mostly concerned with Siniavskii's attempt to vindicate himself for the publication of Progulki s Pushkinym for which he was maliciously attacked and slandered by Russian nationalists in the West as well as in Russia proper. In the chapter on Zinov'ev, Michael Kirkwood explores Zinov'ev's application of the so-called "generative device" for the production of literary texts, and he provides the reader with a formal statistical analysis of several novels by Zinov'ev. The essay on Sasha Sokolov by Hanna Kolb is limited to a detailed and insightful analysis of the postmodernist novel Mezhdu sobakoi i volkom, written and published in the West in the 1980s.

In an essay that deals with the prose of Vladimir Sorokin, David Gillespie analyzes the novel Norma and places Sorokin's creative production in a wider perspective. A separate essay in the book is devoted to the drama of the playwright Viktor Slavkin, and two chapters, by Sally Dalton-Brown and Kathleen Parthe, deal with the subjects of urban and village prose respectively. Finally, Ewa Thompson contributes an interesting article on the proliferation of Russian imperial thinking in the Russian literature of the late Soviet period.

The quality of any collection of scholarly articles is just as good as the academic level of the essays included. To that end, the articles by Grayson, Thompson, Dalton-Brown, and Gillespie are insightful and thought provoking. Most other essays are well researched, but limited in scope and provide little help in our effort to understand better the general phenomenon of Russian literature of the 1980s. In fact, that was probably not the objective of the editors, because a number of works by important authors of the 1980s, such as Ch. Aitmatov, Iu. Bondarev, S. Kaledin, V. P'etsukh, or V. Tokareva, among others, are hardly mentioned.

The study is well documented with an extensive index, yet one wonders at the oversight in Parthe's article in which there is an annoying confusion in the enumeration of the Notes. The above notwithstanding, the book will provide the student of Russian literature with some new interpretations and a deeper understanding of the literature produced in the decade of transition from Soviet communist rule to the dissolution of the Soviet empire and the abolition of censorship.

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Students of contemporary Russian culture should welcome the publication of Russian Postmodernism: New Perspectives in Post-Soviet Culture, a compilation of essays by Mikhail N. Epstein, Alexander A. Genis, and Slobodanka M. Vladiv-Gloiever. Covering a wide range of topics including Conceptualist poetry, contemporary fiction, the effect of perestroika on the literary paradigm, post-totalitarian religiosity, and the connection between words and images in the paintings of Il'ia Kabakov, Russian Postmodernism (both the book and the movement) is nothing if not ambitious. Indeed, the feature that distinguishes this volume from other recent studies of postmodernism in the ex-USSR is its at-
tempt at maximum plurality, reflected in both the scope of the subject matter and in the unusual number of co-authors. For their insistence on viewing Russian verbal postmodernism within the wider context of visual art and popular belief systems, the authors are to be commended.

Among the twenty-four essays that make up the volume, several are particularly noteworthy. Epstein’s introductory essay, “The Dialectics of Hyper: From Modernism to Postmodernism,” sets the stage well, arguing against the facile identification between postmodernism and Westernization advanced by many European and American scholars. Never one to shy away from bold theoretical pronouncements, Epstein argues that postmodernism in Russia and the West is the product of a common “search for ways out of an analogous ‘revolutionary’ past (p. 5), an attempt to incorporate modernist paradigm shifts while also interrogating the revolutionary impulses that prompted them.” Epstein examines the resulting dialectics of “hyper” in physics, literary theory, philosophy, psychoanalysis, and Soviet intellectual trends. Given that this essay is only thirty pages long, any of Epstein’s particular claims about these movements might seem reductive if scrutinized carefully, but on the broader, conceptual level, his argument has real resonance. Epstein also contributes two chapters on what he calls “minimal religion”: a religiosity that has no fixed doctrines or practices, whose inherently syncretic approach looks both particularly Russian (in terms of its continuity with dvoeverie and its relationship to official Soviet atheism) and generally postmodern (in its striking resemblance to New Age thought).

Alexander Genis provides brief, insightful overviews of the contemporary “literary process” in Russia, examining developments in both highbrow fiction (Petrushevskaia, Pelevin) and popular entertainment (mystery novels and science fiction). His chapters on Siniavskii provide a succinct explanation of the author’s technique and worldview, placing both in the postmodernist context. His “Onions and Cabbages: Paradigms of Contemporary Culture” is an eclectic examination of what he calls “Soviet metaphysics,” the “language of communism” (p. 395). Working backwards from the end of history, Soviet metaphysics was inherently paranoid, allowing no room for the superfluous or the meaningless. Genis, who is no stranger to the cultural importance of the Russian kitchen, uses food to provide the metaphors for the mode of unmasking at work within this paranoid metaphysics: the “cabbage” paradigm, in which one arrives at the truth by peeling away at the obstructions that conceal it. By contrast, the post-Soviet period has seen the rise of what Genis calls the “onion” paradigm, which finds nothingness where others might look for meaning.

Epstein’s and Genis’ contributions focus primarily on the “big picture,” with a sweeping theoretical scope that allows less charitable readers to quibble with numerous details. Vladiv-Glover’s approach is virtually the exact opposite: in her close readings of Petrushevskaia, Tolstaia, Bitov, and Sorokin, Vladiv-Glover’s reasoning is inductive; she makes her larger points about postmodernism by focusing on the minutiae of texts (buttressed by a solid grounding in critical theory). Perhaps nowhere is the contrast between their approaches more evident than in the “Notes” sections: where Epstein and Genis are perhaps too sparing in their citations, Vladiv-Glover’s footnotes go on for pages. This contrast, however minor it is on its own terms, is emblematic of the book’s greatest weakness: the product of three different authors, it never comes together as one coherent volume. Granted, one might make the same claim about Russian postmodernism