

Title: Retro-future in Post-Soviet Dystopia
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This paper explores the vision of retrospective future in the emergent genre of post-Soviet dystopia represented by such novels as Tolstaya's *Slynx*, Slavnikova's *2017*, Bykov's *Zhd*, and Sorokin's *Day of the Oprichnik* and *Sugar Kremlin*. Although such a "dystopia industry" could be compared to the genre's development in the twentieth century as a response to a totalitarian utopia, the post-Soviet dystopian novel proves to be different in its treatment of futuristic temporality. Unlike Zamyatin's and Platonov's novels, post-Soviet dystopias do not respond to any utopian narrative but project into the future the historical and ideological reality of Russia's violent past. Such a traumatic reenactment of the Soviet past in the dystopian future testifies to the failure of democracy and the rise of authoritarianism in contemporary Russia. For example, in *Slynx*, what survives 300 years after the atomic blast is the police surveillance with its network of informers. In Sorokin's novels, the Russia of 2028 is once again a medieval state isolated from the world and ruled by oprichnina. In *2017*, the celebration of the hundredth anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution provokes yet another "blood bath" between masqueraded "reds" and "whites." I argue that compulsive retrofuturism in post-Soviet dystopias is symptomatic of Russia's incomplete collective memory work regarding its Soviet legacy. Furthermore, the traumatic return of the Soviet past is largely the result of the very nature of Russia's insufficient transition to democracy in 1991, described as "passive revolution" or "revolution from above." I conclude that despite the omnipresent pessimism of the Soviet past-in-the-future, the post-Soviet dystopia signals the rise of the civil rights consciousness that demands social change and calls to complete the democratic revolution of 1991 that yet remains unfinished.