refers to with a rough English version that reads "when you die, let me know, I'll follow you there." This she characterizes as her own "rather awkward" line, expressing a preference for Mort's English: "and you crack like a glass Christmas star. Arrr arrr" (12–13). On a first reading, my thought here was of an echo, where the rhyming end sound suggests a yearning for something beyond (perhaps including the rhymes of the source), here expressed in the cliché of a star. But Barskova suggests that what the translator has done is to begin "a horrific beautiful game of sounds—which," and this is key, "I had left underdeveloped" (138). Here a poet is clearly reading the work of another poet who, in turn, heard something as she herself read that poet's work and then "translated" it. It is hard not to agree that the result is "a new, other life" (138) for this poem and for the collection as a whole.

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The Death of Vazir-Mukhtar. By Yury Tynianov. Trans. Anna Kurkina Rush and Christopher Rush. New York: Columbia University Press, 2021. xxxii, 632 pp. Notes. Glossary. $40.00, hard bound; $19.95, soft bound.

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The Russian formalist and writer Iurii Tynianov is having a long overdue moment in the spotlight. A collection of his seminal essays on literary theory came out in English translation in 2019 and won the 2022 AATSEEL Prize for Best Scholarly Translation; an English translation of his historical novel *Kliukhla*, based on the life of the Decembrist poet Wil′gel′m Kiukhel′beker, came out in 2021, and two translations of his historical novel based on the life of poet, playwright, and diplomat Aleksandr Griboedov, *The Death of Vazir-Mukhtar*, have come out in recent years, the first in 2018 and the second, in 2021. The latter, translated by Anna Kurkina Rush and Christopher Rush, is the focus of this review. The novel is fascinating in a number of respects. First, it represents a wonderful example of formalist-inspired literariness at a time when formalism was coming under attack in the Soviet Union. It was perhaps not enough for Tynianov to present contemporary readers with realia from early nineteenth century Russia, let alone the Caucasus and Persia; his prolific use of unusual metaphors and colorful epithets estrange virtually everyone and everything that enters the novelist's purview. Here are just three somewhat randomly selected examples: "the fingers are studded with rings, like shish kebabs on spits" (210) and "In a musical sense, Persia was a key, while the Caucasus was a string" (243), and "The man's face was shaven bluish-gray, like a dove, and was ruddy-colored under a tan, like a ham that had started to go bad" (252). Second, it is difficult to resist the temptation to read this novel about the 1820s as a commentary on the Soviet 1920s, a temptation fed by Tynianov's use of the phrase "the twenties" and his frequent shifting into the present tense. The novel's experimental style and complex plot present real challenges for the translator, and the Rushes do an extremely admirable job. The only glaring infelicity in this almost 600-hundred-page novel is, in my view, their decision to render *izvestnoe litso,* a recurring reference to Tsar Nicholas I, as "Famous Face." While face is of course the primary meaning of the word, it is typically rendered in administrative discourse as "official" and in legal documents as "entity." Here, I might have gone with *personage*. (The translator of the 2018 English version, Susan Causey, rendered the phrase as "famous person.") On rare occasion, an attempt to render a complex Russian sentence into readable English results in a dangling modifier: "Birds' heads glittered on the brand-new buttons—the emblem of

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the state," as opposed to: "Glittering on the brand-new buttons were birds' head, the emblem of the state" (5).

The Rushes' translation is equipped with a wealth of supportive material, which is most welcome given the number of obscure historical characters and events treated in the novel, as well as Tynianov's generous use of foreign words and expressions. In addition to an informative introduction by Angela Brintlinger, there are two appendices at the back of the book, the first, a glossary of foreign words, mostly of Persian origin, and the second, a glossary of names, followed by endnotes. The most successful of the supplemental material is the glossary of names, as this is truly parenthetical information; most of the historical figures are briefly described in the body of the novel, so referencing that glossary need not disrupt the reading process. On the other hand, the glossary of Persian words and the endnotes, which contain translations of many words and phrases from European languages, would have been more useful as footnotes as these translations are often necessary to make sense of a passage, and it is quite unwieldy to access those definitions at the back of a volume of this size. Moreover, the endnotes provide nothing more than close English translations of the foreign expressions, even when they are citations or plays on words. So, for example, Griboedov's utterance—"Paris vaut bien une messe"—is rendered in the endnote as: "Paris is worth a mass (Fr.)" (27), with no mention that this was purportedly uttered by Henri IV when offered the French throne on condition that he convert to Catholicism. Without that explanation, the meaning of the expression is as obscure in English as it is in French. In a 600-page novel, these are trifles, but in my view worth mentioning for future translators.

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Central Peripheries: Nationhood in Central Asia. By Marelene Laruelle. London: UCL Press, 2021. x, 252 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Figures. $25.00, paper.
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In this collection of articles, Marelene Laruelle presents a comprehensive picture of the nation-building efforts of the Central Asian states (with the exception of Turkmenistan) since 1991. A fundamental task for these states has been to formulate a national narrative that can consolidate the nation as well as legitimate the state as it enters the international community. These narratives show the unique path and history of each of them, resulting in a competition regarding national "ownership" of legends, myths, heroes, and literature, as well as how far back to date their national nascence. In spite of differences in narratives, these states share the same approach to viewing their national history. Laruelle shows how important the Soviet academic and political heritage has been, and remains, in this regard.

In the first part of the volume the author discusses the Soviet roots of national story-telling, the centrality of the concept of *ethnogenesis*, and how this intellectual heritage is reflected in the formation of national narratives in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan. The second part, comprising half the volume, deals with Kazakhstan and details responses to contemporary challenges to the national narrative. The book was published before the turmoil in Kazakhstan of early 2022.

Their Soviet heritage explains why the Central Asian states emphasize an approach of primordial indigenous continuity that traces each population of their nation to one original group of people and claims that national characteristics have been maintained over the centuries in spite of waves of migration over the steppes

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