Gogol', Dostoevsky, Chekhov, and so on. Unfortunately, Dalton-Brown never gives us the comparative analyses that would shed more light on Petrushevskaia's voices and her void, and perhaps even on her use of generic terms.

Finally, the sloppy preparation of the text is not only annoying, it can be misleading. One hates to forgive Dalton-Brown her conflation of Turgenev and Tolstoy (p. 132) or her reference to the intertextual connections between Petrushevskaia's farcical Chto de-lat' and "Nikolai Chernyshevskii's famously dull 1863 play on socialism" (p. 141). Two references to "Soviet fakelore" suggest that this was a rhetorical point that she meant to make, but neglected to. And Dalton-Brown's potentially elegant use of one particular text to illustrate the techniques she discusses in her "Style" chapter loses its power when the heroine, Vera Petrovna, inexplicably gets called "Vera Pavlovna" (p. 190).

The extensive bibliography includes primary texts (arranged, in an unwieldy manner, chronologically by date of publication); secondary texts (critical studies of Petrushevskaia in Russian and other languages); and other material. The index is also very detailed.

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Each chapter in this collection of works by leading contemporary scholars in post-communist politics holds mainstream theories on democratization up to scrutiny and finds them wanting. The authors make corrections to widely accepted ideas about transitions to democratic rule and forward new hypotheses derived from the post-communist regime changes of the past thirteen years. Philip Roeder's chapter focuses on the important question of why authoritarian regimes begin to democratize in the first place - what causes ruling elites to make the initial choice to liberalize? This question is a crucial one that has been insufficiently studied in the literature on democratization. Richard Anderson similarly is interested in how the initial break occurs in authoritarian regimes, leading some authoritarian elites and everyday citizens to mobilize in favor of democracy. He provides a fascinating and novel study of the discursive sources of identity change in democratizing regimes, which afford citizens the chance to "choose sides" among multiple political alternatives. Steven Fish asks why some countries wind up backsliding to authoritarianism following an earlier transition to democracy, while others manage to maintain or further democratic institutions. Finally, Stephen Hanson provides a critique of dominant existing definitions of "consolidation" in democratic regimes and argues in favor of a definition that is based on elites' probability of conforming with and supporting the principles of formal democratic institutions.

The volume comprises an appealing blend of regional expertise and serious social science, employing a range of methods, from game theory to statistical regressions, survey research, and classic cross-case qualitative comparisons. Although the authors use a wide
variety of approaches in their research and differ even on how they define democracy, the chapters fit together well and refer to one another at appropriate points, as if in conversation — a quality that is all too rare in multi-authored collections today. In the concluding chapter, the four authors together provide an impassioned argument for abandoning the "false dichotomy" that has been constructed in academe between "area studies" and "social science," arguing that in order to develop accurate theories in social science, scholars must have deep empirical knowledge of particular cases.

Although there is much to recommend this book, there are some collective and individual flaws in it. First, as a group, Roeder, Fish, Anderson, and Hanson spend remarkably little time reacting to the work of the dominant "transitology" school on democratic transitions. This is a striking omission, since the transitology school itself, including scholars like Philippe Schmitter, Guillermo O'Donnell, and Terry Lynn Karl, has been centrally concerned for over a decade with debunking the idea that there are social and economic preconditions that must be in place before countries can succeed at democratic rule, and instead focuses on the choices that political actors make. Like the transitologists, the four authors of this book also spend a great deal of their time railing against the literature on preconditions and, by and large, focus on strategic interactions among elites as the driving factor behind regime change. It is almost as though the authors are pretending that no one has ever before attempted this theoretical move against the preconditions literature. This is regrettable, since the authors might have been able to make some important criticisms of the transitology literature in light of the distinctive patterns they find in post-communist regime transitions.

Roeder's chapter makes a complex argument based on a bargaining model, in which the main hypothesis forwarded is that the more widely power is dispersed among numerous bureaucratic elites within authoritarian institutions, the more likely that certain leaders will choose to open up political processes in an attempt to quash internal rivals. It is a compelling argument, although sometimes it is not clear that Roeder is completely convinced of it himself. At certain points, he seems to argue that greater pluralism within the ruling elite can lead to more severe autocracy rather than democratization. For example, he argues at one point that in Belarus and Tajikistan, because the various bureaucracies could not reach a stable agreement on an authoritarian constitution for a post-communist state, the result was greater autocracy rather than democracy: This explanation runs counter to the main thrust of Roeder's argument.

Fish provides a strong argument concerning the institutional sources of "backsliding" from democracy. Yet he so set on denying any argument based on cultural traits or historical legacy that he neglects to provide any general explanation for why democracies and "democratizers" are nearly all located in post-communist Eastern Europe and the Baltic region, while the "backsliders" and autocracies are located overwhelmingly in states of the former Soviet Union (and war-torn states of the former Yugoslavia). Instead, he treats each state on an isolated basis, arguing that the choice of institutions that concentrate unchecked constitutional power in presidential executives ("superpresidentialism") is the main development that can be blamed for later erosion of democratic institutions. However, the striking geographic distribution of various institutional configurations indicates that there may be aspects of historical legacies in different states that cause elites to prefer either superpresidential or power-sharing institutional frameworks.