resulting in some themes—such as drinking and homosexuality—appearing in several chapters. The overlap of categories also led to at least one apparently inadvertent instance of the same joke with different citations appearing in two different chapters (pp. 56, 221). Draitser’s sources, moreover, can be problematic, owing mostly to the extreme difficulty of compiling empirical data on this topic. Many of his examples come from jokes posted to a website called “Jokes for Russians,” as well as from his own personal collection of jokes. A more detailed explanation of sources and methodology would be welcome, in order to reassure the reader that his examples are indeed common jokes in Russia. Additionally, the last chapter, which is devoted to chastushki, seems somewhat out of place. Draitser spends several pages listing the differences between chastushki and the jokes of the previous chapters, prompting the reader to wonder why he included such a different type of Russian humor in the book. His call for further research into bawdy chastushki is appropriate, however, as his introduction to this unique element of Russian folk culture demonstrates that it deserves more attention than a solitary chapter in this book.

These criticisms are minor, however, and are outweighed by the overall originality and importance of Draitser’s research. Deciphering the humor of a culture, as a window into that culture’s most deeply held beliefs, is no easy task. Draitser has solidly argued that gendered and sexual imagery in popular jokelore both exposes and perpetuates cultural assumptions, and he has managed to do so without essentializing Russian culture or, more important, Russian men. His analysis demonstrates that the topic is complex, and that while Making War, Not Love is an important contribution to the analysis of humor in Russian culture, there is room for further study of many of the issues raised.

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The initial flood of optimism concerning democracy in the post Soviet successor states is surely over. One of the great political challenges confronting these successor states has been the legacy of a unitary system of power. Like smaller pieces of a Russian stack doll, each level of government in the Soviet Union was swallowed whole by the next superior level. Not only was there no functional separation of powers on the horizontal axis between executive and legislative bodies, but there was no division of powers along the vertical axis either. In this regard, the Soviet experience forces students of politics to make a fundamental distinction between the concepts of authority and power. The two terms are often used interchangeably in the West. But the Soviet context suggests a clear distinction is mandatory. It is one thing for administrative tasks to be delegated to various levels of government. But if real power (such as money and control over appointments) remains incongruent with levels of authority,
then institutional reform will be a futile endeavor. Thus it is the allocation of power among and within various tiers of government that is the central task of post Soviet state building and the central focus of this edited collection.

The title of this book might remind a reader of one of those lengthy Russian novels. But it accurately conveys the intended focus of the collection of forty-three articles. These articles are divided into eight sections, offering various perspectives and comparisons of the allocation of power in the United States and the former Soviet Union. These sections include historical, comparative, and functional perspectives on the division of powers, and give attention to specific policy issues such as communications, environment, finance, and individual rights. Most sections include essays from both American and former Soviet authors, all presented at Hofstra University in 1992. Since the chapters were drafted some eight years ago, many of them reflect a naïve pursuit of appropriate models of political organization common after the collapse of the Soviet Union. While references to the C.I.S. and the sometimes confused citizenship of contributors now date the book, many articles provide timeless perspectives on the various challenges of allocating power.

The strength of the work is the contribution made to understanding how difficult it is to achieve an effective allocation of power. The American experience, for example, provides a thought provoking perspective to the contemporary predicament of state building in the successor states. The conclusion of Gordon Wood’s contribution, for example, suggests that “... it is the American people in their separate localities that ultimately count and ... any superior centralized authority set over them is a kind of temporary delegation from them. This intense sense of localism is not the product of human ingenuity or rational planning, and it cannot be fabricated out of reading a lot of books on federalism. It is the product of the historical experience and the daily lives of the American people” (p. 17). Such a conclusion, however, also highlights the weakness of this collection: comparisons that might advocate, even implicitly, the importation of structures and practices from one culture to another can be horribly flawed. Indeed, the overall premise of many chapters in this collection is that of “shared learning,” based on the notion that the American model can offers guidelines for replication in other jurisdictions.

Taking Wood at his word, the effective allocation of power in former Soviet states would require much greater attention to understanding the disparate historical records and social structures of various societies of the former Soviet Union. Yet, in this regard, the collection here is weak. Many of the chapters from former Soviet citizens offer little insight into cultural and historical contexts, and a number of American contributors know little about the Soviet context. The third section of the book, loosely titled Government Power and Accountability, lumps such disparate topics as the judiciary, foreign affairs, executive-legislative relations and international trade all under one heading. Subsequent chapters, which cover such issues as cable television regulations and compensation for accidental injuries, accentuate the vast differences between the American and post Soviet systems. These differences suggest that comparisons between the two societies are as appropriate as apples and kangaroos. While regulating communication technology may be an important matter in American federalism, there is no such relevance to the Soviet successor states.