and 1968 respectively. The two "Introductory Notes"