

few minor points are made about his incorporation in his work of passages in foreign languages, his use of neologisms, and so forth. It might have been better to devote a separate section to structural devices, which at present are mixed in with the plots.

The section called "Characters" is the one that lends itself best to the procedure adopted by Professor Lee. But even here one might wish that the author had dispensed with a certain amount of repetitiousness and raised, for instance, the question of possible prototypes for Aldanov's nonhistorical characters, at least in the novels about our own time or about the recent Russian past (such as *Istoki* and *Samoubiistvo*).

The book is the first full-length study of Aldanov the novelist. Its main defect is perhaps to be seen in its very "richness," its excessive detailization. Those among the readers who are not very familiar with Aldanov's work will certainly get a good idea of what his fiction is about, and even what it is like, and may be prompted to read some of the novels for themselves. Those who know their Aldanov may find this very conscientious study insufficiently selective and somewhat deficient in critical evaluation, despite keen observations scattered here and there. There is very little discussion of Aldanov as an historical novelist in relation to his pre-revolutionary predecessors or his Soviet contemporaries. True, there are frequent juxtapositions with Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, mainly to illustrate their differences (and this despite Aldanov's almost unbounded admiration for Tolstoy: the latter and Bunin were for him the two greatest Russian prose writers of all times). The complex relationship between Aldanov and Tolstoy is taken up again in the book's conclusion—in connection with Aldanov's ideas (in the conclusion one more section is added to the three in the chapters about the novels: "D. Ideas").

At the end of the book there is an extensive, but somewhat capriciously organized, bibliography, and also a table of those of Aldanov's works which are discussed in the book, arranged in the chronological order of their historical setting and thus beginning with *Punch Vodka* (1762) and ending with *Nightmare and Dawn* (Bred, 1953).

Like so many of Mouton's publications in Slavistics, the book unfortunately has more than the usual share of misprints. I also found the abundance of *op. cit.* and *loc. cit.* references in footnotes rather annoying and often confusing: it is not always clear what particular works *op.* and *loc.* stand for.

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A SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY: MEMOIRS, 1917–1922. By *Viktor Shklovsky*.

Translated from the Russian by *Richard Sheldon*. With a historical introduction by *Sidney Monas*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1970. xlvii, 304 pp. \$10.00.

This memoir, written fitfully over the period of 1919 to 1922 and first published in Berlin in 1923, during Shklovsky's short-lived exile, is a fascinating performance. A deliberately disjointed, fragmentary, digressive narrative, mixing scenes of revolutionary turmoil and Civil War atrocities with lyrical meanderings, snatches of literary theorizing, and vivid glimpses of the literary life in Petrograd, *A Sentimental Journey* is a remarkable implementation of Shklovsky's Formalist poetics, with its emphasis on discontinuity and displacement. By the same token, the encounter between the realities of the War and the Revolution and the narrator's

freewheeling, iconoclastic sensibility offers a singular, and singularly revealing, perspective on a turbulent era.

The medium and the message are closely intertwined. Shklovsky's central literary strategy—an abrupt, unmotivated “semantic shift”—is an apt vehicle for the mounting perplexity of the protagonist caught between two incompatible postures, those of a passive victim and/or ironic spectator of cataclysmic events and of a thinking man of action trying in vain to influence the course of history or at least to make some sense of it: “I'm thinking that I should have probably let the Revolution go past me. . . . When you fall like a stone you don't need to think; when you think, you don't need to fall; I confused two occupations” (p. 133).

Some of this wistfulness can be credited to the speaker's immediate predicament: had he managed to eschew political involvement, specifically an inconclusive association with the SR's, he would not have had to flee abroad in 1922. Yet this, in all fairness, is only part of the story. Though the tone of *A Sentimental Journey* occasionally verges on the apologetic, the trouble-shooter of Russian Formalism had not yet lost his nerve. The pluck and irreverence of Shklovsky's early writings are very much in evidence here. The moral, if any, to be gleaned from the bewildering and violence-ridden journey is the ultimate irrelevance of *all* political ideologies including victorious Bolshevism, seen here as a forceful but quixotic attempt to superimpose a grand design on the intractable “anarchy of life.”

One of Shklovsky's most characteristic devices is a casual shift from a blood-curdling Civil War incident to a generalization bearing on the nature of art or the structure of the novel. The discrepancy between the starkness of the narrator's plight and the esotericity of his theoretical concerns is richly ironic. On the face of it, there is something mildly ludicrous, indeed “absurd,” about exploring the “connections between plot devices and general stylistic devices” while “people were dying and corpses were hauled on sleds.” At the same time this ability to carry out intricate intellectual projects under extreme stress is an eloquent testimony to the individual's—especially the gifted individual's—nearly unlimited resilience and resourcefulness. In fact, one of the most pervasive and most appealing themes in *A Sentimental Journey* is the celebration of the quest for form as a uniquely human mode of control over chaos, the delight in what Sidney Monas calls “the spirit of improvisation that finds it [form] and, in excess of reason, uses it with skill, zest and originality” (p. xlvii).

All in all, *A Sentimental Journey* is vintage Shklovsky. Richard Sheldon's introduction is informative and competent, though for my taste not sufficiently critical of Shklovsky's post-1930 writings. Also, it is somewhat misleading to call *A Sentimental Journey* a “superb specimen of ornamental prose.” Its aphoristic, staccato style owes more to Rozanov than to Remizov or Bely. Sidney Monas's historical introduction is brilliantly perceptive; the notes are eminently helpful. The translation on the whole is serviceable though there are occasional infelicities. “Siu-zhet kak iavlenie stilia” means “the plot as a stylistic phenomenon” rather than “the plot as a manifestation of style.” Sheldon seems to have a bit of trouble with Galician place names; there is no particular reason for using the German “Stanislaw” instead of the Russian “Stanislavov,” or, preferably, the Polish “Stanisławów.” But these are mere quibbles. Cornell University Press has put us all in its debt by offering a creditable English version of a Russian modernist landmark, the more so since, not surprisingly, the original has not been reprinted since 1929.

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