

film emerges from Beumer's discussion, rightly, as a product of its author rather than that of the film's immediate production circumstances. She suggests, if one had to pick one of many themes she addresses, that the film's goal was to offer the Russian answer to the European cultural project.

The most valuable sections for teaching, as was the case with the *KinoFiles*, are those on production history and reception. This is simply because these are the most time-consuming and difficult for an instructor to reconstruct (and they are also the easiest for the undergraduates to relate to). Indeed, some of the most valued insights in these three volumes come from news reports and press releases (Beumers), archival documents (First), and an interview with the director (Grinberg). If anything, in future volumes the editors should not shy away from including more exhaustive production histories. What may be shortened or even skipped are the sections dedicated to analysis, which in the case of these volumes means a reading of the film scene by scene and shot by shot. Although close textual analysis has been a staple of academic writing on film for generations, the tradition to include it developed partly when it was harder than it is today for readers to view older films. Perhaps in future installments it might be possible to recast the close-analysis parts as sections on the film's themes (Beumers includes such a section in her volume), form and structure, cast and crew, and place in world cinema (genres, themes, and stylistic approaches). Also, to avoid squeezed and stretched images, the illustrations should conform to the films' actual aspect ratios.

These and future *KinoSputniks* will be cherished by Russian-film fans and used in courses on Russian cinema and culture. All three contribute not only to the project of writing Russian film history, but also to explorations of Russian/Soviet culture and history. In fact, whether this was intended or not, all three ultimately address the question of nationality and nation in Russian and Soviet culture: the controversial treatment of the Jews in *The Commissar*, the celebration of the Ukrainians in *Shadows*, and the place of Russia vis-à-vis the west in *Russian Ark*.

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Fourteen Little Red Huts and Other Plays. By Andrei Platonov. Ed. Robert Chandler. Trans. Robert Chandler, Jesse Irwin, and Susan Larson. New York: Columbia University Press, 2016. Notes. Bibliography. Photographs. \$40.00, hard bound. \$19.95, paper. \$18.99, e-book.

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Robert Chandler's name has long been deservedly associated with those who read and teach Russian literature in translation, particularly the work of Andrei Platonov. Either as an individual or in collaboration with other translators, Chandler has made it possible for those who do not read Russian to become acquainted with works far beyond *The Foundation Pit* (*Kotlovan*), that mainstay of Russian literature classes. One of Chandler's most valuable contributions in expanding access to lesser-known works by Platonov is his translations of many of the great writer's late-career reinterpretations of Russian fairy tales, published in *Russian Magic Tales from Pushkin to Platonov* (2013). In that collection, Chandler does a thorough job introducing the general reader to Platonov through a brief biographical sketch, but also includes in the footnotes a great deal of material that will prove valuable to those who are reading these short tales within the context of longer, more famous works.

Fourteen Little Red Huts and Other Plays provides a service similar to that of *Russian Magic Tales*. In the fullest-to-date collected works of Platonov published by

Vremia in 2011, the plays and screenplays take up an entire volume of more than seven hundred pages, almost all works that have until now been inaccessible to those who do not read Russian. The sole exception is *The Hurdy-Gurdy* (*Sharmanka*), from 1930, Susan Larsen's translation of which first appeared in the Yale journal *Theater* in the fall of 1989. The version here represents a collaboration with Chandler that is based on a more accurate Russian text. The third translated work is *Grandmother's Little Hut* (*Izbushka babushki*), a short, unfinished play from 1938. These are "deep cuts" within Platonov's body of work, and we should be grateful not only to Chandler and his collaborators for having translated them, but also to Columbia University Press for having published them because plays are a vanishingly small niche in the publishing world.

In his 2009 *A Companion to Andrei Platonov's The Foundation Pit*, Thomas Seifrid writes that "the typists who had to prepare Platonov's manuscripts for publication would request triple the normal rate of pay—not because of his handwriting, which was clear enough, but because it was impossible with his texts, as was possible for others writers, to remember an entire phrase by looking at its first few words. Every word had to be checked painstakingly to make sure the typescript followed what Platonov had written" (Seifrid, 171). It is instructive to keep this anecdote in mind when considering the "readability" of translations of Platonov. The best translation of his work will feature language that is bewildering and disorienting. Chandler, Irwin, and Larsen have succeeded in preserving this feature of Platonov's prose as much as possible. This feature is amplified in his plays, in which there is no narrative voice to cushion the blows of the characters' dialogue. The three entries in *Fourteen Little Red Huts* are a challenge to reader, performer, and audience member alike—but this is appropriate and necessary. For example, in scene 1.3 of *The Hurdy-Gurdy*, Klokov insists that the collective farm on which the play is set is following directives from above regarding crayfish: Мы уже взяли установку на организацию рачьих пучин—так бы и надо держать (Platonov 7: 73). Typical of Platonov's explorations of the contradictions of Collectivization, this phrase is a mutilated hybrid of misused official speech and unexpected, horrifying sources of "raw material." The translation preserves this strange balance exceptionally well: "We adopted the Party line for the organization of fleshy crayfish deeps—and we should be guided by it" (25).

Although teachers of Russian literature and their students will no doubt make up the vast majority of this book's readership, *Fourteen Little Red Huts* need not be confined to the scholarly sphere. Chandler gives an account of his having staged and directed a Russian-language performance of *Fourteen Little Red Huts* at Queen Mary College, University of London in 2006. Now that this play and the two others in the volume are available in English, it would be laudable to see them performed. As Chandler writes, "I am confident that these plays live in English, and that they can be brought to life in theaters in the English-speaking world" (185). The English-language theater world would do well to move away from repeated revivals and reinterpretations of Chekhov's late plays and to move on to other deserving works of the Russian theater, including challenging material of the type that Chandler and his co-translators have made available.

A minor objection should be made to the decision to render in English some of the Russian "talking names" of the characters. For instance, in *Fourteen Little Red Huts*, the last name Zhovov (from *zhevat'*, to chew) is rendered as "Glutonov"; Uborniak (from *ubornaia*, toilet) as Latrinov; and Suetina (from *sueta*, vanity, trifle) as Futilla. In his introduction, Chandler writes that "we have chosen to re-create [these names] rather than simply to transliterate them" (xxi). While this approach is interesting, the resulting "Russlish" blends—English words with Russian endings—are jarring to those who read both languages, akin to watching an English-language movie dubbed into Russian in which the original dialogue is still audible. Furthermore, this

translation decision carries with it the implication that other talking names, from Nikolai Gogol's Chichikov to Fedor Dostoevskii's Raskol'nikov, should undergo a similar treatment—an odd prospect, indeed. Still, we can thank the translators for having made this choice in that it will likely prove productive in classes in which the problems of literary translation are a topic of discussion.

This last criticism is minor. Chandler, Irwin, and Larsen have produced a volume that will prove valuable in both in the classroom and on stage. It helps place Platonov alongside Bulgakov and Maiakovskii as one of the key playwrights of the early Soviet period.

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Leaving Footprints in the Taiga: Luck, Spirits and Ambivalence among the Siberian Orochen Reindeer Herders and Hunters. By Donatas Brandišauskas.

New York: Berghahn, 2017. xiii, 291 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Glossary. Index. Illustrations. Photographs. Figures. Tables. Maps. \$120.00, hard bound.

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Leaving Footprints in the Taiga by Donatas Brandišauskas is, in so many ways, a wonderful book. Based on seventeen months of substantial fieldwork among a small community of Orochen reindeer herders and hunters living east of Lake Baikal, Brandišauskas examines an Orochen ontology of *kutu*, or luck. In looking at *kutu* in particular through the beliefs and practices of the Zhumaneev-Aruneev kin group, an extended family that hunts and herds reindeer in the Zabaikal Province and Buriatiia, he analyzes Orochen *kutu* as a complex practice and idea that includes creating and sustaining good relationships between humans, humans and animals, and humans and the spirit world. The way in which such relationships are produced and maintained is key to Orochen hunters' success to tracking and killing animals, as well as to securing future fortune and luck. By extension, a *kutuchi*, or lucky person, is a person who follows cultural rules that help him or her to express respect for and gratitude to guardian or master spirits, and to maintain a living energy (*musun*) that flows through humans, animals, and plants. While Orochen hunters acknowledge that *kutu* cannot be constant and fluctuates, a lucky person must nevertheless continuously use her or his knowledge and skills to enable good fortune and fate.

Much of what Brandišauskas describes and knows about Orochen hunting ontology and culture was collected 2004–11, although he also makes excellent use of pre-Soviet and Soviet ethnographic sources and texts. On the one hand, Brandišauskas' ethnographic experience enables him to delineate significant cultural practices that ensure and maintain *kutu*, and show the knowledge, skill, and expertise involved in its maintenance: for example, taking care of *omiruks* (miniature figures or figurines) that act as guardians, using pieces of animals—sable fur or the upper jaw of a moose with teeth attached—to attract luck, reading “natural” signs to assist trapping, and guarding the words one pronounces and speaks. What is at stake here is not only a cultural definition of luck—*kutu* is clearly set in contradistinction to a more western understanding of luck as a chance-like incident—but also the notion of a cultural self that is not always already seen as bounded but marked by complex interrelations with other humans, animals, plants and external phenomena such as thunder and wind. On the other hand, the temporal length of his research enables Brandišauskas to present an Orochen world that is also subject to change. Like so many others who have lived through the post-Soviet economic and political transition, Orochen