admired by Bagritsky. Much of the essay, though, does not so much look back toward influences but forward to the poem's (and to an extent Bagritsky's) subsequent reception. Shrayer examines Tarasenkov's article as well as a 1977 talk by the conservative poet and essayist Stanislav Kuniaev, in which he condemned Bagritsky as a person who was in effect renouncing his Jewish origin in order to gain acceptance as a Russian poet—thereby echoing the anti-Semitic accusations of an earlier generation. In 1997 Shrayer taped an interview with Kuniaev, and a translated portion of their rather unsettling exchange occupies nearly five pages of the text. Finally, Shrayer uses *February* and "Origin"—as well as other works—in an effort to arrive at an understanding of Bagritsky's actual attitudes toward his Jewish origins.

The result is a fascinating consideration not just of the poem and Bagritsky himself, but also of the manner in which questions of Russian-Jewish identity have both affected writers during the Soviet era and continued to resonate in the cultural climate of both the late Soviet and post-Soviet eras. Granted, the book is not without one or two flaws. It appears to be rather "under-edited," with instances of similar points being repeated in various parts of the volume as well as careless errors that could easily have been caught (for example, both *sed'moi* and *vos'moi* are said to be stressed on the first syllable [42]). And for all the admirable efforts to track down the manuscript version of *February* and to deduce Bagritsky's intentions by noting omitted passages, the conclusions about the poet's attitudes toward his Judaism seem to rely too much on literary works, which are not always a reliable source for biographical information. Many of Bagritsky's acquaintances are quoted, but in the absence of more evidence from Bagritsky himself—letters or other direct testimony—some of the conclusions here need to remain tentative. That said, Shrayer has not just provided an important addition to our knowledge of Russian-Jewish literature and its cultural echoes, but has also done much to remind us that Bagritsky as a poet is a figure worth more intensive study than he has been accorded to date.

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Eliot Borenstein, *Men Without Women: Masculinity and Revolution in Russian Fiction, 1917–1929.* Durham NC: Duke University Press. 2000. Bibliography. Index. xvi + 346 pp., $19.95 (paper).

This study of gender in early Soviet literature should enjoy a lively reception. From the title alone, anyone familiar with the field will appreciate the topic's importance, and be able to imagine a list of candidates for analysis that will likely include the works featured here: Babel's *Konarmiia*, Olesha's *Zavist'*, and Platonov's *Chevengur.* Borenstein does not disappoint. He finds new things to say about these familiar books, using them to build a convincing argument about masculinity and revolutionary ideology. The author starts off with a handful of theoretical concepts, literary, anthropological, and sociological. Referring to Edward Said's opposition of filiation/affiliation in European Modernism, Freudian patriarchy versus fraternity from *Totem and Taboo*, and masculine institutions such as Remy's *fratriarchy* and Sedgewick's *homosociality*, Borenstein describes a culture in which sons attempt to replace the biological link with their pre-revolutionary fathers by the fraternal, ideological bond of Soviet comradeship. Women have not entirely left the scene, but are reduced to vague ideals or to those objects of desire that, in René Girard's scheme, function primarily as a means by which rival males relate to one another. Bolshevik culture, despite its ostensible feminism, privileges stereotypical masculine values; femininity is politically suspect—as is the traditional family unit. The protagonists of Babel, Olesha, and Platonov search for a male-only replacement for the families they have lost or never knew. This search is ultimately fruitless; it

foreshadows the return of family values at the close of the period dealt with in this book, and the reaffirmation of women's place in Soviet society—within the limits of Stalinist patriarchy.

Highlights of this study include Borenstein's linking of the episodic structure of Babel's short-story collection to the notion of an unstable masculinity that must be forever proven anew; his fascinating discussion of the little-known Olesha story "Legenda"; and his analysis of the binary oppositions of Platonov's early essays in the light of his 1929 masterpiece *Chevengur.* Written with a flair that only occasionally favors cleverness at the expense of clarity, *Men Without Women* includes extensive notes reviewing recent scholarship on Soviet culture and the authors in question. It also gives background information on the complex social, ideological, and artistic trends that influenced depictions of masculinity in Russian literature of the 1920s. Such depictions, of course, are only partly motivated by Soviet factors, as opposed to elements of pre-1917 Russian culture or modern Western culture in general. Though Borenstein does not neglect the latter, his interpretations do risk exaggerating the extent to which writers like Babel, Olesha, and Platonov take a specifically Soviet approach to what Borenstein calls the "man question." He convincingly demonstrates the peripheral status of female characters in *Konarmiia, Zavist'*, and *Chevengur*, and equally convincingly relates this status to an evolving concept of Soviet male comradeship. Yet it is worthwhile considering how few of the contemporary readers of these works would have paid attention to the things that Borenstein notices. The search for and rejection of father figures, the challenges to traditional family structures, the homoeroticism—these would have been noticed. But are women really absent in a way that significantly differs from their pre-revolutionary literary treatment? In the rare novel that deals with a female protagonist in any depth (Chernyshevsky's *Chto delat?*, Gladkov's *Tsement*), femaleness is always an issue; but one in which the characters are predominantly male (the unmarked gender) is never a book about the "man question" *per se*, and if the authors discussed by Borenstein address gender in any explicit way (mainly Platonov, in his non-fiction), it is more in terms of the traditional "woman question" (*zhenskii vopros*). The real revolutionary change for Soviet women was not their purported disappearance under a surge of post-revolutionary masculinity, but their subsequent *appearance* for the first time as more-or-less equal participants in a modern industrialized economy under the great father Stalin.

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Mikhail Artsybashev. *Sanin: A Novel.* Trans. Michael R. Katz. Intro. Otto Boele. Afterword Nicholas Luker. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001. 268 pp., $45.00 (cloth), $17.95 (paper).

Vladimir Petrovich Sanin unexpectedly arrives home after several years' absence. His maturity and self-assuredness set him apart from the inhabitants of a provincial town and quickly influence those with whom he comes in close contact. He destroys the overly smug Zarudin, convinces his sister that her illegitimate pregnancy can be dealt with rationally, forces himself sexually upon Karsavina, and counters the passivity of Svarozhich with self-assertiveness. At the end of six months, Sanin leaves completely unchanged (although bored), having wreaked havoc on almost everyone else. At one point, Artsybashev writes: "The thought of Sanin had no shape: it was a recollection of insane power, terrible enjoyment in which suffering was combined with a desire for even deeper intimacy and, at times, a wish to be tormented to death. Then there was the luminous and peaceful recollection of some melodious and inexpressibly intimate tenderness; this final memory revived [Karsavina's] heart" (241).

Like Karsavina, Katz, Boele and Luker must have had a similar relationship with Sanin

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TITLE: Men Without Women
SOURCE: Slavic and East European Journal 46 no2 Summ 2002
PAGE(S): 379-80
WN: 0219600671018

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