

nial Caribbean aesthetic; the second is a compelling analysis of Samuel Beckett's indebtedness to Eisenstein's theory. For both artists it is 'between the cracks of time and space [that] a new image of inner and outward reality emerges' (p. 197). It is, in my view, in these two artists that the affinity in thinking is clearest.

Paula Quigley assesses the potential of Eisenstein's interest in ideogram as a model for film language as an alternative to the 'powerful, not to mention paradoxical, anti-ocular inflection of film theory' (p. 154). Contrary to post World War II film theorists, in particular French film theorists, who were concerned with the dangers of suture and the illusion of the image, Eisenstein's 'cinematographic writing cannot be accounted for by the signifier/signified model', but instead formed an ideogram writing where 'meaning is produced in the structural relations of the filmic system, rather than in the relation of the image to reality' (p. 161). It is Quigley's assertion that the understanding of the Eisensteinian emphasis on the indexical image offers contemporary film theory a possible rejection of the favoured anti-specular stance.

The indexical of the image is also the concern of Paul Willemen. In a staunch rebuffal of the stance that sees Eisenstein's celebration of the iconic image in the 'new media,' it is Willemen's argument that through a pre-programmed computerisation the image loses its indexicality – its 'body' of the artist, and hence is reduced to assemblage and mechanical organism. The difference between a computer drawn mouse and Mickey Mouse is 'the transmutation of aspects of Disney's body into the drawing of a mouse, and the images created by mice' (p. 185). The loss of the indexical of the image makes the digital image anti-democratic, 'because it makes the administrative control of 'meaning' easier' (p. 180) – as it were, taking the Dadaism out of the montage and infusing it with dictatorial futurism.

Although there are discrepancies, as I have pointed out, this study manages to stay faithful to Eisenstein's theory. This stems from the fact that, by and large, all the essays can coherently be located within the perimeters of the Eisenstein context, and as such this collection is useful to both student and scholars of the montage principle.

John M. Bates

Carl Tighe, *The Politics of Literature. Poland 1945-1989*, University of Wales Press: Cardiff 1999, IX + 412 pp.

Carl Tighe is the author of several works on Polish themes, including a monograph on German-Polish relations, *Gdańsk: National Identity in the German-Polish Borderlands* (1990) and a novel *Burning Worm* (2001), which despite its modernist pretensions, is an evocative account of life in Poland during the early nineteen-eighties. The present

work, by contrast, seeks to analyse the 'relationship between literature and politics' (VII) under the Polish communist regime.

'Literature' here is understood both with a capital and small 'l', but is limited in either case to prose. Individual chapters deal in turn with Jerzy Andrzejewski, Jan Kott, Stanisław Lem, Kazimierz Brandys, Ryszard Kapuściński, Tadeusz Konwicki, and Adam Michnik. Two more general chapters preface these authors, providing a historical and sociological context, and another two locate the writers' concerns within the framework of the Party's general manipulation of language and discuss the consequences of the transition to democracy and the market economy. Potted biographies of principal secondary figures (362-403), not all of whom (e.g. Tadeusz Hołuj, Melchior Wańkowicz, Tymoteusz Karpowicz) appear in the narrative, and an index complete the study. In length and scope, therefore, this is probably the major English-language monograph published over the past ten years that is devoted exclusively to contemporary Polish literature.

The chapters dealing with individual authors largely focus on a single major work: respectively, *Ashes and Diamonds*, *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*, *Solaris*, *A Question of Reality*, *The Emperor*, *A Minor Apocalypse* and *The Church, the Left – Dialogue* – to give them their English titles. Tighe's technique is basically to read the works through their historical and political background, rather than to attempt any critical analysis involving questions of aesthetics. Even on such reductive terms, his account produces statements that are sometimes at best contentious (that '*Ashes and Diamonds* takes place in a Polish town [probably Kraków]', [102], whereas somewhere further east would be a better guess), or simply erroneous. In the latter category can be included such statements as '...within the Writers' Union at their annual conference in June 1956' (144) and '[i]n 1963 the Party shamelessly manoeuvred its own people into the leading positions within the Writers' Union. They ousted chairman Antoni Słonimski...' (146). Annual conferences were a phenomenon of the immediate post-war years (1945-47) and the Gomułka era (1956-69), but the 1956 'conference' ('congress' – *zjazd* – is the term more generally used) took place in November-December. The Party dealt with Słonimski in 1959, though 1963 was important because the infamous Thirteenth Plenum of July that year debated the state of Polish literature in neo-Stalinist terms. The book would have benefited from more attentive proof-reading, particularly in respect of the Polish terminology: '*lewa laicka*' (VIII, sic!) eventually gives way to the correct '*lewica*', but the phrase '*rewizjonist gains of 1956*' (247) offends on a number of linguistic counts, even if the correct singular form were to be employed. Occasionally, too, the footnotes prove enigmatic: a quotation from Jadwiga Staniszkis (298) is glossed additionally with the names of Andrzej Walicki and Tadeusz Konwicki (359).

The structure of the book generates certain reservations. Several chapters have appeared previously as separate articles and not enough has been done to excise the repetitions that appear throughout the text – such as Kazimierz Brandys' diagnosis of 'Polish

unreality' on several occasions (196, 243, 304, 307). The problem perhaps runs deeper, for although different generations of writers are involved, the central experiences (World War II, 1956, 1968-70 and Solidarity) are common and treating each writer in individual chapters means often covering the same ground again. Conversely, Tighe fails to deal properly with socialist realism, where politicians most decisively intervened in literature. This is surprising, because it was a formative experience for most of the writers here, but it is presented only tangentially and largely as a feature of the individual's biography.

Objections may be raised about the selection of individual writers. If Michnik is deemed worthy of a separate chapter, why not Kołakowski? After all, substantial selections of Kołakowski's work, including his fables, have appeared in English. Or is it due to a particular political agenda as evinced by the somewhat enigmatic reference to his displaying 'increasingly reactionary sentiments' in the mid-1980s (294)? The focus on prose presumably explains the exclusion of Mrożek (at least in his capacity as dramatist), who has also been extensively translated, although his work would provide a highly interesting slant on power relations both under state socialism and in conditions of conspiracy. In many respects, Tighe's thesis about the close relations of literature and politics might be better served by using the work of poets such as Herbert, Miłosz, and Różewicz. They would certainly provide greater continuity with the Romantic ethos that is often under discussion within the book.

Ultimately, *The Politics of Literature* begs the larger question of whether it is true that '[i]n Poland, for most of recent history, literature was the continuation of politics by other means' (337). Adam Czerniawski is perhaps the most vocal critic in Britain of the view of nineteenth-century Polish literature as being a political forum, and the examples of the Ukrainian School or the decadent strands of *Młoda Polska*, to name but two contrary trends, bear him out. This may be a case of Tighe's following received Polish opinion in his analysis, as when he asserts that 'only unknown Party writers joined [the new neo-communist Writers' Union in 1983]' (312). This assertion does not take into account the presence of writers like Roman Bratny and Zbigniew Safjan (both inexplicably missing from the narrative and potted biographies), neither of whom could be called 'young and unknown', as well as figures such as the younger Józef Łoziński and Tadeusz Siejak (well known to the cognoscenti who bought *Twórczość*, if no-one else) on the other. However, as a practitioner of teaching Polish literature to non-native speakers of Polish, I have to confess that yoking together literature and politics is an attractive, systematizing thesis, which explains certain phenomena. Problems invariably arise where students attempt to apply the thesis rigidly or assume that it necessarily continues to hold, say, during the inter-war period or after 1989 – not a mistake, I hasten to add, that Tighe makes.

Nonetheless, even under the communists, one is aware of writers whose work does not 'fit the bill', whatever their political sympathies might be. These might include women writers, in the round, such as Wisława Szymborska and Ewa Lipska, and those males

perhaps not easily shoehorned into the canon, like Andrzej Kuśniewicz. I am not entirely convinced by the more apocalyptic statements about 'the destruction of political and moral language' (297). The debasement of language, albeit undoubtedly more acute under state socialism, seems to me a feature of all political systems and the contrary tendency to reclaim its true meaning, whether exemplified by the writings of Józef Tischner or Noam Chomsky, common to them as well. Be that as it may, in spite of its numerous failings, Tighe's book demonstrates considerable thinking about, and research into, the Polish case and, for the British teacher of post-war literary history, constitutes an invaluable resource.

Tadeusz Szczepański

Stalin, Aleksandrow, Szczors i inni

Le Cinéma „stalinien”. Questions d'histoire, sous la dir. de Natacha Laurent, Presses Universitaires du Mirail – La Cinémathèque de Toulouse: Toulouse 2003, ss. 240.

Kino „stalinowskie”. Problemy historyczne to plon konferencji zorganizowanej w maju 2000 roku w Tuluzie przez tamtejszy uniwersytet Le Mirail i miejscową filmotekę – z inicjatywy badaczki kina radzieckiego Nataszy Laurent, współpracowniczki obu tych instytucji i autorki książki poświęconej cenzurze filmowej w czasach stalinowskich (*L'Œil du Kremlin. Cinéma et censure en URSS sous Staline*, 2000). Konferencji towarzyszyła złożona z przeszło sześćdziesięciu filmów retrospektywa poświęcona kinematografii stalinowskiej. Tak bogaty program umożliwiła blisko czterdziestoletnia współpraca tuluskiej Cinémathèque z moskiewskim Gosfilmofondem, dzięki której francuskie archiwum szczyli się imponującym zbiorem radzieckich filmów. Konferencja zgromadziła grono wybitnych znawców filmu, literatury i kultury stalinowskiej – zarówno francuskich, jak i zagranicznych – i ich wystąpienia wyznaczają naukową rangę książki, która przynosi rewizję wielu uproszczonych poglądów na kino epoki stalinowskiej.

W przedmowie do tomu jego redaktorka zwraca uwagę, że dotychczasowe oceny filmów tego okresu, traktowanych z pogardą i lekceważeniem jako efekt nudnej i prostackiej propagandy, przyczyniły się do powstania „obrazu gładkiego, jednolitego i spójnego, co musi budzić podejrzliwość historyka” (s. 11). Tymczasem bardziej wnikliwe i obiektywne spojrzenie *sine ira et studio* na tę formację ideologiczną odsłania cały kompleks fascynujących problemów, które kryją się w labiryncie kulis stalinowskiej dyktatury i jej relacji pomiędzy z jednej strony środowiskiem filmowym a społeczeństwem, czyli kinową widownią, z drugiej. Laurent pisze, że kino stalinowskie oceniano przeważnie z ideologicznego – zarówno z prawa, jak i z lewa – punktu widzenia, a nie naukowego, dzięki czemu