

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

is drawing to a close, when Gerigk finally opens “the door” in an eponymous subchapter. He explains the misinterpretation of a witness and recounts the key scene “In the Dark” for those who may not remember all the details: Fedor Karamozov, the old lecher, is beaten to death with an iron paperweight by his illegitimate son Smerdyakov. The carefully crafted tension, the trick with the door, does nothing to lessen the force of the argument. The real murderer, Gerigk asserts, is Dmitri. The alleged miscarriage of justice is recast as an act of salvation and linked to Dostoevsky’s biography as well. All in all: a great book to be read in a single sitting, combining provocative propositions with academic rigour.

Gerigk’s approach is hermeneutic or structuralist, as the situation demands. Evil in the world, existential angst, and Heidegger’s notion of *das Man* are all addressed, as are narrative technique and composition. Dostoevsky’s work, his characters and methodology are examined alongside numerous predecessors and epigones from Western literature and the reception of chiefly American films. At the same time, the author is able to explain a number of concepts from cultural theory and philosophy as if in passing and profitably integrate them into his reflections. Susan Sontag’s speculations about camp culture, for instance, are used to shed light on the *Idiot*. Sometimes Gerigk is simply overcome by playfulness and indulges in fictitious casting sessions for equally fictitious film adaptations. Overall, however, the systematic approach dominates. Gerigk is interested in the common thread that runs through Dostoevsky’s oeuvre, in connections. The great turning point, he believes, is the katorga. In Gerigk’s view, imprisonment in Omsk and forced proximity to the criminal populace changed everything for Dostoevsky.

In Siberia a new writer was born. Gerigk therefore begins neither with a biography nor with Dostoevsky’s early work, but – after a brief preface and without an introduction – with the *Memoirs from the House of the Dead*. The prison marks the beginning of a great writing career. It ends with the *Brothers Karamazov*. Everything else, Gerigk claims, is preliminary or secondary to this. He could easily have concluded his own study with Dmitri’s conviction; the final chapter is merely a supplement and was in fact conceived as such. It gathers together superfluous material, as if in haste and somewhat carelessly adding the most essential biographical details and the hallmarks of Dostoevsky’s early works – but it also recapitulates Gerigk’s ingenious conceit. Gerigk insists on the genuine kinship between Dmitri Karamazov and Fedor Dostoevsky, two *rightly convicted* criminals. Dostoevsky, he argues, uses the figure of Dmitri to write about his own membership of the Petrashevtsy. As such, Gerigk sees

in the *Brothers Karamazov* subtle yet recognisable echoes of the *House of the Dead* – and thus also cleverly lends additional legitimacy to the structure of his own study.

The aptly chosen framework of the book is mirrored by the well-reasoned and often very original analyses within. Gerigk's focus is on Dostoevsky's major novels, and he provides a brief introduction to each one. Themes, plot and composition are covered in a minimum of words. These "opening remarks", similar to an entry in a literary encyclopaedia, are followed by the "approach". Here the author takes greater liberties and juggles his comparative knowledge and his various Dostoevsky interpretations (gathered together here for the first time). Some of Dostoevsky's works are boiled down to one central poetological idea: Gerigk maintains that *The Idiot* bears out the theme of misjudgement; the *Brothers Karamazov* concentrates on the question of guilt; the narrative technique employed in *The Adolescent* conveys the pubescent consciousness of a young man in all its stumbling complexity. The poetological aspects of *Crime and Punishment* and *Demons* are more abundant and include fatherlessness and fantasies of every description.

Gerigk is concerned with Dostoevsky's *development* as a writer. He consistently links his analyses of the different novels, and readers can understand the increasing complexity and craftsmanship with which Dostoevsky composes his works. For this reason, however, his placing of the *Gambler* after the *Brothers Karamazov* is jarring. Here the desire for completeness gets in the way of the study's well-balanced composition. The *Gambler* and Dostoevsky's travels in Germany could be skipped without any great loss. But what appears superfluous here – this includes some word-for-word and therefore grating repetitions of certain pithy observations and formulations – is lacking elsewhere. Subjectivity is, admittedly, the lifeblood of Gerigk's Dostoevsky book. Readers must be willing to go along with the author's personal approach and provocative style. The selection of research literature is therefore likewise subjective and necessarily limited. Overloading the text with footnotes would have changed its nature entirely, and to its detriment. Nonetheless, the failure to mention a number of recent landmark studies (such as Rosenshield's book on the *Brothers Karamazov*), which could certainly have been incorporated into Gerigk's argumentation, is regrettable.

For whom is this history of Dostoevsky's work written? For specialists and amateurs, Dostoevsky connoisseurs and book lovers, Russia aficionados and students of languages and literature at all stages of their education or career. Gerigk's Dostoevsky book is conceived for a broad audience, and

it inspires a love not only of literature, but of literary scholarship, too. And that is already a great contribution.

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Hans Rothe: *Dostojewskijs Stellung in der europäischen Literatur*. Paderborn, München, Wien, Zürich: Ferdinand Schöningh 2013 (= Nordrhein-Westfälische Akademie der Wissenschaften und Künste. Vorträge Geisteswissenschaften, G 441). 37 Seiten.

Bereits 1983 hat Hans Rothe (Universität Bonn) mit dem von ihm herausgegebenen Sammelband *Dostojewskij und die Literatur*, der insgesamt 26 Vorträge zum 100. Todesjahr des Dichters enthält, einen inzwischen „klassischen“ Beitrag zur internationalen Dostojewskij-Forschung geliefert (Köln, Wien: Böhlau Verlag). Wenn sich Hans Rothe nun mit einem Vortrag, den er unlängst vor der Nordrhein-Westfälischen Akademie der Wissenschaften und Künste gehalten und für den Druck erheblich erweitert hat, erneut mit Dostojewskij beschäftigt, so verdient dieser Text unsere besondere Aufmerksamkeit. Es ist jetzt von Dostojewskijs Stellung in der europäischen Literatur die Rede, seiner produktiven Nutzung verschiedenster literarischer Textsorten. Wie geht Hans Rothe vor?

Er erläutert vorweg seine Grundannahme, dass die wichtige Frage, „wie er (= Dostojewskij) geschrieben und was dabei auf ihn gewirkt hat“, in der europäischen Öffentlichkeit bislang von seiner „Wirkung auf seine modernen Leser“ verdeckt worden sei (S. 8). Um zu einer „gesicherten Beurteilung“ seines Oeuvre zu gelangen, sei eine Neugliederung der Schaffensphasen vonnöten. Jede dieser Schaffensphasen (es sind, wie Rothe ausführt, drei) sei durch ganz bestimmte inhaltliche und formale Eigenheiten gekennzeichnet. In ihrem Verlauf betrachtet, dokumentieren sie, wie sich zeigen lasse, die Selbstfindung Dostojewskijs – mit den *Brüdern Karamasow* als Summe und Gipfel. Rothe erläutert, dass es „zweckmäßig“ sei, „drei Lebensabschnitte anzunehmen“, während bislang die Behauptung gelte, dass „Dostojewskijs Leben und Werk“ in „zwei Perioden“ zerfalle: „vor Sibirien auf einem Irrweg, danach geläutert für seine Hauptwerke“ (S. 9). Und so kommt Rothe zum Plädoyer für drei Lebensabschnitte: „1) das Leben und die Werke des Anfängers bis 1849; 2) Leben und Werke des Gescheiterten und Suchenden bis 1865, und zwar einschließlich des ersten der großen Romane, *Schuld und Sühne*; und 3) die