

SHORT BIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY □ □

Lev Livshits (1920-1965) was a talented literary and theatrical scholar and critic, bright public figure and an excellent tutor. Having gone through war, injuries and then Stalin's camps (1950-1954) during the last ten years of his life he managed to finish a Ph.D. thesis about mystic dramatic satire "Shadows" ("Teni") by M.E.Saltikov-Schedrin, to compose (together with M.G.Zeldovich) anthology of critical material "Russian literature of the XIX century " (four editions); to write a number of articles on the theory of literature and criticism, published in such journals as "Filologicheskie nauki", "Voprosi literaturi" and others. Still the main life work for him at this period of time was research on the literary heritage of Isaac Babel and returning this name to literature and readers.

Communicating closely with the writer's widow A.N.Pirojkova, his children, friends and other people who knew Babel well, the scholar collected the largest and for those years the most comprehensive archive, did a lot for the publication of unknown and forgotten works by Babel and unfortunately died at the threshold of writing a large complete monograph about Babel.

The significance and aim of the return of selected works by Lev Livshits are not limited to the rehabilitation of his name or memory. The research principles developed and used in these works, especially in the monograph about the genuine drama by Saltikov-Shchedrin "Shadows" ("Teni") and articles about "Konarmiya" and Babel's drama "Sunset" ("Zakat") have remained important and actual even today.

Between them are a deep, organic immersion of literary phenomena into the context of a historical process; the ability to catch the fine movements and developments of a writer's thought, based on intensive (comprehensive) textological analysis of literary drafts as well as diaries, letters and other documents left by author; fine and exact analysis of images' characters, behavior and psychology.

The fragment from publicist paper representing innovative positions and attitudes to the teaching of the literature in academic milieu and some theater articles from late 40-s which formally evolved into the accusation of Livshits as a "cosmopolite" have also been included in the book.

The memories of friends, pupils and relatives in the appendix help to reconstruct Livshits' charismatic image and his extreme devotion to the literary and social ideals of the epoch. The book is completed by photographs from the family archive and bibliographic index of the main works not included in the present edition. Altogether it turns this edition as a whole into a monument and discovery at the same time.