



Research Article

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NOTES FROM UNDERGROUND: IN ENGLISH*

Abstract: This chronological survey of English translations of *Notes from Underground* covering the years 1913–2014 evaluates the treatment of the text from various, often contradictory, perspectives. Well-known and unknown translators and editors offer sometimes opposing versions of the text aided by various ancillary materials which range from biographical information to a detailed chronology of Dostoevsky’s life plus excerpts from contemporary documents and modern critical evaluations. A number of the translations are designed expressly for students, others for those with limited or no knowledge of Dostoevsky, Russian history or the Russian language. No single introduction or translation emerges as the most insightful or accurate, although those of the last two decades are more idiomatic. Influencing this is often the background of the editor or translator. American editors focus on the context of Dostoevsky’s creation, English or Russian editors concentrate on the core elements that emphasize either the Russian literary tradition or late 19th century Russian politics and its importance for Dostoevsky’s conception of the story. Almost all editors consider the narrative experimentation of the work and the structural differences between Parts I and II. A number of the editors also address the Existential quality of the text, while translators confront the difficulties of capturing Dostoevsky’s sometime idiosyncratic prose.

Keywords: Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*, translations, narrative, literary history, St. Petersburg, style, anti-hero.

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«ЗАПИСКИ ИЗ ПОДПОЛЬЯ» НА АНГЛИЙСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ*

Аннотация: Хронологический обзор переводов повести Ф.М. Достоевского «Записки из подполья» охватывает 1913–2014 гг. и ее интерпретаций с разных, порой противоречивых точек зрения. Как хорошо известные, так и неизвестные переводчики и редакторы изданий повести предлагали различные, порой противоречащие друг другу версии текста, сопровождая их разными сопутствующими материалами — биографическими сведениями, вплоть до подробной хронологии жизненного пути Достоевского, а также современной критикой. Ряд переводов специально готовились для студенческой аудитории, другие — для читателей, мало или вовсе ничего не знающих о Достоевском, русской истории и русском языке. Ни один перевод и ни одно из предисловий нельзя выделить как самые глубокие, полные или точные, хотя в последние два десятилетия появились более идиоматические переводы. Нередко заметную роль играют фоновые знания переводчика или редактора. Американские редакторы в большей степени сосредоточены на контексте повести Достоевского, английские или русские редакторы — на основополагающих элементах, которые связаны либо с русской литературной традицией, либо с политическими вопросами, актуальными для России конца XIX в. и существенными для проблематики «Записок из подполья». Практически все редакторы отмечают экспериментальный характер повествовательной техники в этом произведении и структурные отличия между первой и второй частями повести. Целый ряд редакторов подчеркивают экзистенциалистский характер текста. Для переводчиков же сложней всего оказывается задача схватить и передать идиостиль прозы Достоевского.

Ключевые слова: Достоевский, «Записки из подполья», перевод, повествование, история литературы, Санкт-Петербург, стиль, антигерой.

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Even in those days I carried my underground deep within me.
Fyodor Dostoevsky. Notes from Underground (part 2, chapter 1)

I

To start, a comparison of four different translations of the same section. At the opening of chapter 11 in the first part of *Notes from Underground* in the Ronald Wilks translation, we read:

To sum up, gentlemen: the best thing is to do nothing! Better conscious inertia! So, long live the underground! Although I may have said that I envy the normal man with all the rancour of which I'm capable, I wouldn't care to be him in the situation in which I see him (although I shan't stop envying him all the same. No, no, in any event the underground I smore advantageous!). There one can at least... Ah! You see, here again I'm lying! I'm lying because I myself know, as sure as twice two is four, that it's not the underground that's better in any way, but something else, something completely different which I long for but which I cannot find. To hell with the underground! [Dostoevsky 2009: 34]

The confused speaker celebrating and denigrating the underground, grasping for meaning in its value, establishes the tone of his inquiry throughout this translation. As the speaker emphasizes in chapter 2, "to be excessively conscious is a disease" and this disease permeates his short novel both seducing and repelling the reader [Dostoevsky 2009: 6].

A more recent, 2014 translation (Wilk's appeared in 2009) of the same passage emphasizes a more formal voice, controlled and orderly and reasoned while expressing a similar idea:

In the final analysis, gentlemen, it's better not to do anything. Conscious inertia is best. So then, long live the underground! I may have said that I am bitterly green with envy of normal men, but under the conditions I see them in, I wouldn't want to be one (though I still won't stop envying them. No, no, in any case the underground is more advantageous!). there at least you can... Eh!, Why, here I am lying again! I'm lying because I myself know, like two times two, that it is not the underground that is better but something else, something completely different, which I'm yearning for but won't find by any means! To hell with the underground! [Dostoevsky 2014: 46]

Diction conveys the explicit and implicit formality with words like “analysis,” “advantageous,” and “yearning.” The reader does not feel the same immediacy of voice, nor involvement with the speaker who seems to be offering a lecture rather than expressing his inner feelings.

An earlier translation, the popular Constance Garnett which first appeared in 1918, offers yet another version of the same scene but again with a certain Edwardian, fustian flair:

The long and the short of it is, gentlemen, that it is better to do nothing! Better conscious inertia! And so hurrah for underground! Though I have said that I envy the normal man to the last drop of my bile, yet I should not care to be in his place such as he is now (though I shall not cease envying him). No, no; anyway the underground life is more advantageous. There, at any rate, one can... Oh, but even now I am lying! I am lying because I know myself that it is not underground that is better, but something different, quite different, for which I am thirsting, but which I cannot find! Damn underground! [Dostoevsky 1918: n.p.]

Garnett is here taken with the dignity and seriousness of the writer; her efforts at informality are awkward and forced: “hurrah for underground!”, “the underground life is more advantageous,” “thirsting.” When she came upon a phrase or word she did not understand, her remedy was swift: omit it. She also eliminated any idiosyncrasies of narrative voice, the very elements that more contemporary translators emphasize to give the narrator his individuality and modernity. Garnett’s *Underground Man* sounds quite 19th century; Wilks or Lodge’s, quite contemporary.

Garnett had already translated *The Brothers Karamazov* (1912), *The Possessed* (1913), *Crime and Punishment* (1914) and *The Double* (1917) before *Notes* and was well-known to the public as the premier translator of Russian literature of her time. But as later translations appeared, she was thought to smooth out the intensity of Dostoevsky in general and the *Underground Man* in particular. Later translators became more informal with a stronger sense of a modern, informed reader.

Finally, an English translation from 1913, Dostoevsky’s work retitled as *Letters from the Underworld*, translated by C.J. Hogarth and published in London. The opening of chapter 11, part 1 begins with

So at length, gentlemen, we have reached the conclusion that the best thing for us to do is to do nothing at all, but to sink into a state of

contemplative inertia. For that purpose all hail the underground! True, I said above that I profoundly envy the normal man; yet, under the conditions in which I see him placed, I have no wish to be he. That is to say, though I envy him, I find the underworld better, since at least one can — Yet I am lying. I am lying because, even as I know that two and two make four, so do I know that it is not the underworld which is so much better, but something else, something else — something for which I am hungry, but which I shall never find. Ah no! To the devil with the underworld! [Dostoevsky 1913: 44]

Here, a formality of syntax reigns generating wordiness matched by a certain pompousness of speech (“hail the underground!”). Through its elevated rhetoric the statements sound dictated rather than spoken.

II

What do these four examples reveal and what do they show about representing *Notes* in English? One answer might be what one could call reverse engineering — the language becoming more informal and casual the further one gets from the original publication of the story, and the further one moves away from the Russian. Encouraging this process are the publishers who realized from the start that for Dostoevsky to appeal, his work had to be approachable and understandable almost from the first glance at his sentences. They also realized that they had to “sell” Dostoevsky to the reader, hence the repeated biographical introductions to the editions, rather than an immediate engagement with the text.

From the perspective of reception, to be seen reading Russian literature was thought to be a sign of education and cosmopolitanism, drawing both an elite and common readership.¹ Market decisions and commercial decisions were as important as the quality of the translations. These were long books and there was no guarantee of sales. The reverse was equally uncertain: translators did not receive a royalty, only a modest fee and perhaps some prestige [McAteer 2021: xiii–xiv]. But this gradually changed, especially with Penguin books. Illustrating the care with which publishers approached the idea of Russian translations, however, Alan Lane, the founder of Penguin, contacted two émigré Russians: Samuel S. Koteliansky, a translator who worked with Virginia Woolf on collabora-

¹ See [Beasley 2020], [Beasley, Bullock 2013]. Also helpful is [Blume 2011] on the construction of reputation for Russian writers in England.

tive translations for the Hogarth Press, and Sergei Konovalov, an Oxford scholar, about the prospects of publishing Russian literature in translation. This occurred in the mid-to-late 1930s and early 1940s. Lane had sensed the broad interest in Russian culture and writing documented by Rebecca Beasley in *Russomania* [Beasley 2020]. During the post-war period, the public mood was pro-Soviet because of their positive role in ending WWII. Society displayed a general pre-occupation with Russia.

In the prefatory or paratextual material preceding an actual translation of *Notes*, a pattern emerged following the directives of publishers. Translators generally addressed a set of fixed matters noting that what the *Underground Man* means counts less than who was the author, what were the circumstances that led to his writing the story and how it should be received. Also, how does the story foretell issues and themes in Dostoevsky's other works, all written in the fourteen years between *Notes* (1864) and *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880), *Karamazov* appearing the year before he died. One further characteristic of editions in English is to contextualize both Dostoevsky and his work showing what else was happening in world literature at the time and the impact of the work on later writers. This broadening of presentation emphasizes the transnational element of the author and text widening Dostoevsky's influence. The editions were also transactional, that is designed to encourage their purchase. Penguin, as a sign of its Russian texts, had a color code: all the Russian translations were identified by red borders on the cover and spine. The front cover had a black and white illustrated roundel or medallion illustrating a significant plot point or a key character, all to entice the reader to acquire the book. Linking popularity with quality was the goal.

One must also consider the status of the translator when evaluating the English editions. Garnett, for example, between 1892 and the mid-1920s, translated over seventy volumes of Russian literature. She was also the wife of the well-known critic and editor Edward Garnett. Conrad, Woolf and others praised her work. Ronald Wilks studied Russian at university, was a Naval interpreter and then received a PhD in Slavics in 1972. He has translated a series of titles for Penguin by Gorky, Gogol, Tolstoy, Pushkin and seven volumes of stories by Chekhov. Kirsten Lodge is a professor of Comparative and World Literature in the American mid-west whose first degree was from Prague, before studying in Finland and finally Columbia University in New York where she completed a PhD in Russian and Czech language and literature. C.J. Hogarth, after a limited military career, studied Russian and became an active translator.

All of these mostly academics differed from those early twentieth century translators who tended to be émigrés, such as David Magarshack who arrived in England from Riga in 1920 and, after an unsuccessful attempt at journalism and then crime writing, turned to translations. For the Penguin Russian Classics series, he produced a number of Russian translations, notably *Crime and Punishment* and *Notes from Underground*. Magarshack's translations were expressed in relaxed language but responsive to the textual complexities of Dostoevsky, matters of repetition, the intonation of obsession and what Nabokov called Dostoevsky's "vulgar soapbox eloquence" [Nabokov 1981: 118]. One important aspect of Magarshack's work is that it was for him a way of earning a living: for his first translation, he received an advance of £200 plus royalties of seven and a half percent. Wilks and Lodge are academics; Charles James Hogarth (1869–1945) educated at Charterhouse, was a translator who made an early career publishing editions of Gogol's *Dead Souls*, Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons*, Gorky's *Through Russia* and Goncharov's *Oblomov*, plus Dostoevsky's *The Gambler*, *Poor Folk* and *Notes*. He was sometimes criticized for his incomplete knowledge of Russian but rich imagination, although one critic claimed that he had provided Gogol with such an elaborate style as to make him unrecognizable [May 1994: 35].

Dostoevsky was initially thought to be too Russian for English readers, so a flat, approachable, unthreatening translation, such as that of Garnett, eased the writer into the hands and minds of readers. He was thought wild, couth, and deviant, this condescending attitude preventing many from even going near him. Joseph Conrad, having read Garnett's translation of *The Brothers Karamazov*, praised her translation but not Dostoevsky: the work was "an impossible lump of valuable matter... terrifically bad and impressive and exasperating" [May 1994: 34]. No less than Henry James found Dostoevsky offensive, a disordered writer with extreme characters confessing incoherent spiritual views at the same time they were intimidating. James could not finish *Crime and Punishment* but Robert Louis Stevenson, a fan of Dostoevsky, declared that "it nearly finished me. It was like having an illness" (quoted in [May 1994: 28]). In 1903, publishers felt there was no real market for Dostoevsky in England. He was thought incapable of writing a novel that approached a work of art [May 1994: 29]. He was overshadowed by Tolstoy, a perennial English favorite largely for his moral fervor; the 1890s was his decade.

The first English version of a major work by Dostoevsky was *Notes from the House of the Dead* in 1881, the year he died. As Rachel May

points out in *The Translator in the Text*, when more Dostoevsky appeared in translation in the mid-1880s, the response was tepid, even patronizing [May 1994: 28]. There was a negative reaction against the Russian preference to address the disturbing, seamy facts of life contrasted with the English preference to hide them. In 1906, there were two French versions of *The Brothers Karamazov* but not one in English.

Much of this changed with the so-called Russian craze in England between 1910–1925. There was something similar in America, largely focused on Turgenev promoted by James and an informal curiosity in Tolstoy. But suddenly, it seemed that Dostoevsky became a British favorite. Garnett's reputation carried some weight but she encountered resistant publishers, notably at Heinemann where she was told to tone down passages in *The Brothers Karamazov* that might be thought offensive. The Garnetts tended to agree and accepted a flat fee rather than a royalty for the translation but when it appeared in 1912, it caused a sensation [May 1994: 31]. Over the next eight years, Garnett provided eleven more volumes of Dostoevsky. Her triumph resulted from her adaption of his complex style to the demands of the English reader, employing simplification, clarity and purposefulness. In short, she domesticated him. To clarify his writing and thought became her mantra, to clean up the obscurities by creating a fluid but tepid style [May 1994: 323]. The price was the elimination of the mutterings and deliberations of the narrator in *Karamazov*, discarding syntactic intrigue and diversion. Not all, however, felt she went far enough in smoothing the rough edges but she did put Dostoevsky into the hands of proper English readers reading proper English translations. She was, after all, approaching her work as a late Victorian.

One of her readers was a young English woman just beginning her literary career, but one who constantly measured the reception of Dostoevsky and the early English translations: Virginia Woolf who published a series of essays on him, essentially introducing his fictions to the “common reader.” Before that started, she had read *Crime and Punishment* in French on her honeymoon in 1912 and told Lytton Strachey that Dostoevsky is “the greatest writer ever born” [Woolf 1976: 5]. In later years, she read six of his seven translated novels and reviewed three of his five volumes of collected stories for the *Times Literary Supplement* between 1917–1919. Woolf also co-translated with Koteliansky “Stavrogin's Confession,” the previously suppressed, unpublished chapter of *The Possessed*; it appeared with her Hogarth Press in 1922. Woolf stresses the spirit of Russian writing and why Dostoevsky is central to understanding the international scope of

fiction: his novels have become “an indestructible part of the furniture of our rooms” [Woolf 1987: 83]. Her celebration of his work in reviews and essays promoted his popularity.

The impact of Dostoevsky on Woolf was major: “after reading *Crime and Punishment* and *The Idiot*, how could any young novelist believe in ‘characters’ as the Victorians had painted them?” she asks. “We go down into his characters,” she added in “Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown” of 1923 as if “as we descend into some enormous cavern... It is all dark, terrible, and uncharted” [Woolf 1988: 386]. Dostoevsky’s psychologically complex characters provided her with an alternative to what she called the materialists. Writers devoted only to surfaces is how she characterizes her Edwardian contemporaries. Her 1925 essay “The Russian Point of View” further celebrates the emotional intensity of Dostoevsky, calling his novels “seething whirlpools, gyrating sandstorms, waterspouts which hiss and boil and suck us in” [Woolf 1992: 186].

In the same essay, however, she offers some qualifications on the matter of translation, acknowledging that only the Garnett translations are available to her:

When you have changed every word in a sentence from Russian to English, [you] have thereby altered the sense a little, the sound, weight, and accent of the words in relation to each other completely, nothing remains except a crude and coarsened version of the sense [Woolf 1992: 182].

This is like men deprived of their clothes and something more subtle Woolf writes: the characters have lost “their manners, the idiosyncrasies of their characters” in the linguistically flat translations. It is easy then to read into them something false [Woolf 1992: 182]. This critique and hesitancy with the Garnett translations remained despite her enthusiasm for Dostoevsky. And a curious parallel between the translator and the author emerges: Garnett’s Russian was self-taught. Woolf was largely self-educated.

Another, later promoter of Dostoevsky and attuned to translations, is Nabokov whose critical views of Dostoevsky are well-known. A sampling:

Dostoyevsky’s lack of taste, his monotonous dealings with persons suffering with pre-Freudian complexes, the way he has of wallowing in the tragic misadventures of human English words — all this is difficult to admire. I do not like this trick his characters have of ‘sinning their way to Jesus’ or, as a Russian author Ivan Bunin, put it more bluntly, ‘spilling Jesus all over the place’ [Nabokov 1981: 104].

But Nabokov can also be illuminating in his nastiness:

Dostoyevsky never really got over the influence which the European mystery novel and the sentimental novel made upon him. The sentimental influence implied that kind of conflict he liked—placing virtuous people in pathetic situations and then extracting from these situations the last ounce of pathos [Nabokov 1981: 103].

And finally, Dostoevsky “seems to have been chosen by the destiny of Russian letters to become Russia’s greatest playwright, but he took the wrong turning and wrote novels” [Nabokov 1981: 104.]

But the perennial issue, one central to Nabokov, remains: should the translator generate a readable or literal translation? For modern readers unfamiliar with Russian, the readable trumps the literal. Readers today need access to the text and the formal or wordy efforts of a Hogarth or Garnett no longer appeal in their self-conscious efforts to make Dostoevsky seem literary, at least for English readers. One early critic praised the translations as in fact more literary in English than Dostoevsky is in his own Russian [May 1994: 28]. The informal, casual language of a Wilks or Lodge wins out and what they sacrifice in accuracy they make up in their readability. Nonetheless, the ideal remains, in the words of Magarshack, that a “translation ought to produce [the] same effect as the original work” [McAteer 2021: 90]. The operative term is “ought,” a possibility rather than an absolute directive.

The principle of equivalence guides this approach broken down to the translator’s attempt to translate idioms, atmosphere, background period, style, meaning and understanding of parts of speech as they transfer from one language to another. Garnett was castigated for her literal renderings creating a spurious atmosphere of incorrect information about Russian culture, people and even the way of life. Ironically, by being true to the actual language distorted the meaning which needs a certain elasticity of words which permitted greater psychological, contradictory characters. In more contemporary translations, syntax maintains its confusions, repetitions and incomplete sentences found in Dostoevsky’s Russian. In a word, the text remains idiomatic. A likeness, not a literal copy, has become the new and persuasive goal.

A final example from the sources cited below: at the end of chapter 11, the Underground Man declares that “perhaps by writing things down I really shall find relief” [Dostoevsky 2009: 37]. But in the Oxford World’s

Classics translation by Jane Kentish, we read that “I believe that if I write it down I’ll get rid of it. Why not try?” [Dostoevsky 1991: 40]. Lodge offers a variant: “for some reason I believe that if I write it down, I’ll get it out of my head. Why not try?” [Dostoevsky 2014: 49]. Hogarth is more formal: “Somehow I feel confident that once it were written down, it would vanish for ever. Why should I not try the experiment?” [Dostoevsky 1913: 48]. And then, the fulsome Constance Garnett:

At times some one [reminiscence] stands out from the hundred and oppresses me. For some reason I believe that if I write it down I should get rid of it. Why not try? [Dostoevsky 1918: n.p.]

“Writing will be a sort of work,” the Garnett translation continues, but “they say work makes man kind-hearted and honest. Well, here is a chance for me, anyway” [Dostoevsky 1918: n.p.]. Such optimism varies with each translation which seems almost date-stamped but collectively express the essential idea of the *Underground Man*: writing is a likely means of survival, if not salvation.

What follows is a digest of the major British and American English translations of *Notes from Underground* with an indication of the translator’s approach to the text and life of Dostoevsky.

Editions in English

1913. Dostoevsky, *Letters from the Underworld, The Gentle Maiden, The Landlady*, trans. C.J. Hogarth, Everyman’s Library (London: J.M. Dent; New York: E.P. Dutton, 1913). Introduction (vii–ix), *Letters from the Underworld* (1–149), *The Gentle Maiden* (153–207), *The Landlady* (211–308).

Fifteen-page advertisement of all Everyman titles completes the volume. *Letters* begins with Dostoevsky’s one-page “Preface by the Author” dated 1846. Text proper begins on page 5 and ends on page 149. Preceding the contents page is a late addition in the 1937 reprint: a list of Dostoevsky’s works “in order of appearance” including a list of major translations and their translators plus a number of critical studies.²

Hogarth’s three-page moralistic introduction begins with acknowledging the growing interest in Dostoevsky’s writing, referring to him as

² See online at The Internet Archive page for *Letters from the Underworld*, by Fyodor Dostoyevsky, published April 4, 2008, <https://archive.org/details/lettersfromunder00dost/page/n7/mode/2up>.

“the greatest of Russian realistic writers” (vii) and claims that he may be healthy reading for the “comfortable set” because he reveals some of the worst “of our social sores.” Dostoevsky exposes and invites readers to see the foulness permitted by all civilizations: the “moral plagues” Dostoevsky exposes exist everywhere (vii). He writes honestly of such problems because he, himself, had descended into the inferno as a captive, not spectator, but does not extend or condemn the sins he describes. He only inquires what comfortable society thinks of such ills. He does not lay blame but seeks reaction.

Importantly, according to Hogarth, Dostoevsky does not preach like Tolstoy or indulge in satire like Chekhov but neither is he a pessimist. He can see light, minimal light, in the darkness. He can discern the spiritual through a figure like Liza. And redemption can be achieved through love, showing us what it’s capable of while letting the reader draw his or her own conclusions, unlike Tolstoy who always instructs. Love in *Letters from the Underworld* can redeem the most ignoble soul argues Hogarth for whom redemption is the key to understanding Dostoevsky’s world.

Showing the redemptive power operating in the two additional stories in the volume, Hogarth concludes with a comment on *Letters from the Underworld* referring to the narrator as a “half-crazed, embittered cynic” who “vents his wrath” on Liza. He turns on her and rends both her and himself creating what Hogarth calls “a terrible picture — perhaps some might say too terrible” (ix). “Don’t look,” he imagines the author sarcastically saying; continue to be comfortable. In this late Victorian, moralistic introduction to Dostoevsky that omits any biographical or linguistic detail, the focus is on exposure to immoral behavior teaching the reader right choices.

1918. Dostoyevsky, *Notes from Underground*, in *White Nights and Other Stories*, trans. Constance Garnett (London: William Heinemann, 1918), 50–155. Other titles in the volume include *White Nights*, *A Faint Heart* and “Polzunkov” plus three others. Begins with Dostoevsky’s “Author’s Note,” then *White Nights*, *Notes from Underground*, *A Faint Heart*, “A Christmas Tree and a Wedding,” “Polzunkov,” “A Little Hero,” and “Mr. Prohartchin.” No introduction or preface. Revised by Ralph E. Matlaw in 1960.

Garnett's translation of this and other works by Dostoevsky — she also did Tolstoy and Chekhov³ — became the early twentieth century standard praised by Conrad and D.H. Lawrence. The translations were often and frequently reprinted for more than two decades, although later readers, notably Nabokov and Brodsky, criticized her work complaining that her translations were too demure and Victorian. When she did not understand a word or phrase, she omitted it. Later translators like Ralph Matlaw, Rosemary Edmonds and David Magarshack used Garnett's translations as foundations for their own. A useful reference is [Garnett 2009].

1955. Dostoevsky, *Notes from the Underground*, trans. David Magarshack, in *The Best Short Stories of Dostoevsky* (New York: Modern Library, 1955), 107–240. Also printed in *Great Short Works of Fyodor Dostoevsky* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968). Reprinted by Modern Library in 1992 and again in 2001 and 2005 as *Best Stories of Fyodor Dostoevsky*, xxiii, 348 pp. Includes “Biographical note” (v–vi), introduction (ix–xxiii), *Notes* (95–214), *White Nights*, “Honest Thief” and “Dream of a Ridiculous Man” plus three others.

After an obligatory biographical note, Magarshack argues that Dostoevsky's shorter works have as much impact and importance as his longer. They display his creative power and profound thought offering a convex mirror of his immensity. The smaller works are also free from “partisanship,” displaying detachment which allowed for insight (ix). Biographical details again emerge to contextualize the appearance of *Poor Folk* which again anticipates his later themes. Magarshack also notes Dostoevsky's early success at twenty-four. His truthful descriptions of life, his ability to delineate character and social conditions, plus his ability to understand the tragic elements of life stand out. But he also notes, drawing from Belinsky, Dostoevsky's tiresome repetitions and digressions.

Indebted to Gogol, Dostoevsky, nevertheless, went further, showing the spirit of the disenfranchised and marginalized which he understood in his much admired Dickens, suggesting that *The Insulted and Injured* is his own version of *The Old Curiosity Shop*. After commenting on his early stories, imprisonment, and then visit to London, Magarshack focuses on *Notes*, but not before registering the disasters of 1864 with the demise of

³ For a full list of her translations see “Translations by Constance Garnett,” *ibiblio*: The Public's Library and Digital Archive, last modified August 26, 1999, <http://www.ibiblio.org/eldritch/ac/jr/biblo.htm>.

his journals, death of his wife (15 April 1864) and then his brother (July 1864) who was 15,000 roubles in debt which Dostoevsky had to repay.

In this condition, Dostoevsky wrote and published *Notes*, appearing in the first and second issues of *Epokha*. Magarshack calls the novella a profound reflection on man's destiny. In largely general phrases, Magarshack offers a presentation but not analysis of the novella — relying on grand phrases such as the “darkest recesses of the human personality” and “a deep analysis of Human nature” (xx). He praises Dostoevsky's seeing the limitations of the scientific approach to ethical problems but also understood the appeal of material prosperity summed up in the Crystal Palace. The dissection of Russian society in St. Petersburg follows, but the critical language remains abstract, if not vague. He does, however, develop parallels between *White Nights* and *Notes* where the heroes of both are dreamers, but where *White Nights* progresses in an almost seamless narrative manner, *Notes* is erratic and “penetrates deep into the human heart and mind” (xxi). Magarshack then quickly moves on to discuss the two last stories in his volume, “A Gentle Creature” and “The Dream of a Ridiculous Man.”

Magarshack ends by linking the first part of *Notes* with “The Dream of a Ridiculous Man” and the near despair that overtakes his characters. Reason without feeling, mind without heart will destroy; only pity and love can provide some form of renewal. Absent in the frontmatter is any direct commentary on translating or the translating process.

1960. Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*; and *The Grand Inquisitor*; with relevant works by Chernyshevsky, Shchedrin and Dostoevsky, sel., trans., introd. Ralph E. Matlaw (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1960), xxiii, 229 pp. Introduction (vii–xxii), “Translator's Note” (xxiii), *Notes* (3–115), *The Grand Inquisitor* (119–141).

Matlaw emphasizes his complete revision of the Constance Garnett translation with this key point from the “Translator's Note”: “some changes were made for accuracy and consistency; others so that the text might approximate Dostoevsky's idiosyncratic style. Certain important words or turns of speech have always been rendered in the same way, even when at times they might have been given more idiomatically.”

After the obligatory biographical information, the introduction describes 1864 as the nadir of Dostoevsky's career, writing *Notes* while his wife lay dying and he himself was ill. Shortly after, his brother Michael died and Dostoevsky assumed all his debts. A. Grigor'ev, an important

friend, also died. Further biographical description of Dostoevsky's life and writing commitments and difficulties with creditors follow, with Matlaw arguing that *Notes* marks a change "in ideas and a refinement in techniques" for Dostoevsky (x). Discusses Dostoevsky's negative reaction to *What Is to Be Done?* and its celebration of reason, rationalism, the doctrine of environment plus man's notion of perfectibility in a search for a perfect, harmonious society. To Dostoevsky, this was all false; *Notes* became a critique of Chernyshevsky's views. Matlaw notes the immediate reaction from the radical camp to Dostoevsky's position with attacks and satires appearing. Such a rivalry with the liberals continued for years, although Matlaw indicates that Dostoevsky's ideas had been formulated years before *Notes* appeared.

Discussing the text proper, Matlaw explains that the "venomous monologue of the narrator," aimed against the materialistic and scientific assumptions of civilization, forms the first part (xi). Dostoevsky rejected the view that man is inherently good and would seek everyone's communal advantage in the process of his enlightenment. He refuses to accept the arguments of science and the doctrines of determinism and necessity. Utopian socialism based on man's reason and essential nobility is wrong. *Notes* energetically indicts such theories. Man is capricious and irrational and cannot be categorized Dostoevsky believes. He objects to mechanical perfection symbolized in the Crystal Palace built in 1851 in Hyde Park; London satisfies only man's mechanical not spiritual needs (xii). He pursues Rousseau who emphasized individuality and feelings, not Hegel's world view that all that exists is rational.

Matlaw then identifies the moral illness of the narrator finding its roots in urbanism: St. Petersburg, itself, imposes the "willful imposition of an artificial order on nature" Matlaw explains (xiii). The artificial setting and creation of the city ensures its isolation from nature. Snow, itself, becomes yellow, wet and threatening to man's well-being. The narrator rarely, if ever, ventures out. There is an overall and individual loss of identity which Matlaw links to Kant and Schiller. The goal of the underground man is his increasing self-consciousness and how society interferes with his individuality forcing him to withdrawal into daydreams (xiv). But such consciousness rises from the conflict with reality, not from abstractions Matlaw argues. The result is inaction because it is better to do nothing than to commit oneself to social or moral limitations. But life becomes boring for the underground man, even if the sublime and grotesque co-exist. Hyperconsciousness, which may be a disease, creates suffering but

suffering is the token of individuality the underground man believes. This chain of thought becomes the tragedy of modern man, although suffering is essential for Dostoevsky's philosophy (xv). Suffering is then an object not a result Matlaw concludes, noting that not intellect but faith might be the solution to the problems of the underground man who says "it is not at all underground that is better, but something different, quite different, for which I long but which I cannot find! Damn underground!" (pt. 1, chap. 11, p. 33). As he earlier declared, "Gentlemen, I am tormented by questions" (pt. 1, chap. 8, p. 29).

Matlaw's introduction evolves into a substantial history of ideas concentrating on the thought of both Dostoevsky and his narrator in an effort to break free from the biographical and purely textual, although he does note the importance of the excised passage on faith in chapter 10 of part 1, cut by the censor. Inexplicably, Dostoevsky did not restore the cuts when he republished the novel, in that way ensuring that the narrator would be left in limbo. The novel is a "Confession," the very title of the work when it was first announced Matlaw writes. The text remains, then, an extended monologue with suggestions of a dialogue with phrases like "yes, gentleman" or "you say" (xvi-xvii). Matlaw then makes the astute point that this is a confession to one's self; the auditor and confessor are one despite the evasions, repetitions and contradictions. The job of the reader is to discount the confusions even when the narrator says at the end of his work, "it's hardly literature so much as corrective punishment" (pt. 2, chap. 10, p. 114). And when the narrator asks, which is better, "cheap happiness or exalted sufferings?" he purposively doesn't answer (pt. 2, chap. 10, p. 114). Bleakly, the underground man concludes that "we are all divorced from life," so far from it "that we immediately feel a sort of loathing for actual 'real life.'" We "all privately agreed that it is better in books" he concludes (pt. 2, chap. 10, p. 114).

Although Matlaw refers to the text as "one of gloomiest works in world literature," he celebrates its value for its exposure of the dilemma of modern man: the choice between reason or faith, society or individualism. However, Matlaw reasserts that the work is a fiction, not a philosophical tract. The text is essentially a confession, its original title. It is an extended monologue with an implied dialogue (you say, you laugh, etc.). Evasions, contradictions, repetitions and self-criticism abound and the reader's job is to "discount the distorting prism" of one who is essentially a "self-torturing rationalist" (xvii, xx).

The remainder of the introduction explicates the text and its structure emphasizing that the climax of the work is Liza's love for the narrator when she recognizes his unhappiness. She accepts him completely but vanity, self-revenge and overall moral illness make it impossible for the narrator to accept Liza's offer. He prefers his unhappy state to any other condition (xix), although ironically in the final paragraph of the work a narrator reports that "the 'notes' of this paradoxalist do not end here, however. He could not resist and continued them," but this is also a good place to stop (pt. 2, chap. 10, p. 115).⁴

1961. Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground, White Nights, The Dream of a Ridiculous Man*, and Selections from *The House of the Dead*, trans. Andrew R. MacAndrew (New York: Signet Classics, 1961), 240 pp. Revised edition (1980). Reprints (2000, 2004). Includes *White Nights* (7–61), selections from *The House of the Dead* (62–89), *Notes from Underground* (90–203), "The Dream of a Ridiculous Man" (204–226), afterword (227–239), selected bibliography (240). A 2004 re-issue has an introduction by Ben Marcus, novelist and short story writer.

Opening directly with *White Nights*, passages from *The House of the Dead*, *Notes from Underground* and then "The Dream of a Ridiculous Man", MacAndrew saves his commentary until the afterword which begins with skeptical views of Dostoevsky as a prophet supplemented by Soviet reactions to his work. Among all the introductions or afterwords in these English translations, only MacAndrew engages with the Soviet response to Dostoevsky's writing.

"Dostoevsky was a sick man, he was spiteful, intolerant and irritable. Turgenev once described him as the nastiest Christian he ever met" is the striking beginning to MacAndrew's essay (227). Noting Dostoevsky's dissolute father, death of his mother at an early age and the murder of his father by serfs because of his brutality and debauchery with peasant girls, MacAndrew establishes the context for his reading of Dostoevsky, noting that despite paternal cruelty, Dostoevsky's innate humanitarianism led to pity for the underdog. And this never left him.

But his life took several surprising turns which MacAndrew outlines: following his participation with the liberal/utopian Petrashevsky group,

⁴ Text available at The Internet Archive page for *Notes From The Underground: And The Grand Inquisitor*, by Fyodor Dostoyevsky, published May 29, 2020, <https://archive.org/details/notes-from-the-underground-and-the-the-grand-inquisitor/page/115/mode/2up>.

Dostoevsky was arrested, sent to Siberia and almost executed, saved at the last minute by a reprieve from the Tsar. An eight-year sentence in Omsk penitentiary in Siberia followed. But imprisoned with simple Russians, he had a political change of heart, and possibly even a nervous breakdown MacAndrew suggests. In fact, he spends a paragraph on Pavlov and his studies on the inter-relations between a mental breakdown and brainwashing (229).

MacAndrew also outlines what he believes to be Dostoevsky's paradox: he recognized the invincibility of power at the same time he became responsive to, and hoped to alleviate, human suffering. But all resistance to the order of things became doomed to failure with Christian submission the only course of action for mankind ironically expressed by Alexander Herzen: "Compassionate love may be very strong. It sobs, it burns, then it wipes away its tears — and it does nothing" (229). More biographical details follow, including Dostoevsky's marriage to his first wife, a moody, consumptive widow with a streak of cruelty leading to his being unfaithful.

Released and back in St. Petersburg in December 1859, Dostoevsky began to write again and use his poor health as a pretext for foreign travels to cities and spas beginning in 1862. At the resorts, and under constant pressure to publish, he would soon begin to gamble in need of money. Of course, he lost. In 1864, his wife and brother died, although three years later he married his secretary who survived him nearly forty years after his death in 1881. She died in 1920 after the Soviets deemed Dostoevsky a "mouthpiece of reaction and obscurantism" (230). But over time, that view changed, MacAndrew adding that they have since recognized him as a "great Russian Classic" with one caveat: he is given to frequent errors because he couldn't help reflecting "the tottering beliefs of a decaying class" (230). He adds that "the regime would have found it hard not to rehabilitate him" because during the years of his suppression, copies of his works were secretly circulated and discussed by small, clandestine groups (230). Khrushchev was Premier at the time MacAndrew was writing his afterword, ruling from 1958 to 1964.

But a consistent error in evaluating Dostoevsky, MacAndrew writes, was in seeing him as a prophet, a spiritual Jules Verne which further placed him under a Soviet cloud. The term prophet misled many, while MacAndrew, in an unusual paragraph, pursues many of Dostoevsky's lapses and mistakes, from writing carelessly and hurriedly, to relying on sentimentality. Nonetheless, he reached "peaks in Russian" and world literature achieved by few. The source was his unique insight into human motivations and

exploring, in rather broad terms, “the human soul” (231). But this view attracted “simplifiers,” philosophical poets and even professors of literature, who read only sections of Dostoevsky and in their efforts misunderstood him (231). MacAndrew is clearly defending the writer from such “intricate elaboration” (231) as seen in the use made of him by Freud and Sartre. They, and others, wanted to see him as a forerunner of existentialism, linked even to Malraux through ideas of death and subject to unconvincing literary comparisons.

Replacing Dostoevsky as a writer is Dostoevsky as a religious and even political prophet, his metaphysical views overvalued. MacAndrew calls such readings “cheap interpretations,” citing the Russian word *dostoyevshchina*, a term favored by the Soviets for dismissing Dostoevsky’s work when it did not mesh with Marx (232). But MacAndrew then attempts to revise the notion of prophet claiming it is not what Dostoevsky says but the tone in which he says it that gives credibility to the term. In his ability to convey the torments people undergo when trying to solve metaphysical problems, he becomes “prophetic.” But MacAndrew also claims that it is impossible to make a philosophical system out of Dostoevsky’s world — it is too contradictory and inconsistent, much like the humanity he represents. After rejecting his ideal of social union, Dostoevsky thought the point of life was “redemption through suffering and love” (233).

Linking Dostoevsky with Nietzsche is also incorrect according to MacAndrew, partly because Nietzsche was scornful of Dostoevsky’s Christian apologetics. Nietzsche felt that Dostoevsky was a victim of the “conscience-vivisection and self-crucifixion” of the past two thousand years of Christianity (233). He sinned to enjoy the luxury of confession, preaching submission as the way to redemption, while still trying to prove the existence of God. His internal debate is relentless for without God, acceptance of suffering has no meaning. In Dostoevsky, doubters and believers are at war as MacAndrew describes Dostoevsky’s impossible universe governed by uncertain universal laws.

Following these general ideas, MacAndrew turns to the actual texts with modest commentary on each: *White Nights*, *The House of the Dead*, *Notes* and “Dream of a Ridiculous Man,” noting that each work links to a distinct period in Dostoevsky’s life. Of *Notes*, he says it is a “passionate rejection of his former beliefs” and an attack on his previous political associates by a character he actually dislikes. In generalized language again, MacAndrew suggests that the texts actually probe the “human hearts” which absorbed Dostoevsky, whether an uneducated peasant who

kills without knowing why, or a “hypersensitive neurotic” who ranges from elation to despair, the so-called Underground Man (235). *White Nights*, he claims, is an affirmative piece, while *The House of the Dead* is a chronicle of violence with the injection of suffering.

Notes, he asserts, is a “compact protest” against simplified, optimistic visions of the future. In an unwittingly comic sentence, MacAndrew writes, “it’s hard to tell which irritated Dostoevsky more:” the Victorian sense of a clockwork universe supported by optimism, or the “maudlin enthusiasm” of Russian followers of Fourier and French utopian socialists (236)? *Notes*, he concludes, argues that the desires of men are not reasonable and often make them act against their own commonsense, this very contradiction defining us as human. In part 2 of the novel, such irrationality is shown in action. The Underground Man secretly longs for Liza but finds it necessary to banish her, the event demonstrating contradiction at work (237). Man remains fickle and unreasonable. Self-interest and reason are in a constant battle without a victor. For the Underground Man (a phrase not used by MacAndrew), art and beauty cause him only scorn. There are no absolutes.

Of the translation itself, MacAndrew says little, only that “the general aspect has been rendered” and that internal allusions are not fully explained. He gives, as an example, Dostoevsky citing an artist who paints shit, in Russian a word beginning with the letter “G.” But there was also a Russian painter named Gué (or Gé) and Dostoevsky may be insulting him (238). MacAndrew also notes Dostoevsky’s sarcasm toward Chernyshevsky whose symbol for utopia was London’s Crystal Palace, attacked several times by the narrator of *Notes*.

MacAndrew’s overall language is vague, relying on broadly based terms instead of precise details. The interpretation is dated (he published during the Cold War and before such resources as Joseph Frank’s Dostoevsky biography), although he identifies some of Dostoevsky’s larger concerns and their attempted solution within the work, stressing Dostoevsky’s general anti-rationalist stance. But in a final comment on “The Dream of a Ridiculous Man,” he remarks that in a dream, the protagonist finds that he shot himself in the heart instead of the head as planned. His rational action has been overturned. Awake, he had considered a logical suicide but, in his dream, he knew it was his feelings that must die, emotions overpowering reason. The Underground Man is similarly incapable of such a proper, planned self-execution. Only an impetuous act could succeed but likely one that would fail.

The selected bibliography in the edition lists works by Dostoevsky and eleven critical texts including George Steiner's valuable *Tolstoy or Dostoevsky* of 1959.

1969. Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*, trans. Serge Shishkoff, ed. Robert Durgy (New York: T.Y. Crowell, 1969). Introduction (vii–xxii), “Translator’s Note” (xxiii–xxvi), *Notes* (3–125), “Criticism” (129–260), bibliography (261).

This substantial edition offers an extensive introduction, a useful note by the translator and six important essays, including “Nihilism and *Notes from Underground*” by Joseph Frank,⁵ “Dostoevsky — Notes from Underground” by M.M. Bakhtin and “Dostoevsky’s Metaphor of the ‘Underground’” by Monroe Beardsley.

The introduction stresses the prophetic nature of Dostoevsky’s work, with the Underground Man stressing the spirit of rebellion in the modern era, rebelling against traditional forms and assumptions. Awareness of the sometimes dark, irrational elements of human behavior are also accounted for by Dostoevsky. The Underground Man’s paradoxical mental states, arrogance and humiliation, inertia and activism are also scrutinized with urban alienation one of his modern ailments.

Durgy goes on to show the connections between the Underground Man and existential literature, especially in Part I of the novel. Albert Camus and Ralph Ellison are two modern examples of writers incorporating the Underground Man’s condition. While preceding generations saw Dostoevsky as a tragic writer focusing on despair, the modern age reads him as the stepping stone to a new confessional literature.

A biographical section opens with the important detail that Dostoevsky’s father, a physician, was murdered by his own serfs in retaliation for his own brutality when he retired to a small estate outside of Moscow. Graduating from engineering school, Dostoevsky joined the engineering dept of the War Ministry and began to write. *The Double* (1846) began his interest in duality, the sense of an unstable personality. The story of Dostoevsky before the firing squad follows and then his time in Siberia including an early and unhappy marriage. Durgy is then clear on the division in Russian ideology between the westerners who saw a Western origin for Russian civilization and the “Slavophiles” who wanted to dissociate Russia from

⁵ See Joseph Frank’s classical works on the *Notes*: [Frank 1960], [Frank 1961], [Frank 1986] *passim*, but esp. pp. 310–311.

western influence and find sustenance in the peasant commune, source of her socialistic soul. Dostoevsky sympathized with the “Slavophiles” who also favored the moral and religious laws of the Russian Orthodox church.

Noting Dostoevsky’s response to his two European trips (1862, 1863), Durgy then focuses on the stressful personal life of Dostoevsky including his failing health and gambling debts. His mistress had also deserted him. In 1864, his wife died of consumption and three months later his brother who left a debt of 25,000 rubles which he assumed to maintain family honor. During this period, he also wrote *Notes from Underground* which appeared in 1864. Over the next sixteen years, he produced his masterworks. In generalized language, Durgy summarizes Dostoevsky’s successes and growing popularity. At his death in 1881, nearly 40,000 supposedly attended his funeral.

Durgy then argues that the themes of the *Underground* appeared earlier in Dostoevsky’s work, notably in *Winter Notes on Summer Impressions*. Condemning western scientific rationalism as well as selfish individualism, he expanded these themes in *Notes*. He sought a “selfless brotherhood” (xv). Durgy then outlines Dostoevsky’s critique of rationalism for several pages before engaging in the question of narrative. The extremes of the *Underground Man* need to be confronted but not always believed. And one must hesitate to identify the *Underground Man* too closely with the author, the focus of the remainder of the introduction which ends with brief comments on the useful critical commentary included in the edition noting that Bakhtin’s essay appears here for the first time in English and stresses the polyphonic, often contending, voices of the narrator.

The “Translator’s Note” by Shishkoff addresses the difficulty of transposing the style of one language into another, more challenging with the idiosyncratic first person narrator of *Notes*. The translation must not try to correct, or edit the irregularities of speech used by the *Underground Man*. The colorful speech must remain, colloquial expressions must survive. He does, however, note that the narrator’s speech changes as does his mood. When excited, his language becomes careless and confused. Other translations have tried to purify the style but not this one. Ambiguities also remain in this version emphasized in the translator’s note, one of the most detailed and helpful discussions of translation of the novel in print.

Of particular importance is the translator’s repeated adherence to the original text, resisting the chance to omit, change or add anything to the original. His aim is syntactic accuracy, even duplicating Dostoevsky’s few grammatical and syntactical errors. The clumsy passages are intentional.

Shishkoff even admits his failures, unable to find English equivalents for Russian phrases. He also comments on Dostoevsky's capricious paraphrasing showing that it was intentional: it was a device to achieve certain effects. The "Translator's Note" is the clearest presentation among English translators of the challenges and pitfalls of translating Dostoevsky and *Notes from Underground*.

1972. Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground* and *The Double*, trans. Jessie Coulson (London: Penguin, 1972). Translator's introduction (7–12), *Notes from Underground* (13–123), *The Double* (125–287).

Coulson begins her introduction with comments on Dostoevsky's sense of accomplishment from Belinsky's praise of *Poor Folk* and his enthusiasm for his work as he began *The Double*. It was the spring of 1845. Public reception to both works was more tempered, however, and *The Double* met with hostility or indifference. Nevertheless, the style of *The Double*, partially modelled on Gogol, made it easy to read. Coulson goes on to outline the conventional aspects of *The Double*, from its use of a government clerk as its "hero," to its St. Petersburg setting. But it is clearly Dostoevskyan in its ability to project events and thoughts from inside the mind of Golyadkin who suddenly, at the end of one day, encounters his double. Coulson then provides an exposition of the story and how the double is that side of the protagonist's own nature of which he disapproves and fears. The development of a split personality anticipates studies of this phenomenon not to appear for fifty years.

The popularity of *The Double* was not immediate, restricted by Dostoevsky's own disappearance from his arrest, imprisonment and exile. Notebooks from the 1860s suggest that Dostoevsky was planning to add episodes and possibly rewrite the work for its second publication, the first collected edition of his works. No new episodes were added but some rewriting occurred.

When he published *Notes from Underground*, Dostoevsky had recovered his fame, largely through *Memoirs from the House of the Dead*, the fictionalized account of his time in Siberia exile. He found his subject and style which *Notes* continued, acting as a prelude to *Crime and Punishment*, shortly to follow.

The Underground Man, like *The Double* focuses on a single character who has turned in upon himself. His sensitivity to slights alternately causes him to retreat in his underground and to revenge "himself for his humiliations by humiliating others" (9). In his notebook, Dostoevsky wrote

that he was the ““only one to have depicted the tragedy of the underground, made up of suffering, self-torture”” and the consciousness of what is best but also the ““impossibility of attaining it.”” He also believed that everyone else is the same (10).

Coulson points out that the isolation of the nameless character was emphasized by its being published in two parts in the *Epoch*, the journal of the Dostoevsky brothers. Part 1 is the long monologue expressing the “philosophy” of the narrator. She refers to it as “passionate, bitter, jeering, sharp-tongued attack” on the ideal of Utopian socialism in which he once believed. *What Is to Be Done?* was the immediate cause of the outburst, leading the distinguished early critic and biographer Leonid Grossman to remark that never was Dostoevsky’s thought so nakedly exposed (10).

Part 2 of *Notes* is set twenty years earlier than part 1 and which Coulson awkwardly titles “A Story of the Falling Sleet.” It was originally planned to be two chapters but in finished form they united as part 2, although in two parts. During the composition of *Notes*, Coulson reminds readers that Dostoevsky was living with his dying wife in Moscow and anxious over the fate of his stepson Pasha, while rethinking his own youthful years back in St. Petersburg. Part 2 recalls many locations of that earlier time even from his period at the School of Military Engineering. But there are also moments of cruelty as when he takes revenge for his frustration and anger on the prostitute Liza. The humiliation, rejection of friendship, failure to force a quarrel on his old classmates all rear up in the outbursts of the narrator directed at Liza.

Coulson ends her introduction by referring to the fallen woman theme, something of a stock figure in nineteenth century literature. The poem by Nekrasov, quoted several times in *Notes*, paints a picture of a repentant Magdalen figure reduced to tears by the harsh words of her lover who ultimately, at the end, announces to the purged woman, “Enter now, then, bold and free; / Be mistress of my house and me” (12). Dostoevsky uses the quote as the epigram to chapter 9 of part 2 (112). But the language and situation, Coulson adds, seems sentimental and unreal in contrast to Dostoevsky’s Liza who seems real and honest, Coulson claiming that she is more direct and authentic than the Underground Man who promotes only false, self-created ideas. Her departure into the falling snow is honest and genuine. All the Underground Man can do is return to his decaying morals in his decaying corner. His attempt to run after her is weak and dishonest.

In a surprising proto-feminist interpretation, Coulson argues that while the novel physically stops, it is Liza “who goes on: the novel without

a hero has acquired a heroine, and its end is her vindication, almost her triumph” (12). And to be fair, the narrator momentarily agrees with her: at the end of part 2, chapter 9, the narrator confesses that their roles have reversed: Liza has become the heroine and he was just another “crushed and degraded creature as she had been that night” (pt. 2, chap. 9, p. 118). But he can’t make up his mind if this is true or not, the continual dilemma of the Underground Man.

Absent in the introduction are any comments on the challenges of translating the text or the features of Dostoevsky’s Russian style.

1974. Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*, trans. Mirra Ginsburg, introd. Donald Fanger (New York: Bantam, 1974). Introduction (vii–xxvi), “On the Translation” (xxvii–xxix), *Notes* (1–153), notes (155–158).

Donald Fanger’s introduction begins with a remark on how nearly 110 years after its publication, *Notes from Underground* continues to fascinate, provoke, confuse and even repel readers. The paradoxes of the narrator resonate more powerfully now than with Dostoevsky’s own readers, while the contexts of modern literature have distinguished the work as “one of the most sheerly astonishing and subversive creations of European fiction” (vii).

Fanger then explains that it’s not the radical content of the narrator’s talk that’s original but the way Dostoevsky alters the rules of literature beginning with the idea of an anti-hero. A slippery narrative technique furthers the complexity: the work begins with “I” and ends with “We” as the speaker repeatedly involves the reader, anticipating his reactions, judgments and opinions. The reader is never just a spectator. In a shrewd observation, Fanger writes that the Underground Man “traps his reader into a relationship” (viii). Importantly, the work constantly addresses questions of the moment: self-knowledge, urban loneliness, the power of ideology and the value of happiness. These contemporary concerns are partly why the text endures.

Confusions about the nature of the text started, however, when readers conflated Dostoevsky’s ideas with that of the Underground Man. His character speaks, not Dostoevsky, at least not directly. Dostoevsky’s skill but also his downfall is that he successfully dramatizes ideas by setting them in conflict with each other and tests them through action. Tautologically, the Underground Man’s views arise from experience and his experience corroborates his views, each validating the other. Truths and half-truth mix without the guidance of any consistent authorial voice. Yet,

Fanger argues, the work grows directly out of Dostoevsky's earlier work which he implicitly critiques in this one.

An historical survey of Dostoevsky's writing begins with another declaration: Dostoevsky was 19th century Russia's only "great novelist of the city" who focused on the insulted and the injured, the forgotten (ix). Alienation was his theme first seen in forms of poverty and failure and in the urban poor and expressed in *Poor Folk*.

St. Petersburg becomes the centre of Dostoevsky's world, a city unlike other European capitals because it lacks a long history. Originally a swamp on the Gulf of Finland, Peter the Great ordered its construction to provide a port for trade with the West. Despite the elegant, often symmetrical buildings, the creation of Italian and French architects, it was inhabited by decree. It was man-made and shaped by ideas, not history. It was simultaneously a fact and a symbol of the country. But Dostoevsky's early success, *Poor Folk* published when he was twenty-four, focused on the disadvantaged of St. Petersburg recalling their suffering and poverty. No less than the esteemed critic Belinsky told Dostoevsky it was a triumph.

Fanger labels *Poor Folk* Russia's first "social novel" with an experimental element: it tells the story in a series of letters without an omniscient narrator. Dostoevsky's concern was with creating an inner world of experience which "refracts the outer world but is not determined by it" (x). Importantly, his characters are writers and readers whose even limited taste and skills help us understand them, using literature to create literature while investing the smallest detail with "explosive psychological significance" (xi). The protagonist Devushkin sees a loose button as robbing him of his last shred of dignity in an interview; the Underground Man suffers over a yellow spot on his pants. Anything, Fanger notes in his perceptive introduction, can "trigger pathos in Dostoevsky's world" (xi).

The Double, following *Poor Folk* by only two weeks, polemically reworks themes from Gogol with Golyadkin seeking escape from his horrible existence by dreaming of grandeur. He then suddenly discovers an imaginary person, his double who possesses the very habits he lacks. But the double embodies the conventional ideals and aspirations of the central character: success and recognition at the office and a romance with the boss's daughter. The double is distasteful but possesses a humanity we must recognize. Golyadkin is the first of a series of split personalities in Dostoevsky, split between the more and less authentic, not the good or bad.

In his mature characters, the protagonists attempt to live out their ideas to discover what is authentic in themselves by experience. But

they repeatedly fail. Preparing to throw a bottle at a dinner held by those colleagues who neglect him, Golyadkin chooses, instead, to pour himself a full glass. As Dostoevsky writes, Golyadkin was ““neither dead nor alive, but somewhere in between”” becoming a symbolic emanation of the spectral capital of Russia, St. Petersburg (xii). For Dostoevsky, it is a city where nature has no place and empty routines control — and often destroy — daily life (xii). Without spontaneous life, men become dreamers but this creates disappointed figures who survive only in isolation. And for the educated dreamers, they live and talk only out of books as does the Underground Man, especially when with Liza in part 2 (xii). For the dreamers, books show a richer, more fulfilled life, becoming their gospel. One leaves the world of contingency for that of the imagination. In the words of the narrator of *White Nights*, one becomes ““the artist of his own life”” (xiii).

This is precisely the situation of the Underground Man who, as Dostoevsky outlines in his “Author’s Note,” identifies himself as a dreamer of the 1840s, revisited twenty years later in the 1860s. He ironically recalls his youthful dreams, although his curse is that he understands too much.

Fanger goes on to discuss *Notes* from the perspective of *The House of the Dead* and the thinly disguised imprisonment and exile of Dostoevsky in Siberia where he was exposed to murderers, thieves, soldiers and peasants. And a new theme emerges, expanded in *Notes*: to be conscious of one’s misery may for some become a pleasure. “Suffering is the sole root of consciousness” the Underground Man declares, although he distrusts its cathartic powers. But he also knows that “man will never give up true suffering — that is, destruction and chaos” (39). This is one of the major ideas of *Notes* which challenges the corollary that improving one’s social condition will improve one’s well-being. Suddenly, whim and spite become exercises of personal freedom. Reason no longer prevails. Man is fundamentally impulsive and unpredictable, while ideas distort individual consciousness.

Fanger then turns to *Winter Notes on Summer Impressions*, Dostoevsky’s journalist account of his first trip to Europe. The Crystal Palace and the anthill become the dominating and limiting images turned into metaphors of a spiritless life. But the seemingly egotistical freedom represented by the Crystal Palace and the success of the mechanistic collective of the ant hill bring nothing. True individualism requires self-transcendence, essentially the way of Christ. With this sense of loss, Dostoevsky creates the Underground Man, bringing to narrative consciousness ““things [every

man] is afraid to reveal even to himself” (xv). Fanger then turns to *Notes* directly, emphasizing that the varying labels for the text, from a defense of individuals to a case history of neurosis, do not fit. He suggests we should put aside the attempt at meaning to consider how the work conveys meaning.

The *Notes* are fundamentally a tirade, a performance, a memoir by a nameless individual who says he’s writing for himself but repeatedly manipulates the reader. But Dostoevsky’s presence as an author is minimal, a paragraph of introduction and then three sentences at the conclusion. Nevertheless, the Underground Man is representational, his condition shared by many signalling not an individual pathology but a communal experience. Historically, it is the 1840s seen from the perspective of the 1860s. The confusions and contradictions are the fate of the Dostoevskyan dreamer who remains centre stage and who, in fact, is unable to stop his monologue. This is apparent on the final page when the author interrupts and says, the narrative must stop, although he cannot stop the Underground Man who “went on writing” (153).

But paradox reigns throughout: the Underground Man admires the average individual but could not become one. He seeks sympathy from his reader but simultaneously works to undermine it. He has a “corrosive intelligence” which swerves toward impulses for which he cannot account (xviii). Striving might be more important than achieving but striving for what? He doesn’t know. Anticipating Kafka, he claims that he sought to be an insect, but even as an intelligent man, he was unable to begin or finish anything. He is morbidly self-aware, living in hopelessness with the poisons of “unfulfilled desires turned inward” in a “fever of vacillations” with resolutions one moment and repentance a moment later (12). “You long to live,” he cries at one moment, yet “you yourself entangle life’s problems in logical confusion” (43).

The Underground Man cultivates pain which brings him consciousness, which replaces the dreaming of Dostoevsky of the 1840s. But a super sensitive consciousness inhibits action and so he does nothing except complain about life as his preoccupations replace any occupation. Dialogue with himself takes the place of dialogue with others. His term for this condition is “underground” or “being underground. He listens to life around him through a metaphoric crack in the floorboards” (xix).

What is the pleasure that accompanies such degradation? That is the originating issue for the Underground Man attached to the question of how is it possible is to be entirely frank with oneself and face the truth? Part 2

of the novel, “On the Occasion of Wet Snow,” explores this issue, while part 1 of the work was a set of paradoxes fueled by pain. Part 2 is a story about the roots of that pain. First a polemic on the issues of the day and a tale about a poor clerk of the 1840s, in Part 2 the novel becomes a work of literature about literature. Life for the Underground Man was always more satisfying in books. Reality and the self always disappoint: “I often looked upon myself with furious dissatisfaction, verging on loathing... I carried the underworld in my soul” (50, 56).

“My chief occupation at home was reading... apart from reading, I had nothing to turn to... nothing that could attract me” he declares (55, 56). He does on occasion, however, turn to the real world and “suddenly plunge into dark, surreptitious, sordid debauchery” (56), but there were other times when he would “simply suffocate with anger” (59). Part 2 shows the Underground Man in the real world before his figurative retreat below the floorboards. Yet in the real world, he encounters only a set of humiliations, the ironic if not pathetic result of the efforts of the narrator to initiate a scandal, notably at a party at the Hotel de Paris held by his old schoolmates who disregard him. But he follows them to a brothel where he encounters the twenty-old Liza. But her response to his actions, not surprisingly, is “‘it’s like out of a book,’” remarking on the Underground Man’s only store of emotions which are bookish (xxiii). Late in the story, he admits that his cruelty to Liza has been “make-believe, ... invented *bookish*” (149).

Nevertheless, he implores her to leave prostitution but when life imitates literature bringing Liza to his apartment, he is humiliated, proud, angry and sympathetic. It has, in Fanger’s words, “the inevitability of tragedy — though not the effect” (xxiii). And paradox returns with a vengeance. “I’ll never forgive *you* for what I’m confessing to you now” (144)! Liza reaches out to him but all he can utter while sobbing is that they (his peers and society) won’t let him be good. He goes on to write with shame the story of Liza, calling his work not literature but “corrective punishment” (151). Both his literary and therapeutic aims in writing have failed. His story has no hero, only an anti-hero.

By the end of the narrative, the alienation of the Underground Man is complete summarized by his declaration, “‘either a hero or mud’” (xxiv)! There is no in-between. But for Dostoevsky, it is the posing of problems and not their solution that matters. The Underground Man cannot act, a state that changes for Raskolnikov in *Crime and Punishment* or Alyosha in the *Brothers Karamazov*. The Underground Man has carried the under-

ground — suffering and self-punishment — within him creating his sense of helpless isolation preventing any action. But he, and even Dostoevsky, cannot find or attain something better. In Fanger's words, Dostoevsky's *Underground Man* is an "anatomist of the un-lived life" which is achievement enough (xxvi). Fanger's introduction is one of the most critically insightful among the current set of English translations.

The three-page translator's note by Mirra Ginsburg begins with the difficulty of translating Dostoevsky's work. He is, in fact, resistant to translation because of the character of Russian, his particular style and the type of human experience he conveys. Russian, she writes "is capable of finite emotional variation; English is more specific, more conceptual," a cogent declaration of differences (xxvii). As an inflected language, Russian makes changes immediate and varied. Dostoevsky's emotionally charged use of Russian poses constant challenges for a translator because the emotional and moral categories of the language are quite different from English; often there are no equivalents and "no coincidence of values" (xxvii). All the translator can do is rely on approximations to convey the rhythms and tonalities of the original.

Ginsburg also notes the satiric aspects of *Notes*, especially in part 1, described as an example of "violent self-judgment." Part 2 is a "tragic grotesque" (xxviii). Irony, mockery, hate, self-hate and bitterness dominate part 1 where the narrator sees everything through hostile eyes. Only Liza temporarily escapes his anger and when the narrator speaks of her, his voice changes. He treats her with compassion, although not himself. But the ultimate humiliation he inflicts on her is simultaneously inflicted on himself.

The translator must capture these changes and shifts in tone. But as Ginsburg writes, "translation is a struggle with impossibility" (xxviii). Losses are inevitable. Her example is the word *deyateli* which is "doer," not "men of action," but to convey the sense of Dostoevsky's term, "men of action" must stand. She then addresses the term "spiteful," a compromise solution for the Russian *zloy* which actually means "malicious, angry, nasty" and more. But the English for the two terms, which in Russian tie self-hate and pain together bringing the end back to the beginning, do not coincide in English. As a result, the emotional and even philosophic unity of the work is undermined. In her closing paragraphs, Ginsburg notes that she follows the original, sometimes awkward structure of Dostoevsky's Russian sentences and that in Russian, the paragraphs of *Notes* sometimes run on for pages noting that the text is a spoken not written book. But she

broke up the long paragraphs for clarity at moments where the speaker would have paused. Nevertheless, her aim remained to convey the tensions and undercurrents in the text. Interestingly, the Classic Theatre of New York dramatized Ginsburg's translation in 1979.

1989. Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*, trans. Michael R. Katz, Norton Critical Edition (New York: Norton, 1989). 2nd ed. (New York: Norton, 2001). Prefaces (vii–x), “Brief Note on the Translation” (xi–xiv), *Notes* (3–91), “Background and Sources” (95–122), “Responses” (125–138), “Criticism” (141–253), “Chronology” (255–256), selected bibliography (257–258). No introduction, only prefaces to 1st and 2nd editions and then “A Brief Note on the Translation.” After the text (3–91), the “Background and Sources” include selected letters and passages from other Dostoevsky works and from Chernyshevsky and then critics on the work. Chronology and selected bibliography follow.

The absence of an introduction is surprising and the two prefaces are short, the first, dealing with the 2nd edition, is only one paragraph long noting minor revisions and some bibliographic additions. The preface to the 1st edition is only a page and a half and notes the various translations of *Notes* and its importance in world literature. He states his own goal of producing a decent translation of a “convoluted piece of mid-nineteenth century Russian prose” (ix). He also notes his inclusion of annotations and a set of critical texts. In fact, it is the ancillary material that provides the greatest help in this version of *Notes from Underground*. In addition to a section labeled “Responses,” Katz includes two parodies of the work. He also adds several texts seemingly inspired by Dostoevsky's work including a passage from Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* and Sartre's short story, “Erostratus.” The value of the edition is the wide range of secondary materials including excerpts from Bakhtin, Joseph Frank and Todorov (95–258).

A brief four-page “Note on Translation” follows, emphasizing the difficulty in reproducing or replicating Dostoevsky's syntax. He focuses on the opening adjectives and how they complicate the effort to characterize the protagonist. Nonetheless, Katz adopts some locutions from Constance Garnett for their simplicity, although neither the word order nor epithets correspond directly to the Russian. He laments that a translation cannot convey the authentic nature of the original and in his final sentence urges readers to learn the language.⁶

⁶ See also [Katz 2013].

1991. Dostoevsky, *Notes from the Underground*, trans. Jane Kentish, introd. and notes Malcolm Jones, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991). Reprint (2008). Introduction (vii–xxiii), “Note on the Translation” (xxiv), selected bibliography (xxv), “Chronology” (xxvi), *Notes* (7–123), *The Gambler* (127–275), explanatory notes (276–284).

The two-part introduction notes the composition of the story in the 1860s during a period of acute personal crisis for Dostoevsky offering biographical details beginning with his near death by firing squad and then exile in Siberia. Kentish continues with his first marriage and then wife's death in 1864, plus his involvement with the journal *Vremia* (*Time*) in an effort to re-establish his literary career. The appearance of *Epokha* following *Vremia's* close allowed him to publish *Notes from Underground*. Multiple sources for the story follow, as well as the impact of the Underground Man archetype for writers such as Kafka, Hesse, Camus and Sartre. Kentish identifies the underground as the narrator's morbid self-consciousness obsessed with his inability to deal with social realities breeding resentment towards the society that prevents his entry.

Dostoevsky's debts by the summer of 1865 and how he handled them shapes the balance of the introduction, plus his mistreatment by unscrupulous publishers and how, under tremendous pressure, he completed the novel *Roulettenburg* (known in English as *The Gambler*) in twenty-six days to satisfy his conniving publisher, Fyodor Stellovsky.

The second part of the introduction discusses *Notes* and *The Gambler* and how a first-person narrator tells each story, both personal confessions of disenfranchised men. Part 1 of *Notes* consists of philosophical polemics of a prematurely retired civil servant in the 1860s. Part 2 of his memoir/confession consists of episodes of his life from the 1840s. Kentish then describes the debates and competing ideologies of Russia in the 1860s and the sense of revolution around the world, including the American Civil War, the invasion of Schleswig-Holstein by Austria and Prussia and the appearance of Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*. As she details, elements of *Notes* are clearly topical.

More time is then spent on Chernyshevsky and the Populist movement, his promotion of a New Enlightenment coming under attack by Dostoevsky's narrator. The deterministic ideas of the natural sciences contributed to this reflecting Chernyshevsky's influence with one consequence the belief that individual freedom was limited. The philosophical basis of *Notes* then becomes the concern of Kentish, especially the claims of

individuality against abstract theories anticipating modern Existentialism. Somewhat reductively, Kentish says the narrative is the unhappy contrast between a “personality problem and a philosophical problem” (xiii). The underground man fantasizes drawing from Pushkin, Lermontov, Byron and George Sand but the vulgarity of the real world and real people undo such dreams and lead to his discontent and unhappiness. But when in part 2 Liza accepts his fantasies and visits him, he becomes confused and unleashes his guilt and anger on her.

The Underground Man lives in a world derived from books, a source for him of authority and value but for him, values do not appear to derive from any inner conviction, only cultural fashion. In the original chapter 10, Dostoevsky was to express a need for faith but the censor cut the passages. But balancing thematic interest is formal interest as Bakhtin has argued. The narrator’s mode of discourse is the true innovation of the text, each word part of the anticipated response of the reader as the narrator frequently attributes thoughts to the reader. The reader’s expected response is pivotal in “determining the form of the confession” (xiv). Kentish concludes her discussion of *Notes* by signalling the importance of Dostoevsky’s near decade of imprisonment and exile. The ideas of the Underground Man are both anti-pathetic and yet attractive. Entrapment is the challenge and test of the Underground Man, an idea a later writer like Beckett will explore (xv). Philosophising and reminiscing are the twin acts of *Notes* whose narrator, Kentish remarks, is part of the tradition of the superfluous man.

1993/1994. Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*, trans. and annot. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993; New York: Vintage Classics, 1994; New York: Everyman’s Library, 2004). Introduction (ix–xxii), selected bibliography (xxiii–xxiv), “Chronology” (xxvi–xxxi), *Notes* (5–126), notes, 121–126.

With its introduction, “Chronology,” and notes, this useful translation by two distinguished translators, who also did *The Brothers Karamazov*, *Crime and Punishment*, *Demons*, and *The Idiot*, remains a valuable version, although it is almost thirty years old. The introduction focuses on the self-consciousness of the remarkable narrator and his isolated, unstable consciousness not unlike Don Quixote, Hamlet or Faust. Interestingly, we do not see him, only hear him, addressing the world from a crack in the floorboards. A “passionate amateur,” he writes out of an irrational vision of the world with a barrage of interruptions, self-commentary and polemics (ix). These are, after all, “notes,” jottings, unstructured thoughts often

hostile and vituperative. Dramatizing the unity of *Notes* is the process of its writing. The narrator is attempting to write himself out of the underground drawing on his eclectic reading but then denouncing the very books he studied. To him, the word “literary” is sarcastic. The narrator, the translators emphasize, is an anti-hero who read his way into the underground and is now trying to write his way out.

The translators, however, also call attention to the stylistic and situational humor that pervades the text with laughter a curious feature which allows distance permitting recognition making the text more than a case history. “Tonal distancing” is a key feature of the work they argue which allowed Dostoevsky to present characters and events from simultaneously different points of view (xi). It is clear that Pevear and Volokhonsky focus on the literary dimensions of the text with character foregrounded, while the defiant outpourings of the underground man provide an edge to the text through his diatribes, recollections and crude, unregulated thoughts. What he writes, he claims, is not literature “but corrective punishment” (pt. 2, chap. 10, p. 118). The translators go on to develop the idea of the work as a tragi-comedy defined by its dramatic expressiveness to a voice isolated yet, in its unique way, alive, although self-accusatory and defiant.

The story of its publication follows this critical commentary, with an emphasis on how Dostoevsky’s journeys to Europe shaped his views that Russian society had been wrongly formed by imported ideas and thoughts from the West. Social romantics like Victor Hugo, Eugene Sue and George Sand, partly linked to the theme of the redeemed prostitute, becomes the focus of part 2 of *Notes*. Pevear and Volokhonsky also explore how certain themes in *Winter Notes on Summer Impressions* appear in *Notes*, especially the Crystal Palace as the embodiment of reason which for Dostoevsky meant a false unity, spitefully calling it a tenement house or chicken coop.

Importantly, Pevear and Volokhonsky note how the two time periods of the novel represents two stages in the evolution of the Russian intelligentsia: the sentimental and literary 1840s and the utilitarian and rational 1860s, a period shaped by the liberals. In an acute remark, they write that “the polemicist of the first part grew out of the defeated dreamer of the second” (xiii). The inverted time scheme of the two parts allows us to understand this shift. The doublemindedness of the narrator, an extremist in his thoughts and actions with a heightened consciousness, led him to often disastrous and comic results with Chernyshevsky the unmentioned target of many of the attacks against the denial of free will. Pseudoscientific terms and innumerable but clumsy parentheses in *Notes*

deliberately mock Chernyshevsky and his manner of writing. Dostoevsky's response to *What Is to Be Done?* is both idealistic and artistic, two inseparable strands.

The editors detail reactions to Chernyshevsky in Russian thought with glancing asides to Nabokov and *The Gift* and a consideration of “giftlessness” in Russian writing (xvi–xvii), while a quote from Shigalyov in the *Demons* pinpoints the dilemma of the Underground Man: “I got entangled in my own data, and my conclusion directly contradicts the original idea I start from” (xvii). Bakhtin elaborated this in his study of Dostoevsky: artistic form, he explains, “does not shape already prepared and found content, but rather permits content to be found and seen for the first time” (xvii). But another, oppositional element may be at work, an ideological climax in part 1 to match the narrative climax in part 2. This was likely the censored section from part 1, chapter 10, where the need for faith in Christ was outlined. But the published version of *Notes*, while containing numerous self-contradictions, lacked the censored section (xviii–xix). Dostoevsky never restored the cuts as he did not restore cuts to *Crime and Punishment* or *Demons*.

Pevear and Volokhonsky end with a celebration of the formal inventiveness of *Notes* from its striking language to its multiple and conflicting tones, reversed structure and resolution by an unexpected catastrophe. The result is the triumph of a plural, multiple self who manages to continue even after the text is over: “the ‘notes’ of this paradoxalist do not end here. He could not help himself and went on. But it also seems to us that this may be a good place to stop” is the final paragraph of the work (pt. 2, chap. 10, p. 119). And the symbolic slamming of the door when Liza rushes out is the very moment of the work's origin marked by a confusion of tenses. It's a cry from the past into the future: “never will I recall this moment with indifference” (pt. 2, chap. 10, p. 117). It sends us back to the beginning. Self-contradiction and literary confusions describe the text and its representation of both the pluralistic narrator and the often disoriented reader, qualities that make the work inescapable and unforgettable.

A three-page section ends the introduction focusing on the style, language and natural challenges of translating *Notes*. The editors examine in detail Dostoevsky's reliance on blunt and even crude terms, maintained in the translation by Pevear and Volokhonsky to sustain the tone of the original. They then address whether *zloy chelovék* should be translated as “wicked man” or “spiteful man” in sentence two of the novel. They opt for “wicked” (pt. 1, chap. 1, p. 5). Dostoevsky's writing, they modestly assert, is “emphat-

ic” (xxi). A brief, annotated, selected bibliography follows and then a helpful “Chronology” which provides a literary context, as well as a list of historical events in addition to dates relating to Dostoevsky’s life and work.

2006. Dostoevsky, *Notes from the Underground*, trans. Hugh Alpin (London: Hesperus Classics, 2006), 150 pp. Foreword by Will Self.

2009. Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground* and *The Double*, trans. Ronald Wilks, introd. Robert Louis Jackson (New York: Penguin, 2009). “Chronology” (vii–x), introduction (xi–xlix), “Further Reading” (1–liii), “Note on Text” (liii), “Table of Ranks” (liv–lv), *Notes* (3–118), *The Double* (121–282), notes (283–291). Includes chronology, lengthy introduction, texts and notes.

Jackson’s thirty-nine page introduction entitled “Vision in Darkness” begins with a quote from Dostoevsky’s notebook for *The Raw Youth* on the author’s praise of the underground because only there does truth lie.⁷ He then cites Dostoevsky’s comment on the unity of tragedy and satire, suggesting that both *Notes* and *The Double* — the two texts are often published together — combine both forms. Jackson essentially stresses Dostoevsky’s creation of an underground ethos, originating in the denial of the organic need for self expression and the drive to be one’s self. The “pleasure of despair” becomes a new lifestyle especially for men like the narrator who thinks but does nothing (8, 9).

Jackson historicizes Dostoevsky’s efforts to explain individualism, especially after his return from Siberia in 1859. The need to affirm oneself is a law of nature Dostoevsky argued in his articles on Russian literature that appeared in 1861. But society has erased the underground man who appropriately does not even have a name. As he later wrote in his notebook for *Raw Youth*, the reason for the underground is the ““destruction of faith and general norms. *Nothing is sacred*”” (xiii). Jackson then claims that the basic social and moral positions Dostoevsky will develop in his five great novels can be found in *Notes from Underground*.

A short intellectual biography of Dostoevsky follows noting the early influence of Belinsky, his reaction to the German romantic idealists (Hegel and Schiller) and French utopian socialists (Fourier, Saint-Simon). But the juxtaposition of these ideals with Russian social and institutional violence deeply affected Dostoevsky. Part 2 of *Notes* emphasizes this dis-

⁷ See also [Jackson 1958].

parity Jackson notes and it was St. Petersburg which embodies the tragedy and fantasy of the country with a landscape and city “the most abstract and fabricated city on earth” (6). But its rational conception overlooks its creation in a swamp and the death of thousands in its construction.

Unlike Pushkin’s *The Bronze Horseman* of 1833, where imperialism overrules the individual, *Notes* tries to reassert the power of the individual will in a contest with institutions, the Underground Man hidden and subject to social neglect and even abuse. Hence the negative power of the Underground Man who knows that he can only survive by striking back irrationally against the institutions that have marginalized him.

Jackson then turns to Gogol as the figure Dostoevsky first confronts, a writer who demonized St. Petersburg through his tales of the absurd and grotesque. Herzen and Belinsky helped in Dostoevsky’s excavation of the fallen man, a process he explained in an 1846 letter to his brother where he operates by analysis not synthesis: “I go into the depths, and picking things out atom by atom, I disclose the whole.” Gogol, by contrast, goes directly for the whole (xvii). Jackson then outlines the importance of the double in Gogol and Dostoevsky with an extended discussion of Golyadkin’s disintegration before addressing the disfigured world of the underworld where characters suffer knowing there is something better they are unable to achieve. Consequently, there is no reason to improve. The product of this collapsing world is the Underground Man divorced from his beliefs and nation linked, Jackson argues, to the superfluous man found in Pushkin, Lermontov, Herzen and Turgenev.

Part 2 of the introduction addresses Dostoevsky’s renewed spiritual faith partly brought about by his imprisonment with freedom emerging as a basic psychological need and what happens when it is suppressed which turns the rational into the irrational. This is the focus of this section of the introduction drawing from Dostoevsky’s trip to Europe in 1862 expressed in *Winter Notes on Summer Impressions* (1863). Part 3 of the introduction returns to Dostoevsky’s reaction to Chernyshevsky and the structure of the work, while repeating that the collapse of moral and spiritual foundations formulates the underground where confusion over good and evil reigns (xxxii). The disillusioned idealist defines the Underground Man who is a man without foundations, spiritually ill yet who tries to defend human dignity and free will (xxxiii).

The Underground Man is both the accused and the accuser who in part 1 is forty but in part 2 is twenty-six, Dostoevsky reversing the movement of time. Polemics describe part 1, memoirs part 2. But the irony of

the Underground Man's effort to celebrate free will is that his will becomes self-assertion, self-will. He stands not for suffering or even prosperity but caprice declaring that a formula is not life: "twice two is four is no longer life... but the beginning of death" (31). And he asks, if man loves to construct why is he also "passionately fond of destruction and chaos" (30)? A man is a man, not a piano key (28)!

Jackson then discusses the movement toward catastrophe as *Notes* moves forward, every act an act of spite, while the irrational leads to dependence and humiliation which he takes out on Liza. This portion of the introduction provides a helpful explication of the ending where duality becomes a torment, a contest between self-will and compassion. In the text, the attack on rationalist ideology never falters but in ending with a quote from a 1904 letter by Kafka, Jackson presents the entire text as a positive act: "a book must be an axe," Kafka wrote, "to break the sea frozen within us."

The value of Jackson's introduction is his rooting the Underground Man in Dostoevsky's earlier writing, while foregrounding various statements from Dostoevsky's notebooks and letters that anticipate and reflect the nature of *Notes*.

2009. Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*, trans. Boris Jakim, introd. Robert Bird (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2009). Introduction (vii–xxiv), translator's preface (xxv–xxx), *Notes* (3–118).

A seventeen-page introduction precedes a five-page translator's note. In the introduction entitled "Dostoevsky's Wager," Bird provides a truncated biography focusing on Dostoevsky's involvement with public life at thirty-eight, having returned to St. Petersburg in 1859. He began to publish but these new works met a cool critical reaction. He also met Turgenev, Polonsky and Chernyshevsky. At the start of 1860 two volumes of his collected works appeared in Moscow. He was also co-editor of his brother's review *Vremia* (*Time*).

Dostoevsky sought to renew his religious beliefs, partly stimulated by the only book he had with him in the Siberian prison camps: the gospels. But he also invested in form, plans for his new work *Notes from the Dead House* in an original style where his "personality will disappear". They are "the notes of an unknown man" he wrote to his brother in October 1859. He further added that they will be the "serious, gloomy, humorous, and colloquial conversation in the prison style" (viii). The work was considered the first major work in Russian captivity literature. Instead of an authoritative narrator, the voice is eccentric and erratic. The structure

is non-linear as Bird establishes the literary context for the Underground Man. Conventional literary forms cannot properly convey the visceral experience of prison. The vibrant, racy language is sustained in the Jakim translation, Bird argues.

Notes from Underground is similarly unconventional, a kind of “wager on form” (ix). A stimulating “Ideology and Fiction” section follows beginning with the emancipation of the serfs in 1861 relaxing restrictions on education. In the summer of 1862, Dostoevsky travelled to Europe and wrote his *Winter Notes on Summer Impressions*. That same year *What Is to Be Done?* by Chernyshevsky appeared calling for the reform of Russian society. Both *Winter Notes* and *What Is to Be Done?* feature the Crystal Palace. Dostoevsky saw it as folly, a prison house and example of delusional thinking while Chernyshevsky saw it as an ideal of what could be useful. Bird then suggests that *Notes from Underground* represents the ideological duel between Dostoevsky and Chernyshevsky whose utilitarian aesthetics Dostoevsky rejects.

Four sections of the introduction follow: “The Form of the Underground,” “The Wager and the Wet Snow,” “The Ethics of Media” and “Dostoevsky’s Notes.” Each takes up a critical aspect of the novella offering critical and theoretical interpretations that contextualize the story in ways other than historical fact or biographical development. He points out that all three works from this time, *Notes from the Dead House*, *Winter Notes* and *Notes from Underground* show a tension between “eternal questions and topical crises” (xxi). A first-person narrator, used in all three works, attempts to make sense of a chaotic world. And Bird offers an important insight: Dostoevsky’s notes are analogues to his account of genre painting found in an 1871 essay, “At the Exhibition” from *Diary of a Writer*. One must represent reality as it really is he argues but he means a psychological, contradictory, emotional and even spiritual reality, often disfigured and without apparent meaning, *not* something physical and regulated. Image and idea are never standard or even consistent from one text to another, or even from one page to another.

Bird’s introduction offers the most ideological reading of *Notes from Underground* set in the context of the ideas of its time, noting that in the “Author’s Note” to the *Brothers Karamazov* Dostoevsky calls Alyosha an “odd man” who also carries within himself “the heart of the whole” (xxiii). This is the very condition of the Underground Man.

The translator’s note begins with a warning: the language of the translation is coarser than any other. It’s a rude but accurate translation,

one that Jakim attempts to restore something of its original shock value. He also highlights his deep reading of the text and how the Underground Man returns to a set of key concepts: vocation, consciousness, impossibilities, expressed by a wall, and the quantifiable element of the Underground Man, terms and phrases from mathematics. Statistics becomes one of his obsessions to show that while two times two equals four, if it equaled five it would be splendid. The mathematical, technological civilization is defective. In the end, it's not the underground that's better but "something different, totally different, for which I'm thirsting but which I can't ever find" (35)! This modernist, existential quest is the curious goal of the Underground Man — and how the translator ends his preface. "We don't even know where life lives now" (xxx).

2009. Dostoevsky, *Notes from the Underground*, trans. Constance Garnett, ed. with introd. Charles Guignon and Kevi Aho (Indianapolis: Hackett Classics, 2009). Introduction (vii–xxxvii), "Note on Translation" (xxxviii), *Notes* (1–96), selected bibliography (97–99).

The introduction to this edition, edited by two philosophy professors and designed for North American audiences, begins with why readers find the troubling narrator engaging even though he is despicable, unpleasant and insecure. The answer is that his difficult behaviour, from excessive vanity to self-defeating actions, mirrors our own. We, like him, experience the contradictions and challenges of what it means to be modern. The inner torment of the narrator, the editors suggest, is a response to the dramatic, social and cultural changes in Russia in the mid-nineteenth century, not unlike the upheavals of our own 21st century.

The editors situate *Notes* in a transformative world commenting on how an older way of life, once rooted in the *mir* or village, has been replaced by cities, industrialization, scientific materialism and individualism. Self-affirmation, still linked to ideas of human betterment, had separated from religion. Innate human goodness, linked to ideas of a transcendent moral order, was no longer assured. This is the modern dilemma and the focus of the editors as they consider Dostoevsky's work. Essentially, they argue that for Dostoevsky the Enlightenment had not delivered a world of reason or knowledge and that darker human emotions contend with optimism. Unavoidable is a sustained sense of cruelty, a preference for violence and an explosion of indignation, a protest against life's indignities. For Dostoevsky, such ideas have infected mankind.

Guignon and Aho consider *Notes* a novel of unresolved ideas. Dialogue in Dostoevsky's fiction supports this concept: it constantly confronts competing ideas expressed by the narrator which remain unanswered. And for Dostoevsky, the measure of ideas is their consequence, which is exactly what his characters embody as he explores ideologies "that motivate us to act" (ix). The viability of an idea is its embodiment; his characters might seem "beyond credibility" but they are actually "representative of existential types," not ordinary people. In Dostoevsky's universe, there is never a single right answer. But that is the point: despite dialogue, discrimination and debate, what in Bakhtinian terms is "dialogical exchange," ideas and even actions remain inconclusive and contradictory. When Liza visits the narrator in his room in part 2, chapter 9, he writes that "I stood before her crushed, crestfallen, revoltingly confused, and I believe I smiled..." (pt. 2, p. 87). He is unable to understand his own feelings, admitting that "there is no explaining anything by reasoning and so it is useless to reason" (pt. 2, p. 92).

For these editors, *Notes* explores the psychological needs of the narrator as they come into conflict with new ideas imported into Russia from the West. Dostoevsky understood the importance of the social world but also how it can inhibit or clash with the wishes and psychology of the individual. In his *Diary of a Writer* (1873), he explains that "some ideas are deeply felt but remain unuttered and unconscious" but such ideas always "fuse with the human soul" (x). This three-page section of the introduction usefully unites the novel of ideas with Dostoevsky's presentation of the psychological unconscious.

Next is the matter of existentialism and whether or not Dostoevsky is an Existentialist. They cite the philosopher Walter Kaufmann who wrote that part 1 of *Notes* is "the best overture to existentialism ever written" (xi). The editors agree, describing Existentialism as the tension between two sets of needs, the first they label facticity, the earthly elements that make up our desires and impulses. This is our lived, concrete life. The other is our mix of consciousness and subconsciousness, transcendent aspects of life which give meaning and purpose to ourselves (xi). The tension between these opposing needs defines our humanity, essentially the desire to transcend facticity to achieve a higher purpose but in Dostoevsky's world an impossibility.

In part 1 of *Notes*, the drive of the anti-hero is to affirm his identity as a free agent rising above fixed behavior but the struggle is the source of his anger and energy. In part 2, the protagonist battles against his own

facticity. He attempts to assert his higher being but the result is a fractured, conflicted self unable to reconcile the tension between the two conditions, facticity and transcendence.

The introduction by Guignon and Aho sustains its focus on the philosophical aspect of *Notes* throughout its subsequent sections entitled “Romanticism and Idealism,” “The Radical Enlightenment,” “The Problem of Freedom,” “Laceration,” and finally “Redemption,” the longest sub-chapter. In this last portion, they re-articulate Dostoevsky’s contradictory positions: on one hand he rejects the idea of facticity as only meaningless casual interactions but on the other he rejects the ideology of the Underground Man concerning freedom. The only result of this position is an unsatisfactory “freedom of the void” which Hegel identified in his *Phenomenology of Spirit* (xxx). Collectively, the introduction offers the most sustained philosophical discussion of any found in current English translations.

But the introduction also attends to textual as well as thematic matters, noting that Dostoevsky had written a penultimate chapter that spoke of the healing power of Christ’s love. The censors strangely insisted it be cut, the most positive and pro-Russian chapter of the book which asserted a “necessary faith in Christ” (xxix). He accepted their changes, despite his frustration, because he was short of money and did not want to delay publication. When he re-issued the work after its periodical publication, the chapter was not reprinted. But other themes remained: the meaningfulness of suffering, the search for a transcendent life, our innate, brutal instincts. Dostoevsky always showed the dark and the good entangled and inseparable. But the irony surrounding Dostoevsky’s characters is that any aspiration for a higher life is always doomed to fail. The actions and reactions of the narrator are a form of spiritual suicide. Freedom is negative in that it means the rejection of accepted norms and behavior; as the critic Rowan Williams writes, “the hunger for such freedom can only manifest itself in destruction, flinging itself against existing limits” (xxx).

Negative freedom is freedom *from*; positive freedom is freedom *for*. But willpower alone will not generate the integration of psychological differences. As the narrator admits, “I was incapable of love, for I repeat, with me loving meant tyrannizing and showing my moral superiority.” Love, he concludes, “consists in the right — freely given by the beloved object — to tyrannize over her” (pt. 2, p. 93). Love erupts only as a struggle. But the secret is to release ourselves from our egos, achieving wholeness within and without only by the experiencing something power-

ful outside of ourselves, something more than human, something spiritual. This absorbing thirty-page introduction addresses a set of philosophical and religious concepts that helpfully evaluate the impact and importance of *Notes*.

The “Note on Translation” which follows is a short paragraph stating that the text is a light revision of the Garnett translation replacing archaic terms or British idioms with contemporary American English. Readability is the editors’ goal. They persist with the Garnett title, however, maintaining the article: *Notes from The Underground*. Zinovieff and Hughes, in their introduction (2010), take issue with Garnett’s mis-translated title.

2010. Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*, trans. Kyril Zinovieff and Jenny Hughes (Richmond: Oneworld Classics, 2010), 151 pp. Photographs [vi–ix], introduction (xi–xii), “Translators’ Note” (xiii–xv), *Notes* (7–115), “Note on the Text” (116), annotations, notes (116–120), “Extra Material” (121–146), including Dostoevsky’s life, works, and a select bibliography, appendix: opening chap. of *Notes* in Russian (149–51).

This enriched translation with its sustained focus on Russian language opens with five pages of photographs, a brief introduction and a translator’s note followed by the text proper. Annotations, a critical survey and then an actual passage from *Notes* in Russian completes the edition. This is the only translation to include a section of the book in Dostoevsky’s own language (149–151). The translators, Kyril Zinovieff, born in St. Petersburg in 1910 and arriving in England in 1920, previously published a social history of the last years of Imperial Russia and a *Companion Guide to St. Petersburg*. Jenny Hughes, co-translator, is a lecturer in Applied Theatre at the University of Manchester and a Director of the Centre for Applied Theatre Research.

Following the opening set of photos which include a picture of Dostoevsky’s St. Petersburg apartment, his dacha in *Darovoye* and a copy of the journal *Vremya*, is the introduction which states that *Notes* appeared five years after Dostoevsky’s return from exile in Siberia and two years before *Crime and Punishment*. Importantly, the translators include the titles in Russian with the English in parentheses. They also state that the title of *Notes* is difficult to translate and has been mistranslated in English for over ninety years since Constance Garnett called it *Notes from the Underground* in 1918. The Russian means something else: literally, “Notes from Under the Floorboards.” Nevertheless, the translators decide to keep the old title because of convention and recognition “but it is wrong” (xi).

But does an exact translation of the title matter they ask? Yes, because the connotations of “underground” suggest something criminal, conspiratorial, revolutionary, not the space under the floorboards where rodents live and, according to folk legend, the space of devils and demons. The narrator of *Notes* is in fact “a little mouse ensconced under the floorboards of his St. Petersburg flat” (xi). But his subconscious thoughts are certainly not harmless.

The free association method of the narrator, thirty years before Freud, opens dark doors and illuminates obscure psychological corners but made little initial impact on the Russian reading public in the 1860s. The editors then point out Dostoevsky’s belief that man is not driven by materialistic gain but erratic motives that are unclear even to himself. He even undertakes acts harmful to himself, acts that may actually be necessary for self-fulfillment.

A final paragraph in the introduction deals with structure, part 1’s combative presentation the premise of an argument, part 2 the example of how it might actually play out. Linking the two parts is a poem by Nikolai Nekrasov, the popular romantic poet offering a poem about a man romantically entangled and about to marry some one with a dubious past. She confesses and he forgives her; presumably they happily marry. But Dostoevsky’s anti-hero rejects such sentiments and rejects his mistress. In response to her proffered love, he rapes her and then offers to pay her. The contradiction between what a hero should do (pt. 1) versus what he does (pt. 2) is dramatic and explicit.

The “Translators’ Note” begins again with the question of the title, citing Nabokov who suggested “Under the Floor.” Others have suggested “Notes from the Cellar” but such spaces are habitable by humans. Dostoevsky implies something less appealing to suggest space only for mice or demons.

The translators then highlight additional difficulties in translating the text, notably Dostoevsky’s colloquial, popular style and use of proverbs expressed in language unlikely to be found in literature. Frustrated at times, the translators suggest that the original Russian would be preferable. And his reliance on colloquialisms likely explain why most translations tend toward paraphrase, not a literal translation, and why they differ from one another more widely than translations usually do. The two translators for this edition move towards translating rather than paraphrasing “even at the cost sometimes of elegance” (xiii). But this fits with the narrator who is distinctly not elegant and often difficult to understand.

Zinovieff and Hughes also note that Dostoevsky introduced some of the Russian words for the first time in Russian literature. Among them is “anti-hero” or *antigeroy*. They also point to a grammatical quirk in Russian that Dostoevsky uses by which most substantives and verbs can acquire a magnified or diminutive form and by adding *-ka* “can in some contexts also acquire a contemptuous nuance” (xiv). When under the floorboards, the narrator wants to diminish things and therefore relies on contemptuous diminutives. Subsequent paragraphs focus on Dostoevsky’s Russian and what he achieved, often impossible to convey in English alone.

Two further words trouble the translators: *soznaniye* which could mean “consciousness,” “awareness” or possibly “self-consciousness.” For Dostoevsky, it distinguishes the hyper-sensitive, under performing dweller under the floorboards. They decided on “awareness” as the best term, although they also, on occasion, restore “consciousness.” The second term, *mokry sneg*, means “wet snow” but in Russian it can also mean “sleet.” But sleet, they say, is especially unattractive, off putting as the title of part 2 where at the end it is definitely snowing. However, they prefer “In Connection with Wet Snow,” an awkward locution (39). They title part 1 of the novel “Under the Floorboards;” other translations prefer “Underground” (Wilks, 2009), although “The Mousehole” is MacAndrew’s preference (1961, 1980). In a “Note on the Text”, we learn that the basis for the translation is the Russian text taken from volume 4 of the *Collected Works* published in Moscow in 1956.

The annotations which follow the text proper (116–120) are helpful but not extensive. Some are revelatory such as the name *Wagenheims*, the surname of well-advertised German dentists practising in St. Petersburg at the time. They also elaborate a reference to the painter Nikolai Gé at the end of part 1, chapter 6. Gé was a Russian painter of French ancestry who shocked St. Petersburg and Dostoevsky with his painting of Christ, presented not as a divinity but a pauper.

The so-called “Extra Material” at the end of the edition includes a detailed and extensive twelve-page biography, and a separate eleven-page commentary on Dostoevsky’s works, noting, when discussing *Notes*, that the Underground Man’s actions intentionally work against him but that he often anticipates his audience’s reactions and speaks directly to them. Part 2 consists of anecdotes from the narrator’s past to illustrate points from part 1 (139–140). The note also acknowledges that the confessions of the narrator are “unsparing in their detail and self-criticism” (140). His convictions, sentiments and even internal searching are all paraded past

the reader. But for the narrator, they lead to jealousy, cowardice and even moral cruelty, the result of being hyper-sensitive and over educated. After these critical comments is a one-page selected bibliography with ten titles and then the opening of *Notes* reprinted in Russian (149–151).

2012. Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*, trans. Natasha Randall, introd. D.B.C. Pierre (London: Canongate, 2012), 152 pp.

The London based Natasha Randall has translated Lermontov and Zamyatin, as well as Dostoevsky. From 2002 to 2007 she wrote a column on books and publishing for *Publishing News* (UK).

2012. Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground: In Contemporary American English*, trans. Marciano Guerrero (London: MaryMarc Translations, 2012).

This is an unusual edition with the text filled with American colloquialisms and idioms. An example from the introduction: “The word underground is confusing, causing many readers to think that the narrator lives in some underground tenement... the underground man in today’s language may be described [as] a ‘bi-polar’ character.” This is a casual, incomplete work, more an oddity than a genuine effort.

2014. Dostoevsky, *Notes from the Underground*, trans. Kirsten Lodge (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2014). Introduction (7–15), *Notes* (17–124), “Literary Contexts” (125–149), “Critical Reception” (150–159), “Nineteenth Century Images” (160–171). Helpful annotations throughout.

The introduction begins with biographical information noting Dostoevsky’s hatred of mathematics and the military. It turns quickly to his early literary interest in the suffering of the poor and his frequent Friday evening meetings of political thinker Mikhail Petrashevsky, evenings devoted to analyzing social problems of Russian and French social thought. The incident of his near execution in 1849 with the detail that those about to die wore long white shirts soon to become their burial shrouds follows. Publication of *Notes from the House of the Dead* in 1860 focuses on his time in prison and the many disadvantaged he met there. Lodge then carefully outlines the evolution of Dostoevsky’s thought and his rejection of socialism and acceptance of suffering as a morally transforming experience, idealized through peasant culture.

The upheavals of the 1860s, with the emancipation of the serfs in 1861, play a role in the shifting subject matter of Russian writing. As peasants migrated to the cities, the urban landscape of Moscow and St. Petersburg transformed, with an expanded labor force easing the rise of industrialism. Lodge then narrates how Dostoevsky and his brother founded *Time* and then *Epoch* but their collapse, compounded by the loss of his wife and brother, and excessive financial debt left by his brother, partly led to the painful pressures exerted on the narrator of *Notes*. Lodge then claims that *Notes* is the embryo of “most of the ideas of the great novels of his later years” (8). Comments on his 1862 trip to Europe and his published travelogue, *Winter Notes*, with reference to the Crystal Palace, to appear again in *Notes from Underground*, follow. Lodge then continues with Dostoevsky’s life highlighting the pressure to publish, his gambling habit, his escape from creditors to Europe with his second wife from 1867–1871 and his continued work as a journalist and novelist.

The following sections of the introduction focus on the contemporary context of the Underground Man seen as a polemic against Chernyshevsky’s idea of rational egoism, his critique of the good as only what is useful and his skepticism of science. Lodge then details how certain sections of *Notes* address these issues and privileges freedom (related to moral obligations) above all other issues in contrast to Chernyshevsky’s belief in natural laws governing human interests which, he believed, cannot be determined. Lodge notes the importance of the $2 \times 2 = 5$ formula in the text but also recognizes that the refutations of rational egoism by the Underground Man are often chaotic and occasionally contradictory. A further section of the introduction emphasizes the context of the Underground Man’s youth during the 1840s and how Dostoevsky fashions a parody of the Romantic idealist.

The introduction successfully addresses the swirling history of literary, political and social ideas in Russia and Europe at the time Dostoevsky wrote *Notes*. He repeatedly supported the idea that individuals were the agents of change, not social or economic forces. The paradoxes of the Underground Man, however, make him both repellent and compelling, one of the most distinct features of the work and its disunified anti-hero. There is no translator’s note.

Following the text proper is a lengthy section entitled “In Context” (125–159), after which are a series of useful photographs of Dostoevsky, his brother, Chernyshevsky, the Crystal Palace, Nevsky Prospekt and St. Isaac’s Square. The “In Context” portion includes a passage from Fou-

rier, poems by Nekrasov, excerpts from *What Is to Be Done?*, additional writings by Dostoevsky and, finally, the “Critical Reception” of the book with two commentaries from 1883 and 1891. This is a compact yet expansive, accessible edition.

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ADDENDUM ПРИЛОЖЕНИЕ

Чарльз Джеймс Хогарт Предисловие к переводу «Записок из подполья»⁸

Нельзя не радоваться тому, что читающая публика в нашей стране начинает все более ценить достоинства Федора Достоевского, величайшего русского писателя-реалиста, и уже не думает, что произведения Толстого, Тургенева и Чехова составляют всю сущность русской литературы. Достоевского, пожалуй, особенно полезно читать «благополучной» части общества, ибо он обнажает некоторые из ужаснейших социальных недугов, призывая всех мужчин и женщин обратить взор на гной и смрад, которым цивилизация позволяет существовать, пусть и не сама она их породила. Пусть писатель говорит о России — картина эта ничуть не менее отражает состояние любого современного общества, не исключая и наше собственное, ведь нравственная чума и язвы, какие он описывает, существуют повсюду и являют собой, по всей видимости,

⁸ Перевод выполнен Т.А. Пирусской по изд.: Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Letters from the Underworld*, trans. C.J. Hogarth (London: J.M. Dent, 1913), vii–ix.

неизбежное побочное следствие системы, лежащей в основе современного общества.

В отличие от многих других писателей-реалистов, Достоевский изображает ужасы этого мира, зная их не понаслышке: он сам спустился в ад и пребывал там, не просто как наблюдатель, но как пленник, как заключенный, как изгой, оказавшийся там бок о бок с погибшими душами, вынужденный переносить их телесные недуги и душевные страдания. Рисуя перед нами картины того, что он видел в этих мрачных глубинах, он словно бы спрашивает благополучную часть общества, что же она обо всем этом думает. Но он не пытается смягчить порочность и грязь — нравственную и физическую — подполья, как не стремится и осуждать их. Он не возлагает вину за увиденное им на тот или иной тип общественного устройства или на конкретный социальный класс. Он лишь приглашает читателя взглянуть, а затем пойти и подумать, что он увидел.

Достоевский, в отличие от Толстого, не проповедник, ему не свойственна и мягкая чеховская сатира, и все же он не пессимист. В самых кошмарных обстоятельствах, в самых опустившихся людях он различает если не луч света, то по крайней мере намек на луч, который в конце концов прорежет тьму, все искупит и преобразит. Соня и Мармеладов из «Преступления и наказания», Лиза из «Писем из подполья» и многие другие — Достоевский способен разглядеть в них негасимую искру божественного духа. Но что, спрашивает он, принесет им искупление? Любовь в высшем смысле этого слова. Именно: любовь, любовь и еще раз любовь — в ней Достоевский видит избавление от недугов жизни, исцеление болезней, от которых страдает человечество. Однако он не занимается восхвалением этой панацеи. Он лишь показывает, на что она способна, и предоставляет читателю делать выводы самостоятельно. Толстой, снимая с мольберта написанную им картину, поднимает ее высоко над головой и, вооружившись указкой, поясняет, какие нравственные уроки надлежит извлечь из той или иной изображенной на холсте детали. Достоевский же пишет свою картину, оставляет ее стоять на мольберте, а сам незаметно выходит за дверь. Если вы хотите, вы можете заглянуть в комнату и посмотреть на картину, и понимайте ее, как хотите; ей не требуется ни указка, ни инструкция относительно того, как истолковать детали. Если в вас есть человечность, человечность этой картины отзовется в вас; если вы не способны к такому пониманию — что ж, может быть, это не так уж важно. Как бы то ни было, художник не

станет читать вам проповедей, потому что он сам был грешником вместе с грешниками, которых рисует.

Итак, перед нами автор, показывающий, как любовь в высшем смысле этого слова может исцелить самый подлый характер. Высокая и чистая любовь, говорит нам Достоевский, спасает и очищает на всех этапах жизни. «Была бы у меня семья с детства, не такой бы я был, как теперь» (522)⁹; «Сам [отец] в сюртучишке засаленном ходит, для всех скупой, а ей [дочери] из последнего покупает, подарки дарит богатые, и уж радость ему, коль подарок понравится» (522); «...Где любви не бывает, там и рассудка не бывает» (523); «...Тут каждое, хоть и самое трудное время счастьем покажется; только бы любить да быть мужественным» (524); «Знаешь (говорит циничный развратник проститутке), — розовенький такой мальчик, грудь тебе сосет... <...> Да разве не всё тут счастье, когда они трое, муж, жена и ребенок, вместе?» (524); «Любовь! — да ведь это всё, да ведь это алмаз... Ведь чтоб заслужить эту любовь, иной готов душу положить, на смерть пойти» (526). Можно привести еще много подобных фраз, вложенных Достоевским в уста пьяниц, эпилептиков, ростовщиков и проституток. Одна из повестей в этой книге представляет собой полный раскаяния бессвязный рассказ человека, который, при всей своей низости, любил искренне и всем сердцем. Под влиянием этой подлинной и глубокой страсти он, некогда алчный ростовщик, научился быть щедрым и благородным, хотя своим упрямством разбил сердце жене и довел ее до самоубийства. В другой повести мы наблюдаем гибель неустойчивой натуры, которая проходит через муки чисто любовной страсти. Наконец, мы читаем, как бедная отверженная обществом женщина, на которой полупомешанный, озлобленный циник решил сорвать свой гнев на мир и разочарование в нем, хватается за искреннюю и великодушную любовь, которую, как ей кажется, он ей предлагает, и своим порывом обнаруживает высшую, лучшую, чистую природу, все еще теплящуюся в душе этой женщины. Ее любящая душа, жаждущая того, в чем ей отказала судьба, готова отдать рассказчику всю свою нежность, а он — он обрушивает на нее свою злобу и причиняет ей боль, хотя этим поступком делает больно и самому себе. Чудовищная картина — иные, пожалуй, скажут, слишком чудовищная. Так и кажется, что автор говорит им: «Не смотрите, добрые люди, живите и дальше спокойно».

⁹ Цитаты из повести Достоевского приводятся в тексте в круглых скобках по изд.: *Достоевский Ф.М.* Записки из подполья // *Собрание соч.:* в 15 т. Л.: Наука, 1989. Т. 4. С. 452–551.

Ральф Мэтлоу От переводчика¹⁰

Переводы «Записок из подполья» и «Великого инквизитора», сделанные Констанс Гарнетт, в этой книге полностью переработаны. Некоторые исправления внесены ради точности и цельности, другие — чтобы передать индивидуальный стиль Достоевского. Ряд важных для писателя слов и оборотов речи всегда передавался одними и теми же эквивалентами, даже если можно было подобрать более образный перевод. Так, оборот “to be conscious” [«сознать»] использован и там, где с точки зрения стиля уместнее было бы употребить глагол “to recognize”; “after all” [«наконец»] — там, где можно было бы разнообразить текст такими словами, как “indeed”, “surely”, “however” и тому подобными. В «Великом инквизиторе», где инквизитор говорит Христу «ты», я заменил “thou” на “you”. “Thou” звучало бы чересчур высокопарно и не передавало бы разговорной интонации персонажа. Однако я сохранил отсылки к Библии и местоимение “thou” в прямых цитатах из Писания. Редактируя и переводя другие тексты, я старался по возможности избегать использования причудливых выражений, таких как “little fathers” [«батюшки»] и “muzhiks” [«мужики»], которые, «обмениваясь друг с другом комплиментами и раскланиваясь»¹¹, подчас в избытке встречаются в переводах русской литературы на английский язык. В то же время я без колебаний употреблял неестественные английские обороты, переводя явно неудачные в стилистическом плане выражения или откровенные нелепости, особенно в прозе Чернышевского и желчном монологе рассказчика из «подполья». Все ошибки и неточности, разумеется, на моей совести.

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¹⁰ Перевод Т.А. Пирусской выполнен по изд.: Ralph Matlaw, “Translator’s Note,” in *Notes from Underground: And The Grand Inquisitor; With relevant works by Chernyshevsky, Shchedrin and Dostoevsky*, by Fyodor Dostoevsky (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1960), xxiii.

¹¹ Мэтлоу цитирует «Ареопагитику» Джона Мильтона. См.: Мильтон Дж. «Ареопагитика: Речь о свободе печати от цензуры, обращенная к парламенту Англии (1644)» // Lib.ru/Классика: электрон. б-ка. 2016. URL: http://az.lib.ru/m/milxtou_d/text_1644_areopagitica.shtml (дата обращения: 13.04.2021). — *Прим. пер.*