Dostoevsky and the Epileptic Mode of Being

By Paul Fung

For Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821-81), who lived with epileptic seizures for more than thirty years, illness is an ineradicable part of existence. Epilepsy in his writings denotes both a set of physical symptoms and a state of survival in which the protagonists incessantly try to articulate, theorize, or master what is ungraspable in their everyday experience. Their attempts to deal with what they cannot control or comprehend results in disappointment, or what Dostoevsky called a mystical terror. Dostoevsky's heroes are unable fully to understand this state, and their existence becomes 'epileptic' in so far as self-knowledge and self-coincidence are never achieved.

Fung explores new critical pathways by reexamining five of Dostoevsky's post-Siberian novels. Drawing on insights from writers including Benjamin, Blanchot, Freud, Lacan and Nietzsche, the book takes epilepsy as a trope for discussing the unspeakable moments in the texts, and is intended for students and scholars who are interested in the subject of modernity, critique of the visual, and dialogues between philosophy and literature.

Paul Fung is Assistant Professor in English at Hang Seng Management College, Hong Kong.
The Invention Of The Text

By Gianfranco Marrone

The notion of text is perhaps the most used and discussed within social and human sciences. Nevertheless, it is surprisingly one of the worst defined. Philology and Linguistics, Literary Criticism and Aesthetics, Philosophy of Language, Hermeneutics, Ethnology, Psychoanalysis, Sociology, Semiotics: all these disciplines refer in various ways to the "text", to make of it the basic object of their analysis or to measure the distance they keep from it. So what does "text" mean? What genealogy does this concept have? Why is there “no salvation outside the text”? This book shows why the text should be the formal model to explain all human, social, cultural and historic phenomena and, as a consequence, the product of a double invention: first as a sociocultural configuration, secondly as an analytical reconstruction.
How was national consciousness developed? The present book aims to investigate such matter through a series of different case studies, in which the terms nation, homeland and people have been applied. This Romantic lexicon identifies similar conceptions of the national idea in some countries dominated by Italian, German and Slavic cultures, and in some groups or minorities such as the Jews and the Vlachs in Central and Mediterranean Europe. In order to clarify the cultural framework, the authors explore the construction of identity through folk tunes, poetry inspired by popular culture, and opera in which the national myths or heroes appear. In the self-making tradition, the national traits are sustained by the process of embodiment of any regional utterance, and also by the elimination of the ‘other’, especially the minorities. The symbols of the nation, as an achievement of the power that flourishes from the sense of belonging, are defined per differentiam.
All Over

By Gabriele Tinti & Nicholas Benson

All over is a collection of epic songs, of epinician odes for our day. The heroes praised are boxers, men the author identifies as the last able to truly astound, to induce awe. These epinician odes on Pindaric models are transformed in the making. What they sing about is not victory but defeat. The hero, the boxer, is deprived the possibility of attaining true “victory” through the gods’ obliging and favorable presence — a limitation that never pertained in antiquity. This is a fragile hero. An all-too human human. He is a “simple” boxer. Nothing but a man. The epinician odes, therefore, end up being direct, and matter-of-fact, in their style and content. They wind up as epigraphs, tragedies in verse form that narrate the real exploits of workday heroes, even if the resulting events are exceptional, moving us to weep, and to feel great admiration and compassion.
Swedish Crime Fiction
The making of Nordic Noir

By Kerstin Bergman

Why have authors from the safe, social welfare state Sweden captivated the minds of the crime fiction readers across the globe? Kerstin Bergman suggests that killer marketing and a widespread curiosità about the “exotic” Nordic welfare states, their waste landscapes and alleged gender equality, has propelled these authors and novels into the international spotlight. Bergman uses this innovative angle to retell the recent history of crime fiction in Sweden, exploring central themes and selecting key authors that have garnered national and international acclaim for their lethal plots. Swedish Crime Fiction: The Making of Nordic Noir contextualizes the explosive recent history of the genre, offering newcomers and aficionados insights into the minds of protagonista and their literary creators.

This is the first research-based and exhaustive presentation of Swedish crime fiction and its Nordic “neighbours” to an international audience.
Alejo Carpentier and the Musical Text

By Katia Chornik

Widely known for his novels *El reino de este mundo* (The Kingdom of this World) and *Los pasos perdidos* (The Lost Steps), the Swiss-born Cuban writer Alejo Carpentier (1904–1980) incorporated music in his fiction extensively, for instance in titles, in analogies with musical forms, in scenes depicting performances, recordings and broadcasts, and in characters’ discussions of musical issues. Chornik’s study focuses on Carpentier’s writings from a musicological perspective, bridging intermediality and intertextuality through an examination of music as formative, as form, and as performed. The emphasis lies on the novels *Los pasos perdidos*, *El acoso* (The Chase), *Concierto barroco* (Baroque Concerto) and *La consagración de la primavera* (The Rite of Spring), and on his unknown essay *Los orígenes de la música y la música primitiva* (The Origins of Music and Primitive Music), the repository of ideas for *Los pasos perdidos*, included here for the first time as facsimile and in English translation. Chornik’s study will appeal to scholars and students in literary studies, cultural studies, musicology and ethnomusicology, and to a specifically interdisciplinary readership.
Spanish New York Narratives 1898-1936
Modernization, Otherness and Nation

By David Miranda-Barreiro

In the early decades of the twentieth century, New York caught the attention of Spanish writers. Many of them visited the city and returned to tell their experience in the form of a literary text. That is the case of Pruebas de Nueva York (1927) by José Moreno Villa (1887-1955), El crisol de las razas (1929) by Teresa de Escoriaza (1891-1968), Anticipolis (1931) by Luis de Oteyza (1883-1961) and La ciudad automática (1932) by Julio Camba (1882-1962). In tune with similar representations in other European works, the image of New York given in these texts reflects the tensions and anxieties generated by the modernisation embodied by the United States. These authors project onto New York their concerns and expectations about issues of class, gender and ethnicity that were debated at the time, in the context of the crisis of Spanish national identity triggered by the end of the empire in 1898.
Wor(L)ds In Progress
A Study Of Contemporary Migrant Writings

By Alessandra Di Maio

In the contemporary world, the figure of the migrant, moving across spaces, cultures and languages, has acquired unprecedented centrality. Migrants have transformed the ways of representing and narrating the transnational world in which they live, responding in new fashions to one of the oldest impulses of men and women of every place and time: the impulse to tell stories. By engaging with the notions of diaspora, postcoloniality, nomadism, translation, and exile, Di Maio moves across the Anglophone and Italophone spectra offering a compelling definition of migrant literature at the turn of the millennium.
The Murray Edwards Duse Collection

By Alison Wilson & Anna Sica

The Murray Edwards Duse Collection is the best record of Eleonora Duse’s literary background. So advanced was her artistic and literary emancipation that she was considered one of the foremost Italian aesthetes. The discovery and reconstruction of The Collection change in many ways the reception of her acting and of her intellectual profile, shedding new light on her art. The Murray Edwards Duse Collection includes several books that Eleonora Duse read: a fundamental resource in understanding the roots of her artistic profile. It could now be said there are two aspects to Duse’s acting. She is first and foremost one of the greatest actresses in the history of theatre; but she is also an incomparable intellectual of her time. The Murray Edwards Duse Collection may be considered metaphorically as Duse’s gold, previously considered to be lost for ever.

This book has been published with the sustain of the Murray Edwards College.
A Little More Than Kin

By Ernest Hebert

Initially appearing in Hebert's first Darby Chronicles novel, The Dogs of March, Ollie Jordan and his clan live in shacks behind a huge billboard advertising a Vermont business. Although he's a brooding character with an inquiring, philosophical turn of mind, Ollie has grown up with no education, no mentors, and a serious Freudian hang-up. A family history of poverty, stubborn pride, and a culture that runs contrary to mainstream society have robbed Ollie and his people of opportunity, even hope. They live by a culture of "succor and ascendancy." When Ollie is evicted from his shacks, he breaks his drinking rules and heads out into the wilderness with his disabled son, Willow, literally chained to him. Father and son are doomed. How that doom plays itself out, as experienced by the disturbed but insightful Ollie Jordan, is what makes A Little More Than Kin unique in contemporary American literature. Hebert gives his rural underclass protagonist the depths of a tragic hero. Though A Little More Than Kin is action-packed and its prose is clean, hard, lyrical, and sometimes very funny, the book is at its heart an exploration into a brilliant mind that has laid waste to itself. This novel will appeal to readers who enjoy prose that explores the human psyche at its most perverse.
Spoonwood

By Ernest Hebert

Ernest Hebert's series of novels set in Darby, New Hampshire, has been hailed by the Boston Globe as "one of the most interesting accomplishments of contemporary American fiction . . . [a series] into which the texture of class is as skillfully woven as it is in Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha County." After almost fifteen years, Hebert has returned to this rich literary landscape for a new novel of the changing economic and social character of New England. Hebert's previous Darby novel, Live Free or Die, recounted the ill-fated love between Freddie Elman, son of the town trash collector, and Lilith Salmon, child of Upper Darby gentility. At its conclusion, Lilith died giving birth to their son. As Spoonwood opens, Freddie, consumed by grief and anger and struggling with alcoholism, is not prepared to be a father to Birch. But as both his family and Lilith's begin to maneuver for custody of the child, Freddie embarks on a course of action that satisfies none of them. Once again, Hebert masterfully conveys the natural and social landscape of contemporary rural New England. Grounded in complex, fully realized characters, Spoonwood offers Hebert's most optimistic vision yet of acceptance and accommodation across class lines.
Live Free or Die

By Ernest Hebert

"You stay in your hometown, you end up more of a stranger than if you'd started new someplace else." The struggle between the indigenous rural working class and the upper crust intensifies in this turning-point novel of the Darby Chronicles as Freddy Elman, son of the town trash collector, and Lilith Salmon, daughter of a prestigious family, embark on their ill-fated love affair. Seeing Darby through new eyes, Freddy comes to realize that "the kind of people who hunkered down among these tree-infested, rock-strewn hills" is "dying out, replaced by people with money, education, culture, people wise in the ways of the world." As that world increasingly intervenes, the lovers' attempt to bridge the chasm that divides their class-aliénated families inevitably collapses. This is a book for anyone interested in local politics, privilege, and poverty, all embedded in a story of love and death in the woods and on the ledges of the Granite State.
The Passion of Estelle Jordan

By Ernest Hebert

Sometimes the characters in Ernest Hebert's Darby Chronicles hew close to real life. When the author was a college student pulling shifts part time at a hospital laundry, he worked alongside a woman in her fifties—unadorned, sweet-natured, and with long gray-black hair that was her pride. Nights, Hebert frequented the beer bar in Keene, New Hampshire, where he encountered a sassy, self-empowered, forty-something bleached blonde who could bamboozle any man she met. Borrowing qualities from these women, Hebert would shape one of his most memorable characters: Estelle, the "witch" of the Jordan clan. A major character in earlier Darby novels A Little More Than Kin and Whisper My Name, Estelle takes center stage in The Passion of Estelle Jordan. Presently she is sliding into late middle age, drawn to two lovers who could not be more different: the widowed farmer Avalon Hillary and a mysterious young punk Estelle calls Trans Am in honor of the car he drives. And there's a threat, not to Estelle—she can take care of herself—but to Noreen Cook, a younger woman Estelle sees as a version of her own secret, vulnerable self. Putting herself in Noreen's shoes to save her, Estelle may be in for way more than she bargained for. The Passion of Estelle Jordan, like that of Christ, is rife with sin, suffering, sacrifice, and perhaps redemption. The Passion of Estelle Jordan is for anyone—male or female—going through a change of life.
Whisper My Name

By Ernest Hebert

The institution of town meeting, the beauty of the landscape, and the enduring qualities of the architecture all give the New England town the power to shape the identity of its inhabitants—in a good way. This premise is put on trial—and to a vote—in Whisper My Name, the third novel in Hebert's Darby Chronicles. The story unfolds as seen through the eyes of three men: the reporter Roland LaChance, the farmer Avalon Hillary, and the founder of a land trust, Raphael "Reggie" Salmon. Magnus Mall, a national corporation, wants to buy the Hillary farm and transform the property into a mall to serve western New Hampshire and eastern Vermont. The aging Hillary is torn between the traditions of his family and "the thought of the money." LaChance is not only chasing down leads in his reportage on the mall—he's chasing down the story behind his own origins. Along the way he falls in love with Sheila "Soapy" Rayno, an aphasic girl from Darby whose origins are equally mysterious. As usual, the Jordan clan plays a pivotal role in this rousing tale of greed, power, and lust. This third novel in the Darby Chronicles will appeal to anyone interested in the clash of cultures in small-town America.
The Dogs of March

By Ernest Hebert

"His life had come to this: save a few deer from the jaws of dogs. He was a small man sent to perform a small task." Howard Elman is a man whose internal landscape is as disordered as his front yard, where native New Hampshire birches and maples mingle with a bullet-riddled washer, abandoned bathroom fixtures, and several junk cars. Howard, anti-hero of this first novel in Ernest Hebert's highly acclaimed Darby Chronicles, is a man who is tough and tender. Howard's battle against encroaching change symbolizes the class conflict between indigenous Granite Staters scratching out a living and citified immigrants with "college degrees and big bank accounts." Like the winter-weakened deer threatened by the dogs of March—the normally docile house pets whose instincts arouse them to chase and kill for sport—Howard, too, is sorely beset. The seven novels of Hebert's Darby Chronicles cover 35 years in the life of a small New England town as seen through the eyes of three families—the Elmans, the Salmons, and the Jordans—each representing a distinct social class. It all starts with The Dogs of March, cited for excellence in 1980 by the Hemingway Foundation (now the Pen Faulkner Award for Fiction).
Howard Elman's Farewell

By Ernest Hebert

Part Falstaff, part King Lear, but all American, Howard Elman was a fifty-something workingman when he burst onto the literary scene in The Dogs of March, the first novel of the Darby Chronicles. Now in this, its seventh installment, the Darby constable is an eighty-something widower who wants to do "a great thing" before he motors off into the sunset. Maybe Howard achieves this goal, but he manages it in strange, wonderful, and dangerous ways. On his quest he's aided, abetted, hindered, and befuddled by his middle-aged children, his hundred-year-old hermit friend Cooty Patterson, a voice in his head, and the person he loves most, his grandson, Birch Latour. At 24, Birch has returned to Darby with his friends to take over the stewardship of the Salmon Trust and to launch a video game, Darby Doomsday. At stake is the fate of Darby. And the world? Maybe. Howard Elman's Farewell begins as a coming of (old) age story, morphs into a murder mystery, expands into a family saga, and in the end might just follow Howard Elman into the spirit world. This is a novel for people who like New England fiction with humor, pathos, and just a touch of magical realism.