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## The Aesthetic Code of Russian Postmodernism [1]

Mark Lipovetsky

### Introduction

Postmodernist discourse has become central to literary criticism in the 1990s. Unlike many other literary discourses, it was never formally announced, yet beginning in the late 1980s (with Mikhail Epstein's articles) it took over almost all literary publications and effectively led to a new polarization of literary forces. If, during the first years of Perestroika, literary and cultural factions were divided primarily along political lines, with Western liberal sympathizers and anti-Communists on one side, and nationalist defenders of Communism on the other, then by the middle of the 1990s debate about postmodernism had split the liberals into those who sided with postmodernism and those who backed the "realist tradition." For example, while the journal *Znamia* [The Banner] welcomed postmodernist experiments in its pages, such pioneers of 1960s liberalism and the dissident movement of the 1970s and '80s as the journals *Novyi Mir* [New World] and *Kontinent* [The Continent] tried to exclude the anti-realists in every possible way. [2] Alexander Solzhenitsyn, a standard-bearer of Russian anti-Communism from the 1960s onward, expressed his indignation regarding postmodernism in 1993:

Thus we witness, over history's various thresholds, a recurrence of one and the same perilous anti-cultural phenomenon, with its rejection of and contempt for all foregoing traditions, and with its mandatory hostility toward whatever is universally accepted. Before, it burst upon us with the fanfares and gaudy flags of 'futurism'; today the term 'postmodernism' is applied. . . . There is no God, there is no truth, the universe is chaotic, all is relative -- 'the world as text,' a text any postmodernist is willing to compose. How clamorous it all is, but also -- how helpful. [3]

At the same time, even analysts and defenders of postmodernism could not unite; some, such as Mikhail Epstein [4] and Boris Grois [5], delineated Russian postmodernism as a small circle of Moscow conceptualists, while others, such as Viacheslav Kuritsyn [6], ascribed to postmodernism almost all at least somewhat significant literary phenomena, including the selfsame Solzhenitsyn. A third group, which included the critic Vladimir Novikov, refused to view Russian postmodernism as an independent literary event at all, and found in it

only evidence of the modernist and avant-garde aesthetics. [7]

In the end, postmodernist discourse exceeded the boundaries of literature itself and became a vivid illustration of intellectual chaos, as the subject of discourse became as myriad and nebulous as its language. Minister of the Interior Anatolii Kulikov (who could hardly be considered an academician) was not so far off the mark when he publicly reacted to some absurdly convoluted situation in 1997 with the words "This is some kind of postmodernism!" [8]

The present author has also weighed in on these arguments and even wrote a book on Russian postmodernist prose. [9] In this article I would like to summarize some of this protracted discourse and examine Russian postmodernism from the semiotic viewpoint, as one of the crucial crossroads of Russian cultural dynamics in the twentieth century.

I would like to argue that, unlike Western postmodernism, the Russian variety did not strive to counter the modernist tradition; rather, it attempted to resurrect it after many decades of sociorealism's cultural monopoly. This was precisely the intent of Russian postmodernism's seminal texts, which subsequently became its classics: *Moscow to the End of the Line* by Venedikt Erofeev (1969); *Pushkin's House* by Andrei Bitov (1971); *A School for Fools* by Sasha Sokolov (1973-75); and the early conceptualist poets, such as V. Ufliand, Vsesvolod Nekrasov, Henry Sapgir, and Evgenii Kropivnitsky. These literary experiments were continued and elaborated by the so-called "underground" writers, who surfaced during the first years of Perestroika: Dmitri Prigov, Lev Rubinstein, Timur Kibirov, Alexander Eremenko, Vladimir Sorokin, Viktor Erofeev, Evgenii Popov, and Alexander Ivanchenko. By the end of the 1980s and beginning of the '90s, other postmodernist writers, such as Tatiana Tolstaya, Vladimir Sharov, Viktor Pelevin, Viacheslav Pietsukh, Valeria Nabrikova, and Dmitri Galkovsky had made their debut.

As it evolved, Russian postmodernism rejected more and more consciously a key element of the modernist and avant-garde aesthetic -- *themythologization* of reality. In the modernist and avant-garde tradition, the creation of an individual poetic myth, which always hearkened back to some authoritative archetype or model, signified the creation of an alternate reality, or more precisely, an alternate eternity -- one which could overcome the senselessness, violence, oppression, and horror of life. The myth symbolized the ultimate form of existence because it was created freely and consciously by the artist, and thus embodied the concept of freedom itself. Postmodernism deliberately aimed to destroy all

mythologies, viewing them as the ideological foundation of utopianism and all attempts at mind-control in general -- enforcing a single, absolute, and rigidly hierarchical model of truth, eternity, liberty, and happiness. Beginning with a critique of Communist mythology (socialist art in the visual sphere, and subsequently in literature), postmodernism soon turned on the conceptual myths of Russian classical literature and the Russian avant-garde, and later to the myths fostered by contemporary mass culture. However, in shattering existing mythologies, postmodernism strives to reassemble the pieces into a new, non-hierarchical, non-absolute, playful mythology, since the postmodernist writer views myth as the most stable and a-historical form of human consciousness and culture. Thus postmodernism's strategy with regard to myth might be defined more properly as *deconstruction* than destruction -- a restructuring along different, counter-mythological principles.

The most concrete expression of this strategy in Russian postmodernism is the tendency to create unstable, frequently conflicting and even explosive *hybrids* -- compromises formed between both aesthetic and ontological categories, which are traditionally perceived as incompatible and even antithetical. These might be paradoxical "compromises" between life and death (as in works by Bitov, Erofeev, Sokolov); fantasy and reality (Tolstaya, Pelevin); memory and forgetting (Ilia Kabakov, Sharov); order and absurdity (Viktor Erofeev, Pietsukh); the personal and the faceless (Prigov, Evgenii Poppov, Kibirov); eternal archetype and vulgar stereotype (Sorokin). The search for ontological junctures forces the postmodernist writer to build his poetics upon unstable aesthetic compromises between the elevated and lowly, mockery and pathos, wholeness and fragmentation, and so on. This central principle of Russian postmodernism -- simultaneously structuring and deconstructive -- is defined below as the *paralogism of Russian postmodernism*.

This paralogism, which aims to form eruptive compromises among contradictory ideas and cultural discourses, was the first in the twentieth century to create such an open ("systematic") alternative to the traditional binary model of Russian cultural evolution, in which, according to Iurii Lotman and Boris Uspensky, "change occurs as a radical negation of the preceding state. The new does not arise out of structurally 'unused' reserve, but results from a transformation of the old, a process of turning it inside out. Thus, repeated transformation can in fact lead to the *regeneration* of archaic forms." [10]

In a certain sense the postmodern cultural aesthetic turns out to be more "clever" than its own authors. If the Russian postmodernist aesthetic

creates paralogical compromises, then the postmodernist writers, obeying the inertia of Russia's cultural tradition, generally organized their relations to the non-postmodernist world within the literary context, viewing readers and writers of the older generations along the principles of binary opposition: for them, as for the Russian avant-garde at the turn of the century, self-assertion became inseparable from "full-scale destruction" of the opposition, which was understood primarily to be the Russian realist tradition. In the words of Lotman and Uspensky, Russian postmodernists "did not simply accept a new system of values, replacing the old one, but rather wrote the old into the new -- with a minus sign." This inner contradiction between the social and aesthetic aspects in Russian postmodernism is but one of many characterizing the complexity, drama, and scale of the postmodernist crossroad in the history of Russian culture.

### **The "Paralogism" of Russian Postmodernism**

What unites these disparate versions of Russian postmodernism? What do Nabokov's *Lolita* and Viktor Pelevin's novels, for example, have in common? The present study attempts to describe that philosophical-aesthetic model which characterizes Russian postmodernist texts greatly removed from one another in time and quality. I would like to emphasize that this search does not aim to unify such a widely varied phenomenon as Russian postmodernism, but rather to reveal its aesthetic *code* -- which, on the one hand, is sufficiently diverse, and on the other, creates a common semantic field in which the dialogue among different individual conceptions of Russian postmodernism might unfold. Such a code undoubtedly belongs to the universal language of postmodern philosophy and aesthetics -- in this sense, Russian postmodernism also belongs to the universal postmodernist culture. Yet a focus on certain aspects of this language differentiates the *specificity* of Russian postmodernism compared with, say, the European or North American versions.

A key element of the Russian postmodern code is the "paralogism" -- a term introduced by J. F. Lyotard in *The Postmodern Condition* to describe a new type of logic which emerged alongside contemporary science:

Postmodern science--by concerning itself with such things as undecidables, the limits of precise control, conflicts characterized by incomplete information, *fracta*, catastrophes, and pragmatic paradoxes--is theorizing its own evolution as discontinuous, catastrophic, nonrectifiable, and paradoxical. It is changing its meaning of the word *knowledge*, while expressing how such a change can take place. It is producing not the

known, but the unknown. And it suggests a model of legitimation that has nothing to do with maximized performance, but has as its basis difference understood as paralogy. [11]

To clarify this category, Lyotard emphasizes that "paralogism" counters the ideas of dialogue and consensus. The paralogism arises out of despair of achieving consensus on any issue. It embodies "a power that destabilizes the capacity for explanation, manifested in the promulgation of new norms for understanding." [12] As Steven Connor remarks, paralogism -- in the given interpretation -- is "contradictory reasoning, designed to shift the structures of reason itself." [13]

Like any normal postmodernist aesthetic, Russian postmodernist culture paradoxically bases its paralogism on the unhinging of the mighty "structures of reason" which inform modernist culture, such as binary oppositional thought. Yet unlike the Western experience, the Russian cultural model lacks a tradition of resolving opposition through compromise, or more precisely, tends toward a tradition of intolerance for compromise of any sort, with roots stretching back into Russian medievalism. [14] According to Lotman and Uspensky, Russian culture always moves toward a radical break with the past, which reveals the unwavering maximalism of its consciousness, rejecting the very idea of compromise, acknowledging heaven or hell (and periodically, in the course of cultural evolution, renaming the previous hell as heaven and vice-versa), but excluding the concept of purgatory on principle. The combination of binary thinking with intolerance of compromise was exemplified in the twentieth century not only by the Marxist "dialectic" [15] and socialist realism, but by the oppositional "critical realism" of Solzhenitsyn, Astafiev, and most of the 1960s writers as well. One has only to remember Solzhenitsyn's attacks on "our pluralists" in the 1970s. And in the 1990s the programmatic declarations of a young champion of the "old realism" are quite emblematic of the spirit of intolerance toward compromise:

Any intermediate phase between realism and modernism leads to the death of realism. Its goals and meaning are too precise and suffer no relativism. If an artist throws himself to the whims of chance, to 'self-expression,' then he has lost his faith in the world and its workings, and now his goals lie in an entirely different realm. . . . [16]

For this reason postmodernism is forced to build its own paralogism in Russia, pushing away both from the logic of binary opposition per se and from the tradition of intolerance toward compromise which characterizes

Russian culture as a whole. Hence Russian postmodernism, unlike the Western variety:

1. concentrates precisely on seeking compromises and dialogues between opposite poles, on forming "intersections" among philosophical and aesthetic categories which are incompatible in the "classical," modernist, and dialectic consciousness;

2. forms compromises which are principally *paralogical*: they retain an eruptive quality, they are unstable and problematic, simmering with tension, begetting a contradictory whole. The very fact of such conceptual creations is emblematic of paralogism's central characteristic: "contradictory reasoning, designed to shift the structures of reason itself."

Due to this combination, Russian postmodernism itself is often perceived as an "oxymoron" (M. Perloff), an invalid phenomenon (C. Emerson, N. N. Shneidman), and, more precisely, as a particular kind of "paralogical" paradox, especially since, according to Lyotard, paralogism in science aims to automodelize ("theorizing its own evolution as discontinuous, catastrophic, nonrectifiable, and paradoxical"). However, it seems impossible to understand either the specificity or the creativity of Russian postmodernist philosophy outside this illogical combination of compromise and its concomitant instability and potential explosiveness.

Tellingly, the most meaningful images of Russian postmodernism are many-layered combinations of disparate paralogical compromises. Such, for example, is the image of garbage which forms a central motif in the poetics of Ilia Kabakov. In dialogue with Boris Grois, [17] Kabakov characterizes garbage as the philosophical compromise between life and death: at first he states that "garbage is closer to death; it is death visualized" (320); on the next page he says that "life itself is but a pile of rubbish" (321). Besides, Kabakov uses garbage as a "metaphor for . . . ordinary, gray, plodding daily existence, which is above all eventless" (322) and simultaneously as an embodiment of the most personal and intimate: "making the leap from the faceless and anonymous into the intimate world which is mine alone" (328). Garbage also occupies the intermediate zone between memory and forgetfulness: "It is, in itself, some sort of intermediary object, cleaved in two, with one end directed to memory and the other to forgetting" (329). Kabakov's discussions of garbage form one of the brightest examples of postmodernist paralogism. The logical Grois's response is also highly expressive: "There is an English saying that 'you can't make an omelet without breaking a few eggs.' It seems to me that this is basically the problem you have put to yourself"

(325).

Essentially, this is a problem which Russian postmodernism as a whole "puts to itself." It delineates postmodernism's place in contemporary culture. Of course it would be difficult, if not impossible, to compile a catalogue of every paralogical compromise enacted in the works of Russian postmodernists. I will limit myself to examining the most important of these compromises, in my view--those which have made the most vivid mark on postmodernist semantics and poetics.

### **Simulacrum-Reality**

The category of "simulation" first introduced by Jean Baudrillard is remarkably appropriate to the Russian version of postmodernism. Having fixed the blurred boundaries between signified objects and their referents, Baudrillard asserts that in the postmodern era, reality is replaced by a web of "simulacra"--self-referential complexes of signifiers which no longer correspond to anything in the real world. Thus arises a "hyperreality of simulacra." The expansion of language takes place through a system of signifiers with no object. Simulacra direct human behavior, perception, and in the long run, consciousness, which in turn leads to the "death of subjectivity": the human "I" is also constructed from an aggregate of simulacra. [18] The search for correspondence between Baudrillard's "simulacra" and sociorealism's sham worldview has been conducted exhaustively throughout Russian postmodernist studies. One can easily find direct illustrations of Baudrillard's philosophical theses in such early examples of Moscow conceptualism (of the late 1960s and early '70s) as Erik Bulatov's paintings or Dmitri Prigov's poetic cycles.

Yet at the same time, even the work of such acknowledged conceptualist leaders as Ilia Kabakov does not quite fit neatly into this categorical framework. A telling discrepancy arises in Kabakov's dialogue with Boris Grois about the installation "Fly with Wings." In Grois's view, the installation is a means to expose the simulation, artifice, and mechanical glue holding reality together at the seams. Yet Kabakov objects:

I disagree. In fact, it seems to me that the mechanical, inorganic entity, that conglomerate which the elements of the installation comprise, is combined into a new, organic whole, which cleaves and doubles in our consciousness, remaining what it is -- that is, a collection of buckets, sticks, and all kinds of rubbish -- and at the same time unfolding a new event before our eyes, a new whole and a new creative endeavor . . . . I would like to point out once more that the installation reaffirms and

regenerates the existence of real artistic space, which is entirely lost in painting . . . the reality which painting has lost is reestablished in the installation. [19]

This dichotomy points up the double meaning of simulacrum as a category in the postmodernist aesthetic. On the one hand, the flow of simulacrae eats away at reality, turns it into a theater of shadows, a collection of universally accessible illusions, a phenomenon of absence. The first, heroic -- or rather, analytical -- stage of Russian postmodernism (which includes the Lianozov school, Moscow conceptualism, and Andrei Bitov's novel *Pushkin's House*, with its anti-hero, the genius of smoke and mirrors, Mitishatiev) aimed to expose the sham and pretense of that which is considered reality. Yet it soon became evident that the existence absorbed by simulacrae might also be squeezed out of them (in direct correlation with Pasternak's well-known metaphor): simulacrae allow one to recreate reality, not even mechanically, but organically; herein lies the foundation of Russian postmodernism's "synthetic" stage, or rather its "synthetic" version. The seeds of this interpretation of the category of simulacrum might be traced as far back as Venedikt Erofeev's long poem *Moscow to the End of the Line* (1969). Erofeev achieves an anti-simulative effect paradoxically; by combining fragments of very distant cultural systems, he proves that not only the language of Soviet ideology, but also the language of Russian symbolism and even the language of today's social "nadir" play equal roles in creating that which Baudrillard terms "hyperreality." "Olga Erdeli," the sacramental question of what really killed Pushkin, the angels, God dressed in "blue lightning," the "gossip's" white lilac cocktails, foot-odor remedies, and "life should be lived in such a way that the years one has passed so aimlessly do not cause too much pain"-- all of these constructions appear equal in their simulativeness as they are expressed in the poem's language and narrative structure. However, another remarkable effect of Erofeev's work lies in his magical ability to achieve an organic symbiosis between these discursive fragments; they engage in a highly unusual dialogue, frequently within the space of a single passage, finally and paradoxically recreating reality. For example:

And later (listen carefully), later, after they had found out why Pushkin died, I gave them Alexander Blok's poem 'The Nightingale Garden' to read. There, at the center of the poem -- if you throw out all of the perfumed shoulders, the unilluminated mists, the rosy towers in smoky vestments -- there at the center of the poem you find the lyric hero dismissed from work for drunkenness, whoring, and absenteeism. I told them, 'It's a very contemporary book.' I told them, 'You'll find it useful.'

And so? They read it. But, in spite of everything, it had a depressing effect on them -- Freshen-Up disappeared immediately from all the stores. It's impossible to say why, but blackjack was forgotten, vermouth was forgotten, Sheremetievo International Field was forgotten, and Freshen-Up triumphed. Everyone drank only Freshen-Up.

Oh, to be carefree! Oh heavenly birds, who neither sow nor reap. Oh, the lilies of the field are dressed more beautifully than Solomon! They drank up all the Freshen-Up from Dolgoprudnyi Station to Sheremetievo International. [20]

The stylistic trajectory of this fragment might be interpreted along the following parabola. At first, we are ironically presented with high poetic style ("perfumed shoulders and unilluminated mists and rosy towers in smoky vestments"), which then veers sharply downward, first into vulgar colloquialism ("drunkenness, whoring, and absenteeism") and second into a parody of a well-known quote of Lenin's ("It's a very contemporary book"). Practically speaking, the author demonstrates three types of reality simulation here: the poetic, the ideological, and the so-called folksy-practical (drunkenness, whoring, and absenteeism from work all represent absence -- absence of consciousness, of love, of labor). But the final part of the fragment presents an ennobling return into poetic tonality; in fact, the cologne called "Freshen-Up" associatively rhymes with "The Nightingale Garden" ("Freshen-Up triumphed") and is written into a Biblical stylistic context ("Oh, the lilies of the field are dressed more beautifully than Solomon. . . ."). Here, the lofty comes down not to be discredited, but to take on a new form of existence -- a different state of reality -- in the "lower" realm. It appears that this very recreation of reality from mutually reflective and repellent simulacra engenders that crucial quality of Erofeev's poem, which Vladimir Muraviev called "counter-irony" and Mikhail Epstein described as "the carnival's aftermath," when all former values "are upended by the carnival and then restored in some new, 'noumenal' dimension." [21]

In the dialogue regarding the "Fly with Wings" exhibition, Ilia Kabakov underscores that "the material presence of reality in art is absolutely tied to the absence of reality in life itself." [22] Kabakov describes this "absence of reality in life itself" in an aggressive image of an all-absorbing emptiness (a theme which acquires independent meaning in the postmodernist aesthetic): "It sticks, grows together, sucks the marrow from existence; its thick, viscous, nauseating anti-energy is drained vampirically from the surrounding environment." [23]

This same theme appears in Erofeev's poem: not only the train, but the narrative itself follows a circular route, and each essential motif appears twice, both in a positive and negative light (this is particularly evident in the example of the angels and the silence of God), thereby cancelling each other out. In the end, only emptiness remains; Erofeev leaves us with "darkness" closing in (absolute night takes over outside the train's windows at the end of the chapter which brings together the two points of Venichka's trip: "Petushki. Garden Circle") and time ("What do you need time for, Venichka? . . . Once you had a heavenly paradise, you could have found out the time last Friday, but now your heavenly paradise is no more, what do you need with the time?" p. 155) and Venichka's murderers, seemingly born of thin air.

Of course, the simulacrum theme is also distinctly present in the modernist aesthetic (one need only recall Andrei Bely's domino imagery, the symbolic role of masquerade in the writing of Blok and Fiodor Sologub; later, the theme of false reality will become a fundamental leitmotif in Konstantin Vaginov's novels). Thus, for instance, all of Nabokov's Russian novels and the early American works clearly trace an anti-thesis of vulgar pseudo-reality and true perception, created in the protagonist's imagination -- witness *Martin Edelweiss*, *Godunov-Cherdintsev*, *Cincinnatus C.*, *Sebastian Knight* (and later, his brother), *Adam Krug*.

However, in *Lolita* (1955), a novel which played a colossal role in American postmodernist history, this anti-thesis is lifted away: Humbert's reality, constructed as a projection of the modernist myth, and Lolita's, constructed from the vulgar stereotypes of mass culture, collide and destroy each other--leaving behind, instead of a true "reality," a pile of scorched rubbish (this motif frames the narrative). A funnel of emptiness sucks in first Lolita, then Humbert. It is telling that Humbert is not the only one to sense the presence of this void behind the welcome film of simulacrae: "the side door banged open full-blast and a roar of black eternity rushed in, the howling wind drowning out the shriek of solitary ruin" [24] (thus Humbert describes his state of mind after losing Lolita), yet one of his most unbearable heartbreaking memories is of Lolita herself "very serenely and seriously" telling a girlfriend, "You know, what's so dreadful about dying is that you are completely on your own." [25] Even the fact that Lolita dies "in childbed, giving birth to a stillborn girl on Christmas Day" (6) reminds us once again that it is not so much a matter of death as of the metaphorical impossibility of life; Lolita cannot continue to live even through her daughter, once she has seen what *really* lies

behind the "fence of stereotypes," behind all of the lofty poetic fantasies.

The postmodern simulacrae *do not contradict reality, but its absence -- that is, emptiness*. Paradoxically (paralogically), these simulacrae become a creative source of reality only when their simulative, false, fictitious, illusory nature is acknowledged -- only on the condition of *denial*.

Thus, for instance, Vladimir Sorokin uses his socio-artistic novellas, novels (*Marina's Thirtieth Romance, The Hearts of the Four, The Novel*), and intricately structured books (*The Norm*) not only to expose the sham at the core of the standard sociorealist text, but to reconstruct the ritual-mythological complexes in sociorealist discourse, which remain hidden in the cultural subconscious. In the end, he manages to transform standard, schematic plots into nauseatingly naturalistic descriptions of bloody, primal ritual, reconstructing a primordial reality which *predates* all signifiers, much like the impossible "theatre of cruelty" which Antonin Artaud once imagined so wistfully.

In his quasi-historical novels *Rehearsals* (1991), *Sooner or Later* (1993), and *How Could I Not Regret. . .* (1995), Vladimir Sharov seems to parody the utopian and mythological subtexts of twentieth-century Russia's most authoritative ideologies to an almost grotesque degree of detail. For example, in *Sooner or Later* the Russian revolution is literally masterminded by Madame de Stahl, who (in Sharov's novel) possesses the secret of immortality and grants power to her lovers -- the philosopher Nikolai Fiodorov, the composer Skriabin, Stalin (who is simultaneously Madame de Stahl's son--hence the pseudonym). However, unlike other quasi-historical novelists (such as Valeria Zolotukha, author of *The Great Indian Liberation Crusade*; Dmitri Lipskerov, author of *Forty Years in Changzhou*; Iurii Buida, author of *Boris and Gleb*), Sharov writes compellingly and earnestly. His fantastical tales echo the monotonous, dispassionate tone of historical research, documents, and events. The effect was so *realistic* that a few critics (S. Kostyrko, I. Rodnianskaia) attacked the author for "distorting historical truth," thereby confirming the simulacrum's power to engender reality -- of course, a "false" reality, or a paralogical reality if one assumes the traditional point of view.

Viktor Pelevin's work proves even more telling in this area, as some of the most popular and "readable" postmodern literature of the 1990s. Pelevin's characters struggle as fiercely as "Russian schoolboys" with the fundamental question: What is reality? For these protagonists (incidentally, Pelevin is the youngest of the Russian postmodernists), realizing the illusory nature of their environment is merely a starting point

for their ruminations. Pelevin does not explore reality's transformation into simulacrum, but rather the reverse process -- the birth of reality from simulacrum. Essentially, his intent is exactly opposite the basic postulates of postmodernist philosophy.

Yes -- life is most likely a dream (the short story "The Blue Lantern"), a computer game (the tale *The Prince of the State Planning Commission*), fryer chickens moving along an incubatory conveyor belt (*The Hermit and the Six-Fingered One*), and even the senseless "drone of insects" (the novel *Life of Insects*). With unmatched virtuosity, Pelevin plays up a smug middle-manager's gradual metamorphosis into a tank-driver and a beach bum's into a dragonfly. Yet Pelevin does not write from satirical motivations; by combining, for instance, human passions with the instincts of an insect, he tries to peer behind the destructive similarity behind people's meaningless existence and a moth's blind race toward a flame. As the protagonist of his earlier work, *The Prince of the State Planning Commission*, puts it, even if the result of a lifelong quest turns out to be hollow, a sham, a cardboard cutout, still "when a man spends so much time and energy on the journey and finally gets there, he can no longer see his destination as it really is . . . and even that is not correct, because there is no 'really.'" [26] For this reason, Omon Ra (Pelevin's protagonist in the novel of the same name [1993]), having realized that the space mission for which he sacrificed his legs, for which his friends gave their lives, is nothing but a secret play staged somewhere in the underground labyrinths of the Moscow metro, remains a space hero, much like the Egyptian god who overcame death. The mission's 'reality' does not matter; for Omon Ra it is an event resembling an ancient rite of passage through terrible trials and temporary death. Even Pelevin's scarab beetles in *Life of Insects* (1994), whose entire world consists of a dung pile, are not a mockery of the human quest for the meaning of life; on the contrary, Pelevin imbues them with an almost grotesque solemnity, for even manure can become meaningful as the site of conscious drama, pain, hope, despair, persistence.

The formation of paralogical compromise between simulacrum and reality -- an unstable zone where simulacrum constantly engenders reality while reality turns into simulacrum -- defines Russian postmodernism's mechanism of aesthetic perception. In turn, this process is inextricably tied with the following problematic opposition between *fragmentation* and *integrity*, which generally lies at the structural core of these aesthetic principles.

## Fragmentation-Integrity

In Soviet artistic theory of the 1970s and '80s, a widespread belief held that the "integrity of a particular work expresses the all-encompassing nature of reality itself, the result of an artist's creative perception of life, unearthing the dialectic unity of the real world . . . in all of its contradictions and junctures" and that "types of art should be understood first and foremost as types of artistic integrity." [27] This category of "integrity" also countered the structural immanence of the text and the extra-textual mandates of sociorealism -- party line, ideology, class struggle. [28] That almost magical significance which Russian scholars imparted to this category might only be compared with the semantically loaded use of the word "discourse" by their Western colleagues. At the same time, it appears axiomatic that the postmodernist aesthetic preaches a movement "from creation to text," from the illusion of an integral worldview (which the more radical postmodernist theorists define as totalitarian by nature) to a fragmented text, which can be compared only with itself. Postmodernism's theoretical and practical rebellion against all ideologies based on Unity or Hierarchy necessarily targeted the category of creative integrity. Yet, on the other hand, the Russian fascination with integrity could not help but transform the postmodernist rebellion against "totalities" as well.

It is interesting, for instance, that even the most radical examples of integral decay and dissolution in Russian postmodernist texts generally lack independent significance and appear to be mechanisms for propagating various "non-classical" models of integrity.

Thus, we see a radical attack on "integrity" in Ilia Kabakov's "tabular poetry":

One might describe 'tabular poetry' like this: every square of a grid or table is filled . . . with one, or more rarely, two or three words. The 'reader' is asked not to 'read,' but to 'look at' the entire field all at once, as one might view a drawing or a picture... Of course, any line-by-line reading of 'tabular poetry' loses its meaning. [29]

However, this poetic 'table' is merely a background on which Kabakov superimposes a picture of a fly -- the "extra element" which spurs the reader to perceive this random collection of words as a "whole":

This principle of adding an 'extra element' . . . lies in the fact that a meaningless, random image stimulates and activates whatever it appears

extraneous *to*. We have already mentioned that 'tabular poetry' depends upon a reader's unified, summary gaze to view the entire table as a whole. Yet the actual practice of examining tables (or any schematic drawings, graphs, and so on) does not allow for such viewing; instead, we are forced to scrutinize every square, every graph separately. This is where the role of the fly as activator of the 'whole' becomes so critical. In relation to this perplexing unknown factor the 'poetic table' coalesces into a complex but integrated organism, enclosed in a single frame, in which each word -- this is important -- appears 'equal' to the rest. This is a key condition of 'tabular poetry's intended effect. [30]

Of course, the very idea of "tabular poetry" hardly warrants much serious scrutiny, yet it is highly illustrative of the artistic mindset of Russian postmodernism, which discerns in the negation of familiar connections only the path toward a new non-hierarchical integrity. In truth, Kabakov's invention was also realized with a few small variations in Lev Rubinstein's "card poetry." These collected fragments, lines, or paragraphs, each printed on a separate card (some of the cards were left blank) are incoherent only at first glance. First, as Andrei Zorin remarked, the very process of flipping cards implies a certain cadence, while the cards themselves count out rhythm and meaning. [31] Second, this apparent formal incoherence makes the question of connection among these seemingly random elements of meaning the most important problem posed by Rubinstein's poetry. As careful analysis [32] proves, Rubinstein's entire text can be divided into several locally rhythmic patterns, which either develop in a parallel fashion or replace one another. It is also important to note that these rhythmic structures always interconnect and reflect one another, forming a specific non-linear dialogue. Rubinstein's rhythm plastically embodies his integral model--the arrangements constantly replacing one another are built into a random and seemingly chaotic enumeration of every possible thing. Rhythmic structure acquires in Rubinstein's work a particular philosophical meaning: his text generally becomes a dynamic model of self-consciousness. This model is far from classical, for Rubinstein's "I" turns out to be a point, or rather a field of intersection among various inharmonic, contradictory rhythms; this seems to be chaos, a cacophany, but simultaneously *a combination of foreign and repeating elements of being which can never be duplicated, everything from faces and words to objects and symbols*. The quest for this combination, the construction of its design, comes not post facto but rather from within any act of self-awareness, *here and now*, in every one of Rubinstein's texts. In this sense, the deconstruction of Rubinstein's work aims to create a new type of integrity. Rubinstein himself says that "the reconstruction of language in my texts imbues it with new positive

codes. I seriously believe that the main vector in my work is positive, which many would doubt." [33]

The paralogical fusion between fragmentation and integrity is particularly evident in the importance ascribed to the categories of emptiness, the semantic abyss, and even death in Russian postmodernism. These very figures becomes the base structure for fragmentation, as opposed to a single, unbroken integrity.

Having analyzed Ilia Kabakov's poetics, Mikhail Epstein concludes that Kabakov assigns a double semantic meaning to emptiness: in one sense (discussed above) it is an aggressive ravenous anti-energy, resisting the artist who would create reality from simulacrum. Yet emptiness is present not only beyond the bounds, but also within Kabakov's texts:

Kabakov's world is a porous body designed to allow emptiness inside and then to trap it within the work. . . . As one tries to establish the difference between these two interpretations, one notices that 'bloodsucking' emptiness is inherent to the world surrounding the artist, which he must also share with all the world. On the contrary, 'sunlit' emptiness, which is the same as fullness, only appears in the whiteness of the artist's paintings, glowing from beneath letters and brushstrokes. . . . One is left to suppose that the artist not only confuses the two kinds of emptiness and goes astray in his interpretations, but that his secret intent is precisely this transformation of one emptiness into another. [34]

Since Kabakov's work is always built upon the combination of text with the visual plane, Epstein's thoughts, which tear apart the visual plane's integrity, come to express that "sunlit" emptiness in the world of color, while the colors which condemn text to an inescapable fragmentation play the same role in the world of words.

Thematically, death plays an analogous role in Bitov's *Pushkin's House*, Venedikt Erofeev's *Moscow to the End of the Line*, and Sasha Sokolov's *School for Fools*. On the one hand, all three of these works present death as the inevitable product of an environment in which simulacrae leave no room for "reality." However, in all three texts the direct result of total simulation becomes the increasing *homogeneity* -- that is, uniformity -- of "lofty" and "lowbrow," "tragic" and "comical": the Russian classical canon and the fictitious existence of Liova Odoevtsev (in Bitov's novel); the Christian (among others) tradition and recipes for fantastic cocktails brewed from deodorants, cologne, and brake fluid (in *Moscow to the End of the Line*); the romantic image of the insane poet

and the whiny half-wit shrieking and wailing into empty barrels (in *School for Fools*).

Thus, both Bitov and Sokolov use death as a common denominator -- in the former case, connecting and allowing for mutual exchange between the afterlife of classical culture and grubby "modernity"; in the latter, as the basis for metamorphoses occurring between the chaotic poetic consciousness of "so-and-so's disciple" and the cruel, chaotic insanity reigning in the "School for Fools." In *Moscow to the End of the Line*, death also stands out as the "last" and perhaps the only stable value in a catastrophically ambivalent world. The protagonist's death turns the poem's very text into a narrative of nonbeing, since the last sentence reads "A clotted red letter 'Iu' spread across my eyes and started to quiver. And since then I have not regained consciousness, and I never will." [35] Yet in the given context death is imbued with a tragic value, assuring the protagonist-hero of a new and different existence as the author-creator, finally gaining a stable, otherworldly point of view, which in turn retrospectively sheds light on the text as a whole. Death does not bring closure to the narrative events, but rather opens them up to further interpretation. The moment interrupting the gradual course of events, the emptiness of nonbeing, paradoxically insures the story's unity and flow.

This model of textual integrity, based upon the unity of semantic spaces and structural breaks, most closely corresponds to the systemic principles of the *rhizome* [36] described by Giles Deleuze [37]. In general terms, Deleuze delineates three groups of principles which characterize the rhizomatic system:

1. Heterogeneity, the playful combination of different semiotic codes without undermining their internal integrity; multiplicity, the impossibility of singling out the system's base. Rhizomatic multiplicity also denies any kind of transcendence, any additional dimension that would extend beyond its immediate multilinear space;
2. Fragmentation -- "A rhizome may be broken, shattered at a given spot, but it will start up again on one of its old lines, or on new lines." [38] This principle is related to the transformation of the relationship between culture and reality; they are no longer connected by representation or mimises. The book and the world form a fragmented, yet internally integral rhizome;
3. The rhizome is deprived of any transcendent deep structure, whether temporal or spatial -- it is all *here* and *now*; hence the rhizome's

incomplete nature: it has neither beginning nor end in any dimension; it is always in the middle of its dynamics, always in the process of development based on the interaction of heterogeneous elements characterized by a single space-time status.

The rhizomatic model of creative integrity differs cardinally from the models of integrity rooted in classical types of culture. It does not oppose fragmentation but rather presupposes it as an essential condition of its own realization. This type of creative integrity seems totally independent of the author's efforts to organize his creation by means of plot manipulation, literary techniques, and so on (Bitov, Erofeev, and Sokolov all reveal this independence in different ways). Of course, this is an expertly crafted illusion of spontaneity in the creative world. But if this illusion is truly achieved, then the resulting integrity opens up to embody various meanings lying beyond the boundaries of the rational, deterministic world. Erofeev's protagonist's mystical epiphanies and the surreal liberty which Sokolov grants to his narrator are no accident, but make perfect sense in the context of this integral model.

Rhizomatic principles also correspond with the unfolding of other, no less significant semantic oppositions in Russian postmodernism, also "stamped" with the rhizomatic compromise between fragmentation and integrity. Thus, the principle of multiplicity, heterogeneity, absent transcendence is most clearly realized in Russian postmodernists' interpretation of the opposition between the *personal* and *impersonal*. Theoretically, postmodernism refutes the category of personality and the personal as one of the modernist "totalities." However, in practice Russian postmodernism takes a slightly different approach. If, for example, Dmitri Prigov tirelessly demonstrates the fallacy of personality and personal self-expression as categories in his poetry, variously and methodically cataloging the different "automatisms" of quasi-personal assertion--from the purely ideological and thematic to those based on gender -- then Lev Rubinstein (as discussed earlier) reinstates personality over and in place of worn, faceless discursive material--as a combination of "foreign" elements, flowing but impossible to reproduce -- words, objects, quotations, gestures, images, and so on. This approach does not refute the category of personality as a unique, integral whole, but rather sees this integrity, this wholeness, much like a kaleidoscopic design: shifting, unstable, consisting of impersonal fragments. This approach appears even more distinctly in Timur Kibirov's lyrics. Demonstratively using the most representative array, the most disparate quotations in conjunction with the most immediately recognizable details on the advantages of "social" life (from public toilets

to the military), Kibirov consistently achieves a remarkably sincere effect - he is, perhaps, the most *personal* poet in contemporary Russian letters. Essentially, he does not refute postmodern determinism, but magnifies it instead. Kibirov asserts that chaos determines personality, which is thereby destined to be individual. His constant theme revolves around entropy, the disintegration of previously stable, almost calcified formations. But these decaying particles, tastelessly intermingled, settle in a specific, personal memory and consciousness, obeying the logic of chaos -- that is, capriciously and unpredictably--and therefore absolutely individually. Personal experience plays a unique role because its very nature is random and disorderly. At the same time, Kibirov's lyrical consciousness is open to dialogue with a different consciousness, one which takes in the same entropic products, is comprised of the same bits and shards, but has formed a separate, also unique kaleidoscopic design (incidentally, this explains Kibirov's penchant for lyrical missives to friends):

This is all mine, familiar,  
This is all mine.  
Bold adventures,  
Stubbed harvest-fields,  
Birch and rowan trees,  
Rivers or TsK  
A political prisoner or a prick and a quarter,  
Or heartbreaking sorrow!  
. . . or a battle, or swede,  
An inventory of Khokhloma  
And we are sent off  
To three jolly letters.

To L. S. Rubinstein [39]

Of course, such a conception of personality precludes any sort of transcendence by "higher" values or arrangements. In this context, it is interesting to compare two "Buddhist" novels which came out in the 1990s: *The Monogram* (1991) by Alexander Ivanchenko, a writer more indebted to modernism than to postmodernism, and Viktor Pelevin's *Chapaev and Emptiness* (1996). Ivanchenko views Buddhism as a teaching about Truth, and quotes copiously and directly from Buddhist sutras and parables, explains meditation techniques to the reader, and constructs his entire story around the philosophic wisdom and saving grace of emptiness: at the novel's end, the enlightened heroine discovers the attributes of the legendary Sixth Patriarch on her desk at work --

while formally remaining a modest librarian, she has experienced a spiritual transformation. Pelevin, on the other hand, uses Buddhism as an ironic metaphor for the *absence* of any transcendental explanation or justification of existence: his protagonist becomes convinced of the equivalence of reality and hallucination, or rather, in the end, loses all ability and desire to distinguish between them. This character -- the poet Peter Empty -- is simultaneously a psychiatric patient and commissar of Chapaev's legendary troop. He comes to understand that his main goal is to "get himself out of the hospital," that is, relinquish the quest for universal salvation and a single "true" reality and to accept that "personality is like clothing, taken out of the closet piece by piece, and the less real a person is, the more items of clothing are in his closet," while there is "no one to wear them (the items of clothing)." [40] But to prevent anyone from taking this philosophy for actual Truth, Pelevin turns the well-known folkloric-cinematic hero Chapaev into an embodiment of the Buddha, and the widely recognizable anecdotes about Petka, Anka, and Chapaev into miniature parables similar to ancient Chinese koans (as noted by A. Genis and D. Bykov); this oxymoron deliberately undermines the seriousness of a reader's response.

The rhizomatic principle of intermittence and fragmentation, which presupposes the rhizome's ability to regenerate from any point, inspires a paralogical reinterpretation of the opposition between *memory* and *oblivion*. The connection between these categories and conceptions of integrity is obvious: curiously, in the 1970s this very category of "memory" was perceived as a key condition of the integrity of the historical process and moral striving--to deny memory was to deny consciousness, social responsibility, and culture. Meanwhile, Bitov's *Pushkin's House* maintained that the most important condition for preserving unity and cultural integrity was not memory, but oblivion. M. Pavlovich Odoevtsev, the protagonist's grandfather, asserts this same idea twice, at the novel's beginning and end:

The ties have been broken, the secret forever lost . . . a mystery is born! Culture remains only in the form of monuments contoured by destruction. A monument is doomed to eternal life, it is immortal merely because all that surrounded it has perished. In this sense, I'm not worried about our culture -- it has already been. It's gone. It will exist in my absence, as a meaningless thing, for a good while longer. . . . All has perished -- and in this very hour the great Russian culture has been born, this time forever. . . . To our descendants, Russian culture will be a sphinx, just as Pushkin was the sphinx of Russian culture. [41]

Here, as a general diagnosis, this formula is pronounced: "Unreality is a condition of life" (354).

The formula's meaning is clear: it establishes a connection between the contemporary protagonist's artificial existence, his "unreal times," and the cultural life of the Russian classics. M. P. Odoevtsev's argument plots ambivalent coordinates for the image of Russian culture: here death becomes security, ruptured connections lend a classical sense of closure, non-existence predetermines grandeur. . . . Yet culture as a whole becomes closed off in this conception, senseless (as a factor of its impenetrability). Its context lies in the total destruction of reality; its effect is either muteness or incomprehension. Oblivion becomes the only possible form of cultural preemption: the novel's main character, the philologist Liovushka Odoevtsev, realizes this function of connection through oblivion.

This paradox is even more readily apparent in Vladimir Sharov's novel *Sooner or Later* (1993) [42]. As previously mentioned, this novel represents a certain kind of meta-parody (though not comic in the least) of various mythologizations of Russian history. The narrator, Aliosha, a relatively young man, suffers spells of total amnesia and is therefore confined to the senility unit in Kaschenko Hospital. Another character, Ifraimov, dictates to Aliosha his story of the relationship between the French writer Germaine de Stahl (who lived three human lifetimes) and the Russian philosopher Nikolai Fiodorov as a confession before God on the eve of the second Great Flood, explaining who *really* galvanized the Russian revolution. Unlike the other patients, Aliosha and Ifraimov remain at the hospital -- which doubles as an Ark -- along with Fiodorov and Madame de Stahl in "memory of that life." At the same time, the final bout of amnesia before the Great Flood strikes Aliosha precisely at the moment when Ifraimov's mythical version of the revolution and reality coincide, and Aliosha realizes that the elegant old woman in the next room is, in fact, Madame de Stahl, and the old man so obviously in love with her is the famous philosopher Fiodorov, and the shellshocked soldiers with whom the nurses are sleeping are not really soldiers at all, but Fiodorov's children by Madame de Stahl, "those idiot children whom she bore in St. Petersburg, whom their father had never seen in their youth -- immediately following these words, *as though I had truly needed them to fall asleep*, darkness, an abyss. Whether I did anything else, spoke to anyone, I don't remember; I am only aware that I was sick for a long, long time, *almost for all eternity*" (IV, 60).

The narrator's paradoxical mental states parallel the consciousness of

other characters in the novel. In his amnesia, he resembles the oblivion in which Fiodorov lives out his romance with Madame de Stahl. This parallel is most apparent in the accumulation of mythological *memory* on the *senility* ward--hence, it becomes the Ark.

The coincidence of the narrator's realization of *mythical reality* with the moment of amnesia's onset leads one to suppose that the "broken rhythm" of Aliosha's consciousness is *synchronous* to the rhythm of history -- mythologized history, of course. For this reason, having recovered from his last bout with amnesia, Aliosha feels as though "not only I, but also those who never lost their memory understand nothing and are also afraid"(61). The moment of oblivion lies in the interval between *repeating* mythological cycles, and thus signals the moment of transition from historical time into eternity. Characteristically, the narrator describes amnesia as life's circular point of closure: "Death waited behind me, not in the future. . . . I don't know why, maybe because I was coming from the other end, but this life was very different from what I had imagined, and very different things wound up being significant"(III, 9). Fiodorov and Madame de Stahl find themselves in exactly the same position; they have outlived death (Fiodorov's fictitious death, de Stahl's real death), and much in the same way, their subsequent existence fills with meaning when they repeat events already lived through: in his hospital trysts with his lover, Fiodorov "repeated himself seventy years ago almost word-for-word"(70), while Madame de Stahl rejoices that the nurses "in their relationships with her sons almost literally reenact her affair with Fiodorov, and this makes them happy. Her former life was being lived anew, in triplicate"(71). Finally, even God repeats himself, arranging another Great Flood and choosing Noah (Fiodorov) to save mankind.

On the other hand, none of this refutes the moment of *remembering, recording history*, but rather lends it special meaning: this history is saved for eternity, and no one can enter eternity without paying the price of death and oblivion. Essentially, this artistic conception of *history's discrete continuity* is a particular conception of integrity which incorporates the necessary element of rupture, discontinuity, multiple versions--from memory lapse to death, from revolution to flood. This element shatters integrity into little pieces, breaks it into autonomous fragments, but the pattern of explosions traces a certain "ragged rhythm" -- though ragged, it remains rhythmic, that is -- ordered, "cosmic harmony" (O. M. Freidenberg). An order defined and created by its violations. Continuity, harmonized by the inevitability of rupture.

A rhizomatic "cartography," existence in the here and now, outside of any profound temporal or spatial structures (3), indirectly corresponds with the opposition between *power* and *freedom*. Dmitri Prigov explained conceptualism's strategy thus:

I have always understood that the main problem facing art, its purpose in this world, is to bear witness to absolute freedom, fully cognizant of the dangers. Art lets people view absolute freedom, which perhaps cannot be realized fully in life. I took Soviet language as the most functional, clear-cut, and accessible example, which represented ideology and passed itself off as absolute truth, brought down from on high. Man was suffocated by this language, not on the outside but within. Any ideology which demands your heart and soul, any language, all have totalitarian ambitions to take over the whole world, strew it with their terminology, and show that they represent absolute truth. I wanted to show people that freedom exists. Language is only language, not absolute truth, and once we understand this we will be free. [43]

Elsewhere he repeats this same thought regarding Sorokin: "...it seems to me that Sorokin's position (as well as that of the entire movement to which he strives to belong) -- viewing freedom as the fundamental pathos of contemporary culture--is truly, if not singularly, humanistic."

[44] However, Russian conceptualism only engaged totalitarian discourse in its earliest period. Subsequently the experience of liberation from the tyranny of totalitarian language was applied by Sorokin and Prigov to any literary discourse -- from the language of Turgenev's novels (Sorokin's *The Novel*) to women's lyrical language (Prigov's "Women's Super-Lyricism" and "Super-Women's Lyricism"). In its own way, this makes sense: subsequent deconstruction reveals in any literary tradition such totalitarian qualities as the ability to create autonomous, mythological reality, direct (and manipulate) the reader's perception, giving certain values preference over others. In principle, deconstructing literature as such leads to absolute freedom. But who can wield it? The individual personality is out of the question--according to conceptualism, any personality is never more than the product of discourse, totally enclosed in its framework. Nor can the author wield it, for the author has no language to express this freedom -- if every language is totalitarian, then freedom from the tyranny of discourse precludes the very possibility of expression. But the conceptualist text can truly translate any word -- however foreign or distant in time -- into the flat space of paper: any word is no more than uniform material subject to deconstruction. The greatest power belongs to whoever executes this operation before the eyes of his astonished readers -- that is, the conceptualist author. The

author's abstract freedom provides the means to realize maximal (at least, in today's culture) power. Thus conceptualist practice turns freedom into a superpower.

Incidentally, it is quite characteristic that Russian conceptualists, though omnivorous, still prefer to engage in discourses with the most authoritative energy -- they strive to "redistribute," or more precisely, to appropriate this energy. In this sense, one might note Sorokin's assertions that Russian literature is dead--which seems to mean that no sufficiently powerful discourses remain to validate conceptualism's authority. Sorokin's fascination with cinema and television points up that he continues to seek zones of discursive power, wherever they might be found. Sorokin's latest work to date -- the screenplay "Moscow" (co-authored by Alexander Zeldovich), [45] presents an interesting departure from the boundaries of intra-literary games, into the realm of "life." Sorokin addresses the "New Russians" -- a new social class which indubitably possesses material and political, but not yet discursive, power -- a class still without a cultural language. Sorokin essentially offers them his services. He mixes a cocktail of surrealism, the classical figures of the three sisters (the three heroines -- two sisters and their mother, who nevertheless sleeps with the same men as her daughters do -- are named Olga, Masha, and Irina [46] ) and his own patented brand of naturalism, which in this case acquires all the meaning of "truth" in the lives of the "New Russians" with their Mafia connections, intrigues, and other horrors. [47] In a way, this is an honest move: rather than exploit the energy of existing powerful cultural discourses, it is logical to try to create a new discourse of power, as yet unformed in the culture at large. However, such a trajectory seems to lead beyond the boundaries of postmodernism, into a new normative realm which prefers power to freedom. The Russian avant-garde experienced a similar evolution, encountering this dilemma already in the 1920s: to perish or to dissolve its energy in the power of "government as the ultimate work of art" (H. Gunther).

In 1985, Sasha Sokolov offered an unusual allegory for "paralogical" freedom's transformation into a superpower in his novel *Palisandria*. His protagonist and narrator, Palisander Dahlberg, whom Sokolov imbues with all the polish of his own style, achieves the synthesis of all possible oppositions -- he is simultaneously man and woman, youth and old man, "freedom fighter" and the State's darling, bully and victim, charmer and freak, and so on. In the long run, Palisander is truly free: every twist of fate is nothing more than his own *deja vu*--they have no power over him, nor do authority, time, or death ("There is no death!" -- he repeats this slogan throughout the novel). But the result of this freedom turns out to

be absolute power for Palisander, who is anointed at the novel's end as Russia's eternal ruler (with the official title "Your Eternity"). Yet the author clearly feels uneasy with such freedom. "The author vomited," reads a phrase in *Palisandria's* epilogue. Having created his eternal freedom, Palisander himself admits defeat in the epilogue:

You were so carried away that at times you imagined the text you were reading exempt from the time warps and whirlpools of relativity. You were mistaken. Although literature has till now been merely a timid exercise, a clumsy form of hieroglyphics, a tribute to human boorishness and savagery, nothing is exempt: every word of mine shall be lost. . . . And -- listen closely now!--everything that happened was in vain. Theabyss yawned, life cracked, and slowly it broke off. [48]

Like any paralogical compromise, "freedom-power" propelled Palisander and conceptualism to self-abnegation and finally to chaos. Erasing distinctions between polarities inevitably devalues and empties them. In the end, existence becomes indistinguishable from non-existence -- both are equally simulative. As Palisander himself acknowledges in the final chapters: "Do not weep for me, O Russia, do not weep. For thou art no more. I am no more. We are gone. We have crossed over. We have fallen off . . . Where's your country? . . . 'Forget her,' an inner voice responded, 'forget her name. Your country is Chaos'" (373, 380).

This metaphor may be applied to the rhizomatic model of creative integrity as well. It too cannot be stable in principle, for it borders on entropy by its very nature, tending toward self-destruction. Perhaps it initially requires a certain immaturity of poetics as system in order to be realized--a kind of "unreadiness"? But in that case will maturity and closure in postmodernist poetics necessarily lead to the extinction of rhizomatic integrity, turning it into sham spontaneity, an imitation, a flat plaster cast of endless metamorphoses?

This question leads us to the next, perhaps most fundamental aesthetic opposition, which Russian postmodernism has transfigured into the zone of paralogical compromise.

### **Chaos-Cosmos**

Joyce hit upon the best definition for this zone in his final novel, *Chaosmos*. What once seemed an extravagant play on words has, in the past decades, been imbued with concrete scientific meaning. Ilya Prigogin, Benoit Mandelbrot, Mitchell Feigenbaum, and other "chaos

theorists" have presented more than simply a new paradigm of scientific knowledge (incidentally, Lyotard developed his ideas about "paralogism" specifically in response to Mandelbrot's arguments). Far more importantly, these chaos theories laid the foundation for a new, non-classical conception of systemic processes -- the cultural significance of this discovery cannot be overstated. Postmodernism evolved, one might say, along a parallel course, but within the same paradigmatic framework; therefore juxtapositions between chaos and postmodernist theories are quite natural [49] .

Ilya Prigozhin defines chaos as a system whose activity counters "the indiscriminate disorder which reigns in a state of equilibrium: no stability can insure the veracity of macroscopic description, *all possibilities are actualized, coexisting and interacting with one another, while the system simultaneously turns out to be all that it might be*" (italics mine --M. L.). [50] To my mind, this definition profoundly corresponds to the Russian version of the postmodernist "paralogism." By combining semantic polar opposites in paralogical compromises, Russian postmodernism achieves an effect of unprecedented fullness: the resulting creative system "turns out to be all that it might be" -- both fiction and reality; integral and fragmented; faceless and personal; the embodiment of memory and an emblem of oblivion; the realization of freedom and proof of power. That is, according to Prigozhin -- chaos.

The central idea of "chaos theory" states that outwardly random conglomerates possess a particular inner organization and, moreover, can organize themselves. This is realized through a broad spectrum of conceptions about unstable, localized, and temporary orderings arising within a "chaotic" conglomerate; about cascading bifurcations propelled by random factors but vastly increasing a system's level of self-organization; about "strange attractors" -- points surrounded by a whirling, disorganized stream and forming curiously systematic structures; and finally, about fractals, self-referential figures yielding such seemingly irregular formations as a picture of a shoreline or the pattern of frost on a windowpane, not literally, but structurally repeating a composition into infinity, in all its possible permutations and dimensions -- from micro to macrocosms.

The rhizomatic model of postmodern art acts, of course, as a particular kind of "strange attractor." Its shattered integrity, openness, indifference to ruptures, its ability to find itself always at the center of its own dynamic, correspond to such characteristics of strange attractors and particularly of fractals as infinity (when enlarged to any degree, the lines

surrounding a strange attractor scatter along new, structurally identical trajectories), the necessity for an empty zone, a rupture ("physical unattainability") in the structural make-up of any "attractor" or fractal, flow and instability (since fractal self-likeness establishes a direct correlation between macro and microcosms), and the constantly moving and changing outlines of fractal compositions--the direct result of the endless movements among molecules and other sub-particles. In such a system, flow appears to be a fundamental condition of stability:

(it) can survive only by remaining open to a flowing matter and energy exchange with the environment. In fact, matter and energy literally flow through it and form it, like river water through a vortex. . . . The structure is *stabilized* by its flowing. It is stable but only relatively stable -- relative to the constant energy flow required to maintain its shape. Its very stability is also paradoxically an *instability* because of its dependence on its environment. [51]

Consequently, if the rhizomatic structure endemic to postmodernist consciousness is that same "strange attractor," and the postmodernist aesthetic might be characterized as chaotic, then one might suppose that the postmodernist aesthetic incorporated into texts which possess rhizomatic integrity might by this same token breed various forms of internal self-organization -- or "dissipative orders," as Prigozhin calls them -- *transfiguring postmodernist chaos into chaosmos*. In any case, it is precisely the creation of this chaosmos that becomes the central effect of the postmodernist "paralogism" (at least, in its Russian permutation).

Of course, this presupposition might (and probably should) be confirmed by examining the compromises which arise in Russian postmodernism between categories such as *structure-amorphousness, randomness-predictability, diabolical-godly, culture-nature, beauty-ugliness*, and many others through which the fundamental opposition of chaos-cosmos has traditionally realized itself, from ancient times delineating the teleology of the aesthetic act. Such analysis exceeds the bounds of the present study. However, at least two principal conclusions may be drawn from the presupposition of *chaosmos* as the "value center" of postmodernist aesthetics.

The first conclusion addresses the *significance* of the postmodernist "paralogism" for Russian culture. If the aforementioned presupposition is correct, then postmodernism radically undermines the ancient myth of the "poet (as) harmony's son" (A. Blok), transforming the chaos of life (day-to-day existence, history, routine, material life, etc.) into a new -- godlike

or, on the contrary, competing with God--harmony. The essence of this mythology was not disturbed by the modernist and avant-garde rebellions, though of course, significant steps toward postmodernist chaosmos had already been made. Thus, even Blok prefaced his words about the "poet (as) harmony's son" with: "The world's order is troublesome; it is the offspring of disorder and may not correspond with our thoughts about good and evil." [52] Yet postmodernist "paralogism" lends structural and semantic closure to this movement. This mythological revolution resonates most strongly in Russian culture. It is not simply a matter of undermining faith in the artist's "godlike nature" -- and therefore in artistic expression of higher truths in an absolutely universal sphere of activity ("everything is ours"). Far more significantly, postmodernism essentially turns out to be the first creative system which deliberately sets out to destroy such fundamental elements of the Russian cultural tradition as the prevalence of dual models (see Lotman and Uspensky) [53] . The paradox lies in Russian postmodernism's aim to destroy binary cultural consciousness using the same maximalism and radicalism that characterizes the Russian cultural tradition in the first place. Russian culture's answer to the question of poetry after Auschwitz (or the GULAG) is an orientation toward chaosmos instead of harmony: aesthetic harmony is principally impossible (fictitious, simulative), while the flowing, unstable chaosmos forms the farthest horizon to which art may aspire.

The second conclusion addresses postmodernism's *future*. As stated before, the primary condition for such a system's existence is flow -- the endless exchange of matter and energy with the surrounding environment. For a chaotic state to become ordered, it requires so-called backward loops, whereby the products of a system's activity become preconditions for its existence (in chemistry these are known as autocatalysts). A chaotic system "closed up on itself" may be quite stable:

Having once stabilized through a backward loop connection, a system past the threshold of bifurcation may resist further change for millions of years, until some critical interference breaks apart the backward loop connection and thus creates a new point of bifurcation. [54]

If we expand this analogy (cautiously) and apply it to postmodernism, it becomes obvious that this creative system can actually exist only in the midst of a "foreign" and even hostile, un-postmodernist cultural environment. The more intensively postmodernist consciousness evolves, the more quickly postmodernism takes on qualities of a cultural monopoly--this process is taking place rapidly in Russia. In the absence of

a core tradition of real pluralism and "cultural diversity," postmodernism clearly fills the niche vacated by sociorealism, becoming a universal code not only in art, but also in mass culture, mass-media, and politics. A telling example is the connection between the postmodernist aesthetic and the new style of architecture in Moscow, as articulated by the critic Grigorii Revzin:

Moscow's Kremlin has become a key source of inspiration. To plan a building in Moscow taller than three stories and without turrets is like applying for a foreign visa during the years of Stagnation. It means officially declaring oneself a dissident. Government symbols, symbols of power, are everywhere. The orders are clear and are carried out swiftly. But something is wrong with this picture . . . all these turrets resemble cartoons. They are somehow random, like playthings."

Thus, for example, is Tsereteli an artist? Peter is, according to Revzin, nothing more than a toy transformer. Revzin offers a paradoxical but, in my view, precise explanation for the sovereignty of playthings: ". . .the role played by Culture Two [Vladimir Papernyi's term designating the imperial cultural paradigm -- M. L.] in today's Moscow embodies an almost unrecognizably mutated form of postmodernism. References to enduring symbols, historicism, repeating images -- today's architect can incorporate all of this only through that style." Of course, contradictions arise: "By its very essence, postmodernism cannot be Culture Two. It cannot assert ideas of collective unity revolving around national symbols. The rhetoric of national sovereignty is the same as Iurii Nikulin on the mausoleum's tribunal." In the author's opinion, an unheard-of and theoretically impossible phenomenon has arisen: "the image of asserting power by deconstructing it. . . . That same Peter may be a toy, but he is still terrifying, as a cockroach grown to the size of a guinea pig is terrifying." [55]

By determinedly asserting itself in all spheres of cultural activity, Russian postmodernism moves toward closure in itself, reducing the possibility of dialogue with the outside cultural context to a minimum: squeezing out or subjugating other cultural languages, postmodernism forms its own cultural environment, thereby condemning itself to the use of the products of its own making. The resulting "backward loop connection" stabilizes the system to the point that it becomes a monument to itself -- that is, the flowing chaosmos of postmodernism will realign itself toward a new monumental normative state, much in the same way that baroque (which many scholars view as most historically analogous to postmodernism

[56] ) prepared the soil for classicism.

In this way the “postmodernist crossroads” in Russian culture may be characterized as both an outward and an inner tension between the traditional binary dynamic model and the paralogical strategy offered by postmodernism, which would create “neutral” but simultaneously conflicting spheres between aesthetic, philosophical, and ideological polar oppositions.

Indeed, in the history of Russian culture, at least that of the twentieth century, postmodernism is the first to present such large-scale, open evidence that the *simultaneous conflict and coexistence* of differently aimed discourses are possible not only in abstract theory but also in concrete intellectual practice. Besides, Russian postmodernism cannot be separated from the Russian cultural context, and was forced to assert itself correspondingly with the demands of this context. Thus, along with the paralogical tendency, Russian postmodernism began to exhibit what one might call a *tendency toward inertia*, aimed to transform postmodernism into yet another mono-culture by means of a total break with the cultural past. At the end of the 1990s, Russian postmodernism resembles a typical Russian “new culture” -- “which conceived of itself as the negation and complete annihilation of the ‘old,’ (but) was in practice a powerful means of preserving the latter,” according to Lotman and Uspensky. In Russian postmodernism, this tendency is tied to discrimination against all non-postmodernist cultural languages, the search for positions of power, and the formalization of dialogues and relationships with other discourses--cultural isolationism.

Which of these tendencies will prevail? This depends largely upon the degree of responsibility with which Russian postmodernists approach their historical mission. Postmodernist paralogism can alter the algorithm of Russian cultural evolution if Russian postmodernists continue to struggle for domination, cultivate their own marginalism, coddle their opponents, and avoid the institutionalization of postmodernist culture like fire. Only “defeat” in the local historical context can lead postmodernism to victory on the “greater temporal scale” (Bakhtin) of culture. Unfortunately, at present the evolution of Russian postmodernism as a component of Russian culture in the 1990s tends in a diametrically opposite direction.

## References

This paper was translated from Russian by Masha Barabtarlo.

1. The term "postmodernism" was introduced by the critic Vladimir Novikov to designate "late modernism." See: Novikov, Vladimir. *Zaskok* (Moscow: Knizhnyi Sad, 1997), p. 391.
2. Especially telling is the story of Vladimir Sharov's novel *Sooner or Later* (1993). After its publication in *Novyi Mir*, this postmodernist novel was immediately condemned by two members of the journal's own staff, I. Rodnianskaia and S. Kostyrko, in its pages. See: "Sor iz Izby. Vokrug Romana V. Sharova *Do i vo Vremia*" in *Novyi Mir* 5 (1993) pp. 186-90.
3. Solzhenitsyn, Alexander. "The Relentless Cult of Novelty and How it Wrecked the Century," in *The New York Times Book Review* (February 7, 1993), pp. 3, 17.
4. Epstein, Mikhail. *After the Future: The Paradoxes of Postmodernism and Contemporary Russian Culture*, translated and with an introduction by Anesa Miller-Pogacar (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1995).
5. Grois, Boris. *The Total Art of Stalinism: Avant-Garde, Aesthetic Dictatorship, and Beyond*, translated by Charles Rougle (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).
6. Kuritsyn, Viacheslav. *Kniga o Postmodernizme* (Ekaterinburg: 1992).
7. Novikov, Vladimir. "Prizrak bez Priznakov" in *Ex Libris NG* (July 7, 1997), p. 6.
8. *Moskovskie Novosti* (1998), No. 1.
9. Lipovetsky, Mark. *Russian Postmodernist Fiction: Dialogue with Chaos* (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1999).
10. Lotman, Iurii M. and Boris A. Uspenksy. "Binary Models in the Dynamics of Russian Culture to the End of the Eighteenth Century," translated from the Russian by Robert Sorenson. In *The Semiotics of Russian Cultural History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), pp. 30-68.
11. Lyotard, Jean-Francois. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, translated from the French by Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), p. 60.

12. Ibid., p. 61.

13. Connor, Steven. *Postmodernist Culture: An Introduction to Theories of the Contemporary* (Oxford-Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing, Ltd., 1989), p. 34.

14. See Lotman, Iu. M. and B. A. Uspensky. "Rol Dualnykh Modelei v Dinamike Russkoi Kultury" in *Trudy po Russkoi i Slavianskoi Filologii* 28 (1977), pp. 3-36. See also: Lotman, Iu. M. and B. A. Uspensky, "Binary Models in the Dynamics of Russian Culture to the End of the Eighteenth Century," translated by Robert Sorenson in *The Semiotics of Russian History*, Alexander D. Nakhimovsky and Alice Stone Nakhimovsky, eds. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), pp. 30-68.

15. The Marxist dialectic allowed for "no measurable space which might contain the truth--all was either to the left or to the right of it, while the truth itself came to resemble more and more a keenly sharpened blade... For the blows came from two opposite corners, and the middle took the worst of it. The middle was attacked even more mercilessly than the extremes, because only it could aspire to reconcile the different sides of the dialectic . . . from the viewpoint of this dialectic, the worst sin was compromise -- that is, the attempt to synthesize or justify contradictions." Epstein, M. "Istoki i Smysl Russkogo Postmodernisma" in *Zvezda* 8 (1996), p. 183.

16. Basinkii, Pavel. "Vozvrashchenie: Polemicheskie Zametki o Realizme i Modernizme" in *Novyi Mir* (1993) No. 11 p. 238.

17. Grois, Boris and Ilia Kabakov. "Dialog o Musore" in *Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie* (1996), No. 20, pp.319-330. References to specific pages are given in the main text after each quote.

18. See Baudrillard, Jean. "The Precession of Simulacra" in *A Postmodern Reader*, Natoli and Hutcheon (eds.), pp. 342-375; "Simulacra and Simularion" in *Postmodernism: An International Anthology*, Wook-Dong Kim (ed.), (Seoul: 1991), pp. 446-492; "The Ecstasy of Communication" in *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, Hal Foster (ed.), (Washington, D. C.: Bay Press, 1983), pp. 126-134.

19. Kabakov, Ilia. *Zhizn Mukh* (Edition Cantz, 1992), pp. 186, 190.

20. Erofeev, Venedikt. *Moscow to the End of the Line*, translated by H.

William Tjalsma (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1994), p. 37.

21. Epstein, Mikhail. "Posle Karnavala, ili Vechnyi Venichka" in *Ostavte Moiu Dushu v Pokoie* by Venedikt Erofeev (Moscow: 1995), p. 17.

22. Kabakov, Ilia. *Zhizn Mukh*, p. 196.

23. Ibid., p. 84.

24. Nabokov, Vladimir. *Lolita* (Moscow: 1989), p. 289.

25. Ibid., p. 323.

26. Pelevin, Viktor. *Buben Verkhnego Mira* (Moscow: Terra, 1996), p. 233.

27. Tiupa, V. I. *Khudozhestvennost Literaturnogo Proisvedenia* (Krasnoiarsk: 1987), p. 6.

28. According to Mikhail Epstein, "integrity" was "the most important category and highest value in Russian thought long before Soviet totalitarianism triumphed. . . . Integrity was seen as a saving grace, overcoming all of the extremes and divisions in Western thought -- the split between heart and mind, free will and reason, faith and knowledge, church and state, individual and society . . . and as a pledge to Russia's imminent rise above the fragmented, scattered European world. Yet if one examines this integrity, its genesis came about because Russian had not yet given the world anything, had not produced any particular contributions to civilization -- and thus, unburdened by tradition, free of prejudice, may rise above all extremes and unite them in itself." Epstein, M. N. "Istoki i Smysl Russkogo Postmodernisma," p. 185.

29. Kabakov, *Zhizn Mukh*, p. 42.

30. Ibid., pp. 42-44.

31. See Zorin, Andrei. "Stikhi na Kartochkakh: Poeticheskii Iazyk Lva Rubinsteina" in *Daugava* 8 (1989), pp. 111-112.

32. For an examination of Lev Rubinstein's "Eto -- Ia" see: Lipovetsky, M. "Konets Veka Liriki" in *Znamia* 10 (1996), pp. 211-16. The English variant of this article is: Lipovetsky, M. "Self-Portrait on a Timeless Background: Transformations of the Autobiographical Mode in Russian Postmodernism"

in *a/b: Auto/Biography Studies* 11 (Fall 1996), No. 2, pp. 154-160.

33. Rubinstein, Lev. "Voprosy Literaturny" in *Druzhba Narodov* 6 (1997), p. 181.

34. Epstein, Mikhail. *Vera i Obraz. Religioznoe Besozhatelnoe v Russkoi Kulture 20-go Veka* (Tenaflly: Ermitazh, 1994). pp. 162-163.

35. Regarding this ending, Vladimir Tumanov writes: "The last sentence turns the entire preceding narrative into a paradox: the narrator indicates that he could not have told his story, since he ceased to exist as a *consciousness* as soon as the action stopped. . . . What makes Venia's narrative paradoxical is his own reference to the end of his cogitative activity: at the moment of death the hero ceased to think and should, logically, lose the ability to narrate... In *Moskva-Petushki*, however, the dead narrator seems to stress that his death appears as the ultimate end: a point where everything, including time and consciousness, stops. . . . Venia's inside-out narrative suggests a narrator for whom time has stopped: a hero who seems to exist somewhere *outside of existence* and therefore not constrained by its temporal or sequential parameters." Tumanov, Vladimir. "The End in V. Erofeev's *Moskva-Petushki*" in *Russian Literature* 39 (1996) pp. 95-96, 101.

36. A rhizome is a "rootlike subterranean stem, commonly horizontal in position, that usually produces roots below and sends up shoots progressively from the upper surface." *Random House Webster Dictionary* Second Edition (New York: Random House, 1987) p. 1651. More broadly, rhizomes include various types of molds, virus colonies, ants, wasps, and rats.

37. Deleuze, Giles. "Rhizome Versus Trees" in *The Deleuze Reader* (Constantin V. Boundas, ed.) (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), pp. 16-36.

38. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

39. Kibirov, Timur. *Santimenty: Vosem Knig* (Belgorod: Izdatelstvo "Risk," 1994), p. 171. Kibirov's lyric resembles both structurally and thematically Ilia Kabakov's installation "The Toilet" (1992), which displays the naturalistically rendered interior of a Soviet communal toilet with a view into the dining room and bedroom of a typical 1940s-'50s Soviet apartment, complete with photographs, woven wall-hangings, table settings, and other attributes of domestic coziness. This oxymoronic

combination might appear a mockery to some. Yet it holds deeply personal significance for the artist, reminding him of his mother, who had no apartment and found shelter in odd corners; as she taught in a Moscow art school, where her son was a student, she often secretly slept in the closet situated in the boys' bathroom.

40. Pelevin, Viktor. *Chapaev i Pustota* (Moscow: Vagrius, 1996), pp. 375-76.

41. Bitov, Andrei. *Pushkin's House* translated by Susan Brownsberger (New York: Farrar, 1987), pp. 352, 353.

42. Sharov, Vladimir. "Do i vo Vremia" in *Novyi Mir* (1993), Nos. 3-4. In parentheses, I indicate the journal number and page number of each quotation.

43. Gandlevsky, Sergei and Dmitri Alexandrovich Prigov. "Mezhdru Imenem i Imidzhem" in *Literaturnaia Gazeta* 12.05 (1993), No. 19, p. 5.

44. Sorokin, V. *Rasskazy* p. 118.

45. See *Kinostsenarii* 1 (1997), pp. 88-117.

46. As noted by M. N. Epstein in oral conversation.

47. For a detailed analysis of Sorokin and Zeldovich's screenplay, see my article "Novyi 'Moskovskii' Stil: Moskva i Kultura Dva" (a parallel reading).

48. Sokolov, Sasha. *Astrophobia*. Translated from the Russian by Michael Henry Neim (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1989).

49. In his introduction to Ilia Prigozhin and Isabella Stengers's book *Order Out of Chaos*, Alvin Toffler writes: "*Order Out of Chaos* is more than just another book: it is a lever for changing science itself, for compelling us to reexamine its goals, its methods, its epistemology -- its world view. Indeed, this book can serve as a symbol of today's historic transformation in science -- one that no informed person can afford to ignore. . . ." (Alvin Toffler, "Science and Change" in *Order Out of Chaos: Man's New Dialogue with Nature* by Ilia Prigozhin and Isabella Stengers, [Boulder and London: New Science Library, 1984], p. xii). For a more detailed analysis of chaos theories as they relate to contemporary philosophical and literary trends, see: *Disorder and Order: Proceedings of the Stanford International Symposium*, Stanford Literature Studies. (Stanford: Anima Libri, 1984);

Kuberski, Philip. *Chaosmos: Literature, Science, and Theory* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1994); Hayless, N. Katherine. *Chaos Bound: Orderly Disorder in Contemporary Literature and Science* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1990); Briggs, John and F. David Peat. *Turbulent Mirror: An Illustrated Guide to Chaos Theory and the Science of Wholeness* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1989); Paulson, William. *The Noise of Culture: Literary Text in a World of Information* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1988).

50. Prigozhin, Ilia. "Pereotkrytie Vremeni" in *Voprosy Filisophii* (1989) No. 8, p. 11.

51. Briggs, John and F. David Peat. *Looking Glass Universe: The Emerging Science of Wholeness* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984), p. 169.

52. Blok, A. A. *Sobranie Sochinenii* Vol. 6 (Moscow, Leningrad: GIKhL, 1962), p. 161.

53. See Lotman, Iu. M. and B. A. Uspensky. "Rol Dualnykh Modelei v Dinamike Russkoi Kultury" in *Trudy po Russkoi i Slavianskoi Filologii* 28 (1977), pp. 3-36.

54. Briggs, John and F. David Peat. *Turbulent Mirror: An Illustrated Guide to Chaos Theory and the Science of Wholeness* (New York: Harper and Row, 1989), p. 143.

55. Revzin, Grigorii. "Postmodernism kak 'Kultura Dva': Ob Osobennostiakh Sovremennoi Moskovskoi Arkhitektury" in *Nezavisimaia Gazeta* (January 25, 1997), p. 7.

56. On the similarities between baroque and postmodernism, see for example: Zatonskii, D. "Postmodernism v Istoricheskom Interiere" in *Voprosy Literatry* (May-June 1996), pp. 194-205; Barnhofen, Patricia Lynn. *Cosmography and Chaography: Baroque to Neobaroque. A Study in Poetics and Cultural Logic*. A Dissertation . . . for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Comparative Literature). (University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1995). The remarks of baroque expert I. P. Smirnov are also revealing: "Russian postmodernism repeated the fate of the so-called spontaneous version of Eastern-Slavic baroque, which also reached mega-levels" (Smirnov, I. P. "Konets Cheloveka v Totalitarnoi i Postmodernistskoi Kulture," unpublished).

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