

From the Editor

This issue of *TSJ* offers thematic criticism from a variety of perspectives. In the opening essay, Martin Bidney compares Tolstoy's "Three Deaths" and Zola's "How People Die." Bidney finds in both authors' treatment of death a similar conflict between a Realist unmasking of social delusions and a Romantic idealization of nature.

The following two essays are concerned with the heroine of *Anna Karenina*. In the light of Bataille's concept of "the economy of loss," Zinaida Vaganova traces the migration of Pushkin's Cleopatra theme through the drafts of Tolstoy's novel. Vaganova's approach provides a way of representing the escalating contest of sacrifice and counter-sacrifice between Anna, Karenin, and Vronsky, illuminating such topics as Anna's failure to press Karenin for a divorce, her sudden willingness to give up Seriozha, and her suicide, which becomes the ultimate sacrificial gift. Curt Whitcomb, on the other hand, sees Anna's fate as conditioned by her failure to engage in "responsible striving." In contrast to Levin, who, despite the failure of many of his initiatives, maintains a commitment to understand and change his life, Anna, like her brother Stiva, awaits circumstances and relies upon false solutions.

Readers have long pondered the curious circumstances that Tolstoy and Dostoevsky contrived never to meet each other. In her essay Olga Meerson proposes that the two authors may indeed have met—in the pages of *War and Peace*, specifically, in the shadow of Pierre's relationship to the image of Napoleon. Robert Edwards's contribution (a continuation of his study published in *TSJ* 5: 15-37) also focuses chiefly upon Pierre, using a Deweyan perspective to illuminate the complexity of Pierre's mental processes.

Pierre comes in for scrutiny of a different kind in the Roundtable discussion devoted to Daniel Rancour-Laferriere's *Tolstoy's Pierre Bezukhhov: A Psychoanalytic Study*. The table talk ranges from critiques of Rancour-Laferriere's main points (Duffield White, Ronald LeBlanc) to an engagement with "the sociobiology of narcissism" (Brett Cooke), to a psychoanalytic reading of the dream which concludes Tolstoy's *Confession* (James Rice), together with Rancour-Laferriere's response to his readers' reactions.

Volume VIII (1995) will be a special issue devoted to *Anna Karenina*. Since its contents have largely been settled, I have high hopes of bringing it to the reader before we enter 1996. Volume IX will again present work on a variety of topics; I await your submissions and proposals for reviews.

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