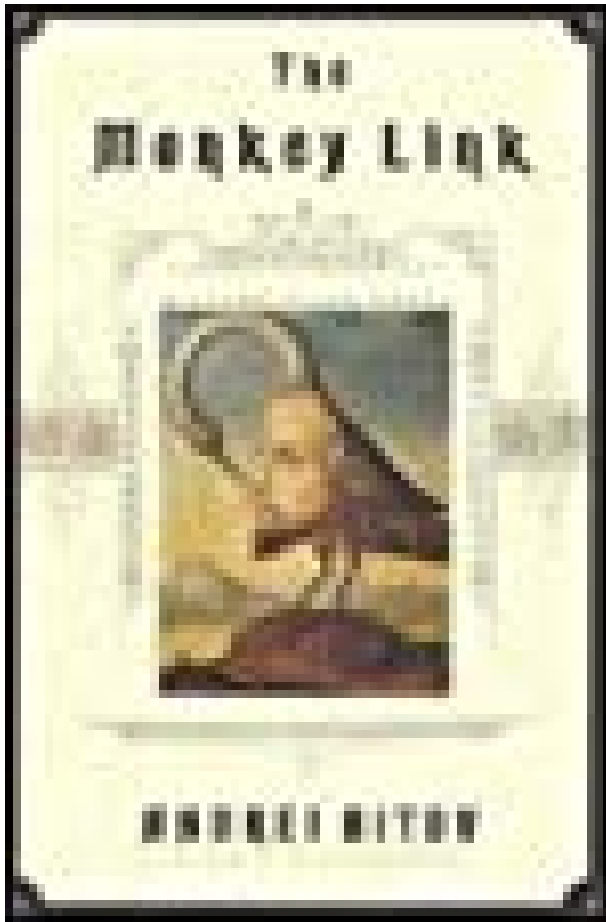


The Monkey Link: A Pilgrimage Novel



Author:	Andrei Bitov
Genre:	Cultural
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Goodreads Rating:	4.33
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Andrei Bitov's first novel in almost a decade is a challenge to the form. Full of talk, philosophical speculation, and dark humor, *The Monkey Link* presents a highly original view of the world and of the former Soviet Union. Andrei Bitov wrote the three tales in the novel between 1971 and 1993, while the Soviet Union moved from peace to war to collapse.

The first tale was published in Russia in 1976, but the second did not appear - and the third could never have been written - until after glasnost. As time flows through the novel, the changing fortunes of the author, the hero, the censor, and their country generate a very complex set of ironies. On the simplest level, *The Monkey Link* is a novel in three acts, a comedy of ideas. In the waning years of the Empire, a poet traverses Russia, from the Baltics to the capital, to the shores of the Black Sea. Along the way, he discusses man's place in the scheme of things with, among others, a very sober scientist and a very drunken landscape painter. He is harassed by the authorities, spends time on a movie set, and is an eyewitness to the August 1991 coup. Intricate in its structure but sweeping in its concerns, this exciting novel confirms Bitov's position as one of the most important writers in Russia today.