When Beaujour turns to the other writers of the first emigration, she confesses that any attempt to generalize about their linguistic experience would be nearly impossible because of the vast number of variables in the writers' acquisition of a second language. She instead adopts an "anecdotal" approach, and offers a series of observations about the prominent figures of the period. Contrasting Zinaida Shakovskoi with Elsa Triolet, for example, Beaujour notes that the former was not worried about the prospect of being a "linguistic bigamist," but cheerfully embraced her two languages (French and Russian) as two lovers. Boris Poplavskii's decision to write only in Russian is explained by Beaujour as manifesting his desire to be a *poète maudit* by writing in the language which would be less natural for him. The ease with which Helene Iswolsky moved among Russian, French, and English may be attributed in part to the fact that she had an "overarching concern with the ecumenical Christian message" (p. 153). Beaujour's most intriguing comments are directed at Marina Tsvetaeva's career. She speculates that Tsvetaeva's decision to cling to the "milky call of Russian" derived from her own devotion to the concept of motherhood: Russian was the language in which she wrote about her mother and the language in which she herself was a mother. Beaujour's discussion of Tsvetaeva concludes with an engaging analysis of her relationship to Rilke and her reluctance to utilize German in her poetry.

Despite the introductory remarks on neurolinguistic research, Beaujour's study does not claim to be a comprehensive investigation of bilingualism as such. Acknowledging that her target group is a restricted one, she notes that even within this small population, the range of individual experiences is diverse. Nonetheless, it is always interesting to learn how talented writers wrote about their gifts and their struggles, and Beaujour's study provides a concise compendium of such writing. The monograph represents a stimulating introduction into a complex subject, and it will surely invite further research and discussion.

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There are very few works in world literature that can sustain a serious critical study devoted exclusively to them, and Venedikt Erofeev's *Moskva-Petushki* (1977) is in my opinion not one of them. For all its brilliance, profoundly Russian tragico-ironic pathos, and almost Nozdryovian virtuosity and verbal pyrotechnics, it has two weaknesses which are particularly visible in our post-*glasnost*, "everything-is-permitted" era and which limit the universality of its claims to first-rung greatness. It suffers from the author's unavoidable, perhaps, but noticeable cultural insularity and from the self-indulgence of its alcoholic hero's point of view. Drunkenness does have
important metaphoric as well as literal significance in the novel, which
describes the hero's real or imagined trip on a slow local train from Moscow
to the end of the line. Nevertheless, one can question the universality of both
drunkenness as a metaphor of the human condition and the alcoholic as that
condition's self-immolating Christ. The image of the writer as a self-or social
sacrificial lamb has also become rather tired and lost much of its artistic
impact through too frequent use in modern Russian poetry and prose. Any
objective study of Erofeev's work should take into account its weaknesses as
well as its merits, and Gaiser-Shnitman's monograph lacks any such kind of
objective critical view.

Gaiser-Shnitman's analysis of Moskva-Petushki focuses on a digressively
detailed explanation of the numerous literary and artistic echoes and refer-
ences contained, and possibly contained, in the novel. The majority of these,
however, allude to the Bible and the classics of European and Russian
literature and require at their most complex no more than a phrase or two of
interpretation in order to be fully appreciated. Gaiser-Shnitman does far
more than is required and ironically, more than is desirable to make her case
for the greatness and uniqueness of Erofeev's book.

Pages and pages of Gaiser-Shnitman's book are filled with various forms
of padding: excessively long quotations, plot summaries of universally known
works, recapitulations of the major themes of the Russian classics, general
discussions of works only marginally or possibly related to Moskva-Petushki.
On pages 70-71, for example, Gaiser-Shnitman quotes at length from a story
by Bergengruen, "Der letzte Rittmeister," only to conclude that "there are no
indications that the author of Moskva-Petushki had read" the work cited
although he "would have found it congenial to the spirit of his novel." Elsewhere,
several pages are spent in a rather facile attempt to locate the
source of the conflict between heart and mind in the West European literary
tradition. There is a hugely long digression on Crime and Punishment
introduced merely to prove that Erofeev's hero has obvious points in common
with Marmeladov, Raskol'nikov, and Sonia. A final example of unnecessary
digressiveness is the summary of the history of proofs of God's existence in
Western philosophy (pp. 143-44).

The irony is that Gaiser-Shnitman has several interesting observations
about Erofeev's novel (which has not, as she says, received the critical
scrutiny it deserves), and she does explain or offer convincing possible
interpretations of its most obscure images. By digressing so much, however,
she hurts her own cause and a novel she justifiably admires. Whatever its
virtues, Erofeev's novel is not Ulysses. It becomes deafened by the noise of the
resonances Gaiser-Shnitman believes it generates in almost every line, and
it ends up losing rather than proving its originality. We are left with the sense
that every word Erofeev wrote echoes somebody else, who, alas, often seems
to have said it better. But no writer could stand up to such an obsessive, forest-
for-the-trees critical desire to prove his/her uniqueness. If one applied Gaiser-
Shnitman's method of reference-searching to the literary giants of the last
500 years, they would all begin to look like overburdened pygmies, poor