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Peter Kaye

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DOSTOEVSKY AND  
ENGLISH MODERNISM,  
1900-1930

When Constance Garnett's translations (1910-20) made Dostoevsky accessible in England for the first time they introduced a disruptive and liberating literary force, and English novelists had to confront a new model and rival. The writers who are the focus of this study – Lawrence, Woolf, Bennett, Conrad, Forster, Galsworthy, and James – either admired Dostoevsky or feared him as a monster who might dissolve all literary and cultural distinctions. Though their responses differed greatly, these writers were unanimous in their inability to recognize Dostoevsky as a literary artist. They viewed him instead as a psychologist, a mystic, a prophet, and, in the cases of Lawrence and Conrad, a hated rival who compelled creative response. This study constructs a map of English modernist novelists' misreadings of Dostoevsky, and in so doing it illuminates their aesthetic and cultural values and the nature of the modern English novel.

PETER KAYE lectures at University College of Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, and is senior editor at educational publishers McDougal Littell. He has a particular interest in twentieth-century British literature and in strategies for teaching literature at school and college level.

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## *Acknowledgments*

This work began on a bright California morning many years ago, when I was asked by a Virginia Woolf enthusiast to name my favorite author. My answer of Dostoevsky prompted a fascinating response about Woolf's attraction to his work. One question suggested another, leading me eventually down the long and arduous road of this project, which began as a doctoral dissertation.

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