
This book fails to live up to its ambitious yet vague title and subtitle, "Essays on Dehumanization, Human Isolation and Transcendence." The chapters are comprised of very short sections replete with weighty claims and underweight analyses of specific texts. The author argues that the existential relationship between spiritual inner space and geographic outer space accounts for tension and conflict in literature. The volume contains three units: "The Russians," "Nietzsche" and "The Twentieth Century". Russian literature, however, is central for the whole argument as a catalyst through which the experience of the modern world can best be gauged. Ponomareff—unoriginally—sets up yet another dual-type typology to explain Russia's crises: some kind of "golden age"—never properly defined—is the "inner space" and Peter the Great's "West" is the "outer space".

The unit on Russia sweeps through the oeuvres of Turgenev, Tolstoi, Dostoevskii, Chekhov and Bunin in order to move on to Nietzsche without any transition. We learn that Russian literature "overreacted" in asserting its cultural identity, later to be told that it was Nietzsche's and Dostoevskii's "sick selves" that drove them to seek a sense of power through their writings. The final unit provides superficial comparisons between Blok and Rilke, Maiakovskii and Paul Celan, between Chekhov's German "ghosts," Böll and Christa Wolf and, finally, between two émigré writers, Nabokov and Anne Hébert. All these writers experienced threats to their "inner space," their "anguish and malaise" arose either because they foresaw or because they experienced totalitarianism.

Even apart from the shallowness of the analyses, the book is marred by cliched generalizations about the supposed originality and unoriginality of centuries, the psychological profiles of authors and the intellectual foundations on the basis of which comparisons are attempted. Ponomareff virtually equates Peter the Great's policy of Europeanization with the results of the Bolshevik revolution of 1917: such claims require thorough substantiating which is all but completely lacking here.

The book contains numerous typos; it does not include either a bibliography or an index. The cumbersome cross-references between the footnotes do not disguise the fact that the book is very thinly researched and that the author ignored not only literary theories of the past thirty years but also recent criticism on the specific authors he chose to scrutinize.

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Pekka Tammi demonstrated his fine control of Nabokov's *oeuvre* in his admirable book, *Problems of Nabokov's Poetics* (1985), in which he analyzes a variety of
Nabokov's works using the methods of narratology. In the present collection of four essays, his method is subtext analysis, a particularly fruitful approach for Nabokov's works. The essays — "Invitation to a Decoding: Dostoevsky as Subtext in Nabokov's Priglashenie na kazn,'" "Reading in Three Dimensions: Remarks on Poligenetichnost' in Nabokov's prose," "The St. Petersburg Text and Its Nabokovian Texture" and "Nabokov's Poetics of Dates" — are "thoroughly rehabilitated" (p. xi) versions of previously published articles collected here for the Nabokov centennial. The purpose of Tammi's collection is to provide a typological approach to Nabokov's subtextual strategies.

In the introduction to his first essay, Tammi devotes twelve pages to a clear discussion of subtext analysis, explicitly excluding the larger field of intertextuality, that traces its origins to the work of Kiril Taranovksy on Mandel'shtam's poetry. Tammi's discussion would be a useful introduction to subtext analysis for undergraduates, except for the use of untranslated Russian (book titles, citations from the subtexts themselves).

The essay examines Dostoevesky's The Idiot, Crime and Punishment and The Double as subtexts for An Invitation to a Beheading, finding Nabokov's purpose to be a polemic with Dostoevsky's mysticism. Nabokov shifts the emphasis to the aesthetic: the prison of mortality may be transcended by the act of imagination alone. Tammi refers to Nabokov's Despair in the footnotes to this essay; it would strengthen his argument to include a discussion of Hermann's "missed stick" as a parody of Dostoevsky's mysticism. Does Nabokov simply repeat the same argument in Invitation or does he add something?

Again starting from Taranovskv's work on Mandel'shtam, Tammi's essay on poligenetichnost offers a typology of Nabokov's modes of subtextual linkages: the primary text (T1) leads to texts two (T2) and three (T3) (e.g., Ada to Hadji Murad and War and Peace), or T1 leads to T3 via T2 (e.g., Lolita to Carmen to "The Gypsies"), of which several examples are provided.

The third essay traces the Petersburg theme through Nabokov's Russian verse, autobiography, and narrative fiction. That could include every word ever written by Nabokov, but Tammi says his is "an introductory survey" (p. 67), and limits himself to specific references to Petersburg's topography, shops, Nabokov's house, modes of speech in characters' thoughts primarily about the past, or imaginary returns. The article has an appendix that catalogues fifty-two items containing St. Petersburg.

The fourth essay provides a typology of dates that acquire the meaning and function of subtexts in Nabokov's fiction: 1) within a single work, 2) linking Nabokov’s works to Russian literature, 3) used to construct Nabokov's public persona, all of which may function on the three (intratextual, intertextual, mythological) levels at once. Several of these dates, their origins and associations, are familiar to us from Nabokov scholarship (all well documented in Tammi's footnotes), but it is useful to have them catalogued together here.

The collection comprises a handbook of Nabokov's subtextual ploys that will inform any reading of his work. Seeing them all laid out should convince the sceptical student or beginning reader of Nabokov's bird's-eye control over his oeuvre. Yet despite the painstaking pace of exposition (and the rather anxious use of italics) appro-