

undistinguished collection. The same issue of *ZL* also published an unnerving account of the present "strategies" of the Writers' Union toward non-Russian Soviet writers. These strategies include "surrounding the creativity of writers with maximum attention," and "leadership of the army of budding writers by national committees, special seminars, and consultations."

The six essays in Luckyj's collection shed further light on this dismal state of affairs and, though brief, we have reason to be grateful for the scholarly essays by Leon Mikirtitchian on Armenian literature (15 pages), Stanislaw Stankevich on Belorussian literature (18 pages), Rolfs Ekmanis on Latvian literature (42 pages), Gustav Burbiel on Tatar literature (30 pages), and Luckyj's own essay on Ukrainian literature (20 pages). Luckyj's twelve-page essay, "Socialist in content and national in form," is concise and informative. Unfortunately, the brevity of the essays occasionally causes them to resemble conventional histories of literature with their lists of names, titles, and dates, and expectation that the reader will take on trust such phrases as "extremely well written," or "a great and original talent," with no evidence to support these judgments. Valuable lists for further study in Western languages, Russian, and the vernacular languages are also included.

Precisely how "dissident" some of the voices are (or were) is difficult to gauge. To be sure, the list of voices which have been silenced is a tragically long one. On the other hand, Professor Luckyj and his colleagues can name writers who have "succumbed to Russification," and "jumped on the Soviet bandwagon." Some non-Russian writers have apparently done well enough for themselves: M. Lvov (Tatar) now living in Moscow, V. Petrov (Siberian) in Kharkov, while Amdzhatov's (Kirghiz) novels have been translated into several "fraternal" languages and filmed (Amdzhatov is also the recipient of various literary awards).

Professor Luckyj points out that "our knowledge of the non-Russian literatures of the USSR is abysmal." Vast areas remain unknown: from Moldavia to the northern Caucasus, and Siberia, among others. This volume is therefore a necessary step in the right direction.

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CZYSTA FORMA W TEATRZE. By *Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz*. Compiled, annotated, and with a foreword by *Janusz Degler*. Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Artystyczne i Filmowe, 1977. 431 pp. Plates. 100 zł.

The least explored area of Witkaciana has been his theory of Pure Form and its application to his creative works. Janusz Degler's excellent introduction to Witkiewicz's theoretical writings is a step in the right direction, but it is merely a step: Witkacy's theory of Pure Form in the theater remains virgin territory. One does not blame Degler, who almost singlehandedly (with an assist from Konstanty Puzyna) has resurrected Witkacy. The problem is that this Polish Renaissance man was almost too large for the twentieth century. If he had not existed, I doubt if he could have been created. Degler attempts to provide proof of that existence. Some of the material appearing here has been published previously by Degler in *Bez kompromisu* (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1976), and in his excellent study of Witkacy's acceptance in Poland prior to the latter's suicide in 1939, *Witkacy: W teatrze międzywojennym* (1973). But Witkacy himself remains elusive.

Czysta Forma w teatrze contains not only everything Witkacy wrote about the theater but also brings together for the first time the various polemics he waged throughout his life with his "enemies"—among whom were Irzykowski, Rostworow-

ski, Słonimski—and almost every critic who wrote about him. Of the legion of critics who derided Witkacy's theory of Pure Form, only Tadeusz Peiper, the Polish T. S. Eliot-in-waiting, credited his countryman with originality but accused him of lacking practicability. Even Boy, who befriended the painter-dramatist, voiced his doubts concerning Witkacy's determination to fight for his theories at the expense of befuddling his creative works. But Witkacy was determined.

Witkacy made it a point of separating "living nonsense" from "formal sense," that is, he tried "to create a formal construction." Thus, characters who commit suicide or are killed in the second act reappear in the final act. To effect Pure Form it was necessary to follow Witkacy's advice. Everything had to be coordinated, even the acting style; ensemble work was necessary. But realistic acting had no place in his theater: the actor had to rely on "his own creative intuition" in order to fulfill the demands set by the author. The overall effect was of primary importance; Witkacy did not want the actors to create a feeling of reliving an emotion. Improvisation was anathema. Witkacy's theory of acting resembled Gordon Craig's ideas but went beyond the latter's concept of actors as supermarionettes. Thus Pure Form, as Witkacy envisioned it, encompassed all aspects of a work, be it drama, poetry, or painting.

Another area still to be explored is Witkacy's experiences in Russia. How did Tairov, Meyerhold, Mayakovsky, or Komissazhevskaja affect him? It is difficult to believe that Witkacy was not involved in the intellectual climate of Moscow and Leningrad. What was it that created the atmosphere for Witkacy to wish for "a real temple for reliving pure metaphysical feelings"? Was it the October Revolution?

For now, however, we must be content with Witkacy's own theoretical essays, rebuttals to critics, and creative works (novels, plays, paintings, scene designs, and so forth). These have yet to be properly analyzed and appreciated. Degler has provided critics and students with an opportunity to evaluate Witkacy's pronouncements for themselves. It is difficult to say which are more enjoyable to read—Witkacy's creative works or his essays. In both he speaks as though he were alive.

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INSATIABILITY: A NOVEL IN TWO PARTS. By *Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz*.

Translated and with an introduction and commentary by *Louis Iribarne*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977. xlvi, 447 pp. \$15.00.

A "dystopia" set in the not too distant future (perhaps the twentieth or twenty-first century?), *Insatiability* (written in 1927 and published in 1930) describes a world which has yielded to regressive impulses. Toward the end of the book, individualism has given way to collectivism, and a society has emerged in which "each could do as he pleased, as long as he went about it in a prescribed manner." These changes are introduced into Europe by the Chinese whose aim is "to destroy everything first, then create a new man and rid the world of the poison of the white race." They succeed by means of their superior organization, their religion of "Djevanism" (which seeps through to central and western Europe long before the actual military conquest takes place), and, finally, by force. Political developments have been caused by the rise of China and the upsurge of interest in drugs and in Eastern mysticism. The discipline through terror which prevails in the Chinese army is strangely reminiscent of Stalin's way of dealing with those subordinates who happened to have made a mistake.

This futuristic scenario is heavily peppered with sex. A good part of the book is devoted to the love affair between Zipcio, a nineteen-year-old Polish cadet, and the Russian-born and fortyish Princess di Ticonderoga, who guides the young man through