

and happier hours, even if only retrospectively, and that the shining horrors of life are frequently redeemed by unexpected rewards, by situations of high comedy and shared laughter, and by moments of memorable beauty. The private hours may be dark and filled with unanswered questions ("Nocturnal Turnings"), but the public experiences often distill into hints and clues that may yet lead to answers. The author's preface will be of special interest to serious students of Capote's work, and is in itself worth the price of admission to his surprising world.

Harold E. Lusher

RÉSHARD GOOL

Price

Charlottetown, P.E.I.: Square Deal Publications, 1976. Pp. 186.

"Promise-keeping and truth-telling are, perhaps, the most final social values. Without them, no society can function." So speaks Henry Naidoo, the protagonist of *Price* (p. 186). Naidoo is the lawyer son of poor Natal Hindu parents. His story, narrated by his friend, Adrian Van der Merwe, "golden-haired representative of Afrikaaner Herrenvolk" (p. 2), is the tragic story of the destruction of the liberal option in contemporary South Africa.

With a strong sense of the dramatic unities, Gool sets his action in Cape Town between Dingaans Day, December 16, 1947, and the New Year of 1948, the year in which the Afrikaaner Nationalists are to assume power. Political forces mobilize with Sophoclean inevitability to shape the last few weeks of Henry Naidoo's life. In Katherine Holmes, younger daughter of an old Cape Colored family, Naidoo finds love, destiny, and "the liberal spirit of the Cape" (p. 118). The love-death paradigm is strongly etched. Love and the political ideal also come together in a single design: ". . . there is for me only one kind of true love," Henry asserts, "and that is responsible compassion" (p. 186).

Indeed, responsible compassion is a marked feature of Gool's treatment of his major characters and themes. Both Henry and Katherine are required to bear a substantial burden as representative figures. Both, nonetheless, are rendered with warmth and individuality. We are allowed to know Henry through his introspective diary and letters (pp. 3-25). Here are reflected his earnestness, romanticism, and "ironical rationality." The controlling voice, however, is that of Adrian, Oxford-educated lecturer in sociology, an "Anarchist of the pacifist type," and author of a dissertation on historical determinism. Adrian's link with determinism warns us that the sense of fate that pervades the novel springs not only from the bias of events and from the requirements of Aristotelian catharsis, but from the particular point of view of the narration. It is under this triple doom that the three major personae of *Price*, Adrian, Henry, and Katherine, capitulate, through exile, through death, through intimate loss, to the inexorable tragedy of the land. Each pays a price to participate in that tragedy—Adrian the price of Ishmael, that he may tell the story; Katherine the price of lovelessness, that, though ravished and barren, she may at least survive; Henry the price of a brutal death, that, no longer an "outsider," he may act out the principles of promise-keeping, truth-telling, and responsible compassion.

The rewards of reading *Price* are many. In no small measure they are due to the sensitivity with which Gool creates the ambience and to the exuberance with which he endows the supporting roles. Cape Town on a midsummer holiday (p. 27), for example, and the estuarine Eden of Henry's childhood (pp. 8-9), are described with rich nostalgia. Gool's versatility in re-creating the idiosyncrasies of colloquial speech give keen memorability to such characters as the promiscuous Doc (p. 32), and the Cambridge-educated Marxist, Yussouf Rycliffe (pp. 101-02). The masterpiece among the fixed characters, however, is the "gorgeous, and repulsive, figure" of Shaikh-Moosa the entrepreneur, archbetrayor of the Categorical Imperative, which Gool quotes as his novel's epigraph: ". . . treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of any other, in every case as an end, never solely as a means." The spider at the center of the web in which all *Price's* characters are entangled, Shaikh-Moosa is "reality" itself, ruthless capitalism—protean, inventive, flam-

boyant, impudent, unassailable, vital, fascinating, sinister, funny, and mad (pp. 63, 79-80, 144-45).

In brief compass, *Price* offers a broad yet finely detailed picture of Cape society. The tragic frame is strong enough to accommodate the absurd, the grotesque, the surreal, the amusing, and the sentimental without sacrificing its authority. The web of events is bewildering; almost thirty pages of sustained narration are required to achieve the denouement. But the death of Henry Naidoo, when it does come, is told so simply, and with such swiftness and restraint, that the anonymous savagery of the act becomes that much more terrible, and our sense of the fragility of a human life that much more poignant.

As an account of South Africa's fateful drift into extremism, and as a reminder of the complexities of individual motivation and aspiration caught in the gathering violence, the novel deserves a wider readership than it has yet acquired. Its humane spirit, its political relevance, and its accomplished writing call for a reissue of *Price* by an international publisher.

John Smith

VLADIMIR KRASNOV

Solzhenitsyn and Dostoevsky: A Study in the Polyphonic Novel

Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1980. Pp. 227.

In a flood of books about Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn published in the last decade, Vladimir Krasnov's book under review stands out. Not so much because it says something startlingly new—Solzhenitsyn is slowly approaching the point of endless repetition of opinions about him—but for its approach. The author has chosen to treat Solzhenitsyn's works, mostly *The First Circle* and, to a lesser degree, *Cancer Ward* and *August 1914*, as a testing ground for the theory of a polyphonic novel propounded by the Soviet literary theoretician Mikhail

Bakhtin (1895-1975) some fifty years ago while writing about Dostoevsky. This theory states, to put it in a simplified form, that characters in a polyphonic novel are no longer manipulated by the author but rather lead their own lives and follow their own consciousnesses, moving in a world independent from that created by the author. Bakhtin found this notion best exemplified in the novels of Dostoevsky. Krasnov, in turn, found in Solzhenitsyn's novelistic technique great similarities with that of Dostoevsky and proceeded with the examination of the three novels of Solzhenitsyn from that point of view.

The author has, by and large, succeeded in proving his points by examining closely the destinies of such divergent personalities as Stalin, Rubín, Sologdín, Nerzhín, and other lesser characters. The degree of his success, however, depends on our willingness to accept the notion of a polyphonic novel as valid. While it is true that the pieces seem to fall neatly into their places within the framework of Bakhtin's theory followed by Krasnov, the reader must be allowed a modicum of doubt as to the validity of such a theory. At least not as something terribly new. Characters created by great writers have been known for slipping out of their hands and beginning an existence of their own, in a figurative sense (Balzac, for example, is said to have greeted a startled visitor with the heart-breaking news that one of his characters had just died, as if he had been a real-life friend of his). At the same time, it is mighty difficult to eradicate from the reader's mind that it is the author, after all, who rules the world he has created.

With that qualification in mind, it can be stated that Krasnov has written a competent study of Solzhenitsyn's main works. He writes well and interestingly, and he has a helpful habit of supporting his arguments with illustrations from the works he examines. His attempt to show a genuine affinity between Dostoevsky and Solzhenitsyn seems stretched somewhat too thin, although he makes some valid points. The truth of the matter is, there is hardly a Russian writer who completely escaped being influenced by Dostoevsky, to a larger, lesser, or even minute degree. At the same time, the periods, atmospheres, and problems with which these two writers are concerned are so different that any effort to see them bound closely together or influencing one another should be approached with great caution.