

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."

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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

of love and gambling, have always made it popular with the reader. Yet the work is deserving of more scholarly attention than it has received, with respect to its rich problem content, its relation to *Notes from the Underground* and *Crime and Punishment*, and its place in the European literary tradition (for example, its relation to Prévost's *Manon Lescaut*).

In his introduction Wasiolek provides a psychologically perceptive and judicious analysis of Dostoevsky's relationship with Apollinaria Suslova. The last part of the introduction deals with the themes of *The Gambler* itself—a concise, though in our view too brief, account of the novel's problem content. It is here that Wasiolek writes of Dostoevsky's belief—reflected in *The Gambler*—that the “deepest urge in human beings is the revolt against definition and the fixities of life.”

Victor Terras's translations are superior. His translation of *The Gambler* has the important and by no means insignificant virtue of accuracy; the English employed is simple, colloquial. Above all, it captures very well the briskly nervous and abrupt style of the narrator. The reader is never in the mind and world of the translator—only in Dostoevsky's world. And that is the way it should be.

All in all, the Wasiolek-Terras book is an important contribution to the study of Dostoevsky.

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DOSTOEVSKY AND DICKENS: A STUDY OF LITERARY INFLUENCE.

By *N. M. Lary*. London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973. xvii, 172 pp. \$9.75.

Certain subjects seem to offer themselves up for comparative study, like docile and attentive students, ready to be shaped by an aggressive tutor: Byron and Pushkin, Shakespeare and anybody, and, particularly, Dickens and Dostoevsky. Everyone mentions them, courses are taught on them, articles have been written about them, a recent Soviet volume, *Dickens in Russia*, devotes a chapter to them, and now we have an entire book on them. Though Mr. Lary conscientiously explores every conceivable union of figure and incident, and presents them to his reader with engaging modesty, a problem lies within the comparison itself: after the inevitable associations of Little Nell and Nellie (*The Old Curiosity Shop* and *The Insulted and the Injured*), Steerforth and Stavrogin, and perhaps the Micawbers and the Marmeladovs, all the rest is conjecture. The two authors begin to resist alignment, not because new pairings do not suggest themselves, but because the basic clay from which each molds his art is so very different. Dickens offers rich, often dark comedy, a multiplicity of characters and an endlessly imaginative world, curiously revealing of our own, yet arising from a unique and subjective vision (an art far more like Gogol's than Dostoevsky's). Dostoevsky commits himself to an intense and narrow focus, to moments which best permit unexpected irony and moral ambivalence, to a world built of scandal and paradox, measured against a clearly conceived religious outlook, which itself must be subjected to self-mockery. For all their immediate appeal, Dickens and Dostoevsky fail to live up to their mutual promise. Those docile students, so ready to serve their master, suddenly grow recalcitrant; without argument or bile, indifferent to the other's departure, each goes his separate way.

What troubles me even more is that “Dostoevsky and Dickens” disguises the true nature of this book, for Dickens simply drops from view for many pages while