ciety. Despite a brief flourishing of satire in the 1920s, it was silenced after Stalin came to power. His slogan of "self-criticism" was key in transforming the journalistic feuilleton and newspaper reports into propaganda tools and denunciations.

The glasnost policy, beginning in 1987, opened up public discussion, but censorship and Party control continued. The feuilleton was reborn as a vehicle for subtle irony or sarcastic commentary about Soviet life. Feuilletonists wrote about social and economic problems, culling many of their ideas from readers' letters. The feuilleton "contributed to the processes of revelation, exposure and public debate" during these early days of glasnost, writes Ryan-Hayes. But as the limits of glasnost were pushed back ever further, reportage eclipsed the feuilleton. The genre was in decline as early as 1989. As one writer quoted by the author says, "people tired of allegory. They want to read concrete harsh direct truth."

Included in the book are feuilletons by Leonid Likhodeev, Lev Novozhenov, Eduard Grafov, Iurii Makarov, Marina Lebedeva, and Leonid Treer. All were contributors to liberal or moderate Soviet newspapers including Moskovskii novosti, Izvestiia, and Moskovskii komsomollets. The pieces capture life in the last years of Communist power: the grey poverty, the queues, alcoholism, lethargy, the senseless bureaucracy and corruption. Lebedeva, who wrote for Izvestiia on women's issues, tells the story of an alcoholic woman trapped in a state rehabilitation home. Makarov describes how the laziness and incompetence of Soviet partners in a foreign joint venture lead to its destruction. Treer, writing in the telegraphic, absurdist style of Zoshchenko, offers kooky solutions to the Soviet Union's hard currency shortage. And Novozhenov satirizes popular fears about the shift to a market economy.

The main weakness of this book about humor is its utter lack of humor. The chapters dealing with the genre's style and structure, and the sketches of the Soviet feuilletonists themselves are dry and clinical. Although the author says that she interviewed some of the writers, she offers no real insights into these people. She says nothing about the pressures they faced working under the Soviet system or about the editorial controls and the censorship at newspapers. The translations are useful, but they are most often stiff and not funny.

This book is an interesting addition to the history of Soviet journalism. Unfortunately, it captures none of the exhilarating spirit of journalism during the period of glasnost — a journalism that sent millions of people scurrying to newspaper kiosks and inspired intense discussions at kitchen tables across the country.

Jennifer Clibbon


Andrei Bitov (1937-) occupies a prominent place in twentieth-century Russian literature. He began publishing widely in the 1960s, and ever since then his prose has had a reputation of being original, "difficult" and "cerebral. Although Bitov has attracted considerable critical attention — at least two doctoral dissertations and many articles, mostly in Russian — there existed up to now no coherent study of his work in its entirety. Chances' book fills this gap in Bitov scholarship. Her passionately written monograph is the product of sinupulous research. Her detailed interpretative exploration of his writings makes it invaluable for everyone interested in modern Russian literature. Chances's stated goal is to provide a comprehensive study of Bitov to the academic community. Her book is consistently explanatory, written in an easy lucid style ac-
cessible not only to academics but to the general reader as well. Her careful contextualization of Bitov's prose within the Russian literary tradition is enormously helpful in understanding its cultural-historical roots as well as its implied or explicit intertextual connections and references.

In chapter 1, Chances discusses the generic versatility of Bitov's prose — he has written short stories, a novel, poetry, philosophical essays, literary criticism, essays, film scenarios — and its resonance with social, historical, psychological, and ethical issues posed by nineteenth- and twentieth-century classical Russian literature. She traces Bitov's roots to such diverse writers as Pushkin, Gogol', Tolstoi, Dostoevskii, Iurii Olesha, Daniil Kharms, Belyi, Pasternak, Nabokov, and Zoshchenko, to name but the most prominent among them. Because Bitov repeatedly refers to these authors, as well as other literary, cultural, and historical texts, his prose is rich in intertextual allusion. Chances carefully points out this "literariness" of Bitov's works and elucidates Bitov's embeddedness within the Russian classical heritage. Chances further demonstrates the internal connections of different fragments of Bitov's writings in a larger meaningful whole.

Besides these literary and metaleterary dimensions, Bitov's prose reflects his deep awareness of the "relationship of the human being to his/her natural environment, and culture, biological niche." (p. 10) For Chances, Bitov is an "ecologist" because he respects "nature's ecosystem" and is attentive to the relationships between individuals and their environment. It is no accident, then, that Chances' study is subtitled The Ecology of Inspiration. For her, Bitov's work shows life as "a dynamic, living, breathing, moving whole." (p. 13)

In the following chapters, Chances leads us through Bitov's world from his early collection of 1961, The Big Balloon, to the novel Pushkin House (published in the West in 1978), on to his writings of the 1980s. The unifying theme of Chances' analysis is that Bitov is breaking down the boundaries between his works by recycling the same characters, events, and parts of stories in different texts. This recycling, according to Chances, allows him to "forge connections to the past" and reveal "life's creative cycle." (p. 92)

Each of Chances's chapter titles includes the title of one of Bitov's books and its key themes under discussion at that point. Thus, chapter 2 focuses on The Big Balloon and the development of Bitov's favorite character: a creative, sensitive individual who has to find a balance between his creative needs and everyday reality. Chapters 3 and 4 deal with two other collections from the 1960s, Such a Long Childhood and Dacha District. The former is a farewell to childhood and a transition to adulthood; the latter continues this theme into the central character's maturation, creativity, and life cycles. Chapters 5 and 6 examine the theme of life and its manifestations in Bitov's Apothecary Island and Image of Life. Chances's analysis of Bitov's generically unusual story, "The Wheel" (1972), included in gof Life is among the best in her study. The circular symbolism of the story enables us to see that life is full of "overlapping orbits, intersecting circles, circles that beget circles, links in a chain of circles." Everything is interconnected in Bitov's world and everything has parallels. Thus, the critic points out, living and writing are similar. One only needs to be patient enough to see how out of formlessness form will emerge.

The following short chapter, devoted to Seven Journeys, treats the theme of journeys to other lands as well as internal journeys. In geographical and cultural terms it highlights Bitov's love and appreciation of Armenia and Georgia.

In the analysis of The Days of Man in chapter 8, Chances reinforces her earlier statement that Bitov's texts exist in dynamic interaction with each other and demonstrate "variety and unity of life." (p. 183) Chances also returns to another of Bitov's major themes, the individual's