Criticism of the Strugatskii Brother's Work

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The Strugatskii brothers, working in tandem, have indubitably been the path-breakers of Soviet Science Fiction (SF) since 1958, when they began publishing their first stories. Arkadii Natanovich Strugatskii was born in 1925, worked as a specialist for Japanese language in the Institute of Technical Information and from the end of the 1950's as editor in the State Publishing House in Moscow. Boris, born in 1933, is an astronomer working in the Pulkovo observatory near Leningrad.

Considerable critical attention has been devoted to them inside, and some outside, the Soviet Union. Their works and horizons have in fact been in the center of Soviet critical debates on SF for the last dozen years or so. Not only can the intensity and direction of debates about this genre be gauged from their *fortune*, but their work has posed some of the most interesting theoretical and sociological questions for SF criticism.

In this essay I shall attempt a brief survey of the critical reception accorded to the Strugatskiis, based on the bibliography of 96 critical units in part II. Although it will not be possible here to enter into any systematic evaluation of their opus (I hope to do that at another time), a brief chronological table of their works is indispensable for the understanding of the essay. The order followed is: Title; (English translation); Probably written in; Place, Publisher, Year of first publication in book form, Number of pages; Abbreviation to be used in this essay. A number of stories and longer works were published in periodicals before (or indeed instead of) being collected in book form, and critical discussion may refer to such an earlier date. All the works are novels or long stories unless otherwise specified:

Страна багровых туз; (Country of Crimson Clouds); 1956-58; М.: «Детиз», 1959. 296 стр.; Sbt.

Шесть сниток (1 long and 6 short stories); (Six Matches); 1957-59; «Детиз», 1960. 208 стр.; Ss.

Путь на Амальтео (title long-story and 3 short stories); (Destination: Amaltheia); 1959; М.: «Мол. гвардия», 1960. 144 стр.; PnA.
A long story or novel entitled Гадкие лебеди (The Ugly Swans), due to be published at «Мол. гвардия» in 1968, has never seen the light.