

error (*Perverzija* was published, not in 1999, as claimed [p. 295], but in 1996 in *Suchasnist* and in 1997 as a separate book). Like *Perverzion*, *Zwölf Ringe* has endnotes, but in this case the author is Andrukhovych himself, who furnishes the German-speaking reader with his own perspective (subjective, and not without polemical missiles hurled at Ukrainian cultural conservatives) upon the social and cultural realities of contemporary Ukraine.

The audiences of choice for these translations are cross-culturally interested English-speaking and German-speaking readerships accustomed to the demands and rewards of modern and postmodern prose. Such audiences, unacquainted with, but potentially curious about, the new neighbours of the European Union, should find in *Perverzion* and *Zwölf Ringe* much that will delight and challenge (and, perhaps, inform).

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W.J. Leatherbarrow, *A Devil's Vaudeville: The Demonic in Dostoevsky's Major Fiction*, Evanston, IL, Northwestern University Press (Series: *Studies in Russian Literature and Theory*), 2005, xi + 210pp. ISBN: 0-8101-2049-6.

In this relatively slender (181 pages of text, 27 of notes, references and index), but erudite contribution to Northwestern's series on Russian literature and theory, W.J. Leatherbarrow illumines one of the most important if ambiguous aspects of Dostoevsky's art: the 'inscription of the demonic' in his fiction. His concern is both with the nature and sources of the writer's *demonology* (his understanding of what the demonic means), and with his *demonography* (the literary means 'through which the presence of the demonic may be mediated'; pp. 1-2). The framework for the enquiry is further elaborated in the Introduction, which considers the critical influences of Russian folklore, Orthodox theology and the Romantic literary tradition, as well as the aesthetic and ethical systems shaping Dostoevsky's worldview and the 'demonic' dimension of fiction itself as the art of deceit and a usurpation of divine authority. It also acknowledges the contribution of Bakhtin, Lotman, Uspensky, Robert Louis Jackson and many others who have mapped the territory Leatherbarrow means to explore in detail.

Of the five chapters constituting the heart of the project, the first sets out to show how ‘in the course of Dostoevsky’s career, demonic signs come to be attached to a particular cluster of ideas, images, and conditions with a persistence that allows us to develop an understanding of what constituted for him the locus of demonic evil’ (p. 27). With particular reference to *Notes from the House of the Dead*, *The Gambler*, *Notes from the Underground* and other works of the first ‘post-Siberian’ years, Leatherbarrow explicates demonic ‘markers’ of various kinds (the prison, the underground, the Crystal Palace; imposture, mendacity, gambling and so on) and traces the ‘demonization’ of two preoccupying phenomena: a ‘godless’ universe in which ‘anything can happen’, and the ‘godless’ Europeanized intellectual divorced from ‘living life’. The remaining chapters, each devoted (in chronological sequence) to one of the major novels, go on to develop detailed readings based on these and other aspects of Dostoevsky’s ‘demonic semiotics’. The analysis of *Crime and Punishment* moves from a discussion of folkloric, religious and literary resonances of the diabolic in the portrayal of Raskolnikov and Svidrigailov to link the diabolic ‘rationality’ of the murder to the utilitarian aesthetics of Chernyshevsky and Dobroliubov and the hero’s eventual redemption with his ‘innate sense of ideal beauty’ (p. 93). A comparable contrast, between Rogozhin (‘the novel’s most insistent demonic marker’, p. 95) and the ‘positively good’ Myshkin, is the starting point for the chapter on *The Idiot*, which however goes on to discern an ‘emerging *potential for demonism*’ (p. 109) even in the latter – specifically in his attachment to European abstractions and tendency to assume rights of authorship over the other characters of the novel.

The chapter on *The Devils* deconstructs the novel’s ‘diabolic matrix’ (p. 121) to find at its heart a duality: on the one hand, a ‘devil’s vaudeville’ deriving from the traditions of carnival and folklore, and on the other an apocalyptic vision of a society that can find redemption only by discovering its roots in the Russian soil. The longest of the chapters (‘The Father of the Lie’) relates the demonic themes of *The Brothers Karamazov* and the demonic form of the modern realist novel which proved incompatible with Dostoevsky’s attempt to create a countervailing theodicy in ‘The Russian Monk’. A brief conclusion, devoted to an entry in *The Diary of a Writer* in January 1876, is in the nature of a postscript on Dostoevsky’s conception of ‘the extraordinary cunning of devils, that is if they really are devils’ whose power over men

derives not from the attractions of their false promises but their ability to exploit the human capacity for universal discord.

Equally impressive in this monograph are the subtlety of its searching textual analysis and the range of its command of modern Dostoevsky scholarship. If the theoretical framework derives predominantly from Bakhtin, the approach is anything but monologic, incorporating the insights of folklorists, narratologists, psychologists, philosophers, biographers, literary historians and many others too numerous to list. Indeed, the author himself seems at times aware of a certain tension between the need to do justice to his sources and ‘the risk of rehearsing the already familiar’ (p. 122). However, this is a book not only for Dostoevsky specialists; and even those unable to follow or unwilling to go along with all its arguments will find much in its examination of the great novels, in its discussion of the ‘demonic’ significance of, say, thresholds and other ‘liminal’ spaces, or of lying and story-telling or suicide, to fascinate them and enrich their reading. Generally free of jargon, it combines lucidity with flashes of humour, and in the whole 210 pages I detected only one typographical error: Zosima appears once (p. 26) as Zossima.

With his earlier books on Dostoevsky – notably *Fedor Dostoevsky* (Twayne, 1981), *The Brothers Karamazov* (Cambridge, 1992) and most recently *The Cambridge Companion to Dostoevskii*, 2002 – W.J. Leatherbarrow has established himself as a leading authority in the field; indeed, thanks to the appearance made by the first of these studies in Woody Allen’s film *Match Point* (2005), he might even be said to have attained stardom. With *A Devil’s Vaudeville* he consolidates his reputation and adds substantially to our understanding of Dostoevsky and his demons.

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Evgeny Dobrenko, *Aesthetics of Alienation: Reassessment of Early Soviet Cultural Theories*, trans. Jesse M. Savage, Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2005. xii + 152 pp.

The title of this book, part of the NUP series *Studies in Russian Literature and Theory*, may strike a chord of recognition among humanities scholars