OBITUARY / НЕКРОЛОГ

SLOBODANKA VLADIV-GLOVER

PROFESSOR NATALIA V. ZHIVOLUPOVA
(16.08.1949 Vladimir, Russia - 28.04.2012 Nizhii Novgorod, Russia)

Natalia Zhivolupova left a lasting impression on people who crossed her path. It was her aura of a translucent spirit, in the sprightly body of a petite blond with bright green-blue eyes, and a melodiously scanned voice, which spilled fully formed poetic and witty sentences in Russian into space like pearls. Natalia’s language was rich, reflecting how rich in spirit she was. It was a joy just to listen to her enthusiastic comments about the world around her, always apt, always hitting the mark.

This perspicuity was reflected in Natalia’s scholarly work. She was a pioneer in the study of genre of Dostoevsky’s novels, long before “genre studies” became an industry in Western Dostoevsky scholarship. She approached genre through structure, which was designated in her nomenclature by the word “architectonics.” In the analysis of structure, Natalia isolated the figure of the “negative hero” and through this avenue arrived at the heart of Dostoevsky’s poetics of “circularity” of “eternal return” to (not of) the Same. Thus, rather than give this poetics of ‘eternal return’ a Nietzschean inflection, Natalia framed her investigation of structure and genre by a religious conception of life. Natalia’s investigations led to the discovery that confession was the key to the structure of Dostoevsky’s poetics of the novel (although she also found that was not the only genre he appropriated and transformed). The form of confession as genre was decisive for Natalia: within it, the “return” became a metaphor for the ‘return’ of the “prodigal son.” This made every single one of Dostoevsky’s fictional works a theodicy in Natalia’s critical approach to the life and works of the Russian writer she loved so much, whose works spoke to her on a personal level, right up to her last breath. Her last paper – to be published posthumously by her husband Alexander – sums up her entire theoretical and critical approach to Dostoevsky. Its title, Dostoevsky's Concept of the Holy Body in the Structure of The Brothers Karamazov: Religious and Aesthetic Aspects, bespeaks the intimate connection which Natalia found in Dostoevsky’s confessional genre between aesthetics and the religious sensibility, or between aesthetics and an ethical life. This connection was not only evident for Natalia in Dostoevsky’s fiction; it was also a guiding principle of her own life. This is clearly visible in the last paper, which reads like Natalia’s own, personal confession and quest for an eternal life, beyond the body.

Natalia was a great colleague, always ready to give praise, in her lavish expressions of admiration and approval. Her annual Christmas greetings were sincere panegyrics to the recipient in rhythmic prose. They always elicited a big feeling of pleasure and well being in the addressee. Natalia was generous. She gave of herself and of her scintillating personality to the world around her. She was also generous with her professional skills and her expertise, in Russian and English. One could rely on Natalia to answers emails immediately and to understand the unstat ed urgency of every request. Her English was impeccable and she functioned as a
scholar in a truly international environment: America, Germany, Australia. She was a supportive founding member of the editorial board of *The Dostoevsky Journal: An Independent Review* (published by Charles Schlacks). She was an examiner for Australian Master of Arts and PhD theses on Dostoevsky and Russian literature topics. She was a valued contributor to *The Dostoevsky Journal: An Independent Review*.

Natalia’s death was untimely in the fullest sense of the term. She died between two symposiums of the International Dostoevsky Society: the past one in Naples and the forthcoming one, in Moscow. Her death broke the thread not only of her life but also of the continuity of Dostoevsky scholarship. That she will be missed is an understatement. Words cannot describe the gap created by her absence on the Dostoevsky scholarship scene, represented by the IDS and the Dostoevsky Fund. In the spirit of her favourite novel, *The Brothers Karamazov*, her memory will be eternal amongst those who were fortunate enough to know her.

**Natalia Zhivolupova: Significant Events and Publications**

*The Dostoevsky Journal: An Independent Review* (Bibliography, entries for Natalia Zhivolupova)


**Education**

1991-1993 Moscow State Pedagogical University, Senior Research Program  
1988 Nizhnii Novgorod State University, Qualification Improvement Course  
1983 Moscow State Pedagogical University, PhD  
1982-1983 Moscow State Pedagogical University, Full-time Post Graduate Research  
1973 Nizhnii Novgorod State University, Passed PhD exams with distinction  
1967-1971 Nizhnii Novgorod State University, MA in Philology

**Professional Experience**

2008-2012 *Nizhnii Novgorod State Linguistic University*  
Professor – Department of Russian Philology  
Coordinator: Section of Russian Literature