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Title: 'Life-Creation' as Life-Consumption: The Reader as Consumer in Platonov

The 1920s saw a surge in literacy in the Soviet Union, after Lenin's introduction in 1919 of the policy of *likbez*. With the advent of compulsory education and the increased availability of printed material, a new Russian readership emerged. As Party leaders took control of the printing presses immediately after the 1917 revolution, print culture was instrumental in instilling new values into the reading public. Contemporaneously, influenced by Futurism and Constructivism (namely, by those critics associated with the journal *LEF*), some writers during this time expressed ambivalence towards artistic activity as an end in itself, instead emphasizing the values of "life-creation" and "productionism, which called on artists to abandon the 'easel' to designing objects capable of bringing about the utopian transformation of the everyday life of the proletariat." Perhaps no other Soviet writer tried to put this philosophy of productionism into practice more naively and sincerely than Andrei Platonov, and yet a close reading of his work reveals a deep pessimism about the power of language to transform culture, and about the ability of the proletariat to fulfill a sort of Fyodorovian utopian vision by transforming the material world. In *Kotlovan*, the act of "life-creation" is often depicted in the reverse: rather than art creating life, artistic demands leech the life force from workers on the foundation pit, as they are engaged in frenzied production (which, for Platonov, was nearly synonymous with artistic activity). This paper hopes to engage with the extensive Platonov scholarship on the fraught relationship between man and the material world in his works by interrogating the status of the novel and literary language as material objects, and the role of the reader as consumer of this material.