

Taken as a whole, the study reveals the capacious, adaptable nature of Pushkin's tragic vision as it reflected narrative forms from abroad and refracted them into a unique, late-romantic sensibility which, tempered by the poet's dominant mode of irony, invited the possibility of endless re-vision. *Tragic Encounters* thus represents a significant contribution to our field and beyond, broadening our understanding of the poet and his works, their redefinition of romanticism's tragic dimensions—and, ultimately, the conceptual boundaries of the tragic mode itself.

Lynn Ellen Patyk. *Dostoevsky's Provocateurs*.

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This new addition to the Studies in Russian Literature and Theory series examines Fedor Dostoevskii's fictions and journalistic writings from the angle of communication studies. The author borrows the ideas of Rainer Paris, a German sociologist, to explain the structure of provocative acts in Dostoevskii's works. A provocateur is someone who "emerges from nowhere, and acts, but obliquely, not directly, by addressing themselves to others and making them (re)act" (4). Mikhail Bakhtin's 1929 seminal work *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* has successfully proven the presence of provocation in the writer's work. For Bakhtin, the interaction between characters is an "orderly and profoundly civil exchange" (9). But Patyk shows that it is more complicated; characters would deploy various strategies to disrupt a balanced and progressive conversation.

The first provocateur is Golyadkin in *The Double*. He suffers from various insufficiencies: the lack of self-awareness, other awareness, and communicative skills (29). To overcome his inadequacies, he seeks independence by cutting himself off from other consciousnesses and reiterating his identity. Multiple selves co-exist in the protagonist: not one other, but many other "others." The righteous Golyadkin and subservient Golyadkin; the rebellious Golyadkin and the social climber Golyadkin. These different selves clash in the story, leading to language excess. The aim of provocation, that is, to confirm his single identity, eventually fails.

The Underground Man in *Notes from the Underground* is the second provocateur on the list. Borrowing McGowan's Lacanian discussion of laughter, the author argues that the protagonist again suffers from a lack, to which the hero responds using excessive language. His language touches on the lack and excess, which are repressed in people's everyday life. Nervous laughter arises when we encounter our unconscious. Paris points out that when a provocation fails, the subject will repeat his act more intensively. This is what happens to the Underground Man when he fails to elicit a submissive response from the compassionate Liza. He counteracts by further humiliating her, reiterating her identity as a whore. His provocation is also marked by his pursuits of irrational desires. Well-being is a great thing, but it implies unity and finitude. It is only in perverseness that the Underground Man can fully express his longing for infinitude and freedom.

Nastasya Filippovna in *The Idiot* is distinguished by her sensational provocation. Not only does she protest patriarchy as a feminist, but she also raises people's awareness of

the sufferings caused by such a male-oriented world. Her provocations successfully lead to self-unmasking of male characters (Ganya). Her key strategy is shamelessness, which functions as a “cover for anger and a vent.” It justifies her deviated behavior and more importantly, it is used to ridicule her opponents who then become “the sources of her own empowerment” (75).

In *The Diary of a Writer*, provocation is fueled by irritation. Mass media evens out the density of various events happening every day in the world. On the one hand, readers become detached from the actual happening of an event. But at the same time, they are eager to listen to an expert’s assessment of it. Dostoevskii addresses his readers’ thirst for judgement by offering his commentaries on current issues. Echoing the habitat of “participatory media,” the writer treats his readers as intellectual “coworkers” who engage themselves with his ideas. Dostoevskii’s strategy is to express his authentic psychological state to evoke an analogous state in his readers (106). This can be found in his discussion of Russia as the mother of all Slavic nations. In his chapters on Tolstoi’s *Anna Karenina*, Dostoevskii criticizes the author by inserting himself into one of the scenes in the novel. By reorchestrating the relevant dialogues, Dostoevskii presents Levin’s reactions as an example of profound selfishness and indifference to the suffering of distant others.

Patyk describes Zosima’s provocation in *The Brothers Karamazov* as prosocial. The strategy is marked by infinite tolerance and abstinence from judgement or blame. Yet the provocateur is not passive; he would extend help and foster relations in a community. When Zosima responds to Ivan’s atheistic remarks, the former probes into Ivan’s intention and identity instead of elevating the discussion into a debate of moral maxim. The provocateur does not impose truth on the others; he assists them to embark on the search for self-knowledge on their own.

In conclusion, Patyk compares provocation to a child playing with matches. The child is fueled with intentions in fondling the matches, but there is no guarantee of how the play ends. It is this unpredictability in the act of provocation that captures the infinitude and human freedom in Dostoevskii’s works.

Kateryna Malaia. *Taking the Soviet Union Apart Room by Room: Domestic Architecture Before and After 1991.*

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When Russia initiated the war in Ukraine on February 24, 2022, numerous multi-story, multi-apartment prefabricated houses became targets of bombardment, highlighting not only a ruthless assault on civilians but also serving as symbolic testaments to the enduring nature of the (post) Soviet space, which has undergone minimal transformation since its construction. However, within these structures, significant internal changes have transpired—an aspect explored in Kateryna Malaia’s work, *Taking the Soviet Union Apart Room by Room*. The book endeavors to comprehend the post-Soviet metamorphosis by scrutinizing the evolution of everyday life, with a particular focus on the residential domain.