

work, that he labored to render victims "heroic," and sought to elevate men to "sainthood."

Of course, any critic, and indeed any reader, is entitled to a personal response to an imaginative work—and especially to one whose ferocity, in substance if not in style, is bound to provoke a wide range of individual reactions. In this sense, Carden's view of Babel is valid enough, though scarcely persuasive to this reviewer, who is struck rather by Babel's inexorable fascination with violence *qua* violence. Carden's perception is also far removed from Lionel Trilling's brilliant observation that Babel's "apparent denial of immediate pathos is a condition of the ultimate pathos the writer conceives."

Carden's attempt to ascribe explicit motives for Babel's choice of heroes and victims, and their juxtaposition, may be the inevitable function of the kind of *examination de texte* that continues, alas, to make impossible demands on some doctoral candidates in literature. Beyond this, one suspects a simple misunderstanding of the creative process. In a letter cited by Carden, Babel wrote (about the story *Pan Apolek*): "I am still correcting the manuscript. Besides the wild Cossacks, common mortals have appeared. I am glad." As any imaginative writer knows, all sorts of characters appear and disappear, in that mysterious flux of creative experience that escapes beneath the artist's hand. Zamiatin has described the process: "As soon as they come alive to me, they will begin to act unerringly on their own. . . . I may try to re-educate them, I may try to build their lives according to plan, but if they are alive, they will inevitably overturn all the plans I may devise for them." Babel's art springs, not from some preconceived design (moral or other), but from the play between the sovereign rigor of his style and the irrepressible forces of violence that moved his universe.

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PARADOX IN THE RELIGIOUS POETRY OF ZINAIDA GIPPIUS. By *Olga Matich*. Centrifuga, Russian Reprintings and Printings, no. 7. Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1972. 127 pp. Paper.

This study is a revised doctoral dissertation presented by Mrs. Matich to the University of California at Los Angeles. It abounds in interesting and valid observations about the "very intense religiosity" (p. 7) of Hippius's poetry. The study is also an attempt "to disprove the poet's already legendary decadent reputation" (p. 7). The formal aspects of Hippius's poems are not discussed, but the description and evaluation of the major religious themes and the peculiar dialectic patterns, characteristic of Zinaida Hippius's poetry, are well done. Unfortunately, the first thirty-six pages of this short study are devoted to various anecdotes about the poet, circulated by her detractors. Mrs. Matich would have achieved a more balanced view of Hippius's complex personality and poetic universe if she had incorporated some of the statements by Hippius's contemporaries who knew her intimately, for example, Georgii Adamovich, Victor Mamchenko, Iurii Terapiano, Count Józef Czapski, and the Swedish artist Greta Gerell, to mention only a few. Furthermore, a critical attitude toward many often ludicrous statements, based on "hearsay" and passed from generation to generation without careful examination, would also have made Mrs. Matich's "Introduction to Zinaida Gippius" more credible and perhaps more valuable to the researcher.

There are also many textual inaccuracies. For instance, the poem "Kak prezhde" (1918) is not dedicated to D. V. Filosofov but to I. I. Bunakov-Fondaminsky; Hippius's references to "new *voliublennost'*" and "new voluptuousness" in her diary *Contes d'amour* have no connection with the poet's personal relationship with a "young, yet old looking, English girl" (p. 72) (reference to the composer Elizabeth Baroness von Overbach?). The dwellers of the underworld in Hippius's poem *The Last Circle* (1943) did not "want to return to life" (p. 109). On the contrary, wishing to avail themselves of time to undergo spiritual purification and attain love, they had no desire "to return to life."

Mrs. Matich's "Selected Bibliography" is outdated and often lists works which contain no reference to the poet, for example, D. V. Filosofov, *Slova i zhizn': Literaturnye spory noveishego vremeni (1901-1908 gg.)* (St. Petersburg, 1909), or P. F. Nikolaev, *Voprosy zhizni v sovremennoi literature* (Moscow, 1902).

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SELECTED WORKS OF NIKOLAI S. GUMILEV. Selected and translated by *Burton Raffel* and *Alla Burago*. Introduction by *Sidney Monas*. Russian Literature in Translation, no. 1. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1972. xi, 248 pp. \$10.00.

MODERN RUSSIAN POETRY. Edited and translated by *Olga Andreyev Carlisle* and *Rose Styron*. New York: Viking Press, 1972. 210 pp. \$6.95.

Both of these really quite attractive editions should appeal to the broader general readership for which they are intended. The presentation of Gumilev's works is scholarly in manner, while the approach in the anthology of modern Russian poets is what is usually called popular. This is Olga Carlisle's third book (here in collaboration with Rose Styron) in a series which has helped, along with her numerous articles, to bring some idea of modern Russian poetry to the English-speaking public. The Gumilev collection marks the beginning of a new series, Russian Literature in Translation, designed to make available translations of those Russian writers who have been more or less ignored or badly translated in the past. The format is handsome, and the first volume in general augurs well. One can only wish the new venture success.

The editor's fairly brief introduction to the Gumilev volume makes good use of the relatively limited materials on the poet's life and work. It does not discuss at any length the shorter lyrics, although the comments on the plays and the cycle including "The Lost Tram" are highly interesting. There are, however, some faults. It is long past time, for example, that we got over being embarrassed by what might be called Gumilev's youthful "conquistador" stance (see p. 14). Selections from his first volume, *Pu' konkvistadorov*, were wisely omitted from this collection; the stance was not so frequently taken in later volumes, and was actually atypical for the maturer work. At another point in the introduction there is a reference to Gumilev's wickedly clever satire of the *personae* of many of Akhmatova's early poems—and, in part, of the poet herself ("Iz logova zmieva"). Given the occasion and the known circumstances of the poem, it seems odd to connect this figure with Zoë of *The Poisoned Tunic*, or the person to whom the poems of *The Dark-Blue Star* were written—and much less with Eve and the Fall, and