

notions of romanticism, realism, symbolism, and postmodernism might have been more rewarding, not to mention the awkward coinage of “neorealism.” Leonova jails herself without need in the prison of traditional stylistic notions in a situation where she does not speak about style but about structure. It would have been more promising to apply chaos theory to the phenomenology of Russian literary history consistently. Doing so might have given her the freedom to interpret more than just five of the masterpieces of Russian literature. Her innovative approach might also prove valuable to the theory of literary evolution in Slavic studies that has been largely neglected since the efforts of the Russian formalists and the Czech structuralists.

In spite of all the criticism, Leonova’s contribution is relevant. Her book illustrates convincingly that chaos theory may be applied to the interpretation of single literary texts and to the conceptualization of Russian literary history.

ULRICH SCHMID
University of St. Gallen

Before They Were Titans: Essays on the Early Works of Dostoevsky and Tolstoy.

Ed. Elizabeth Cheresch Allen. Brighton: Academic Studies Press, 2015. xiv, 338 pp. Notes. Index. Tables. \$79.00, hard bound.

Readers of Dostoevskii’s and Tolstoi’s early works are often tempted to interpret them in light of the novelists’ later masterpieces. As Elizabeth Cheresch Allen reminds us in her introduction to this volume, however, such works as *Poor Folk*, *The Double*, *Childhood*, and *The Sevastopol Sketches* offer rich rewards when read for their own value. Investigating them with a focus on each writer’s concerns at the time, she suggests, is more productive than reading them primarily as foreshadowing future mature works. The contributors to this collection follow this approach with great success, and in the process arrive at fresh, insightful interpretations.

In the first of the Dostoevskii chapters, Lewis Bagby analyzes *Poor Folk* in terms of agency and desire. Whereas Makar Devushkin is reduced to nearly complete passivity as his romantic desires are extinguished, Varvara Dobroselova discovers a small degree of agency within the limited confines of her poor life as a seamstress. Ultimately for Bagby, this revelation directs readers to contemplation of their own individual responsibility. Gary Saul Morson reads *The Double* as an early attempt by Dostoevskii to explore the philosophical question of what makes us unique and, in the process, to offer a proof of individual subjectivity. He locates the horror of the novel’s absurd premise in Golyadkin’s recognition that his double does not just resemble him but is a copy of him, despite his sense of himself as unique. For Morson, Golyadkin’s view of his double as an extension of himself, rather than a separate person to be treated with compassion, is paradoxically what prevents him from escaping this terrifying trap.

The remaining essays in Part I address less oft-critiqued early works of Dostoevskii. Susanne Fusso, in her analysis of *Another Man’s Wife* and *The Jealous Husband*, demonstrates that Dostoevskii’s revitalization of vaudeville devices elevate the comical stock character of the deceived husband into a darker, tormented figure. She also shows that Dostoevskii’s use of vaudeville is not restricted to his early period, as it reappears two decades later along with the anxiety of identity featured in the early stories, in his novel *The Eternal Husband*. Dale Peterson contextualizes *White Nights* as part of Dostoevskii’s ongoing dialogue with Rousseau on the value of self-contemplation. He terms the narrator’s compulsive escape from real life actions and interactions pathology rather than pathos, as Dostoevskii’s dreamer prefers his fantasies of seduction to becoming an actual suitor, his reveries to living in the real world. Allen, in her

analysis of the incomplete novel *Netochka Nezvanova*, explores the ways in which stories and fantasies shape the orphaned heroine. Dostoevskii outlines Netochka's progress from a young girl gifted with a purely creative imagination to an adolescent who possesses a strong moral imagination, and is able to exhibit virtues of courage and self-sacrifice modeled on the heroes of her readings in fiction and history.

The Tolstoi portion of the volume continues with a related theme, as Robin Feuer Miller explores the falsehoods and betrayals of art, play, and dreams in *Childhood*. Nikolai's creative impulses lead to a series of lies that haunt him, thus revealing Tolstoi's concerns about the power of art to falsify. William Mills Todd III and Justin Weir in turn explore Tolstoi's anxiety about creation in *The Raid*, arguing that the diversity of genres reflected in this story reflects the author's own troubled relationship with publishing institutions in Russia. Tolstoi's changes from initial to final version of *The Raid*, for Todd and Weir, transform it from a Caucasian war story into a "metafictional consideration of the authorial process" (195).

The following two chapters illuminate unexamined intertextual connections in Tolstoi's early works. Liza Knapp argues that Harriet Beecher Stowe's style plays a shaping role in Tolstoi's *Sevastopol Sketches*. Stowe's mixture of pathos, sermon, and protest in her defamiliarization of the institution of slavery serves as a model for Tolstoi's innovative war coverage, which depicts the pain and suffering of the Crimean War in an effort to convey shocking truths to readers. In her essay on "A Landowner's Morning," Anne Lounsbury demonstrates the influence of the eighteenth-century philosophical tale, which aims to test received ideas against hard facts in order to critique the existing social order. As Lounsbury shows, this genre allows Tolstoi to depart from the idyllic presentation of serfdom in *Childhood*, and vividly demonstrate his hero Nekhliudov's failed attempts to understand and help his peasants. Finally, Ilya Vinitsky's contribution shifts the focus to Tolstoi as teacher, as he claims that the writer's pedagogical activities, though they seem to focus solely on questions of peasant education, actually address his own psychological and spiritual struggles. Thus, Vinitsky interprets Tolstoi's philosophy of education, as expressed in his 1861 article "The Yasnaya Polyana School in November and December," as part of the writer's personal salvation project.

In her Afterword, Caryl Emerson ties the essays of the volume together by identifying two thematic clusters that unify Dostoevskii's and Tolstoi's "apprenticeship periods": the field of the hero, whose "interlocking anxieties of shame and the creative imagination" structure the works, and the field of the author, who attempts to stretch accepted generic boundaries (319). Although Allen cautions the reader that the collection is not intended to forge links between the essays, such serendipitous cross-connections occur naturally and frequently in the volume. Emerson mentions the common focus on childhood shame and creativity in Allen's and Miller's respective essays on *Netochka Nezvanova* and *Childhood*. Another example is Knapp's discussion of Tolstoi's exploration of how we regard the pain of others, which recalls Morson's ruminations on empathy in *The Double*.

The contributors succeed admirably in illuminating the value of these early works in their own right. Each of the essays is well written and accessible, providing original insights into the works it critiques. Allen's well edited and effectively organized volume makes for a highly valuable and welcome contribution to Dostoevskii and Tolstoi studies.

ALEXANDER BURRY
Ohio State University