“Workflows: human labor and bodily energy in the works of Andrei Platonov”

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This paper examines Andrei Platonov's fiction in the context of Soviet public discourse in the 1920s and early 1930s, arguing for this author's centrality to the emerging Stalinist conception of the human body in socialist labor. As the NEP years wore on, theorists as diverse as Aaron Zalkind and Alexei Gastev posited that bodily energies available for labor and sex existed in a zero-sum balance and presented abstinence and sublimation as necessary components of the proper Soviet habitus. With the gradual coalescence of the Stalinist "general line," public rhetoric increasingly fixated on the figure of liquidity, construing bodily fluids and energies as volatile forces that must be regulated to maximize socialist labor productivity. Works such as "Antisexus" (1925-6), "The Ethereal Tract" (1926), and *Happy Moscow* (1933-36) chronicle Platonov's disillusionment with the possibility of perfectly efficient conversion of sexual into labor-ready energy while articulating the Soviet establishment's intensifying commitment to realizing this same possibility.