

ent lack of command of Russian. At any rate, his quotations of statements by Tolstoy and Chekhov are all from English and American sources. This is a serious drawback, because Speirs is especially interested in the literary views of the two writers but seems to be limited to their oft-quoted observations. Naïveté is evident also in his comparison of the two authors in their treatment of the same kinds of social events in similar cultural contexts. The contrasts he notes are obviously attributable to the differences in their ages and social backgrounds. Since one was born in 1828 and the other in 1860, and one was a member of the gentry and the other the grandson of a serf, they were bound to develop different approaches. But Speirs belabors these contrasts throughout his book (for example, see page 172 for his comments on their attitudes toward education).

Many of Speirs's conclusions are questionable. To say that *War and Peace* boils down to a conflict between the Westernized Prince Andrei and the arch-Muscovite Pierre Bezukhov (p. 17) is an incredible distortion of the novel. A large part of Speirs's book is devoted to analyzing the structure of Tolstoy's two major novels, but these remarks fall disappointingly short of those offered by such fairly recent commentators as John Hagan, John Bayley, Albert Cook, and James M. Curtis.

The title of the book would seem to suggest that some grounds exist for an illuminating juxtaposition of these two authors. Yet Speirs overlooks much relevant material. He does not deal with the early stories by Chekhov that may have been influenced by Tolstoy's ideas (a subject treated, though not exhausted, in Thomas Winner's *Chekhov and His Prose*), or the fairly obvious debt of Chekhov to *Anna Karenina* in his stories "About Love" and "Lady with the Dog." He fails to comment on Lev Shestov's incisive remarks about the influence of Tolstoy's "Death of Ivan Ilyich" on Chekhov, although he does compare that work with "A Dreary Story." He also overlooks Tolstoy's possible debt to Chekhov in *Hadji Murad*.

The two chapters on Tolstoy's work after *Anna Karenina* give the impression that the later Tolstoy is being covered, but actually only three works are specifically discussed—the results are a dubious condemnation of *A Confession*, the traditional dismissal of *Resurrection*, and the equally predictable praise for *Hadji Murad*. The Tolstoy half of the book ends with a subessay, "*Anna Karenina* and the English Novel: A Note," which turns into a three-page discussion of why D. H. Lawrence preferred the Russian novelistic tradition to the English one. The author's tendency to want to elucidate Lawrence's debt to Tolstoy rises like a crescendo throughout the book, culminating in an afterword describing the influence of *Anna Karenina* on *The Rainbow*. The reader may feel that in this material Speirs has found a more viable topic for comparison than the one the title of his book proposes.

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DOSTOYEVSKY: AN EXAMINATION OF THE MAJOR NOVELS. By
Richard Peace. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press,
1971. vii, 347 pp. \$11.50.

In the first of the five sentences that constitute his preface, Mr. Peace surveys the book-length literature on Dostoevsky and, without naming names or recognizing the existence of outstanding problems, finds it good ("His biography; his religious

and philosophical ideas; his influence on world literature; the realism, the dramatic qualities of his work; the novels as tragedies; the novels as comedies—all these aspects, and many more, have already been well covered"). In the second sentence he defines his own intention, which is "not to do what has already been done, but rather to look closely at the texts of the major novels and see how each functions as a work of art." To this intention he is faithful in the series of double chapters on the four great novels which follows an introductory tracing of Dostoevsky's career through *Notes from Underground*—though, given the vagueness of the intention, infidelity would be a difficult thing. What he offers, in fact, is detailed, eclectic discussions, which begin with a few lines of biographical background and center on structure, motif, symbol, idea, and sometimes political and cultural background. These discussions reflect careful reading of the novels; they contain intelligent observations and at least one particularly interesting discovery, concerning the extent to which the lore of dissident religious sects is made to play a prominent (if often covert) role in all the large novels.

These discussions are not, however, based on any clear methodology. They do not seek with any consistency to incorporate or build on the best Russian and Western work; indeed, they give few signs that the author is acquainted with it. There is no bibliography, and references to other critics are sparse and perfunctory. One searches in vain for any mention of Bakhtin or Bem or Chirkov; of Wasiolek's book, or Jackson's, or Belknap's; or of the important articles which Joseph Frank has been publishing over the last decade. As a result, Peace's conclusions (and many of his generalizations), lacking qualification as they do, seem disappointingly elementary, and often show as well a tendency to beg critical questions through the use of impressionistic terminology: "A constant thread running through Dostoyevsky's major writing is that of polemics with the nihilists" (p. 299). "The theme of beauty is an important one for Dostoyevsky" (p. 302). "The other great motive force in Dostoyevsky's work is his gift for drama. This is so strong that under his pen even ideas can take on a dramatic intensity" (p. 310). "The behaviour of Dostoyevsky's characters is, on many occasions, extreme and irrational, but, with few exceptions, his figures are fully-rounded and convincing" (p. 307).

In one sense, these quotations—typical as they are—may give an unfair impression of the work as a whole, for the journey on which Peace conducts us is more interesting than arrival at the destination. His chapters could make a respectable set of lectures; their rationale as a book is more obscure.

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THE NOTEBOOKS FOR *THE BROTHERS KARAMAZOV*. By Fyodor Dostoevsky. Edited and translated by Edward Wasiolek. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1971. 279 pp. \$9.50.

With the publication of this last volume, the working notebooks for all of Dostoevsky's major novels are now available in English. Unfortunately the most detailed notebooks that have survived are those for Dostoevsky's weakest novel (*A Raw Youth*). For *The Brothers Karamazov* we have only a fragmentary account of the last stage of his work—which makes this the least interesting of the notebooks.