

helpful perspective that its subject deserves while illuminating fundamental questions which many readers share.

I have some minor quibbles with this volume. The “Chronology” is quite skimpy and should either have been expanded (doubled in size), or omitted. The bibliography contains the essential references, but it, too, could have been expanded to great advantage. Furthermore, there is no recognition of the need to include some indication of the current state of Dostoevskii studies in Russia. Given the history of his treatment especially during the Soviet period, it is disappointing not to find at least one essay by a leading Russian scholar of Dostoevskii. This would also be of particular service to those readers and scholars who do not read Russian, and there are many. While the editor defines his undertaking as an edited volume bringing together the insights of “some of the finest contemporary Western Dostoevskii scholars” (10), one is left to wonder about the reason for that self-imposed limitation. Finally, and this may be trivial, it seems puzzling that Leatherbarrow has opted for the transliterated spelling (Dostoevskii)—which I feel obliged to follow, while “Dostoevsky” is much more common in both popular and scholarly publications.

These caveats are minor on any scale. This volume will be useful for researchers, general readers, and for the undergraduate and graduate classroom.

Joanna Trollope

Brother and Sister

Toronto: McArthur and Company, 2004. Pp. 311. \$24.95

Reviewed by Nora Foster Stovel

Joanna Trollope—who writes historical romances under the pen name Caroline Harvey and who has authored *Britannia’s Daughters*, a study of women in the British Empire—has published a dozen novels in sixteen years: *The Choir*, *A Village Affair*, *A Passionate Man*, *The Rector’s Wife*, *The Men and the Girls*, *A Spanish Lover*, *The Best of Friends*, *Next of Kin*, *Other People’s Children*, *Marrying the Mistress*, *Girl from the South*, and, most recently, *Brother and Sister*. As the titles of her novels suggest, Trollope’s forte is family life in contemporary England, especially village life, often with an ecclesiastical flavor. Relationships and situations that appear unassailable are rocked by changes that demand adjustment and accommodation. Trollope excels at detailing the fallout of such seismic shocks.

Brother and Sister is no different. The titular characters, born of different mothers but adopted by the same parents, now married and settled with children of their own, have grown up unusually close, united by the knowledge that,

unlike other children, they were *chosen*. Suddenly Nathalie realizes that she has to know where she comes from, and she communicates that impulse to her brother David. Their quest takes each of them on a journey of discovery and self-discovery. What they do not anticipate is how the quest will affect their families—parents, spouses, and children—not to mention the families of their birth mothers. The changes that occur unleash tidal waves that spread ever-widening ripples through their entire lives, including their careers. Nathalie's husband, Steven Ross, proprietor of a design company, for example, opens the narrative as he "contemplated his small and satisfying empire" (2), but, by the conclusion of the novel, his empire will be shattered. David, a landscape designer, married to Marnie Dexter from Winnipeg, will decide to relocate his family home and business in Canada. How they get from here to there makes for intriguing reading.

Trollope has perfected the slow curve. Beginning with stability, her novels build gradually to considerable intensity, revealing the truth of persons and relationships. She maneuvers a community of families deftly, moving effortlessly from group to group in realistic but memorable domestic scenes. Her style of writing is immensely readable, and her ability to convey the nuances of real relationships and domestic life is unsurpassed.

Carol Jacobs and Henry Sussman, eds.

Acts of Narrative

Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003. Pp. 296. \$60.00 \$24.95

Reviewed by Daniel Punday

It is difficult not to be impressed by a collection of essays like *Acts of Narrative*. Its list of contributors is a mix of prominent critics and theorists. More than this, many of the essays included here are genuine contributions to specific areas of study within literary history and criticism. My personal favorites—which no doubt reflect my own theoretical interests—are W.J.T. Mitchell's discussion of place and landscape in terms of the "spatial designs of a period," Alan Liu's discussion of technology and literary history using the unlikely subject of Sir Phillip Sidney's "Apology for Poetry," and Tom Cohen's intriguing analysis of the language of tracking as a model for literary investigation in Faulkner's *Go Down Moses*. Indeed, while the broad topic announced by the collection's title might have leant itself to extremely general or theoretical essays, all of these essays have very particular foci. The freedom to focus on what seem to be quirky issues and texts allows these critics to do the sort of work for which they have become well known.