

dom to reflect on its constraints: imprisonment, totalitarianism, and terror. If the third chapter contains a trenchant reading of *Notes from the Underground* (in part by analyzing it not just in relation to Nietzsche's views but also, somewhat more unconventionally, to Sacher-Masoch's *Venus in Furs*), then much of it is also devoted to Dostoevsky's *Notes from the House of the Dead and Demons*, with Boym's remarks about the latter focusing on the issue of terrorism, as embodied particularly in the figure of Petr Verkhovensky. The trials of Siniavsky, both the one with Daniel in a Soviet courtroom and the one arising from the controversy over his *Strolls with Pushkin*, occupy a significant portion of Chapter 5. And, in a very different way, the complicated relationship between Hannah Arendt and Martin Heidegger, the main topic of Chapter 4, inevitably deals with totalitarianism and how individuals respond to it on both the personal and public level. This chapter, though, which looks at love as "an exemplary trial of freedom" (160) for Arendt as well as for Kierkegaard a century earlier, at times seems tangential to the study, even allowing for references to love elsewhere in the book and for the multiple approaches to regarding freedom that Boym embraces. (My one other quibble arises from finding a number of small errors in the text; thus a probable editing slip has Ezhov as the head of the Writers' Union instead of the secret police (73), and Stavrogin in *Demons*, who commits suicide on the family estate, is said to do so "after his voluntary exile from Russia" (147).)

Still, the focus on Arendt in Chapter 4 highlights the sense that she may well be the most central figure for the book as a whole. Arendt's notion of "passionate thinking" (25), the kind of nonprofessional thinking that engages with and seeks to understand the world, serves as a guiding motif throughout. The reference to the "banality of evil" in the subtitle of Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem* inspires several comments late in the study and also would seem to have informed the approach to Dostoevsky's *Demons* earlier. Parts of the last three chapters appeared previously in articles; the subtitles of those articles refer respectfully to Arendt and Heidegger, to Shklovsky and Arendt, and to Shalamov and Arendt. If discussing Arendt together with Heidegger hardly surprises, then the comparisons with Shklovsky and Shalamov are less obvious and are used to show both in a different light. In particular, Boym finds a series of similarities between the concerns of Shklovsky and those of Arendt, including their examining totalitarianism through both spatial and architectural considerations as well as their constant insistence on thinking in unconventional ways. Shklovsky's contributions as both an experimental writer and as a thinker do not always receive the acknowledgement they deserve; one of this book's many accomplishments is to serve as a corrective in this regard.

*Another Freedom* is not always easy reading, but in its ability to take a fresh look at a familiar concept, its incisive engagement with not just philosophical and aesthetic but also political and social issues, and in its sense of discovery and wonderment through "passionate thinking," it is a book that constantly rewards its readers.

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Rebecca Jane Stanton. *Isaac Babel and the Self-Invention of Odessan Modernism*. Studies in Russian Literature and Theory. Evanston, IL: Northwestern UP, 2012. Bibliography. Index. xi + 205 pp. \$45.00 (cloth).

Lionel Trilling had clearly never been to Odessa; if he had he might not have been so easily gulled. In his influential essay on Isaac Babel, for the 1955 translation of the *Collected Stories*, Trilling made a nuanced psychological case for why this "ghetto Jew" had ended up riding with the Cossack Red Cavalry in the Russian Civil War. The young Babel had, it appeared, been traumatised by a "determinative" incident recounted in the story "First Love," in which a Cossack officer humiliated his father as a mob looted "the Babel store" (44). One problem, or, rather,

three problems: Babel was not from the "ghetto," his father did not own a store, and the whole incident with the Cossack officer was fabricated. So much for having a liberal imagination.

In trying to understand anything of Babel's life, Trilling was always going to be writing from a position of weakness. Even now there is no authoritative biography of Babel and much of what has been written about him has been shaped as much by his self-mythologizing as by historical fact. Trilling might have been tricked into believing the veracity of Babel's forged autobiographical pact, but then the best tricksters came from Odessa.

For Rebecca Jane Stanton the facility, or even need, to "blur the line between truth and fiction" in ostensibly autobiographical writing is distinctive not just of Babel's work, but also of his contemporary Odessan modernists, Yuri Olesha, Valentin Kataev, and Konstantin Paustovsky (44). It is the particular "self-consciousness" fostered by that port city which gives rise to these writers' investment in "paradox, multivocality, and carnivalesque inversion; a sense of exile in both time and space, often manifested in the narrator's positioning himself as an outsider in the world he depicts; a roguish manipulation of the distinctions between autobiographical and fictional narrative; and a preoccupation with stories (often, 'lies') that come true, and their inverse, 'truths that become stories'" (143).

In a compelling first chapter Stanton describes the cultural archaeology of Odessa and the reasons for its exercising such formative influence on its writers. Founded during the reign of Catherine the Great, this concrete expression of Russian imperial might was actually conceived by a Spanish admiral, José de Ribas. Odessa was built through Dutch engineering and beautified by Italian architecture. The first two governors of the city were French and, in 1819, 75 percent of the population were Westerners. In many ways, Odessa's story reflects that of St. Petersburg, but where Peter's capital reflected the West of Paris and Venice, Odessa traded, in more ways than one, with Naples and Marseille.

Even as it evolved, Odessa retained a sense of 'otherness,' the place of exile and trade, crime and creativity. By the end of the nineteenth century more than a third of the population was Jewish, and it was also a center for Ukrainian nationalism. In Stanton's sophisticated formulation this multi-ethnic, multi-lingual cultural palimpsest becomes a "city-text," a Foucauldian "heterotopia." As she argues, "If Moscow and Petersburg represented, respectively, a Russian gaze directed inwards toward its own traditions and a Russian gaze directed outward towards western Europe and modernity, Odessa represented a layering of many gazes, a kind of Cubist mélange of perspectives in which the terms 'self' and 'other' had no fixed referents but occupied a constantly shifting semiotic space" (26).

Through attentive readings of Babel's childhood stories in the second and third chapter of her book, Stanton traces the way this Odessan "indeterminacy" is not only manifested in narrative unreliability but also encoded in the structures of reflecting narratives within each story itself. Tellers of tall tales are revealed to be telling the truth by other stories, a layering of "lying" in which Babel and his narrators playfully participate. If there is a lacuna in this approach it is that, while it is made clear how indebted Babel's work is to these Odessan tropes, the trans-national influence of distinctively *modernist* theories of autobiography are not fully explored.

Stanton does productively complicate her argument by looking at the way Babel's self-mythologizing was reflected and refracted in Paustovsky's *Time of Great Expectations*, Olesha's posthumously published *No Day Without a Line*, and Kataev's controversial memoir *My Diamond Crown*. All three of these works violate the autobiographical pact and do so in distinctively Odessan fashion, none more emphatically than Kataev's. His cocktail of braggadocio and chutzpah was too much for many of his contemporaries, who accused him of necrophilia and vampirism as he went about his retrospective grandstanding. While that fails to appreciate the ironic flavor of what goes into Kataev's approach, there is no disguising the bitter taste of what is left out: even as he revives (and appropriates) the dormant Odessan motifs and themes of Babel's work, he fails to address what finally put them into terminal sleep. He might have been the great survivor of the Odessa school but he paid for his longevity with artistic complicity.

Here, then, is the current of pathos running through *Isaac Babel and the Self-Invention of Odessan Modernism*. Through Stanton's attentive and generous readings of Babel's childhood stories, one can sense the sheer *pleasure* Babel took in trespassing on the disputed territory between genres of fiction and autobiography, a pleasure that is thematically bound up with the subject of dawning childhood creativity itself. Yet these acts of Babelian self-fashioning, written with nostalgia for the Odessan sun, were ultimately eclipsed by the state's counter-narrative, which led to the dark and damp of Lubyanka prison. As Stanton makes clear, one of the ideas that fascinated Babel and the Odessan writers was that even false stories have a way of "coming true." It was, though, Stalin's agents, writing their apocryphal counter-narratives, who had the greatest power in this regard. With the forced confession and the firing squad, it was they, scrawling in their case files, who could make their mendacious "biographies" assume a nightmare reality.

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Olga Adamova-Sliozberg. *My Journey: How One Woman Survived Stalin's Gulag*. Trans. Katherine Gratwick Baker. Evanston, IL: Northwestern UP, 2011. Photos. xxxvi + 226 pp. \$21.95 (paper).

The sentiment that there is nothing new to be learned about the Gulag after Solzhenitsyn is certainly widespread but untenable. Ironically, it stems precisely from not knowing enough (and, by definition, from never being able to do so). As Varlam Shalamov's sketch "Through the Snow," which opens his *Kolyma Tales*, suggests, no single memoir, no matter how exhaustive, is ever sufficient. Allegorically, as Shalamov portrays a file of prisoners trampling down the snow to make roads for cars and tractors, "the snow becomes a blank page on which even 'the smallest and the weakest' can help leave a trace if only they do not always walk in the footsteps of others but trample down some untouched portion of the snow" (Leona Toker, *Return from the Archipelago: Narratives of Gulag Survivors*, Indiana UP, 2000, 5). Olga Adamova-Sliozberg's memoir *My Journey* has left a deep and indelible trace in the no-longer virginal "snow" of Gulag literature, and its translation by Katharine Gratwick Baker has gone far in the same direction along the parallel tracks of the English language.

The name of the author is not new to the English reader: her memoir was first introduced as excerpts, translated by Sally Laird, in *Till My Tale Is Told: Women's Narratives of the Gulag* (ed. Simeon Vilensky, Indiana UP, 1999, 1–86), where it is the first and the longest text of the volume. Adamova-Sliozberg served as one of Solzhenitsyn's interviewees for *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) and later contributed to Marina Goldovskaya's renowned documentary *Solovki Power* (1988). In Russia, the first book-length publication of *My Journey* [Put'] took place in 1993, and the book was subsequently reprinted more than once. It took nearly two decades before its full English translation, along with an impressive number of other books on the subject, came out in the U.S.

What makes the English edition of *My Journey* stand out against most Gulag memoirs is a thoughtful combination of the author's first-hand account (the most important part of the book) and a variety of supplementary materials. The book opens with a map of Adamova-Sliozberg's prison and other camp locations across the territory of the Soviet Union, which helps the uninitiated reader visualize the geographical scale of the historical events described and resonates with the book's title, making the "journey" more palpable. Adamova-Sliozberg's family tree and, especially, the chronology of her life (xxviii–xxx) are also instrumental in mapping her

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