According to many experts,
Are surely
Much poorer
Than if he had minded his own business
And simply written poems,
Looking for his own style
And his own place on the literary scene (45).

A similar satirical wit appears in "Poema Americanum," in which a visit to a west coast university prompts the poet to reflect on his own marginality: "in time you will stop being a person / whose acquaintance is sought out by the slavic studies professors / wishing to appear more radical" (133). In this poem, as throughout the entire volume, the translation deftly captures the contrasts between a multitude of voices and perspectives, allowing Arseniev's multifaceted authorial presence to appear starkly on the page.

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Devastation and Laughter: Satire, Power, and Culture in the Early Soviet State, 1920s–1930s. By Annie Gérin. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018. xvii, 255 pp. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations. Plates. Photographs. $60.00, hard bound.
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This valuable volume addresses the use of satire—as rhetorical mode, aesthetic technique, and ideological weapon—within early Soviet public culture, especially in the visual arts (advertising and poster art), cinema, theater, and the circus. Over six chapters preceded by a theoretically oriented introduction, Annie Gérin follows Soviet satire from its birth in post-revolutionary fervor, through its troubled adolescence in the 1920s, to its dissolution in a "humor" culture aligned with the dictates of Socialist Realism. Deploying both contemporary and historical theories of the comic, Gérin makes a persuasive case for the continuity of Russian humor culture through the centuries.

Underpinning her analysis is a deep engagement with the ideas of Anatolii Lunacharskii—erstwhile God-Builder, Old Bolshevik, and People's Commissar of Enlightenment from 1917 to 1929. Initially granted a great deal of latitude, Lunacharaskii was gradually pushed aside as Stalin consolidated power. Following his death in 1933, his Commission for the Study of Satirical Genres, created three years earlier as part of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, was shuttered. His magnum opus on satire remained unfinished, and in his absence, the specific vision of Soviet satire he had developed went into decline.

Gérin's in-depth treatment of Lunacharskii's theoretical works offers insight into the similarities between pre- and post-revolutionary humor culture in Russia. Russian rulers, in fact, had been co-opting satire for centuries before the 1917 revolutions. As Gérin points out, the Bakhtinian carnivalesque was never restricted to the "realm of the popular" in Russia; Peter the Great, for instance, was a master of weaponizing laughter against the disenfranchised as a means of cementing his authority. (22) After Peter, Russian popular genres like that *chastushka* and *lubok* became "didactic instruments and political tools" rather than expressions of popular sentiment (23). By the nineteenth century, satire had returned to the people—at least, to a small subset

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of them: among the intelligentsia, it was the object of both "erudite deliberation" and a method of critique. (25)

Like Vissarion Belinskii, Nikolai Chernyshevskii, Nikolai Dobroliubov, and Aleksandr Herzen, Lunacharskii believed satire to be an important political instrument. Unlike his predecessors, however, he was in the unique position to implement his theory of satire as both weapon (*oruzhie*) and tool (*orudie*). Specifically, Lunacharskii promoted satire as a means of discursively destroying "the outmoded, the residual, and the deviant," clearing away pre-revolutionary detritus to create *Lebensraum* for the nascent Soviet state. By analyzing Lunacharskii's theoretical writings on the functions of satire, Gérin emphasizes the mobilizing function of Soviet laughter, which was called upon to perform the difficult task of transforming Russia's "spontaneous masses" into a disciplined population well-versed in the emerging norms of Soviet ideology.

An interesting feature of Lunacharskii's understanding of satire is its reliance on cognitive dissonance. By calling attention to an issue only to immediately destroy it through mockery, Lunacharskii wrote, satire should evoke laughter while showing that the "evil" being criticized "does not merit serious attention" (33). Accordingly, as the 1920s gave way to the 1930s, Soviet satire often acted not only to identify social ills, but also to dehumanize political opponents—enacting a "symbolic destruction" that would soon assume a very real dimension (171).

Lunacharskii's writings form an effective framing device for Gérin's engagement with early Soviet visual culture. Chapter 2 connects Lunacharskii's ideas with the development of early Soviet illustrated satirical journals and poster art as outlets for mocking the flaws and pitfalls of post-revolutionary life. Chapter 3 treats the "emergence of a satirical scene" within circus and theater performance over the course of the 1920s (74), while Chapter 4 chronicles the decline of satire in early Soviet cinema after 1928. In Chapter 5, Gérin groups the rhetorical strategies of Soviet satirists into four categories: caricature, collage, parody, and irony, each of which receives detailed and theoretically-deft attention. *Devastation and Laughter's* final chapter shows that satire, being an inherently volatile modality, could never be brought under the total control of even Stalinist authority, which Gérin postulates as one of the reasons for its institutional decline in the Soviet context.

Devastation and Laughter sheds light on the origins, functions, and nature of early Soviet satire, and is especially useful as a study of Anatolii Lunacharskii. It is sure to be a helpful resource in a wide variety of subfields within Russian and east European studies, including but not limited to its author's field of origin, Art History.

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Redemption. By Friedrich Gorenstein. Trans. Andrew Bromfield. New York: Columbia University Press, 2018. xxviii, 199 pp. $30.00, hard bound, $14.95, paper, $13.99, E-book.
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Fridrikh Gorenshtein (1932–2002) was a Russian Jewish writer renowned in the early 1970s for his screenplay for Andrei Tarkovskii's film *Solaris*. He was known among Moscow writers and directors for largely unpublished fiction that broke with the literary conventions of the intelligentsia. This milieu knew Gorenshtein, too, for the unusual figure he cut: for his "shtetl" accent, his ornate sartorial style, and his disdain for Moscow-elite mores. Gorenshtein saw himself as a silenced outsider,

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