An extremely political book, Demons is a testimonial of life in Imperial Russia in the late 19th century. As the revolutionary democrats begin to rise in Russia, different ideologies begin to collide. Dostoyevsky casts a critical eye on both the radical idealists, portraying their ideas and ideological foundation as demonic, and the conservative establishment's ineptitude in dealing with those ideas and their social consequences. This form of intellectual conservatism tied to the Slavophile movement of Dostoyevsky's day, called Pochvennichestvo, is seen to have continued on into its modern manifestation in individuals like Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. Dostoyevsky's novels focus on the idea that utopias and positivist ideas, in being utilitarian, were unrealistic and unobtainable. The book has five primary characters representing different ideologies. By exploring their differing philosophies, Dostoyevsky describes the political chaos seen in 19th century Russia.

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