Title: Taming Horses in Babel's <u>Red Cavalry</u>: Genealogy of a Literary Myth
Author: Nina Wieda, Northwestern University

<u>Red Cavalry</u> is largely about one man's journey from intellectuals into the Cossacks. This private transformation, however, is both a consequence and a metaphor for a larger contradiction between the world of intellect, tradition and culture, and the "physiological, irrational, anarchic essence of man's nature" (Luplow, 5).

Entry into the world of the Cossacks, who serve as an embodiment of the irrational, primitive force unleashed by the revolution, is portrayed by Babel' as a ritualized initiation. Liutov needs to master violence, power over women, and power over horses. The first two are predictable as symbols of power over the primary resources, i.e., life and procreation. The third aspect, power over horses, is more enigmatic. Using Bakhtin's concept of chronotopic motifs, defined as typical scenes or events endowed with "stylistic aura" and remembrance of their past (Morson and Emerson, 374), this paper will investigate the role of chronotopic motif of "taming horses" in Babel's <u>Red Cavalry</u>.

This paper will attempt to decipher the meaning of the "taming horses" topos in <u>Red Cavalry</u> by tracing down the development of a wild horse-ride motif in the Russian literature. The analysis will start from the motif's formation during the Romantic period by imitation of Western models and their adaptation to the Russian soil; concentrate on the motif's ubiquity and predictability in Modernist literature, and finish with its fate in Socialist Realism. The paper will reflect on the way different authors have explored the potentials of the chronotopic motif, and the manner in which Babel' makes use of the tradition in his <u>Red Cavalry</u>.

Bibliography:

Morson, Gary Saul and Caryl Emerson. *Mikhail Bakhtin : Creation of a Prosaics*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1990.
Luplow, Carol. <u>Isaac Babel's *Red Cavalry*</u>. Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1982.