

identifying some of them and locating likely candidates for others. One is fully convinced that Nekrylov in *Skandalist* is Victor Shklovsky of the middle twenties, during the period when he was trying to adapt his views—or at least his behavior—to the circumstances of Soviet life. In other cases, as the author admits, “the degree of similarity between character and prototype varies.” Piper’s critical analysis of *Khudozhnik neizvesten* reveals the greatness and tragedy of the artist Arkhimedov in that novel. But does it really help his case to insist on the identification of Khlebnikov with Arkhimedov? The most one can say is that the two men had “much in common” in their personalities and in their artistic vision. But to say flatly that “Khlebnikov is the prototype of Arkhimedov” goes well beyond any data that the author has adduced.

There are a few minor criticisms that should be made. “Factology” is the rather strange locution the author uses in referring to the literary tenets of LEF, which are usually designated as “factography.” The author frequently speaks of “old futurists” and “old formalists” when what he means is Formalists or Futurists who have abandoned their former positions. The translation of the phrase *sotsial’nyi zakaz* as “social command” is not really accurate; in fact a distinction was often made between “social demand” (*zakaz*) and “social command” (*prikaz*). But these are admittedly minor matters and do not detract from the value of the book.

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AMERICA IN CONTEMPORARY SOVIET LITERATURE. By *Alayne P. Reilly*. New York: New York University Press. London: University of London Press, 1971. xiii, 217 pp. \$8.95.

Alayne Reilly examines the way in which four authors—Andrei Voznesensky, Viktor Nekrasov, Valentin Kataev, and Evgenii Evtushenko—have recently written about the United States. Her thesis is that their works indicate a new approach to America by certain Soviet writers who no longer let ideology or preconceived notions stand in the way of an open and at times sympathetic appraisal of the successes and failures of American society. The book’s findings are generally well supported by detailed stylistic and thematic analyses of works by the various writers. Furthermore, many specific observations about an author (especially Voznesensky and Nekrasov) shed light on all of his writings, not just on those about America. But the most valuable contribution of the study is the perspective it provides of the Soviet literature of the 1960s. The fact that four literary figures—representing different genres of writing as well as different generations—all took a more enlightened view of America indicates that new forces were (and, one hopes, still are) at work. Alayne Reilly examines some of them, focusing in particular on stylistic experimentation and on the new introspectiveness among writers.

Unfortunately several shortcomings detract somewhat from the work’s overall value. The first chapter, which deals briefly with earlier writers (Gorky, Mayakovsky, Pilniak, and Iif and Petrov) who also gave firsthand accounts of America, tends to dismiss the most anti-American works as being artistically poor and to praise those that are more moderate. At times the judgments seem valid; at others (most notably in the discussion of Mayakovsky) I have my doubts. In any case, one feels that the polemical tone is unnecessary. The same could be said of the chapter on Evtushenko. The weakest section, however, is the one on Kataev. The

difficulties (which the author acknowledges) in discussing a work as complex and obscure as *The Holy Well* are understandable, but the use of so many “mays,” “mights,” and “possibly” breaks the chapter down into a series of seemingly disconnected conjectures.

The words “surrealism” and “impressionism” are tossed about freely without precise definition. The perhaps too frequent use of these words is symptomatic of the repetitiveness found elsewhere. It may involve a single word (“cryptographic” appears often in the chapter on Kataev) or the use of superfluous examples (the differences between the first and second versions of Nekrasov’s *On Both Sides of the Ocean* are brought up again and again). In fact, one is struck by the generous use of quoted examples throughout. Some of them are needed to support the author’s contentions, but surely there are more than necessary—nearly half the text consists of quotations.

Despite these faults, the book explores an interesting topic and provides some fresh insights into the nature of Soviet literature during the past decade.

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OCHERKI ISTORII RUSSKOI SOVETSKOI DRAMATURGII. Vol. 1: 1917–1934. Edited by S. V. Vladimirov and D. I. Zolotnitsky. 602 pp. 2.06 rubles. Vol. 2: 1934–1945. Edited by S. V. Vladimirov and G. A. Lapkina. 407 pp. 2.24 rubles. Vol. 3: 1945–1967. Edited by S. V. Vladimirov. 463 pp. 2.52 rubles. Leningrad and Moscow: “Iskusstvo,” 1963, 1966, 1968.

“The three volumes of ‘Essays,’” we read in the brief preface to the first volume (p. 4), “aspire to characterize the basic stages of the struggle of Soviet dramaturgy for closeness to the Party and closeness to the people [*partiinost’ i narodnost’*], for socialist realism, and to show the decisive significance for the fate of Soviet dramaturgy of the Leninist tradition of the Party’s approach to the phenomena of art. The authors’ collective is guided in its analysis of historical processes by the spirit of the decisions of the Twentieth and Twenty-second Congresses of the CPSU.” No quotations from those congresses are added at this point.

These books bear the imprint of the Leningrad State Institute of Theater, Music, and Cinematography. However, they do not include anything significant about opera or motion pictures. Plays taken from novels are discussed only briefly, and then when the novels themselves are of Soviet origin. The period covered is from 1917 to 1967, with volume 2 encompassing 1934 to 1945. Yet the editors stop short of terming this work a history of Soviet dramaturgy. The writing itself was done by over a dozen persons, whose names are listed alphabetically at the front of each volume.

In these books the half-century of the Soviet drama is divided into seven sub-periods of four to twelve years, each of which is introduced by a special essay touching on the highlights of those years. The essays are followed by various studies—fifty-one in all—on individual writers who flourished during these sub-periods. Because of this chronological arrangement, three chapters each are given to Leonov, Pogodin, and Korneichuk, and two apiece to Afinogenov, Arbutov, Gorky, Lavrenev, Mayakovsky, and Simonov. All three volumes close with a “Khronika” section and an index of names. The last book adds a bibliography of some twenty-five pages,