Milner-Gulland's excellent "Khlebnikov's eye" provides an interesting discussion of the role of visual images in Velimir Khlebnikov's verse. Noting the poet's close ties with the artist Vladimir Tatlin, Milner-Gulland refers to Khlebnikov as a painter with words, with the interaction among the arts typical for his time. The text emerges as much a visual as a verbal entity.

In "Cinematic literature and literary cinema . . .," Michalski explores cinematic elements principally in Iurii Olesha's prose, as well as Olesha's scriptwriting. A discussion of Abram Room, who directed Olesha's Strogii iunosha (Strict Youth), rounds out Michalski's essay. Her contribution is interesting and significant, but reference to Kazimiera Ingdahl's and the reviewer's own work would have made it more comprehensive.

Wachtel's "Meaningful voids . . ." considers "facelessness" in Kazimir Malevich's later paintings in relation to the novels of Andrei Platonov, especially Kotlovan (The Foundation Pit) and Chevengur. While Wachtel provides valuable comments about Malevich and Platonov, his comments on facelessness in Western works, notably, Giorgio di Chirico's and Henri Matisse's, miss the crucial point that faceless figures in these pieces face each other instead of "looking" blankly out of the canvas.

Chester's "Painted mirrors . . ." focuses on Nataliia Goncharova's and Marina Tsvetaeva's use of space in their respective media. Constricted space and an impression of lurking sin are, Chester states, common to both women, whose sense of a limited world echoes earlier treatments in the work of the painter Mariia Bashkirtseva and the writer Evgeniia Tur from several decades earlier. Both Goncharova and Tsvetaeva, notes Chester in her interesting piece, are significant not only as participants in Modernism, but also as women bringing a feminine sensibility to bear on their work.

In sum, the present collection is, on the whole, well done. This reviewer was gratified to see that it concludes with a bibliography, a vital component missing far too often from contemporary scholarship.

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This interesting collection of short articles on Russian prose writer Andrei Platonov is the first of two volumes to result from a conference of the British Neo-Formalist Circle held in September 2000. The conference, which brought together some of the best-known scholars of Platonov from Europe and the United States, was the quintessential scholarly gathering. Everyone in attendance was fascinated with the same rich subject, and two days around a single table at Oxford University provided the perfect intimate opportunity to discuss the author and the state of Platonovedenie in depth. The results, gathered here by guest editor and conference participant Angela Livingstone, suggest that the field is both complex and vibrant and will remain so for years to come.
The eleven essays included here are suggestive rather than definitive works. They raise general questions about various aspects of Platonov's work, particularly Chevengur, Dzhan, and Happy Moscow; and they indicate numerous areas in which additional work is needed. Although the scholars represented here are familiar with each other's work, it will please readers to know that the essays disagree with and contradict one another on several occasions. Valerii Viugin, for example, treats the "politics of enigma" in Platonov's work, particularly in Chevengur, as a creative principle. Viugin, who has worked extensively on the author's archival manuscripts, argues that Platonov's artistic method involved the deliberate creation of riddles in the text. According to Viugin, Platonov achieves this "reduction of form" by gradually excising more and more of the text until "only a few key words" (p. 7) remain to hint at the important ideas contained within. Viugin's examples are intriguing, especially since he argues that Platonov began to move away from this device in the mid-1930s.

Viugin notes in passing that other aspects of Platonov's poetics contradict the principle of reduction, and it is just such alternative "amplification of form" (p. 9) that Eric Naiman chooses to foreground in his essay on Happy Moscow. While acknowledging the role of compression in Platonov's creative process, Naiman argues that the density of Platonov's text nevertheless "conveys the feeling that too much has been left in" (p. 96). Naiman isolates and evaluates individual components of this verbal density by looking at what he calls "lexical heroes" in Happy Moscow. He contends that Platonov saw that the "corruption of the communist ideal . . . occurred . . . through the degradation of concepts by words" (p. 98). Naiman follows this degradation from Solov'ev's sobornost' to Happy Moscow's ubornost' with typical insouciance, highlighting as he goes some of the most unusual and telling moments of the text.

Other essays offer broad keys to interpreting Platonov's prose. Olga Meerson re-familiarizes Shklovskii's concept of "defamiliarization" to argue that Platonov's technique draws the reader in "by pretending (at least for a while) that the abnormal is normal, either by hiding the important or by gliding past the strange, the audacious, the unbearable, or the logically faulty" (p. 22). Thomas Seifrid contends that the "sense of belatedness" (p. 38) that pervades Platonov's work is evidence of the author's "dialogue with the genre of the [Soviet] novel" (p. 43). Robert Hodel uses the concept of "narrative modality" to trace a line of evolution in Russian literature from Chekhov through Platonov and on to Dmitrii Prigov, all of whom "perspectivize the narrator speech" (p. 50) that Hodel highlights.

Two of the essays focus specifically on Platonov's musicality. Robert Chandler, who has undertaken the heroic task of translating Platonov into English, offers some brief but memorable comments on the joys and difficulties of that process. Angela Livingstone, in her essay on music in Chevengur, notes Platonov's fascination with the "origin of musical sound" (p. 58) and his argument in Chevengur that the act of "listening to the primal sound" (p. 67) is tied to utopian striving.

Both Hamid Ismailov and Marina Koch-Lubouchkine discuss Platonov's still understudied work Dzhan. Ismailov approaches Dzhan as a Sufi treatise and offers useful background information to support his assertion that the story is a religious text in which Platonov creates a "virtual God, a minus-God" of emptiness (p. 78). Koch-