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The Making of a Counter-Culture Icon: Henry MIller's Dostoevsky

Maria Bloshteyn

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At first glance, the works of Fedor Dostoevsky (1821-1881) do not appear to have much in common with those of the controversial American writer Henry Miller (1891-1980). However, the influencer of Dostoevsky on Miller was, in fact, enormous and shaped the latter's view of the world, of literature, and of his own writing. *The Making of a Counter-Culture Icon* examines the obsession that Miller and his contemporaries, the so-called Villa Seurat circle, had with Dostoevsky, and the impact that this obsession had on their own work.

Renowned for his psychological treatment of characters, Dostoevsky became a model for Miller, Lawrence Durrell, and Anais Nin, interested as they were in developing a new kind of writing that would move beyond staid literary conventions. Maria Bloshteyn argues that, as Dostoevsky was concerned with representing the individual's perception of the self and the world, he became an archetype for Miller and the other members of the Villa Seurat circle, writers who were interested in precise psychological characterizations as well as intriguing narratives. Tracing the cross-cultural appropriation and (mis)interpretation of Dostoevsky's methods and philosophies by Miller, Durrell, and Nin, *The Making of a Counter-Culture Icon* gives invaluable insight into the early careers of the Villa Seurat writers and testifies to Dostoevsky's influence on twentieth-century literature.

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