

Along with each essay is a "select bibliography." In some cases it includes both the principal Russian editions and the biographical and critical literature; in some, the latter only. There are a few surprising omissions, such as D. S. Mirsky's book on Pushkin; Donald Fanger's study of early Dostoevsky and his relation to Gogol; Ernest Simmons's book about Chekhov, which is certainly better than Magarshack's; the multilingual volume edited by Thomas Eekman and published in Leiden for Chekhov's centenary; and a few other items. Mirsky's classical *History of Russian Literature*, which would have deserved inclusion in all those bibliographies, found its way only into the Chekhov one.

GLEB STRUVE

*University of California, Berkeley (Emeritus)*

THE RELIGION OF DOSTOEVSKY. By *A. Boyce Gibson*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1973. x, 216 pp. \$6.95.

"And just think—for our De Sade the entire Russian prelacy performed memorial services, and even read sermons about the man's universal love! Truly, we live in strange times," wrote Turgenev in his letter of September 24, 1882, to Saltykov-Shchedrin. In so stating, Turgenev did not exhibit much imagination. For Dostoevsky was to grow in stature first of all as a religious thinker, although only a few admirers, such as Vladimir Soloviev and Nicholas Berdiaev, went to extremes when they termed him, respectively, a "prophet of God" and a "sufficient justification for the existence of the Russian people in the world." In the first decades of our century the probings into the complexities of Dostoevsky's religious thought led to various conclusions—at times, that he was the greatest theologian ever produced by the Eastern Orthodox Church, and often just the opposite, that he remained his "man from the underground." In any case, Vašiliï Rozanov or Lev Shestov did not interpret him in terms of Orthodoxy.

The orientation of interpreters notwithstanding, all this criticism had in common a search for Dostoevsky's fundamental beliefs or disbeliefs, a method that suffered a serious setback when the presumed unity of his philosophy and his literary work began to be questioned. We know today that any pronouncement found in his articles and even in his notebooks undergoes a transformation as soon as it is incorporated into his fiction. The incessant "pro and contra" in his novels calls for a more cautious treatment than was the case when opinions of his characters were patched up with fragments of his publicism and vice versa. Scholarship that stresses the autonomy of the text should receive here due credit. A new danger, however, threatens those who forget about the Russian messianist from *The Diary of a Writer*, and who, eliminating Dostoevsky-the-churchgoer, concentrate on structures growing under his pen. Dostoevsky, probably more than any other writer, is unable to endure such an operation. He loses much of his meaning, which lies somewhere *between*: between his personal convictions and their profoundly transformed shape in the text of his *oeuvre*.

As we learn from the dust jacket, A. Boyce Gibson was a professor of philosophy at the University of Melbourne and died in 1972. His book is a result of his lifelong interest in Dostoevsky. It compares favorably with the best known of the many essays on the subject by Berdiaev. Gibson is more sober, less eulogistic, and more useful as he presents Dostoevsky's development ("tortuous, retrogressive, but continuous and indomitable") instead of a final credo. Strong in theology,

Gibson is less secure in literature. He introduces a category of "Christian novelists," for instance, into which he tries to fit Dostoevsky along with Graham Greene, Paul Bourget, François Mauriac, and Georges Bernanos. But such lapses occupy no more than a few pages of an otherwise valuable book. Quite curious, but not surprising, is the meeting of two minds and two methods of approach, that of Gibson and that of Bakhtin. Bakhtin, in fact, in his famous study on Dostoevsky's poetics, practiced "existential psychoanalysis" many years before Sartre's *L'être et le néant*: his theory of the "polyphonic novel" is founded upon hardly divulged philosophical premises. Gibson finds those premises perfectly acceptable and helpful. He seems to suggest that Dostoevsky made use of polyphony precisely because, as a Christian moralist, he was primarily concerned with one central issue, the "wholly personal issue of pride." It is pride which makes an individual resent being seen by others as an object, and polyphony emerges as a struggle between subjectivities refusing to be objectivized. But to be preoccupied with the demands of our selfhood, with pride, the sin of Lucifer, the first of the seven capital vices (*vitia capitalia*) means to remain in the grip of the basic problem of Christianity, that of Original Sin.

Gibson's analysis also parallels reflections of another Russian writer, Nadezhda Mandelstam, in her *Vtoraia kniga*, where she expresses amazement at Dostoevsky's "populist heresy," his fallacy of the "Russian Christ." Gibson does not maintain that Dostoevsky ever intellectually harmonized his contradictions. The ransom that the Slavophiles and their spiritual descendants had to pay for recovering their personal Christian faith was high: scorn for the intellect. Equated with the West, Roman Catholicism, and the deadly rule of "form," any intellectual sculpturing of our concerns with Being was rejected as godless. Then one was ready to cling to absurd messianic hopes, to worship national idols, to write foolish pages of chauvinistic eulogies. Gibson, although fascinated by Dostoevsky's genius, does not call him a great theologian. He says, "One might wish that Dostoevsky who saw how knowledge will grow from love had also seen that love can grow from knowledge."

CZESŁAW MIŁOZ

*University of California, Berkeley*

THE GAMBLER, WITH POLINA SUSLOVA'S DIARY. By *Fyodor Dostoevsky*. Translated by *Victor Terras*. Edited by *Edward Wasiolek*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1972. xxxix, 366 pp. \$7.95.

The publication of *The Gambler* in Victor Terras's fine new translation is a welcome event. Of equal interest is the appearance in this book of translations (also by Terras) of Polina Suslova's Diary, her story "The Stranger and Her Lover," and selected letters—all of this material relevant to the background and writing of *The Gambler*. The whole book is prefaced by Edward Wasiolek's lucid and discriminating introduction to the various sections.

*The Gambler* draws heavily on the biographical materials of Dostoevsky's life. Yet as Wasiolek rightly observes, Dostoevsky uses his relationship with Apollinaria Suslova "as a premise on which to explore relationships between gambling and love that go far beyond the immediate and literary experience." Fundamental philosophical questions, too, involving basic moral and social issues, are found in *The Gambler*. The fast-moving surface action of the novel, and the interrelated themes