BOOK REVIEWS/КНИЖНЫЕ ПЕЦЕНЗИИ


Festschriften can be uneven affairs, high on good intentions, but low on value. Happily, that cannot be said for this collection of essays honoring the influential and widely respected British Dostoevsky scholar, Professor Malcolm Jones. Readers of this book will find a diverse range of articles, encompassing a variety of approaches to Dostoevsky and his fiction.

The editors, Sarah Young and Lesley Milne, should take credit for the collection’s tight structure. It is divided into four parts: Mythos, Dialogue, Text and Reader, and Religion. This thoughtful categorization reflects Jones’s own scholarship, but also has the advantage of putting a number of the contributions in dialogue with each other.

In part 1, “Mythos,” Rudolf Neuhauser’s analysis of the genres of the shorter and longer fiction in Dostoevsky finds a “remarkable internal coherence” in the former. Furthermore, the “Zeitwelt,” which Neuhauser describes as a more comprehensive version of Lotman’s chronotope, “is roughly the same for both genres,” even if the plot structure and configuration of themes and characters differ considerably between the two.

Readers interested in the semiotics of fiction will enjoy Boris Christa’s article on vestimentary markers in Prestuplenie i nakazanie. He argues that “clothes can be seen as a kind of language with its own grammar” and that, in Prestuplenie i nakazanie, they act as semiotic markers opening up “significant areas of sub-textual meaning” (p. 14). The minutiae of Christa’s argument might not convince all readers – is Raskožnikov’s Zimmerman hat really “provocatively western” (p. 18)? – but this article supplies more ammunition in the war against that old, erroneous cliché about Dostoevsky’s carelessness as a writer.

Valentina Vetlovskaja’s article returns to the familiar discussion of the Petersburg theme in Prestuplenie i nakazanie, by way of that novel’s many allusions to Pushkin’s work, not least Pikovaia dama and Mednyi vsadnik. Dostoevsky’s novel, suggests Vetlovskaja, shares with these tales their subversive attitudes to the tsar’s glorious capital and the fate of the individual living alongside its granite embankments. The revelation of this aspect of the dialogue with Pushkin in Prestuplenie i nakazanie will intrigue students of both writers.

In his discussion of Igrok, Erik Egeberg posits the relevance of Dostoevsky’s original title for the novella, “Roulettenburg”. Genette’s notion of the
“paratext” is not mentioned here, but hangs over Egeberg’s argument that while *Igrok* foregrounds the fate of the story’s hero, under the title Roulettenburg “society will move from the background to the foreground” (p. 40). The full meaning of *Igrok* becomes apparent only “if we include the whole gambling community of Roulettenburg in our analysis” (p. 45).

In the final two contributions in part 1, Alexander Harrington and Jacques Catteau discuss other elements of intertextuality in Dostoevsky. Harrington’s excellent article assesses Dostoevsky’s influence on Anna Akhmatova and in particular the connections between her “Poema bez geroia” and *Podrostok*. In its search for forms to depict disorder (*besporiadok*), Harrington suggests that Akhmatova’s poem matches and exceeds Dostoevsky’s similar ambition in *Podrostok*. Catteau’s finds sources for Ivan Karamazov’s dream of the devil in Dostoevsky’s correspondence and notes.

In part 2, “Dialogue,” Richard Peace argues for a reconsideration of the poetry of Dostoevsky’s close friend, Apollon Maikov, while at the same time suggesting an avenue for further study of the relationship between Maikov’s “cult of the leader” and the discourse on that theme in *Prestuplenie i nakazanie, Besy* and *Brat’ia Karamazovy*.

John McNair and Irene Zohrab both discuss less familiar connections in Dostoevsky’s lifetime. McNair reveals Dostoevsky’s fractious relationship with Petr Boborykin, editor of *Russkaia biblioteka*, who may have been a source for the title of the short story “Bobok”. Boborykin was also a target for some of Dostoevsky’s mockery in *Dnevnik pisatelia*, but, in the end, seems to have been more preoccupied with Dostoevsky than vice versa. Zohrab’s article about the coverage of English schooling in *Grazhdanin* during Dostoevsky’s editorship suggests that the topic was close to the writer’s heart. Dostoevsky’s views on the attributes of a good teacher, it seems, coincided with those of Thomas Arnold, headmaster of Rugby public school. Zohrab’s suggestion of a relation between Thomas Hughes’s novel *Tom Brown’s Schooldays* and Dostoevsky’s own fiction seems entirely plausible in this context. Her article is a model of literary-historical research.

Sarah Hudspith proposes that the subtext of Tolstoy’s *Voskresenie* eludes a dialogue about crime and punishment between its author and Dostoevsky. The question of the two writers’ relationship to one another is not a new one, but Hudspith’s article finds a fresh angle to approach the topic.

Vladimir Tunimanov’s contribution gives a fascinating portrait of the Soviet academic and philosopher, Merab Mamardashvili. By way of discussing the influence of Dostoevsky on Mamardashvili’s thought, Tunimanov also makes a compelling defence of the men of the (Soviet) 1960s.

Arnold McMillin’s article on Dostoevsky and Russian music is typically thorough and good-humoured, and takes its premise from Shostakovich’s suggestion that Dostoevsky and music is “a more important connection than