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Robert Louis Jackson: *Close Encounters. Essays on Russian Literature* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2013). 373 pp +xiv. Index. Introductory note by Horst-Jürgen Gerigk.

The volumes published by Academic Studies Press have proved invaluable to the field of Slavic Studies, advancing scholarship and understanding in important ways. *Close Encounters. Essays on Russian Literature* by Robert Louis Jackson offers a particularly rich collection of essays, linked through an organic structure that reflects the author's brilliant and deeply creative mind. This is no ordinary collection of essays. Jackson selected these pieces from his wide-ranging critical oeuvre; consequently, they come to constitute a kind of autobiography through critical writing. The essays are not linked by author, or with the exception of the final part, by genre, but rather through the abiding themes that have engaged Jackson throughout his career: "Fate, Freedom and Responsibility," "Two Kinds of Beauty," "Critical Perspectives," and "Poetry of Parting."

Jackson has dedicated this volume to his wife, Leslie Gillette Jackson, a noted artist who died just as the book was appearing. For the many members of the International Dostoevsky Society who knew and admired Leslie and her work, another layer of meaning emanates from this volume with its extraordinary cover reproducing one of her works, "Come, let us build ourselves a city."

Readers of *Dostoevsky Studies* no doubt identify Jackson primarily as a scholar of Dostoevsky. Such readers will find new treasures here, culled from publications they might have missed. Of the twenty-two essays, eight focus on Dostoevsky. The other fourteen selections, however, remind us that Jackson, despite the remarkable depth and staying-power of his seminal work on Dostoevsky, is also a versatile essayist whose range frequently reflects the unusual avenues and byways taken by his intellectual curiosity. Pushkin, Dostoevsky, Turgenev, Tolstoy, and Chekhov are represented here – often in surprising ways, as in the essay, "What Time is it? Where Are We Going?": Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*: The Story

of a Verb,” a close analysis of the play through its use of certain verbs. There are also essays on Solzhenitsyn, Gorky, Bakhtin, Vyacheslav Ivanov, Tyutchev, Severyanin, Zhukovsky, Goethe and Nabokov. Jackson’s writings on fate, freedom, responsibility, tragedy, memory, vision, beauty (“obraz”) and the absence of beauty (“bezobrazie”) have shaped the thinking of subsequent generations of scholars of Dostoevsky and Tolstoy. His careful gathering together of essays from the numerous different works in which they originally appeared constitutes a statement about his philosophy of art, while at the same time highlighting those ideas and practices upon which others of us have drawn.

Gerig suggests that readers will find in *Close Encounters* “a new answer to the old question of what to look for in Russian literature.” Jackson, like the writers he admires, does not hesitate to tackle the big questions. But he does so through close reading and through a careful sifting of the evidence. He is never an ideologue. He quotes Andre Gide: “Really, there are no problems in art for which the work itself does not provide an adequate solution.” Jackson’s essays identify new problems for readers to consider. To have a genuine “close encounter” with art is a risky business that yields rewards beyond the intellectual, philosophical, religious, moral, aesthetic, and critical enterprises we usually claim to seek in our professional work. Jackson’s quiver contains all these arrows in abundance, and they are sharp. But sharpest of all is that arrow in which he can bring the jaded or recalcitrant reader into a new, piercing close encounter with the work itself.

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Horst-Jürgen Gerig: *Dostojewskijs Entwicklung als Schriftsteller. Vom „Toten Haus“ zu den „Brüdern Karamasow“*. (Dostoevsky’s development as a writer. From the ‘House of the Dead’ to the ‘Brothers Karamazov’.) Frankfurt a. M., Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag 2013 (= Fischer Klassik). 347 Seiten.

Gerig’s book reads like a Dostoevsky novel: exciting, full of mystery and surprises. This alone would be recommendation enough. We are drawn in, swept up in the action, sharing the characters’ hopes and trepidations and waiting for new revelations – even though we already know how it ends. Three quarters of the *Brothers Karamazov* have been analysed, the chapter