Dostoevsky
and the Russian People

Linda Ivanits

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DOSTOEVSKY AND THE RUSSIAN PEOPLE

Russian popular culture and folklore were a central theme in Dostoevsky's work, and folklore imagery permeates his fiction. *Dostoevsky and the Russian People* is the most comprehensive study of the people and folklore in his art to date. Linda Ivanits investigates the integration of Dostoevsky's religious ideas and his use of folklore in his major fiction. She surveys the shifts in Dostoevsky's thinking about the Russian people throughout his life and offers comprehensive studies of the people and folklore in *Crime and Punishment*, *The Idiot*, *The Devils*, and *The Brothers Karamazov*. This important study will illuminate this unexplored aspect of his work, and will be of great interest to scholars and students of Russian and of comparative literature.

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For Anna, Ellen, and Jeffrey

Contents

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Note on transliteration, translation, and dates

The Library of Congress system of transliteration will be used for Russian items throughout. Except for Russian terms and titles in parentheses, this system will be modified slightly within the body of the text for the ease of readers who do not know Russian. Soft and hard signs will be removed ("Raskolnikov," rather than "Raskol'nikov"); final "yi" or "ii" will be rendered "y" ("Dostoevsky" rather than "Dostoevskii"), and initial "ia" and "iu" will be rendered "ya" and "yu" ("Yakushkin" rather than "Iakushkin").

Unless otherwise indicated, all references to Dostoevsky's works and letters will be to the Academy Edition prepared by G. M. Fridlender *et al.*: F. M. Dostoevskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridtsati tomakh* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1972–90). Most notations will be indicated in the text by volume number and page (14: 69) or, in the case of the final three double volumes, by volume, book, and page (28, 2: 33); in the notes they will be indicated by PSS, volume, and page (PSS 14: 69). Translations are my own unless noted otherwise.

For the most part, dates for Dostoevsky's life and letters are given according to the Julian calendar ("Old Style"). For letters to Russia from Europe both the Old and the New Styles (Gregorian calendar) are indicated (Letter to A. N. Maikov of August 16/28, 1867). For entries in the *Notebooks* occurring while Dostoevsky was in Europe, unless otherwise indicated, I use New Style in conformity with his practice.

Biblical quotations are from the New English Bible and indicated by book, chapter, and verse (John 12: 24).

Introduction: the people in Dostoevsky's art and thought

Readers of Dostoevsky will recall the dramatic events in the cell of Father Zosima that initiate the action of *The Brothers Karamazov*. The Karamazov family has gathered at the monastery where the youngest son Alesha is a novice so that the saintly monk can resolve a feud between the eldest son Dmitry and his father Fedor Pavlovich. They are an unlikely assortment of visitors. Fedor Pavlovich, his son Ivan, and their distant relative Miusov are non-believers who have come largely out of curiosity. Dmitry alone takes the meeting seriously, but his arrival is delayed for most of the scene. During his absence, Old Karamazov spouts travesties of biblical verses, Zosima steps out to visit a group of peasant women, and the entire company engages in a heated discussion of an article that Ivan wrote about ecclesiastical courts. Dmitry arrives, asks Father Zosima's blessing, and sits down; then the conversation turns to Ivan's thesis that if God does not exist, everything is permitted. Sensing that Ivan is in the midst of a great spiritual struggle, Zosima blesses him. Suddenly Fedor Pavlovich begins shouting scandalous accusations against Dmitry, who in turn cries out: "Why does such a man live? . . . Can one even allow him to defile the earth with his presence?" Old Karamazov responds, "Are you listening, are you listening, monks, to the parricide?"(14: 69). Zosima unexpectedly rises from his place, falls on his knees and bows down before Dmitry. All the visitors rush out of the room.

Thus Dostoevsky propels his greatest novel into motion. Readers and characters alike, prompted by Zosima's enigmatic gesture, immediately suspect that the rivalry between Dmitry and his father will culminate in murder. They also surmise that Ivan's query about the consequences of life without God will be of major import. But following the whirlwind of developments in the elder's cell, Zosima's visit with the peasant women remains only a faint and somewhat puzzling recollection. This scene had briefly shifted the thrust of the narrative from the modern world of rational argumentation and psychological nuance, which the major characters

inhabit, to the antiquated world of the Russian village. When Zosima left his cell, he visited a *klikusha* or woman who shrieks because, according to popular belief, a devil sits inside her; another woman who practiced sorcery to find out if her son was alive; another whose speech had acquired the sing-song rhythms of a folk lament from grief for her dead child; another who murdered her abusive husband; and another who simply smiled while holding her baby girl for Zosima to bless.

What connection could a group of wailing, lower-class women have with the mayhem in the Karamazov household? No doubt Dostoevsky included them in the tumultuous opening of his story to slow down the momentum and give his readers breathing space. In any case, the women round out the picture of monastery life. But do they have any connection with the murder of Fedor Karamazov? Or with the great issues of freedom and totalitarianism that Ivan will raise in his Grand Inquisitor? Indeed they do. Like most of Dostoevsky's characters from the common people, the peasant women of *The Brothers Karamazov* represent a worldview that runs counter to the secularism of the upper classes. As this book will argue, one cannot speak meaningfully about the fundamental issues of human existence in Dostoevsky's mature fiction without taking these people – the Russian *narod* – into account. At best the people exhibit a simple (some would argue simplistic) Christianity that turns on charity; at their worst they embody a primal brutality that manifests itself in wife-beating and throat-cutting. In either case, a vision of reality that encompasses more than earthly life permeates the thinking of Dostoevsky's people and radically differentiates them from most of his educated, upper-class heroes.

The *narod* seldom absorbs the reader's interest in Dostoevsky's novels. The writer tends to keep the people in the background where they constitute secondary or even tertiary characters. His main protagonists are attractive young men from the upper classes who are, for the most part, under the sway of western ideas. Their stories bring us face to face with questions that the Russians termed both "accursed" and "eternal" – the nature of good and evil, the meaning of human freedom, the existence of God. Readers still quiver as they live through Raskolnikov's murder of the old pawnbroker in *Crime and Punishment*; they brood over the failure of goodness in the story of Prince Myshkin of *The Idiot*; they identify with the brilliantly rebellious Ivan Karamazov and argue endlessly about whether his creator was on the side of the Grand Inquisitor or Christ. But I think it is fair to claim that they are not overly concerned about the common people.

In contrast to his fiction, Dostoevsky's journalism highlights the *narod*. The "thick" monthlies *Time* and *Epoch* that he published with his brother

Mikhail in the early 1860s advanced a "native soil" ideology that called for bridging the historic gap between the upper classes and the masses. In *The Diary of a Writer* of the 1870s, the people of post-Emancipation Russia occupy center stage. Dostoevsky harps on the theme of their moral superiority to the intelligentsia, which, supposedly, has succumbed to the allure of western European materialism (22: 43). The tone of the *Diary* often seems harsh and doctrinaire when compared with that of his novels. Educated Russians, Dostoevsky pontificated, should "bow down before the people's truth and recognize it as the truth even if, God forbid, it should come in part from the Lives of Saints" (22: 45). After all, he argued, the illiterate folk had preserved a true knowledge of Christ:

> They say that the Russian people know the Gospels poorly and don't know the basic teachings of the faith. That's so, of course, but they know Christ and have carried him in their hearts from time immemorial. There is no doubt about this. How is a true understanding of Christ possible without learning about the faith? That's another question. But a heartfelt knowledge of Christ and a true understanding about him exists completely. It is passed from generation to generation and has fused with the hearts of the people. It may be that Christ is the only love of the Russian people, and they love his image in their peculiar way, that is to the point of suffering. (21: 38)

Now and then, statements about the people similar to the above excerpt from the *Diary* surface in Dostoevsky's fiction. In *The Devils*, Ivan Shatov cries out: "The only God-bearing people is the Russian people" (10: 200). Prince Myshkin delivers a tirade claiming that Roman Catholicism is the religion of the Antichrist and that a Russian who loses the native soil under his feet loses God (8: 450–53). Father Zosima, like Shatov, terms the Russian people "God-bearing," though his tone is far milder. Considering the relentlessness with which the *Diary* pursues the theme of the decadence of the West and the moral superiority of the people, one can only be amazed by the relative infrequency of such statements in the novels.

Yet the *narod* is every bit as important to Dostoevsky's fiction as to his journalism. Its presence or absence affects the working out of the "accursed" questions. In Dostoevsky's great novels, however, the technique for handling the people and their ethic differs from that of *The Diary of a Writer* and, for that matter, from that he employs in creating his intellectual heroes. On the primary level of plot, the writer tends to shift the emphasis away from the people. At the same time, he crowds the shadows of his fictional world with servants, tradespeople, and peasants, whom readers are prone to dismiss as simply constituting a veneer of local color that renders the novels truly *Russian*. A multitude of street people inhabits the seedy section of

St. Petersburg where *Crime and Punishment* takes place. *The Devils* and *The Brothers Karamazov* contain large numbers of servants who attend to the everyday needs of the upper classes and function as conduits of information. Both novels contain a few highly conspicuous peasants. The escaped convict Fedka of *The Devils* is a former serf who was dispatched to the army to pay gambling debts; he robs churches, cuts throats, and, at the same time, spends his nights listening to readings of the Apocalypse. In *The Brothers Karamazov* the murderer Smerdiakov belongs by birth to the people; he is the son of an idiot girl whom the townspeople called "Stinking Lizaveta" and revered as a holy fool.

The eccentricity of such characters as Fedka and Stinking Lizaveta catches our attention and perplexes us. But most of Dostoevsky's lower-class characters are mentioned solely in conjunction with major personages. If studies of his great novels of the 1860s and 1870s have tended to ignore them, it is not just because they are inconspicuous; it is equally because they lack the prime feature that we postulate as a mark of significant characters – self-consciousness.[1] Dostoevsky does not allow us to enter the minds of his common people, and they usually do not tell us what they think. Symbol and innuendo rather than internal monologue and direct statement open up their world, and folklore imagery, much of which has a religious coloring, plays a major role. Allusions to particular narratives or songs often conceal the ethical perspective of the *narod*. While the people's point of view is less evident than, say, arguments for a rational restructuring of society, the moral vision that it encodes bears directly on the central spiritual dilemma of the novels.

In *Crime and Punishment*, for example, major characters discuss the hypotheses that crime reflects an aberrant social structure and that there exist extraordinary people to whom crime is permitted (the Napoleonic theory). Both these positions serve as possible motives for Raskolnikov's murder. But the text also points to legends and spiritual songs that embody popular notions about crime. In coming to grips with his deed and his prospects for reintegration into the human community, Raskolnikov must weigh the people's perspective against modish environmental and Napoleonic theories. None of Dostoevsky's novels contains a greater abundance of folk imagery than *The Brothers Karamazov*. Folklore patterning and motifs help bring the three Karamazov brothers as well as Grushenka and Smerdiakov into sharper relief. Popular notions enter into such key scenes as the murder of Old Karamazov, the death and putrefaction of Father Zosima, and Dmitry's trial; they touch on the novel's central questions of suffering, justice, and resurrection.

Prince Myshkin's resemblance to Christ constitutes a fundamental issue in *The Idiot*. In evaluating this relationship it is important to consider the role of legends about Christ walking the Russian countryside as a beggar. The portrayal of Nikolay Stavrogin, the focal character of *The Devils*, hinges in part on comparisons with heroes of the popular tradition. But *The Idiot* and *The Devils*, which were written, for the most part, between 1867 and 1871 during Dostoevsky's self-exile in western Europe, display a much darker religious vision than *Crime and Punishment* and *The Brothers Karamazov*. Dostoevsky knew who Raskolnikov was when he began *Crime and Punishment*; from the inception of *The Brothers Karamazov* he had a firm grasp on Dmitry, Ivan, and Alesha. The *Notebooks* to *The Idiot* and *The Devils* indicate that the characters of Myshkin and Stavrogin eluded him, and in the finished texts the question of just who they are becomes the central issue. The wide array of folklore imagery accompanying them embeds fundamental religious and political questions, yet masks rather than reveals the true nature of the heroes. When the masks fall, the reader is confronted with a spiritual void.

The present book is a study of the *narod* in Dostoevsky's art and thought. Few would dispute the people's centrality for Dostoevsky. One of the great "truths" about this writer is that after spending four years in a Siberian stockade side by side with the common people, they came to occupy a pivotal role in his thinking. As G. M. Fridlender remarks, "The people (*narod*), their moral and spiritual life, their impulses . . . – this is the reference point that Dostoevsky tried to follow and on which hung his social position and his ethical pathos."[2] It is equally true, as many have pointed out, that Dostoevsky's vision of reality was fundamentally religious and focused on the image of Christ.[3] Generations of readers have been inspired by his creative representations of the workings of the divine in human life and have glimpsed their own search for faith in the tortuous paths of his heroes. This book is primarily a discussion of the interconnection between the *narod* and Christianity in the four great novels of the 1860s and 1870s. Along the way, it also looks at *Notes from the House of the Dead* for clues about Dostoevsky's inner changes during Siberian incarceration and surveys the people of *The Diary of a Writer* and *The Adolescent* for his attitudes about them in the post-Reform era. While there are a number of commentaries that focus on Dostoevsky's Christianity and some that explore his ideas about the people or his use of folklore, few probe the artistic integration of these two strands in his work.[4]

My study proceeds from the premise that any talk of God in the mature Dostoevsky must include talk of the *narod*. But the issue is by no means as

straightforward as the writer's mandate to "bow down before the people's truth." The powerful scenes of peasant brutality and drunkenness appearing in his fiction and journalism suggest he may have been far less certain about the people's Christianity than the doctrinaire statements of the *Diary* would indicate. Moreover, by his own admission, he himself was tormented all his life by the question of God's existence (29, 1: 117). Dostoevsky struggled to believe in Christ and in the Christian essence of the Russian people, but at times his striving and the dark face of Russian reality were uneasy bedfellows.[5] His inner doubts, to a good extent, find reflection in the dark atmospheres of *The Idiot* and *The Devils*.

My methodology will involve close readings of text, bearing in mind that the Dostoevsky who steps forth as an overt champion of the people in *The Diary of a Writer* may seem quite different from the wily artist of the great novels. Imagery relating to his fictional *narod* can be double-edged and one must approach it with caution. Dostoevsky uses motifs from popular lore for characters that represent positive spiritual ideas (Sonia Marmeladova, Alesha Karamazov, and Father Zosima). But his art also abounds in travesties of the supposed holy, and some of the same patterns and images that appear in depictions of Sonia, Alesha, and Zosima accompany such counterfeit saints as Semen Yakovlevich, a fool for Christ in *The Devils*, and the monk Ferapont of *The Brothers Karamazov*.

Dostoevsky tends not to distinguish between Old Russian literature (especially apocrypha and saints' lives) and oral legends and songs as narratives that reflect the moral values of the people. On occasion he mingles folklore with biblical or hagiographic imagery in such a way as to create tension between their respective associations. In *Crime and Punishment*, for example, water is simultaneously a positive and a negative symbol. Biblical overtones connect it with the "living waters" of rebirth; but in popular notions water is the place where devils dwell, and from this perspective it is associated with suicide and darkness.[6] Both hagiographic canons and folklore imagery about the earth accompany the putrefaction of Father Zosima in *The Brothers Karamazov*. The model of the saint's life anticipates that the body of a holy man will give off a sweet fragrance and fail to decompose; folk beliefs, on the other hand, demand rapid decay as a sign of acceptability to Mother Earth.[7]

I shall follow the rule that in Dostoevsky's art it is not possible to know what a reference or motif means until its function within its own text is assessed. The same imagery can operate differently from one work to another. This is the case with legends about the wandering of Christ as a beggar in *The Idiot* and *The Brothers Karamazov*. Sometimes obvious

folklore imagery, such as Smerdiakov's song in *The Brothers Karamazov*, plays a far more superficial role than hidden allusions that are deeply embedded and have undergone severe transmutations.[8] In *Crime and Punishment* references to songs about the beggar Lazarus are almost invisible, while the text highlights the story of the resurrection of Lazarus from the Gospel of John. Yet both Lazaruses prove essential to Raskolnikov's regeneration.

My organization will be chronological. The initial chapter will sketch out background information about Dostoevsky's changing understanding of the people and his acquaintance with folklore prior to the mid 1860s when his major novels began to appear. A later chapter will examine the people in the mid 1870s. These two chapters will be concerned largely with Dostoevsky's thinking about the *narod*. Four chapters will focus on his greatest novels, *Crime and Punishment* (*Prestuplenie i nakazanie*, 1866), *The Idiot* (*Idiot*, 1868), *The Devils* (*Besy*, sometimes translated *The Possessed* or *The Demons*, 1871–72), and *The Brothers Karamazov* (*Brat'ia Karamazovy*, 1879–80). Unforgettable characters seeking answers to the fundamental questions about God and human nature entice us to read these masterpieces over and over again. I hope to offer new readings demonstrating how the presence of the people and folklore contributes to their probing of the eternal questions.

1

The face of the people, 1821–1865

Fedor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky's greatest fiction captures his own spiritual quandary, first as a liberal and revolutionary of the 1840s and then as a Christian apologist in the 1860s and 1870s. His novels juxtapose modish, rational blueprints for the betterment of society to the simple faith of the Russian people. By the late 1860s, Dostoevsky was arguing vehemently that the *narod*, however sinful and ignorant, had managed to preserve the image of Christ and that the upper classes, corrupted by western ideas, needed to learn from them. Two decades earlier he had placed his hopes for social change in the westward-looking intelligentsia and had rejected the notion that Russianness was to be found in pre-Petrine antiquities or among the superstitions of village folk. Between lay the central episodes in the formation of the mature writer – arrest, Siberian imprisonment, and exile.

This chapter will chart Dostoevsky's thinking about the Russian people and folklore prior to the writing of *Crime and Punishment* in the mid 1860s. Its first section will treat his childhood acquaintance with the *narod* and its traditions, the probable murder of his father at the hands of his serfs, and his ideas about the people in the 1840s. Dostoevsky's closest contact with the Russian people occurred between 1850 and 1854 when he was squeezed into filthy, putrid quarters side by side with common criminals in the Omsk Stockade. I shall examine his fictionalized autobiography *Notes from the House of the Dead* for shifts in his ideas about the *narod* and his own inner life during these turbulent years. Then I shall survey the period following his return to European Russia when, along with his brother Mikhail, he edited the journals *Time* and *Epoch*. During these crucial years in the early 1860s Dostoevsky became increasingly antagonistic to the materialist and rationalist notions he attributed to western Europe and prone to see the Russian *narod* as the repository of genuine Christianity. The chapter closes with a discussion of Dostoevsky and folklore.

BEFORE SIBERIA

Common people formed an integral part of Dostoevsky's environment from the time of his birth in 1821. He grew up on the edge of Moscow in a cramped apartment attached to the Mariinsky Hospital for the Poor, where his father Mikhail Andreevich was a resident physician. Thanks largely to the *Memoirs* of his younger brother Andrey we can piece together a rough picture of the servants and peasants the writer knew as a boy. Of the six or seven domestics who were a constant presence in the apartment, the most prominent was the housekeeper and nanny Alena Frolovna. Treated as a member of the family, this good-natured, corpulent woman entered the Dostoevskys' service in the early 1820s and remained until the death of Mikhail Andreevich in 1839. Never marrying and referring to herself as "Christ's bride," she stayed with the children at all times, leaving the premises of the hospital only rarely to spend a day with her sister. Although Alena Frolovna boasted that she was of the lower-middle class (*meshchanstvo*) and not "of the simple folk," there was little in her worldview separating her from the peasants. She even attributed periodic bouts of howling in her sleep to the choking of the house spirit of popular superstition (*domovoi*). When Dostoevsky's parents went out for the evening, the children, left in her care, sang, danced the circle dance, and played games of tag or blind man's buff, and their mother Maria Fedorovna would jokingly say, "Take care, Frolovna, that the children have a good time."[1] Some reports suggest that occasionally Alena Frolovna concealed the children's misbehavior from Mikhail Andreevich.[2] This kindly woman made a powerful impression on young Fedor, who noted many years later that she told wonderful tales and termed her a "true saint from the people" (22: 112; 24: 181).[3]

Andrey gives the names and duties of various other domestics, most of whom were serfs. David, the coachman, and his brother Fedor, who carried water, chopped wood, and took care of the stoves, were Ukrainians whom his father acquired prior to his marriage in 1819. The family had an excellent cook named Anna, but their laundress Vasilisa ran away, evidently homesick for her native village. At first the Dostoevskys used hired servants as maids. But in 1834 the pretty Vera, who sometimes took part in the children's games, was dismissed for having an affair with Maria Fedorovna's brother Mikhail. Mikhail Andreevich expelled his brother-in-law from the house, striking him on the face and probably shocking the children, who were not subjected to corporal punishment.[4] After this Maria Fedorovna brought three orphan girls from the villages of Darovoe and Cheremoshna to Moscow to help with the household. The eldest, Akulina, assisted Mikhail Andreevich in

his practice.[5] Maria Fedorovna became particularly fond of Arisha (Arina), who served as her personal maid and nursed her through her final illness; she requested that this girl be granted freedom after her death. The liveliest of the orphans was the "fireball" Katerina, who was the same age as the future writer.[6]

In addition to the regular servants, several wet nurses continued to visit the family after their duties ceased. Such visits served as story-telling occasions, and Andrey transmits a vivid picture of their festivity:

> The following picture takes place in my memories as if it were now: Nanny Alena Frolovna appears before Mama in the drawing room one winter morning and reports, "The wet nurse Lukeria has come." We boys run from the hall into the drawing room and clap our hands with joy. "Call her," says Mama. And so the bast shoemaker Lukeria appears. The first thing she does is pray before the icons and greet Mama; then she kisses all of us and we literally hang on her neck; then she gives us all our share of treats from the village such as buttermilk cookies. But after this she again withdraws to the kitchen: the children don't have time to spend with her since they must spend the morning at their studies. But now dusk is upon us, evening comes. Mama is busy in the drawing room; Papa is also in the drawing room busy writing prescriptions in case histories (for the hospital), of which he has a multitude to do each day, and we children are already awaiting the arrival of the wet nurse in the dark (unlit) hall. She appears; we all sit down on chairs in the dark, and the telling of tales commences. This pleasure lasted for three or four hours, and the tales were related almost in a whisper so as not to disturb our parents. There was such silence that one could hear the squeak of Father's pen. And what tales didn't we hear, the titles of all of which I don't remember now! There were some about the "Firebird," about "Alesha Popovich," about "Blue Beard," and about a lot else. I remember only that some tales seemed very terrifying to us. And we reacted to the tellers in a critical manner, noting, for example, that although nurse Varina knew more tales, she didn't tell them as well as Andriushina, or something like this.[7]

In addition to the tales of servants and wet nurses, the Dostoevsky children were familiar with the folktale collection *True and Tall Tales* (*Byli i nebylitsy*) by the Cossack Lugansky (a pseudonym of the great folklorist V. I. Dahl), and the three older brothers visited the carnival and observed first-hand various folk comedians and puppet shows.[8]

Besides the domestics of his immediate household, the future writer could observe the poor patients at the Mariinsky Hospital and the peasants of Darovoe and Cheremoshna, where he spent a good part of the summers between 1832 and 1836. In Moscow, the hospital's large garden with its pathways and linden trees served as a playground for the Dostoevsky children, and although they were prohibited from conversing with the patients, it

seems that the precocious Fedor spoke with them on the sly.[9] In the late 1870s Dostoevsky told of an atrocity occurring on the hospital grounds that left a profound mark on him. One of his playmates, the "frail, graceful" nine-year-old daughter of a cook or coachman, was raped by a drunk and bled to death.[10] A. I. Savelev, who served as a duty officer when Dostoevsky attended the Engineering Academy in St. Petersburg, had good reason to attribute the writer's compassion for the defenseless to his boyhood at the hospital where everyday he "could see poor people, beggars, and ragamuffins in front of his father's windows, in the yard, and on the staircases."[11] Since the hospital was located near a way station for convicts en route to Siberia, it is possible that the young Dostoevsky also observed convoys of prisoners.[12]

In later life Dostoevsky recalled the small village of Darovoe as a "place where everything was filled with the most precious memories" for him (25: 172). Andrey gives a vivid description of his brother's exhilaration on the two-day journeys to the country: "During these trips my brother Fedor was in a sort of feverish mood. He always took a seat on the driver's box. There wasn't one stop, even for a minute, during which my brother didn't jump down from the carriage and run around the nearby area or circle about Semen Shiroky [the driver] near the horses."[13] In the country young Fedor spent whole days talking with the peasants in the fields and sometimes helping with the plowing and harrowing. On one occasion, he ran home, a distance of several kilometers, to get a woman some water for her baby.[14] He often played with Andrey near a copse called Brykovo, which the family had dubbed "Fedia's Woods," and Andrey notes that they included village children as subordinates in their games. They had an "attendant" for fishing whose function was to dig for worms and bait the hooks. In the game of "savages," devised by the imaginative Fedor, the peasants played the role of villagers captured and taken prisoner by the "savage" Dostoevsky brothers, who had stripped almost naked and were appropriately "tattooed." Peasant children served as horses in the game of "troika," and, Andrey adds, since this game required diligent care and feeding of the "horses," the boys brought a certain portion of their daily meals to the "stables," located somewhere under a bush.[15] Some of these children, now men and women over fifty, seem to have been among the peasants the writer visited when he returned to Darovoe in 1877 after a forty-year absence.[16]

Andrey's depiction of summers in Darovoe has an idyllic ring and creates the impression that the surrounding countryside was picturesque. In fact, Darovoe and the adjoining Cheremoshna form a fairly drab landscape, and the tiny manor house in which the family lived was essentially a three-room

cottage with a thatched roof that, according to Leonid Grossman, resembled a Ukrainian peasant hut.[17] Even as a boy Fedor seems to have been aware of the harshness of village life. Darovoe had burnt to the ground in spring 1832 causing the death of Arisha's father. It resembled a grim wasteland with charred columns jutting out when the Dostoevsky family beheld it.[18] The orphan girl Agrafena was probably the writer's first acquaintance with a village fool. She spent her time walking about the fields uttering disconnected remarks about a child buried in the cemetery and took shelter in winter only under duress. Despite her idiocy Agrafena had been raped, and her baby had died soon after birth. Many years later Dostoevsky incorporated his recollections of the charred remains of Darovoe in the description of the burnt-out village of Dmitry Karamazov's dream. Aspects of Agrafena's story enter the portraits of Maria Lebiadkina of *The Devils* and Stinking Lizaveta of *The Brothers Karamazov*.[19] The writer also discerned occasional cruel streaks in the peasants. He recalled a houseboy who took pleasure in torturing animals and butchering the chickens for dinner. This child would climb along the thatched roof of the barn to seek out sparrows' nests so that he could twist the birds' heads off (22: 62). The best-known literary portrait from Darovoe is "Marey," the peasant Dostoevsky presents in *The Diary of a Writer* for February 1876 as an embodiment of the deep kindliness of the *narod*.[20] But the original "Marey," probably a villager named Mark who helped Maria Fedorovna with the cattle, did not fully correspond to the later image. The writer's notebooks mention that he had the "Tatar habit" of beating his mare across the eyes.[21]

Though our information about Dostoevsky's inner world as a child is scant, we should seek the roots of his sympathy for the poor and oppressed as well as his hatred of serfdom in these early years. He must have known that his stern father exhorted his mother to flog the peasants when they failed to follow orders and that such beatings were the norm in landowner–serf relationships; and he surely would have been aware of the social gap between Vera and his uncle Mikhail. At Chermak's boarding school in Moscow, which Fedor and his older brother Mikhail attended in the mid 1830s, the young Dostoevsky stood out among his peers for defending the vulnerable. V. M. Kachenovsky, who was five years his junior, recalled how the future writer protected him when older students harassed him and then recited stories to alleviate his homesickness.[22] Later, at the Engineering Academy, Dostoevsky and his friend Berezhetsky stood up for students subjected to hazing; and on one of their summer bivouacs near Peterhof, they took up a collection for the destitute peasants of the village of Staraia Kikenka.[23] V. S. Nechaeva thinks that questions about the entire Russian social order

must have ripened in the mind of Dostoevsky during his summers in Darovoe.[24] But he also saw violence and injustice elsewhere. In May 1837, while traveling to St. Petersburg with his father and Mikhail to prepare for the Military Engineering Academy, Dostoevsky witnessed a particularly brutal scene. He watched a courier strike his driver over and over on the back of his head with his fist as their troika galloped away from the way station (22: 28).[25]

After accompanying his older sons to St. Petersburg, Mikhail Andreevich, distraught without his wife, who had died in February 1837, retired from the service. Taking Katerina with him as his concubine, he moved to Darovoe and began drinking heavily. The circumstances of his death in early June 1839 are ambiguous. The official medical report lists a stroke as its cause. But Andrey's *Memoirs*, the account of the writer's daughter Liubov, and stories that Nechaeva and M. V. Volotskoy collected in Darovoe in June 1925 support the tradition that Mikhail Andreevich's serfs murdered him.[26] Dostoevsky makes no direct mention of the murder either at the time of its occurrence or later, but in any case the political sensitivity surrounding peasant assaults on landowners would have made it imperative to maintain silence. He must have discussed his father's death with his second wife Anna Grigorevna because she passed the story on to Liubov.[27] Andrey's *Memoirs* have been the major source for the murder story. Initially he was informed that his father died from a stroke, but when he guessed that something was amiss from cryptic remarks made in his presence, he was told that his father, enraged by some act of the peasants, began to shout at them, and the most daring among them responded with a crude remark, and then the rest, about fifteen, attacked him. Supposedly the neighbors V. F. Khotiaintsev and his wife told grandmother Olga Yakovlevna the story and advised covering it up since sending the entire male population of Cheremoshna to Siberia would deprive the orphans of their inheritance. Somehow, Andrey reports, the peasants found the "not insignificant" sum necessary to bribe the authorities, and the murder was hushed up.[28] Over the years Andrey seems to have learned far more than he was willing to write in his *Memoirs*, for he adds that he later heard many details from his sister Vera, whose family purchased the estate in the 1850s, from Alena Frolovna, who was in Darovoe at the time and saw the corpse, and from Arisha, whose relatives knew the story.

Fedor appears to have been the first brother to learn about their father's death, for in a letter that has not survived, he informed Mikhail. Mikhail's subsequent letter of June 30, 1939 to the Kumanin in-laws strongly hints at something out of the ordinary: "This week I received a letter from brother

Fedor informing me of the misfortune that has struck our family . . . I have not received any news from the village, and my brother writes very unclearly about everything that has happened; therefore I know almost nothing in detail . . . My God! My God! What a terrible death Papinka died! Two days on the field."[29] Most likely Mikhail learned the details of his father's death when he visited his Moscow relatives and Darovoe in fall 1841 in conjunction with his forthcoming marriage. When he returned to St. Petersburg with Andrey, who was to begin his studies at the Civil Engineering Academy, the two older brothers locked themselves in Fedor's room for several days and exiled Andrey to the room of Fedor's apartment mate. Nechaeva suggests that the reason for excluding Andrey from their conversation was not disdain for their little brother, as Andrey reports in his *Memoirs*, but their need to discuss the death of their father and other family business in private.[30]

Nechaeva has scrutinized the passages about managing the estate in the letters between Mikhail Andreevich and his wife and concluded that there is no reason to regard his severity as abnormal for the time of serfdom. But, she notes, the peasants' recollection of him as someone who flogged his people without grounds indicates that he became significantly harsher after Maria Fedorovna's death.[31] Nechaeva suspects that the general despondency of the peasants aggravated their inclination to do away with Mikhail Andreevich; she places his murder within the overall context of mounting unrest among the peasantry of central Russia, numerous fires resulting from drought, and fear that 1839 would be a famine year.[32] Less than two weeks before his death he answered Fedor's request for money in a letter that shows how desperate the situation at Darovoe was:

> The snow lay on the ground until May; consequently we had to feed the cattle somehow. The roofs were all laid bare for feed . . . From the beginning of spring up to this time there hasn't been even one drop of rain, not even dew! The heat, the terrible winds have destroyed everything. The winter fields are black, as if they hadn't even been sown; many of the fields have been plowed over and sown with oats. But this evidently won't help because even though it's already the end of May there isn't a shoot to be seen on account of the severe drought. This threatens us not only with ruin, but also with complete famine.[33]

In 1925, Nechaeva and Volotskoy spoke with Andrey's son, two daughters of Dostoevsky's sister Vera who had spent their lives in the village, and a number of peasants who had heard the story from their fathers. The peasants preserved the memory of Mikhail Andreevich as a "beast" and a person "with a dark soul" and of Maria Fedorovna as "kindhearted."[34] Though one

old man from Cheremoshna, evidently fearful of speaking openly, insisted that Mikhail Andreevich had died of a stroke, other peasants agreed to tell the story. The gist of these accounts was that virtually all the men of Cheremoshna had conspired to murder him, that a pretext was found to lure him into the village, and that it was done in such a way as to avoid leaving marks on the body. Nechaeva collected the following account from two elderly peasants of Darovoe, Andrey Savvushkin and Danilo Makarov:

> The Cheremoshna peasants took it into their heads to finish him off. Efimov, Mikhailov, Isaev, and Vasily Nikitin agreed among themselves. Now it doesn't matter – no one is alive, they rotted long ago. It's possible to tell about it. It was the Peter-Paul fast, just about this time; the peasants were hauling manure. The sun was already high up in the sky, the master (*barin*) asked whether everybody had gone out to work. They told him that four people from Cheremoshna had not gone; they claimed to be sick. "Well, I'll just cure them!" He ordered the carriage to be harnessed. And he had a stick this big. He came and the peasants were already standing outside. "Why aren't you going?" "We're too weak," they said. He went after one with his stick, then another. They went into the yard; he went after them. Here Vasily Nikitin, who was so healthy and tall, grabbed him by the arm from behind, and the others stood around and got scared. Vasily shouted to them, "Why are you standing there? What did we agree for?" The peasants threw themselves at him, gagged him and grabbed him where necessary so that there wouldn't be any marks. Then they carted him away, dumped him in the field on the road from Cheremoshna to Darovoe. And the driver David had been cued. He left the master and went to Monogarovo for the priest, but he didn't stop off at Darovoe. The priest came, the master was breathing, but had already lost consciousness. The priest received his silent (*glukhaia*) confession. He knew, but he concealed it. He didn't give the peasants away. Investigators came later from Kashira; they questioned everybody; they tried to find out, but they didn't learn anything. He supposedly died of a stroke; he used to have strokes.[35]

Savvushkin and Makarov related the story to Volotskoy as well. This time they included the detail that David warned Mikhail Andreevich not to go because something might happen to him, but the latter shouted back, "What, you don't want me to 'cure' them? Hitch up and be lively about it."[36]

All indications are that Dostoevsky believed the murder story. If, as is likely, he heard an account of his father's death similar to the one above, he would have known some of the participants in the story from summers in the village. The driver, David, who must have passed on the story to the other domestics, had been an integral part of the household in which he grew up. David was not a peasant of Darovoe or Cheremoshna and may have warned Dostoevsky's father not to go after the men who refused to work;

even so he played his part and did not give the murderers away afterward. To some extent, Nechaeva conjectures, the Cheremoshna peasants may have been prompted by Mikhail Andreevich's exercise of seignorial rights over Katerina. She connects the "Efimov" of the oral history above with Katerina's uncle, Efim Maksimov, in whose house the orphan girl had grown up and in whose yard the murder may have taken place and notes that the killers entering the oral accounts were related to each other either by blood or marriage.[37] His father's relationship with a girl who had probably been a playmate several years earlier would have deeply disturbed Dostoevsky.[38] He later omitted a story about a serf's murder of his master from *Notes from the House of the Dead* – largely for reasons of censorship, but possibly in part because the story was strangely reminiscent of that surrounding the death of Mikhail Andreevich. It concerned a prisoner in the Omsk Stockade whose wife had been abducted and raped by the widowed master on their wedding day. Moved by his wife's despondency, the peasant prepared an axe and watched for an opportunity to avenge her. Fellow villagers may have suspected something when they saw him lingering around the master's estate, but the prisoner knew that they would have treated a threat to the person of a despised master as none of their business. An opportunity arose, and the peasant struck his master in the head with the axe and then surrendered to the authorities.[39]

The murder story must have provided Dostoevsky with abundant material to ponder during the following decade, when he moved in circles opposed to serfdom, and in the stockade, when he formed the habit of lying on his plank bed reviewing the details of his past. Joseph Frank suspects that the impassioned diatribes against serfdom for which he was known in the 1840s reflect remorse for causing his father to mistreat his peasants in order to satisfy his own extravagant demands.[40] Given the silence surrounding the murder, it is difficult to ascertain the writer's feelings and its psychological impact precisely. Surely it must have fed his understanding of the order of serfdom as inherently unjust; but it equally must have served as a graphic demonstration of the violent reprisals the *narod* could inflict on its oppressors. He remembered Darovoe fondly, and the thinly veiled descriptions of the village in his art tend to be wistful recollections of a golden past.[41] We can assume that his childhood interactions with the villagers were positive and that he nurtured a deep sympathy for them. But the name "Cheremoshna" evidently had a sinister ring for him; in *The Brothers Karamazov* it appears as "Chermashnia" and signals Ivan's desire for his father's death. If Dostoevsky believed that Mikhail Andreevich's murder was deliberate and carefully planned in advance, he would have been puzzled by the role of

David and by the ability of so many peasants, each summoned for inquiry by the investigating committee, to coordinate a story and then maintain a "conspiracy of silence" over many years. While it is doubtful that he had an answer in the 1840s, after Siberia he would have attributed it to the chasm that serfdom had created between the *narod* and the upper classes. As he wrote to his brother Mikhail on leaving prison in 1854, "Their hatred of the nobility exceeds all limits . . . They would have eaten us up if they had been allowed" (28, 1: 169).

In spring 1847, Dostoevsky began attending Friday meetings at the apartment of M. V. Butashevich-Petrashevsky, where visitors debated the feasibility of French socialist systems in Russia and took advantage of the wide array of forbidden books in their host's library. He was arrested along with other members of the Petrashevsky Circle in April 1849 and received a death sentence, which at the last minute was commuted to Siberian imprisonment and exile. On Christmas Eve 1849, Dostoevsky was fitted with leg irons and taken from St. Petersburg in an open sleigh, not to return for ten years. In actuality the writer had managed to enmesh himself far more deeply in revolutionary schemes than almost anyone realized at the time.[42] He had joined a secret society formed by the enigmatic Nikolay Speshnev, who also attended Petrashevsky's Fridays, for the purpose of overthrowing the existing order. Dostoevsky's participation in this group became generally known only in 1922 when a letter of his friend Apollon Maikov written in 1885 to P. A. Viskovatov was published (18: 364).[43] Maikov describes Dostoevsky "sitting in front of his friends in his nightshirt like the dying Socrates" arguing that Speshnev's scheme represented a sacred duty to "save the fatherland" (18: 192).

Only profound revulsion for the inhumanity of serfdom could have induced the promising young writer, whose first novel *Poor Folk* (*Bednye liudi*) had a few years earlier been favorably received by the great critic V. G. Belinsky, to risk his career and very life through membership in a conspiracy. There is no firm indication that he nourished hatred toward the monarchial system per se or that his socialist convictions were especially strong. His statements about French socialism in his deposition for the Investigating Commission probably reflect his actual feelings: he claimed that Fourierism in Russia "could exist only in the uncut pages of a book or in a soft, dreamy soul without spite" (18: 133). In any case, as V. L. Komarovich and others have stressed, the particular brand of socialism toward which Dostoevsky gravitated was based largely on the Gospels and its compassion for the downtrodden penetrated his literary works from *Poor Folk* to *The*

Brothers Karamazov.[44] The writer's contemporaries noted his deep feeling for victims of injustice. Savelev recollected that when Dostoevsky served as an engineering officer at Kronstadt, he could not bear to see peasant prisoners in chains working on the grounds or to witness military punishments.[45] Those who remembered Dostoevsky from Petrashevsky's Fridays attested that he remained silent when discussion concerned the various details of socialist systems, but was prone to impassioned outbursts when the plight of the peasants was mentioned. I. M. Debù recalled:

> I see before me as if it were now Fedor Mikhailovich at one of Petrashevsky's evenings, I see and hear him telling about how a sergeant of the Finnish regiment who took vengeance on the company commander for his barbarian treatment of his comrades was made to run the gauntlet or how landowners behave with their serfs.[46]

But though Dostoevsky was willing to risk death to liberate the serfs, his attitude toward them, like that of many other Westernizers of this time, seems to have been one of condescension and scorn for their low cultural level. In the 1840s Dostoevsky did not attribute a religious essence to the Russian people; he regarded them as ignorant and superstitious rather than spiritually superior to the educated classes. A feuilleton he wrote in Spring/Summer 1847 for the *St. Petersburg News* (*Sanktpeterburgskie vedomosti*) contains revealing statements in this regard. He takes issue with an unnamed Frenchman (probably the Marquis de Custine) who views Moscow as quintessentially Russian and Petersburg as a city without character.[47] In his argument he places himself in the camp of the Westernizers and against a Slavophile idealization of pre-Petrine Russia:

> Yes, the Frenchman sees Russian nationality precisely where very many wish to see it at the present time, that is, in the dead letter, in an outlived idea, in a heap of rocks, supposedly reminiscent of ancient Rus and, finally, in a blind, wholehearted turning to our dense, native olden times. Without a doubt the Kremlin is a highly revered monument of a bygone age. It is an antiquarian rarity at which one looks with particular curiosity and with great respect; but in what way it is perfectly national – this we cannot understand. There are certain national monuments that have outlived their time and have ceased to be national. They will say: the Russian people (*narod*) know the Moscow Kremlin; they are religious and converge on it from all points in Russia to kiss the relics of the Moscow wonderworkers. Fine, but there is nothing peculiar in this: the people (*narod*) go in droves to pray in Kiev, on Solovetsky Island, Lake Ladoga, Mount Athos, Jerusalem, everywhere. (18: 25)

This depreciatory stance contrasts sharply with statements Dostoevsky would make in the 1870s, when he would praise the people for clinging

to their simple faith in the face of the false notions of the intelligentsia and assert that childhood trips to the Kremlin instilled a feeling of Russian pride in him (21: 134).

THE DEAD HOUSE

During his four years in the Omsk Stockade, Dostoevsky was isolated from the outside world: he received no letters from his family, he rarely had visitors, and only at the end did he obtain a few books. We lack direct evidence about his inner life for this crucial period when the convictions that would inform his greatest art began to coalesce, and we must rely on his quasi-autobiographical *Notes from the House of the Dead* (*Zapiski iz mertvogo doma*, 1862, hereafter *House of the Dead*), the letters that he sent to his brother Mikhail and N. D. Fonvizina on exiting prison, and later remarks. A great deal of speculation exists concerning what might have happened. Since there is little evidence that Dostoevsky lost his belief in God or immortality in the 1840s, we can dismiss the notion that he experienced a conversion to Christianity in prison.[48] Frank believes that the writer underwent what amounted to "a 'leap of faith' in the moral beauty of the Russian peasantry, its infinite capacity to love and forgive those who had for so long sinned against it."[49] While Dostoevsky's four years of forced labor constituted his most prolonged and intimate contact with the *narod*, it is doubtful that he detected either the people's moral beauty or their capacity to forgive while he was still in the stockade. Instead he came to know the depth of their hatred of the upper classes, their lawlessness and capacity for brutality and, at the same time, their fair-mindedness and inventiveness. Edward Wasiolek is closer to the mark in claiming that in Siberia the writer discovered not "the golden heart" of the Russian people, but their "moral abyss"; he learned that the "the beast and the executioner" are truly a part of human nature.[50]

Dostoevsky set off for Siberia imagining that he had been struggling for the liberation of the oppressed *narod*. But forced labor soon revealed that the very people for whom he was suffering imprisonment rejected him because he was a "master" (*barin*). In the stockade he witnessed countless acts of gratuitous brutality and listened to many personal stories and folk legends. His life among the people revealed in a new way the devastating stamp of serfdom and erased any notion that the *narod* would follow the upper classes into a new order.[51] Though he emerged from the Dead House greatly changed, it took him at least a decade to process the meaning of his prison experience.[52] The two remarkable letters he wrote on exiting the stockade in

early 1854 offer a rough gauge of his thinking under the immediate impact of forced labor. His letter to Mikhail displays ambivalent feelings about the people. He complains of their crudeness and unremitting hostility toward the nobility, whom he still regards as morally superior to the lower classes (28, 1: 169–70). But barely a page later he notes that even among criminals he found people with deep, powerful, and beautiful characters and hints that the *narod* would loom large in his future art: "How many folk types and characters I carried out of prison with me! . . . How many stories of tramps and bandits and in general of this entire dark, woeful way of life! It will suffice for entire volumes. In general my time has not been wasted. Even if I didn't get to know Russia, I got to know the Russian people well and perhaps better than many know them" (28, 1: 172–73).

In his well-known letter of the same time to N. D. Fonvizina, the wife of a Decembrist, the writer terms himself a "child of [his] age, a child of unbelief and doubt," yet one who knows moments of peace that have caused him to forge a sacred symbol of faith for himself: "To believe that there is nothing more beautiful, deeper, more appealing, wiser, more courageous, and more perfect than Christ, and not only that there is not, but . . . that there cannot be. What's more, even if someone proved to me that Christ was outside the truth, and *in reality* the truth were outside Christ, then I should prefer to remain with Christ than with the truth" (28, 1: 176, Dostoevsky's emphasis). These letters transmit a vivid picture of the external hardships of prison life and of the writer's mixed emotions about his fellow inmates, and they also speak of his personal spiritual tribulations, the centrality of Christ for him, and his tendency to place belief outside the domain of rational argumentation.[53] But, significantly, they do not connect the *narod* and Christ.

Both as a glimpse at the processes effecting his own changing convictions and as a foretaste of the overpowering urge toward destruction that he dramatizes in his major novels, *House of the Dead* occupies a pivotal place in the writer's *oeuvre*. The work introduces a motley assortment of prisoners from the far reaches of the Russian Empire during the reign of Nicholas I; as the inmates phrased it, "The devil wore out three pairs of bast shoes getting us all together in one bundle" (4: 13).[54] Dostoevsky purports to be transmitting the notes of Alexander Petrovich Gorianchikov, who spent ten years in the Dead House for murdering his wife. Yet as the text unfolds, it becomes apparent that the true narrator is, like the author, a political prisoner. Though not a frequent churchgoer, Gorianchikov is an educated gentleman who reads the bible and adheres to the same Christian moral principles that one can assume of the reader. He is shocked to

find these principles utterly absent in most of the prisoners, who show no remorse for brutal crimes, steal from each other without qualms, and find nothing wrong with denouncing their fellow inmates to the authorities. Gradually, in addition to corruption, Gorianchikov comes to perceive wit and ingenuity in the people. Thus, while the *House of the Dead* contains the experiences of the "real" Dostoevsky, the material is reordered in such a way as to convince the reader that, "One has only to remove the superficial crust on the surface and look more closely at the kernel itself, more closely and without prejudices, and one will see in the *narod* such things as one would never have imagined" (4: 121–22). The notes – or "scenes" as Gorianchikov dubs them – span the distance from the revulsion produced by the stockade's initial impact to the conviction that there exist within the Dead House people capable of deep feeling and thought (4: 178–79).[55]

For Dostoevsky personally, Siberia was the watershed in his understanding of the Russian people, and in the late 1860s and 1870s he tended to anchor his claim that they were aware of themselves as sinners and had preserved the image of Christ for the godless world on his first-hand contact with them in the Omsk Stockade. It is therefore important to stress that the narrator of *House of the Dead* makes no such assertion. When he is preparing to leave prison, he admits to himself that he has lived among a remarkable people: "After all, it may be that this people is the most gifted, the most powerful of all our people. But powerful forces perished in vain, perished abnormally, unlawfully, irrevocably" (4: 231). Strength and talent despite an abysmal history of drunkenness, violence and enslavement are what the narrator discerns. But if the extreme claims that Dostoevsky would later make about the *narod* are lacking in *House of the Dead*, religious querying nonetheless permeates the text. The narrator is keenly interested in the imprint of Christianity on the people, and readers cannot help sensing that his commentary on prison life embeds the story of his own spiritual trial. His technique couples a seemingly documentary presentation of horror and debauch with a highly ambiguous network of religious imagery that probes not only whether genuine moral feeling exists within the hearts of the convicts, but, ultimately, whether God can exist at all in this hell on earth. While the weight of the imagery seems to argue for the presence of Christ in the Dead House, the distorted and misapplied quality of much of it creates leeway for a very different conclusion – that Christian notions are a soothing illusion. We shall examine this imagery for clues about the shifts occurring in the writer's own spiritual life.

Dostoevsky builds the possibility for conflicting readings into the overall framing of *House of the Dead*. In the preface the putative editor introduces

Gorianchikov as a bitter and anti-social Siberian settler and explains that he acquired the latter's notes after his sudden death. The notes begin and end with scenes of leaving the stockade. The early pages describe a man's departure after twenty years of forced labor:

> There were people who remembered how he entered the stockade for the first time; he was young, carefree and didn't think either about his crime or his punishment. He left a gray old man with a gloomy and sad face. He silently made the rounds of all six of our barracks. Entering each barrack, he prayed before the icon and then bowed low, from the waist, to his comrades, asking them not to remember evil against him. (4: 10)

The narrator's own leave-taking echoes the above scene: "On the eve of the very last day at dusk I walked the entire length of the fence for the last time . . . On the next morning, before they went out to work . . . I made the rounds of all the barracks to say farewell to all the prisoners" (4: 230, 231). A religious dimension is added when his leg irons fall off. The prisoners say, "Well, go with God! With God," and he thinks, "Yes, with God. Freedom, new life, resurrection from the dead . . . what a glorious moment!" (4: 232).

It seems, then, that the ordeal of penal servitude has left the narrator, like the old man, more thoughtful and, perhaps, devout. But do his thoughts, which are the final words of the text, portend resurrection and new life? Gary Saul Morson believes that our answer depends on whether we understand them as belonging to the fictional Gorianchikov or to Dostoevsky. If we take them as Gorianchikov's, then his dreary post-prison life "of tortured isolation and perhaps insanity," as told in the preface, infects the narrative with despair and seems to rob it of positive meaning; but if we read it as Dostoevsky's own memoir, then the promise of new life stands.[56]

Religious gestures and symbols customary in village practice crop up on practically every page of *House of the Dead*. Some of the older inmates make the sign of the cross in the morning. Prior to their drunken binges convicts place candles before the icons that can be found in each barrack. The people casually utter the phrase "God saved you" when the stockade's cruel major escapes the prisoner Petrov's knife and when the giant, spider-like Tatar Gazin is suddenly distracted from dropping a heavy tray on Gorianchikov (*Sam bog spas*, 4: 14; *Nu, bog spas*, 4: 42). A typical prison song contains the lines, "You can't see behind the walls / How we live in here; / God, the heavenly creator, is with us, / Even here we will not perish" (4: 111). Given the overall debauchery in the stockade, common religious objects and acts may well point to the unconscious stamp of tradition rather than

to genuine faith. But other details suggest a certain reverence beneath the convicts' hardened exteriors. Those who do not exhibit religious fervor tend to admire those who do: they respect an old Polish gentleman who falls on his knees in deep prayer after being flogged by mistake, and they esteem a bible-reading "holy fool" who from a thirst for suffering attacked the major with a brick. The people have a high regard for the Lezgin Nurra because of his integrity and his devoutness during the Muslim holy days, and they entrust their money to an Old Believer from the Starodubov settlement because they know he is completely honest. The moaning of this old man's prayers serves as a backdrop to the nightly wheezing and stench of the barracks. Part 1 closes with the narrator waking up in the middle of the night and hearing him chant, "Lord Jesus Christ, Have mercy on us!" (4:130).[57] In the hospital's prison ward the consumptive Ustiantsev's similar cry of "Lord, I have sinned!" breaks the nightly silence (4: 165). While outward displays of compunction violate the general tone of the Dead House, a few of the most desperate prisoners abandon this front in the nocturnal hours.

Some religious references in *House of the Dead* are couched in unlikely places and seem to constitute a travesty of the holy. The question of God's presence in the Dead House slips into the prisoners' taunting of the stockade's only Jew, Isay Fomich:

"Hey, Jew, you'll get flogged. You'll go to Siberia."
"But already I'm in Siberia."
"They'll send you even farther!"
"And will the Lord God (*pan bog*) be there?"
"Yes, he will. He will."
"Well, then so what. It'll be all right anywhere if only the Lord God will be there and money."
"Good fellow, Isay Fomich. You can see that he's a good fellow!" (4: 94)

Later, when asked why he shouts, weeps, and laughs while chanting his Sabbath prayers, Isay Fomich explains that he is crying over the loss of Jerusalem and rejoicing as he remembers the prophecy about the return of the Jews to the Holy City (4: 95). One cannot but agree with critics who find the portrayal of Isay Fomich anti-Semitic.[58] What is more, the treatment of his Sabbath contrasts sharply with the relatively sympathetic attitude toward expressions of Islam and Catholicism in the prison.[59] Yet Dostoevsky's artistic method is such that in the midst of this derision, he conceals central religious questions: is God really with this "lost" people, and will they ever, both symbolically and actually, return to their homeland?

Some scenes are so ghastly that they engender a feeling of nausea. When the door to the bathhouse steam room opens, the narrator has the impression that he has entered hell. Through the vapor he sees about a hundred men, naked, wearing leg irons, with shaved heads and huge welts on their backs from floggings, and so crowded together that it is difficult to step past them. They are sitting and standing in a stupor while whipping themselves with twigs and dousing with water; a continual stream of muck runs off them onto the floor, which is thick with slime (4: 98– 99). Petrov guides the narrator to a bench, soaps him all over, and then announces "And now I'm going to wash your tootsies (*nozhki*, 4: 99)." This scene suggests a skewed baptismal rite and a travesty on the Gospel story of Jesus washing Peter's feet (John 13: 6–9), with Petrov (whose name encodes "Peter") playing Christ to Gorianchikov.[60] The narrator is bathed in the convicts' grime and then enters into symbolic fellowship with them. Such a "washing" prepares him to be ritually re-clothed, which happens several weeks later when he puts on a filthy hospital gown containing the puss and lice of men who have been beaten. Is this, then, a warped "putting on Christ" by identifying with the suffering of the convicts who have been flogged?

The sensual nature of the bathhouse and the dressing gown render the above scenes among the most visceral in the entire text of *House of the Dead*. How convincingly, we might ask, can the words "new life" and "resurrection" ring after the impact of such utter filth and revulsion? Perhaps Robert Louis Jackson's contrast between disfiguration (*bezobrazie*) and primal image (*obraz*) as fundamental moral and aesthetic categories in Dostoevsky's art offers a possibility of glimpsing some hope in these two scenes, which in a dramatic way symbolize the tragedy and corruption of Russian popular life. Accordingly, they depict the monstrous, disfigured, but never fully lost image of the life hidden under the layers of debris and violence and awaiting restoration.[61] In the final analysis, however, such scenes retain their double-edged quality; they force us to choose between the gut physical evidence of moral horror and a deeply obscured potential for redemption.

Far less ambiguity attends almsgiving, an aspect of popular spirituality that the prisoners esteem. Though hardly new to Dostoevsky, who in the 1840s had been generous to the poor, the kindness of the local population toward convicts nonetheless struck his imagination. The narrator notes that the *narod* tended not to rebuke prisoners for their crimes and that their use of the word "unfortunate" (*neschastnyi*) instead of "villain" or "criminal" encapsulated their compassion for their suffering brothers (4: 18–19). Almsgiving is one facet of popular life from which Gorianchikov is not excluded. As he goes out to work for the first time, a man with a beard

gives five kopecks to a member of his work party, who, in turn, uses it to buy sweetbreads for everybody. Gorianchikov personally receives a coin from a widow and her daughter who come to the hospital to take leave of her dying husband. The little girl runs after him with the words, "Here, unfortunate, take a kopeck for the sake of Christ!" (4: 19). Such an incident in fact happened to Dostoevsky, who kept his coin for years and was deeply saddened when he lost it.[62] At Christmas and Easter, alms in the form of sweetbreads and other edibles pour into the prison. The prisoners behave reverentially toward the donations, and while they steal virtually everything else from one another, including bibles, they scrupulously share everything given in alms.

The events described in *House of the Dead* span the Christmas Fast (Advent), Christmas, Great Lent, Easter, and summer. The narrator stresses that his account pertains primarily to his first year in the Dead House for which his memory is distinct; after this one day seemed to flow into another (4: 220). Dostoevsky did not arrive at the stockade until late January 1850. No doubt he shifts Gorianchikov's entrance back to December to coordinate the bulk of his story with the Church's major celebrations of the life of Christ and, especially, to prompt a reading of its events vis-à-vis the Passion and Resurrection.[63] This time frame allows his narrator to descend into "hell," as he terms the Dead House, during the year's darkest days (4: 12).[64] The first part opens with his initial shock and alienation and concludes with the Christmas celebration and theatricals that mark his newfound appreciation of the people's ingenuity. The second part begins with late winter (Lenten) hospital scenes of death and beatings; these are followed by Easter and the summertime that instills a renewed longing for freedom. Now the account becomes less time-bound and less horrific and consists mainly of generalized descriptions of prison animals, a food protest, the Polish political prisoners, an attempted escape, and, finally, departure from the stockade.

The actual Christmas liturgy was brief. Prisoners waited for the priest to arrive before breaking their fast; he said prayers before an icon set up on a makeshift altar in the midst of the military barrack, sprinkled all the barracks with holy water, and held the cross for them to kiss (4: 109). After this they ate the foods that they had specially prepared and, of course, drank vodka. The narrator repeatedly suggests that the men had been anticipating something more, that there was a sense of disappointment. The real festive event of the season came a few days later with the theatricals, which offered a brief reprieve from the horror of prison life and caught up in a humorous key several major themes of *House of the Dead*: the gap between the gentry and

the people (especially the enactment of "Kedril the Glutton," a spoof pitting a clever, gluttonous servant against his master), flogging (a pantomime in which a miller whips his unfaithful wife and her lovers), and resurrection (another pantomime in which a corpse comes to life).[65]

Though mention of the cross in the Christmas liturgy is brief, as a sign that potentially imbues suffering with meaning, it casts a large shadow over the Dead House. In the "Lenten" chapters that follow the Christmas celebrations, the image of the cross and the theme of suffering move to the forefront. The portrait of the lifeless convict Mikhailov sets the tone for the rest of this section, which culminates in the story that Gorianchikov overhears about the murder of the young peasant woman Akulka. In death Mikhailov bears an unmistakable resemblance to an elongated Gothic Christ on the cross or, given the mention of his mother, in a *pietà*. Tall, thin, and quietly sad with beautiful eyes, he dies at three o'clock as the rays of the setting sun fall on his bony, naked body with its ribs poking out. He throws off his blanket and clothing and, ten minutes before expiring when he is completely unconscious, even the cross around his neck; but he cannot get rid of his convict's fetters. One of the prisoners closes Mikhailov's eyes, and another replaces his crucifix while making the sign of the cross. Finally the officer on duty arrives:

> He approached, slowing his steps more and more, and in bewilderment gazed at the prisoners who had quieted down and were looking at him sternly from all sides. Going a step closer to the dead man, he stopped as if forged in place, as if he had lost courage. The completely naked, dried-up corpse, wearing only its leg irons, struck him and his lower jaw suddenly quivered; he unfastened his chain strap and removed his hemlet, which was not at all required, and crossed himself broadly. This was a stern, gray-haired person who had been in the service a long time. I remember that at the same instant Chekunov, also a gray-haired old man, was standing there. All the time he silently and intently looked the duty officer in the face, absolutely point blank, and with some sort of strange attention peered at his every gesture. But their eyes met and Chekunov's lower lip suddenly began trembling. He twisted it strangely, bared his teeth, and quickly, as if desperately motioning the duty officer toward the dead man, uttered, "After all, he too had a mother!" and walked away. (4: 141)

Those surrounding Mikhailov fall silent as if attending to the mystery of something greater than they can comprehend. His death becomes for them a sacred moment that they mark with the sign of the cross. Here the cross seems to point to the presence of the divine in human suffering, and the fettered Mikhailov becomes a sort of "living" crucifix, bringing the Passion into the present moment. Yet the detail that Mikhailov tore off his

crucifix, a naturalistic enough feature in the description of an agonizing death, leaves room for a drastically opposing reading. This gesture could signal the impotence of the cross in the face of the Dead House's abysmal horror and thus the absence of God.[66]

The narrator next engages in a disquisition on flogging, which is another area where class differences came into play. Ordinarily the nobility were not flogged in prison, and when they were occasionally beaten, they would experience not only physical pain, but also degradation.[67] Prisoners from the *narod*, however, accepted their beatings without humiliation and often without experiencing any resentment toward their floggers. One convict told Gorianchikov with something akin to gratitude how the beatings he received every day of his life helped him survive his 4,000 lashes in prison (4: 145). The convicts were actually fond of a flogger named Smekalov, who had a popular touch and questioned them in a fatherly fashion, showing interest in their affairs. He began his floggings by having the prisoners recite the Lord's Prayer, and when they uttered "in heaven" (*na nebesi*), Smekalov would shout, "Let him have it!" (*Podnesi!*) (4: 151). A few former soldiers were in the Dead House for murdering superior officers who beat them; but it appears that their crimes were connected with the arbitrary and unjust exercise of power rather than the beatings per se. Petrov sought to kill the hateful major because the latter wanted to flog him without sufficient reason; but when the major drove off, Petrov submitted to the lash compliantly. In short, the prisoners of the *narod* regarded their beatings as part of the natural order of things.

The narrator, on the other hand, considers flogging an utterly unnatural phenomenon in which the lash is directed not at some abstract miscreant, but at a brother in Christ, another human being imprinted with the image of God (4: 154). Flogging encapsulates the lowest point to which human nature can sink and the demoralization of the society that condones it. Such brutality, he believes, can become habitual:

> Blood and power make a person drunk; callousness and corruption develop . . . In the tyrant, the person and citizen perish irrevocably and the way back to human dignity, contrition, and renewed life becomes almost impossible for him. What is more, the example and possibility of such willfulness infects all of society . . . A society that looks indifferently on such a phenomenon is itself already infected at its foundation. (4: 154)

Dostoevsky's thinking in the above passage displays both a social and a psychological thrust. His words about the inherent corruption of a society that condones flogging are an obvious critique of serfdom, which he holds

responsible for brutalizing Russian life and fostering the *narod*'s sense of being a "lost people" (*pogibshii narod*, 4: 13). The passage equally points to the capacity of human beings to stifle conscience and become "tigers thirsting to lick blood" through the habitual assertion of dominance over others (4: 154). Here we can glimpse the moral/psychological underpinnings of such future strongmen as Svidrigailov and Stavrogin. But equally fundamental for Dostoevsky's great novels is the clinging to the notion of the person as the image of God, no matter how buried this image is under layers of grime and corruption.

The narrator's thoughts on flogging form a fitting prelude to "Akulka's Husband" ("Akul'kin muzh"), a story that the cowardly peasant Shishkov tells about the murder of his wife Akulka.[68] Shishkov's friend Filka Morozov had worked for Akulka's father, a self-righteous, wealthy old man who read edifying books. Morozov asked for his pay saying that he planned to carouse with the money and then either sell himself as a soldier in substitution for another peasant or set off as a tramp. He claimed that he had slept with Akulka and recruited Shishkov to help tar her gates, causing the girl's father and mother to beat her until her wailing could be heard up and down the street. Since, the old man reckoned, he could no longer marry his "dishonorable" daughter to a wealthy old man like himself, he accepted Shishkov's proposal, even though he was from a poor family. Shishkov took his whip with him to the wedding bed and, to his surprise, discovered that Akulka was a virgin. He then went down on his knees and asked her forgiveness. In response she placed both hands on his shoulders, looked at him with her huge eyes, and laughed while tears were running down her face. But Filka taunted him with the thought that he was drunk on his wedding night and could not have known whether Akulka was innocent or not.

Now Shishkov starts beating Akulka mercilessly, sometimes simply from boredom. Filka throughout is on a binge, but on his final day, as he is being driven to the army, he catches sight of Akulka at her gate, jumps down from the cart, makes a low bow to her, tells her he has loved her for two years, and asks her to forgive him his slander. Akulka returns his bow and says, "You forgive me, good youth, I hold no grudge against you." When Shishkov asks what she said to him, she replies that she now loves Filka more than anything in the world. The next day Shishkov takes her outside the village and cuts her throat "like a calf" (4: 167–73).

"Akulka's Husband" shifts the action to the Russian village, where we encounter the same drunkenness, slander, brutality, and religious hypocrisy that are ingrained in the Dead House. Commentators have admired

Dostoevsky's ability to sustain the narrative in convincing peasant idiom (*skaz*), and they note that here the writer embeds in a popular drama the complex and irrational motivations that he will generally reserve for the protagonists in his great novels. Morozov emerges as a broad, Russian type similar to Dmitry Karamazov, and Akulka as a meek heroine on the lines of Sonia Marmeladova. Two acts of repentance occur against the backdrop of the violence and stupor, and Akulka performs the amazing feat of pardoning her tormentors. Gary Rosenshield, who discusses Akulka as an embodiment of ideal goodness, notes that she not only forgives and begs forgiveness of Filka, but that in telling Shishkov that she loves Morozov, she asserts her personality and, in a sense, rebels against her enslavement as a woman in village society.[69] Jackson regards Akulka as an "icon" (*obraz*) whose death can be viewed as the disfigurement (*bezobrazie*) of goodness and beauty.[70]

While remarkable as an entity unto itself, within *House of the Dead* "Akulka's Husband" serves as the capstone to the hospital sequence's narrative twists on the Passion. The figures of Mikhailov and Akulka are points against which to interpret the whole. Jackson suggests that the eye-motif especially renders Akulka an "icon," and much the same can be said for Mikhailov. The narrator notes, "I remember only that he had beautiful eyes, and, to tell the truth, I don't know why he left such a clear mark on my memory" (4: 140). But if in Mikhailov's depiction we glimpse a sort of *pietà*, then in Akulka we have, besides the static image, a reenactment of the way of the cross: an innocent person is slandered, flogged, and killed.[71] Akulka seems to represent an eternal victim, suffering without guilt and dying a sacrificial death. But is there, in the final analysis, meaning to her death? Can we read her as an *alter Christus* who signals hope in the darkness of Russian life, or is she just one more victim of its senseless brutality?

The "Lenten" scenes of scourging and death flow into the celebration of Easter. The Orthodox prisoners, divided into seven shifts, spend one week fasting, attending church services, making their confessions, and receiving communion. Gorianchikov emphasizes that he no longer stands among the nobility, who assumed the first places in church, but with the *narod* at the very back, where even in his childhood it had seemed to him that people prayed more fervently and with a deeper sense of their unworthiness:

> We were fettered and dishonored; people avoided us, and everyone even seemed to fear us, and they gave us alms every time, and, I recall that I even found this pleasant for some reason . . . The prisoners prayed in a very heartfelt manner and every time each one of them brought his beggarly kopeck with him to church for a candle or for the church collection. "After all, I too am a human being," he

perhaps thought or felt on giving it, "before God everybody is equal . . ." We took communion at the early mass. When the priest with the chalice in his hands read the words, " . . . but receive me as you received the thief," almost all fell to the earth, fetters ringing, having accepted these words, it seems, as applying to them literally. (4: 177)

The above scene contains one of very few hints of remorse in *House of the Dead*. Again the key point of reference is not so much the Resurrection as the Crucifixion. The prisoners are moved by mention of the good thief in the prayer of St. Basil the Great (4: 308), which brings to mind the scene in Luke's Passion where Christ forgives his executioners and the thief on the cross next to him.[72]

The religious imagery of *House of the Dead* cuts two ways: evidence of malice, debauch, and religious hypocrisy is juxtaposed to the imperceptible possibility of the working of the divine within the here and now. On the one hand we have the figure of the dead Mikhailov lying serenely and reverenced by the guard and his fellow convicts and, if interpreted against the paradigm of Christ's suffering and death, proclaiming that his life is now mysteriously one with God; on the other, the visible evidence of the sadism of a prison flogger who uses the Lord's Prayer as a backdrop to his whippings. We have the image of Akulka's father beating her and crying out "in the time of the venerable patriarchs, I would have chopped her in pieces at the bonfire" (4: 168). Yet we also have scenes in which she forgives those who have treated her with cruelty, and we have her seemingly sacrificial death. The resolution to the conflicting readings resides not so much in the text as in the subtext. If the Gospel narrative against which we read these scenes is not valid, then the potentiality for meaning within the agony of the Dead House collapses. The religious imagery of *House of the Dead* impels the reader to question whether God has truly thrown in his lot with humankind. It is in such querying, I believe, that we must seek Dostoevsky's own inner journey.

Dostoevsky's faith after the Dead House would not be authentic unless it squarely confronted the human propensity for destruction that he had come to know so deeply.[73] He would need to seek the divine precisely in the midst of the appalling evil surrounding him, to affirm the reality of this evil while asserting that there is more than meets the eye, and, like the psalmist raising his voice *de profundis*, to cry out that God is inscrutably present despite the apparent senselessness of suffering and death. In fact, Dostoevsky adopts the stance of the psalmist in his letter to Fonvizina when he refers to himself as thirsting for faith like "withered grass" (Psalm 102: 4; Russian bible, Psalm 101). The double-edged quality of the religious

imagery of *House of the Dead* has much in common with his claim to her that "the more I find arguments to the contrary, the stronger this thirst [for faith] becomes in my soul" (28, 1: 176). One must imagine that the arguments to the contrary included the nastiness surrounding him and the lack of any perceptible remorse on the part of the *narod*.

While Dostoevsky's personal experience in the stockade was not one of conversion from non-belief to Christianity, it was nonetheless intensely religious. Dostoevsky had glimpsed violence in Russian life and cruelty in the *narod* before Siberia, and, Frank thinks, he had known moments of mystic terror in the 1840s.[74] But most likely his memories of the kindness of his mother, Alena Frolovna, and other domestics and peasants from Darovoe as well as his dream of overthrowing serfdom and creating a society guided by ideals of Christian brotherhood outweighed his perception of human iniquity. Four years of forced labor tipped the scales toward a more profound awareness of the human inclination toward evil. No doubt it was in this school, where gratuitous malice was a far more palpable reality than human compassion or the presence of the divine, that the writer came to understand first-hand the overpowering arguments for atheism he would give some of his greatest characters. Some sixteen years after leaving the stockade, he would echo his words to Fonvizina in his well-known admission to Maikov that the problem of the existence of God had haunted him all his life (29, 1: 117). His own difficulty in believing in the reality and goodness of God while enduring a world of cruelty and injustice becomes a central problem for his heroes from Raskolnikov to Ivan Karamazov. The ambiguity of the religious imagery of *House of the Dead* anticipates the interplay of belief and doubt that would henceforth accompany the posing of the great questions about God and humankind in Dostoevsky's art.

THE EARLY 1860S: THE PEOPLE ACQUIRE A CHRISTIAN FACE

In 1859–60, when he had just returned from Siberia and was writing *House of the Dead*, Dostoevsky had only partially digested the implications of imprisonment for his future work. He was convinced of the strength and creativity of the Russian people and aware that serfdom had engendered a tragic gulf between them and the educated classes. But he did not argue that they possessed a fundamentally Christian orientation toward life; nor, for that matter, did he place significant emphasis on their Orthodoxy. In fact, *House of the Dead* questions whether their religious upbringing made any impact at all on their day-to-day behavior. Yet *Crime and Punishment*, which

appeared about five years later, implies that the murderer Raskolnikov can find his way back to the human community only by embracing the simple faith of the *narod* based, as Dostoevsky came to understand it, on charity, repentance, and an acceptance of suffering. In Siberia, Raskolnikov's fellow prisoners abhor him not just because he is a *barin*, but equally because they perceive that he is an atheist (*bezbozhnik*, 6: 418–19), a factor that did not enter into the people's hatred of the upper classes in *House of the Dead*.

During the first half of the 1860s, Dostoevsky reached the conclusion that a social order based on Christian love and brotherhood eluded European nations, but was an inherent potential for the Russian *narod*. Now that the writer was back in the capital participating in the public debate about the changes that the Great Reforms would bring in national life, he was forced to elucidate his positions vis-à-vis the rationalist notions of the Westernizers and the Slavophile exaltation of Orthodoxy and pre-Petrine Russia. Between 1861 and 1864 we can observe Dostoevsky's evolving distaste for the Westernizers' atheism and his movement toward the Slavophile appreciation of Orthodoxy as a defining feature of the Russian people. The impact of his first trip to western Europe in summer 1862 and his renewed acquaintance with the ethical ideals expressed in folklore played major roles in this shift in his thinking about the *narod*.

Dostoevsky returned to a very different Russia in late 1859. His friend A. P. Miliukov conjectured that during the ten years of the writer's absence, Russia and Europe had more or less changed places: all the humane utopias attractive to the Petrashevsky Circle had come to naught in the West, while in Russia many of their most fervent dreams were on the verge of being realized.[75] Tsar Alexander II was about to emancipate the serfs, the very thing for which Dostoevsky had gone to Siberia. The writer's euphoria at the impending abolition of serfdom and the granting of full citizenship to the *narod* – reforms he considered as significant as those of Peter the Great – led him to believe that the painful gap between educated Russians and the people could at last be bridged. In 1861, with his brother Mikhail as the official editor, he began publishing the new "thick" journal *Time* (*Vremia*, 1861–63), which called for the cultural synthesis of the educated classes with the popular base. *Time* and its successor *Epoch* (*Epokha*, 1863–65) advanced a "native soil" ideology (*pochvennichestvo*, from the Russian word for "soil," *pochva*) that thrived in the atmosphere of the early 1860s when the details of the Reform had not yet been worked out and hope ran high for a genuine transformation in Russian society without a violent upheaval.[76] The platform Dostoevsky wrote in late 1860 to announce the publication

of *Time* conveys the ebullience of the first period of the movement:

> Now not thousands, but many millions of Russians will enter into Russian life, will bring to it their fresh, untapped strengths and will utter their new word . . .
>
> The Reform of Peter the Great . . . cost us too dearly; it separated us from the people [*narod*] . . .
>
> But now the separation is coming to an end . . .
>
> And now before entering this new life, reconciliation of the followers of Peter's reforms with the popular base [*s narodnym nachalom*] has become essential . . . Unification whatever it may cost, regardless of the sacrifice, and the sooner the better – this is our foremost idea, this is our motto. (18: 35–37)

The need for rapprochement between the intelligentsia and the *narod* would remain a consistent motif of *pochvennichestvo* and a pervasive theme in Dostoevsky's writing for the rest of his life.

Ideologically, the *pochvenniki* positioned themselves between the Slavophiles and the Westernizers, sharing certain interests with each and confusing the public about the precise direction of their movement. But the vagueness of their platform by no means inhibited *Time* from gaining a significant number of subscribers, in part due to the very popular *House of the Dead* and other contributions by Dostoevsky.[77] Unlike the Slavophiles, the *pochvenniki* did not look wistfully to the pre-Petrine past for answers to current problems and, in their early phase, they did not stress linkage between the people and Orthodoxy.[78] Like the Westernizers, they believed that Peter's thrust to place Russia within the sphere of European intellectual development constituted a necessary stage in their nation's history, though they felt that many of its consequences were negative. But unlike the Westernizers, they did not favor the reorganization of society on a rational model and advocated instead a decentralized, organic evolution of social life as a separate entity from the state and equally free from the threats of government intervention and of revolution. They believed that both the Slavophiles and the Westernizers suffered from an abstract conception of the people. The *pochvenniki* viewed the *narod* not as a fixed entity restricted to the peasantry (as among the Slavophiles), but as continually reshaping itself and encompassing the various Russian estates including (at least in potentiality) the nobility.[79]

In 1861, *Time* displayed unusual inclusiveness in its selection of articles and literary works and in the composition of its editorial board, which contained members with both Westernizer (A. E. Razin) and Slavophile (Nikolay Strakhov) leanings. Dostoevsky's refusal to attack the young radicals at *The Contemporary* (*Sovremennik*) frustrated Apollon Grigorev, *Time*'s chief literary critic, who accused the writer of conducting a "shameful friendship"

with the journal.[80] *Time* joined with the Westernizers in embracing full citizenship for Jews, the end of special privileges for the gentry, and the abolition of corporal punishment. But the Westernizers' depreciation of art as valuable only insofar as it served to change society and their conviction that the human person was rational and would respond to social engineering, positions best articulated by N. G. Chernyshevsky, were bound to grate on Dostoevsky. His experience of the Dead House had convinced him that human behavior was often profoundly irrational, and he believed that beauty was as necessary as food and drink for genuine life. Dostoevsky's best-known sally against these positions occurs in 1864 in his *Notes from the Underground* (*Zapiski iz podpol'ia*), generally regarded as a response to Chernyshevsky's novel *What is to be Done?* (*Chto delat'?*, 1863).[81] But *Time* had tilted toward the Slavophiles somewhat earlier, and by late 1862 Dostoevsky was already emphasizing the moral regeneration of each person as a precondition to a genuine transformation of society.[82]

Somewhere between 1862 and 1864 the "idea-feelings" (to use Frank's term) that Dostoevsky carried within himself after Siberia sharpened into definite positions.[83] Two antithetical conceptual spheres that would recur for the remainder of his life, sometimes in harshly rhetorical language and sometimes in a milder guise, emerge: the cluster of "atheism," "socialism," and "Catholicism" on the one hand and "Christ," "brotherhood," and "Russian *narod*" on the other. The Gospel mandate to love one's brother had fueled the utopian socialism that attracted Dostoevsky in the 1840s; now, however, socialism as a blueprint for reorganizing human life had become for the writer a godless western import. Moreover, Catholicism, construed as a religion that had forsaken allegiance to Christ and yielded to the allure of earthly power and riches, became increasingly associated with socialism. In a notebook entry for 1863–64, Dostoevsky remarks: "From Catholic Christianity only socialism arose; from ours will arise brotherhood" (20: 177).

Although Dostoevsky's earliest articles in *Time* already speak of the West's loss of Christianity and inability to grasp the Russian spirit (*russkii dukh*, 18: 50), his first trip to Europe, in summer 1862, solidified his hostility toward the bourgeois and capitalist world, which, he believed, venerated wealth and the individual and was incapable of developing a humane and Christian social order. *Winter Notes on Summer Impressions* (*Zimnie zametki o letnikh vpechatleniiakh*, henceforth *Winter Notes*), published in the February and March 1863 issues of *Time*, presents his scathing critique of the West. Dostoevsky was appalled at the scope of human misery he found in industrialized London where, he claimed, the reigning deity was Baal (5: 70–71); and he was disgusted by the worship of money he found among

the Parisian bourgeoisie. Reflecting on the implementation in contemporary France of the Revolutionary slogan, "Liberté, égalité, fraternité," he concluded that freedom and equality were only for the rich while true brotherhood, however much the French talked of it, was impossible in a country where self-sacrifice and the ability to love one another were not inherent in the nature of the people (5: 80). To achieve it, the writer speculated,

> It would be necessary for [a people] to be instinctively drawn to brotherhood, to the commune (*obshchina*), to harmony, and be drawn in spite of all the age-old sufferings of the nation, in spite of the barbarian crudeness and ignorance that had taken root in the nation, in spite of the age-old slavery, in spite of the invasions of other peoples – in a word, that the demand for a brotherly commune (*obshchina*) be in the nature of the person, that the person be born with it and have assimilated such a habit from time immemorial. (5: 80)

The above passage contains a thinly masked description of the Russian people, among whom a communal form of life and land management (*obshchina*) had existed for generations in the countryside and, according to Dostoevsky, who alone had imbibed the necessary preconditions for brotherhood. The writer characterizes the love that would be necessary for brotherhood as a mastery of one's ego and a free giving of the self to the community without any expectation of gain. The community, in turn, would respond, "You are giving us too much. We don't have the right not to accept what you are giving from you, for you yourself say that your happiness lies in this. But what are we to do when our hearts ache continuously for your happiness. You also take everything from us" (5: 80). Dostoevsky further implies that a society based on such mutual self-giving would be the realization of the maxim "Love one another and all this will come to you as well" (5: 80) – a conflation of Christ's words in John 13: 34 and Matthew 6: 33.

The writer does not mention Christ directly and he does not adduce a specific example of genuine self-giving in the section of *Winter Notes* from which the above passage is taken. In an earlier section, however, he had extolled Arina Rodionovna, the peasant nanny who narrated folktales for Pushkin during his house arrest of 1824–26. Dostoevsky tauntingly implies that without her Russia might have been robbed of its greatest poet, and he wonders if some other "Pushkin" might have been taken for upbringing to France where there would be "no Arina Rodionovna and no Russian language from the cradle" (5: 51–52). The lack of outright mention of Christ as the model for self-mastery and voluntary self-sacrifice in *Winter Notes* may reflect the writer's doubt that his unconventional rendition of Christianity

would pass censorship. The censor did, in fact, require the removal of a reference to Christ in *Notes from the Underground*, which appeared in *Epoch* about a year later.[84] But in Dostoevsky's private reflections written April 16, 1864 at the funeral bier of his first wife, Maria Dmitrievna, Christ moves to the forefront. Dostoevsky terms Christ the eternal ideal "toward which the human being must strive by the law of nature" (20: 172) and amplifies the understanding of brotherhood given in *Winter Notes*:

> After the appearance of Christ as *the ideal of the human being in the flesh* it became as clear as day that the very highest, final development of the personality must reach precisely . . . to one's finding, acknowledging, and becoming convinced with all the force of one's nature that the highest use that a human being can make of one's personality, of the fullness of development of one's "I" – is, as it were, to annihilate this "I," to give it entirely to all and each one completely and wholeheartedly. And this is a very great happiness. In this way, the law of "I" is fused with the law of humanism, and in this fusion both of them, both the "I" and the "all" (obviously, two extreme polarities), mutually annihilated for each other, at the same time also reach the highest goal of their individual development, each in particular.
>
> And this is Christ's paradise. . .
>
> But if this is the final goal of humanity (which, having achieved it, will not need to develop [further], that is to reach out and struggle for it, to recover sight of the ideal after all failures and eternally strive toward it . . .) – then, as a consequence, a human being finishes earthly existence while reaching out [for it]. And so, on earth the human being is a creature that is only developing, consequently, is not a finished creature, but transitional. (20: 172–73, Dostoevsky's emphasis)

The above passage offers a rare window onto Dostoevsky's personal thinking about Christ and immortality in this period.[85] As Frank notes, its evocation of a Christ that is close to that of the Utopian Socialists of the 1840s and its silence about such doctrines as Resurrection and Redemption smacks of unorthodoxy.[86] These reflections are also significant for elucidating one of the presuppositions underlying Dostoevsky's grasp of the human personality – the unfinished quality of life on earth, and by extension, the notion that to live is to be open to change and moral transformation. Human life, however miserable and depraved, and the entire history of mankind, however cruel and bloody, acquires profound meaning as a striving toward the ideal of Christ, which is impossible to reach on earth: "NB. And so everything depends on whether one accepts Christ as the definitive ideal on earth . . . If you believe in Christ, then you also believe that you will live forever" (20: 174).

While Dostoevsky does not specifically include the Russian *narod* in his reflections at the side of his dead wife, it is clear that his thinking displays

a social as well as eschatological thrust. His good society – brotherhood – implies the continual process of mutual self-giving in a striving to fulfill Christ's commandment to love another person as oneself (20: 172, 174), a feat for which, he suspects, only the Russian people have the capacity. We can rightly read these reflections as a sequence to the passage in *Winter Notes* where the writer contrasts the western and Russian aptitudes for genuine love.[87] Here, as in *Winter Notes*, the antithesis is provided by atheism (socialism), which, denying God and immortality, fails to perceive the transitory nature of life and views reality solely in earthly terms (20: 174). Slightly later, in a sketch for an uncompleted article on "Christianity and Socialism," Dostoevsky continues the development of this contrast. Protesting vehemently against the young radicals' materialistic notion of a human being as no more than flesh and blood with an aggregate of physical needs, he contends that socialism robs the human person of higher dignity and goes no further than the belly (*Sotsialisty dal'she briukha ne idut*, 20: 192). If genuine brotherhood would lead to "Christ's paradise" (20: 172), socialism could only reduce society to the status of the "anthill" (*muraveinik*, 20: 193).

In the course of the early 1860s, then, Dostoevsky emerges in print as a champion of the Russian "national spirit" and his anti-western tendencies assume sharper outlines. He continues to express the concern voiced in *House of the Dead* about the low moral status of the *narod* (20: 191), but he also begins to draw a connection between the historical experience of the people and their capacity for brotherhood. For Dostoevsky the moral ideal toward which the good society must aspire remains, as in the 1840s, the figure of Christ. Yet in the early 1860s we can observe a slight, but significant shift in emphasis: the writer explicitly factors immortality into his understanding of the incompleteness of life on earth and of human striving. His grasp of human nature now manifests a clear metaphysical underpinning that will find expression in his greatest works as the clash between the dream of a rational society on the one side and, on the other, the reality of both irrational human drives and gratuitous kindness.[88] Amid the destructive urges of the *narod*, described so vividly in *House of the Dead*, the writer now discerns a capacity for Christian love. It should be noted, however, that even in Dostoevsky's private writings of this period, one does not find extreme claims that "the people have known Christ from time immemorial" or that they recognize themselves as sinners in the midst of foul deeds. These will appear in his writings from abroad in the late 1860s and in *The Diary of a Writer* in the 1870s.

DOSTOEVSKY AND FOLKLORE

While Dostoevsky's insistence on the ability of the Russian people to love one another does not correspond to their representation in *House of the Dead*, it is nonetheless more than a knee-jerk reaction to his growing anti-westernism. Alongside the rethinking of his Siberian experience, the writer acquired a deep appreciation for the religious ideals of the *narod* as expressed in folklore. In the great novels that followed he embedded references to oral narratives and songs in the text as a way of introducing the people's voice into the debate between socialism and Christianity.

Dostoevsky's use of folklore attracted very little interest until the last three decades of the twentieth century.[89] Most likely the educated, upper-class status of his heroes along with the hidden nature of much of the folklore imagery deflected attention away from this aspect of his art. But at present there is general recognition that Dostoevsky, like every other major Russian writer of his era, drew on the folk tradition.[90] The question is no longer whether he turned to folklore, but how he incorporates it into his works and what meaning it imparts. Dostoevsky imbibed popular traditions naturally, though not always consciously, from his nanny, wet nurses and, no doubt, the peasants of Darovoe, and then again from the *narod* in the Omsk Stockade where he heard "purifying and penitential" stories about saints and holy places (25: 215). Throughout his professional life, he moved among people interested in oral traditions and had access to published collections. We can determine the contours of what he probably knew on the basis of the general folklore repertoire and available collections, and it is clear that after Siberia many of the narratives that imprinted themselves on his psyche had a religious bent. But it is often impossible to identify an indisputable source for a particular reference or allusion in his fiction.[91]

In the 1840s, Dostoevsky shared the general feeling of the Westernizers that civilization and true art come from above, not from the lower classes, and that the oral tradition lacked the creativity and significance of the European literary tradition.[92] Even so, most of his works of the 1840s contain folklore references.[93] His tale *The Landlady* (*Khoziaika*, 1847), in which a young intellectual imagines that the old merchant and beautiful young woman with whom he lodges are a sorcerer and a captive maiden, reads like a pastiche of popular lore. This work attests to the writer's knowledge of folktales, superstitions about demonic powers, and Volga bandit traditions.[94] But in *The Landlady* the folklore does not point to the ethical ideas of the people, as it often would in his great novels; its overall thrust is demonic and signals the hero's destruction. Like the feuilleton Dostoevsky

wrote for the *St. Petersburg News* about the same time, this tale seems to have an anti-Slavophile bias.[95]

Dostoevsky may have studied oral narrative formally while at the Engineering Academy since his teacher of Russian literature V. T. Plaskin was an enthusiast of folk poetry.[96] A good number of his acquaintances turned to the popular tradition for material. In 1843–44 he shared an apartment with D. V. Grigorovich, a writer of tales about village life who would play an important role in the publication of *Poor Folk*. Dostoevsky had high praise for Grigorovich's story "The Village" ("Derevnia"), which is saturated with folk rituals and belief narratives, but there is no indication that he shared his friend's exuberance for ethnography (28, 1: 126).[97] He read the stylized folk poetry of A. V. Koltsov, and he probably read Dahl's stories of village life and the selections from his book on folk belief (*O pover'iakh, sueveriiakh i predrassudkakh russkogo naroda*), which appeared in the mid 1840s in the weekly *Illiustratsiia*.[98] In 1849, when he was imprisoned in the Peter and Paul Fortress, three volumes of Dahl's works and one of I. P. Sakharov's *Tales of the Russian People* (*Skazaniia russkogo naroda*) were included among the books that his brother Mikhail sent him (28, 1: 449–550). Still, while his considerable correspondence with Mikhail and the accounts of his contemporaries are filled with references to writers and literary works, they make almost no mention of folklore.

One aspect of ethnography that did interest Dostoevsky in the 1840s was the speech of the Petersburg lower classes. Dr. A. E. Riesenkampf, another of Dostoevsky's apartment mates, recalled that he spent a good deal of time with his poor patients. The writer justified his lavish expenditure of time and money by claiming that he wanted to become better acquainted with the poor since he was attempting to describe their life.[99] This explanation rings true since from the beginning his works stand out for their highly individualized speech and insight into human nature.[100] V. P. Vladimirtsev, who has studied popular idiom in Dostoevsky's works, hypothesizes that in the 1840s he may have kept a notebook of street expressions that was confiscated at the time of his arrest and disappeared along with his other papers.[101] The writer's interest in folk idiom carried over to the Omsk Stockade where his most ambitious collecting project took place. Though Dostoevsky was not permitted to write while in prison, thanks to the good auspices of Doctor I. I. Troitsky and his assistant A. I. Ivanov, during his stays in the hospital he managed to compile a notebook of roughly 500 popular sayings and turns of speech that caught his attentive ear. About 290 of the items in this "Siberian Notebook" ("Sibirskaia tetradka") later found their way into *House of the Dead* (4: 275).[102]

During his time in forced labor Dostoevsky began to awaken to folklore as an expression of the ideals the people carried in the depths of their hearts.[103] In *House of the Dead* the Christmas theatricals mark the moment when Gorianchikov, seeing the convicts transformed by the artistry of the folk skits and music, glimpses the good hidden under their coarse exteriors. The prisoners' inventiveness in devising the costumes and the curtain amazes the narrator; their talented acting and the music of the folk instruments delight him. After the performance, he notes, the prisoners fell asleep with almost peaceful spirits: "They just allowed these poor people to live in their own way a little bit, to make merry in a human fashion, to live if only for an hour not according to the way of life in the stockade – and each one changed morally, even if only for a few minutes" (4: 129–30). Beneath Gorianchikov's new perception of his fellow prisoners, we can discern Dostoevsky's own change of heart about folklore. The narrator's appreciation of folk music, his sense that the performance elevated the prisoners spiritually, and his grasp of the importance of the folk drama in transmitting traditional values from one generation to the next imply a movement away from the writer's position of the 1840s.

Shortly after leaving the stockade, Dostoevsky took up his duties as a soldier in Semipalatinsk, and once again he had friends who were interested in folklore and ethnography. The Decembrist's son E. I. Yakushkin, who had arranged a visit with him in Omsk in 1853, asked him to collect Siberian folk songs. He was unable to fulfill his friend's request, but M. M. Gromyko thinks that since the writer interacted a good deal with the local peasantry, he may have collected other songs and narratives in Siberia (28, 1: 184).[104] In Semipalatinsk, Dostoevsky became friends with Chokan Valikhanov, a descendant of Kirghiz khans serving in the Russian army who collected the folklore of his own people.[105]

During Siberian exile, the writer set about reading everything he could get his hands on to make up for the years when he was deprived of thick journals and new literary works. As Dostoevsky was aware, he was under strict police surveillance, and even his attempts to receive materials through a third party sometimes failed.[106] Our information about precisely what books he received or borrowed is spotty, but we do know that he read back and current issues of *The Contemporary* and *Notes of the Fatherland* (*Otechestvennye zapiski*) and that these journals contained important articles and works related to folklore. It is clear that he read A. N. Afanasev's article on the religious meaning of the Slavic peasant dwelling ("Religiozno-iazycheskoe znachenie izby slavianina") from the June 1851 issue of *Notes of the Fatherland* because he places a derisive response to it in the mouth of the

hero of his Siberian novella *The Village of Stepanchikovo* (*Selo Stepanchikovo*, 3: 135). Its outlook on the people ran against the grain of Dostoevsky's experience in the Dead House, and he alluded to it again in his 1861 article for *Time* "Mr. —bov and the Question of Art" as a sham insight into the character of the *narod* ("G-n —bov i vopros ob iskusstve," 18: 71). The writer no doubt found that Afanasev's mythological approach to popular belief as expressed in his claim that the Slavs' hut (*izba*) was a "mysterious temple in which abided the beneficent, bright god of the hearth and in which rituals in honor of this domestic deity took place" (3: 514) was irrelevant to the *narod*'s woeful history of misery and enslavement.

Dostoevsky almost certainly became acquainted with N. A. Nekrasov's "Vlas" around the time it appeared in *The Contemporary* in 1855.[107] "Vlas," a short narrative in verse about a great evildoer who, after a vision of hell, spends the remainder of his life as a wandering beggar collecting alms to build a church, is a literary reworking of a widespread oral legend about a great sinner who repents.[108] In his own "Vlas," which appeared in *The Diary of a Writer* in 1873, Dostoevsky argued that the figure embodied the essence of the Russian national character: an initial inclination to observe no measure in lawlessness and negation and then, on the edge of the abyss, to make a dramatic counter-movement toward suffering and repentance (21: 35–36). But the Vlas paradigm acquired significance for the writer long before 1873. As Jackson observes, Filka Morozov from *House of the Dead* may be considered an early rendition of this type.[109] Dostoevsky also read A. F. Pisemsky's peasant drama *A Bitter Fate* (*Gor'kaia sud'bina*, 1859) while still in exile. Though the liberal critics disapproved of the play, he esteemed it highly, no doubt because its hero Anany also approximates Vlas's movement from sin to repentance.[110] In a moment of passion, Anany kills the baby that his wife Lizaveta has born to the estate owner Cheglov-Sokovin and runs off into the forest. Though he has money and can easily escape, he turns himself in, asks forgiveness of his fellow villagers, and accepts the punishment awaiting him because, as he explains, "one can run and hide from human judgment, but there's no place to hide from God's."[111]

In *House of the Dead*, the narrator stresses that no matter how hard he searched, he could not detect any sign of repentance among the prisoners, most of whom considered themselves in the right.[112] At the same time he leaves open the possibility that he may have missed something: "Who can say that he has scrutinized the depths of these lost hearts and read in them what is hidden from the entire world?" (4:15). Folklore works and such literary renditions of them as "Vlas" and *A Bitter Fate* seemed to offer Dostoevsky a glimpse into these lost hearts where he discovered

deeply concealed moral ideals that he would come to regard as the people's cherished inheritance.

Dostoevsky's return to European Russia and the editing of *Time* and *Epoch* coincided with heightened public interest in folklore and the appearance of many collections that even today remain fundamental. *Time* discussed a good number of them, and while Dostoevsky was not the reviewer, it is unlikely anything evaded his watchful eye. All his energy was devoted to the journal; as de facto editor he closely followed current trends in Russian public life and discussions in competing journals, and he mulled them over with other members of *Time*'s staff at their regular afternoon meetings.[113] The February 1861 issue contained a large review article embracing Afanasev's *Russian Folk Tales*, which even today remains the basic collection, I. A. Khudiakov's *Great Russian Folk Tales*, the first volume of P. A. Bessonov's monumental compilation of spiritual songs, *Wandering Pilgrims*, V. Varentsov's *Collection of Russian Spiritual Songs*, F. Buslaev's classic study of Russian folk poetry and old Russian literature, and two volumes of P. V. Kireevsky's *Songs*.[114] In 1862, *Time* reviewed the second part of P. N. Rybnikov's collection of epic poetry (*byliny*), I. G. Pryzhov's *Beggars in Holy Russia*, and a number of works on the schism and Old Believers; in October and November 1862 *Time* published A. Shchapov's *Land and Schism: The Runners*, a study of the dissident sect of Runners.[115]

Dostoevsky intended to include *byliny* from Rybnikov's collection in *Epoch*, but the journal failed before this could come to pass (28, 2: 523). Evidence also exists for his correspondence with the folklorist P. V. Shein, probably about placing songs in *Epoch*, and for his knowledge of Buslaev's work.[116] The writer's personal library of the early 1860s contained several works on Old Believers as well as Shchapov's study, but his stepson Pavel Isaev sold the contents of this library to second-hand book dealers when the Dostoevskys were abroad between 1867 and 1871.[117] Like the other *pochvenniki*, the writer was prone to think of the Church Schism of the late seventeenth century as a popular reaction to the stagnation of Muscovite Russia.[118]

In his novels Dostoevsky incorporates a wide range of folklore genres and popular beliefs, which serve primarily to introduce the worldview of the *narod* into the text.[119] One can speculate that the *byliny* he would have liked to include in *Epoch* concerned the central hero of the Russian epic tradition Ilia Muromets, whose high moral stature captivated his imagination. Distinguished from other epic heroes by his lowly birth, Ilia Muromets was the indefatigable defender of widows and orphans, the Christian faith, and the Russian land.[120] The writer's jottings from August 19, 1864 for a

series of political articles on Russia and the West end with the notation "Ilia Muromets. Meekness" (20: 189). Radical notions about obligations to help the poor, sacrificing everything to follow God, and forgiveness for abominable sinners underlie the spiritual songs about the beggar Lazarus, Saint Alexis "Man of God," and Saint Mary of Egypt, all of whom receive clear mention in Dostoevsky's works. The collections of the 1860s contain multiple variants of these songs.

References to legends about demonic possession, repentant sinners, and Christ walking the Russian countryside begging alms of the *narod* also enter the great novels. Dostoevsky would have had easy access to the voluminous collection of legends and apocrypha in *Monuments of Ancient Russian Literature*, which appeared in 1860.[121] Internal evidence suggests that Afanasev's *Russian Folk Legends* (*Narodnye russkie legendy*) served as an important source for smuggling popular Orthodoxy into his texts.[122] This collection was banned as offensive to religion and morality shortly after it appeared. As a former political prisoner Dostoevsky would have avoided any perception of association with forbidden material, and, not surprisingly, he makes no mention of *Russian Folk Legends* in his correspondence or notebooks. Still, the book was obtainable, including, one must suppose, in the personal libraries of some of his friends and acquaintances. The government censor had approved publication, and it had appeared in 1,200 copies and sold out in three weeks; the subsequent ecclesiastical ban pertained in actuality to the second edition, which was already being prepared for publication. Another "illegal" edition of *Russian Folk Legends* was published in Alexander Herzen's Free Russian Press in London the same year.[123] It is highly unlikely that *Russian Folk Legends* escaped Dostoevsky's attention. In any case, he would have read A. N. Pypin's lengthy reviews of both *Russian Folk Legends* and *Monuments of Ancient Russian Literature* in the March and November 1860 issues of *The Contemporary*. Pypin gives multiple plot summaries and quotes extensively from legends about Christ as beggar, great sinners who repent, demonic possession, and other themes that entered the writer's work.[124]

Dostoevsky's life alongside the people in the Dead House opened his eyes to their inner strength and cleverness. It also instilled in him an understanding of their hatred of the upper classes and, like the story about his father's murder, demonstrated their capacity for violent retribution. But as a reform from above, the Emancipation of 1861 gave him grounds for hoping that in Russia the painful gap between the classes could be closed peacefully and without the bloodbath of such European upheavals as the French Revolution. By 1864, his ideas about the people had shifted from

the fairly objective assessment in *House of the Dead* that cast doubt on their religious sensibilities to an affirmation of their latent capacity for brotherhood and their genuine Christianity. He had also discerned in folklore a rich source for expressing popular spirituality in art. In the magnificent novels that followed he would turn again and again to this inexhaustible treasure house.

2

The world of the people in Crime and Punishment

Crime and Punishment is the most carefully crafted of Dostoevsky's great novels. By focusing almost exclusively on Raskolnikov, the author achieved a remarkable sense of unity. The story of the evolution of the novel, however, suggests that such unity did not come easily. *Crime and Punishment* resulted from the fusion of two different conceptions, a novel on contemporary social problems and a shorter work about the psychology of a young criminal. In June 1865 Dostoevsky wrote to the editor of the journal *Notes of the Fatherland*, A. A. Kraevsky, about an idea for a novel to be called *The Drunkards* (*P'ianen'kie*), which would treat the problem of alcoholism and its effects on family life (28, 2: 127). During the following months another scheme closely approximating the outlines of Raskolnikov's story in the finished novel took shape. Dostoevsky described it in a letter of September 10, 1865 to Mikhail Katkov, the editor of *The Russian Herald* (*Russkii vestnik*). It concerned a destitute ex-student, swayed by the radical notions of the 1860s, who murders a malicious usurer:

> The action is contemporary, in the present year. A young man expelled from the university . . . and living in extreme poverty, from thoughtlessness, from flippancy, having yielded in his understanding to certain strange, "half-baked" ideas that toss about in the air, has decided to get out of his despicable position at one go. He has decided on killing a certain old lady, the wife of a titular counselor who lends money at interest. The woman is stupid, deaf, sick, greedy, takes exorbitant percentages, is malicious and eats up the life of another person, tormenting her younger sister who is living with her as a worker. "She's good for nothing." "Why is she alive?" "Is she of use to anyone at all?" etc. These questions confuse the young man. He decides to kill her, to rob her – in order to make his mother, living in the provinces, happy, to deliver his sister, living as a companion with certain landowners, from the lascivious attentions of the head of this land-owning family – attentions that threaten to ruin her, to finish his university course, to go abroad, and then for his entire life to be honorable, firm, unbending in the fulfillment of his "humanitarian duty" – through which, of course, he will "smooth out the crime" – if only one can use the word "crime" for this action against a deaf, stupid,

malicious, and sick old woman who doesn't know herself why she lives in the world and who within a month might up and die on her own . . .

He passes almost a month after the crime until the final crisis. There are no suspicions of him and cannot possibly be. But it is here that the entire psychological process of the crime unfolds. Insoluble questions arise before the killer; unsuspected and sudden feelings torment his heart. God's truth, the earthly law make themselves felt, and in the end he himself *is compelled* to turn himself in. He is compelled in order to be joined again to people, even if he perishes in prison; the feeling of disattachment and alienation from humanity, which he experienced immediately on committing the crime, has worn him out . . . The criminal himself decides to accept suffering in order to atone for his deed. (28, 2: 136–37, Dostoevsky's emphasis)

As *Crime and Punishment* evolved, the above scheme about a former student's murder and inability to live with his crime expanded into a full-fledged novel that preserved the idea for *The Drunkards* in a subplot about a clerk named Marmeladov and his destitute family.[1] The epilogue finds Raskolnikov, much like the narrator of *House of the Dead*, living side by side with coarse peasants in a Siberian prison. Though alienated from the people at first, he undergoes an experience that transforms him, and he comes to accept his common bond with them. As the novel ends, he picks up the copy of the New Testament from which Sonia Marmeladova had read him the story of the resurrection of Lazarus and wonders, "Can it be that her convictions will now become my convictions?" (6: 422).

The movement toward the people and religious faith in the epilogue has been a major issue for exegesis, and some commentators reject it as far-fetched and inconsistent with the depiction of a bilious and unrepentant Raskolnikov in the novel proper.[2] In fact, by placing him in daily contact with the *narod*, whose world seethes just under the apparent monolith of deliberations about his crime, Dostoevsky lays the groundwork for the new Raskolnikov long before the epilogue. None of Dostoevsky's great novels contains a larger number of encounters between the hero and the people. The Marmeladovs constitute an important part of the popular underworld, but they represent only a tiny fraction of the mostly unnamed workmen, vagrants, prostitutes, and drunkards that throng the streets of the capital. Yet so absorbed are we with Raskolnikov's predicament and the questions of why he committed murder, whether he will be caught, and whether he wants to be caught, that we can easily dismiss these people as disconnected from his quest for self understanding, but necessary for a plausible depiction of a seedy section of St. Petersburg. Isolated, preoccupied though he is, Raskolnikov is almost never alone. One has only to turn away for

a moment from his inner monologue and pay close attention to what is going on outside him to realize how prominent these motley crowds are in the back alleys and squares through which he walks. Raskolnikov bumps into tipsy peasants; he passes beggars performing as street musicians and traders hawking their wares. He witnesses the attempt of a peasant woman to commit suicide; he gives money to a young prostitute and receives alms from a merchant's wife. When he finally decides to go to the police, he must make his way through a group of peasants to reach the station. Nor does Raskolnikov escape from the people on returning to his stifling, closet-like room. His landlady's servant Nastasia, a healthy, plump peasant woman, is present throughout his sickness and post-murder ravings, at the arrival of his mother and sister, during Sonia's visit, and, unseen by him, she follows him with her eyes as he returns to his room for the final time before surrendering. Sometimes these multitudes, like the city itself, seem phantasmagoric. A furrier who accuses Raskolnikov of murder seems to spring out of the earth like an evil spirit of folk belief. But our perception of Petersburg as spectral results partly from experiencing it through Raskolnikov's eyes and thus attuning ourselves to the novel's psychological dimension at the expense of social reality.

Multiple allusions to popular beliefs, legends, and songs permit us to flesh out the spiritual and ethical world of the *narod*, which views human suffering from a cosmic perspective and concrete charity as the sine qua non of the moral life. These references are, on balance, easy to miss because they tend to be buried in an idiomatic expression or a verse of a song that crops up within the normal rhythm of a conversation. The *Notebooks* to *Crime and Punishment* contain references that were deleted from the final text, indicating both that Dostoevsky's use of folklore was deliberate and that he wished to soften its effect.[3] Dostoevsky evidently intended to highlight the outward story of Raskolnikov's crime and to subdue the imagery connected with the *narod*. As a result, a certain tension exists between the plot about the murder of the old pawnbroker and her half-sister Lizaveta and the novel's rich undercurrent, which conveys popular ideas about justice and mercy. As George Gibian has argued, in working out the novel's religious dimension, Dostoevsky favored symbol and metaphor because, stated outright, the case for "acceptance of suffering, closeness to the life-sustaining Earth, and love sounds insipid and platitudinous."[4] By contrast, the arguments of the men of the sixties, who could find a rationale for eliminating harmful or useless members of society, can be clearly articulated. Even in those passages in *Crime and Punishment* where religious themes move to the center of narrative, there is "obliqueness" in

their presentation that renders them ambiguous. Marmeladov, for example, delivers a moving tavern oration about human suffering and God's universal forgiveness, but his drunken state lends a certain burlesque distortion to his speech.[5]

But there is more at stake than Dostoevsky's desire not to sound sanctimonious. The very structure of the novel turns on interplay between the obvious and the hidden. At the primary level of narration *Crime and Punishment* operates as a psychological thriller. The secondary strain, developed mostly through symbol and innuendo, comments on the primary narrative, lending surface events a deeper meaning and rendering the novel one of literature's great stories of spiritual quest. Here and there the folklore material rises to the surface, and the reader is jolted into a world of popular notions about good and evil spirits and Mother Earth in which primal brutality and religious extremism exist side by side with simple, unobtrusive faith.

The folkloric undercurrent signals the existence in *Crime and Punishment* of two distinct worlds and their accompanying visions of reality: the world of educated Russians that accommodates positivism and rationalism and the pre-scientific cosmos of popular belief. This discussion will focus on the secondary strain. It will explore how Dostoevsky creates the novel's folk cosmos and then view Raskolnikov's story vis-à-vis a widespread legend about sin and repentance. Finally, it will examine how a casual reference to the spiritual song about the beggar Lazarus embeds popular notions of charity and justice that interact with the progressive environmental theory and the Napoleonic theory in Raskolnikov's search for self-understanding. In *Crime and Punishment*, as in Dostoevsky's other great novels, the larger questions of the existence of God and the meaning of socialism for Russian life cannot be rightly understood without assessing the role of the people.

RASKOLNIKOV IN THE THROES OF "CLEAN" AND "UNCLEAN" POWERS

Early in the novel, Raskolnikov receives a letter from his mother that questions whether he has lost his faith:

> Do you still pray to God, Rodia, as you used to, and do you believe in the graciousness of our Creator and Redeemer? In my heart I am afraid that you too may have been visited by the latest, fashionable disbelief . . . Remember, my dear, how when you were a child and your father was alive you babbled your prayers on my knees . . . (6: 34)

Dostoevsky has injected into this letter a statement of the two worldviews that will run concurrently throughout the novel: a modish, rational atheism

and an unsophisticated Christianity that approximates the belief of the Russian village. It is amazing how much care the writer invested in this second, largely veiled cosmos. The text of *Crime and Punishment* abounds in allusions to superstitions about harmful spirits, witches, corpses, and Mother Earth. It makes broad use of the nature symbolism common to folklore, hagiography, and the bible in which light and vegetation signal the forces of good, darkness and aridity the forces of evil, and water functions simultaneously as a symbol of death and of rebirth.[6] Raskolnikov inhabits both worlds, as his tag-name implies; he is "split" and wayward in his thinking (*raskolot'* = "to split"; *raskol'nik* = "schismatic"). Though his rationalizing side dominates the novel proper, part of his being remains open to the possibility of belief, however hard he may try to suppress it.

After receiving his mother's letter, Raskolnikov wanders out of the dusty city onto the Islands, which are green with vegetation. Here he has a dream in which he becomes the child of her description. He is walking with his father by a tavern where a rowdy crowd has gathered to watch the peasant Mikolka beat his worn-out nag. The peasant's savagery mounts, and he decides to strike his mare with a shaft and finish her off with an iron bar. Most in the tipsy crowd urge Mikolka on, but a few shake their heads disapprovingly. One old man shouts that he is a devil and not a Christian, and others repeat this sentiment after the mare dies. Unable to endure this cruelty, the young Raskolnikov runs to embrace the dying horse. His father catches up with him, drags the crying child away, and Raskolnikov wakes up.

This dream sets the moral horror of Mikolka's action within a framework of popular superstition. A literal translation of what the old man says and the crowd later echoes would read, "So maybe there's no cross on you, you forest spirit!" (*Da chto na tebe kresta, chto li, net, leshii*! 6: 48). Peasants often used the term *leshii* ("forest spirit") as a substitute for *chert* ("devil"). Doubt about Mikolka's Christianity is expressed through mention of the crucifix (*krest*) that was worn from baptism to the grave and, in the popular understanding, served as a weapon against the devil.[7] Raskolnikov immediately grasps the message that the dream encodes for him personally – the act he is contemplating is akin to Mikolka's – and he prays:

> God! . . . Can it really be, can it really be that I'll actually take an axe and start hitting her in the head and smash her skull . . . that I'll slip in the sticky, warm blood, break open the chest, steal and shake; hide all covered with blood . . . with an axe . . . Lord, can it really be? . . .
>
> No, I shan't endure it! I shan't endure it! . . .
>
> Lord! . . . Show me my path, and I renounce this accursed . . . dream of mine. (6: 50)

Having admitted to himself that he is not capable of the deed, he senses that he is free from "these spells, sorcery, charms, witchcraft" (*ot etikh char, ot koldovstva, obaianiia, ot navazhdeniia*, 6: 50). On his way home, however, the other, dominant Raskolnikov asserts his sway: crossing Haymarket Square and overhearing that Lizaveta will be away at seven o'clock the next evening, he resolves to commit the murder.

Even before the murder, then, the novel's folklore symbolism implies that Raskolnikov is in the throes of a struggle between good and evil forces. Much later, Sonia Marmeladova, unable to grasp Raskolnikov's theory about the existence of extraordinary men who have a right to transgress the moral law, will bluntly state what occurred from the perspective of the people: "You went away from God, and God struck you and handed you over to the devil!" (6: 321). The Russian *narod* believed that the unclean force prompted murder and suicide, and allusions to popular demonology crop up throughout the presentation of Raskolnikov's crime. The evil forces often seem more powerful than those that would protect him. A dream of a cool deep spring in the desert suggestive of the biblical waters of life almost causes him to oversleep the murder, and Nastasia's presence in the kitchen prohibits him from obtaining the axe he was counting on as a weapon. But something propels Raskolnikov toward the deed, and when he suddenly espies another axe, he muses, "When reason fails the devil helps" (*ne rassudok, tak bes*, 6: 60). Even the pawnbroker, Alena Ivanovna, seems to be in league with the evil powers urging him on; she is called a witch (*ved'ma*) directly and her neck is compared to a chicken leg in unmistakable reference to Baba Yaga. The habit that Raskolnikov shares with his friend Razumikhin of using the word "devil" in swearing is likely connected to the folk notion that the devil appears when his name is mentioned and points to the nearness of malicious spirits.[8] Even the dream in the epilogue that finally signals Raskolnikov's liberation associates his theory with the demonic. Raskolnikov has a vision of a plague in which thousands of people slaughter each other because they have been infected with "trichinas" that make them believe in their supreme intelligence. The new "trichinas" are termed "spirits" (*dukhi*), and the people they invade become possessed and insane (*liudi . . . stanovilis' totchas zhe besnovatymi i sumasshedshimi*, 6: 419–20). The text of *Crime and Punishment* also mentions an array of weapons used in the struggle against evil spirits: icons, candles, and crosses. It includes, as well, references to the great demon killer of the popular imagination Elijah the Prophet (*prorok*) in the person of the assistant police superintendent, Ilia [Elijah] Petrovich, who is dubbed "Gunpowder" (*porokh*) on account of his fiery temperament.[9]

Dostoevsky clusters many of the novel's allusions to the "unclean" and "clean" forces of the popular imagination around Svidrigailov and Sonia. They embody the two polarities toward which Raskolnikov can move, and he himself acknowledges that he must choose "either her path or his" (6: 354). An entry in the *Notebooks* offers a sense of how acute this choice is:

> Svidrigailov – despair, the most cynical
> Sonia – hope, the most unrealizable
> (Raskolnikov himself must express this.)
> He has latched on to both of them passionately.
> (7: 204)

The writer dramatizes the above dichotomy by placing Svidrigailov's and Sonia's rooms side by side in the same building. Svidrigailov rents from Gertrude Resslich, who makes her living by procuring young girls for prostitution (6: 228), while Sonia rents a room from the Kapernaumovs, whose name echoes that of the biblical town Capernaum.[10]

Sonia and Svidrigailov impress themselves on Raskolnikov's consciousness before they actually enter the novel. After his mother's letter informs him of Svidrigailov's lewd designs on his sister Dunia, Raskolnikov imagines him as an arch-seducer. A fashionably dressed and witty middle-aged gentleman, Svidrigailov makes his official entry midway through the novel, stepping across the threshold of Raskolnikov's closet-like room just as the latter awakens from a nightmare in which he has relived the murder. Raskolnikov experiences him as quasi-spectral and fears he may be a continuation of his dream; he later asks Razumikhin whether his visit was a fantasy (*fantaziia*) and the visitor a ghost (*prizrak*, 6: 225).

Allusions to mini-stories about ghosts that are patterned on memorates (*bylichki*) about suicides, murder victims, drunks, and dead sorcerers and witches attend Svidrigailov's depiction. The *narod* believed that Mother Earth did not accept these corpses, which were prone to leave their graves and inflict harm on the living.[11] Svidrigailov remarks that the ghosts of his wife Marfa Petrovna, whom he probably murdered, and of his servant Filipp, whose suicide he occasioned, have visited him. Rumors and dreams also implicate him in the suicides of several adolescent girls whom he had seduced or raped.[12] Folk superstitions about the bathhouse as a gathering place for evil spirits and the unclean dead underlie Svidrigailov's vision of eternity as a replica of this dank, moldy outbuilding with spiders in the corners (6: 221).[13] Tradition forbade placing an icon in this building, and bathers removed their crosses before steaming themselves to placate the dangerous spirit (*bannik*) inhabiting it. In folk belief, Svidrigailov's own

suicide would render him a prime resident of this bathhouse, to which the dingy, humid hotel room with exposed logs where he spends his final night is strikingly similar.

On hearing Marmeladov's account of how Sonia became a prostitute to support their destitute family, Raskolnikov internalizes her as a perpetual victim. Like his sickly fiancée before her, she acquires a mysterious power of attraction for him. She is frail, inarticulate, and only minimally educated; yet, as her name signifying "Holy Wisdom" (Sofia) implies, she stands at the heart of the novel's religious meaning.[14] Dostoevsky imbues her depiction with traits peculiar to popular Orthodoxy. Raskolnikov calls her a "holy fool" (*iurodivaia*), a religious type highly esteemed by the folk and characterized by impropriety and clairvoyance.[15] On the surface, her position as a prostitute would seem to capture the scandalous behavior of the fool; but, in actuality, Sonia's spirituality is mild rather than eccentric and is associated with illumination. When Raskolnikov wanders about "in darkness and confusion" seeking her room, she emerges with a candle to light his way (6: 241). Light seems to emanate from her clear blue eyes and at times she functions as an icon for Raskolnikov, who tends to gaze intently at her or bow down before her.[16] When he attempts to make her guess that he killed her friend Lizaveta, he feels a surge of hatred toward her, but it dissipates when he looks at her face (6: 314). Similarly, before setting off to the police station to surrender, he avoids looking at Sonia; but when he finally glances at her, his feeling returns and his heart contracts (6: 403).

While Svidrigailov's connection with suicide signifies his enmity with Mother Earth, Sonia's portrayal incorporates popular beliefs about the earth's power to receive confessions and to heal. She knows that for true regeneration Raskolnikov must go beyond the technical aspect of surrendering and receiving punishment; he must concede that he has shed human blood and regain the capacity to love.[17] Drawing on notions about Mother Earth as a source of renewed life, she tells him: "Get up! . . . Go right now, this very minute, stand at the crossroads, bow down and first kiss the earth that you have defiled, and then bow down to the whole world, to all four corners, and say to everyone out loud, 'I have killed.' Then God will again send you life" (6: 322).

Sonia's faith is anchored above all in the Gospel and the cross. After learning that Raskolnikov has murdered the pawnbroker and Lizaveta, she unexpectedly asks him if "there is a cross on him" ("*Est' na tebe krest?*"), echoing the words of the peasants to Mikolka in Raskolnikov's dream. Then, she offers him her cross: "Here, take this one; it's made of cypress. I have another, a bronze one, Lizaveta's. Lizaveta and I exchanged crosses.

She gave me her cross, and I gave her my little icon one. Now I will start wearing Lizaveta's, and this one's for you . . . We'll go to suffer together; we'll carry our cross together" (6: 324). Raskolnikov delays kissing the earth and accepting Sonia's cross until he is ready to surrender. He rightly understands that her cross stands as an emblem of what he must suffer and that Sonia will share it with him. He knows, too, that in accepting a cross of cypress wood, he is he is putting on a peasant (*prostonarodnyi*) cross, and taking another step away from Svidrigailov's path and toward Sonia's world.[18]

THE PEOPLE TELL RASKOLNIKOV'S STORY: "SIN AND REPENTANCE"

In *Crime and Punishment*, then, behind the presentation of the criminal's psychology and the fashionable ideas prompting the murder, stands the cosmos of an archaic narrative form in which supernatural forces play a direct role in human life.[19] It is little wonder that critics have espied a quest pattern on the lines of the hero myth or the saint's life underlying Raskolnikov's self-deliberations and his cat and mouse game with Inspector Porfiry Petrovich.[20] Michael Holquist suspects that *Crime and Punishment* has two simultaneous plots that combine two narrative forms – that of a contemporary detective story with its sophisticated twists and turns and that of a wisdom tale with its focus on eternal verities. These two narrative modes, he argues, hold each other in tension and proceed from different defining moments in Raskolnikov's story: the detective story from the murder itself, which occurs near the beginning, and the wisdom tale from his rejection of the theory justifying the murder, which occurs in the epilogue. Not the dominant mode of the novel proper, the wisdom tale ascends to the foreground by the end.[21]

If Holquist's insight is valid – and I believe it is – the existence of two plots implies not only two cosmologies, but also two narratologies with their distinct ideological systems. The novel's sub-surface cosmos corresponds to that of the oral tales that Dostoevsky heard in Siberia and encountered again in the collections appearing in the early 1860s. Raskolnikov's story – from the murder that severs him from the human community through his rebirth in the epilogue – approximates the pattern of a widely disseminated legend about a great evildoer who repents and sets out to find forgiveness. Folklorists sometimes designate this narrative "The Legend of a Great Sinner" or, in those variants where the hero obtains forgiveness only after destroying an even greater evildoer, "The Legend of Two Great Sinners."[22] This generic name is close to that of the proposed multi-volume work that

Dostoevsky would sketch out a few years after *Crime and Punishment*, but never write. He titled his project *The Life of a Great Sinner* (*Zhitie velikogo greshnika*) and claimed that it would be his magnum opus and would deal with the question of the existence of God, "which had tormented him consciously and unconsciously all his life" (29, 1: 117). His hero was to be an intellectual whose story would include boarding school, complicity in murder, a period in a monastery under the influence of Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk, involvement in various political and philosophical movements, cruelty, suffering, and ultimately a religious crisis and regeneration (29, 1: 117–18).

Dostoevsky knew the folk legend, though it is difficult to say whether he knew it under the designation "The Legend of a Great Sinner." He had observed its pattern as the actual experience of several prisoners in the Dead House who, though generally quiet, had suddenly committed serious crimes followed by killing sprees and then had calmed down again (4: 87–88). This legend was no doubt among the oral narratives he heard in Siberia, for in *The Diary of a Writer* for July/August 1877 he speaks of tales of saints and pilgrimages that he listened to as a child and again "in the stockade among bandits, and the bandits would listen and sigh . . . Even bad, wretched people, profiteers and oppressors, would not infrequently receive a strange and irresistible desire to take up wandering, to purify themselves by labor, by a feat, to fulfill an oath taken long ago" (25: 214–15). Dostoevsky also knew the legend from N. A. Nekrasov's poem "Vlas," which reworks the type with a single sinner, and he continues the above *Diary* passage by remarking that Nekrasov could not have imagined his Vlas "other than in chains and penitent wandering." A. N. Afanasev's *Russian Folk Legends* presents both types of the legend under the rubric "Sin and Repentance" ("Grekh i pokaianie"), and A. N. Pypin's review article in *The Contemporary* contains a lengthy retelling of the type with two sinners (Afanasev's variant "b").[23] While the *Notebooks* for *Crime and Punishment* contain no mention of Afanasev as such, an early draft finds Raskolnikov thinking of his deed as "sin" and musing about the moment when he will "repent" (7: 82, 83).

The similarities between Raskolnikov's story and the two Great Russian variants in Afanasev's collection are numerous. Both concern an impoverished widow, her son, and her daughter. The son of the legend, like Raskolnikov, commits a serious transgression and acquires wealth in which he immediately loses interest. Both Raskolnikov and the hero of the legend forsake their families and look for someone who can help overcome the consequences of the deed. Both find a spiritual guide who tells them what

they must do, and both eventually obtain release from their burden. In *Crime and Punishment*, of course, the legendary situations undergo certain mutations in conjunction with Dostoevsky's probing of motivation and moral ambiguity and his presentation of an educated hero.[24]

Raskolnikov's evident crime is murder and theft. The most frequent hero of the legend is a bandit-murderer, though in some Great Russian variants, including those in Afanasev's collection, the initial sin is incest.[25] In both Afanasev's variants the mothers trick their sons into sleeping with them, their sisters, and their godmothers. Raskolnikov's crime is not without sexual overtones. Psychoanalytic studies have long argued that the old pawnbroker and Lizaveta can be viewed as displaced representations of his mother and sister, against whom he nourishes suppressed hostility, and they posit his strong erotic attraction for Dunia.[26] Sonia and Lizaveta have exchanged crosses and entered into a relationship of adoptive sisterhood, which, in the understanding of the *narod*, was as strong as blood kinship.[27] As a result, when Raskolnikov takes Sonia's cross and she retains Lizaveta's, he enters a symbolic kinship relationship with both women. The mother in Afanasev's variants functions as an evil power, and she is sometimes destroyed after the deed. According to variant "b," "The son had no sooner left the yard and gone about ten steps, when suddenly a wind arose and the hut burst into flames and burned down in one minute along with his mother and sister."[28] The letter from Raskolnikov's mother arrives a day before the murder and aggravates his guilt feelings toward his family; it contains a detailed account of Dunia's humiliating position in the Svidrigailov household and her engagement to the despicable Luzhin, and it implies that she is sacrificing her happiness for him. Konstantin Mochulsky considers this letter the turning point in Raskolnikov's fate, the event that pushes him from vague dreams to action and allows him to use the poverty and helplessness of his mother and sister as a pretext for a murder that will, supposedly, rescue them and free him for a life of service to humanity.[29]

For Dostoevsky, no doubt, the emphasis on the hero's conscience constituted the most compelling feature of this legend. Even in variants like Afanasev's where an external power (the mother) exerts a strong influence, the choice to do evil lies with the hero, who is fully accountable for his deeds. Legends tend to move rapidly from the initial situation (banditry, incest, sacrilege) to repentance and the search for forgiveness and then to give a fairly detailed description of the penance. In Afanasev's variants, the young men acknowledge their guilt immediately. Even before leaving the pawnbroker's apartment, Raskolnikov feels "horror and revulsion about what he has done" (6: 65). But he will spend the remainder of the novel

proper and most of the epilogue trying to figure out why he committed the deed and justifying himself to himself. In both the legend and the novel the crime severs the hero from his family. In the legend the hero simply leaves home. Raskolnikov becomes psychologically incapable of feeling love for his mother and sister, and soon after the murder, having entrusted them to Razumikhin's care, he informs Sonia that he has taken leave of his family and she is all he has left (6: 252).

The heroes of Afanasev's variants and Raskolnikov are alike in their indifference to their new wealth – a clear signal that material gain was not their primary motive. Neither legendary hero touches the treasure (*klad*) he has gained; both set out immediately to seek forgiveness:

> He became even more despondent and thought, "It must be that I am a great sinner before people and God."
>
> And he walked and walked and came upon a great, thick forest; he saw a path, set out on this path, and came to a cell; he began to knock, and the hermit asked him, "Who's there?" "A sinner, holy father." (variant "b")[30]

Raskolnikov buries his booty without taking stock of what he has stolen. Unlike the hero of the legend, he is not immediately repentant. We sense that he has a dim perception that the murder left him mortally wounded when he contemplates suicide or muses on the resemblance of his tiny room to a tomb. He admits openly that it was really himself that he killed during his confession to Sonia, but his awareness that his deed was a sin occurs only after his dream of the "trichinas" in the epilogue.

Like Afanasev's variants, the novel uses the term buried treasure (*klad*) for Raskolnikov's booty, which he places in a trench and covers with a rock in accordance with folk notions about where such treasure may be found.[31] In his post-murder delirium Raskolnikov cries out for his socks and Nastasia responds, "Just look what rags he's gathered and he sleeps with them as if they were buried treasure" (*klad*, 6: 73). Later, when Razumikhin tells Porfiry Petrovich that Raskolnikov gave his last kopeck to Katerina Ivanovna for her husband's funeral, Raskolnikov retorts that he may have found buried treasure (*klad*, 6: 195). In popular belief, buried treasure was guarded by demonic powers; this is explicit in the legend and implied in the novel by the association between Alena Ivanovna and a witch.

Like the novel, the legend connects the regeneration of the sinner with the earth. Common to both Afanasev's variants is one of the most widespread folklore motifs for penance: the planting and watering of three burnt sticks

until they sprout shoots and grow. We understand this to mean until the earth renews their life and, by analogy, the life of the sinner. Finally, there may be a connection between the motif of one sinner killing an even greater sinner and the death of Svidrigailov. It is the news of Svidrigailov's suicide that seals Raskolnikov's resolve to go through with his confession to the police, possibly because he understands subconsciously that this death closes one of his two possible paths: he must now follow Sonia's.

The legend of the great sinner offers a plausible reading of Raskolnikov's story from the people's perspective. But its function in *Crime and Punishment* goes deeper than the similarities noted above; it touches the heart of the ideological debate where the very meaning of the concepts "sin" and "crime" becomes pivotal. The legend builds on a notion of sin consonant with popular belief: the hero's deed is a violation of an absolute standard of human behavior. This is close to Sonia's understanding of Raskolnikov's murder ("God handed you over to the devil"), but it is one that Raskolnikov rejects throughout the novel proper. Sonia's stark interpretation, outmoded and simplistic by comparison to the more eloquent arguments in the novel, is incompatible with the ideas of the 1860s that regarded crime not as a violation of God's law, but as a consequence of the improper organization of society. It is equally at odds with Raskolnikov's Napoleonic theory, which released the few who have a "new word" to offer humanity from common morality.

The hero of the legend refers to his deed as "sin" (*grekh*) and to himself as "sinner" (*greshnik*). The main sinner in *Crime and Punishment* is Raskolnikov, though the term is not applied to him directly. It is, however, used of both his alter egos, Sonia and Svidrigailov. Sonia tells Raskolnikov that she is a "great, great sinner" (*velikaia, velikaia greshnitsa*, 6: 246). Later Svidrigailov, who has just been describing his engagement to a teenage girl, ironically counters Raskolnikov's revulsion with, "Have mercy on me, good fellow. I am a sinful man (*chelovek greshnyi*). Ha, ha, ha" (6: 370). His comment stands as a perverse echo of Sonia's statement, which Svidrigailov overheard while eavesdropping. Unlike Sonia and Svidrigailov, Raskolnikov avoids applying the term *sinner* to himself. Yet, when he adamantly reinforces Sonia's use by affirming that she is indeed a great sinner and the worst thing is that she "killed and betrayed herself in vain" (6: 247), we suspect that he is projecting on her a truth that he is unwilling to recognize in himself. In explaining his theory of the extraordinary man to her, he rather gingerly uses the term *sinful*, no doubt suspecting that it is the only context in which he can reach her:

This is the thing: I once asked myself what if, for example, Napoleon happened to be in my place and he didn't have a Toulon, or an Egypt, or a crossing of Mont Blanc with which to begin his career, but instead of these beautiful and monumental things there was simply some sort of ridiculous old woman, the wife of a civil servant, whom he had in addition to kill in order to take the money from her chest (for his career, understand?). Well, would he have decided to do this if there were no other way out? Would he not have been up to it because it wasn't monumental enough and even . . . sinful? (6: 319)

Raskolnikov's other significant use of the term "sin" occurs in conjunction with his kissing the earth. Sonia told him to kiss the earth, which he had defiled (*oskvernil*, 6: 322). But he remembers her saying, "Kiss the earth because you have sinned against it" (*Potselui zemliu, potomu cho ty i pred nei sogreshil*, 6: 405). Though he again avoids applying the term directly to himself, one feels that his subconscious is clamoring for him to admit that his deed was truly a sin.

The very title of Dostoevsky's novel reads like a secular version of "Sin and Repentance." The Russian word "prestuplenie" has a broader meaning than the English "crime," which implies a legal offense. It signifies a transgression, a stepping beyond an accepted boundary.[32] Raskolnikov understands this sense of the term when he acknowledges his common bond with Sonia, for he emphasizes that she, too, has "stepped across" (*Ty tozhe perestupila*, 6: 252). Raskolnikov uses "prestuplenie" repeatedly in discussing whether such a thing as "crime" really exists and in his article where he hints that what is termed "crime" may be permissible and even necessary to advance the cause of human progress. But the word touches a sore spot when applied to his own deed. When Dunia asks him, "After all, in accepting your suffering aren't you already washing away half of your crime (*prestuplenie*)?" Raskolnikov cries out in fury:

Crime? What sort of crime? . . . That I killed a disgusting, malicious louse, an old-woman pawnbroker, whom no one needed, whom they'll forgive you a multitude of sins for killing, who was sucking the life juices from the poor, and this is a crime? . . . And why are they poking at me from all sides: "crime, crime"! Only now do I see clearly the entire absurdity of my faintheartedness, now, when I've made up my mind to take on this unnecessary shame! I'm simply doing it from my own baseness and lack of talent. (6: 400)

For Raskolnikov to term his killing a "crime" would be either to admit once and for all that he is ordinary or that his theory is bankrupt.

The novel adheres to a fairly strict distribution according to class for the use of the words "sin" and "crime." The street people commonly use "sin", while officials and educated people use "crime" or a substitute word.

We can observe this in the first meeting between Raskolnikov and Porfiry Petrovich, which contains the novel's most elaborate discussion of crime and is remarkable for its almost total avoidance of the word "sin." Besides "prestuplenie" we find "outrage" (*beschinstvo*), mistake (*oshibka*), "to step over/beyond the law" (*perestupat'* and *prestupat' zakon*), "to step over an obstacle" (*pereshagnut' cherez prepiatstvie*), and "to eliminate all obstacles" (*ustraniat' vse prepiatstviia*) (6: 196–201). Razumikhin alone, whose name signifies "reason" or "good sense" (*razum*) and who stands close to the popular view, introduces the concepts of "sin" and "conscience" into the discussion.[33] He objects to the socialist notion that proper restructuring of society will instantly make all of humanity "righteous and sinless" (6: 197); and he is horrified at the idea of "blood [killing] from conscience" (*krov' po sovesti*, 6: 202, 203). Elsewhere in the novel Razumikhin is termed *bogatyr'* (epic hero) because of his purity of heart and fortitude in the face of poverty even greater than Raskolnikov's.

Moving from the educated milieu onto the street, we enter the cosmos of the legend and encounter the term *grekh* (sin) for a variety of offences and disasters. When Raskolnikov happens upon a woman who has attempted to drown herself, he hears her neighbor cry out, "I went off to the shop and left our little girl to watch her – and just look what an awful thing (*grekh*) took place" (6: 132). Shortly afterward he comes upon Marmeladov, who has been run down by a carriage, and the driver is crying, "Such an awful thing (*grekh*), Lord. What an awful thing (*grekh*)! (6: 136)." The house-painter Mikolay, a sectarian who confesses to Raskolnikov's crime in search of inordinate suffering, uses "sin" and a popular variant for "murderer": "I'm guilty. The sin is mine. I'm the murderer" (*Vinovat! Moi grekh! Ia ubivets!* 6: 271).[34]

The furrier who sees Raskolnikov return to the scene of the crime similarly uses the dialectal *ubivets*, rather than standard Russian *ubiitsa*. Raskolnikov perceives this little man as a phantom (*prizrak*) springing from under the earth (6: 210, 254, 274). After witnessing Mikolay's confession, the furrier believes he has accused Raskolnikov wrongly, and he returns to confess his guilt:

> The man stood on the threshold, looked at Raskolnikov in silence, and moved one step into the room. He was exactly as he was yesterday; the same figure, dressed the same way, but in his face and glance a powerful change had taken place: he looked as if he had become sorrowful (*prigoriunivshis'*), and standing for a minute he sighed deeply. All that was needed was for him to put his palm on his cheek and bend his head to the side, and he would resemble a peasant woman perfectly.
>
> "What do you want?" asked Raskolnikov benumbed.

The man was silent a moment then, suddenly, bowed deeply to him, almost to the earth . . .

"What are you doing?" cried Raskolnikov.

"I'm guilty," the man quietly uttered.

"Of what?"

"Of evil thoughts." (6: 274)

The furrier's belief that he is guilty before Raskolnikov explains his grieved expression and his earthly bow, an ancient peasant gesture expressing humility. His offense consists of evil thoughts, of false judgment. Raskolnikov, too, must understand that he is guilty of evil thoughts and must acknowledge the sinfulness of his "accursed dream" to be released from his self-torture.

Like the legend, the novel incorporates the linkage between sin and grieving. Realizing what he has done, the sinner of Afanasev's variant "a" "begins to weep bitterly" and becomes a bandit "from terrible grief"; in variant "b" the hero becomes despondent and understands that he is a "great sinner before the people and God." In *Crime and Punishment* the details that the furrier has become sorrowful and that he resembles a peasant woman create the picture of a peasant woman grieving or lamenting. Understood in this way, the mini-scene of the furrier's confession enters into an extensive network of grieving and lamenting running through the novel – over four hundred instances according to V. P. Vladimirtsev's count.[35] It is connected to the howls that awaken Raskolnikov after the murder, Sonia's silent trembling and heaving when she returns from the street for the first time with thirty rubles, the suppressed tears and prayers of Katerina Ivanovna as she and the children kneel during the last rites for Marmeladov, and the whining voice of the beggar woman to whom Raskolnikov gives five kopecks on his way to turn himself in (6: 70–71, 17, 143, 405). Vladimirtsev apparently suspects that Dostoevsky considered adding a Haymarket prostitute's lament about her terrible fate to this background din, but opted instead to place a line from a lament in Razumikhin's mouth ("I shall weep burning tears" [*Zal'ius' slez'mi goriuchimi*] 6: 160). He contends that the undercurrent in *Crime and Punishment* created by the repetition of tears and cries and fortified by Razumikhin's line can be understood as an embedded wail of the people for Raskolnikov the murderer (*ubivets*) and native son (*Rodia*, a diminutive of *Rodion*, relates to *rod* [kin] and *rodnoi* [native]).[36]

Another aspect of the folk attitude toward crime in *Crime and Punishment* is the tendency of the people to term criminals "wretched" or "unfortunate" (*neschastnye*) once they have confessed. Sonia terms Raskolnikov "wretched" immediately after he confesses to her ("There is no one in the whole world

more wretched than you" 6: 316), and she also applies the designation to herself ("Oh, how wretched I am!"). In this way she identifies with Raskolnikov's fate, which has become her own, and assures him that she will not abandon him. It is only now that she addresses him informally (*ty* rather than *vy*), a usage that, Vladimirtsev argues, is connected with the sentiments and poetic requirements of lamenting.[37] Her first statement contains the formal *vy* but assumes the rhythms of the lament: "What have you done, what have you done to yourself?" (*Chto vy, chto vy nad soboi sdelali!* 6: 316). But as she continues her "lament," she shifts to the more intimate form of address (*ty*):

> No, no! There is no one more wretched than you (*neschastnee tebia*) in the whole world! . . .
>
> No, no! Never and nowhere! . . . I'll follow you, I'll follow you everywhere. Oh, Lord! . . . How wretched I am! . . And why, why didn't I know you earlier! Why didn't you come to me earlier? Oh. Lord! . . .
>
> Now what! Now what are we to do? Together, together! . . . I'll go to prison together with you![38] (6: 316)

Soon after this "lament," Sonia again assumes the formal *vy* in addressing Raskolnikov: "How is it that you (*vy*), such a person as you (*vy*) . . . could make up your mind to do such a thing?" (6: 317).

Although the novel's outward discussion of the meaning of crime gives prominence to the stylish environmental and Napoleonic theories, in the final analysis, it is the legend's and Sonia's understanding of sin that Raskolnikov must embrace to be released from his self-torment. The sinner of the legend repents of his deed immediately and sets out in search of someone who can inform him how to expiate it. Some variants specify that he becomes a brigand from terrible grief and kills all who fail to give him an answer; afterward he accepts his penance in the hope of finally obtaining forgiveness. On the surface, Raskolnikov's seemingly chance murder of Lizaveta appears to replicate the killing spree of the legend. But Raskolnikov's inner path acquires a more elaborate psychological development than that of the legendary hero. From the time he conceives of his "accursed dream," Raskolnikov falls prey to inner torments, and these intensify following the murder until he is compelled to confess, give himself up, and receive his "penance" in the form of Siberian imprisonment. Consciously, he seeks not so much to gain forgiveness as to castigate and strengthen himself, though suppressed deep within him is a thirst to be reconnected to the human community.

THE BEGGAR LAZARUS

Crime and Punishment is not only the drama of a great spiritual quest; it is also, as the heart-rending story of the Marmeladov family reminds us, a social novel about life in the back streets of St. Petersburg in the mid-1860s.[39] Though the focus is on the hero and his crime, the poverty and human misery surrounding Raskolnikov provide a good deal of the fuel generating his rationale for murder. The dreams haunting Raskolnikov in his isolation and erupting in murder are largely warped ideas of justice. As Joseph Frank notes, while Dostoevsky may argue fiercely against radical ideas, he was by no means without sympathy for big-hearted young people who, lacking outlets within Russian society for their zeal to create a better world, fell under their influence.[40] Reference to justice is evident in one of the novel's earliest expositions of the environmental theory. Raskolnikov overhears "his very own thoughts" in a tavern when a student jokes that he could kill Alena Ivanovna without any pangs of conscience because the issue was the justice (*spravedlivost'*) in killing a "stupid, senseless, worthless, evil, sick old woman whom no one needs and, on the contrary, is harmful to everyone" and then using the old woman's money for good deeds (6: 54). The explanation of the "Napoleonic theory" that Raskolnikov offers Porfiry Petrovich implies that great men may have the obligation to break with common morality in order to bring salvation to all of humanity (6: 199).

Crime and Punishment develops the folk perspective on social justice through an allusion to a spiritual song that retells the Gospel parable of the beggar Lazarus and the unmerciful rich man (Luke 16: 19–31). The novel situates the one clear mention of this song in Raskolnikov's thoughts; as he is about to meet Porfiry Petrovich for the first time, he muses, "I suppose I'll have to sing Lazarus to this one too (6: 189)." "To sing Lazarus" (*pet' Lazaria*) is a turn of speech for "to tell a tale of woes," "to solicit something ingratiatingly," "to put on a false front."[41] The Lazarus song, from which the idiom was derived, expressed the belief of the *narod* that relations between rich and poor should be governed by concrete charity as manifested in almsgiving (*milostynia*). In *Crime and Punishment*, allusions to this song thread their way through the text binding seemingly unrelated passages. Since the reference is buried in an idiom, Russian readers tend to overlook it, and it usually fails to survive translation into English.[42]

Studies have suggested that Raskolnikov's thought of "singing Lazarus" signifies that he has falsely assumed the role of beggar and that he is dissimulating when he tells Porfiry Petrovich that he believes in the resurrection

of Lazarus.[43] True, summoned to the police station for failure to pay his rent, Raskolnikov exaggerates his position as a "poor and sick student depressed . . . by poverty" (6: 80), and he intends to maintain this stance in front of Porfiry Petrovich who may suspect him of murder. The song concealed beneath the idiom, however, directs us not so much to the hero's playacting as to his inner fragmentation. Something deep within Raskolnikov draws him to the lowly and the outcast (Sonia, his sickly fiancée, Lizaveta), and he gives alms to the destitute. Something else causes him to rebuke himself for his generosity and to reject help from others. Raskolnikov clings to the belief that he may be superior to the street rabble to whom he gives a few kopecks. As he phrases it in his confession to Sonia, he feels compelled to ascertain whether he is a louse (*vosh'*) like everybody else, or a human being (*chelovek*, 6: 322). When he thinks about "singing Lazarus," he seems to express a subconscious awareness that he must choose between the way of giving *and receiving* alms and the way of power and reason, by which he can justify the murder on the grounds that the old pawnbroker is a "louse" and not a "human being."

Critics seldom mention the beggar Lazarus. On the other hand, they almost universally perceive the novel's essential religious meaning in the Gospel narrative of the resurrection of Lazarus (John 11: 1–45). Dostoevsky highlights the Lazarus whom Jesus brings back from the tomb and downplays Lazarus the beggar. As a pledge that Raskolnikov, like the dead Lazarus, can awaken to new life, John's narrative captures the novel's metaphysical center.[44] The song about Lazarus the beggar directs us to the world of the impoverished inhabitants of Petersburg's back alleys and squares. In *Crime and Punishment*, the two Lazarus stories complement each other by fusing the themes of charity and resurrection into a single overarching religious vision. The novel links the action of giving and receiving alms to the theme of resurrected life, for the presence of God on earth becomes palpable in simple acts of charity, though the rich and the powerful may not see it.

In pre-Petrine Russia, Luke's parable about the rich man and Lazarus was a favorite subject for sermons and religious tracts.[45] The song, which took shape on the basis of written sources, was known virtually everywhere in the countryside by the nineteenth century. A narrative on the beggar Lazarus in some form or another would surely have been included among stories Dostoevsky heard as a child and again in Siberia. His activity as co-publisher of the journal *Time* and later *Epoch* in the early 1860s brought him into the direct proximity of a number of publications containing the Lazarus song. In 1861, *Time* reviewed P. A. Bessonov's *Wandering Pilgrims*, P. V.

Kireevsky's *Songs*, and V. Varentsov's *Collection of Russian Spiritual Songs*.[46] The section of Bessonov's classic multi-volume work that was under review (vol. I, part 1) contains nine variants of the Lazarus song listed under the heading "Whom do Wandering Pilgrims Take as an Example," thereby underscoring its special role in the beggars' self-understanding of their place in the world. Kireevsky's and Varentsov's collections each contain several variants of the Lazarus song.

Like the New Testament account, the spiritual song contrasts the earthly life of the rich man and the beggar with their reversal of fortunes after death: the rich man who failed to help the poor one goes to hell, while the beggar Lazarus goes to heaven. Both accounts imply that the beggar's condition inherently makes him a recipient of divine sympathy, whereas the rich man must earn this favor through acts of mercy. Russian folklore in general reinforces the ethic of the Lazarus song and shrouds the act of almsgiving with an aura of sacredness. In legends it is often Christ himself who, disguised as the beggar, seeks charity. Even the formulaic request for an offering, "I beg/receive alms in the name of Christ" (*Proshu/beri milostyniu Khrista radi*), is sanctioned by a spiritual song in which Christ leaves his beggar-brothers his name instead of "mountains of gold and rivers of honey" at the time of his Ascension. John the Evangelist (sometimes John the Baptist or John Chrysostom) cautions him against leaving wealth because, "The powerful, the rich will take them away; / And there will be much murder, / And there will be much blood-spilling here."[47]

The Lazarus song pushes the contrast between good and evil further than Luke's parable by elaborating on the earthly life of the two men, the circumstances of their death, and, often, their conversation in the afterlife. It usually makes the rich man and the poor man brothers and underscores this relationship by naming both "Lazarus" (hence the common designation of this song as "The Two Lazaruses"). While the Gospel narrative is scanty in its details of the interaction between the rich man and the poor one, the song includes a scene in which the beggar asks his wealthy brother for alms in the name of Christ, is refused, and is thrown out of the house. Typically, the rich man denies his kinship with the beggar and sets his "fierce" dogs on him. But the dogs, kinder than their owner, bring the poor brother the crumbs from their master's table and as in the Gospel account, lick his sores. Luke does not relate how the two men die, but the song shows poor Lazarus beseeching God to take his soul. Though anticipating that his life in the next world will correspond to his earthly existence, he finds God's hell preferable to his brother's unkindness:

The poor man went out into the open field,
He looked up; he gazed at the heavens,
The poor man shouted out in a loud voice:
Oh, Lord! Lord! Merciful Savior!
Hear, Oh Lord, my prayer,
My unrighteous prayer:
Send me, Lord, terrible angels.
Terrible, and restless, and unmerciful!
Let them thrust a lance through my ribs to my soul,
Let them place my soul on a harrow;
Carry my soul into the burning tar.[48]

The rich brother, on the other hand, expects to enter heaven, for he imagines the afterlife as a continuation of the pleasure he knows on earth. Some variants of the song indicate that he believes his wealth will secure his way into paradise: "For me, a rich man, there is the means to enter heaven, / For me, a rich man, there is the means to save my soul / A rich man has great possessions: / Bread and salt, gold and silver."[49]

The song normally ends with the rich man's plea to his poor brother, whose kinship he now acknowledges; the poor man responds that he cannot go against God's will ("Brother, my brother, it is not my will but the will of God").[50] Sometimes the ending includes a list of acts of charity akin to that noted in Matthew 25 that the rich brother failed to perform on earth:

[The rich man cried out:]
Oh my brother, poor Lazarus!
Since you knew and were aware of eternal life,
Of the evil, eternal torment,
Why, my dear one, did you not tell me then?
Ah, I would not have been so concerned
about my possessions and life,
Bread and salt, and gold and silver!
I would have given alms in the name of Christ,
I would have called you my own dear brother,
I would have summoned poor beggars into my house,
I would, my brother, have attended to widows and orphans,
I would have protected them with nightly lodgings,
I would have clothed the naked and the barefoot,
I would have given alms to those sitting along the road,
I would have brought light into the darkness of the dungeons,
I would have accompanied the dead in their coffins.[51]

For the Russian *narod*, the Lazarus narrative was a succinct presentation of the injustice reigning in the world and, at the same time, a powerful

summons to live the Gospel commandment of love of neighbor.[52] Yet, in spite of the sharply negative portrayal of the rich Lazarus, it is not possible to claim that the song advocates a social upheaval that would equalize the distribution of wealth. It is clear, however, that wealth *ipso facto* bears with it the obligation of charity. The rich brother goes to hell not because he is wealthy, but because he failed to help the poor.

Within the educated milieu of Dostoevsky's time the understanding of beggars and almsgiving differed sharply from that of the people. The radical intelligentsia in particular was prone to explain the existence of beggary, like that of crime, as an aberration of the social structure that would disappear once the system was set right. Several years prior to the writing of *Crime and Punishment* this attitude slipped into *Time* in a review of I. G. Pryzhov's book *Beggars in Holy Russia*. The reviewer, M. Rodevich, rejected Pryzhov's historical schema that appeared to link mid-nineteenth-century beggars crowding the streets of the Russian capitals to pilgrims who were once the bearers of the spiritual songs and whom princes and monasteries sustained.[53] He viewed beggary as a phenomenon that "could not help but be connected with the very structure of social life in general" and beggars as a social blight that almsgiving aggravated: "Poverty is a social sin, a civil vice of the people; as it relates to the individual person it is a misfortune. Beggary is deliberate charlatanism and religious virtue maintained by false notions about society."[54] The solution Rodevich advocated was to educate the people so that they would overcome the irrationality and "mystical-religious urgings" that caused them to give alms: "teach them, open their eyes, let them understand that their almsgiving leads to nothing but bad."[55]

Dostoevsky disagreed with Rodevich, and, in a passage that he omitted from the final text of *Crime and Punishment*, he placed his objections in the mouth of Razumikhin:

> Certain good, big-hearted, and truly intelligent people will tell you that it is sad and difficult to help in an isolated fashion and that one must tear out the root of evil and implant good. Others, also fine and good people, but already too steeped in theory, will bring you entire volumes of proof – truly accurate (from one point of view) – that isolated instances of good do not help society. They forget that, among other things, they do help that particular individual, and they make you yourself better and uphold love in society. And so fools and rogues will immediately conclude from this that it is not necessary to help at all, and that this is progress.[56] (7: 211)

In the final text, Dostoevsky carried on this polemic more indirectly. He placed the crucial statements in the mouth of the drunken Marmeladov,

who introduces the theme of beggary in the tavern scene (Book 1, Chapter 2) with a parody of Rodevich: "Kind Sir . . . poverty isn't a vice, that's the truth . . . But beggary (*nishcheta*), kind Sir, beggary is a vice" (6: 13). This deformation of the radical position continues in Marmeladov's explanation of why Lebeziatnikov, the novel's prime caricature of the men of the sixties, refuses to loan him money: "After all, he knows that I'll not return it. From compassion? But following the latest ideas Mr. Lebeziatnikov explained the other day that in our time compassion is already forbidden by science" (6: 14).

In the tavern scene, the very relationship between the drunken civil servant and Raskolnikov suggests one between supplicant and almsgiver, and, curiously, it may be precisely Marmeladov's beggarly mien that attracts Raskolnikov.[57] Marmeladov is dirty and in rags; he has sold his clothing for drink and has spent five nights on a hay barge. Though Raskolnikov is hardly better dressed, the title by which Marmeladov repeatedly addresses him, "Kind Sir" (*Milostivyi gosudar'*), is revealing. It is, of course, a standard form of respectful address and points here to Marmeladov's clerical status; but it also contains the key word (*milostivyi*) of the spiritual songs and folk legends for a person who shows kindness (*milost'*) or gives alms (*milostynia*). In the Lazarus song, *milostivyi* describes Christ and the angels he sends to the beggar; its opposite, *nemilostivyi*, is used for the rich man and the angels Christ sends to him. The disjointed story Marmeladov tells Raskolnikov contains a number of mini-stories on the pattern of destitute seeker/(potential) benefactor. Katerina Ivanovna is reduced to a state of hopeless beggary and Marmeladov, unable to look on such suffering, offers her his hand; Sonia becomes a prostitute in order to feed small children who have not "seen a crust for three days"; Marmeladov appears before his superior, Ivan Afanasevich, dressed in rags, and the latter takes him back into the service; Marmeladov asks Sonia for money for drink and she gives him her last thirty kopecks (6: 16, 17, 18, 20).

The terms "beggar" (*nishchii*) and "beggary" (*nishcheta*) are sprinkled throughout the text of *Crime and Punishment* and pertain not only to the riff-raff of Petersburg's back streets, but to most of the main characters as well. The Marmeladovs are a destitute family who live in a tenement of beggars. A merchant's wife mistakes Raskolnikov for a beggar. Though the term is not specifically used of Razumikhin, we learn that he dresses in rags and that his poverty is so great that he sometimes does not light the stove in the winter (6: 44). Luzhin fancies that his marriage to Dunia will lift her from beggary. At his trial Raskolnikov explains his murder partly as a result of destitution (*nishcheta*), and his sentence is more merciful (*milostivee*) than

could have been expected (6: 411). The mention of beggars occurs even in contexts remote from the main action; thus, on the final night before his suicide, Svidrigailov looks through a chink in the wall of his dank hotel room and, for some reason, espies one man reproaching another for being a beggar whom he "pulled out of the mud" (6: 389).

The motif of almsgiving occurs at almost every juncture of *Crime and Punishment*. Raskolnikov gives alms to the Marmeladovs, to an organ grinder, to a prostitute, and to a young girl who has just been seduced; even on his way to the police station to confess the murder of the pawnbroker and her sister Lizaveta, he gives something to a woman with a child. The detail that he had used his meager resources to support an impoverished, consumptive student and his destitute father surfaces at his trial. We know very little about his former fiancée except that she was sickly, dreamed of a convent, and loved to give alms to beggars. When Raskolnikov's landlady refuses to continue his board because he has not paid his bill, her servant Nastasia, seeing how sick and penniless he is, brings him food and drink in her own dishes. Sonia reproaches herself for refusing to give Katerina Ivanovna collars and cuffs. The corresponding passage in the *Notebooks* makes it clear that she considers herself a great sinner precisely because of this "sin against love" and not because of prostitution (7: 135).[58] In Siberia Sonia brings pies and sweetbreads (*kalachi*) to the entire stockade at Christmas. Luzhin emerges as especially despicable by the standard of almsgiving. He imagines that his marriage to Dunia will free her from destitution, but he does not lift a finger to help her. Later, after Dunia has broken the engagement, he reproaches himself for not using expensive gifts to bind her to him. His treatment of Sonia subverts the meaning of almsgiving as an act of compassion. He gives her ten rubles for Katerina Ivanovna, whom he terms a "beggarly fool" and a "beggarly widow"; and then he slips another hundred in her pocket so that he can accuse her of stealing "from beggary" (6: 281, 288, 305).[59] Though an amoral debauchee, Svidrigailov takes the time before his suicide to make provisions for his young fiancée, Katerina Ivanovna's orphaned children, Sonia, and Raskolnikov.

The relationship of the two Lazarus brothers is recapitulated in that between Alena Ivanovna and Lizaveta: the pawnbroker forces her half-sister to work for her like a slave, yet, like the rich Lazarus, she believes she can buy her way into heaven. She plans to leave all her wealth to a monastery where prayers will be said for her soul. As a merciless usurer, the pawnbroker constitutes precisely the sort of victim Raskolnikov needs to convince himself that he can improve the lot of the downtrodden by eliminating her ilk.[60] Immediately after his first visit to her he overhears a discussion that

coincides with his own thoughts: it would be possible to kill Alena Ivanovna without any pangs of conscience and on her money save dozens of families "from beggary (*nishcheta*), dissolution, debauchery, hospitals for venereal disease . . . One death and a hundred lives in exchange – after all, it's a matter of simple arithmetic" (6:54). In selecting Alena Ivanovna as the brunt of his attack, Raskolnikov appears to differentiate between predators and victims along the lines of the Lazarus song. But in yielding to the idea that it is *his* mission to bring about a "just" solution by destroying the oppressor, he usurps a right that the song leaves to divine providence. Raskolnikov's apparently chance killing of Lizaveta along with her half-sister destroys the "simple arithmetic" of his calculation according to which she and the other "poor Lazaruses" would benefit from the pawnbroker's death.

The theme of beggary moves to the center of narrative attention when Katerina Ivanovna takes to the streets with her children. The tie between this scene and the tavern scene becomes evident when Katerina Ivanovna's six-year-old daughter sings "The Little Farm" ("Khutorok"), which is the song that a seven-year-old sang while Marmeladov was talking with Raskolnikov. Lazarus's plea to God in the spiritual song finds its counterpart in the desperate cry with which Katerina Ivanovna prefaces her move: "On the day of my husband's funeral, after my hospitality I'm chased from my lodgings onto the street with my orphans! And where am I to go! . . . Lord! . . . is it possible that there is no justice (*spravedlivost'*)! Who is here for you to defend if not us, orphans that we are!" (6: 311). Now Katerina Ivanovna adopts the role of a beggar asking for alms: "Let everybody see, all of Petersburg, how the children of a noble father beg for alms" (6: 329) and "We are a poor, noble family of orphans reduced to beggary" (6: 329). Both Luke's account and the song illustrate the rich man's abundance by referring to his sumptuous meals; Katerina Ivanovna summons her husband's superior from his dinner at the house of a general "who feasts on grouse." Just as Lazarus is driven from his wealthy brother's house when he seeks help, so she, too, is driven from the house of the general. Her threat to walk by his window and beg every day echoes Luke's detail that Lazarus lay at the rich man's gate (Luke 16: 20). Like Lazarus, Katerina Ivanovna is unsuccessful in her search for justice on earth. As she lies dying her focus seems not so much on what will come next as on the thought that death will release her from her misery: "Enough! . . . It's time! . . . Farewell, wretched creature! . . .They've driven the nag (*kliacha*) to death! . . . I've overexerted myself!" (6: 334). Her use of *kliacha* underscores that her life was cruel, for it is the same word used for the mare in Raskolnikov's dream. In the Lazarus song the poor man begs for death without any expectation of paradise.

Katerina Ivanovna's statements may echo this motif: she emphasizes that there is no need to waste money on a priest (6: 333). One might note that some versions of the Lazarus narrative make the priests, along with boyars and merchants, the money-loving companions of the rich brother.[61]

Crime and Punishment thus contains a good number of scenes and situations that evoke the Lazarus song. But, while the song, as is customary for folklore narratives, turns on the sharp juxtaposition of good and evil and seldom elaborates on the hero's motivation, the novel leaves no doubt about the psychological complexity of the destitute person, who may be both victim and perpetrator of suffering. In the case of the Marmeladovs, as Edward Wasiolek notes, Dostoevsky transforms the common sentimental situation "in which circumstances bring an unfortunate individual to misery and destitution . . . into one in which the individual looks for his misery and destitution and derives some strange satisfaction from displaying it and even exaggerating it."[62] Dostoevsky develops the theme of beggary in such a way as to negate any notion that the human person is rational or can be made happy by social restructuring, and the compound motivations of this slum family stand as a clear refutation to Lebeziatnikov's flimsy notion that the "environment counts for everything, and the person (*chelovek*) is nothing" (6: 283).[63] Almsgiving, however, offers more than a kinder alternative to impersonal social reform for feeding the hungry. It represents a mutual exchange in charity in which the destitute person receives material sustenance and offers in return a prayer for the wellbeing of the benefactor.[64] The rite of giving alms places human interaction beyond the realm of logical argumentation for it assumes divine participation in both giving and receiving. We can see this illustrated by the woman to whom Raskolnikov gives five kopecks on his way to surrender; she replies, "May God preserve you" (6:405), thereby blessing him for the ordeal that lies ahead.

Katerina Ivanovna accepts arms from Marmeladov, but fails to respond to his kindness with a blessing of pity for him. The *Notebooks* contain a passage in which she acknowledges her harsh treatment of her husband on her deathbed: "The poor thing would look at me, and I couldn't say a kind word to him" (7: 192). Marmeladov remained sober for the first year of his marriage, but this was not sufficient to gain Katerina Ivanovna's acceptance. She could not forget that she attended a school for aristocratic girls and was his social superior. His decision to drink represents a perverse attempt to punish her and to harm himself, thereby gaining her attention. He seemed on the verge of lifting his family from beggary once he had been taken back into the service; but he chose instead to steal the money that had been saved and plunge them back into destitution. When Raskolnikov

meets him, he is truly a beggar and is buying drinks with Sonia's last thirty kopecks. Marmeladov knows he is guilty before his loved ones and terms himself a "swine" and a "beast." But he places a good deal of the blame for his situation on Katerina Ivanovna, whom he describes as proud and, in her unpitying attitude toward to him, unjust (*nespravedliva*). His account, which pictures her both as the wicked stepmother of the fairy tale who destroys her stepdaughter by forcing her into prostitution and as a penniless, consumptive mother with three hungry children, points to her psychological impasse. Katerina Ivanovna remains haughty in her destitution; even when she deliberately assumes the role of beggar and forces her children to dance and sing for alms, she cannot quite identify with others in her situation. She wants the children to sing French and German songs instead of "The Little Farm" as evidence that they are well-bred children and not common street urchins.

In Raskolnikov's case, the Lazarus song directs us to the area of his psyche where his rationales for murder vie with his sympathy for the downtrodden. As he fumbles toward an understanding of why he killed Alena Ivanovna, he alternates between spontaneous compassion for the street people and the self-castigating fear that he may be a "louse" rather than a superior individual with the right to breach conventional morality.[65] This struggle is evident in his conflicting attitudes toward almsgiving. While impulsively generous, he himself refuses to accept alms. Raskolnikov objects to being perceived as a beggar, but, as noted earlier, he resolves to play the penniless ex-student when he visits Porfiry Petrovich. Destitution, however, is more than a front he adopts before the clever police inspector to elude suspicion of murder. Raskolnikov is truly poor and lives almost entirely on handouts. Nastasia feeds and nurses him throughout the novel, though he is loath to acknowledge his dependence on her. When he receives money – from pawning his father's watch, from his mother – he gives it away in what seems to be a burst of sympathy for the downtrodden (Katerina Ivanovna and her children, the girl who has been seduced). Afterward, when he has subjected his actions to analysis, he reproaches himself for wasting money (6: 25, 42–43).

The rashness with which Raskolnikov gets rid of his money is one of several clues that he chooses his destitution. He gives up tutoring and avoids Razumikhin, who manages to survive on translations and serves as an affirmation that he, too, could eke out a meager income. One might construe Raskolnikov's willful impoverishment as a test of his strength, a probe to determine how much he can endure in preparation for the feat of freeing the oppressed from the likes of the vicious pawnbroker. But

there is an additional possibility. While at the conscious level Raskolnikov rejects the image of himself as beggar, his option for destitution, like his attraction to social outcasts, may signal a subconscious identification with the suffering of those who seek alms and a vague recognition of the presence of God among them.

After the murder Raskolnikov intuitively finds his way to Razumikhin's where, as his muddled attempt to explain his visit indicates, he both seeks and refuses help: "Well, listen. I came to you because, besides you, I don't know anyone who could help . . . to begin . . . because you are better than anyone else, that is, smarter, and you can reason it out . . . But now I see that I don't need anything, you hear, absolutely nothing" (6: 88). Raskolnikov leaves, having accepted a translation project and three rubles; but then he suddenly returns, places them on a table, and walks off without saying a word. A little later the pattern of accepting and rejecting alms is repeated on Nikolaevsky Bridge. After sustaining the lash of a driver's whip for straying into the path of a carriage, Raskolnikov is dimly aware that a merchant lady and girl have thrust a coin into his hand, saying, "Accept this, sir, for Christ's sake." He glances across the Neva and espies the cupola of the cathedral shining in the sun. Vague thoughts and memories run through his head, and he senses a breach with his past, which exists somewhere in the depths beneath him. Suddenly he becomes aware of the twenty-kopeck piece in his fist, tosses it into the Neva, and has the sensation that "at that minute he had taken scissors and cut himself off from everything and everybody" (6: 89–90). At least one commentator interprets this gesture as Raskolnikov's rejection of Christian compassion.[66] This view is partially right, but it ignores the cry for help behind Raskolnikov's deeds. His spurning of Razumikhin's translation and the woman's alms no doubt represents a self-punitive refusal of pity, and he derives bitter satisfaction from taunting himself with the thought that he is severed from his past and any help is futile. At the same time, the very fact that he turns to Razumikhin for aid implies that he is seeking a way out of his predicament. The mention of the gleaming cupola may be a muted reminder that the protocol of almsgiving requires him to bless his benefactor. However, not yet ready to admit that he is a "poor Lazarus" and to embrace his common brotherhood with the destitute, Raskolnikov cannot accept alms.

A slightly later instance of almsgiving reinforces the suspicion that Raskolnikov yearns for pity. After Marmeladov has been run down by a carriage (a motif that connects this incident with the one involving Raskolnikov on the Nikolaevsky Bridge), Raskolnikov helps carry him home, summons a doctor and, when he dies, gives Katerina Ivanovna all the

money that his mother sent him. As he is leaving, Katerina Ivanovna's elder daughter Polechka overtakes him. Before the thin frail child Raskolnikov drops his defensive stance:

> "And do you know how to pray?"
>
> "Oh, of course, we know! For a long time now. Since I'm already big, I pray all by myself. But Kolia and Lidochka pray out loud with Mama . . ."
>
> "Polechka, my name is Rodion; pray for me too sometimes. Just say 'and your servant Rodion' – no more."
>
> "I'll pray for you throughout all my future life," the girl pronounced heatedly and suddenly started laughing again, threw herself at him, and again embraced him strongly. (6: 147)

Raskolnikov's refusal to accept help from Razumikhin and the woman on the bridge truncates the almsgiving rite. In the above scene, however, it is complete. Of course, Raskolnikov has shifted to the more comfortable role of benefactor, but in asking Polechka to pray for him, he acknowledges his own need and thereby insures the full implementation of the ritual.

The encounter with Polechka has a powerful effect on Raskolnikov and, unable to cope with his emotion, he reinterprets it as a surge of power for the struggle ahead: "Enough! . . . There is life! After all, didn't I just live? My life has not died along with the old woman! Let the kingdom of heaven be hers and – enough, my good lady, it's time for peace! Now for the kingdom of reason and light and . . . and will and force . . . and then we'll see! We'll measure ourselves now!" (6: 147). Mocking himself for his religious fervor, Raskolnikov sets off for Razumikhin's housewarming party where he knows he will find Porfiry Petrovich; but by the time he arrives, his strength has dissipated and he feels too weak to enter. Razumikhin accompanies him home, and on the way Raskolnikov makes another incoherent attempt to explain himself: "Listen, Razumikhin . . . I was just with a dying man, a certain official died . . . I gave away all my money there . . . and besides just now a certain being kissed me, who, even if I had killed someone, would also . . . in a word, I saw there a certain other being, with a fiery plume . . . but I'm getting all mixed up" (6: 149–50). In his presence at Marmeladov's deathbed, his kindness to Katerina Ivanovna, his first glimpse of Sonia, and, especially, his conversation with Polechka, Raskolnikov participated in the give and take of the almsgiving rite and, however much he attempted to suppress or twist its impact, experienced the touch of divine mercy.

The next day, when Raskolnikov visits Porfiry Petrovich and thinks about "singing Lazarus," he carries within him the residue of his experience with Polechka as well as his resolve to measure his strength against the police

inspector. On the surface the encounter takes on elements of a mock almsgiving rite in which Raskolnikov adopts the role of a supplicant lacking the funds to redeem his father's watch vis-à-vis an important person who can grant or refuse his request. It is possible that the name "Porfiry," which comes from the word for "purple" (*porfira*), is intended to associate Porfiry with the rich man whose role he unwittingly parodies and who in Luke's account dresses in purple (Luke 16:19; the Russian bible uses *v porfiru*).[67] Toward the end of their encounter, Porfiry shifts the playacting implied in "singing Lazarus" to a serious level. After listening to Raskolnikov's theory about extraordinary men, he abruptly ask him if he believes in the New Jerusalem, God, and the resurrection of Lazarus. The insightful inspector clearly glimpses behind the young murderer's pose a struggle between his wish to be "extraordinary" and his search for a solution to his agony. Porfiry's curious question exposes the repressed side of Raskolnikov's psyche and hints at linkage between John's Lazarus and the beggar.

It is to Sonia that Raskolnikov takes Porfiry's question. That evening he visits her in her "beggarly" room (*v nishchen'koi komnate*, 6: 251) and impels her to read him the story of the resurrection of Lazarus. The *Notebooks* indicate that at one point Dostoevsky considered using Mark's Gospel for his resurrection account (7: 91). His choice of John may have been predicated in part by his desire to connect the two Lazaruses.[68] The scene in which Sonia reads the Gospel story contains references to almsgiving (*milostynia*) and justice (*spravedlivost'*). Sonia says that Katerina Ivanovna "believes that there should be justice in all things," and, as if contradicting her dead father, she insists that Katerina Ivanovna is just and that Lizaveta, too, was just and therefore "will behold God" (6: 243, 249). She reminds Raskolnikov that he gave his last kopeck to Katerina Ivanovna and censures herself for cruelty in withholding collars and cuffs from her when, for her part, Katerina Ivanovna would give away everything she had (6: 244–45). Raskolnikov taunts Sonia with the likelihood that Polechka will be sent to beg for alms on the street and will become a prostitute; he emphasizes how quickly children begging for alms become perverted (6: 245, 246, 252). His initial request that Sonia read him the story of the resurrection of Lazarus is so ambiguous that it may embed a second reference to Lazarus the beggar:

> "Where is the part about Lazarus?" he suddenly asked.
> Sonia stubbornly looked down at the floor and didn't answer . . .
> "Where is the part about the resurrection of Lazarus? Find it for me, Sonia."
> She glanced at him from the side.
> "Don't look there . . . In the fourth Gospel"
>
> (6: 249)

It appears that Sonia is not sure which Lazarus Raskolnikov is speaking about on his first request, and her answer leaves open the possibility that he may be looking in Luke's Gospel instead of John's.

Dostoevsky incorporates John's narrative in a manner that highlights the Gospel text's threefold movement – the affirmation of general resurrection; the relocating of resurrection in the person of Christ; and the miracle of resurrection within earthly life. Martha confesses her belief that her dead brother will rise on the last day; Jesus answers that He is "the resurrection and the life" (John 11: 19–29); Jesus feels sorry for Martha and Mary, weeps, goes to the tomb, summons Lazarus, and the dead man comes forth from the grave (John 11: 32–45). The spaces between the quotations are filled with descriptions of Sonia's reading, which, hesitant at first, becomes triumphant as she nears the miracle.[69] Watching as she trembles yet grows more confident, Raskolnikov understands that he has laid bare her most cherished secret, the reason she does not throw herself into the canal and the reason why, though humiliated and impoverished, she can say that God does everything for her (6: 248). In the *Notebooks* Sonia proclaims, "I myself was a Lazarus who had died and Christ resurrected me" (7: 192).

John's story of resurrection is the capstone to the novel's debate about God and the afterlife. The Lazarus song offers an image of eternity that is fairly standard in Russian folklore: a just God welcomes the beggar to paradise and consigns the unmerciful rich man to the flames of hell. In *Crime and Punishment* Dostoevsky incorporates a different set of alternatives from that of the spiritual song for the hereafter: Marmeladov's vision of the total forgiveness of a merciful God and Svidrigailov's image of a dank, sooty bathhouse with spiders in the corner. While the Lazarus song promises the destitute a breakthrough to a better life, Marmeladov's heaven does not exclude the unmerciful rich and, one can imagine, may even accommodate Svidrigailov and Alena Ivanovna.[70] But for the living, only John's Lazarus holds genuine promise. The concept of eternity in John's narrative is fundamentally different from that of the Lazarus song or even Marmeladov's speech, both of which draw sharp boundaries between this world and the next. John's Lazarus is a pledge not just for the next world, but also for renewed life in the here and now.

Raskolnikov had a foretaste of resurrected life in giving alms and receiving Polechka's blessing, and now he is moved by Sonia. But he is still not ready to adopt her view of life. When she asks him what she should do to protect Katerina Ivanovna's children, he attempts to pull her into his sphere: "What should you do? Break what must be broken once and for all, that's what: and take the suffering on yourself . . . Freedom and power, and most important,

power! Over all trembling creatures, over the whole ant heap! . . . That's the goal! Remember it!" (6: 253). Raskolnikov will become open to new life only when he can view himself as poor enough to receive what Sonia has to offer, and this constitutes the antithesis of his cry for "power over the whole ant heap." He must abandon the desire to be extraordinary, for in the popular understanding, almsgiving subverts any division into strong and weak (or extraordinary and ordinary) and the destitute person becomes sacred and must be viewed as Lazarus or as Christ himself.[71]

In *Crime and Punishment*, the folklore references create an undercurrent in which we can discern the moral perspective of Sonia and the other street people. Their voice enters the novel's polyphony, offering in a nuanced rather than rhetorical manner, an ethic that counters the two main theories serving as pretexts for Raskolnikov's crime – the environmental one and the Napoleonic one. The tendency of spiritual songs and legends to view earthly suffering from the standpoint of eternity must have captured Dostoevsky's imagination. Within this perspective human life becomes part of a cosmic drama in which the powers of good and evil struggle for the human heart. If Raskolnikov is to emerge from his isolation and self-torture, he must heed the wisdom of the *narod* by acknowledging that his deed is a transgression of an absolute law, a sin, and taking responsibility for it. The largely concealed reference to the Lazarus song reverberates throughout the text as a thread that connects multiple scenes and personages and offers another example of Dostoevsky's use of indirection to convey religious meaning. This narrative carries the central moral imperative of the people – absolute charity as manifested in almsgiving. By this standard Sonia can rebuke herself for failing to give Katerina Ivanovna collars and cuffs; she can claim that Lizaveta will "see God"; and she can anticipate that Katerina Ivanovna, too, will find comfort in the afterlife. But almsgiving implies a mutual exchange in which the poor beggar blesses his benefactor. To be fully reintegrated into the human community, Raskolnikov, generous in giving, must learn to participate in this rite fully by viewing himself as needy and accepting help graciously.

3

The Idiot*: where have all the people gone?*

At the end of *Crime and Punishment*, Raskolnikov stands on the threshold of new life. His heart has at last softened and he is able to love Sonia. *The Idiot* concludes on a far darker note. Prince Myshkin appears before us for the final time in a stupor near the murdered body of Nastasia Filippovna. Dostoevsky wrote his new novel in western Europe, but, like *Crime and Punishment*, it is set in Petersburg. While the action of the earlier work occurs in the seamy neighborhood of Haymarket Square, *The Idiot* takes place largely in the well-to-do environs of Liteiny Prospect and in the elegant summer homes and park of suburban Pavlovsk. The moneyed milieu of post-Reform Russia with its schemes for amassing capital has replaced that of impoverished slum dwellers.[1] In *The Idiot* one finds the familiar discussions of Christian morality interwoven with arguments by the political left, and this novel is also built around a single hero who appears in almost every scene. But Raskolnikov is one of Dostoevsky's "great sinners" whose story unfolds along the pattern of a quest for self-understanding and anticipates inner transformation. Prince Myshkin, by contrast, appears in the novel almost fully developed, his portrayal turning on implications that he is Christ-like. His story follows not a linear pattern of development and change, but a circular one of emergence from and return to a state of idiocy.

The central problem of *The Idiot* is its gloomy religious atmosphere. Most readers locate the novel's darkness in the tempestuous world of money-grubbing, social climbing, and sexual passion that Myshkin encounters on returning to Russia. For them, Myshkin stands as Dostoevsky's nineteenth-century Christ figure whose light shines in the midst of the chaos surrounding him. They view his kindness and refusal to judge others as evidence of his saintliness, and they do not fault him for the unhappy fates of the other characters.[2] As Edward Wasiolek claims, "It is only a hopelessly pragmatic and schematic mind, weighing moral worth by some statistic of help and harm, that would read the tally sheet of results as the measure of Myshkin's

worth . . . If we were to measure Christ by pragmatic results, he too might appear to be an emissary of darkness rather than of light."[3]

Others, however, believe that one must tally results. Troubled by Myshkin's impotence in the face of a society gone awry, they locate much of the novel's darkness in the hero himself. They censure him for spawning havoc in the lives of Rogozhin, Nastasia Filippovna, Aglaia, and Ippolit and glimpse an element of disingenuousness in his naiveté. Murray Krieger, perhaps the best known of Myshkin's detractors, considers him sanctimonious and claims that his perfection and humility are such that they do not grant others the privilege of sinning or being offensive.[4] Krieger thinks that the root of the problem lies in Myshkin's incompleteness: he is "half-saint (or half-'idiot') and half-man; half out of the world, but half committed to it."[5] Some commentators think that the novel's apocalyptic imagery sets its tone. Robert Hollander considers it an allegory about the victory of the Antichrist, whose spirit governs the dismal house where Myshkin and Rogozhin hold their vigil over Nastasia Filippovna's body.[6] Michael Holquist suggests that while Raskolnikov's story implies the presence of the divine within human life, *The Idiot* concerns the split between sacred and profane: "The possibility that Christ's moment of execution was final, that it did not result in resurrection and thus did not insure the sequence of *imitatio Christi* for other men – as it seems to do for Raskolnikov . . . – is the primary metaphysical dilemma of *The Idiot*."[7]

It is difficult to determine precisely what Dostoevsky thought of Myshkin. He knew exactly who his hero would be before he began *Crime and Punishment*. We can already discern the figure of Raskolnikov in his letter of September 10, 1865 to M. N. Katkov about a former student who murders a malevolent usurer (28, 2: 136–37). But Dostoevsky began working on *The Idiot* in Geneva in August 1867 without having grasped the nature of his main character. The *Notebooks* convey something of the roundabout path along which the novel evolved. It is impossible to recognize the Myshkin of the finished text in the selfish and at times nasty hero of the first six drafts (9: 161, 170–71). A compassionate and forgiving personage emerges only in the seventh draft (November 1867), but the writer was still unsure how to handle the plot. Then on December 18, 1867 he embarked on a different scheme and was able to furnish Katkov with Part 1 of *The Idiot* for the January and February 1868 issues of *The Russian Herald*. The *Notebooks* convey nothing of what happened during this burst of inspiration. However, immediately after completing Part 1, Dostoevsky wrote his famous letters to A. N. Maikov and his niece Sonia stating that the idea behind *The Idiot* was the depiction of a "positively beautiful person"

(*vpolne prekrasnyi chelovek*, 28, 2: 241 and *polozhitel'no prekrasnyi chelovek*, 28, 2: 251).

His letter to Maikov also expressed uncertainty about how his hero would develop (28, 2: 241), and, in fact, after completing Part 1 Dostoevsky did not know how to continue. He was unable send material for the March issue of *The Russian Herald* and completed only the first two chapters of Part 2 for the April issue, another three for the May issue, three more for June, and the final two for July.[8] The two remaining parts to the novel were published through the rest of 1868 with the final text appearing in February 1869 as a supplement to the December 1868 issue. An entry in the *Notebooks* for March 1868 equates the Prince with Christian love, and several references to "Prince Christ" occur in April 1868 (9: 220, 246, 253). This would seem to indicate that Dostoevsky persisted in envisioning his hero as "positively beautiful." But the *Notebooks* also contain hints that the writer was unsure about Myshkin. An entry dated April 10, 1868 reads:

> The most important thing: the character of the Idiot. Develop him . . .
>
> In order to represent the character of the Idiot more attractively (to make him more likable), it's necessary to think up something for him in the field of action.
>
> He restores N[astasia] F[ilippovna] and acts as an influence on Rogozhin. He leads Aglaia to humaneness . . . (9: 252)

In the published text, Myshkin proves powerless to prompt change in the other characters, a failing that encapsulates the novel's spiritual conundrum. Still, we cannot be sure that the hero's ineffectiveness was the reason why Dostoevsky was disappointed with his finished novel and admitted that it was flawed (29, 1: 24, 122). Nor it is clear what the writer had in mind when he later said that readers who valued *The Idiot* above his other works had a special mindset that appealed to him (29, 2: 139). On the whole, Dostoevsky's personal comments and the *Notebooks* fail to clarify whether the writer continued to view Myshkin as an *alter Christus*, as the references to "Prince Christ" and his statements to Maikov and his niece would suggest, or whether Myshkin mutated into something other than the Christian ideal.

This examination of folklore and the *narod* in *The Idiot* argues that the novel's underlying religious thrust shifted during composition. As in his other works, Dostoevsky draws extensively on nature symbolism and oral narratives. But the incorporation of folklore imagery in this novel is unusual. Animal symbolism and references to vegetation and light, which elsewhere signal vitality and inner illumination, tend to be ambiguous. In addition, *The Idiot* stands out for a number of remarkable omissions. It is the only

major novel in which earth imagery fails to play a major role. Absent too is a stable network of references to the clean and unclean forces of Russian popular belief, which in other novels creates the sense that supernatural powers are mysteriously operative in the lives of the characters.[9] Particularly noteworthy is the paucity of references to icons, frequent in Dostoevsky's other great works as objects that focus prayer and betoken the presence of grace. By contrast, *The Idiot* makes extensive use of portraits and incorporates a sense of the eerie, which heightens the suspense surrounding Rogozhin's house.[10]

Another anomaly of *The Idiot* is its shortage of minor characters from the people. The *narod* is less obvious as a background presence in *The Idiot* than in any other of Dostoevsky's great novels. Gone are the multiple encounters between the hero and the street people that characterized *Crime and Punishment*. With the exception of the Epanchins' lackey, Myshkin interacts mainly with persons of position and wealth – General Epanchin and his family, the merchant-millionaire Rogozhin, moneylenders and would-be power brokers of the capital. He also must deal with the young radicals who claim their rights against him. Of course, at the Epanchins' party, where he is being scrutinized as a possible fiancé for Aglaia, Myshkin assumes the role of champion of the *narod* and expounds on Orthodoxy and Russianness. On the verge of an epileptic seizure, he launches into a tirade on Roman Catholicism as an unchristian religion that preaches the Antichrist, on how western Europe's loss of faith has infected the Russian upper classes, and how the only response is to hold the Russian Christ up to the West (8: 450–53). Here he reflects Dostoevsky's nationalist messianism, which was taking shape during the period of writing *The Idiot* (e.g., 28, 2: 260).

But when the people themselves are noted, Dostoevsky invariably adopts an indirect method for handling them. He tends to place the *narod* outside the main action of the novel, often in the speech of others or in inserted narratives. Myshkin's most significant encounters with the people occur offstage, during the hiatus of six months between Part 1 and Part 2. We learn about them when he expounds their meaning to Rogozhin. The street people of St. Petersburg, with whom Myshkin fails to interact, enter the text of Ippolit's "Necessary Explanation" (*Neobkhodimoe ob"iasnenie*). Ippolit describes the hungry *narod* that scurries by him in back alleys, the impoverished clerk Surikov, whose baby froze to death, and a provincial doctor and his family reduced to destitution and living in a crowded tenement. He even discusses almsgiving and talks about a general who throughout his life gave alms to convicts on their way to Siberia (8: 326, 330, 335). Here

we recognize the human underworld of *Crime and Punishment*. But in *The Idiot* these people are removed from the settings in which we encounter Myshkin. Even servants often appear in the speech of the main characters rather than in the flesh. Ippolit mentions his family's Matrena in his narrative; Rogozhin refers to Nastasia Filippovna's maid "Katka" and his own Pafnutevna in his discussions with Myshkin (8: 327, 175, 504).

Dostoevsky surrounds Myshkin with abundant religious imagery, including folk legends, the Gospels, the Book of Revelation, and well-known paintings. But these references prove double-edged: they prompt readers to consider him saintly and, at the same time, they undermine his depiction as genuinely Christ-like by hinting at inadequate enfleshment and escapism.[11] The strange natural world of *The Idiot*, its lack of icons, earth imagery, and the *narod*, and the particular flaws with which Dostoevsky imbues his kind-hearted hero suggest that as the novel developed Dostoevsky shifted from creating a "positively good person" to the posing of fundamental questions about the nature of Christ and the operation of the divine in the world. The finished text raises the specter that the Incarnation is a hoax and human life has not been sanctified. Dostoevsky, of course, knew how touchy Russian censorship could be when it came to religious matters. Surely he would not have been able to treat such a fundamental doctrine as the Incarnation openly, and this in some measure explains the erratic nature of the novel's religious imagery and its unusual omissions.

I shall begin my discussion with nature symbolism and folklore legends in Myshkin's depiction. Then I shall examine the implications of Myshkin's stories of encounters with the *narod* and the novel's lack of icons for the theme of the Incarnation.

UNNATURAL NATURE

The sheer abundance of descriptions of the natural world distinguishes *The Idiot* from Dostoevsky's other novels. References to the Swiss mountains, the Pavlovsk Park, gardens, and landscape paintings permeate the text. Much of this imagery is connected with the Fall and End Time which, coupled with allusions linking Myshkin to Christ, prompts a reading of the text vis-à-vis the Christian schema of salvation history. But in the final analysis *The Idiot*'s nature subverts the Christian paradigm.

Generally Dostoevsky adheres to the folkloric convention that vegetation symbolizes the power of life. In *The Brothers Karamazov* love for the "sticky green leaves" signals Ivan's desire to live (14: 209–10). The shift in *The Idiot*'s setting from St. Petersburg to the gardens of Pavlovsk would seem

to herald a movement toward renewal. Yet the atmosphere of the wealthy summer resort turns out to be as vicious as that of the capital.[12] Myshkin entices the dying Ippolit to Pavlovsk on the pretext that the fresh air and trees will offer him respite. Ippolit himself contrasts the trees in foliage to the brick wall ("Meier's wall"), which he views from his bed in the city, as symbols of potential life versus deadness. But just as Myshkin proves incapable of instilling hope of future life in the dying boy, these trees are powerless to transmit their vigor to him.[13] Nor does Myshkin himself find consolation in the midst of the Pavlovsk trees. On the night of his birthday, despondent and unable to sleep, he wanders about in the park and broods about his exclusion from the "feast" of life. He recalls a bright day in the mountains:

> Before him was the brilliant sky, below a lake, all about the bright and endless horizon, without limit . . . It tormented him that he was completely alien to all this. What a feast, what a perpetual great festival without end and to which he had been drawn for a long time, forever, since childhood, and in which he could not participate . . . Every blade of grass grew and was happy. And everything had its path . . . and departed with a song and arrived with a song. He alone didn't know anything, didn't understand anything, not people, not sounds, and was alien to everything, was an outcast. (8: 351–52)

Myshkin speaks ecstatically about nature and claims he does not understand how anyone can walk past a tree and not be happy (8: 459), but his thoughts about the Swiss landscape underscore his severance from the life surrounding him.

The motif of the Garden of Eden is prominent in both Nastasia Filippovna's and Myshkin's stories. Totsky assumes custody of Nastasia Filippovna as an orphaned child living in a central province, and when he perceives that she will develop into a rare beauty, he hires a Swiss governess and surrounds her with expensive knick-knacks. Several years later, he removes her to an exquisite wooden house in a distant village that bears the telling name "Delight" (*Otradnoe*).[14] His seduction of Nastasia Filippovna at Otradnoe spoils this Garden of Eden, a point that is driven home when, fearing she may not agree to marry Gania, he exclaims that there may be a "snake under the flowers"(8: 42).[15] Toward the end of the novel we learn that the remote estate where Myshkin spent his early years was called "Golden Summit" (*Zlatoverkhovo*), a name that also evokes Eden. His illness forced him to leave Zlatoverkhovo for an idyllic Swiss village where children surrounded him. Unlike Nastasia Filippovna, he enters the novel proper in a state of pristine innocence, or, as Konstantin Mochulsky states,

"he is a being of another aeon – before the Fall."[16] Myshkin's and Nastasia Filippovna's shared feeling that they have seen each other before points to their similar childhoods, and his offer of marriage rekindles her longing to return to a blameless state. But after the Fall the gates to the Garden are forever closed. The path that the Christian paradigm would offer Nastasia Filippovna is forward through day-to-day living and suffering toward new life.[17] In the novel, however, the "fallen" Nastasia Filippovna is a condemned woman without a future. The garden knife (*sadovyi nozsh*), which Myshkin fingers at Rogozhin's house and searches for half-consciously in a shop window and which ultimately serves as the weapon for killing her, symbolically binds her death to her tainted Eden.[18]

The story of Nastasia Filippovna suggests that the dichotomy between childhood purity and the contamination of adulthood is integral to the novel's meaning. The *Notebooks* repeatedly mention that Myshkin was to found a children's club (9: 216, 218, 236, 268). This club fails to materialize in the finished text, possibly because the presence of Lebedev's children and Kolia Ivolgin renders it superfluous. The most fully alive characters in the world of *The Idiot* are children and those who are termed "child-like" (Myshkin, Lizaveta Prokofevna Epanchina), and this implicitly raises the question of what happens when one grows up. Does the movement from childhood to maturity imply entrapment in a world of wickedness? A description of Christ in one of Nastasia Filippovna's letters to Aglaia hints that it may. She envisions him alone, with his arm absentmindedly resting on the head of a small child. Preoccupied and sad, Christ looks toward the horizon, with some sort of great idea embedded in his glance, and the child stares at him thoughtfully (8: 379–80). The enigmatic sadness on Christ's face does not bode well for the child, who may evoke Nastasia Filippovna in her pre-Totsky era and portend the "child" Aglaia's disastrous marriage to a Pole who masquerades as a wealthy count and her acceptance of Catholicism. The religious world of *The Idiot* is hostile to true maturation. It seems frozen in God's prohibition to Adam: "You shall eat from every tree in the garden, but not from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; for on the day you eat from it, you will certainly die" (Genesis 2: 16–17).

Nastasia Filippovna's fate dominates the beginning and end of *The Idiot*; the middle highlights the bilious seventeen-year-old Ippolit who is in the final stages of consumption. In an entry of the *Notebooks* for September 15, 1868, Dostoevsky terms Ippolit the "main axis of the entire novel" (9: 277) even though Ippolit plays a minor role in the early parts. On the surface, his rise to prominence in Part 2 would seem to underscore the writer's uncertainty about how to develop the action after the whirlwind events

of Part 1. Yet the focus on the dying boy represents less a breach with the underlying thrust of Nastasia Filippovna's story than the postponement of her inevitable "execution."[19] The writer transfers the same thematic line to Ippolit, and the parallels are striking. Like Nastasia Filippovna, Ippolit has received a deathblow on the threshold of adulthood, and he too frantically seeks retribution for his cruel fate.[20] This replication coupled with the novel's unremitting elaboration on death implies that the fate of Nastasia Filippovna and Ippolit constitutes the fate of all flesh.

Many settings in the novel evoke a spoiled Eden. Lebedev's charming wooden Petersburg house, surrounded by flowers, looks suspiciously similar to the one where Totsky seduced Nastasia Filippovna. The novel's repetition of the color green seems to highlight the theme of perverted nature: Rogozhin lives in a dirty green house on "Pea" Street (*Gorokhovaia*) not far from "Garden" Street (*Sadovaia*); Aglaia arranges a tryst with Myshkin on a green bench near three large trees; and the curtain behind which Nastasia Filippovna's body lies in the haunting final scene is green.[21] The metaphor of the garden seems apt not only for Pavlovsk's parks, but for the interior of Rogozhin's house with its faded landscapes on the wall, the drawing room (*sbornaia*) of the Epanchin women with Adelaida's unfinished landscape on an easel, their villa resembling a Swiss chalet and surrounded by flowers and bushes, and the veranda (*terrasa*) of the summerhouse that Myshkin rents from Lebedev. While decorating his summerhouse, Lebedev takes great satisfaction in placing green tubs of orange, lemon, and jasmine trees on it. Ippolit claims that he first conceived the idea that the remainder of his life might not be worth living on Myshkin's veranda (8: 325), and, in fact, this artificial garden serves as the locus for discussions of murder and the end of the world occurring during the middle part of the novel, including the sensational murder of the six members of the Zhemarin family, Lebedev's tale of a cannibal monk who consumed sixty adults and six infants, his interpretation of the Book of Revelation, the reading of Ippolit's testament, and the latter's failed suicide.

The novel's main characters, then, seem to live in a corrupted garden and concern themselves with murder, suicide, and the end of time. The reference to the apocalyptic "springs of life" (*istochniki zhizni*) and the star "Wormwood," which the company on the veranda asks Lebedev to interpret, lends doomsday shadings to the blighted natural world. Lebedev's explanation associates "Wormwood" with the materialism and egoism of contemporary society and views the new network of railways as a symptom of moral decay (8: 309–15). The Book of Revelation, however, connects Wormwood with defiled nature: it is a cosmic polluter that transforms

life-giving water (the "springs of life") into an instrument of death: "The third angel blew his trumpet; and a great star shot from the sky, flaming like a torch; it fell on a third of the rivers and springs. The name of the star was Wormwood; and a third of the water turned to wormwood, and men in great numbers died of the water because it had been poisoned (Rv 8: 10–11)."

Symbolism connected with light aggravates the strangeness of *The Idiot*'s natural world. From their initial encounter on the St. Petersburg–Warsaw train where they sit opposite each other in a third-class compartment, the contrast between light and darkness underscores differences between Myshkin and his alter ego Rogozhin. Rogozhin is repeatedly termed "black-haired" and "dark-complexioned" (*chernovolosyi*, *chernomazyi*), though "deathly pale" (*primetna byla v etom litse ego mertvaia blednost'*, 8: 5), and he is wrapped in a black *tulup* – a fur coat worn by peasants and merchants. Myshkin is fair (*belokuryi*). Rogozhin has small gray eyes that glitter with passion; Myshkin has light blue eyes. But if we compare the eye motif in Myshkin's portrayal to that in Sonia Marmeladova's, we see a significant difference. Her light blue eyes reflect a goodness and simplicity that draw people to her (6: 183); his have a fixed, heavy quality about them, "something full of that strange expression by which some are able to recognize epilepsy in a subject at first glance" (8: 6). Myshkin's eyes, then, signal not so much spiritual wholeness as physical infirmity. A particularly striking confusion of light and darkness occurs during seizures when "an unusual inner light illumined his soul . . . Then his consciousness faded out and complete darkness descended" (8: 195). Myshkin interprets this moment of light as a glimpse into eternity and claims that during this instant he understands the apocalyptic phrase that "time will be no more" (8: 188). His experience, however, remains uniquely his own; he cannot transmit his vision to the other characters.[22]

When Lizaveta Prokofevna places Myshkin in the sunlight so that she can see him better, the reader may recall that the positive figures of Russian folklore, including Christ and the saints, were associated with the sun. But in the novel the use of light imagery does not quite adhere to the precept that light signifies good and darkness evil. Darkness is the dominant motif in Nastasia Filippovna's depiction: her portrait presents a dark-haired, dark-eyed woman dressed in black. Myshkin treats this portrait with religious awe, strangely kissing it and reading in her face not only defiance, but also simplicity and suffering.[23] Aglaia's name, which is that of one of the Graces of Greek mythology, signifies "beautiful" and "bright," and Myshkin thinks of her as a "bright spirit" (8: 379). Yet her marriage and conversion

to Catholicism constitute one of the worst fates that can befall anyone in Dostoevsky's fiction.[24]

Animal symbolism also fails to adhere to standard meanings. Folk belief regards the donkey as sacred because it carried Christ.[25] Several studies perceive in Myshkin's mention of the donkey an association with the Jesus of the Gospel, who rode a donkey into Jerusalem (Luke 19: 32–36).[26] But in Russian, as in English, "donkey" (*osel*) also carries the meaning "dolt," and in this sense it reinforces the notion of Myshkin as an idiot.[27] When Myshkin's tale of how the cry (*krik*) of a donkey in Basel returned him to a state of awareness causes an uncomfortable laughter among the Epanchin girls, one is reminded that a similar, uncanny cry accompanied the seizures that originally plunged him into unconsciousness (the text uses both *krik* and *vopl'*, 8: 195, 459).

Myshkin calls his Swiss children "little birds" because, he claims, "there is nothing in the world better than a bird" (*luchshe ptichki net nichego na svete*, 8: 58). The reader, by now responding to textual inferences about Myshkin's goodness, may associate these birds with those mentioned in the Gospels as being under the special protection of God (Matthew 10: 29–31). Yet when he leaves his idyllic Swiss village, the "birds" Myshkin encounters are money-grubbers of varying degrees: Ptitsyn, Ivolgin, and Lebedev (from Russian *ptitsa* [bird], *ivolga* [oriole], and *lebed'* [swan]).[28] Gania's statement, "There is no one more honorable than Ptitsyn" (*chestnee Ptitsyna net*, 8: 104) thus becomes a perverse echo of Myshkin's words about the children. It may seem curious that Pavlishchev, the benefactor whom Myshkin regards as an exemplary Christian, bears the name "peacock" (*pavlin*). Myshkin is shocked to hear that Pavlishchev became Roman Catholic under Jesuit influence. The Prince, it seems, can only envision his benefactor with the eyes of a child and cannot fathom that he might adopt a religion that for him (and Dostoevsky) encapsulates the degeneracy of the West. Yet if the polarities of this world are truly innocence/childhood and corruption/adulthood, then standard notions of "goodness" and "fidelity," which assume a mature ability to resist evil, cease to have meaning. Aglaia will soon "come of age" and replicate Pavlishchev's path.

Avian and equine references acquire apocalyptic shadings in *The Idiot*. According to W. J. Leatherbarrow, the novel's bird names point to the "vile and loathsome" birds that dwell in the fallen Babylon (Rv 18: 2).[29] David Bethea, arguing that the horse is the "alter-ego in the animal world" of the donkey, links Myshkin's reference to the donkey as well as Nastasia Filippovna's and Ippolit's names to the horses of the Apocalypse: "Filipp"

signals "lover of horses" while Hippolytus of Greek myth was thrown from his chariot and dragged to death.[30] End time imagery thus surrounds the very characters most closely connected with loss of childhood innocence and inescapable death. Nastasia Filippovna discusses the Book of Revelation with Lebedev, and they agree that the world is on the brink of disaster and has entered the age of the black horse whose rider holds a pair of scales in his hand; "and after this one follows the pale horse (*kon' blednyi*) and the one whose name is Death." (8: 167–68). Ippolit dreams of a giant scorpion-like monster, which seems to have the markings of the beast of Revelation, and he has a terrifying vision in which Rogozhin, who has affinities to the Antichrist, stands in front of the icon lamp and mocks him.[31]

In *The Idiot*, Dostoevsky infuses the seemingly realistic settings of St. Petersburg and Pavlovsk with allusions to blighted nature after the Fall and to the Apocalypse. The gardens and rural verandas where much of the action occurs appear at first glance to offer an attractive respite from the dreary streets of the city. On closer inspection, however, nature acquires ominous tonalities. The metaphor of Russia as a perverted garden, occupied by loathsome beasts, and polluted by "Wormwood" catches up the moral bankruptcy of the moneyed classes and nihilists alike – both of whom bear the "stamp" of the West and both of whom Dostoevsky censured for Russia's excessive materialism.[32] The writer shared Lebedev's assessment that much of Russian high society, having succumbed to western values, was devoid of a guiding spiritual idea.

But when one moves from the social/political plane to the novel's underlying religious questions, crucial exclusions come into focus. Within the Christian schema the time between the state of corruption following the Fall and the doomsday of the Antichrist is one of grace ushered in by the coming of Christ. *The Idiot* offers only periods of alienation from God. Nor, within the Christian pattern, do the abominations of the last days represent God's final pronouncement on human history. Revelation proclaims the ultimate victory of the Lamb, who offers a vision of nature renewed: "Then he showed me the river of the water of life, sparkling like crystal . . . On either side of the river stood a tree of life, which yields twelve crops of fruit, one for each month of the year; the leaves of the trees serve for the healing of the nations. Every accursed thing shall disappear" (Rv 22: 1–3).

In *The Idiot*, the lack of the middle period in good part explains the writer's omission of earth imagery and the *narod*. The earth for Dostoevsky is the only locus of real life – in his phraseology, "living life" (*zhivaia zhizn'*). It is a sacred substance without which human life is unthinkable, not simply because it nourishes the living and accepts the dead in pledge of

rebirth, but because God assumed human flesh and walked it. The exotic trees on Lebedev's veranda, which grow in pots, have lost their essential grounding and stand as a sign of severance: nature without Mother Earth is artificial, dead. Anticipation of one who can bring sanctification to the earth is implicit in references to the Fall. According to the Christian paradigm, after Adam and Eve were banned from Eden, nature "groaned" for deliverance. But are Mochulsky and others right in contending, "'The positively beautiful individual,' Prince Myshkin, alone stands opposed to the 'dark forces' and perishes while struggling with them"?[33] Dostoevsky's statements of intention and abundant imagery linking Myshkin with Christian love support such a reading on the surface. But Dostoevsky's handling of folklore legends in Myshkin's depiction implies that we should not be too quick to equate his kindly hero with Christ.

MYSHKIN AND RUSSIAN FOLK LEGENDS

Allusions to folk narratives offer many popular heroes against which to evaluate Myshkin, but each reference proves inadequate.[34] A legend about an angel banished from heaven upholds the idea that Myshkin is not fully incarnate and suggests associations with the holy fool. In the variant from Afanasev's *Russian Folk Legends*, God removes an angel's wings and sentences him to a three-year exile on earth for refusing to bring him the soul of the young mother of newborn twins. Serving as a priest's hired man, the angel behaves in a way that seems odd to his fellow villagers: he throws stones at a church cross, prays by a tavern, and scolds a beggar. When asked to explain his actions, he says that he threw stones at the church because devils were hiding on the cross, prayed for sinners unmindful of their hour of death, and reprimanded a false beggar who was robbing the destitute.[35]

Myshkin's story adheres to the general contours of the legend.[36] He too is kindhearted and loves children, and in returning to Russia, he seems to abandon the pristine settings of Zlatoverkhovo and the Swiss mountains and descend into a world of evil and suffering. Dostoevsky apparently regarded the legend as a succinct précis of holy foolishness, for in *The Brothers Karamazov* he has Rakitin remark: "It's always that way with holy fools; they cross themselves at the tavern and throw stones at the church (14: 73)." The *Notebooks* term Myshkin a holy fool (*iurodivyi*, 9: 251), and an implied comparison with the fool is clear from the first pages of the novel when he appears in odd foreign dress and gaiters. The Prince's quaintness, his disinterest in money and prestige (the dominant values of the society

into which he enters), and his ability to penetrate the minds of the characters he encounters seem to fit the model of the fool for Christ, with the caveat that in Myshkin's depiction the foolishness is less scandalous than in "The Angel" or the Lives of ancient saints of this type.[37] Still, there are indications of impropriety in his conversations about execution with the Epanchins' lackey and the girls and in his tirade against Roman Catholicism at the Epanchins' party.

Rogozhin terms Myshkin a holy fool while they are still on the train, and their exchange invites the reader to consider that he may be returning to Russia as the "beloved of God" for those caught up in a corrupt world.

"Tell me right away, Prince. Are you a great admirer of the female sex?"

"I, nooooo! After all I . . . You perhaps don't know, but on account of the illness I was born with, I don't even know women."

"Well," exclaimed Rogozhin," if that's the case then, Prince, you are a complete *iurodivyi*, and God loves such as you!" (8: 14)

The reference to Myshkin's lack of sexual experience intensifies the implication that he is a sort of incorporeal, angelic exile. Yet, unlike strange dress, "clairvoyance," or inappropriate social behavior, sexual innocence is not a characterizing feature of the fool. Thus, as Jostein Børtnes argues, Rogozhin's remarks may serve not so much to establish Myshkin as a holy fool as to distance him from the prototype.[38]

The trait that we constantly bump up against in Myshkin's portrayal is his incorporeity. Vyacheslav Ivanov believes that "the secret suffering of this soul . . . rises from the incompleteness of this incarnation."[39] Mochulsky thinks that Myshkin "does not tread upon the earth, but hovers over it like a bodiless spirit in ineffectual pity for sinful men."[40] This deficiency makes itself painfully evident in his absentmindedness and apparent lack of sexual desire in the presence of the woman he loves. Sitting next to Aglaia at a concert Myshkin dreams of the Swiss mountains and his favorite waterfall while staring at her "as if at an object located a mile away, or as if at her portrait, and not her very self" (8: 287). Unable to savor the earthly joy of being with a beloved woman, he approaches her not as a person of flesh and blood, but as a simulation of a person, a picture. As he becomes more and more involved in the chaotic affairs of Rogozhin, Nastasia Filippovna, and Ippolit, Myshkin has the urge to flee: "Suddenly he wanted to leave everything here, to go back to the place he came from, to somewhere far off, to a remote area, to leave right now without saying good-bye to anyone. He sensed that if he were to remain here only a few more days, then he would be drawn into this world irrevocably" (8: 256). Like the angel of legend,

Myshkin cannot find a secure home within the society of the novel. He understands himself as an outsider and "cast off" (*vykidysh*, literally a fetus that does not survive to birth, 8: 352), a term he appropriates from Ippolit, who in turn uses it of himself as a young man whose life is about to be cut short (8: 343).

An allusion to sectarian legends about a distant land of truth and justice reinforces Myshkin's escapism and the novel's apocalyptic undertones. Myshkin describes how he would stand high in the Swiss mountains and fantasize that at the point where the sky and earth met there would be new life and the city Neapol with palaces, bustle, and vitality (8: 50–51). "Neapol," which means New City, evokes the New Jerusalem of Revelation and probably also "Belovodie" ("White Water"), a legendary paradise to which the sect of Runners (*beguny*) was encouraged to flee.[41] Keenly interested in Old Believers and Sectarians, Dostoevsky would have known about "Belovodie" from A. P. Shchapov's *Land and Schism: The Runners*, which appeared in his journal *Time* in 1862 and which he later procured for his personal library in book form.[42] The doctrine of the Runners proceeded from the conviction that since 1666 the Russian State and Church had been in the power of the Antichrist, and since the time of Peter the Great the tsar's power had become an "icon of Satan."[43] The number of the beast of the Apocalypse is, of course, 666. By coincidence 1666 marked the year when a church council decided in favor of the hateful liturgical reforms of Patriarch Nikon that spawned the Schism in Russian Orthodoxy. The Runners opposed all interactions with the Church and the State; they rejected internal passports and the division of Russian society into classes. To be saved, they believed, it was necessary to flee, wander, and hide.[44] By the nineteenth century, the Runners had established a network of flight routes and places of refuge throughout Central Russia and Siberia. Their final destination was often the legendary "Belovodie," imagined as an island where the Antichrist could not penetrate situated in the midst of islands in a distant ocean to the East.[45] Dostoevsky earlier incorporated material about the Runners into *Crime and Punishment*. The house painter Mikolay, who confessed to Raskolnikov's murder, belonged to this sect, and his motive for taking the crime on himself seemed to combine a fanatic desire to save his soul through suffering with the conviction that lying to a state that represents the Antichrist does not constitute a sin.

Myshkin's portrayal, while lacking the fanatic elements of Mikolay's, contains several traits common to the Runners. Despite his ancient princely lineage, Myshkin places himself on equal footing with the Epanchins' lackey

and, somewhat to the embarrassment of the latter, enters into a lengthy conversation with him. At the end of Part 1, Myshkin flees Petersburg and disappears for six months; we later learn that he spent some of this time wandering through rural Russia. Even the name "Myshkin" may have sectarian overtones. This name is usually associated with an architect who, according to Karamzin's history, designed the Dormition Cathedral (*Uspenskii sobor*) in Moscow (9: 385), but Dostoevsky may have known that the Myshkinsk Region of Yaroslavl Province contained a concentration of *beguny*.[46] Motifs connected with the Runners reinforce the novel's dichotomy of perverted nature/corrupted world versus Eden/state of innocence by hinting that Russia after Peter is in Satan's grasp and salvation lies in escaping to a land without sin.

Sectarian allusions segregate Myshkin from the secularized world of the upper classes, which may be Satanic or on the verge of catastrophe. At the same time, this imagery intertwines with references to Old Russian culture and the Apocalypse to tighten the bond between Myshkin and Rogozhin, who also belongs more properly to an earlier epoch. Some commentators think that Myshkin and Rogozhin coexist in the uncanny symbiosis of Christ/Antichrist.[47] Myshkin duplicates the handwriting of the fourteenth-century Abbot Pafnuty who "was known for his holy life and went to the headquarters of the Golden Horde to help arrange contemporary affairs" (8: 46). The name "Pafnuty" turns up again in Rogozhin's household, where the woman servant is "Pafnutevna" ("daughter of Pafnuty").[48] The motif of flight also occurs in Rogozhin's depiction. When Myshkin's first meets him on the train, he is returning from Pskov, where he went to escape his father; and at the end of Part 1 he flees to Moscow. In fact, alienation from the capital's westernized culture and familiarity with the religious underworld of the people serve as fundamental motifs in Rogozhin's portrayal. He is repeatedly called a peasant (*muzhik*, e.g., 8: 97, 141, 149); his language is close to folk idiom and contrasts sharply with the bureaucratic or salon speech of the other characters. His Pskov aunt, who lives like a nun, reads the Church calendar and spends her time with holy fools, may be an Old Believer, for this city was one of their well-known centers. The very name "Rogozhin" echoes that of an Old Believers' cemetery in Moscow.[49] Rogozhin's father claimed that the Old Believers' faith was truer than that of the post-Petrine Church, and he held a special regard for the sect of Castrates (*skoptsy*) to whom he rented lodgings (8: 173).[50]

References to Christ constitute by far the most significant comparison in Myshkin's portrayal. Many note that his docile acceptance of a slap in the face intended for Gania, his refusal to take offense or condemn those who

mock and cheat him, his selfless giving of time and money, and his love of children signal that he is deliberately modeled on the Christ of the Gospels.[51] Widely disseminated folk legends about Christ roaming the countryside in the guise of a destitute pilgrim intermingle with the biblical image of Jesus in Myshkin's depiction. Dostoevsky knew the variants of this legend in Afanasev's collection, and he probably heard others in his childhood and in Siberia. He may also have known counter-traditions – village stories about pilgrims mistakenly identified as saints or Christ who turn out to be great rogues.[52] Scholars who have studied the influence of these legends on Myshkin's portrayal believe that the writer deliberately modeled his hero on the image of the "popular Christ" (*narodnyi Khristos*) and thereby rendered him an embodiment of the moral values of the *narod*.[53]

The central issue in the legends is charity, and Christ assumes the visage of "the least of my brethren" of the Gospels (Matthew 25: 40). Unlike the angel, the Christ who tramps the Russian earth is a highly corporal being. He appears as an old man (*starik, starichok*, *starets*) in rags and, frequently, accompanied by St. Nicholas, St. Peter, or other disciples. He visits a rich peasant and asks for a night's lodging. The rich man may reject him outright and send him to a poor peasant or widow, or he may receive him begrudgingly. Though it is clear to the audience who this beggar is (he is called "Christ," "Lord," "Savior"), the host does not know his identity and views him either as a sponger or as a brother in need. He may reward a poor peasant, or he may punish a rich one for lack of hospitality. In one narrative he causes a poor peasant's grain to multiply miraculously because he shared his tiny portion with him; in another he causes the farmstead of a rich peasant to burn.[54] Some legends contain the additional episode of Christ entering into adoptive brotherhood with a peasant or merchant or serving as godfather for an impoverished child. A few legends present Christ as compassionate (as opposed to Christ as a tester of compassion and a judge). In one he invites his godson to visit him in heaven, allows him to judge the world, and then rebukes him for judging too harshly.[55] Most likely this all-forgiving Christ had a particular appeal for Dostoevsky. Compassion and a refusal to judge harshly are indisputably important traits in Myshkin's portrayal.[56]

Like Christ and the angel of legend, Myshkin arrives from and returns to a distant land. In *The Idiot* this land is West, not East – a fact that should be considered suspicious. Dostoevsky's letters of this period speak of the light of Orthodoxy shining from the East on the decadent West (28, 2: 260; 29, 1: 30–31) and the Gospels specify that Christ will return from the East (Matthew 24: 27). In addition, Switzerland was a country that Dostoevsky

disliked; in his letters to Russian friends he termed everything but the view "vile" (28, 2: 302–03).[57] The frequent mention that Myshkin is like a child reverses the legend's presentation of Christ as an old man, and in the novel the "beggar" first comes not to Russian peasants, but to the newly wealthy of the capital. Myshkin later claims that he visited rural Russian during his six-month absence from St. Petersburg, and when he returns to the capital, he exchanges crosses with the "muzhik" Rogozhin – actions that conform to the legend. Resemblance between Myshkin and the Christ of legend is discernable from his initial appearance on the train. Dostoevsky's hero enters the novel carrying a little bundle (*uzelok*) that contains all his earthly possessions. This bundle becomes a leitmotif running through Part 1, serving as a continual suggestion of his beggar status and prompting the Epanchins' lackey, the General, and Lizaveta Prokofevna to suspect that he has come for a handout (8: 17, 23, 44).

The image of Christ as beggar provides a template against which other characters react to Myshkin. Sensing that he is impoverished, those with whom this awkward but likeable young man becomes acquainted on his first day in Petersburg help him. Rogozhin invites Myshkin to visit him; General Epanchin gives him a job and a twenty-five-ruble loan and arranges lodgings at the Ivolgins; Madame Epanchina feeds him. They would pass the charity test of the legend. Unlike the rich peasants in the legend, Dostoevsky's characters seem to glimpse a morally superior being beneath the guise of this "poor" Prince. Rogozhin suggests that he enjoys the special favor of God. General Epanchin, who has purchased an expensive necklace in the hope of making Nastasia Filippovna his mistress, realizes that Myshkin's appearance has saved him from an unpleasant encounter with his wife and thinks, "It's as if God had sent him" (8: 44). On taking leave of the Prince, Lizaveta Prokofevna echoes her husband: "I believe that God brought you to Petersburg just for me . . . That's precisely how God arranged it" (8: 70). The comparison between Myshkin and the beggar-hero of the legend is unmistakable in Lizaveta Prokofevna's musings that the last of her line is "practically a beggar and accepts handouts in his poverty" (8: 44). Myshkin's statement that he does "not know where to lay his head," which General Epanchin repeats on persuading his wife to see him, reinforces his homeless status and evokes the Christ of the Gospels (8: 31, 45; Matthew 8: 20).

Characters encountering Myshkin on his return to Russia are strangely captivated by him and accept him as both odd and saintly, a response that will run throughout the novel. In his "Necessary Explanation," Ippolit will call him the "Man," thereby associating him with Christ, whom he terms

the "superior being" (8: 348). Lebedev will unctuously address him as "Most Shining Prince" (*siiatel'neishii kniaz'*, 8: 160). Responding to narrative cues, the reader too is inclined to regard him as curiously saintly. But alongside imagery prompting consideration of Myshkin as an *alter Christus*, the text contains hints that we should be wary of too facile a linkage. It is possible that the theme of "knowing how to look," raised very early in the novel in conjunction with Adelaida Epanchina's painting, is intended as a cryptic communication between the author and the reader, who must not be content to take matters at face value. If we forego the assumption that use of folkloric or biblical imagery about Christ in conjunction with Myshkin automatically signals identification, we cannot but conclude that the references are problematic. True, the narrator gives many allusions to Christ, and characters straining to comprehend Myshkin generate others. Some of these references occur within an ironic framework, which cautions against accepting them without qualification. This is the case with General Epanchin's thought "It's as if God sent him."

Myshkin is not really a beggar. When he tells Rogozhin on the train, "At the present moment I have barely a kopeck to my name" (8: 13), he does not mean that he is poor, but that *at the present moment* he is without money. During his subsequent conversation with General Epanchin he tries at least four times to discuss his business – which we may assume to be his inheritance (8: 24, 31). On the train, the millionaire Rogozhin notes that he himself had been penniless like Myshkin five weeks earlier when he fled from his father with nothing but a little bundle (*s uzelkom*, 8: 10). Gania dreams of amassing a fortune, yet he too is termed "beggar" in one of Nastasia Filippovna's remarks (8: 90). Even more striking in Gania's case are turns of speech originating in the Gospels that, while appropriate in an idiomatic sense, seem misapplied as biblical references. When he tells Myshkin that he wants to become so rich that the world will announce, "There goes Ivolgin, King of the Jews," he has in mind Rothschild, not Christ.[58] Similarly, when Gania's premonition that his father will create a scandalous scene in the presence of Nastasia Filippovna comes true, the narrator invites a curious comparison between his situation and that of Christ in Gethsemane before his crucifixion by noting, "he would have to drink this terrible cup to the full" (8: 90; Matthew 26: 43).[59]

Thus, certain aspects of Myshkin's portrayal seem to run counter to the comparisons with Christ (he is really a rich man), while the depictions of Gania and Rogozhin, whom no one would dream of terming "positively beautiful," also include motifs from the Gospels and folk legends. Perhaps we should not dismiss out of hand Aleksandra's remark to Aglaia that this

prince may be a "great rogue, and not an idiot at all" (8: 48), though I suspect that to accept this statement uncritically or to associate Myshkin with the false Christ of folk legend would be to err in the opposite direction. Dostoevsky wants his reader to be troubled by the difficulty in pinning down his hero, and this implies that he is prompting deeper questioning about the relationship between Myshkin and Christ. Perceiving Myshkin directly through the prism of folklore references or the Gospels, as do most of the characters in a half-conscious manner, does not resolve the mystery of his identity.

The folklore and biblical references of *The Idiot* generate clusters of potential associations around Myshkin, but fail to provide a secure referent against which he can be understood. They confront us with his incorporeity and his longing to flee the troubled world he has entered, and they highlight the garden and the knife as fundamental symbols of corruption and inevitable death. But they do not fully elucidate Myshkin's relationship to this tainted world or to Christ. Though he fails to conform wholly to the prototype of the popular Christ, he nonetheless leaves readers wondering whether he still might be a saint for post-Reform Russia, or perhaps a clairvoyant who sees beyond immediate reality. Or he might even be a sectarian who, like a Runner, maintains an outward relationship with the larger society, while intending to flee to some far-off utopia. The imagery connected with religious figures is unstable; it tends to jump from one character to another and acquire ironic twists that skew its meaning. In the final analysis, the references accompanying Myshkin neither fully confirm nor wholly refute a reading of him as Christ-like. I believe that this is deliberate. In integrating folklore and biblical imagery into *The Idiot* Dostoevsky adopts a fundamentally different strategy from that of *Crime and Punishment*. In the earlier novel one reference to a song embedded in an idiom ("To sing Lazarus," 6: 189) reverberated throughout the text providing the connective thread for many, apparently unrelated, scenes and conveying a popular ethic of charity that counterbalanced Raskolnikov's rationalistic social ideas. In *The Idiot*, by contrast, multiple references to the Christ of the Gospels, of legend, and of Revelation fail to satisfactorily explain just who Myshkin is and why he has returned to Russia.

THE PEOPLE'S FAITH AND THE MISSING ICONS

Myshkin's mini-stories of his meetings with the *narod* and the theology of icons offer important clues about his spirituality and the novel's cosmos. Significantly, both the encounters and icons are extraneous to the novel

proper: Myshkin interacts with the people during the six-month gap in the action, and icons are conspicuous by their absence. Both serve to direct us to debates of the early Church about the nature of Christ and above all to the Council of Chalcedon's formulation that he is "truly God and truly man." In the eyes of the early fathers, de-emphasizing either of Christ's two natures resulted in a loss of balance that distorted his true image and misconceived the Incarnation: Arianism stressed the creaturehood of Christ at the expense of divinity, while Gnostic tendencies devalued his humanity.[60] In *The Idiot* the balance has been lost.

Myshkin relates his stories to Rogozhin to illustrate genuine religious faith. He tells about a murder in which a peasant slit a friend's throat "like a ram" for a watch while praying "Lord, forgive me for Christ's sake"; a swindle in which a soldier claimed his tin cross was silver and sold it to Myshkin for a drink; and a young mother's comparison of her baby's first smile to "God's joy every time he sees from heaven that a sinner is kneeling to pray before him with all his heart" (8: 183–84). These stories ring familiar within the general context of Dostoevsky's works. They are reminiscent of the slitting of Akulka's throat "like a calf" in *House of the Dead*; Fedka the Convict's willingness to murder coupled with his abhorrence of Peter Verkhovensky's atheism in *The Devils*; and the peasant Marey's gentleness with the child who feared a wolf in *The Diary of a Writer*. Myshkin's stories present religious experiences that are normative in Dostoevsky's world outside *The Idiot*, which may explain why they constitute reported narratives and are not part of the novelistic present. They form the prelude to his exchange of crosses with Rogozhin and to his musings about his own religious experience.

Recognizing himself in the story of the peasant who murdered his friend, Rogozhin asks Myshkin to swap crosses with him. Myshkin agrees and, somewhat reluctantly, hands over the peasant's tin cross, receiving Rozgozhin's golden one in return.[61] They thus engage in the ancient rite of adoptive brotherhood intended to bind them to each other and, since the cross that Myshkin gives to Rogozhin is from a peasant, to the *narod*. Rogozhin then leads Myshkin to his mother to ratify the pact, and the old lady symbolically accepts him as her son by making the sign of the cross over him (8: 185). In the *byliny*, epic heroes frequently enter into adoptive brotherhood to curtail enmity and offer each other protection. Their relationship involved the obligations of mutual aid in danger, obedience to the "elder" brother, and a series of prohibitions on marriage. Since the bond between adoptive brothers and sisters was considered as strong as blood kinship, the wife of one brother became the sister of the other, and

the latter did not have the right to marry her on her husband's death.[62] Rogozhin's desire to exchange crosses can be construed as an attempt to restrain his own violent urges and prevent any further hostility over Nastasia Filippovna. Yet, it fails utterly, for within a few hours of the conclusion of the rite, he accosts Myshkin with his raised knife, and only an epileptic attack saves the hero's life. In *The Idiot*, the ancient rite lacks the power to prompt a change of heart that might curb his passion.

After exchanging crosses, Myshkin leaves Rogozhin's house, promising not to seek out Nastasia Filippovna. He now engages in a curious odyssey of rambling about St. Petersburg in a state of sickly agitation and semi-awareness, continually sensing that Rogozhin is watching him. He boards the Pavlovsk train, then suddenly casts his ticket away and proceeds toward a shop window where he thinks he saw a certain sixty-kopeck item. His subconscious does not allow him to name the item – a garden knife similar to the one he saw at Rogozhin's. Myshkin recalls that when he was last in front of this shop, he had turned suddenly and caught Rogozhin's eyes on him. Overcome by an "irresistible desire, almost temptation" he decides to look for the house where Nastasia Filippovna usually stays, even though he knows she is probably in Pavlovsk.

Some commentators regard Myshkin's cat and mouse game with Rogozhin as a fall from grace; they note that by seeking Nastasia Filippovna he breaks his promise, and by tempting Rogozhin, he judges him.[63] Myshkin's interior monologue surely prompts this understanding, for throughout he refers to his temptation as his "demon" (*demon*). Yet Dostoevsky's choice to use the term "demon" instead of the biblical *d'iavol* or popular *chert* or *bes* is curious. In other novels, the repetition of the words *chert*, *bes*, and *d'iavol* coupled with notions about them contributes to a sense that supernatural forces are operative in the life of his characters. Here Dostoevsky probably wanted to avoid close associations with the devil of Christianity or folk belief; among the ancient Greeks *daimones* were general supernatural powers, not necessarily associated with "powers of evil."[64]

In other novels, crowded streets and happenchance encounters are the norm; but in *The Idiot* the author underscores the complete isolation of his hero and keeps the *narod* at a distance. Myshkin asks a child for directions and he watches passers-by, but they acquire no specific traits. At one point Myshkin stops to rest under a tree in the Summer Garden. Here he muses about the religious meaning of the flash of light preceding his epileptic fits as a "moment for which one could give one's whole life" (8: 188). His thoughts bring us to the core of his inner world:

His mind, his heart were illuminated by an unusual light; it was as if all his agitation, all his doubts, all his uneasiness quieted down at once and were resolved in some sort of higher serenity full of clear, harmonious joy and hope, full of comprehension of the ultimate cause of things. But these moments, these flashes were still only a foreboding of the final second (never more than a second) with which the seizure itself began. That second was, of course, unbearable. Reflecting on this moment afterward, already in a healthy state, he often said to himself: that after all, all these bolts and flashes of higher sensation of self, of higher self-awareness, and consequently, of a "higher existence" were nothing other than the sickness, than a violation of a normal state of being. So then they were not a higher existence at all but, on the contrary, must be ascribed to the very lowest. And, in the end, however, he all the same reached an extremely paradoxical conclusion. "What does it matter that it's sickness?" he finally decided. "What does it matter that it's an abnormal tension, if the result itself, the minute of sensation that is remembered and reflected on in a state of good health proves to be in the highest degree harmony, beauty, and gives an unheard of and previously unimaginable sense of fullness, measure, peacefulness and ecstatic, prayerful fusion with the very highest synthesis of life?" . . . In the fact that it was truly "beauty and prayer," that this was truly "the highest synthesis of life," in this he could not doubt, he could not allow any doubt. (8: 188)

The above passage relates Myshkin's central religious experience and the rationale for his belief in God. Many have viewed it as the "truth" that the novel wishes to communicate because it appears that Myshkin's seizures afford him a moment of divine union and because it seems to agree with Dostoevsky's insight that faith often contradicts reason. In addition, this vision accords with descriptions that have come down to us of the writer's own attacks of epilepsy.[65] However, Dostoevsky was capable of twisting even his most intimate convictions and experiences to suit his artistic purposes. One must evaluate Myshkin's vision in terms of the novel itself, and from this perspective, his "fusion with the very highest synthesis of life," like the comparison with Christ, becomes problematic. Given the overall theme of corrupt vegetation in *The Idiot*, the locus of Myshkin's reflections under a tree in the midst of a garden is suspect. But the most serious drawback to the vision is that Myshkin cannot transmit his light to others.[66] His personal illumination fails to alleviate Nastasia Filippovna's wounded pride or to quell Rogozhin's passion; it does not lessen Aglaia's latent nihilism and desire to run away from her family; and it does not bring peace to the dying Ippolit. This is not due to the inadequacy of words to convey the ineffable, but the direction of Myshkin's vision: it moves not outward, toward the other, but inward. Myshkin's experience does not transcend his Self. Myshkin himself set the standard for evaluating faith in his

mini-stories about the peasants. Unlike Myshkin's moment of light, the peasants' experiences move beyond Self. By admitting that his deed is a sin and he needs God's forgiveness, the peasant murderer points to a Reality other than that locked within him. The peasant woman perceives this other Reality in the simple joys of human life.

Myshkin's vision devalues matter and affirms the victory of spirit alone. It smacks of those early Christian heresies that rejected Christ's humanity. Many Gnostics regarded the suffering and death of Christ as illusory and Christ himself as a spirit only appearing to occupy a human body; his true purpose on earth was to communicate a secret teaching that liberates believers and initiates them into a privileged elite.[67] Myshkin's "holy sickness" seems to render him a member of such an elite (he mentions Mohammed), whose higher wisdom is accessible only to each other. One might compare the thrust of Myshkin's vision with the words of the Gnostic teacher Monoimus:

> Abandon the search for God and the creation and other matters of a similar sort. Look for him by taking yourself as the starting point. Learn who it is who within you makes everything his own and says, "My God, my mind, my thought, my soul, my body." Learn the sources of sorrow, joy, love, hate. Learn how it happens that one watches without willing, rests without willing, becomes angry without willing, loves without willing. If you carefully investigate these matters, you will find him in yourself.[68]

Myshkin's epilepsy creates the conditions within which he himself becomes the starting point in his search for God. His moment of illumination is an exclusively *inner* light. This inward direction of his vision along with his insufficient enfleshment – one of the most stable traits in his depiction – implies that if he represents Christ, then it can only be the purely spiritual Christ of Gnosticism. The self-sufficiency of Myshkin's religious impulse explains another curious detail of his portrayal and a point of contrast with "saintly" characters from other novels: Dostoevsky does not show his hero praying for the unhappy people on whose lives he has impinged. Sonia Marmeladova responds to Raskolnikov's query about whether she prays a lot with, "What would I be without God?" (6: 248). After witnessing the fiery passions of his family, Alesha Karamazov falls asleep praying, "Lord, have mercy on them all, all the unhappy and troubled ones, and guide them. Yours are the paths; save them all by your paths. You are love; you send joy to everyone!" (14: 147). Myshkin instead broods about his need to get away from the turbulence of the world and reflects on his moment of ecstasy; for him the vision itself constitutes "beauty and prayer."

Myshkin's thrust is exclusively spiritual; he lacks the enfleshment necessary to truly enter into the suffering and joy of the novel's unhappy people and instill in them something of his elevation. By contrast, the world he enters seems entrapped in materiality; it is without a spiritual thrust that would allow escape from the law of inevitability. This failure of integration of spirit and matter in the cosmos of *The Idiot* elucidates the impotence of the rite of adoptive brotherhood and the novel's use of portraits rather than icons. In the Eastern Church icons betoken a fusion of heaven and earth, spirit and matter; they are reminders that through the Incarnation, Christ spiritualized (Orthodox writers prefer the term "deified") all creation.[69]

While the lack of icons may not seem unusual in the parlors of the Epanchin home or Lebedev's Pavlovsk villa, where the manners and tastes of western civilization dictate décor, given the religious ambience of the Rogozhin house, their absence here is striking. Instead, this gloomy edifice with its thick walls, lack of windows on the ground floor, and shop rented out to Castrates, contains the painting that seems to serve as an icon in reverse, Hans Holbein the Younger's "Christ in the Tomb."[70] Holbein modeled his dead Christ on a real cadaver, and the work preserves the effect of the original to an amazing degree. The painting shows the figure of Christ as bluish and starting to decompose. For a person brought up in the Eastern Church, however, this portrayal of Christ's wounded and swollen corpse might seem shocking. The Orthodox icon of the dead Savior, unlike the Holbein or a western crucifix, instills a sense of triumph. In the words of Michel Quenot, "the iconographer does not show us a tortured body that looks vanquished; he paints instead the Master of Life radiating the Divine Presence."[71]

In his "Necessary Explanation," Ippolit construes the Holbein painting as a statement about the finality of life on earth:

> If it was precisely such a corpse (and it undoubtedly had to be just that way) that all his disciples, his main future apostles saw; that the women who accompanied him and stood by the cross and all who believed in him and adored him, saw, then looking at such a corpse, how could they believe that this martyr would rise? . . . Glancing at this picture one imagines nature as some huge, implacable, dumb beast, or more accurately, much more accurately, though a bit strange, as a sort of huge machine of the most recent design which has thoughtlessly seized, torn to pieces, and devoured, without hearing and without feeling, a great and priceless being – such a being alone was worth all nature and all its laws, the whole earth, which, perhaps, was being created exclusively for the appearance of this being. It's as if this picture expresses the idea of a dark, naked, and senselessly eternal force to which all is subject, and it transmits it to you involuntarily. (8: 339)

While Myshkin's vision elevates the spiritual at the expense of the flesh, the Holbein painting offers an overpowering picture of the tyranny of matter. Ippolit's interpretation approximates the understanding of Christ of Ernest Renan's *Life of Jesus* (*Vie de Jésus*), a work on Dostoevsky's mind during the writing of *The Idiot*.[72] Although the novel proper includes no reference to Renan, the *Notebooks* contain several, including one in conjunction with the Holbein painting (9: 183–84). For Renan, Christ was exclusively human, though "a sublime being" in whom "was concentrated all that was good, all that was lofty in our nature."[73] Renan's thinking, like Ippolit's, smacks of Arianism. According to Geir Kjetsaa, Dostoevsky regarded the denial of the divinity of Christ as the "first step in the European process of secularization, which he saw as his calling to oppose."[74] In stressing the intensity of suffering in the Holbein painting, Ippolit underscores Christ's humanity; and in claiming that even Christ was subject to the "huge, implacable, dumb beast," he raises doubts about his divinity. Ippolit presumes that Christ could not have risen from the dead and consequently neither will he.[75]

The choice to use portraits in *The Idiot* is related to the meaning of icons and the debate in the early Church about Christ's nature. In *The Idiot*, portraits do not function as the equivalents of icons because they do not bear the same theological weight. Raphael's absence from the litany of artists included in the text becomes significant in this regard since for Dostoevsky personally, Raphael's Sistine Madonna stood at the pinnacle of western painting and was infused with a sense of the divine.[76] Many of the paintings mentioned or suggested in the novel catch up the themes of standard icons in the Orthodox repertoire. Holbein's "Christ in the Tomb" evokes the Deposition of Christ; the crucifixion permeates the novel, but is especially strong in Myshkin's discussion with Lizaveta Prokofevna and her daughters about execution. Myshkin's statement that he would paint a condemned man with nothing but a face and a cross reminds us of the icon of The Savior Made Without Hands (*Spas nerukotvornyi*).[77] Hints of icons of the Mother of God abound. When Myshkin tells Aleksandra that her face, like that of a Holbein Madonna, expresses a secret sorrow, we may remember that sorrow is also one of the notable characteristics of the Vladimir Mother of God, the best known of the "Tenderness" icons. Lebedev's twenty-year-old daughter Vera (Faith) holding her baby sister Liubov (Love) evokes an icon of Tenderness, as does Myshkin's description of the peasant woman who crosses herself at her baby's first smile. Nastasia Filippovna's portrait seems to function partly as a representation of the Sorrowful Mother of God for Myshkin, though he perceives pride as well as

suffering in her face. The subsequent confusion over her address – Myshkin is told both that she lives by the Bolshoy Theater and by the Church of the Vladimir Mother of God – captures the contradictions Myshkin reads in her portrait. Her willfulness manifests itself in a penchant for theatrics, while her deep suffering and simplicity seem to suggest the icon of Tenderness.

Like the Holbein painting, the above subjects for portraits point us to questions of Christology. The fundamental meaning of "the Word made Flesh," of the reality of Christ's birth from a woman, is central in the Madonna and child and in pictures connected with Christ's suffering and death. But since *The Idiot* gives us portraits, not icons, we may wonder whether we are dealing not with art that somehow fuses heaven and earth, as do icons within the Orthodox understanding, but with bits and scraps of a moribund civilization whose greatest glory hinged on themes from the life of a "Sublime Being." Not that there are no icons at all mentioned in the novel. But in those few instances where they occur, their subjects are unspecified and they seem to be rendered void as bearers of divine presence. In Ippolit's dream Rogozhin assumes a place in front of the desk beneath the icon lamp, symbolically snuffing it out. Nastasia Filippovna sets a date for her wedding with Rogozhin while clutching and kissing an icon; her final gesture before running from her wedding with Myshkin to Rogozhin is to kiss an icon. In the face of Rogozhin's knife these holy images prove impotent.

The final scene at Rogozhin's house brings the novel's religious themes to culmination. Now there is no mention of the Holbein painting, for the masterful "picture" of Myshkin and Rogozhin holding vigil over Nastasia Filippovna's murdered body has usurped its role. Myshkin and Rogozhin approach the house where her body lies from opposite sides of the street; inside they sit silently in the pale reflected light of the moon and the Petersburg white nights, facing each other, as they had on the Warsaw train on their first acquaintance. Rogozhin refuses to light a candle in order not to attract attention. Nastasia Filippovna's corpse lies behind a green curtain; it is covered with a white sheet, from which her marble-like toe protrudes. Her white silk wedding dress, flowers, and ribbons lie scattered about the bed, and the only sound is the buzzing of a fly. Rogozhin tells Myshkin that she spoke of going to the central Russian city Orel, which seems to be the locus of her childhood. To forestall the odor of decay he covered her with a disinfectant and would have surrounded her with his mother's potted flowers and bouquets, but feared that Pafnutevna would guess that something was amiss (8: 504, 505). These details along with the

garden knife he uses for the murder serve to evoke Nastasia Filippovna's lost Eden.

The final scene plays on the implications of Nastasia Filippovna's name – "Anastasia" signifies "resurrection" and "Barashkova" "sacrificial lamb." Like Holbein's Christ, she is a slain lamb that will not rise again. But I do not believe that this scene represents a victory of the Antichrist, as Hollander suggests.[78] Rogozhin and Myshkin stand more truly as great symbols of unspiritualized flesh (like the Holbein) and spirit that has failed to assume flesh. This culminating scene is an eerie reminder that for the world of *The Idiot* nature and all human life must submit to mechanistic laws of decay and inevitability because the Word has not become Flesh and matter has not been "deified."

The Idiot is not a lesser novel than *Crime and Punishment*, *The Devils*, or *The Brothers Karamazov*, as some believe.[79] But the coordinates of its religious world are different. Biblical and folklore references create the expectation that Myshkin will be a Christ figure and then break down for lack of cohesiveness. Myshkin is not the popular Christ of folk legend, nor the great herald of the end time. In fact, within the world of *The Idiot* there can be no true end of time, for the advent of the Antichrist and establishment of the New Jerusalem, like the Resurrection, are robbed of meaning without true Incarnation. Despite the apparent whirlwind of motion in the lives of the characters, the novel is really about stasis.[80]

If, as a Christian perspective would uphold, the entire meaning of history and of life on earth is tied up with the continuing presence of grace, which alone makes possible inner change and good acts, then *The Idiot* represents an anomaly in the Dostoevsky canon. Whatever it is that mysteriously flows from Sonia to Raskolnikov, from Zosima to Alesha and Alesha to the children is missing in *The Idiot*. However dark and bloody *The Devils* may be, it gives us the image of Shatov lit up by an inner conversion as he rejoices in the return of his wayward wife and the birth of Stavrogin's baby; the novel tells us that he "shines" and it is a light that infects others. From the very first pages of *The Brothers Karamazov*, Dmitry's hand is raised against his father, and the novel painstakingly creates the expectation that he will murder the old man. Yet at the last minute his hand is stayed, and the only explanation that Dmitry can offer is that "God was watching over me then" (14: 355). In *The Idiot*, by contrast, Rogozhin's knife is raised over Nastasia Filippovna from the beginning, and though the novel delays the murder by shifting the setting from Petersburg to Pavlovsk and highlighting other characters, there is nothing that can restrain either his passion or her desire for execution.

Lebedev represents one of the more striking dramatizations of the lack of a transforming power in the novel's world. He is a believer who reads the bible, prays, and deplores the spiritual emptiness of the upper classes. Many of his utterances ring true in Dostoevsky's world outside *The Idiot*. But within the novel his faith is powerless to alter even his own existence, and he is doomed to remain painfully amoral, to continue to betray and cheat his friends, perpetrate gossip and petty scandals, and engage in cruel pranks. The wholesomeness of his children and of Kolia Ivolgin contrasts vividly with Lebedev's nastiness, and one wonders about their futures. The final pages of the novel appear to hold out the prospect of happiness for them.[81] Yet the models for transition to adulthood that the novel offers in Nastasia Filippovna and Ippolit and the depravity of Lebedev himself lead one to suspect that gloom hangs over even the most attractive children.

The religious imagery of *The Idiot* lacks constancy and does not permit a reading that would, on its basis, qualify Myshkin as an *alter Christus*. This is not a result of Dostoevsky's artistic failure to create a "positively beautiful person." Instead, I believe, it reflects a shift in the conception of the hero and the work's underlying metaphysical questions that occurred during the difficult period between January and late April 1868, when Part 1 had already been sent to *The Russian Herald* for publication and the writer was unsure how to continue his novel. Dostoevsky no doubt believed that if Myshkin were to be truly Christ-like, he would need to have some positive effect on others. Yet as the central parts of the novel developed, Myshkin, though ever generous and forgiving of those who wrong him, longs more and more to escape the entanglements of the world into which he has plunged and, in any case, proves powerless to quell passion or inspire moral improvement. His alienation and inability to participate in the "feast of life" underscore the Gnostic quality of his goodness.

The novel's craftsmanship is thus geared toward the basic issue the novel came to probe: the import that the failure of the Word to become flesh would have on all life. The capricious quality of the imagery reflects the disjointedness of a world that lacks meaningful connections and the possibility of change. All nature retains its blighted post-Fall status because without the Incarnation matter and spirit remain forever separate. In Dostoevsky's works, references to the earth, whatever their heretical shadings, point to the mysterious vitality of existence in a world that was sanctified when God became man. Here the absence of earth imagery along with the paucity of the *narod* and of icons suggests that grounding in the very stuff of life is missing.

None of Dostoevsky's other novels contains so little bespeaking the presence and goodness of God or, as Robert Lord claims, "anticipates so strikingly the metaphysical tenor of our own day."[82] We know that Dostoevsky grappled with the difficulty of faith and the meaning of Christ throughout his life, and perhaps his dreadful financial situation, compounded by attacks of epilepsy, his wife's pregnancy, the death of his infant daughter, and the impossibility of returning to Russia pushed him to the very edge of desolation during the writing of *The Idiot*. This novel represents the outer extreme to which the writer was willing to let his religious imagination venture.

4

Fumbling toward Holy Russia in The Devils

Dostoevsky wrote a large part of *The Devils* in 1870–71 during the final years of his self-imposed exile in Europe. Its somber mood, like that of *The Idiot*, reflects his distaste for life abroad and his concern about the destiny of his homeland. Initially intending it to be a satirical tract against the radicals, who, the writer feared, had gained exorbitant influence among educated Russians, Dostoevsky drew on the notorious Nechaev affair for the plot and some of the characters. Peter Verkhovensky is called "Nechaev" in the *Notebooks* to the novel, and like his prototype, he establishes a clandestine cell of revolutionaries and attempts to forge it together with the murder of a former member. His intention of wreaking moral and social havoc accords with Nechaev's doctrine that demanded breaking every ethical bond and devoting oneself to merciless destruction.[1] Peter plans to infiltrate the *narod* and "unleash drunkenness, slander, denunciation . . . unimaginable debauchery" (10: 323), and this gory novel chronicles the unfolding of his scheme. Its events include the desecration of icons, robbery, arson, child abuse, suicide, and murder along with countless malicious pranks. By the end most of the major characters are dead.

As the novel evolved, a personage even more sinister than Peter surfaced and took over its center. In a letter of October 8/20, 1870 to his editor M. N. Katkov, Dostoevsky noted that Peter Verkhovensky was coming out comic, but that Nikolay Stavrogin, "also a gloomy character, also a villain," was emerging as the main protagonist and seemed tragic (29, 1: 141–42). The *Notebooks* reveal that though the writer had a clear understanding of Peter from the novel's inception, he arrived at Stavrogin only after a tortuous process of trial and error. Early schemes depict a more passionate hero called "the Prince" (*Kniaz'*), who is under the influence of a Russian patriot and Christian named Golubov.[2] Dostoevsky strove to imbue the Prince with his own conviction that Catholic Europe had lost Christ and that Orthodoxy was the hope for humankind. In several entries the Prince argues that Russia is great because its people have preserved true Christianity, and he muses

whether it is possible for a civilized man to believe that Jesus Christ is truly the Son of God (11: 178). Sensing, evidently, that his hero's faith could not be genuine, Dostoevsky usually concluded these outbursts with the Prince's suicide (11: 132, 151).

As the writer acquired a firmer grasp of his hero, the positive personages fell away. By March 1870 Dostoevsky noted, "Golubov is unnecessary. It turns out that the Prince is the main hero of the novel" (11: 135). An entry from August 1870 reads, "NB: Everything is contained in Stavrogin's character. Stavrogin is everything" (11: 207). In the published text, the "devils" have taken over the surface of the novel's provincial town and no obvious counterbalance to Stavrogin and Peter remains. Golubov disappeared and the editor of *The Russian Herald* prohibited a chapter containing a saintly bishop modeled on Tikhon of Zadonsk.[3] Dostoevsky no longed allowed his hero to venture forth with proclamations about Christ, Russia's holiness, or, for that matter, anything. Stavrogin became motionless and committed to nothing – a silent axis around which all else revolved.

In telling the story of Peter and Stavrogin, the writer incorporates a vast array of folklore references and fills the background of the provincial town where the action is set with common people.[4] The novel's demonology makes up the most obvious layer of folklore. Dostoevsky bestows features of the devils of popular superstition on many of his characters and the town itself is transformed into a visual inferno when fire breaks out during a bawdy fête. Eight lines from Pushkin's poem "The Devils" ("Besy") and Luke's parable of the Gadarene swine (Luke 8: 32–36) serve as epigraphs. The poem, which describes the unclean force swarming in a snowstorm where travelers have lost their way, implies that evil spirits have seized Russia.[5] Dostoevsky elaborated on the meaning of the Gadarene swine for his work in a letter of October 9/21, 1870 that he sent to A. N. Maikov the day after submitting the first installment to *The Russian Herald*:

> [T]he sickness that gripped civilized Russians was far stronger than we ourselves imagined and the business did not end with the Belinskys, Kraevskys, and so forth. But here what the evangelist Luke gives witness to occurred: the devils sat in the man and their name was legion, and they asked Him, "Permit us go into the herd of pigs," and He allowed them to do this. The devils entered the herd of pigs, and the entire herd threw itself over the cliff into the sea, and they all drowned . . . Exactly the same thing has happened with us. The devils went out of the Russian man and entered into a herd of pigs, that is, into the Nechaevs, the Serno-Soloveviches, and so forth. Those have drowned or will surely drown, and the man who has been healed, from whom the devils went out, is sitting at the feet of Jesus. It had to be just that way. Russia has vomited out this rot that she was fed and, of course, in those vomited-out scoundrels already nothing Russian remains. And take note,

dear friend: the person who loses his people (*narod*) and nationality also loses the faith of his fathers and God. Well, if you want to know – this is precisely the theme of my novel. (29, 1: 145)

In the above passage, Dostoevsky reads Luke's parable as political allegory, and, for the most part, the novel's devils take the form of members of the radical intelligentsia who engage in nasty antics and bloody crimes.

Peter represents a major face of the demonic; his pointed head and forked tongue create an unmistakable resemblance to a snake (10: 143–44). His constant leer and the outbursts of sniggering and hysterical giggling that he triggers in others serve as sure signs of the presence of the devil, who typically smirks and laughs in both folklore and Russian ascetic literature.[6] As W. J. Leatherbarrow points out, the diminutive form of his name "Petrusha," by which his father Stepan Trofimovich addresses him, evokes the unscrupulous "Petrushka" of the puppet theater. Like Petrushka, Peter's movements are hurried and jerky, and he manifests greed, cowardice, falsehood, and vanity from the moment he rushes into Varvara Petrovna Stavrogina's drawing room spouting witticisms at the beginning of the action proper to his disappearance after the murder of the ex-student Ivan Shatov.[7] When Stepan Trofimovich questions whether Peter is truly his son, we are reminded of the widespread belief that devils substitute baby demons for real children (10: 240).[8]

As an old liberal of the 1840s, Stepan Trofimovich also enters the novel's demonology, for his generation spawned the nihilist-devils of the 1860s. In the company of his friends, Stepan Trofimovich drank champagne and engaged in liberal chatter about Russia, God, and art. Varvara Petrovna originally hired him to tutor her son Nikolay, and he lived on her estate for over twenty years before finding the courage to set off in search of Russia. Several members of his circle – Liputin, Liamshin, and Virginsky – transfer their allegiance to Peter and become enmeshed in the town's unsavory antics and the murder of Shatov. Dostoevsky ascribes beastlike traits typical of folklore devils to some members of Peter's group, including Liamshin, who imitates animal sounds and squeals in an inhuman voice at the murder of Shatov, and Shigalev, whose ears are unnaturally long and stick out in a strange manner.[9] Fedka "The Convict," a former serf whom Peter employs to kill Captain Lebiadkin and his sister Maria Timofeevna, is another important "little devil" (*besenok*, 10: 230) and a reminder that the *narod* is not immune to demonism. Like evil spirits of the folk tradition, Fedka is sometimes referred to indirectly as "that one" or "that person" (10: 292, 427), and he is prone to appear when his name is uttered.[10]

Stavrogin no longer belongs to the tradition of petty evil spirits of folklore or the puppet theater, and his finished portrait pushes *The Devils* beyond the political pamphlet of Dostoevsky's initial design. The demonic becomes more awesome in his depiction, which turns on insinuations that he is Satanic and embodies the mystery of cosmic evil. Even before he makes his official entrance, slipping quietly into his mother's drawing room after Peter, the metaphors "wise serpent" (*premudryi zmii*, 10: 83) and "beast" (*zver'*, 10: 37, 38) associate him with the tempter in the Garden of Eden and the beast of the Apocalypse. Implications of lifelessness attend Stavrogin's portrayal. He is a handsome, refined aristocrat; yet his pale face and reddish cheeks liken him to a vampire or, as a lady admirer terms him, a "blood-drinker" (*krovopiitsa*, 10: 401). References to Stepan Trofimovich's garbled poem about a black knight who represents death prefigure his appearance, and at one point he is likened to a "soulless wax figure" (10: 182).

Just as Myshkin's true identity constituted the fundamental concern of *The Idiot*, the question of who Stavrogin really is lies at the heart of *The Devils*. Readers perceive immediately that Peter is a base intriguer. But fascinated by Stavrogin, they spend the bulk of the novel trying to comprehend him. Both Peter's whirlwind of destruction and Stavrogin's inertia fuel the momentum of *The Devils*. Yet without Stavrogin, Peter's scheme collapses. Peter needs Stavrogin's charisma for his new order; he intends to wrap him in the aura of a folk hero and present him to the *narod* as their anointed leader. All the other characters place their hope in Stavrogin as well. Those involved in Peter's plan seek authentication from him and suspect that he belongs to a secret revolutionary center (10: 249). Shatov and the engineer Kirillov, who wrestle with great ideological problems, revere him as the author of their beliefs: Stavrogin instilled the idea of the sanctity of the Russian people in the former and the idea of freedom through suicide in the latter. All the major women characters are romantically involved with Stavrogin. His elusiveness on the one hand and rumors of monstrous crimes on the other only serve to enhance his uncanny appeal. Stavrogin, for his part, is utterly self-sufficient: he needs no one and looks to no one.

Alongside its demonology, the novel incorporates imagery from a wide array of oral narratives. References associate Stavrogin with such disparate figures of popular lore as the fairy-tale hero Ivan Tsarevich, the Cossack rebel Stenka Razin, founders of "heretical" religious sects, the hated impostor Grishka Otrepev, and the people's most beloved saint, Nicholas the Wonderworker. This imagery encodes political and religious ideas of the *narod* and creates the expectation that Stavrogin is about to fulfill an

extraordinary mission. Yet like the Christ imagery surrounding Prince Myshkin, it obscures Stavrogin's true identity. For the bulk of the novel, readers and characters alike are captivated by Stavrogin and fail to perceive that he is in essence dead.[11]

Stavrogin's secret marriage to Maria Lebiadkina, the novel's most evident embodiment of popular spirituality, and Peter's plan to create mayhem among the people and then install Stavrogin as their leader signal that Dostoevsky wished to raise the issue of the *narod*'s spiritual and political steadfastness. The *Notebooks* chronicle his struggle to find the proper relationship between his hero and the people. Some passages show the "Prince" proclaiming that Russia and the Russian idea would save humanity (11: 133), while others state that he is shut off from resurrection because he is severed from the soil and does not accept popular morality (11: 239). In the finished text, "deviltry" occupies the limelight and Dostoevsky's cherished notions about the people's Christianity acquire a warped expression. The argument about Russia's holiness comes not from the hero, but from the clumsy Shatov who, serving as a mouthpiece for one of Stavrogin's former ideas, declares that the *narod* is "God-bearing" (*bogonosets*) and a revolt could only start with atheism. Though Shatov is able to diagnose Stavrogin's ailment as severance from the Russian earth, he himself does not quite believe in God (10: 200–03).

Dostoevsky's letter to Maikov about the Gadarene swine indicates that he wanted to believe Russia would "vomit out" its revolutionary "deviltry." Both this letter and the *Notebooks* affirm, "Russia's purpose lies in Orthodoxy, a *light from the East* that will flow to western humanity which has been blinded and has lost Christ" (29, 1: 146, Dostoevsky's emphasis). With the disappearance of Golubov and Bishop Tikhon, however, the demonic and the sensational dominate the novel's spiritual tone and raise some doubt about the ability of the *narod* to withstand the onslaught of "godless" Europeanism. One suspects that as he struggled to find his hero, Dostoevsky faced a quandary he tended to downplay in his letters – without guidance from the Golubovs and Tikhons, popular life might remain prey to superstition and debauchery and lack the vigor to rebuff the West. Even so, Shatov's apotheosis of the *narod* and Stepan Trofimovich's final journey in search of Russia betoken some movement toward reconciliation between the classes.

This study will first survey the novel's presentation of popular religion. Then it will examine folklore imagery accompanying Stavrogin. In *The Devils*, Dostoevsky faced the artistic problem of creating a believable narrative around an empty core. Folklore imagery renders Stavrogin mysterious

and helps sustain the illusion that he is a superior being with a mission. Finally it will assess the interactions of Stavrogin, Shatov, and Stepan Trofimovich with women as indices of their relationship with Russia. Despite its darkness and chaos, *The Devils* sounds a hopeful note in the devotion of Shatov and Stepan Trofimovich to the Feminine Ideal.

TWO FACES OF POPULAR SPIRITUALITY

In *The Devils*, offbeat religiosity prevails in those personages most closely associated with Peter and Stavrogin. But the novel contains a number of very minor characters who seem to embody a milder spirituality. The nanny of Liza Tushina, a beautiful young heiress in love with Stavrogin, bears the name of Dostoevsky's beloved Alena Frolovna. An old woman who serves Kirillov gives alms to Maria Lebiadkina, and the cabby who drives Maria to the cathedral excuses her from paying on the grounds that "It would be a sin to offend her" (10: 122). Fedka's mother prays for him day and night so as "not to waste her old age lying on the stove and doing nothing" (10: 204). A peasant man and woman give Stepan Trofimovich a ride on their cart to the village of Khatovo, and on reaching Khatovo, he bumps into Anisim, a former servant in the wealthy Gaganov household that he frequented with Varvara Petrovna. Anisim assures the other peasants that this strange nobleman "dressed like a foreigner and with the mind of a little child" (10: 488) presents no danger. Sofia Matveevna Ulitina, who first appears as an unnamed bible-seller into whose bag Liamshin and a seminarian placed pornographic pictures, meets Stepan Trofimovich on the verge of his last illness and, forgoing her own plans, remains by his side to nurse him until Varvara Petrovna arrives. Even Tikhon does not disappear completely from the text; Dostoevsky retains a passage in which Shatov advises Stavrogin to visit him at the monastery on the outskirts of the novel's town.

The above characters exist at the novel's fringes; some remain unnamed or receive no development beyond a brief mention. On the whole they survive the pandemonium unleashed by Peter and Stavrogin and attest to the existence of a world beyond the novel's deviltry. Dostoevsky portrays Stavrogin's attendant Aleksey Egorovich and Stepan Verkhovensky's maid Nastasia in somewhat more detail. Aleksey Egorovich served as a male nanny for Stavrogin and still bears a fatherly concern for him, as his uncharacteristic agitation at the return home of his young master betrays (10: 142).[12] When Stavrogin makes nocturnal visits to Kirillov, Shatov, and Maria Lebiadkina, the old valet facilitates his slipping away from his mother unseen. Yet something within him senses Stavrogin's potential for evil, and

he breaks decorum and gives no more than a conditional blessing to his enterprise: "God bless you, sir, but only if you are undertaking good deeds" (10: 184). Nastasia is indispensable to Stepan Trofimovich's daily life; she cleans his house, assists him in dressing, serves his tea, nurses him, runs his errands, and, at the end, lights the icon lamp in his room. Though not approving his "freethinking" (*vol'nodumstvo*, 10: 100), she remains devoted to him, as is evident in the grieving expression she assumes after the town authorities seize his papers. Similar to the furrier in *Crime and Punishment*, Nastasia stands with her right palm on her cheek looking at him like a lamenting peasant woman and annoying her master, who rightly interprets her gesture as a sign of "Russian pity" (10: 329).

Aleksey Egorovich and Nastasia constitute the novel's clearest representatives of a popular Christianity based on compassion, and as such they provide a contrast to the nastiness that prevails after Peter's arrival.[13] But they are minor personages whose goodness is largely inconspicuous, while the eccentricity of Maria Lebiadkina, Fedka, and the "prophet" Semen Yakovlevich capture the reader's attention. In depicting Maria and Semen Yakovlevich, Dostoevsky adapted material from the monk Parfeny's travelogue, *A Tale of Wandering and Journeying throughout Russia, Moldavia, Turkey, and the Holy Land*, which offered meticulous accounts of monasteries and well-known religious figures.[14] Parfeny's narrative voice, like his material, affords a view into the mind of a scrupulous believer with a prescientific outlook. His book, which was approved by the official Church, served as an important source for the more curious aspects of popular Orthodoxy in *The Devils*, *The Adolescent*, and *The Brothers Karamazov*, and at times Dostoevsky seemed to use it as a cover to facilitate slipping unconventional material past the censor.[15]

Maria Timofeevna tells stories about the monastery where she stayed. She admires an ascetic named "Lizaveta the Blessed," who lived in a cage for seventeen years without speaking, washing, or combing her hair (10: 116). Her tale replicates Parfeny's description of the recluse Evdokiia who spent over twenty-five years sitting in a small storeroom.[16] Similarly, Maria's description of how she heeded the words of an old woman about watering the earth with her tears approximates Parfeny's account of a peasant woman whose vision of Christ and angels caused her to fall to the ground and shed tears of joy. But in *The Devils*, Dostoevsky supplements statements that have clear origins in Parfeny's work with the old woman's declaration that "the Mother of God (*Bogoroditsa*) is the great Mother Damp Earth" (10: 116).[17] This outright equation of the earth and Mary exhibits shadings of a heretical cult.

The abundant imagery accompanying Maria Timofeevna obscures her true identity and her countenance, hidden behind layers of powder and rouge, is almost as difficult to discern as Stavrogin's. Some of this imagery links her with the pre-Christian heritage of the *narod* and some with Christianity. On the whole, critics view her as the novel's spiritual center, emphasizing her associations with the earth and Mary and her clairvoyance in ultimately recognizing Stavrogin's demonic nature.[18] S. N. Bulgakov stands apart from the mainstream in comparing her to the Sibyl and suggesting that she "does not know Jesus, does not see the face of Christ, and speaks about the Mother of God (*Bogoroditsa*) in a peculiar, cosmic sense."[19] Bulgakov refrains from regarding her as an outright sorceress. Yet it is noteworthy that she engages in the occult practice of fortune-telling and is surrounded by items that village girls wishing to learn about their future husbands used in divination rituals – cards, comb, a mirror, candles.[20] Her family name (Lebiadkina) stems from the Russian word for swan (*lebed'*) and embeds the standard metaphor for the bride of the folk wedding. The fiancé whose identity she tests is Stavrogin. The *Notebooks* make this explicit when she tells Shatov that the "Prince" gave her a gold ring and told her to look at the sunset as she was going to bed and he would appear to her in her dreams (11: 255).[21]

Maria's name is a verbal echo of Maria the White Swan (*Mar'ia lebed'-belaia*), a prominent sorceress of the folk epic. Even the attributive "White" is captured by the repeated mention that Maria Timofeevna powders herself (*belit'sia*). Maria the White Swan appears in *byliny* about Mikhailo Potyk, which Dostoevsky would have known from P. N. Rybnikov's collection of epic songs.[22] The linkage to primitive rites of Mother Earth and reflections of the struggle between Christian Kiev and the pagan peripheries of Rus in her portrayal probably caught the writer's eye. In the *bylina*, instead of shooting the swan, the hero Potyk takes her to Kiev, baptizes her, and marries her. Then, when she dies, he enters her tomb deep within the earth, kills a snake, sends its mother for living water, and resurrects her.[23] But unsteady in her commitment to her husband and the Christian faith, Maria the White Swan abandons Mikhailo and goes off with an "infidel" Lithuanian. When Mikhailo attempts to "rescue" her, she poisons him and imprisons him in a stone. The name "Maria Lebiadkina" might then be construed as embedding the question of the Russian's people's steadfastness to their baptism and their ability to resist the seduction of the West.

Turning from the ambiguous imagery accompanying Maria to the person herself, one encounters a lame and feeble-minded woman who is the victim of her brother's beatings. But her gentle gray eyes betray a spiritual

depth that shines through her powder and rouge, and she conveys an aura of peacefulness and joy to the narrator (10: 114). Semen Yakovlevich, like Maria, exhibits the bizarre behavior of a holy fool, but he lacks any hint of mildness.[24] His religiosity turns on crude, enigmatic utterances and outlandish acts, including chasing guests away with a broom. The search for unusual entertainment on the part of Peter's companions serves as the pretext for introducing him into the narrative. They encounter a cross-section of reverent devotees visiting the "prophet," mostly peasants, though a fat merchant and a few members of the nobility are also there; several servants attend him, and a portly monk gathers the offerings of money for his monastery. Peter's group scoffs at the fool and, whispering, giggling, and shoving the *narod* aside, rudely stares at him through lorgnettes, a pincenez, and opera glasses; one lady provocatively asks him to say something to her (10: 257). Parfeny's sketch of Moscow's famous holy fool Ivan Yakovlevich Koreisha serves as the likely source for Semen Yakovlevich's portrait, but *The Devils* radically alters Parfeny's narrative perspective.[25] Parfeny considers Koreisha a saintly man and turns to him for a prediction about his forthcoming journey to Mount Athos.[26] Dostoevsky adopts a satirical stance; for him the fool can represent only bogus holiness because he lacks compassion.

Semen Yakovlevich is a puzzling figure and seems superfluous in *The Devils*. Unlike Maria Timofeevna, he has no role in the plot. If Dostoevsky had published the novel as he originally planned, Bishop Tikhon would have offered an enlightened spirituality to balance the darker side of folk religion and the antics of Semen Yakovlevich. Stavrogin was to visit the bishop with a written confession describing how he seduced a fourteen-year-old girl who later committed suicide, but Katkov found the chapter offensive and rejected it. Ever since the deleted chapter gained the attention of the scholarly world with its publication in 1922, opinion has been divided over its relation to the canonical text.[27] Dostoevsky did not attempt to reintroduce it in a separate edition of *The Devils*, perhaps in part because he came to believe that Tikhon tipped the scales too far in favor of normative Orthodoxy while his novel required emphasis precisely on the cruder side of popular religion. Without Tikhon, the rationalism and crass materialism of the radicals collide not with a gentle spirituality of selfless love as in *Crime and Punishment*, but with popular superstition at the point where it touches pre-Christianity. The scene with Semen Yakovlevich highlights this confrontation between nihilism and the murky religious underside of the *narod*. Both Peter's insensitive set, which correctly perceives that the fool is a fraud, and the "faithful" people, who cannot distinguish between

true holiness and pure eccentricity, deviate from the Christian norm. This absence of authentic spirituality fosters the hysterical antics of the fool's cell and creates an opening for the demonic.

Dostoevsky offers another deformation of popular religion in Fedka, who redefines kindness (*milost'*) to signify the payment he receives for crime (10: 204–05).[28] A fugitive from forced labor, Fedka harks back to the world of the Dead House: he murders and steals, even from the Church, and at the same time he is a fervent believer who spends his nights reading the Apocalypse. Peter tries to convince him that he is the victim of Stepan Trofimovich's injustice (10: 204), and a young radical at the fête intimates that Fedka would not be terrorizing the local population if his master had not lost him at cards (10: 373). But Fedka senses falseness in the idea that external circumstances prompted him to violence, and he despises Peter for his atheism and narrowness of vision. As he tells Stavrogin, "If that one [Peter] says about a person that he's a scoundrel, then he doesn't know anything else about him except that he's a scoundrel. And if he says about a person that he's a fool, then there is no other name for that person but fool. But just maybe I'm a fool on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, but on Thursday I'm smarter than he is" (10: 205). Fedka unwittingly rejects the nihilists' deterministic model of the human person and leaves open the possibility of change.[29] This becomes even clearer in a legend he recounts after Peter ridicules him for stealing from a church:

> You know that according to the books once long-long ago there lived a certain merchant who with exactly the same tearful sighing and prayer stole a pearl from the halo of the Mother of God and then in front of all the people and bowing on his knees placed the entire sum back at the foot of the statue. And the Mother-Intercessor, in front of all the people, covered him with her shroud so that then a miracle happened on account of this and the authorities ordered it all to be written down just the way it happened in the official books.[30] (10: 428)

Despite his crimes, Fedka believes that he too will find forgiveness. Interestingly, the deviant nature of Fedka's and Maria Timofeevna's spirituality by no means precludes insights about the mercy of God or the sanctity of the earth. But both are prone to misjudgment, for, much like the crowd that proclaims Semen Yakovlevich a prophet, they imbue Stavrogin with an aura of sanctity. Fedka may see through Peter, but he tells Stavrogin that in his presence he feels as if he were standing "before the true God" (*pred Istinnym*, 10: 205). Maria Timofeevna faithfully awaits her "bridegroom" for almost five years and as he enters his mother's drawing room, she gazes at him with rapture and begs to go down on her knees before him (10: 146).

The dominance of Maria, Fedka, and Semen Yakovlevich in the novel's spiritual world raises the specter that the people might accept false teaching and leadership. Several public scenes also touch on these questions. Workers gather in front of Governor von Lembke's house to protest their unfair treatment; motley crowds congregate in the town square after an icon has been defiled and in front of the house where the Lebiadkins were murdered. Dostoevsky purposely renders these scenes perplexing by having his chatty narrator enhance his description with conjecture, gossip and apology.

The governor orders the local Shpigulin factory cleaned up because it is festering with cholera. But the owners close it, their manager cheats the men of their pay, and the police turn a deaf ear to the plight of the workers. Peter hopes to recruit adherents among the distraught Shpigulins. He tells Stavrogin that some of the workers have knowledge of the *Internationale* (10: 180) and convinces von Lembke that the political posters discovered in the factory signal rebellion (10: 272–73).[31] When about seventy of the Shpigulin men march to the governor's house to discuss their grievances, von Lembke, now on the brink of insanity, mistakes them for insurgents and orders them whipped.[32] The narrator, arriving toward the end of the affair, speculates that the Shpigulins intended to engage in the ancient Russian custom of "having a chat with the general himself"; he also remarks that some townspeople thought that they were rabble-rousers or even politically subversive (10: 337). On balance, the episode creates the impression that despite their wretched conditions the workers did not comprehend the program of the radicals.[33] It also highlights the suspiciousness toward the *narod* of the authorities, who rush to blame the Shpigulins when fire breaks out during the fête. But we cannot be quite sure what it says about the people's political ideas, for the information we receive is sporadic and intermingled with guesswork and rumor.[34]

Peter encourages malicious amusements among the group of young people frequenting Yulia von Lembke's drawing room, and their antics perplex the townspeople and constitute a palpable expression of the novel's deviltry.[35] When Fedka and Liamshin collaborate in desecrating the ancient icon of the Church of the Birth of the Mother of God, about a hundred stupefied onlookers throng the square, reverencing the image and contributing money for its restoration. The *narod* remains quiet and restrained, though a muffled grumble escapes when two pranksters from Peter's circle, laughing and not removing their hats, approach the icon and throw a few copper kopecks into the collection dish. At that moment Liza gallops up and, indignant at the behavior of the two men, bows deeply before the image

and gives her diamond earrings as an offering. The *narod*, we are told, is silent, showing neither approval nor reproach (10: 254).

But several days later the crowd's subdued tension erupts and a mob beats Liza to death in front of the half-burnt house where the Lebiadkins were murdered. The people blame these deaths on Stavrogin, who made his marriage public the day before, and they view Liza as "Stavrogin's woman" (*stavroginskaia*, 413). Watching from afar, the narrator admits that he can give only imprecise information, but insists that the majority of the crowd was quiet. At the same time, he says that Liza was struck several times and her cousin Mavriky was held back so that he could not reach her. We cannot be sure just who or how many from the crowd participated. But the novel hints that her death resulted from a struggle between an overpowering demonic force and a kindly protective one. When Stavrogin does nothing to prevent Liza from leaving Skvoreshniki after she learns about the murder of the Lebiadkins, Aleksey Egorovich, frightened and almost in tears, almost convinces her to wait for a carriage. But Peter dismisses the old servant on the pretext that Stavrogin wants tea and accompanies Liza himself (10: 408–09). She then flees from him and runs to the murder scene.

The novel offers glimpses of quiet spirituality, yet its accent on Maria, Fedka, and Semen Yakovlevich creates the impression that the main religious sentiments of the *narod* hinge on superstition and sensationalism. Even so, the people will not tolerate blatant violations of the moral order, and while the political program of the nihilists may baffle them, the defilement of an icon deeply upsets them and the murder of the Lebiadkins incites some of them to violence. The popular world of *The Devils* is, by and large, primitive and in need of enlightenment. Into this world Dostoevsky brings Stavrogin.

STAVROGIN AND THE FOLK TRADITION

Peter stands at the center of the day-to-day turmoil of *The Devils*. But Stavrogin occupies the novel's philosophical core. Though he speaks a good deal in the *Notebooks* and offers Tikhon his written confession in the deleted chapter, in the work as we have it he is silent and passive. Dostoevsky veils him in conjecture and rumor, and a good deal of his mystique hinges on the lack of hard evidence about him. Details of his past have filtered back to the novel's provincial town through hearsay; they pique the reader's curiosity by their oddity, yet it is impossible to verify what happened. We hear of duels, escapades among the dregs of Petersburg, bizarre pranks that Stavrogin engaged in on his return home four years earlier, and wanderings

through Europe, Egypt, Jerusalem, and Iceland. Yet we are hard pressed to draw any firm connection between these sketchy markers in his biography and the person himself.[36]

While Stavrogin remains elusive, other characters remind us of bits and pieces of his past. The pre-history of Stepan Trofimovich includes references to Stavrogin as a quiet, pensive child; Maria Timofeevna and her brother Captain Lebiadkin evoke his Petersburg period; Peter his half-hearted European radicalism; Shatov and Kirillov his former ideological queries; and Dasha, Liza, and Marie Shatova his amorous adventures.[37] Intrigued by Stavrogin, these characters look to him with expectation and project multiple, sometimes contradictory, identities on him: Shakespeare's Prince Hal and Hamlet, Lermontov's Pechorin, the Decembrist L, a beast with its claws out, a wise serpent, an oddball, a bridegroom, the sectarian "Ivan" Filippovich, a merciful gentleman, a knight, a vampire, Grishka Otrepev, Stenka Razin, Ivan Tsarevich, a falcon, an owl, a prince (*kniaz'*), a shopkeeper, the last nobleman's son (*poslednii barich*), a wonder-worker, a handsome man (*krasavets*), an idol, the true God (*Istinnyi*).[38] This glut of comparisons creates the impression that Stavrogin can be all things to all people, and the multiplicity of rôles foisted upon him partly explains the mask-like quality of his face on an earlier visit to the novel's town.

But when Stavrogin slips into his mother's drawing room behind Peter at the beginning of the action proper, the narrator remarks that his face no longer resembles a mask. Stavrogin has now decided to "play himself." Looking into his room eight days later Varvara Petrovna has a horrifying glimpse of this Stavrogin:

> It rather amazed her that Nicolas could fall asleep so quickly and that he could sleep that way, straight up and so motionlessly. It was even almost impossible to notice any breathing. His face was pale and severe, but as if completely frozen, immovable. His brows were a little knitted and formed a frown; he decidedly resembled a soulless, wax figure. She stood over him for about three minutes, barely taking a breath, and suddenly fear seized her. (10: 182)

The above passage shows the only Stavrogin we have in the novel proper if one accepts that the deleted chapter does not belong in the canonical text. In his true hypostasis, Stavrogin is a metaphysical void, nonbeing.[39]

Dostoevsky constructs his novel around this void. He generates a good deal of conjecture about Stavrogin before his formal entry into the novel and then continues to saturate the text with rôles others envision for him. This creates the feeling that Stavrogin is about to reveal his true identity

and, perhaps, claim his exalted destiny. The people around him fail to see who he really is partly because they view him through the prism of their own dreams and partly because of the deceptive nature of the evil he embodies. The novel gradually exposes his emptiness by collapsing the identities projected upon him and revealing his incapacity for action, his impotence.

The references suggesting Stavrogin's potential relationship to the *narod* are clustered around his dealings with Peter and Maria Lebiadkina.[40] Unlike many others, these references occur mostly in the novelistic present and are integral to the development of the action. They include mentions of heroes and anti-heroes that envision Stavrogin both as a deliverer of the people and a false leader, and they evoke historical crises against which to evaluate contemporary nihilism. A number of these references embed the political-religious ideals of the people, while others draw on the ideas of the radical left about how to win their support. Besides probing potential identities for Stavrogin, these references suggest the propensity of the *narod* to flock to false, sectarian prophets, join in bloodthirsty uprisings, and mistake a pretender for the true tsar of Russia.

Peter knows that the success of his uprising depends less on political pamphlets than on appealing to the *narod*, and he plans to manipulate cherished beliefs about a ruler in hiding who will emerge to save his people.[41] To illustrate the rôle he wishes Stavrogin to assume, he adduces the fairy-tale hero Ivan Tsarevich, the Cossack rebel Stenka Razin, and the sectarian leader "Ivan Filippovich." Mention of Stenka Razin first occurs when Stavrogin tells Shatov that Peter counts on him to play the part of Razin in his revolutionary schemes because of his aptitude for crime (10: 201). Later Peter alludes to a Volga bandit song: "We'll get in a boat, oars of maple and silken sails, maiden at the helm – our light Lizaveta Nikolaevna" (10: 299). For Dostoevsky, the Cossack leader symbolized a latent inclination toward bloodshed among a segment of the *narod*, and several years earlier in *Notes from the Underground* he had likened him to Attila (5: 112). Throughout *The Devils* the fear of violent retribution from the *narod* forms an undercurrent in the thinking of the upper classes. At the time of the Emancipation, Stepan Trofimovich recited a ditty encapsulating this anxiety: "The peasants are coming; they are carrying axes. Something terrible will happen" (*Idut muzhiki, nesut topory, cho-to strashnoe budet*, 10: 31).

Among Russian revolutionaries, the name "Stenka Razin" enjoyed widespread propaganda appeal. Article 25 of the *Revolutionary Catechism*, a collaborative effort of Nechaev and Mikhail Bakunin, states: "We must ally ourselves with the doughty world of brigands, who in Russia are the only

real revolutionaries."[42] Bakunin had described the anticipated revolution as a replay of the "times of Stenka Razin," though for him the Cossack leader would now acquire the collective face of the rebelling people rather than of a single hero.[43] The radicals looked to spring 1870, which marked the two-hundredth anniversary of the Razin uprising and the hundredth anniversary of the uprising led by the Cossack Emelian Pugachev, as the likely date of a massive popular revolt. Dostoevsky, living in western Europe and following the development of émigré radical thought, surely must have been aware of this timetable. An entry in the *Notebooks* to *The Devils* describes one of the activities of the group surrounding Peter (Nechaev) as "the intensification of villainies, crimes, and suicides to shake the popular spirit, to inspire disbelief in the firmness of the existing order, and to inspire movement among the Stenka-Razin portion of the simple folk" (11: 278).

The comparison to Razin ties Peter's schemes for Stavrogin to radical thinking. It also catches up Stavrogin's capacity for both evil and heroic deeds. Similar ambiguity surrounds Stenka Razin in popular narratives. He is a villain excommunicated by the Church, rejected by Mother Earth, and doomed to haunt the living as a quasi-demonic being. At the same time, he is a champion of freedom who, the people believed, had not truly perished, but was in hiding and would return to assume his rightful leadership.[44] Peter (Nechaev) plays on the latter belief in the *Notebooks* when he says that in order to win over the peasants, "We shall shout that Stepan Timofeevich [Razin] has risen and is the bearer of new freedom" (11: 146).

Shortly after alluding to Stenka Razin, Peter reveals his true intention to Stavrogin:

> "We'll unleash fires . . . We'll spread legends . . . Well, and a time of troubles (*smuta*) will begin! There'll be an upheaval such as the world has not yet seen . . . Fog will spread over Rus and the earth will cry out for its old gods. Well, and then we shall release you know who."
>
> "Who?"
>
> "Ivan Tsarevich."
>
> "Whoo?"
>
> "Ivan Tsarevich! You, you!"
>
> Stavrogin thought for a moment.
>
> "An impostor?" he suddenly asked, looking with profound amazement at the frenzied man. "Ah! So that after all is your plan."
>
> "We'll say that 'he is in hiding'," Verkhovensky uttered quietly, in a sort of amorous whisper, as if he were really drunk. "Do you know what this little phrase means: 'He is in hiding'? But he will appear, will appear. We'll spread a legend that is better than the Castrates'. He exists, but no one has seen him. Oh! What a legend it's possible to spread!". . .

"Then you are seriously counting on me?" smirked Stavrogin spitefully.

"Why are you laughing, and so spitefully? . . . He exists, but no one has seen him, he is in hiding. And do you know, that it is even possible, for example, to show you to one person in a hundred thousand. And it will go out through all the earth 'We've seen him. We've seen him.' And they saw Ivan Filippovich the God of Hosts as he ascended to heaven in a chariot before people, with 'their very own' eyes they saw him. And you aren't Ivan Filippovich; you are beautiful, proud, like a god, seeking nothing for yourself, with the aura of sacrifice, 'in hiding.' The main thing is the legend." (10: 325–26)

Peter envisions an exalted position for Stavrogin and grovels before him. But Stavrogin is noncommittal. When Peter mentions Ivan Tsarevich, Stavrogin supplies the term "impostor," no doubt recalling that Maria Lebiadkina had termed him "Grishka Otrepev" at their last meeting (10: 219). Unlike the other designations, Ivan Tsarevich seems generic and morally neutral. It likens Stavrogin to the passive hero of magic tales who travels to a distant kingdom and performs a great feat, often the rescue or disenchantment of a captive maiden. Commentators sometimes view Maria Lebiadkina as a fairy-tale heroine awaiting her savior/husband since her deformity suggests enchantment.[45]

The name "Ivan Filippovich" combines that of Danilo Filippovich, the founder of the heretical sect of Flagellants (*khlysty*), and his successor Ivan Timofeevich Suslov.[46] Both leaders were believed to be manifestations of God on earth and had sizeable followings. According to a legend prominent among the Flagellants, the Lord of Hosts descended from heaven onto the hill Gorodina and entered Danilo Filippovich, who thenceforth was regarded as a living God. Later Danilo Filippovich summoned Ivan Timofeevich Suslov to Kostroma and allegedly took him up to heaven with him for three days in the presence of witnesses.[47] Dostoevsky seems to have regarded Stenka Razin and Danilo Filippovich as kindred spirits. In the notes for his *Life of a Great Sinner* of January 1870 he mentions both as fundamental Russian types who are unconsciously agitated by an elemental inner power that arises within the *narod* during difficult periods (9: 128). The radicals likewise perceived a connection between the bandit element of the populace and religious dissenters, both of whom they hoped to attract to a wide-scale uprising. They directed propaganda efforts toward Old Believers and sectarians, reasoning that since these groups were persecuted as heretics, they would sympathize with the revolutionary cause.[48]

Stavrogin's linkage to religious sects is one of the leitmotifs running through the text. Earlier in the novel Peter remarks that Stavrogin looks

green and notes the presence of Castrates in the area (10: 180). After Stavrogin's night with Liza, Peter mockingly comments, "What sort of love boat are you; you're just an old, worn out, wooden hulk for scrap" (*Kakaia vy "lad'ia", staraia vy, dyriavaia drovianaia barka na slom*, 10: 408). His use of "boat" as a codeword for Stavrogin's impotence both debunks Stavrogin as a true hero within the Volga bandit tradition and hints at the sectarian tradition of designating local churches "boats" (*korabli*).[49] Shades of sectarianism attend Maria Timofeevna as well and constitute another of her associations with aberrant impulses among the *narod*. She shares a patronymic with both Ivan Suslov and Stenka Razin ("Timofeevna"). Along with Shatov, Kirillov, and Fedka, she lives on "Epiphany" Street (Bogoiavlenskaia) in the house of Filippov. Richard Peace believes that this designation echoes the name Danilo Filippovich and suggests that Maria may be a sectarian Madonna.[50] Her first name and her virginity reinforce his suspicion and complement insinuations that connect Stavrogin with the Castrates.[51]

Some commentators believe that royal imposture is the key to Stavrogin and that Maria exercises the prophetic power of a holy fool in terming him "Grishka Otrepev" at their final meeting.[52] Virtually all the Russian people regarded the unfrocked monk Grishka Otrepev as perfidious and demonic. He betrayed their deepest political and spiritual ideals in claiming to be their anointed tsar and in abandoning Orthodoxy and seeking the support of Catholic Poland [Lithuania]. Textual evidence for accepting Stavrogin as a latter-day impostor is compelling. The stormy hiatus between the end of the Rurikid dynasty and the election of Michael Romanov (1598–1613) during which Grishka Otrepev briefly gained the Russian throne was known as the "Time of Troubles" (*Smuta*, *Smutnoe vremia*). Peter claims that he will unleash a new "time of troubles," and the narrator several times refers to the events of the novel as a "time of troubles" (*smutnoe vremia*, 10: 354). Even so, Maria's pronouncement signifies not so much a correct identification of Stavrogin as her own liberation from the demonic possession that marriage to him implies.[53] Her cry "Grishka Otrepev. Anathema!" occurs at the end of nearly five years of waiting and yearning for her bridegroom (referred to by the folk designations "falcon" and "prince"). Before their last meeting, she seems to view Stavrogin as an exalted being: she bows down to his mother at the cathedral doors and greets his appearance with a look of ecstasy. In these scenes, far from equating him with the most despised personage in the popular imagination, she embodies the *narod*'s yearning for a deliverer.

Dostoevsky gives Stavrogin good looks, charm, intelligence, breeding, and superior strength, and though something has gone drastically awry, his potential to have become a champion for the Russian people seems real. To a considerable extent, Stavrogin crosses over into *The Devils* from the unwritten *Atheism* and *The Life of A Great Sinner*, where the novelist planned to chart the spiritual peregrinations of a westernized Russian through social and political radicalism, atheism, Orthodox monasticism, Catholicism of a Polish and Jesuit stamp, and Russian sectarianism until he at last "finds both Christ and the Russian land, the Russian Christ and the Russian God" (28, 2: 329).[54] Stavrogin's finished portrait retains hagiographic motifs. Vyacheslav Ivanov believes that Dostoevsky's hero betrayed a call to saintliness "at some decisive moment of his half-hidden and terrible past," and Václav Černý senses that Stavrogin represents "a saint in reverse."[55] Inverted saintliness in Stavrogin's characterization relates to a specific model – the *narod*'s beloved Nicholas the Wonderworker, whose name he bears.[56] As the ideal of a true leader whose hallmarks are compassion and zealousness for Orthodoxy, St. Nicholas contrasts sharply with the apostate Grishka Otrepev, the heretic Danilo Filippovich, and the bloodthirsty Razin.

The Russian people believed that in times of crisis Nicholas the Wonderworker rose up to save his people. Captivated by his warm-heartedness and readiness to come to their assistance, they termed him "Nicholas the Merciful" (*Milostivyi*) and "second savior."[57] Legends illustrate his benevolence by juxtaposing him to the punitive Elijah the Prophet or Cassian "The Unmerciful" (*Nemilostivyi*); even when offended, often by a greedy priest who desecrates his icon, Nicholas forgives without punishment.[58] Folk narratives rank the saint next to Christ and the Mother of God, and popular belief underscores his closeness to Mother Earth.[59] In some spiritual songs, devotion to Nicholas serves as a test of faith. One encounters such lines as "He believed in the holy faith / And in Mikolka [Nicholas] the Wonderworker" and "Mikolka the Wonderworker is as strong as God / He is a helper to all the saints."[60]

St. Nicholas was on Dostoevsky's mind at the time he was writing *The Devils*. In the letter to Maikov expounding on the theme of his novel, he remarks: "You write me a lot about Nicholas the Wonderworker. He will not abandon us because Nicholas the Wonderworker is Russian spirit and Russian unity" (29, 1: 144–45). The writer is responding to Maikov's letter of September 23, 1870 that notes the saint in conjunction with their common idea of the historic mission of Russia and such current European events as German victory in the Franco-Prussian War, the establishment of the

Paris Commune, and the Vatican Council's pronouncement about papal infallibility:

> My God! Empires fall, republics are proclaimed, the infallibility of a certain mortal being is proclaimed, and an empire is rising up created by the Protestant God . . . where is our Nicholas the Wonderworker – what is he thinking about, it can't be that he is sleeping at a time when the political and Protestant Gods are working – it can't be that he won't labor for us according to his old custom . . . I still believe that in spite of all evident dullness and stupidity, Mikola knows his business . . . he is looking at the feats of the Protestant God with a smile . . . looking and thinking, "Our business is yet to come (*vperedi*)."[61]

Maikov's letter replicates the sentiments of the *narod* about St. Nicholas.

The mostly legendary *Life* places Nicholas the Wonderworker in the turbulent fourth century when Christianity had just become the official religion of the Roman Empire. Many citizens retained vestiges of paganism and controversy concerning the nature of Christ rocked the Church. St. Nicholas was to be "a new sun rising over the earth and promising consolation to the sorrowful," and though he longed to remain in a monastery after visiting Jerusalem, he heard a voice telling him he must serve the people.[62] Nicholas proceeded to the cathedral of Myra, where he was recognized as God's anointed leader. As bishop he performed deeds of mercy, protected the destitute and innocently accused, and shared the tribulations of his people, even spending time with them in a dungeon during persecution. The *Life* presents him as a fierce opponent of heresy. He struck Arius on the cheek for denying that Christ was truly God at the First Ecumenical Council, for which the Church Fathers wished to strip him of his rank. But the more worthy of them were granted a vision of Christ with the Gospels and Mary with an omophorion and understood that Nicholas was acting as a divine agent.

Dostoevsky integrates a number of the saint's traits into Stavrogin's depiction, but subverts their meaning. Skewed associations with Christ and the Mother of God are suggested by his family name, which comes from the Greek word for cross (*stavros*), and his amorous adventures with several "Marys" (Maria Lebiadkina, Shatov's wife "Marie," and, in the omitted chapter, the child Matresha). Like his patron saint, Stavrogin has performed seeming works of charity: he sent Shatov and Kirillov the return fare from America, and he supports Maria and her brother. Varvara Petrovna, reacting to Peter's banter about her son's kindness toward Maria, calls his deed "something saintly" (*nechto sviatoe*, 10: 151). Stavrogin has been to Jerusalem and, it seems, has spent time in monasteries. In the deleted chapter he tells

Bishop Tikhon that he stood through an all-night service on Mount Athos (11: 20). Fedka, trusting that Stavrogin will compensate him generously for murdering the Lebiadkins, applies the attributive "merciful" (*milostivyi*) to him (10: 204–05), and Shatov, Lebiadkin, and Peter call him their "sun" (10: 193, 210, 324).

The novel's most specific references to St. Nicholas frame Stavrogin's final visit to Maria Lebiadkina. As he enters her room, her brother muses, "True, with such a wonderworker (*chudotvorets*) anything can happen; he lives to bring harm to people" (10: 214). Lebiadkin unwittingly recasts the kindly saint as an evildoer. Running from Maria's shouts of "Grishka Otrepev," Stavrogin encounters Fedka, who tells him he has stolen a pyx, a censor, and the chin piece from the icon of St. Nicholas. The chin piece, he notes, was not real silver, but plate – perhaps implying that Stavrogin too has failed to become the genuine thing.

Allusion to the *Life* of St. Nicholas clarifies two especially puzzling scenes in the novel. Maria's bow to Varvara Petrovna outside the cathedral seems to echo the scene in which St. Nicholas is recognized as God's chosen one at the gates of the cathedral of Myra, and Shatov's blow seems to replicate the striking of Arius at the Council of Nicaea. In *The Devils*, as in the *Life*, these episodes touch on the hero's identity and on heresy. But, in the novel, the meaning of the *Life* is inverted and Stavrogin is dislodged from the position of champion of the faith. The active roles fall not to Stavrogin, who is absent in the first scene and motionless in the second, but to Maria, who wishes to acclaim him as her "bridegroom/prince," and to Shatov, who hopes Stavrogin will embrace the cause of the "God-bearing" Russian people (10: 201). Maria's journey to the cathedral follows on her divinations portending the advent of her bridegroom. The *Notebooks* suggest that she functions as a holy fool in pointing to a secret in the Stavrogin household (11: 258), and her riddle-like response to Varvara Petrovna hints at her concealed marriage:

"Are you Miss Lebiadkina, My dear?"
"No, I'm not Lebiadkina."
"Then perhaps your brother is Lebiadkin?"
"My brother is Lebiadkin." (10: 125)

Varvara Petrovna takes Maria to her magnificent town house and Stavrogin arrives shortly afterward. It is at this juncture that the narrator slips in the telling detail that his face no longer resembles a mask (10: 145), a signal that he has appeared in his true guise. He chooses not to claim Maria as his wife when Varvara Petrovna bluntly asks if he is married to her. Instead, he walks

up to Maria, who gazes at him rapturously, and is about to lead her from the room when she steps on her shorter leg and almost falls. Disturbed, she limps out of the room hanging on Stavrogin's arm (10: 147). He takes her home and when he returns, Shatov gives him a stunning blow on the face.

Maria's and Shatov's responses to Stavrogin in the above scene receive some elucidation when, after a week's convalescence, he visits them. Shatov explains that he struck him not on account of his wife or his sister, both of whom Stavrogin seduced, but because of Maria (10: 191). On realizing that Stavrogin was, in fact, married to Maria, Shatov had glimpsed his mentor's duplicity. In striking him, Shatov emerged as the defender of the sanctity of the *narod* as proclaimed in the credo he acquired from Stavrogin and symbolized by Maria. For his part, Stavrogin, though bearing the name of Russia's favorite saint, is guilty of a "fall" and "lie" and functions similarly to the heretic Arius (10: 191).[63] Interestingly, early drafts for the blow show Stavrogin striking Shatov (11: 122, 123); but once the "Prince" of the *Notebooks* evolved into the impassive demonic being of the final text, a reversal was inevitable.

Maria's elated look and her urge to kneel before Stavrogin when he appears in his mother's drawing room create the impression that he is the one for whom she has been waiting. However, at their final meeting, she reveals that she sensed he was not her true bridegroom when she stumbled. She tells Stavrogin, "As soon as I saw your mean (*nizkoe*) face when I fell and you picked me up – it was as if a worm had crawled into my heart: it's not him, I thought, not him!" (10: 219). Maria at last comprehends that he cannot be her "falcon" and "prince" because he is utterly without pity.

In *The Devils* the references to Stenka Razin, "Ivan" Filippovich, Grishka Otrepev, and St. Nicholas create a framework against which to view the nihilism of the late 1860s. The first three evoke seventeenth-century crises that shook the foundations of Russian social-religious order – peasant revolts, heresies, and royal imposture. The allusion to Nicholas the Wonderworker points to the period in the early Church when false teaching threatened to undermine Christianity. In these troubled eras, the Orthodox people needed a true champion (St. Nicholas) instead of false ones (Razin, "Ivan" Filippovich, Grishka Otrepev).

But when we turn from the political and religious implications of the imagery to the actual nature of Dostoevsky's hero, it becomes clear that none of these comparisons unlocks the mystery of Stavrogin's identity. The names Stenka Razin, Ivan Tsarevich, "Ivan" Filippovich, and Grishka Otrepev, all designations foisted on him from the outside, indicate that those who use them have grasped something of his unusual charisma.

They create fields of possibilities around Stavrogin that indicate who he might have become. But they do not tell us who he is. The comparison to St. Nicholas differs from the others in envisioning a positive role for Stavrogin and anchoring his "vocation" within his person rather than in someone else's dreams for him. But clearly he has not fulfilled the call of his baptismal name to bring consolation and Orthodox teaching to the *narod*. In any case, the Stavrogin who enters his mother's drawing room at the beginning of the action proper is simply not interested in being a popular leader or another St. Nicholas.

To see who he truly is we need to move from the symbolic implications of the imagery accompanying him to the world of day-to-day reality and consider traits so obvious that they pale before the evocative comparisons implying his extraordinary calling: his silence, limpness (*vialost'*), and indifference (*ravnodushie*). The Stavrogin of the novel proper is incapable of feeling strongly about anything or anyone. He is the only person who can prevent disaster from erupting. He alone understands that Peter intends to have the Lebiadkins murdered and to kill Shatov and use Kirillov's suicide as a cover. But, though he warns Shatov, he does it with yawns and an air of indifference. To Shatov's cry that he cannot tear Stavrogin from his heart, the latter coolly responds, "I'm sorry that I cannot love you" (10: 202). On the way to Maria's, he tells Fedka that he will not give him money. On the way back, however, he flings his purse at him, not fully intending to murder her, yet aware that his action effectively commissions her murder. When Peter brings Liza to him, he accepts her, knowing he does not love her; and then he does not keep her from running off into the rain and, as he surely must know, toward the charred house of his murdered wife. He subsequently disappears, destroying Peter's plan to use him as a popular leader. Stavrogin's limpness and indifference to everything and everyone signify that he, the crowning achievement in Dostoevsky's creation of a strong-willed, self-sufficient individual, has become incapable of passion or compassion. In placing him beyond human feeling, Dostoevsky has placed him beyond life. He is a walking corpse.

"AND ON HIS SHIELD IN BLOOD / HE WROTE: *AVE, MATER DEI*"

A. S. Pushkin, "The Poor Knight"

But this dark and bloody novel is not without a positive religious ideal. It is not the Christ-centered spirituality of Sonia Marmeladova and Father Zosima. Yet Christological questions were on Dostoevsky's mind during

the writing of *The Devils*, and the *Notebooks* attest that the writer intended to incorporate a statement about Christ's Godhood as the sine qua non of faith (e.g., 11: 178, 187–88). In the published text, which moves away from normative Christianity, references to Christ often smack of heterodoxy. Thus St. Nicholas's blow to Arius for denying Christ's divinity is reconstituted as the champion of the people Shatov striking the failed saint. At the same time, Shatov's lengthy diatribe expounding the creed he received from Stavrogin and terming the people "God-bearing" fails to mention Christ's moral beauty.[64] Kirillov lights a lamp before the icon of Christ and, as Peter observes, "believes more than a priest" (10: 471). But he forces himself to deny God's existence and commits suicide to save humankind from the fear of death and demonstrate how to become "god." Stepan Trofimovich has not read the bible in over thirty years and only recalls a few passages from Renan's *Life of Jesus*, an "Arian" work that regards Christ as not fully divine. Yet he tells Sofia Matveevna that he will correct mistakes in the Gospels for her (10: 487, 491).

Within the cosmos of *The Devils* the image of a divine and transcendent Christ yields to the image of the Mother of God intermingled with that of Mother Damp Earth, whom the *narod* viewed as holy, pure, revivifying, and incapable of containing anything harmful.[65] The repetition of the name "Mary" for the novel's women and the desecrated icon of the Mother of God are among the more obvious signs that a peculiar Mariology reigns in this text. Other indications include the names of the church and monastery (The Church of the Birth of the Mother of God and the Efimevsky Monastery of the Mother of God), Fedka's mini-legend about the merchant who stole a jewel from the halo of a statue of Mary, and Stepan Trofimovich's veneration of the Sistine Madonna.[66]

In conjunction with the feminine ideal in *The Devils*, Dostoevsky adduces the theme of knight-errantry (*rytsarstvo*), which he had used in *The Idiot* to probe Myshkin's identity. Aglaia alludes to Myshkin's "championing" of Nastasia Filippovna by referring to *Don Quixote* and quoting Pushkin's poem "The Poor Knight" (8: 207–09). The mentions in *The Idiot* are prominent, but ultimately prove unproductive as a key to Myshkin.[67] By contrast, in *The Devils* the references seem casual and insignificant, but encapsulate a pattern of loyalty to the Mother of God/Mother Earth. The medieval knight (*rytsar'*) ventures forth to combat evil; he defends the weak and is a devotee of Mary. The true knight transcends himself in the service of something greater. In *The Devils* the ideal of knight-errantry offers a counter-thrust to the momentum of deviltry and serves as a model for rapprochement between the upper classes and the *narod*.[68] Dedication to

the Russian soil and the Mother of God finds embodiment in love for both the people and a specific woman. Thus, the knight's feat bridges the ideal plane and daily life, or to use Ivanov's famous phrase, the knight journeys *a realioribus ad realia*.[69]

Commentators sometimes note knight-errantry in conjunction with Stepan Trofimovich.[70] In fact, most references in the text concern Stavrogin. Peter tells Varvara Petrovna about Stavrogin's "defense" of Maria Lebiadkina in Petersburg, rhetorically exclaiming, "There was no sort of knightly (*rytsarskii*) indignation in the service of insulted innocence here!" (10: 149). Varvara Petrovna later tells her son that she had heard about a certain person of high feelings who was "chivalrously (*rytsarski*) noble," and Stavrogin retorts, "Chivalrously? (*Rytsarski*) You mean it's come to that?" (10: 156). When Stavrogin enters Maria Timofeevna's room for the last time, she has a songbook, a children's travel book, and a book of knightly stories on her table (*rytsarskie rasskazy*, 214). Liza tells Stavrogin that he answered her public question about his marriage to Maria Lebiadkina in a knightly fashion (*takim rytsarem*, 10: 400).[71]

The figure of the honorable knight in the service of the Eternal Feminine complements the reference to St. Nicholas and represents another potential identity Stavrogin did not assume. Some early drafts to the novel envision the Prince as a champion of Russia who proclaims the mission of Orthodoxy to present the true Christ to the decadent West. The *Notebooks* contain repeated mentions of a great feat (*podvig*) that the Prince seeks to undertake (11: 173, 177). But the Stavrogin of the text is a travesty of the true knight and the term "feat" acquires a warped meaning in relation to him. Shatov on learning that he is a member of Peter's society exclaims, "You, you, Stavrogin, how could you dirty yourself in such shameless, untalented, groveling stupidity! . . . So that's Nikolay Stavrogin's feat (*podvig*)!" (10: 193). Stavrogin's callous treatment of women renders him the novel's prime defiler of the feminine. He married the pathetic, half-demented Maria Timofeevna from "moral voluptuousness" and a perverted sense of aesthetics (10: 202). He seduced Maria [Marie] Shatova, Liza, and Dasha, and he is largely responsible for the deaths of all of them save Dasha. In the deleted chapter, he tells of raping and prompting the suicide of the child Matresha, and in the novel proper Shatov rebukes him for belonging to a society for the perversion of children (10: 201). The desecration of the icon of the Mother of God symbolizes the powerful urge toward the destruction of the feminine on the part of Stavrogin, Peter, and the nihilists. The *narod*, superstitious and prone to false teaching in other matters, stands firm in the face of this offense to Mary.

In the cases of Shatov and Stepan Trofimovich, knight errantry acquires a more positive meaning, for both move toward the people and acquire the capacity to love particular women. Shatov acts in defense of Maria Lebiadkina when he gives Stavrogin a blow in the face, and he follows up on Stavrogin's request to care for her, even visiting her several hours before her death. His devotion to the Russian soil and his concern for Maria prepare him for the emotional impact of his wife Marie's return and the birth of the son she conceived with Stavrogin. Susanne Fusso has demonstrated that Marie Shatov, who is about twenty-five, tall and strongly built, with luxuriant dark-brown hair and large dark eyes, and who carries a traveling bag of "Dresden workmanship," serves as a living embodiment of the Sistine (Dresden) Madonna.[72] The birth takes place on Epiphany Street (*Bogoiavlenskaia*), and for Shatov, who welcomes the wife who wronged him and rejoices at the "the mystery of the appearance of a new being" (10: 452), it represents a manifestation of divine goodness. Now he touches the "living life" (*zhivaia zhizn'*, 10: 442), whose enemies he claims to have cast off when he abandoned his radical ideas, and he moves, symbolically and actually, from the darkness and cold of his tiny room, where he gropes about looking for matches to light a candle, into light and warmth. If only for a moment, as Fusso argues, the Shatovs replicate the Holy Family and the lofty significance of the Sistine Madonna is reclaimed.[73] The arrival of Peter's man Erkel, who takes Shatov to the place where, the reader knows, he will be murdered, heightens the pathos of the scene.

Critics note that the removal of Tikhon burdened Shatov and especially Stepan Trofimovich with the novel's moral ideal.[74] Dostoevsky surely prompts us to consider Stepan Trofimovich as a sort of positive counterpart to Stavrogin by using similar imagery for his final pilgrimage and the latter's visits to Kirillov, Shatov, and Maria Timofeevna.[75] Stavrogin, who, Shatov and Peter hope, will "raise the banner" for their causes, sets forth into the rain, armed with an umbrella, and conditionally blessed by his old servant.[76] Shatov pleads with him to kiss the earth, water it with his tears, and beg forgiveness (10: 202), but of course Stavrogin neither accedes to his pupil's request nor finds pity in his heart for his demented wife who stands as a surrogate for Mother Earth. After the fête Stepan Trofimovich likewise ventures forth into the rain carrying an umbrella, and the narrator speculates that he wishes to raise the banner of a great idea (10: 480). Encountering Liza, who has just run from Stavrogin, he kneels down on the wet earth, and she blesses him and asks him to pray for her (10: 412).

Stepan Verkhovensky's final pilgrimage constitutes a concrete implementation of his idealism of the 1840s when he published the initial part of a

study "on the reasons for the unusual moral nobility of certain knights (*rytsari*) in a certain epoch or something in this vein" (10: 9) and composed his poem about the anti-knight on the black horse.[77] The feeling that he must give battle seizes him following the gathering in Varvara Petrovna's drawing room. It is motivated partly by remorse for treating Dasha dishonorably in saying that marriage to her would be covering someone else's sins and partly by his recognition that his son's shabby ideas represent the distorted ideas of his own generation (10: 238). He resolves to speak at the fête about "the queen of queens, the ideal of humanity, the Sistine Madonna," and then, to set out on the road (10: 265). Dismayed by Varvara Petrovna's brusque treatment and her parroting Peter's ideas, he tells her that he will end "as a knight (*rytsar'*) true to his lady" and misquoting Pushkin's "Poor Knight," he says he will leave "Full of pure love / Faithful to his delightful dream" (10: 266).[78]

His subsequent journey in search of Russia contains significant markers of a religious quest: a blessing, a move into the unfamiliar, meetings with guides and helpers. He sets off not knowing exactly where his path will take him and soon encounters a peasant couple who give him a ride to Khatovo (from *khata*, "a peasant hut") and implant the idea of going on from there to Spasov (from *Spas*, "Savior"). At Khatovo he befriends the bible-seller whose tag name signifies "holy wisdom" (Sofia) and "daughter of [the evangelist] Matthew" (Matveevna). He takes her in his carriage to the lake where they await the steamer to the other side. But Stepan Trofimovich falls ill and is unable to make the crossing to Spasov. Sofia Matveevna remains with him, and then Varvara Petrovna, who discovers where he is from Anisim, abruptly replaces her, and nurses him until he dies.

Over the course of his final journey Stepan Trofimovich worries about Liza; he thinks of Fedka with both fear and the realization that he lost people at cards (10:481); he admits that he is an egoist and a poseur ("J'ai menti toute ma vie," 10: 506); he reads scripture with Sofia Matveevna and, interpreting the parable of the Gadarene swine, acknowledges his own responsibility for Peter's generation: "It's us, us and those, and Petrusha . . . et les autres avec lui, and me, perhaps I am the head of it, and we mad and possessed men shall throw ourselves from the cliff into the sea and we shall all drown" (10: 499); and he confesses his love to Varvara Petrovna ("Je vous aimais toute ma vie . . . vingt ans!" 10: 502). At the same time, he concocts stories for Sofia Matveevna, and after receiving the sacrament, begins to declaim in the manner of the 1840s on the love of God and immortality, causing Varvara Petrovna to ask the priest to remain because her friend is

"the sort of person who will have to go to confession again in an hour" (10: 505). As R. M. Davison remarks, Dostoevsky, a novelist rather than theologian, makes the scene believable by leaving Stepan Trofimovich very much his comic self and shrouding his supposed conversion with a good deal of ambiguity.[79]

At their deaths, Shatov probably does not fully believe in God and Stepan Trofimovich has failed to reach Spasov, where symbolically, Jesus would have cast out his devils.[80] But in their devotion to the feminine ideal both Shatov and Stepan Trofimovich have been true knights. Shatov has championed the *narod* and the Russian soil and Stepan Trofimovich did reach Khatovo and dwell for a time among the very Russian people that he had failed to recognize in Nastasia. Both stepped forth in defense of humiliated womanhood, and both died reconciled to the beloved women of their lives. Like Pushkin's Poor Knight, they "failed to honor the Father, Son and Holy Spirit" (*Nest' mol'by Ottsu, ni Synu / Ni sviatomu Dukhu*); but even so the suggestion remains that the Mother of God will intercede for them as well (*No prechistaia, konechno / Zastupilas' za nego*).[81] Mainline Orthodoxy, as represented by Bishop Tikhon and, symbolically, by Spasov, still resides on the fringes of the novel's cosmos, perhaps as a promise of a Holy Russia where the intelligentsia has placed the benefits it obtained from European contact at the service of the *narod*. But, as the novel ends, this positive development stands only as a vague potential for Russia's future. In the final analysis, the novel's religious vision is light years away from the hope for new life and love with which Raskolnikov's story ends or the promise of resurrection that *The Brothers Karamazov* holds out. *The Devils* reflects the writer's deepest political anxieties and, like *The Idiot*, raises the specter that a void occupies the center of the universe. Our final image of Stavrogin hanging on a soaped rope – a suicide calculated not to fail – bespeaks this darkness.

5

Back in Russia: the face of the people, 1871–1877

In April 1867, Dostoevsky and his young bride Anna Grigorevna left Russia planning to remain abroad for several months. They returned only in July 1871. This extended self-exile was one of the most creative periods in the writer's life. Somehow, in the midst of intense homesickness, epileptic seizures, gambling bouts, financial strains, the death of his first daughter, and the birth of his second, Dostoevsky managed to write *The Idiot* and much of *The Devils*. This period also saw the growth of his messianic dreams for Russia and the deepening of his hostility toward western Europe. In his letters to A. N. Maikov, he accused the Catholic Church of assuming the might of the Roman Empire and distorting the image of Christ; and he spoke of Orthodoxy as the "light from the East" that would regenerate Europe after Russia had asserted "*political supremacy* over the entire Slavic world" (29, 1: 146–47; 28, 2: 260, Dostoevsky's emphasis). His letters of this time display the sharpened acrimony toward the liberal and radical intelligentsia so manifest in *The Devils*. One can probably take the words of Peter Verkhovensky (Nechaev) in the *Notebooks* to *The Devils* as a reflection of the writer's own anxiety about the revolutionary movement: he suspected that its true intent was "to eradicate Christianity in order to begin a new life without God" (11: 106). In the West, Dostoevsky's view of the religious nature of the Russian *narod* became more pronounced, and the expression "God-bearing people" (*narod-bogonosets*, 10: 196) now appeared in his writing. He had come to agree with the ideas he placed in the mouths of Myshkin and Shatov: contact with the people was the sine qua non of Russianness and the severance of the educated classes from the Russian soil amounted to severance from God (10: 202–03).

Back in St. Petersburg, Dostoevsky continued his work on *The Devils* and allied himself with Maikov, N. N. Strakhov, and others on the political right. In 1872 he agreed to edit the ultra conservative weekly *The Citizen* (*Grazhdanin*) published by Prince V. P. Meshchersky. In this post he began to write *The Diary of a Writer* (*Dnevnik pisatelia*) – a series of feuilletons

and short fictions relating mostly to contemporary issues.[1] Dostoevsky elucidated the ideological thrust behind his new journalistic activity in a letter of February 26, 1873 to the historian Mikhail Pogodin: socialism had "gobbled up" a whole generation and one must fight against it because "everything had been infected" (29, 1: 262).[2] The *Diary* reestablished the writer in the public eye and made him a standard-bearer for conservatism and Great Russian nationalism. In 1874 he gave up the editorship of *The Citizen* to work on his novel *The Adolescent* (*Podrostok*, sometimes translated *A Raw Youth*). He resumed publication of the *Diary* as an independent monthly in 1876 and interrupted it again in late 1877 to write *The Brothers Karamazov*.

The Diary of a Writer and *The Adolescent* include memorable portraits of the people and constitute the most important source for Dostoevsky's thinking about them in the mid 1870s. The main representatives of the *narod* in *The Adolescent*, the old pilgrim Makar Dolgoruky and his legal wife Sofia Andreevna, embody the spiritual ideal toward which the writer hoped to guide his young hero Arkady and, by extension, contemporary Russian youth. The *Diary* too includes a number of positive types from the people, yet overall creates the impression that in post-Reform Russia their traditional life and values are in a state of dissolution. Both the *Diary* and the novel give evidence of vacillations and inconsistencies in the writer's anti-nihilist stance.[3] When Dostoevsky first returned from Europe, he viewed all young intellectuals with socialist leanings on the pattern of the radicals of the 1860s.[4] Little by little he came to distinguish Russia's new left, which shared his concern about the desperate plight of the countryside, from the nihilists of the 1860s and to see many of the young people involved with the populist movement (*narodnichestvo*) of the 1870s as rooted in a Christian spirit of self-sacrifice and genuine concern for the *narod*. *The Adolescent* reflects his milder attitude toward the young generation through its rather gentle treatment of the Dergachev conspirators, who were based on the Dolgushin group of populist revolutionaries on trial in July 1874.[5] The writer's decision to publish *The Adolescent* in *Notes of the Fatherland*, the journal of Nikolay Nekrasov, his liberal friend of the 1840s, also bespeaks his willingness to listen to the new generation of reformers.[6] Unfortunately, his rapprochement with Nekrasov struck Maikov and Strakhov as an act of betrayal to the conservative cause.

While abroad, Dostoevsky feared that he was cut off from the "living stream of life" in Russia (29, 1: 115). In fact, neither his extreme anti-nihilism nor his adulation of the *narod* could quite hold out against the raw impact of the social disintegration he encountered on returning home. Though, as

the *Diary* attests, he relied on the conservative faction of society to preserve Christian morality and staunchly supported the monarchy, he sometimes broke with his allies on the right and censured government policy when the wellbeing of the common people was at stake. For Dostoevsky, Russia's development as a great nation was entwined with the moral, social, and intellectual betterment of the people, and he called on the intelligentsia to learn from them and to bring to them the best of what it had acquired through its privileged cultural status (22: 45). He blamed much of the misery and dissoluteness of popular life on rapid industrialization. Many conservatives, however, were reluctant to place curbs on industrial growth or to allocate sufficient funds for land reform.[7] Dostoevsky especially deplored the state's reliance on income from a vodka tax, which, he felt, encouraged drunkenness and debauchery among the people and placed the nation's future in jeopardy.[8] Criticism of government programs was not without danger, as the writer learned when he clashed with censorship over an article faulting the poor handling of relief during a famine in Samara Province.[9]

Dostoevsky strongly disagreed with many on the right about public education. He rejected the notion that education should be for the gentry only as anti-Christian and protested the unfairness of schooling only a tenth of the population: "I don't want to think or live other than with the faith that all our ninety million Russians . . . will all one day be educated, humanized, and happy" (22: 31).[10] Despite his antipathy toward nihilism, Dostoevsky was not always in agreement with his conservative colleagues about measures to stop the dissemination of radical thought. He abhorred censorship of the press, and he objected strongly to Prince Meshchersky's suggestion that some sort of surveillance was needed in student residences.[11] In fact, his association with Meshchersky, who did not scruple to let him spend time in jail for his own breach of censorship regulations, probably helped convince the writer that there were as many scoundrels among the conservative part of Russian society as anywhere else.[12]

Many entries of the *Diary* replicate the documentary style of *Notes from the House of the Dead*, and like the earlier work, voice profound unease about the people's moral state. But Dostoevsky wrote *House of the Dead* without preconceived notions about their holiness. The brutality and heartlessness of the Dead House dismay the narrator, who searches in vain for evidence that an Orthodox upbringing had any positive impact on the conduct of the prisoners. By the 1870s the *narod* had become for Dostoevsky "God-bearing," yet its behavior was hardly better than in the Dead House. In the *Diary*'s vignettes of popular life, the tension between the

Christian ideal that Dostoevsky yearned to see and the overwhelming evidence of debauchery becomes almost palpable. Admitting that the morality of the people in the post-Emancipation period was worse than ever, the writer nonetheless beseeched his readers to consider "the great and holy things" that they yearned for: "Anyone who is a true friend of humanity, whose heart has even once ached for the sufferings of the *narod*, will understand and forgive the whole, still persisting, alluvial grime in which our *narod* is submerged and will be able to espy diamonds in this grime" (22: 43).

The Adolescent, too, creates a picture of discord in Russian life. Much weaker artistically than the other novels of Dostoevsky's mature period, it unfolds through the eyes of the naïve twenty-year-old narrator and hero Arkady Dolgoruky, who is the illegitimate son of the nobleman Versilov and the former house serf Sofia Andreevna.[13] The novel builds the problematic relationship between the *narod* and the upper classes both into Arkady's parentage and into Versilov's vacillation between the gentle Sofia and the beautiful aristocratic widow Katerina Nikolaevna. Arkady has grown up apart from his mother and father, and at the outset of the novel he has come to them in Petersburg hoping to find a guiding idea and true father in Versilov. When Makar Ivanovich, who kept in touch with Sofia after embarking on a pilgrim's life and visits her periodically, returns to her to die, Arkady meets his "legal" father and becomes acquainted with folklore expressing the religious ideals of the *narod*.

This chapter will survey the people of *The Diary of a Writer* and *The Adolescent* in an attempt to better understand the incongruity between Dostoevsky's exalted ideas about them and the corruption that he catalogues. It will first discuss the question of environmentalism that the presentation of popular life in the *Diary* raises. Then it will turn to the individuals Dostoevsky adduces as examples of holiness and to the paradigm of "the great sinner" as a description of the Russian national character.

HAS THE ENVIRONMENT "SWALLOWED UP" THE PEOPLE?

Though Dostoevsky entertained lofty ideas about the people, he did not back away from a vivid description of their vices. The expression "alluvial grime" was not simply a metaphor for him; it signaled the reality of life on the back streets of the capitals and in the post-Reform village. The writer was convinced that the taverns and factories springing up all over Russia facilitated the corruption and impoverishment of the people, and many pages of the *Diary* read like a chronicle of the disintegration of their world.

But while deeply concerned about the circumstances in which the people lived, he vehemently rejected environmentalism, which, as he makes clear in his initial essay (January 1, 1873), he viewed as deterministic and an inevitable complement to atheism. Dostoevsky uses the example of the Decembrists' wives as attestation that human beings are capable of freely choosing good: "They gave up everything: high position, wealth, connections, family; they sacrificed everything for the highest possible moral duty, the freest duty that could possibly be. Innocent of any crime, they endured everything that their condemned husbands endured for twenty-five long years" (21: 12). By contrast, Dostoevsky argues, the critic Belinsky's behaviorist approach to social issues presupposed that the human person was not free to choose between good and evil and would have led him to view the prisoners of the Omsk Stockade as "*unable not* to commit their crimes and, consequently, as right" (21: 12, Dostoevsky's emphasis).

A week later in an essay entitled "The Environment" ("Sreda"), the writer discusses the tendency of the new courts to pardon obvious offenders, questioning whether jurors, many of them former serfs, had succumbed to the environmental theory or whether they still called evil "evil." He begins by orchestrating varying explanations for this leniency: some think that the people want to rub the authorities the wrong way; some attribute their tendency to pardon criminals to compassion and fear of ruining another's life; some to their sense of unworthiness before the rights and duties of citizenship, imposed on them so suddenly and, perhaps, prematurely; and some, no doubt Slavophiles, point to this sense of unworthiness as a token of a future, exalted Christianity (21: 13–15).[14] Dostoevsky seems to approve the understanding that the responsibility of a juror is not a private affair, but a civic duty important in upholding the moral law for the entire nation. Yet he never quite explains the Russian tendency toward leniency. Instead he pontificates:

> Christianity . . . completely acknowledging the pressure of the environment and proclaiming mercy for the person who has sinned, nonetheless sets the person the moral duty of struggling against the environment . . .
>
> By making a person responsible, Christianity also acknowledges that person's freedom. By making a person dependent on every mistake in the social structure, the teaching about the environment brings one to complete impersonality, to complete liberation from any personal moral obligation, from any sort of autonomy, leads one to the most miserable slavery that anyone could imagine. (21: 16)

In the above passage, Dostoevsky states his position in terms of polar opposites. But such formulations are stripped of the flesh of real human acts and are too rigid to accommodate the messiness of everyday life.[15] This

becomes evident when the writer attempts to squeeze his prison experience into this dichotomy. He now revisits two themes prominent in *House of the Dead* – the use of "unfortunate" (*neschastnyi*) for "criminal" and the question of the convicts' remorse. When the people call a criminal "unfortunate," he argues, they are in essence saying, "You have sinned and are suffering, but after all we too are sinful. If we were in your place, we might have done something even worse. If we ourselves were better, perhaps you might not be in prison" (21: 17). Admitting that it would be easy to construe such a view as environmentalist, Dostoevsky nonetheless insists that this would be false, for while calling the criminal "unfortunate," the people do not deny the reality of the crime. What is more, he contends, not one of the "terrible and cruel people" he lived with in the Omsk Stockade ceased to regard himself as a criminal; their scattered remarks and their faces before confession indicated that in their souls they did not consider themselves justified (21: 18–19). Here Dostoevsky alters the balance he created in *House of the Dead* where the prisoners' Lenten observance hinted at the existence of conscience, but by no means negated the overall picture of their moral callousness (4: 177). In the *Diary*, the writer reinterprets the expression he remembers on the prisoners' faces from the perspective of the early 1870s, when he was fresh from his European self-exile, not of 1860–61, when his ideas about the *narod*'s Christianity had not gelled. His argument that his fellow prisoners felt remorse and thereby exhibited the *narod*'s ability to distinguish between good and evil is not convincing.[16]

Dostoevsky's sketches of popular life capture the nuances and inner tensions that elude doctrinaire statements and are more compelling than his rhetoric. Soon after his discussion of the Omsk prisoners, he dramatizes a gruesome instance of wife-beating. The newspapers of the time carried reports about a peasant woman who hanged herself when her appeals to the rural court to restrain her husband proved futile. The writer imagines the following scenario:

> Witnesses testified that he had a cruel character: he would catch a chicken and hang it by its legs, head down, just for pleasure . . . For several years on end he beat his wife with whatever was at hand: ropes, sticks. He'd take out a floorboard, thrust her legs into the opening, squeeze the floorboard back, and just beat her and beat her . . . He also starved her and wouldn't give her any bread for three days. He'd place bread on the shelf, call her and say, "Don't you dare to touch that bread. It's *my* bread!". . . He required her to work, and she fulfilled everything unflinchingly, without a word, in a frightened manner, and toward the end she became like a madwoman. I also imagine what she looked like: she had to be a very small woman, wasted away, like a chip . . . Have you ever seen how a peasant beats his wife? I have. He begins with a rope or a belt . . . Having bound his wife

or fastened her legs in the opening of the floorboard, our peasant likely began methodically, cold-bloodedly, even lazily, with measured blows, not listening to her cries and pleas, or rather precisely listening to them, listening with pleasure, otherwise what sort of satisfaction could he take in beating her? . . .

Toward the end he also liked to hang her by the legs the way he hanged the chicken. Most likely he would hang her and then go off and sit down, set about his *kasha* and have a bite to eat, then suddenly again grab the belt and begin setting to work on the hanging woman . . . And their little girl, shaking as she squirmed on the stove, would cast a wild glance at her mother hanging by her legs and again hide.

She hanged herself one May morning, most likely on a bright spring day. She was seen the evening before beaten and completely out of her senses. Before her death she also went to the regional court, and that's where they mumbled to her: "Live more peaceably (*soglasno*) with each other!" (21: 20–21)

The visceral quality of the above scene effaces the preceding, quasi-logical debate about environmentalism. The husband's relentless cruelty easily persuades the reader that the source of evil resides within him and cannot be attributed to external factors. Yet, the writer notes, the defense lawyers insisted that he should be pitied because of ignorance and the backwardness of his surroundings. He was found "guilty but deserving of clemency" and sentenced to only eight months imprisonment in a local jail, after which, the writer surmises, he would be free to hang his daughter by the legs. Dostoevsky's concern for the peasant's little girl did not fall on deaf ears. Some benevolent Moscow ladies took it upon themselves to bring her to the city and place her in a trade school (21: 389).

Dostoevsky wants society to distinguish between good and evil and not confuse compassion for the accused with the notion that crime is merely the product of a wrongly structured society or an illness (23: 137). Even so, he allows that in certain instances the environment does constitute a mitigating factor. In the case of the peasant woman Ekaterina Kornilova who threw her six-year-old stepdaughter from a fourth-story window Dostoevsky supported temporary insanity as the motive for crime. In May 1876 when he first heard of the affair, he condemned it and painted an ironic scene in which a lawyer might justify her crime by adducing the miserable life of poor people and insinuating that she married against her will (23: 19). Nor did the child's seemingly miraculous survival render Kornilova's act any less abhorrent for him. But Dostoevsky subsequently discovered that she was pregnant. In October, after the jury had sentenced Kornilova to two years and eight months of hard labor and then perpetual exile in Siberia, he pleaded for overturning her sentence on the grounds that "during pregnancy (especially with the first child) a woman is subject to certain strange influences and impressions, to which her spirit yields in a strange

and fantastic manner" (23: 138). Here, as in the case of the abused woman, Dostoevsky summoned his artistic prowess and painted a touching scene in which the family would take leave of each other forever at the final way station. The couple would now be divorced because of her sentence, and the children would remain either without a mother or without a father.[17] In pleading Kornilova's case, Dostoevsky did not claim that she was innocent. But he considered it of particular significance that she openly admitted her guilt and went directly to the police station after throwing the child out the window. Given the effect of pregnancy on her emotional state, her personal remorse, and the undesirability of breaking up a family with young children, the writer felt that a higher truth was best served by clemency. His essay and subsequent efforts were instrumental in obtaining a pardon for Kornilova.[18]

It is best to view Dostoevsky's change of heart in the Kornilova affair as an anomaly. Most cases he singles out for commentary, whether real or imaginary, involved the sort of casuistry that he speculated would occur when he first heard about her: a clearly guilty person is exonerated because of external factors or legal technicalities. In the *Diary* for January 8, 1873 he recalls an instance of cruelty reported in the newspapers about twenty years earlier in which a peasant woman poured boiling water on her baby's hand. He imagines that if she had been brought to trial in the post-Reform era, her lawyers would have argued that her sentence should be reduced because of the harsh circumstances of her life (21: 22). Surely for Dostoevsky the most egregious case of unpunished child abuse was that of Stanislav Kroneberg, who was tried in early 1876 for severely beating his seven-year-old daughter and, through the arguments of the clever lawyer V. D. Spasovich, found not guilty. Dostoevsky abhors the falseness and lack of compassion of a court that should defend innocent victims and serve the moral education of the broad public.[19]

As we have seen, Dostoevsky was willing to use the *Diary*'s pages to intercede for victims of misfortune. In January 1876, he solicited support for two boys left behind when their mother's lover killed her and then committed suicide: "The gloomy picture will remain in their souls forever . . . May God bless the future of these innocent children, and may they not cease to love their poor mother throughout their life, without reproach and without shame for their love" (22: 8). The writer's sympathy extended to urban workers, whom he often treated as displaced villagers retaining vestiges of their traditional practices, but condemned to an unnatural life on back streets or in damp basement corners. The narrator-*flâneur* of the "Little Pictures" ("Malen'kie kartinki") of the July 6, 1873 issue of the *Diary* notes

that on Sundays they dress up, often in threadbare but clean western dress, and stroll along the city streets joylessly; and he conjectures that the reason why the children accompanying them are very young is that the older ones have not survived (21: 110). Children need light, air, fresh food, instead of stuffy cellars with the smell of *kvas* and sauerkraut, cockroaches and fleas, and a terrible night stench (21: 112). The writer describes a workman of about thirty with a gloomy mien, walking with his weak, pale two-year-old son. Here, once again, he draws the reader into the pathos of the daily life of the common people by shifting from description to fiction and imagining that the man's wife died from consumption only a month earlier, they live somewhere in tiny basement quarters, and they have just been paying an obligatory holiday visit to the wife's sister.

Another of the "Little Pictures" concerns the drunks crowding the Petersburg streets on Sundays. Many working people, he notes, "walk about on holidays drunk, sometimes in crowds, pressing and shoving people – not from rowdiness – but simply because it is impossible for a drunk not to press and shove; they swear out loud despite entire crowds of women and children whom they pass – not from brazenness – but simply because it is impossible for a drunk to have any language other than swearing" (21: 108). The writer labels vodka the people's new, post-Emancipation "slavery" (21: 97), and its destructiveness on popular morality and traditional life becomes a major leitmotif of the *Diary*. Everywhere, he noted, taverns were springing up and supporting themselves through debauchery, thievery, trading in stolen goods, usury, the destruction of the family: "Mothers drink, children drink, the churches are empty, and fathers take up banditry" (21: 94). The writer used the publication in *The Citizen* of D. D. Kishensky's peasant drama, *Drinking Will Lead to No Good* (*Pit' do dna – ne vidat' dobra*) as an opportunity to highlight the extent of drunkenness among the *narod*. In a review for June 18, 1873 he elaborates on the play's canvas of the devastating ruin of traditional rural life, including the time-honored village council (21: 100–01). Elsewhere in *The Citizen*, Dostoevsky bemoans the effect that drunkenness had in the suburban Moscow village of Izmailovo. The village caught fire in late spring 1873, but the people had sold not only their hoses and hooks, but also such basic domestic items as crowbars, pails, and axes for drink and had nothing with which to stop the blaze (21: 142).

Dostoevsky's aversion to environmentalism proceeds from his understanding of the human person as a godly creation called to freely choose good over evil. Throughout the *Diary*, he sprinkles reminders that human beings are "the image of God" (*obraz bozhii*) or uses the terms "human image" (*chelovecheskii obraz*) or "human countenance" (*chelovecheskii lik*)

with equivalent meaning. While discussing the work of the Society for the Protection of Animals in January 1876, he notes the necessity of bringing the Russian man to his true image (*obrazit'*) and humanizing (*ochelovechit'*) him so that "having learned to have compassion on his cattle, the peasant will begin to have compassion on his wife" (22: 26).[20] He advocates educating the people in order that they might be "humanized" (*ochelovecheny*, 22: 31); he argues that though mired in grime, the people have not lost their "human image" and have preserved "the beauty of their image" (22: 43).

Considering the overall picture that the writer gives of the *narod*, one cannot help wondering if in the depths of his heart Dostoevsky feared that one's "godly image" could become so obscure that it would be irrecoverable. When he speaks about the imprint of alcoholism, abuse, and materialism, he seems to imply that it could. His descriptions of drunken behavior indicate that alcohol takes away a person's ability to choose whether to push and shove, swear, or beat one's wife, and for Dostoevsky the divine image in the person is inextricably bound to freedom of choice. "Green wine (*zeleno-vino*)," he claims using the fixed epithet of folk poetry for vodka, "turns a man into a beast, brutalizes him and deflects him from bright ideas, dulls him to any educational efforts" (22: 29). Musing that it might be helpful if the Society for the Protection of Animals would also direct its efforts at reducing drunkenness, he writes:

> After all, the people's strength is fading, the source of future riches is drying up, intelligence and development are becoming impoverished – and what will today's children who have grown up in the filth of their fathers take into their minds and hearts? A village caught fire and in the village the church, the tavern keeper came out and shouted to the people that if they stopped trying to save the church and saved the tavern, then he'd treat them to a barrel of vodka. The church burned down, but they saved the tavern. Examples like these are now negligible in view of the countless future horrors awaiting us . . . And how can one force someone to have compassion, when things have come to the point, as it were, of *eradicating in a human being any humanity*? And is it just alcohol that makes the *narod* rage and corrupts it in our amazing time? Everywhere some sort of stupefaction wafts in the air, some sort of itch for depravity. A sort of unheard-of corruption of ideas has begun among the people along with the ubiquitous bowing before materialism. In the given case I term materialism the people's bowing before money, before the power of the bag of gold. Among the people as though suddenly the idea has burst forth that the bag of gold is now everything, that it contains in itself all power, and that everything that their fathers told them and taught them until now is nonsense. (22: 29–30; my emphasis)

The above passage insinuates that alcohol and lust for money deprive the people of the very quality Dostoevsky most values in them: the ability to

call evil "evil." His selection of the expression "bag of gold" to signal the rampant materialism of the *narod* plays on the popular notion that such wealth was associated with the devil.[21] The writer senses that the perversion of ideas gnaws at the people's fundamental values, and, in the absence of education and counter-propaganda, they stand defenseless.

Dostoevsky particularly feared that the impact of negative childhood experiences would leave a permanent stamp on the offspring of debauched and impoverished parents. At times in treating such children he seems to imply that there is no escape for them and their futures are fully determined by the horrible conditions in which they have been immersed. The writer devotes the first two chapters of the *Diary* for January 1876 to children. He begins with a discussion of the frivolous pretexts for the large number of suicides among adolescents from affluent families who destroy their lives without "even a shade of suspicion that what is termed 'I' is an immortal being" (22: 6). He then turns to the children's parties he has attended over the holidays. The second chapter deals with street children and is divided into three parts: a one-page feuilleton about a begging child; a story about a child who freezes to death at Christmas; and an account of his visit to a colony for juvenile offenders.

In the feuilleton the writer describes a seven-year-old boy whom he keeps meeting on the street. Though many child-beggars become accomplished at their trade, this one seems awkward and looks at him innocently. Most of these children live in crowded basement tenements, where men are too lazy to work and their drunken, beaten wives send them out to get money for vodka and thrash them if they return empty-handed. Dostoevsky's prognosis is grim:

> When he grows up, they'll farm him off to a factory somewhere, but he'll again be forced to bring everything he earns to the loafers (*khalatniki*), and they will again drink it away. But even before they go to the factory, these children become absolute criminals. They tramp about the city and know places in various cellars where they can crawl in and spend the night unnoticed. One of them spent several nights in a row in a basket next to a doorman, who didn't notice him. They become thieves quite naturally. Thievery turns into a passion even in eight-year-old children, and sometimes even without any recognition of the criminal nature of the act. In the end they endure everything – hunger, cold, beatings – only for one thing, for freedom, and they escape their *khalatniki* only to tramp about themselves. This wild creature sometimes doesn't understand anything, where he lives, what nation he belongs to, whether there is a God, whether there is a tsar; they tell all sorts of improbable things about them; however, they are all facts. (22: 14)

Immediately following the above remarks, Dostoevsky shifts to fiction and relates a story on the lines of Hans Christian Anderson's well-known

"Little Match Girl."[22] The author retains the little hero of the feuilleton, but makes him about six – too young to be sent out to beg; the second child's dead mother replaces the sick sister of the first.[23] The tenement is empty except for a grumbling, eighty-year-old woman dying in the corner and a man lying on the floor in a drunken stupor; the police have hauled off the landlady and the other loafers and drunks are away for the holiday. The narrative perspective now allows the reader to experience the basement world as well as the frost and brilliance of the Petersburg streets through the child's eyes. It is so cold that vapor rises when the boy breathes; hungry, he repeatedly tries to awaken his mother, who is lying dead on a plank bed and seems as cold as the wall. He cannot find anything to eat and would have left the basement earlier but for the large dog in the entry.

In the evening the child finally makes his way onto the street, where a policeman turns away to avoid noticing him. He is awestruck by the glare and bustle of the northern capital – so different from his former dark village, where, however, he was warm and had plenty to eat. He approaches a window, from which he hears music, espies a giant Christmas tree, and watches other children playing and eating until his fingers and toes hurt so badly that he runs away. He stops at another window and sees women handing out sweets inside. When he enters, he is immediately ushered out with a kopeck that he cannot clasp in his frozen hand. The frightened child proceeds further and comes to a window with marionettes.[24] He watches, smiling, but an older boy grabs his cap and begins to hit and kick him, and he runs off and hides behind a woodpile.

Suddenly he begins to feel better, his hands and feet cease hurting, and he imagines that his mother is singing over him. Then he hears a quiet voice inviting him to come to a Christmas party and discovers it is the voice of Christ who on this day gathers boys and girls without a tree of their own around his magnificent tree. These children were just like him: some froze in their baskets where they were abandoned, some smothered at the foundling home, some died in the Samara famine, and some choked to death from the fumes in third-class wagons (22: 17). Now they circle about "like angels" in the brilliance of Christ's tree and float over to console their sinful mothers, who stand to the side crying. Dostoevsky brings the story back to earth by noting that the next morning they found the boy and his mother, who died before him. He teasingly admits that the parts taking place in the basement and by the woodpile could have happened – but about Christ's Christmas tree – he is not sure (22: 17).

Both the feuilleton and the story are saturated with imagery implying that whether or not we regard Christ's Christmas tree as sheer fantasy, we

are still dealing with the sad reality of Petersburg life during the holidays and with a fundamental insight about it that Dostoevsky wishes to convey. His meetings with the child-beggar and his story about the boy who freezes to death follow immediately upon descriptions of parties for the affluent where he observes pampered, over-dressed children and their bored parents. But these parents, the writer notes, have the power hidden within them to make others happy, for after all "even people of the rank of general can reach the Golden Age" (22: 13). Why, we must ask, does the text move so abruptly from the potential for universal happiness to child-beggars? If we read these two chapters as Dostoevsky's recapitulation of the Nativity story for his era, then it seems clear that he wants his reader to discern the Christ-child behind the image of these destitute children. Like the infant Jesus of the Gospels, they are excluded from the comforts and amusements of the well-to-do. In addition, their beggar status *ipso facto* places them in the position of the beggar Christ of legend. For the "generals" privileged to be guests at the sumptuous parties to enter the Golden Age and, symbolically, to participate in the heavenly celebration, they would need to welcome the outcast child as they would Christ.[25]

Section 3 acquaints readers with the street boys who survive childhood and are now in a juvenile colony. In a sense it continues the biographical line of the boy who kicked and hit the smaller child. After spending the better part of the day at the colony, Dostoevsky leaves encouraged, though he finds a few practices, such as addressing the children by the formal "you," bookish. The director assures him that the boys arrive at the colony completely wild: some continue to steal purely from habit, without any notion of wrongdoing, and some lack such rudimentary trappings of upbringing as toilet training. Dostoevsky considers this last detail very significant because it points to the "beastly indifference" of the people with whom the children have interacted and testifies that there exist "personages so gloomy and terrible that in them even any trace of humanity and civic feeling has disappeared" (22: 19). The writer bemoans the terrible impressions that have been stamped on the souls of these boys and notes that those who instruct and correct them must take on the enormous task of eradicating these impressions and implanting new ones (22: 19).

At the beginning of his account Dostoevsky terms the young criminals "fallen angels," thereby linking them to the children around Christ's Christmas tree. But, curiously, though he initiates the feuilleton about the little beggar boy with the statement "children are a strange people" (*Deti strannyi narod*, 21:13), he withholds the term *narod* from the juveniles (*Konechno, eti mal'chiki ne narod*, 21: 23), stressing that God alone knows to what

particular human classification they belong. Here he may have in mind the powerful influence of their street life, which stifled the divine spark within them. But is this spark completely extinguished? Have the terrible pasts of these children totally inscribed their futures? An incident he relates toward the end of his account gives some cause for hope. The director told him about an especially recalcitrant boy of about fifteen who was secluded for refusing to submit to the colony's regulations. When an instructor had to confiscate his Christmas presents, he complained to the director about him and about the other boys, and he remained silent when the director tried to reason with him. However, two hours after the director left, the boy suddenly begged him to come back and, tearful and agitated, began to reproach himself, and to confess secrets that he had previously kept concealed. Given the overwhelming evidence of corruption, this single manifestation of conscience may seem negligible. But for Dostoevsky it was no doubt enough to keep his lofty view of human nature viable and indicate that one's behavior need not be conditioned by circumstances, however horrible.

Before finishing his piece on the colony, Dostoevsky makes an apparent digression to mention a quiet and modest civil servant from the reign of Nicholas I who spent his life putting aside money from his meager pay to redeem serfs because he could not stand the thought that "the image and likeness of God" could be bought and sold (22: 25). He thus closes his two-chapter sequence on children with another example of striving against the prevailing environment to do the right thing. His deliberate use of the expression "image and likeness of God" harks back to his earlier remark that the young suicides were "immortal beings." These two phrases, which at first appear casual and tangential to the issue at hand, serve to provide an interpretative framework for the overall treatment of street children and to reinforce the suspicion that Dostoevsky's intent here is to awaken his readers to the presence of the divine image in them.

"THE *NAROD* HAS ITS FOMA DANILOVS, THOUSANDS OF THEM." (25: 16)

Amid the overwhelming corruption and social disintegration of the mid 1870s, Dostoevsky detected some individuals who embodied his high ideals about the *narod*, and he made several attempts to portray simple Christian goodness in his fictional characters. The civil servant from the reign of Nicholas I constitutes one model of righteousness, which, unlike debauchery, tends to be inconspicuous. His deed remained unknown during his

lifetime. As the writer phrases it, "There once lived a civil servant . . . He served first in Petersburg, and then it seems in Kiev, where he died – and it would appear that his entire biography consists in that" (22: 25). The same is true for the *narod*. The individuals manifesting the positive values of the people tend to appear insignificant and uninteresting. They only come into focus through direct encounter or on rare occasions when circumstances demand sacrifice or heroism. For example, the maid Agrafena Titova and the porter's wife Uliana Bibina only became known when, unable to endure the cries of Kroneberg's little girl as she was being whipped, they brought charges against her father. Dostoevsky emphasizes that they alone took pity on this "tiny, insulted creature of God" and rose up in her defense despite the basic loathing of the simple people to go to court (22: 61–62).[26]

Sofia Andreevna of *The Adolescent* is a fictional representation of popular goodness on the lines that Dostoevsky envisioned in Titova and Bibina. Her tag name for "Holy Wisdom" makes her a literary sister of Sonia Marmeladova, the bible-seller Sofia Matveevna of *The Devils*, and Alesha's mother Sofia Ivanovna of *The Brothers Karamazov*.[27] The main crisis in her life (Arkady uses the terms "sin" [*grekh*] and "ruin" [*gibel'*]) occurs in the novel's pre-history. A house serf betrothed on her father's deathbed to the fifty-year-old Makar Ivanovich who had carried her in his arms as a child, she allows herself to be seduced by the young master Andrey Petrovich Versilov six months after her marriage. Versilov and Sofia fall at Makar's feet in repentance, and Versilov "ransoms" her from him and grants both their freedom (13: 13). Contrary to the usual plot of seduction and abandonment in relations between masters and serfs, Versilov henceforth keeps Sofia near him; and though he periodically deserts her to run off to the West, he always returns. She appears in the novel proper as a static character whose outstanding traits are humility, silence, and purity of heart. Commonplaces of popular religion fill Arkady's childhood recollections of her. His earliest memory is of a dove flying through the cupola of the village church when Sofia takes him to communion (13: 92). Five years later during one of Versilov's disappearances, she makes her way to Moscow to visit Arkady at Touchard's Boarding School. By now he is painfully aware of his illegitimacy, which has made him the brunt of his schoolmates' teasing. His mother's peasant demeanor, her low bows to the Touchards, her prayers to the Mother of God and St. Nicholas for protection, the sign of the cross that she repeatedly makes over him, and even the lowly quality of her village gifts humiliate him despite his longing for her love. Over the course of his Petersburg narrative Arkady develops a closer relationship to her, and

Dostoevsky nudges his young hero toward perceiving the deep spirituality beneath her village practices.

The issues of the *Diary* for February, March, and April of 1876 contain, respectively, portraits of the peasant Marey, a hundred-year-old woman, and Dostoevsky's nanny Alena Frolovna, each of whom the writer holds up as an example of kindliness and depth of feeling. In January 1877 he relates the story of the Russian soldier Foma Danilov who chose to undergo torture and death rather than renounce his Christian faith. In "*On Love for the Narod. Necessary Contact with the Narod*" (*O liubvi k narodu. Neobkhodimyi kontakt s narodom*) for February 1876, Dostoevsky reiterates his view of the *narod* as "crude and unrefined, devoted to darkness and debauchery, 'a barbarian awaiting the light'" (22: 42). At the same time he says he fully agrees with the opinion of the Slavophile writer Konstantin Aksakov that the *narod* has long been enlightened. He claims that the people's ideals are embodied in such saints as Theodosius of the Kievan Caves Monastery, Sergius of Radonezh, and Tikhon of Zadonsk and that such literary works as Pushkin's *Tales of Belkin* (*Povesti Belkina*), Turgenev's *Nest of Gentlefolk* (*Dvorianskoe gnezdo*) and Ivan Goncharov's *Oblomov* have captured in art the people's "simple-heartedness, purity, humility, breadth of mind, and lack of malice in contrast to everything that is broken, false, alien, and borrowed" from the West (22: 43–44). Dostoevsky reiterates his claim that the intelligentsia, like prodigal children, must accept the people's "truth" – even if it stems partly from the Lives of Saints. But, he cautions, the people must also accept much from the upper classes (22: 45).

As the culmination of this argument, Dostoevsky launches into the story "The Peasant Marey," which represents another shifting from non-fiction to fiction in order to capture the inner truth about the *narod*. The writer recalls his first Easter Monday in the Omsk Stockade. The convicts were drunk and rowdy and the Tatar Gazin lay beaten on his planks to prevent his violent assaults; leaving the barracks to escape the vileness, the writer encountered the Pole M-tskii who commented "Je hais ces brigands!" For some reason, he returned to the barracks and lay down on his planks, where he engaged in reveries and recollections of his past life. Suddenly an incident from his childhood came to mind. It was August in Darovoe and the nine-year-old Dostoevsky ventured outside to collect beetles and lizards when he imagined hearing someone shout, "A wolf is coming." He ran to the field where Marey was plowing, and the peasant stopped his mare and comforted the shaking boy, making the sign of the cross over his lips with his fingers soiled with earth. After recalling his encounter in the field with Marey, the writer claims, the malice he bore toward his fellow

convicts evaporated because he now perceived that among the branded and dishonored peasants who were shouting and singing bawdy songs "might, after all, be that very same Marey" (22: 49).

"The Peasant Marey" is Dostoevsky's best-known positive presentation of the Russian *muzhik* and, at the same time, a deceptively complex work of art. We need to keep in mind that the material about Marey has been reworked to achieve an idealized image.[28] Dostoevsky's jottings toward the story indicate that the actual Marey was more multifaceted than the brief moment of encounter in the story would imply. The writer filtered out such information as Marey's "Tatar" habit of beating his little horse across the eyes when he was angry.[29] Indeed, the designation "Tatar" would seem to connect Marey with Gazin, the most terrifying of Dostoevsky's fellow prisoners in the stockade. But Dostoevsky wanted to illustrate the moral best in the Russian people, the enlightenment of which Aksakov spoke, and while he might argue that the encounter with Marey reveals the inner truth of the people, including his fellow convicts, he by no means claims that this is their whole reality.

The story is not only an idealized picture of a Russian *muzhik*, but also, if we can take Dostoevsky's words at face value, the capstone to his *profession de foi* (22: 46). Abundant criticism views "The Peasant Marey" as a window onto the psychological processes leading to a transformation in the writer's understanding of the *narod*.[30] On balance, scholars tend to place the crucial shift in his perception of the *narod* – the point, to use Robert Louis Jackson's terminology, when he finally was able to glimpse the essential image (*obraz*) of the people beneath the layers of filth and moral distortion (*bezobrazie*) – in the Easter season of 1850.[31] While there is no reason to doubt that the writer had a recollection of Marey during his early years in prison, I believe that the consciousness guiding the portrayal of the peasant in the story is that of Dostoevsky of the late 1860s and 1870s. As he shapes his prison memory of a childhood encounter into a work of art intended to lead his readers toward a true understanding of the Russian people, he compresses the lengthy evolution of his views by placing the moment of enlightenment not within the rather humdrum and prolonged process of reevaluating the Omsk experience, but in the tumultuous Easter celebration of the stockade itself.[32] The drunkenness and carousing of the prisoners mask both the spiritual import of the holiday and the true nature of the people. But the recollection of Marey reveals the essential nature of both.

The story's symbolism accords fully with that of the Dostoevsky of the great novels, who had already come to perceive the *narod* as the bearer of

Christian values. Marey stands as an archetypical peasant tilling the soil and is linked to Mother Earth. His "strange" name, to which the writer calls attention, is likely intended as the masculine counterpart to "Maria" and thus connects him with the Mother of God.[33] This becomes explicit in the references to his "maternal smile" (22: 48). When he makes the sign of the cross over the child's lips with his earth-encrusted fingers, he is initiating the boy into the mystery of Christ in the *narod* and the Russian earth and, as has been remarked, symbolically bridging the historic gap between the people and the upper classes.[34] Even the artificiality of Russia's post-Petrine encounter with the West enters this brief story in the mention that the boy would soon have to leave the country and return to Moscow to his boring French lessons (22: 47). In actuality, French did not acquire negative shadings for Dostoevsky until after his Siberian years.

The writer begins the subsequent issue of the *Diary* with a brief retort to Mr. Gamma (pseudonym of G. K. Gradovsky), who in the March 7 issue of *The Voice* (*Golos*) had seized on the glaring contradiction in his view of the people as both barbaric and enlightened and rejected the notion that behavior can be abominable yet ideals good. Dostoevsky reiterated his position that good ideals constitute the foundation for good deeds and among the people there are saints who "shine and light the way for all of us . . . and blessed is the one who has eyes to see them" (22: 75). He then moves into a seemingly unrelated narrative about a hundred-year-old woman ("Stoletniaia"). The writer says he learned about her from a "certain lady" (Anna Grigorevna), who came across her several times as she was running errands. The old woman was weary and seemed to rest at every building as she plodded her way to her granddaughter for dinner. Anna Grigorevna approached her and learned that this "tiny old woman, clean, in ancient clothing, most likely from tradespeople (*meshchanstvo*), with a walking stick and a pale, yellowed face dried against the bones – a sort of mummy" (22: 76) was a hundred and four years old. The old woman smiled constantly and a ray of warm light emanated from her dim eyes; she seemed glad for the conversation, and though not a beggar, she graciously accepted five kopecks for a roll.

Dostoevsky says he heard this account and then forgot about it until, reading a certain journal article late at night (probably Mr. Gamma's), he decided to sketch a plausible continuation. We now see the old woman, whom the writer names Maria Maksimovna with her granddaughter, her granddaughter's barber-husband of about thirty-five, three small children, a nephew, and a guest of about forty. She arrives, sits down, jokes with the guest about her age, discusses everyday matters with her granddaughter, and

mentions the nice lady who gave her five kopecks – with which she would like to buy gingerbread for the children. The old woman is especially tired on this day and cannot seem to catch her breath. While mentioning the gingerbread she seems to fade away, and she dies quietly with her hand on the shoulder of great-grandson Misha. As the family sets about attending to the funeral preparations, the writer notes that when Misha dies no one will be alive to remember the old woman. "And why bother remembering: after all, it's all the same. That's the way millions of people depart; they live unnoticed and die unnoticed . . . God bless the life and death of simple, good, people" (22: 79). The writer admits that he has given us a little picture without a plot, hinting, as Gary Saul Morson suggests, that while a good life does not always yield a good story, what "truly shapes life, what makes it meaningful, is always taking place unnoticed before us."[35]

One must suppose that the story of the writer's beloved nanny Alena Frolovna and of the Russian martyr-hero Foma Danilov would have been as plotless as that of the hundred-year-old woman had they not found themselves in circumstances calling for dramatic responses. According to Anna Grigorevna, Dostoevsky liked to tell his children about Alena Frolovna (22: 378), and her figure enters into the *Diary* for April 1876. The context is again polemical. The writer wished to refute the contention of V. G. Avseenko, a strong advocate for retaining special gentry privileges, that the people would become "kulaks and bloodsuckers" once they forsook their passive, idyllic existence and adopted an active and energetic one (22: 370, 104). For Dostoevsky, the example of Alena Frolovna proved otherwise. He recalled that years earlier when the Dostoevsky family had received word that the village of Darovoe had burned down, she came forward and offered to give the destitute peasants her entire life savings, which she had been putting aside for her old age. The writer comments:

> After all, I don't think it is possible to reckon such people among kulaks and swindlers, and if not, then how does one explain her act. In doing it was she only "at the level of elemental being, of an idyllic, self-enclosed existence and a passive life," or did she manifest something a bit more energetic than passivity? It would be very interesting to hear how Mr. Avseenko would decide this. People will answer me with scorn, saying that it is only a single instance. But I alone have managed to observe in my life many hundreds of such instances among our simple people, and in addition, I know for sure that there are other observers, who also have the ability to look at the *narod* without spitting. (22: 112–13)

Dostoevsky suspects that the Russian soldier Foma Danilov also lived a very ordinary life, and probably even caroused, drank, and did not pray a good deal in his time (25: 15). Yet the deeply embedded religious ideals

of the people surfaced in him when he was captured in Central Asia and asked to serve the khan and convert to Islam. Though no one was present to witness his heroic act, the simple soldier must have answered that he "could not betray the cross and as a servant of the tsar, even though he was in captivity, he must fulfill his duty toward the tsar and Christianity" (25: 12). Danilov's captors were amazed at his steadfastness in the face of torture and death, and they termed him *batyr'* – the equivalent of Russian *bogatyr'* (epic hero). Dostoevsky argues that while the upper classes might regard his feat as amazing, among the *narod* it would not be viewed as unusual, though it would be greeted with deep feeling and tenderness. For him, Danilov became an "emblem" of the true, popular (*narodnyi*) Russia, its genuine image (*obraz*), and he insisted that among the people there were thousands more like him (25: 14–16).

"The legend of the great sinner": Vlas and Makar Dolgoruky

Among the *narod*, then, Dostoevsky discerned drunks, thieves, brutal wife-beaters, and child-abusers on the one hand and models of humility, gentleness, and courage on the other. But he also charts movement from the first category to the second: great evildoers repent and set out to suffer and expiate their sins. Here one bumps up against the "Vlas" paradigm, which caught Dostoevsky's attention at least as early as Siberia. Aspects of it entered the portraits of Filka Morozov, Raskolnikov, and the hero for his unwritten "Life of a Great Sinner." Most likely Dostoevsky superimposed this grid on Kornilova's story, and his visits to her after the overturning of her sentence may have been prompted by the desire to convince himself that she had truly embraced a path of repentance.[36] Echoes of it also appear in *The Brothers Karamazov* in Zosima's and Dmitry's stories. His best-known rendition of this plot occurs in his essay "Vlas," which appeared in the *Diary* for January 22, 1873. Here Dostoevsky argues that this pattern holds the key to the nature of the Russian people. In *The Adolescent* (1875), he again drew on it for the portraits of the wanderer Makar Dolgoruky and the cruel merchant Skotoboinikov in the *skaz* narrative that Makar relates.

In the *Diary*, Dostoevsky proceeds directly from Nikolay Nekrasov's poem "Vlas," which is based on the folk legend about a great sinner.[37] He intended his essay to serve in part as a polemic with the ideas of the liberal intelligentsia, who were concerned about the material and educational needs of the people, but ridiculed their religious notions. Dostoevsky

begins with lengthy quotes from Nekrasov's poem interspersed with commentary. Though he finds much in the poem amazingly good (*Chudo kak khorosho!* 21: 32) and admits that Nekrasov is a true poet, he faults him for his mocking attitude toward his material. Still, he remarks to the poet, the terrifying strength of humility and the thirst for salvation in Vlas struck even "your ultra-liberal soul" (21: 32). Nekrasov's Vlas is a tall, straight old man with a dark complexion; he carries a knapsack, and walks bareheaded, girded by heavy chains, wearing a copper icon on his chest, and begging for alms to build a church. Thirty years earlier he had been a brutal wife-beater who took up with thieves and bandits. But he fell ill and had a vision of the torments of hell. After this he gave away his wealth and set out as a wanderer.[38]

Dostoevsky's rendition contains two Vlases, a great evildoer and his tempter. The story of his first Vlas seems to have originated with a monk living near Kiev. The second is probably his own creation; this figure does not enter the story he related to his young friend Vsevolod Solovev several weeks before publication.[39] Nor does Dostoevsky's tale correspond to those variants of the legend of a great sinner in which one sinner obtains forgiveness by killing an even greater one (21: 398). His first Vlas, responding to the prompting of the second to commit the most heinous deed imaginable, shoots at the Host, has a terrifying vision of Christ on the Cross, sets out to suffer and expiate his deed, and several years later crawls on his knees to the monk crying "There is no salvation for me; I'm cursed" (22: 34). The monk, Dostoevsky surmises, must have recognized that Vlas needed extreme suffering and placed a very heavy penance on him.[40] The writer expresses equal fascination with the tempter – a village "Mephistopheles" and nihilist – who, he suspects, represents a new phenomenon among the *narod*. But this second Vlas drops out of the story.

For Dostoevsky, Vlas's sudden shift from debauchery and blasphemy to radical penitence exemplified the Russian national character, which he described as oblivion to all measure and the need to go to extremes of negation, to deny even what is most sacred and beloved, to look into the abyss and nearly throw oneself headlong into it, and then abruptly to make a similar movement in the opposite direction, to repent, and to seek suffering (21: 35). The fact that his Vlas chose Christ as the sacred object for defilement suggested to the writer that "perhaps Christ is the only love of the Russian people and they love his image in their own way that is to the point of suffering" (21: 38). The Vlas story allowed Dostoevsky once again to make the case that diamonds were concealed beneath the coarse and dirty exterior of the *narod*. The people – the Vlases – had not completely

lost their sense of right and wrong, their godly image. On the basis of the "Vlas paradigm" the writer could believe (or strive to believe) that Vlas's abrupt movement toward repentance signaled that the inner ideals and faith of the people would be their salvation and that of all Russia.[41] Despite drinking, corruption, and all the present horrors existing among the people, he argued, the nation could calm itself because, "Vlas will come to his senses and set about the business of God" (21: 41).

Not surprisingly, Dostoevsky's emphasis on the people's thirst for suffering made his "Vlas" a point of contention within the liberal camp. A commentator for the March 1, 1873 issue of *The Voice* remarked that one must either improve the lives of the Vlases by removing poverty and ignorance so that they can save themselves and everybody else or renounce the idea that they are particularly chosen. Recalling Dostoevsky's recent article on peasant jurors, the author asked, "Don't you sense how curious it is on one page to place all your hopes on these dark Vlases who must renew the world and on the next to complain that these very same Vlases are too condescending to criminals? Is it appropriate on one occasion to grieve about the people's misfortunes and on another preach suffering as the chief, deeply-rooted popular need?"[42]

Of course, one need not accept the rather dubious notion that the "various Vlases, who repent and do not repent . . . will show us a new road, a way out of all our . . . inescapable difficulties" (21: 34) or that the Russian people are uniquely chosen to preserve the image of Christ to understand that here, as elsewhere, what is crucial for Dostoevsky is the inner man, the ideals carried deep within the heart, rather than external acts or material conditions. Not that behavior and material circumstances have no value. Dostoevsky was by no stretch of the imagination against educating the people or alleviating their poverty. But, the Vlas paradigm is first and foremost about the existence of conscience, and as long as this remained, transformation was possible. As Joseph Frank points out, when the writer speaks of suffering as an essential need of the people, he is not referring to "material hardship or physical deprivation" but to the thirst for "moral and spiritual redemption, which in the end would gain the upper hand over the evils of the present time."[43]

Makar Dolgoruky of *The Adolescent* was another Vlas figure of tremendous importance for Dostoevsky. Vsevolod Solovev recalled that when he wrote about the defects in Makar's characterization in a newspaper article, Dostoevsky became deeply offended and spent two hours explaining the meaning of his pilgrim to him. If, Solovev conjectures, the Makar of the text were the same as the one Dostoevsky portrayed in this explanation,

then readers would see in him "one of the most exalted and poetic images ever created by an artist."[44] The link between Nekrasov's hero and Makar is evident, for Versilov quotes from the poem in describing him as "dark-complexioned, tall, and straight" (*smuglolits, vysok i priam*, 13: 109).[45] The visit to a hermit is absent in Nekrasov's "Vlas" and Makar's story, probably because the writers wished to shift the emphasis to the outcome of wandering. Both characters enter their texts as pious old men bearing the marks of years of penance; their pasts are filled in as background information. But while the bulk of Nekrasov's poem consists precisely of this pre-history about the hero's sins and vision of hell, Makar's past is sketchier and his sin subtler. Gloomy, proud, steadfast in his opinions, and familiar with church services and stories of saints from having heard them, he was not generally well liked as a house serf. But after he set out on his wanderings, he was regarded as a saint (13: 9).

The upheaval in his marriage prompted a change in Makar's life that likely accorded with the edifying stories he had heard. V. A. Mikhniukevich thinks that, in essence, he adopted a path characteristic of a religious elder (*starets*) and took Versilov's and Sofia's sin on himself.[46] Though he leaves home, he by no means relinquishes his duties as a husband and father. He extracts from Versilov a promise to marry Sofia after his death as well as three thousand rubles that he invests at interest, understanding full well that upper-class men typically discard their peasant mistresses. He instructs Sofia to keep the children in the lower class; and he writes and returns home periodically. By the time Arkady meets him, his outstanding traits are cheerfulness and humility, and he seems to exude an aura of "true nobility" (*blagoobrazie*). Arkady seizes on the word "blagoobrazie" as a quality missing in his present life and the goal he wishes to seek (13: 291). This term, which contains the word "obraz" (image) and contrasts with "bezobrazie" (disorder, ugliness), implies that Makar's twenty-year pilgrimage has restored him to his true, godly self.[47] By extension it also suggests that this man of the people has reclaimed genuine nobility for the ancient Russian name "Dolgoruky," even though the actual princely line of Dolgoruky was in a state of dissolution and disgrace in the 1870s.[48] Arkady, for whom the name had been a sore spot at boarding school because of his lowly birth, can now take pride in his surname.

Like Sofia, Makar is a static character by the time we meet him. But he is by no means silent, for in the course of his wanderings he has developed into a teller of edifying narratives and saints' lives.[49] During his final days the family gathers each evening around his sickbed to listen to him. In handling Makar's precepts and stories, Dostoevsky abandons his usual tendency to

embed the folklore material deep within the text and opts for a direct presentation. He creates a highly stylized language for Makar and inserts a lengthy *skaz* narrative in his idiom into the novel.[50] Thus, in the relatively brief segment of *The Adolescent* centering on Makar, the writer seems to saturate his work with ethnographic material, a fault for which he had assailed N. S. Leskov in his *Diary* for April 30, 1873 (21: 88).[51] Yet the *Notebooks* indicate that Dostoevsky considered inserting even more popular narratives, including the Life of Alexis Man of God, stories about the end of the world, and a story about a "Stinking Lizaveta" (16: 232, 342, 346).[52] The novel proper uses only three narratives: reference to Mary of Egypt, a brief story about a former soldier who hanged himself from grief after a court found him innocent of a crime he committed, and the story of a merchant who, merciless in his treatment of his workers, widows, and orphans, repents and sets out as a wanderer. All these narratives turn on the pattern of sin and repentance. Mary of Egypt was a prostitute who converted and spent the rest of her life doing penance in the desert; the former soldier kills himself because the court denies him the suffering he needs for repentance (Makar comments, "So there's what it's like to live with a sin on your soul!" 13: 310). The story about the merchant Skotoboinikov (his name means "cattle-slaughterer") is a lengthy reworking of the legend of the great sinner full of local color and realistic details. Dostoevsky was particularly fond of it and liked to use it for public readings.[53]

The Vlas paradigm enters Dostoevsky's works over and over again, not because he wishes to extol the bizarre and even fanatical forms that popular religious expression sometimes assumed, but because it points to belief in a reality beyond what can be seen and observed, a cosmos that encompasses more than life on earth. "Vlas" is a narrative about a dramatic movement of the heart that shifts from the realm of observable reality to that of invisible interior processes, from the realm of earthly preoccupations to the otherworldly. Once Vlas has embarked on the road to redemption, his only "realities" are damnation or salvation. It goes without saying that the sinner's about face and response to something deep within – conscience or the stamp of the divine – is a parable about freedom from external pressures and militates against any sort of environmentalism. Even on the edge of a precipice one can rise above circumstances and turn back.

The writer no doubt took the wide dissemination of the legend of the great sinner, its reworking in literature, and his personal acquaintance with similar instances as evidence that the plot had penetrated deep into the popular psyche. The Vlas paradigm remained an important symbol for Dostoevsky, and, as the references to it in the February, March, and

August–September issues of the *Diary* for 1877 indicate, one that he could adapt to various purposes. In an entry entitled the "Russian Resolution of the Question" ("Russkoe reshenie voprosa") for February 1877, Dostoevsky contrasts Russia's supposed religious path of individual self-mastery followed by deeds of active love to what he views as the European aspiration to create a happy future society on scientific foundations and the abandonment of Christianity. He adduces Vlas as a type who has overcome self-centeredness and placed his talent at the service of others and who, he claims, already exists in various layers of Russian society. Here we can see glimmers of the notion of the Russian people's innate capacity for brotherhood that he had expressed fifteen years earlier in *Winter Notes on Summer Impressions*.

Dostoevsky also brings the image of Vlas into his discussion of the Eastern Question. He argues that, unlike the westernized intelligentsia, the Russian people instinctively grasp that the mission of Russia and the "Orthodox tsar" is to preserve and defend "Orthodoxy and all of Christianity . . . from Muslim barbarity and western heresy" (25: 68). By a curious stretch of logic, the writer implies that this mandate to defend the Orthodox faith is enshrined in the people's legends and traditions, including those concerning the weak and humiliated who suffer for the sake of Christ and who, the people believe, will be lifted up above the rich and powerful on the last day; those about the "chaste and humble" epic hero Ilia Muromets, a "fighter for truth, a liberator of the poor and weak"; and those about hermits, saints, and martyrs, which the people love to tell their children and which, the writer claims, he himself heard first from the *narod* (25: 69–70). To this list he adds the people's "great, repentant Vlases who, having distributed all their possessions, go forth with tenderness to serve the humble and great service of truth, work, and poverty" (25: 70).

Dostoevsky changed somewhat between his return from western Europe in 1871 and his announcement of a break in the *Diary* to write *The Brothers Karamazov* in 1877. He had, thanks largely to the good business sense of Anna Grigorevna, managed to settle with his creditors and arrange a comfortable, though by no means extravagant, living; he was now able to enjoy the peacefulness of a loving family and the appreciation of a wide segment of the public. His stance toward the young generation of populists had softened and he again became friendly with Nekrasov. But his ideas about the *narod* remained consistent with those he propounded while he was abroad: he continued to insist that they carried Christ in their hearts, that the renewal of Russia would come from below, and that the bridging of the gap between the people and the upper classes was of the utmost urgency.

The Dostoevsky of the *Diary* and *The Adolescent* has been reconnected to the ebb and flow of Russian life; he stands in the midst of events and civic discussions, and no longer views these from a distance. An acute observer of everyday reality, he chronicles a society in a state of dissolution: pervasive violence and drunkenness (a source of revenue for the state), abandoned and abused children, an appalling number of famine victims and the ineptness of the government at relief efforts, the failure of the new courts to uphold time-honored moral values, the seeming indifference on the part of many conservative Russians to the plight of the people, and the fleeing abroad of the very people who should become leading players in building a new Russia. Very few Russians would have disagreed that the situation of the *narod* was desperate. Depictions of its plight filled the liberal press as well as the *Diary*. But in contrast to the liberal press, Dostoevsky argued over and over again that this was not the whole reality of the Russian people, that beneath this "filth" one could find sacred ideals and yearnings for purification that would save Russia. His exalted ideas about the people, amazingly, seemed to stand in the face of a crumbling society. But did they really? One senses an impasse between the bleakness and corruption of the contemporary Russia he described so vividly and a future society built on the Christian morality, which the same "debauched" *narod* allegedly carried in its heart. One must suppose that the on-going dialogue Dostoevsky conducts about the people in the 1870s is as much with himself as with the reading public and that there was tremendous tension between what the writer saw and what he wanted to believe.[54] That is why it was so important for him to see – if only occasionally – glimmers of the ideal incarnated in the *narod*. The writer's agonizing and, I believe, unresolved concerns about environmentalism, the faith of the people, and the future of Russia spill over into *The Brothers Karamazov*, where they are transformed into his greatest art.

6

The Brothers Karamazov*:*
Christ walks the Russian land

Dostoevsky interrupted *The Diary of a Writer* from 1878 until late 1880 to write *The Brothers Karamazov*, which proved to be his final and greatest masterpiece. The plot centers on the murder of the dissolute landowner Fedor Pavlovich Karamazov and the false conviction of his eldest son Dmitry. The action occurs in the provincial town of Skotoprigonevsk (Cattle Pen) during several days in August and November in the mid 1860s. Despite the narrator-chronicler's claim that Alesha, the youngest son of Fedor Pavlovich, is the true, albeit, future hero of his tale, the story focuses mainly on the two older brothers, Dmitry and Ivan. This trebling of protagonists renders the structure of *The Brothers Karamazov* more complex than that of the previous novels and facilitates the inclusion of subplots, inserted narratives, and a wide range of secondary characters, including many from the *narod*.

At the heart of the plot lies a sensational parricide that captures the attention of all Russia. But, as the narrator reminds us at the outset, the death of Fedor Pavlovich forms only the "external side" of the story (14: 12). Beneath the drama of the Karamazovs lie questions about the existence of God and the nature of human beings that haunted Dostoevsky throughout his life. Burdened by his worsening emphysema and persistent epilepsy, the writer sensed he did not have long to live and seemed to regard this work as a possible final testament. In *The Brothers Karamazov* the social and political issues are subordinate to the religious ones, which find their most evident articulation in Ivan Karamazov's mini-stories about atrocities committed against children and his Grand Inquisitor (Book 5, "Pro and Contra") and Alesha's rendition of the life and teaching of his mentor Father Zosima (Book 6, "The Russian Monk"). In his letters to his editor, N. A. Liubimov, Dostoevsky termed both these sections "culminating points" and insisted that they were essential to the further development of his work (30, 1: 63, 102).

Dostoevsky's correspondence with Liubimov bespeaks his fear that the editorial staff of *The Russian Herald* might find Ivan's argument offensive.

In treating sensitive religious matters the writer was once again venturing into territory where the Orthodox Church claimed sole domain. The memory of the censor's tampering with the Lazarus passage in *Crime and Punishment* and the removal of Stavrogin's confession to Bishop Tikhon in *The Devils* surely must have prompted his concern. He knew that Ivan Karamazov's case against the injustice of earthly life was so potent that it might incline readers to agree with the Grand Inquisitor that human beings are too weak to refrain from evil without coercion; and he admitted that the theme of the senselessness of children's suffering was irrefutable (30, 1: 63). But he assured his editor that the portrait of Zosima would demonstrate that a "pure, ideal Christian is not an abstract matter" and that "Christianity is the only refuge for Russia from all her evils" (30, 1: 68); and he claimed that his rout of Ivan's "blasphemy" would be a "civic feat" (30, 1: 64). When his friend K. P. Pobedonostsev, the future Procurator of the Holy Synod, disturbed by the stories of child abuse and overwhelmed by the forcefulness of the Grand Inquisitor, expressed his anxiety about how Ivan's argument would be countered, Dostoevsky wrote that the response would not be a point-by-point rebuttal, but an "artistic picture" representing a completely opposing worldview (30, 1: 121–22; 315).[1]

A subsequent letter to Liubimov indicates that Dostoevsky also worried about excisions in the sections of Book 7 where Zosima's body decomposes and emits a foul odor and where Grushenka relates the fable "The Onion" ("Lukovka") to Alesha (30, 1: 126–27). He declared that he would not permit himself even the smallest doubt in the wonder-working power of relics and that Zosima constituted only a single instance. For the hubbub surrounding the elder's death, he claimed that he drew on a similar instance on Mount Athos, which the monk Parfeny described with "touching naiveté" in his *Tale of Wandering and Journeying throughout Russia, Moldavia, Turkey, and the Holy Land*.[2] Regarding "The Onion," Dostoevsky asserted that he himself had transcribed this "precious thing" from the words of a peasant woman. Here Dostoevsky was most likely distancing himself from A. N. Afanasev's banned collection *Russian Folk Legends*, which contains a Ukrainian variant in the appendix.[3]

In his remarks to Liubimov and Pobedonostsev Dostoevsky takes care to place himself squarely in the conservative, Christian camp. Yet one senses that he explains too much and that there were in fact aspects of his religious thinking that did not harmonize with that of the Church authorities of his day. A curious account of his impropriety during his meetings with the Elder Amvrosy of Optina Pustyn Monastery in June 1878 bolsters this suspicion. Instead of listening to Amvrosy's discourses "obediently and with requisite

humility," the writer reportedly spoke more than the elder, raised heated objections, developed and explained the significance of what the elder himself said, and, in general, assumed the role of teacher rather than penitent.[4] We do not know the particular points on which Dostoevsky confronted Amvrosy, but it seems clear that Optina Pustyn regarded Zosima as an erroneous representative of Russian monasticism.[5] On balance, Orthodox critics have found Zosima soft and lacking the imprint of the severe asceticism that alone might quell demonic powers.[6] Despite Dostoevsky's remark to Liubimov that he took Zosima's "person and figure from ancient Russian monks and saints" (30, 1: 102), most studies find that there are elements of the elder's spirituality that do not accord with that of the typical monastic saint of the z*hitiia* (*Lives of Saints*) or of his likely prototypes, St. Tikhon of Zadonsk and the elders Leonid and Amvrosy of Optina Pustyn.[7] Several years after the writer's death the censors actually did pronounce some of Zosima's teachings antithetical to the spirit of Orthodoxy and the existing social order, and they refused permission to publish "The Russian Monk" as a separate entity.[8]

Dostoevsky, of course, managed to navigate the erratic waters of Russian censorship. In the published novel, Ivan powerfully lays out the fundamental dilemma of intellectuals seeking faith and Zosima embodies the religious vision toward which the writer hopes to guide his readers. This "debate" is placed prior to the murder of Fedor Pavlovich and the arrest and conviction of Dmitry, so, as Nathan Rosen has noted, it is not an entity unto itself but leads into the main action where its implications are worked out in plot.[9] Besides the debate, which the novel highlights, the text embeds a vast network of somewhat less obvious religious imagery that for the most part did not attract editorial attention. This imagery, which draws on the bible, hagiography, apocrypha, and folklore, feeds into the debate, expanding meanings and lending nuances to the verbal arguments. My discussion will attempt to discern how imagery pertaining to popular belief illuminates Ivan's critique of earthly justice and Zosima's vision. Scholars have already devoted considerable attention to folklore in the novel, including Grushenka's fable about the onion by which a wicked old woman almost pulls herself out of hell, the spiritual song of Alexis Man of God in Alesha's depiction, folk laments, and beliefs about the earth and the devil.[10] But the overall contribution of folklore and popular belief to the novel's religious vision still needs to be clarified.

While Dostoevsky incorporated elements of folk belief in Zosima's portrayal, it is not quite accurate to say that popular Orthodoxy constitutes the religious ideal of the novel. True, the writer repeatedly extolled the Russian people as preservers of the image of Christ for the world, and these

people crop up everywhere in the novel – as servants in Old Karamazov's, Grushenka's, and the Khokhlakovs' houses; as traders hawking their wares in the market; as monks and visitors in the monastery; as inn-keepers and rabble-rousers in Mokroe; and as jurors who help convict Dmitry at his trial. Even the murderer Smerdiakov belongs by birth to the *narod*. He is the son of the idiot girl "Stinking" Lizaveta and, most likely, Fedor Pavlovich, though the possibility that his father was an escaped convict named Karp is never excluded. We know that Dostoevsky incorporated almsgiving, a major feature of popular faith, into his own practice. In his private notebooks for 1875–76, he confessed to sharing the inner content of the peasants' belief, while parting company with them on the more primitive aspects: "I don't like their superstitions and ignorance, but I like their heart and everything that they love."[11]

The above statement offers a clue for approaching popular religion in the novel. Dostoevsky drew on folk beliefs and narratives to sketch out an elaborate medieval cosmology that imagines the earth as intermediary between a material hell populated by devils and a heaven where God sits on a throne surrounded by angels and saints. The writer no doubt felt that he needed to question the veracity of village cosmological notions and superstitions if he wished to attract educated readers to the higher ideals of the people. As Bruce K. Ward remarks, some readers fault Zosima and Alesha precisely because they suspect that as bearers of the novel's spiritual message they "appeal to an ancient religious tradition entirely outside modern Western science and philosophy."[12] Others, as Ward also notes, believe that in *The Brothers Karamazov* Dostoevsky emerges as a visionary who anticipated the spiritual and psychological climate of much twentieth-century religious thinking.[13] I believe that the second opinion is correct and that the faith of Zosima and Alesha is not at loggerheads with intellectual honesty and a genuine questioning of the nature of the universe. Dostoevsky uses folklore imagery both to expose what seems false and dispensable in religious practice and to reveal what for him constituted the genuine core of faith.

There is far more to popular religion in *The Brothers Karamazov* than quaint practices or a primitive mindset. Though narrated against the backdrop of medieval cosmology, folklore subtexts such as Grushenka's fable posit the primacy of love for God and neighbor in human life and thus encapsulate the bond between active love and immortality that forms the nucleus of Zosima's teaching. These works enter a network of imagery probing the operation of Providence in human life and having as their pivotal text the legend of Christ treading the Russian earth. Concealed

within other references, this legend informs our overall reading of religious imagery and suggests that an unobtrusive presence of the divine suffuses all human suffering and joy. My study will first examine the handling of popular cosmology in the novel and then it will turn to the legend of Christ as beggar.

POPULAR COSMOLOGY

The novel's religious debate attains its clearest formulation in "The Grand Inquisitor" and "The Russian Monk," but Dostoevsky lays its foundation much earlier. When Alesha formally requests his father's permission to enter the monastery, Old Karamazov, half-drunk, responds with a risqué commentary on monks and women and the following burlesque query about hell:

> "After all, I don't think devils could possibly forget to drag me off to their place with their hooks when I die. And I think: hooks? Where did they get them? What are they made of? Iron? Where do they forge them? Do they have some sort of factory or something? After all, there are no doubt monks in the monastery who suppose that there is a ceiling in hell. Now I'm ready to believe in hell, but without a ceiling. Then it comes out rather more refined, more enlightened, Lutheran-like, that is. But, really, isn't it all the same with a ceiling or without a ceiling? And yet the entire accursed question lies in this! Well, and if there is no ceiling, it follows that there are no hooks. And if there are no hooks, then it follows that everything is all jumbled up and, that means, very unlikely: then who would drag me off by the hooks, because if no one drags me off, then just what will happen, and where is justice (*pravda*) on earth? *Il faudrait les inventer*, these hooks, specifically for me, for me alone, because if you only knew, Alesha, what a shameful person I am!"
>
> "But there are no hooks there," quietly and seriously uttered Alesha, looking closely at his father. (14: 23–24)

Fedor Pavlovich's harangue about the afterlife may be a spoof, but it points to the serious topics of justice and immortality.[14] His representation of devils dragging sinners to hell with hooks reflects popular superstition and can be found in spiritual songs and icons of the last judgment.[15] Here the next world is envisioned spatially with markers (a ceiling, gates, doors) delineating the boundaries of hell and paradise. Such imagery replicates the cosmology of folklore, hagiography, and many apocryphal texts. Those who take this topography of the afterworld as literal truth rather than metaphor view hell and heaven as physical places where one goes following death and from which supernatural beings intrude into earthly life to tempt the righteous or place the stamp of approbation or censure on human behavior,

often through sensational signs. The evocation of a pre-scientific cosmology leads naturally to the question of miracles as the basis for faith, which is first raised in conjunction with Alesha's choice of a monastic vocation and the discussion of eldership. Very solicitous of Alesha, the narrator assures us that the young man is neither a mystic nor a fanatic, but a realist and that "in a realist faith is not born of miracle, but miracle of faith" (14: 24). He goes on to illustrate the power of elders over those who entrust their souls to them with a quaint story about a supposed holy man whose coffin flew from the church three times during his funeral because he disobeyed his spiritual father (14: 27). During the gathering in Father Zosima's cell Fedor Pavlovich, again playacting on religious themes, baits the monks by asking whether the Lives of Saints (*Chet'i Minei*) contain the account of a "holy wonderworker who was tortured for his faith, and then, when his head was finally cut off, stood up, lifted up his head and, 'kissing it tenderly,' walked for a long time carrying it in his hands" (14: 42).[16]

Some of Dostoevsky's educated contemporaries probably perceived an element of farce in the pictures of devils with hooks, flying coffins, and decapitated saints kissing their severed heads, but not all. A few simple believers, like Alesha, who, the narrator mentions in passing, accepts the story of the flying coffin and the miraculous power of Zosima, understood such stories uncritically. At this point in the novel the reader likely dismisses this detail about Alesha as incidental and attends instead to his deep love for his elder and his refusal to pass judgment on his negligent and malicious father. Eccentric tales about deceased monks, such as the previous elder Varsonofy, who was renowned for his fasting and silence, chased women away with a stick, and emitted a fragrant odor after death, and about the great ascetics Jonah and Job, who lived to be 105, seem better suited to the less-educated element in the monastery, especially the monk Ferapont and the unnamed visitor from the northern monastery of St. Sylvester. Ferapont's account of plump devils squealing when their tails are slammed in the door picks up on Fedor Pavlovich's devils with hooks, though Ferapont relates his story with complete seriousness (14: 154).

Dostoevsky juxtaposes Zosima to Varsonofy, Ferapont, and other monks whose spirituality places supreme value on fasting, bodily mortification, and the struggle with demons, all standard traits in the portraits of monastic saints in the *zhitiia*.[17] These monks, like most characters from the *narod* and, for a time, Alesha, share a medieval construct of the universe. Zosima does not. In the early pages of the novel Zosima addresses matters related to cosmology obliquely: he tells the widow Prokhorovna, who entered her son's name in the list of prayers for the dead thinking that his soul would

be troubled and he would write home, that her deed was similar to sorcery (14: 47), and he suggests that healings attributed to him may have occurred from natural causes (14: 51). The *Notebooks* contain a passage in which Zosima tells the monks that they will kill their faith by seeking miracles (15: 245), but in the text proper Dostoevsky removes this harsh censure of the thirst for miracle from Zosima and transfers it to the Grand Inquisitor (14: 233).

Zosima makes important statements about heaven and hell in the *Life* that Alesha composes about him some time after his death, but even here Dostoevsky does not have his elder dispute a pre-scientific cosmology directly. Zosima says simply that he does not delve into the question of hell as material fire, but that in any case the spiritual torment would be worse than the physical (14: 293). He offers a new perspective in which spatial and temporal boundaries between this world and the next are dissolved.[18] In his understanding, hell is the inability to love rather than a physical place populated by devils and sinners; heaven is mysteriously concealed within each person; and everything on earth "lives and remains alive only through the feeling of its contact with mysterious other worlds" (14: 290). The novel's religious imagery creates an undertow pulling the reader away from the old cosmology and toward Zosima's view. Dostoevsky wishes to broaden his readers' mental horizons so that they will, as Liza Knapp phrases it, "imagine the unimaginable, the possibility of the existence of another world, not governed by earthly laws or earthly time, where a miracle such as resurrection could take place."[19]

By the beginning of Book 7, Dostoevsky has implanted in his narrative two distinct religious cosmologies within which to evaluate Zosima's bodily putrefaction. The elder's understanding accepts decay as a natural return of the flesh to the life-giving earth, while the *zhitiia* and reminiscences about Varsonofy and other deceased monks anticipate non-corruption and miracles following the death of a saint. The Church attributed great significance to this latter tradition, as Dostoevsky's comment to Liubimov about wonder-working relics implies. Ferapont unwittingly articulates the impasse between the two worldviews when he cries out: "Nowadays people are destroying the holy faith. The dead man, your saint . . . denied that devils exist. He used to give medicine to keep devils away. And now they've multiplied among you, like spiders in corners. And now he has begun to stink. In this we see a great sign from God" (14: 303). While many of the simple people agree with Ferapont and declare that he, not Zosima, is the true saint (14: 304), the reader easily recognizes that the loveless Ferapont represents false holiness. The scandal surrounding Zosima's decomposition

signals that the cosmological underpinning of the *zhitiia* is faulty. Alesha's *Life* of Zosima, though drawing on the quaint style of Parfeny's travelogue, lacks the pre-scientific cosmology, indicating that his post-crisis faith is free from its trappings.[20] Such a shift in his understanding is also suggested later in the novel when Lise describes a dream about devils that retreat when she makes the sign of the cross and approach when she curses God. Alesha admits that he too "*used to have* the very same dream" (*U menia byval etot samyi son*, my emphasis, 15: 23).

The backdrop of popular cosmology helps authenticate the picture of the monastery and the *narod* and forms a counterpoint to Zosima's teachings. But Dostoevsky clearly does not intend to do away with standard imagery for heaven or hell, and the novel does not preclude the possibility of the miraculous.[21] Many of his educated characters rightly understand that scientific discoveries have rendered the medieval construct of the universe and its attendant superstitious practices untenable. But they mistake this construct for the substance of faith, and in rejecting it they reject the idea of God. Dostoevsky's true concern in *The Brothers Karamazov* is not so much the pre-scientific cosmology itself as the literalist mindset that frequently accompanies it and seizes on particular details of the religious tradition while overlooking the core of forgiveness and love.[22] After all, genuinely saintly people from the *narod* seldom question it and, in any case, it underlies much of the New Testament. The reader has no problem recognizing the literalism of Ferapont, the visiting monk from St. Sylvester, and those who are scandalized by the stench of Zosima's dead body. But it is even more insidiously present in the novel's atheists. In a curious and seemingly impromptu caution to Alesha, whom Zosima has instructed to leave the monastery for service in the world, Father Paisy warns about their pseudo-scientific mindset:

> Constantly bear in mind, young man, that worldly science, having coalesced into a great power, especially in the last century, has investigated everything heavenly that was bequeathed to us in the holy books, and after a cruel analysis at the hands of this world's scientists, absolutely nothing of all that was previously sacred has remained. But they investigated it in little bits (*po chastiam*), and looked right past the whole, and one can only be amazed at the degree of blindness. Whereas the whole stands before their eyes unshakable, as before, and the gates of hell shall not overcome it.[23] (14: 155–56)

Paisy, in effect, cautions against a third cosmological model, if indeed it can be so termed: a world limited to what can be verified and measured in the here and now and lacking heaven, hell, and the supernatural. From

the mid 1860s Dostoevsky had maintained that the dominance of such a model, which sees human beings as pure flesh and blood devoid of spiritual qualities, would lead not to brotherhood, but to a social ant heap (20: 193). In the novel this possibility is encapsulated in Ivan's theorem that there can be no true virtue without belief in immortality. Rakitin, a caricature of the seminarian soon to become socialist literary critic, seems an almost too easy illustration of this position. Personally greedy and base, he argues that "even without belief in the immortality of the soul mankind itself will find the strength to live for good deeds" (14: 76) and he dogmatically propounds the ideas of Claude Bernard according to which, as Dmitry will awkwardly explain, a person feels and thinks not because he "has a soul and is some sort of image and likeness" but because of the action of "little tails" on the nerves of the brain (15: 28).[24] Rakitin knows that a cosmology that assumes miracles at the death of a saint is unsound, and in the *Notebooks* to the novel he exclaims to Alesha, "It can't be that you believed in relics?" (15: 256). In the text proper, on finding Alesha despondent and lying face down after the scandal caused by Zosima's corruption, he comments, "After all, I always regarded you as an educated person . . . You can't be this way just because your old man has begun to stink, can you? It can't be that you seriously believed he'd begin to crack miracles? . . . Well, devil take it, thirteen-year-old schoolboys no longer believe in that" (14: 308). Rakitin heard Zosima's discourses and knows that the elder placed love, not miracles, at the basis of his teaching. But having rejected the idea of God along with the archaic cosmology, he can only view the goings-on in the monastery from the perspective of "science." The new grid he has superimposed on his thinking is as inflexible as the old and contains some of the same presuppositions: reality is knowable and, to a good extent, malleable. Rakitin counts on his socialist "truth" to advance his journalistic career and make him rich much as Ferapont and the monk from St. Sylvester rely on their fasting regulations to make themselves holy and keep the devil at bay.

Smerdiakov shares Rakitin's atheism, but he is a far more puzzling personage, and as the actual murderer of Fedor Pavlovich, more sinister. A good deal of religious imagery attends his depiction, and his literalism comes into focus largely vis-à-vis biblical texts. His habit of becoming lost in thought calls to mind the expression on the face of the poor, isolated peasant standing on a forest road in winter and lost in reflection in I. N. Kramskoy's painting "The Contemplator." The narrator conjectures that this peasant, "having heaped up impressions over many years . . . will perhaps suddenly throw everything over and leave for Jerusalem to wander

about and save himself, or perhaps he will suddenly up and burn down his native village, and perhaps both of these things will happen together" (14: 117). While criticism almost unanimously associates Smerdiakov with the power of evil in the novel, the reference to Kramskoy's peasant suggests a range of potentialities. Instead of committing a terrible crime, he might have actively sought salvation as a pilgrim, or he might have both committed a crime and sought salvation (the Vlas pattern).[25] The comparison thus embeds a hint that Smerdiakov's life might have taken a different course, perhaps even paralleling that of Christ as the prototypical pilgrim of the Russian folk legend.

Questions of cosmology enter Smerdiakov's portrait through reference to the creation story. His foster father Grigory tried to teach him sacred history, but the lessons ceased almost immediately when the twelve-year-old remarked, "The Lord created light on the first day and the sun, moon and stars on the fourth day. Where did the light shine from on the first day?" (14: 114). Here we see a clash of two literalisms. Grigory, a stubborn believer who takes every word at face value, reacts by giving the boy a blow across the face. Smerdiakov for his part rightly perceives a lack of strict logic in the passage from Genesis and concludes that the story is untrue. He cannot grasp the text's central insight about the goodness of nature and the imprinting of the Creator's image in the human person, key aspects of Zosima's teaching.[26] Later Fedor Pavlovich gives Smerdiakov the keys to his bookcase, but the boy soon pronounces Gogol false and world history boring. Sullen and disdainful of all human company, he rejects spiritual, artistic, and intellectual striving and narrows his world to polishing his boots, brushing his clothes and, of course, cooking. His antipathy to created life becomes manifest in his hanging and ceremoniously burying cats as a boy and teaching children to be cruel to animals as a young man. Abundant imagery connecting him to the sect of Castrates corroborates the suggestion that the life force has dried up in him.[27]

His next excursus on the bible occurs within a scene that smacks of low comedy, though the only person enjoying it is Fedor Pavlovich. Putting on a show for Ivan's benefit, Smerdiakov has just annoyed Grigory with a casuistic explanation of why there would have been no sin if a Russian soldier (Foma Danilov), who was flayed alive for not renouncing Christianity, had denied Christ and saved his life for future good deeds. Fedor Pavlovich also taunts the deadpan Grigory by suggesting that the soldier should have been proclaimed a saint immediately and his hide should have been sent to a monastery (an offhanded evocation of the business of relics), and he tells

Smerdiakov that he will "go straight to hell and be roasted like mutton" (14: 117, 118). The lackey now confounds Grigory with Jesus' parable about faith the size of a mustard seed that can move mountains (Matthew 17: 20):

> After all, it is said in scripture that if you have faith even the size of the very tiniest seed and then tell this mountain to move into the sea, that it will instantly move. . . . Well, then, Grigory Vasilevich, if I am an unbeliever and you are so much of a believer that you can even constantly rebuke me, just try yourself to say to this mountain, not that it should go into the sea (because the sea is very far from here) but even only that it should move into our stinking little river, the one that flows behind the garden, and you yourself will see at that moment that it won't move at all . . . And this means that even you don't believe in the proper manner, Grigory Vasilevich, but only rebuke others for this in every possible way. (14: 120)

The passage Smerdiakov chooses for reproaching Grigory is thematically connected with the novel's epigraph and Zosima's reiteration of it in his teaching: "In truth, in very truth, I tell you, a grain of wheat remains a solitary grain unless it falls into the ground and dies; but if it dies, it bears a rich harvest" (John 12: 24). But unable to see beyond the surface meaning of the words, the lackey misses the life-affirming significance of the seed, which serves as the novel's primary symbol for movement from unbelief and deadness to faith and resurrection.

We later learn that Smerdiakov has solicited Ivan's opinion about Genesis. Ivan, however, sensed that he was really seeking something else and that the "sun, moon and stars" were of tertiary interest to him (14: 243). This something else was no doubt a strategy for arranging circumstances in which Dmitry would kill his father so that he could steal the three thousand rubles hidden, not under the mattress, as he had told Dmitry, but behind the icon. Smerdiakov takes from Ivan a new "gospel" that will serve this purpose, and he elaborates on the credo guiding him in the murder of Fedor Pavlovich as he returns the stolen money at their final meeting: "I formerly had the idea that with this money I'd begin life, in Moscow or even abroad . . . and more so because 'all is permitted.' It was you that really taught me this, for you talked a lot about this then: for if there is no immortal God, then there is no sort of virtue, and there's no need whatever for it. It was really you. That's how I figured it" (15: 67).

Ivan must bear responsibility for implanting his idea in Smerdiakov and for the conversation where he subconsciously commissions Fedor Pavlovich's death by agreeing to go to Chermashnia. But even so, Smerdiakov's literalism has prevented him from "reading" Ivan accurately. As Vladimir Kantor demonstrates, Smerdiakov has taken the simple theory he

needed while missing the complex struggle over this theory occurring at the core of Ivan's being.[28] Ivan's premise, as he states it at the monastery and as Smerdiakov recapitulates it above is that "*If* there is no immortality, then there is no virtue" (14: 65, my emphasis). Yet Smerdiakov chooses to appropriate it as "*Since* there is no immortality, then there is no virtue." Though Ivan tells Fedor Pavlovich that there is no God (14: 123), the question of God's existence remains unresolved for him. Zosima immediately perceives this on hearing Ivan's theory; and moved by the unrest in his heart, the elder lifts his hand to make the sign of the cross over him from a distance. But Ivan unexpectedly rises from his chair and, with a firm and serious look, goes to him for a blessing.[29] Shortly after, Alesha tells Rakitin, paraphrasing Zosima: "Ivan is seeking neither money nor tranquility. Perhaps he is seeking suffering . . . Ah, Misha, his soul is agitated. His mind is imprisoned. There is a great and undecided idea in him. He is the sort of person who doesn't need millions, but he needs to resolve an idea" (14: 76).

Allusions to Genesis again enter the text in Ivan's explanation of the idea tormenting him during his tavern conversation with Alesha. As W. J. Leatherbarrow points out, Ivan does not agree with the way in which God has scripted creation.[30] But he is not concerned with the order in which the sun, moon, and stars were set in the heavens. Unlike Smerdiakov, he has a visceral thirst for life and an instinctive feeling for nature, which manifest themselves in his passion for Katerina Ivanovna and love for the blue sky and the sticky green leaves of spring (14: 210). The problem is the Fall. He tells Alesha that it is not God, but the world created by God that he does not accept (14: 214). Adults have "eaten the apple and have come to know good and evil" (14: 216); free to choose evil, they have become corrupt, acquired ugly mugs, committed horrendous atrocities, and caused unspeakable suffering. They have befouled creation. He admits that he could never understand how one could love one's neighbors up close. Beggars, he contends, should hide and ask for alms through the newspaper. Longing for pristine harmony, Ivan can accept only what remains unspoiled. He despises his lascivious, slobbering father, his dissolute brother Dmitry, Smerdiakov, who sits annoyingly in his soul, and the silly Maksimov, whom he pushes from the carriage at the monastery. He loves the beauty of the natural world, children, Alesha. His yearning for innocence may explain why he is delighted that Alesha detects a fresh "little boy," a youthful, twenty-tree-year-old, and a greenhorn (*zheltorotyi*) in him, and why he plans to "dash down the cup" at thirty before his thirst for life turns into outright debauchery (14: 209).

Concentrating on earthly reality, Ivan tries to eliminate cosmic questions about the interconnectedness between this world and the next. He tells Alesha:

> If God exists and if he really created the earth . . . he created it according to Euclidean geometry and the human mind with an understanding of only three dimensions of space. At the same time there have existed and exist even now geometricians and philosophers . . . who doubt that the entire universe, or more generally, all being was created only according to Euclidean geometry, and they are so bold as to dream that two parallel lines, which according to Euclid, can never come together on earth, might actually come together somewhere in infinity. I, my dear, have decided that since I can't even understand this, then how can I possibly understand about God? I humbly acknowledge that I do not have the capacity to solve such questions; I have an earthly, Euclidean mind, and how then are we to decide questions that are not of this world? (14: 214)

Despite his inner sense that there is far more to creation than his mind can grasp, Ivan attempts to narrow it to what he can document in the here and now – the horrendous pain of earthly life and, above all, the suffering that adults inflict on children. This is the prime cause of his protest against the created order, and, as if to aggravate his own heartache and make Alesha experience it vicariously, he launches into a litany of graphic descriptions of cruelty, all of which, Dostoevsky assured Liubimov, could be found in the newspapers (30, 1: 64). He describes how the Turks throw Bulgarian babies in the air and catch them with their bayonets; how they cut unborn infants from their mothers' wombs; how an intelligent, educated gentleman and lady beat their seven-year-old daughter with birch rods; how a well-respected father and mother beat, switch, kick, and then lock their five-year-old daughter in the cold outhouse overnight; and how during serfdom a general set his pack of hunting dogs on a little peasant boy who mistakenly hit the leg of his favorite hound with a stone. Dostoevsky had previously used much of this material in *The Diary of a Writer*, but here it is placed in the context of a heartrending plea for justice to a God who, existent or not, made a mess of creation. Ivan wants retribution for this senseless suffering and he wants it now, not in some vague eternity; a cosmic order that mandates the torments of hell for those who cause it makes no sense to him. After all, the suffering has already been inflicted and cannot be undone (14: 222–23).

Ivan is right about many things. His catalog of horrors can be documented in real life. He knows that evil is overpowering, pervasive, and bound up with the very nature of being human. It cannot be summarily dismissed with the sign of the cross, like the material demons that Ferapont

exorcises and Lise and Alesha ward off in their dreams. And he is no Rakitin, who would claim that good and evil are obsolete moral concepts and only scientific and social categories have validity. (Ivan, of course, despises Rakitin and terms him an "untalented liberal bag" 14: 309.) After the novel was published, Dostoevsky commented in a notebook on the depth of his hero and implied that he himself had confronted the very questions Ivan poses on his personal path to faith (27: 48). One might even conjecture that in repeatedly terming Ivan a "blasphemer" in his letters to Liubimov and Pobedonostsev, the writer was secretly comparing him with Job, who also demanded that God give him an answer to senseless suffering and was accused of rebelling by his conventionally pious friends.[31]

But though Ivan has stated the problem of suffering correctly and raised a mighty cry on behalf of all humanity to the God he does not quite believe in, he himself lacks concrete love toward the other. In the stupidity and ugliness of the people he despises, he sees only the Fall and forgets that the creation story also affirms that they are the image of God. On hearing about Ivan's love for the sticky green leaves and the blue sky, Alesha remarks that half his work is done and all that remains is for him "to resurrect his corpses, who, perhaps have never died" (14: 210). Val Vinokur suggests that this perplexing statement signifies that Ivan must now learn to discover the world as "full of particular faces, generous and alive" and serves as the "seed" that Alesha plants in him that may eventually germinate.[32]

In bending creation to fit his "Euclidean" mind, Ivan sees only half the truth about human beings. He admits that there may be more than he can grapple with and that this would require him to confront the possibility that "parallel lines meet in infinity." But then, of course, his intelligence would no longer suffice to pronounce the world evil. For all his brilliance, Ivan wants the questions of suffering and God simple and resolvable, which in part explains why before proceeding to the narration of his "poem" about the Grand Inquisitor, he adduces a catalog of dramatic and literary works that bring heavenly powers down to earth. Ralph Matlaw contends that despite his paradoxes Ivan is a literalist and that his roster, which is mostly from the Middle Ages, indicates that his disbelief may be a "function of the age in which he lives."[33] Educated in the natural sciences, Ivan knows that the medieval cosmology of these works is unsound. Yet it appears that in part he has selected them precisely for this cosmology because he himself yearns for certainty, for an age when everyone partook of the rites of belief and one could rely on celestial beings to take care of affairs on earth. The *Notebooks* contain a passage suggesting he might be more ready to accept "the eternal old God" (*vekovechnyi staryi bozhen'ka*, 15: 231) whose existence

was not questioned; and in good measure his Grand Inquisitor controls the masses (and, presumably, eliminates atrocities against children) by giving them the "old God" of certainty and acceding to their desire for miracles. As he tells Christ, "People seek not so much God, as miracles. And since people don't have the strength to remain without miracles, they will create for themselves new miracles of their own making and already bow down before the miracle of a magic healer or a peasant woman's sorcery" (14: 233).

In his poem, Ivan presents a world in which the obligatory retention of a medieval cosmos and its attendant provision for the miraculous is juxtaposed to the freedom that Christ offers. Divided against himself, Ivan can fully accept neither. His education militates against belief in a pre-scientific cosmos, but he is not willing to relinquish intellectual control and leap into the "unknowing" of faith. On a less grandiose scale, but more importantly, he is not willing to consider that the people he so despises may still harbor a divine spark somewhere deep within them, and he refuses to take responsibility for them.[34] Sitting on a fence between cynicism and moral indifference on the one hand and a passionate love of life and desire for faith on the other, Ivan watches as the tragicomedy between Dmitry and his father unfolds before his eyes and throws out ambiguous moral-philosophical aphorisms, from which Smerdiakov willingly extracts the part he needs. Within the dynamics of the novel's plot, Ivan's primary evil is, as Robert Louis Jackson notes, "his inaction, his unwillingness to mediate the struggle between Dmitry and Fyodor, his insistence on playing the observer."[35] He can only respond to Alesha's question about what will happen between Dmitry and their father with the words of Cain, "What am I anyway? My brother Dmitry's keeper?" (14: 211).

CHRIST AMONG US

The selection of works in Ivan's "preface" to the Grand Inquisitor is worth a closer look because it reveals the depth of his desire for faith and, despite the backdrop of medieval cosmology, leads to an understanding of the divine that contrasts with that of the "eternal old God" of miracle and moral certainty. The roster culminates in clear references to the legend of Christ as beggar. This legend functions in the novel as an all-pervasive subtext that brings into sharper relief "the image of Christ before us" without which, according to Zosima, "we would all perish and go astray" (14: 290). Ivan begins with a loose mention of medieval spectacles incorporating celestial forces, casually tosses in Dante's name, notes French mystery plays that brought "the Madonna, angels, saints, Christ, and God himself" on stage,

and then elaborates on a scene from Victor Hugo's *Notre Dame de Paris* in which the Virgin herself appears to the people of Paris. Next he moves to pre-Petrine Moscow where he notes Old Testament plays and gives a detailed synopsis of "The Wandering of the Mother of God through Hell" ("Khozhdenie Bogoroditsy po mukam"). Subsequently he mentions the anticipation of Christ at the end of time, the appearances of Christ and the Queen of Heaven to various saints, the beginning of a new heresy in Germany threatening belief in the miraculous, and Fedor Tiutchev's poem "These poor villages" ("Eti bednye selen'ia"), which describes Christ walking through the Russian countryside blessing it.

Ivan's references are divided between European and Russian works, and each group ends more or less in the present. His interest is in heavenly, not demonic forces, though he mentions the devil in conjunction with the new heresy. The curious split between Christ and "God himself" in French mystery plays may point to Ivan's own ambivalent feelings in his notions about the divine. He dwells at some length on *Notre Dame de Paris*, "The Wandering of the Mother of God through Hell," and the Tiutchev poem. Knapp suggests parallels between Gudule, the grieving mother of Esmeralda in Hugo's novel, and Ivan, both of whom protest against God and the universe in the name of suffering children.[36] Dostoevsky's hero seems to have in the back of his mind the image of Mary as a constant refuge for those who suffer unjustly. He says that the apocryphal "Wandering of the Mother of God through Hell" contains pictures that rival Dante and recounts in detail how, guided by the Archangel Michael, Mary travels through hell and then argues fearlessly before God to obtain a reprieve for its tormented sinners from Good Friday to Trinity Sunday.[37] Ivan is especially taken by the agony of the sinners in a burning lake "whom God has already forgotten," an expression he considers exceedingly profound and powerful (14: 225). His poem, he comments, "would have been of this very sort if it had appeared at that time. In mine he appears on the stage; true, he doesn't say anything in the poem, but only appears and passes through" (14: 225). Ivan thus ascribes a genre and period to his own work and hints that it may turn on the juxtaposition of the old God responsible for the order of hell with divine mercy, this time in a masculine rather than feminine embodiment. Despite an occasional ironic note, he seems genuinely moved by the picture of heavenly beings entering into human suffering and raising a cry on behalf of anguished, forgotten people. One can perhaps discern behind his comments echoes of his own pain as an abandoned and forgotten child, cared for by strangers and knowing that his father was "the sort of person of whom it was even shameful to speak" (14: 15).

Remarking that Tiutchev deeply believed in the truth of his words, Ivan quotes the following verse for Alesha: "Weighed down by the burden of the cross / Throughout you, my native land / The heavenly Tsar in a slave's guise (*v rabskom vide*) / Has tramped, blessing you" (14: 226).[38] Next follows an impassioned commentary in which Ivan offers a picture of a merciful Christ longing for human company. He said that he "thought up" his poem with ardor (14: 224), and throughout his conversation with Alesha he is in an agitated, feverish state, and no wonder: in this preface Ivan reveals the side of himself that most deeply hungers for God and gives us an idea how this God might look. Following the quotation from Tiutchev, he immediately explains:

> It had to be just that way, I tell you. And he wanted to appear if only for a minute to the people – to the people who were anguishing, suffering, stinking-sinful, but who loved him in childlike fashion. The action of my work is in Spain, in Seville . . . Oh, of course it's not his coming at the end of time . . . No, he just wanted, if only for a minute, to visit his children . . . And in his measureless mercy he passes once again among people in the same human image (*v tom samom obraze chelovecheskom*) in which he walked for three years among people fifteen centuries ago. (14: 226)

Reference to the widespread and very popular legend of Christ as a beggar walking the Russian land is unmistakable in Tiutchev's lines and Ivan's rephrasing of their theme. Ivan's description resembles Afanasev's recapitulation of the legend's plot: "Even now, as formerly, during his earthly life, the Savior walks about the earth, assuming the guise of an impoverished pilgrim, testing the mercy of people."[39] In the novel Dostoevsky masks the legend slightly, in part no doubt to avoid association with Afanasev's collection, which the ecclesiastical censor had pronounced morally offensive. Yet as an artist, Dostoevsky often incorporates cherished themes obliquely and even with deformation, and like the spiritual song about the beggar Lazarus in *Crime and Punishment*, the legend of Christ walking the Russian earth is deeply embedded in the text and resonates in multiple, sometimes surprising contexts. Grushenka's "fable" about the onion serves as another reference to the legend since it constitutes one of several tailpieces to the variant known as "Christ's Brother."[40] As is appropriate with oral genres, Alesha hears (rather than reads) both "The Onion" and the skewed version that Ivan has thought up for his Grand Inquisitor. The legend about the harrowing of hell that the peasant driver Andrey recounts to Dmitry as he speeds toward Grushenka at Mokroe and allusions to songs and apocrypha where the Mother of God rather than Christ visits suffering humanity

function as related narratives, though in the texts where Mary appears, the element of protest may be stronger.[41]

There are several aspects of the legend that are particularly significant for *The Brothers Karamazov*. First of all, the image of Christ as impoverished and seeking charity fundamentally reverses that of the fearsome and authoritative "eternal old God." This is no longer the "heavenly tsar," but a needy and vulnerable pilgrim-beggar. It is the antithesis of the awe-inspiring Christ that Ferapont claims to see at night stretching his hands from the branches of the elm tree near his hermitage and threatening to whisk him upwards "in the spirit and glory of Elijah" (14: 154). In the legend it is not so much Christ himself, as the people he visits who dispense or withhold mercy (though, of course, folklore narrative tends to balance the score at the end by having Christ reward for kindness or punish for hardheartedness). Christ asks for alms, often in the form of a night's lodging, and usually poor peasants grant his request and rich ones refuse him. In the legend, then, charity (almsgiving) becomes a rite by which one interacts with Christ himself. By extension, since Christ stands behind all who suffer or are in need, any act of charity is shrouded in a divine nimbus and the giving of alms implies reverencing the image of God in the other.

The legend preserves popular cosmological notions, sometimes offering elaborate pictures of heaven and hell. This is especially true of "Christ's Brother" (Grushenka's legend), where the kind son (or children) of an unmerciful mother (or parents) is invited to visit the beggar he befriends, and unknowingly travels to heaven from where he looks down and sees his mother writhing in torment.[42] Zosima's teaching dispenses with the archaic cosmology, but not the sin. Hell now becomes the inability to love and can be as much a part of earthly reality as of the next world. The practice of charity – something as commonplace as a kind word or deed – lies at the very heart of the legend and of Zosima's teaching. He tells Madame Khokhlakova that it is the only path to genuine faith: "Strive to love your neighbors actively and tirelessly. To the extent that you succeed in love, you will become convinced of the existence of God and the immortality of your soul" (14: 52).

From the perspective of the folk legend, Ivan's comment that beggars should seek alms through the newspaper amounts to a subconscious refusal to look at the face of God on earth. He ponders this visage only at the safe distance of theoretical discussion or literary reference. How does the Christ that he juxtaposes to the Grand Inquisitor compare to the Christ of folk legend? We have a precise physical description for the inquisitor: he is ninety, wizened, has bloodless lips, thick gray eyebrows, a fire burning in his sunken

eyes, and is dressed in a simple monk's cassock rather than his splendid cardinal's robes. Ivan arouses our curiosity about Christ's appearance when he notes that though he arrives quietly, the crowd immediately recognizes him and comments, "This might have been one of the best parts of the poem, that is, precisely why people recognize him" (14: 226). The Grand Inquisitor scrutinizes Christ's face on entering his prison cell and then keeps his eyes fixed on him as he is speaking, and when Alesha says he does not understand, Ivan responds that maybe the inquisitor was struck by something in his appearance (14: 228). But the text does not specify just what this something was or what made the crowd recognize him. Rather than sketching a detailed portrait, Ivan confines himself to Christ's quiet smile of infinite compassion and the light that emanates from him ("the sun of love burns in his heart," "rays of light, illumination, and power flow from his eyes," 14: 226–27). This Christ resembles an icon of Christ the Savior rather than the scruffy pilgrim of the legend or Tiutchev's poem. Significantly, Ivan uses a word that can mean "icon" (*obraz*) rather than Tiutchev's more neutral "guise" (*vid*) in describing the appearance Christ takes on in visiting his people. The *Notebooks* seem to support the idea that Ivan can only envision Christ as exalted. They contain the statement, "Power flowed from his garments" (*ot riz*, 15: 232). The term *rizy*, which signifies a priest's chasuble, is the plural of *riza*, the setting for an icon. Here both meanings are probably intended. The *Notebooks* further add: "How did they recognize him? Could he really have looked like us: after all, he's a miracle, a heavenly mystery" (15: 232). In preserving the external beauty of the image Ivan signals his discomfort with the idea of Christ assuming the countenance of the lowly, foul-smelling rabble, even while descending to earth and walking among them.

The folk legend seldom gives motivation for Christ's coming, but begins directly with his appearance as a beggar.[43] Ivan's Christ seems lonely; he comes to Seville because he desires to visit his people. His interactions with the crowd are modeled on well-known scenes from the Gospels: people stream after him, throw flowers before him, cry out "Hosanna" (Mark 11: 8–10); he cures a blind man and raises the seven-year-old daughter of an important official from the dead (Mark 4: 41–42; 10: 51–52). But these crowds move aside for the Grand Inquisitor and do not protest Christ's arrest and imprisonment. Throughout the inquisitor's extended account of why it has been necessary to correct his work, Christ remains silent; his only act is to quietly kiss the old man at the end (14: 239). This Christ does not seek alms and he, not the people he visits, is the source of compassion. Yet like the Christ of legend, Ivan's Christ is vulnerable. The guards have

no trouble seizing him and, as the Grand Inquisitor says, the very people who acclaimed him will turn against him the next day. He is vulnerable in Seville for the same reason he is vulnerable in the legend and on the cross: he has placed his fate in the hands of men and women and refuses to use his divine power to help himself or compel belief in him. As the Grand Inquisitor says,

> Instead of taking control of human freedom, you multiplied it and burdened the spiritual kingdom of men with its tortures forever. You wanted the free love of people, you wanted them to follow you freely . . . Instead of the firm ancient law, people must decide for themselves with a free heart what is good and what is evil having only your image (*obraz*) before them as a guide. (14: 232)

Alesha, who has already heard Zosima say that on earth people have only the image of Christ to guide them, tells Ivan that his poem is in praise of Christ, not in abuse of him and observes that the inquisitor's secret is that he does not believe in God. When Ivan agrees, but asks his brother to consider his old man's genuine love and willingness to suffer for humanity, Alesha becomes sorrowful and bursts out that Ivan too does not believe in God.

Ivan's inner fragmentation enters his poem not only in the juxtaposition of Christ as the champion of human freedom and the Grand Inquisitor as the control that will keep the rabble from straying, but also in the particulars of his image of Christ. His Christ is forgiving, compassionate, but still lofty and not quite one with the people he visits. We can glimpse behind this image Ivan's isolation and yearning for faith and, at the same time, his repugnance for the crowd in whose name he, like his Grand Inquisitor, claims to speak. At issue, once again, is his refusal or inability to acknowledge God's image in others, and thus behind his poem lies a consciousness that is light years from the popular notions of charity informing the legend of Christ as beggar. As Jackson says, "Man, in Ivan's view, is unworthy of the Redeemer. He deserves the Grand Inquisitor."[44] Ivan will begin to move toward the ideal of the legend only after he hears from Smerdiakov what his subconscious already knows: that it was he who gave the tacit permission and validation for the murder of Fedor Pavlovich. The ugly consequences of his theories and inaction lay bare his own fallen state and banality. He confronts this side of himself head-on in the paltry, poor-relative devil of his nightmare who derides him for the exalted form in which he couches his ideas, "In truth you are angry with me because I didn't somehow appear to you in a red glow, 'thundering and shining' with singed wings . . . How is it, you might say, that such a petty devil could

have entered into such a great person" (15: 81).[45] But before Ivan meets his devil, he does one good deed: he arranges for the care of a drunken peasant whom he had callously knocked into the snow earlier. Ironically, the time spent on this act of charity prevents him from getting to the authorities with the evidence that Smerdiakov murdered his father before the lackey hangs himself.

The active love that Zosima teaches and Alesha tries to implement is more consonant with the thrust of the legend of Christ as beggar than Ivan's lofty image of the divine. The moral message of the legend is stark and leaves no room for maneuvering: one must render concrete charity to the poor and needy behind whom stands Christ. This command is absolute: as Zosima tells his brothers, "Do not set conditions with God" (14: 149). Moreover, the elder teaches, the only possible locus of active love is the earth and men and women are given life exclusively for love: "Only once in infinite being, measured neither by time nor space, a certain spiritual creature by its coming to earth has been given the capacity to say to itself: 'I am and I love.' Once and only once has it been given an instant of active and *living* love, and for this has earthly life been given with its seasons and times" (14: 292, Dostoevsky's emphasis). The earth that Christ himself walks becomes *terra sancta*, the place where the divine is made present in love. Hell, by extension, becomes the rejection of the fundamental reason for which one is born (14: 292).

Like the Christ of legend, Zosima has spent time begging. Together with the quiet, gentle monk from the peasantry, Anfim, he wandered through Russia as a pilgrim gathering donations for their poor monastery. Alesha's *Life* includes a scene of encounter with his former orderly Afanasy. As a young officer, Zosima had dealt him two severe blows across the face the night before he was planning to duel with a landowner whom he regarded as a rival in love. On waking the next morning, he was overpowered by remorse, begged Afanasy's forgiveness, asked the pardon of the man he was about to fight, and soon after resigned his commission and arranged to enter a monastery. Eight years later, Afanasy, now retired and married, spotted Zosima at a bazaar and invited him into his home where he brought him his children to bless and, though not wealthy, gave him alms for his monastery and his own keep (14: 287). This small interchange replicates the legend not only in its external details (the master is now a beggar seeking alms from his servant) but also in its inner meaning. It is emblematic of Zosima's entire spiritual journey and indicates his inward conformation in humility and charity to the beggar Christ who places himself at the mercy of the other.

How does the legend fit in with the hagiographic patterns that the novel suggests for Zosima and Alesha? *The Brothers Karamazov* includes models of sanctity that can potentially be manipulated for one's own purposes, thereby leading away from humility and charity. In the early pages Dostoevsky pursues a contrast between Ferapont and Zosima that highlights the ascetic traits of fasting, silence, and bodily mortification in the former and the somewhat less common inner traits of tenderness (*umilenie*), humility (*smirenie*), and perspicacity (*prozorlivost'*) in the latter. In the final analysis, Ferapont's portrait proves closer to the technical norm of the *zhitiia*.[46] But Ferapont is a travesty of sanctity; he astounds the more ignorant among the *narod* with his ascetic feats, yet lacks compassion. His strict adherence to the details of the *zhitiia* cannot lead to genuine holiness because the focus is on the self and not on the continual outpouring of this self for others.[47] Jostein Børtnes reminds us that the true function of the model should be "to bring about a gradual transformation into the person of Christ."[48] Dostoevsky does not dispense with fasting and other ascetic works in Zosima's portrait; but by keeping these traits in the background and emphasizing instead his love of God and of all creation he renders Zosima another Christ.

The novel advances St. Alexis "Man of God," one of the most beloved saints of the *narod*, as a possible model for Alesha. Reference to the saint first occurs during Zosima's visit with the believing peasant women as the name of the child for whom a mother is lamenting (14: 47). Later Zosima includes the *Life* of the saint in a list of stories from the bible and *zhitiia* that he advises his monks to read to the people (14: 267). Rakitin and Dmitry use the saint's name and epithet directly in addressing Alesha (14: 321; 15: 27). Born of God-fearing, noble Roman parents, St. Alexis conceived a desire to become a monk in childhood, but his parents found him a bride. On his wedding night he secretly exchanged his rich garments for a beggar's clothing and went to Mesopotamia. There he distributed all his wealth to the poor and lived as a beggar near a church of the Mother of God. After seventeen years he returned to Rome, took up residence in a hovel near his father's house and lived there another seventeen years. His grieving parents and bride recognized him only after he died.[49] Many incidentals in Alesha's depiction correspond to the portrait of his patron saint.[50] But, I believe, in adducing Alexis "Man of God" Dostoevsky wishes to indicate that literal adherence to this model would stifle his hero's spiritual growth. In order to conform to the saint's inward disposition, Alesha must reverse his biographical pattern.[51] Zosima commissions him for service in the world and implies that his life will include a period of wandering:

I bless you for a great service in the world. You will still need to wander (*stranstvovat'*) a good deal. And you must take a wife, you must. You will have to endure all, before you come back again. And there will be much to do. But I have confidence in you and that's why I'm sending you. Christ is with you. Preserve him and he will preserve you. You will see great sorrow, and in this sorrow you will be happy. This is my precept for you: seek happiness in sorrow. Work, work tirelessly. (14: 71–72)

Alesha's "wandering" brings him first to Grushenka. Grieving and dejected after Zosima's death, he allows Rakitin to take him to the woman who, he suspects, will corrupt him. But to his surprise, he finds kindness in her. Delighted to see him, she sits on his lap; but the instant she hears that Zosima died, she reverently makes the sign of the cross and jumps off. Alesha is deeply moved by her pity, his face lights up, and Grushenka confesses to having had evil intentions. But, she adds, she once "gave an onion" and launches into the "fable" she heard as a child from her old, deaf cook Matrena about a wicked old woman who almost won release from hell (pictured as a burning lake) because she gave a beggar an onion.

The onion of Grushenka's tale serves as a metaphor for the small acts of charity that, in Zosima's teaching, constitute one's task on earth.[52] Such little deeds of active love, highlighted in Grushenka's narrative and her interaction with Alesha, pervade the background of the novel and are often mentioned only in passing. Sometimes they take the form of obvious almsgiving: a peasant woman leaves sixty kopecks with Zosima for someone poorer than she is, and we later learn that it went to a widow with children reduced to beggary after a fire (14: 49, 258). More often they are simply acts of kindness flowing naturally from the hearts of good people: Marfa feeds her impoverished neighbors; she and Grigory take in the Karamazov children and Smerdiakov when their mothers die; Dr. Herzenstube gives three-year-old Dmitry a pound of nuts; Grushenka gives money to her Polish seducer when he is destitute; Alesha gathers schoolboy-friends around the dying Iliusha's bedside. At the margins of the text, we encounter an array of servants who slip in and out imperceptibly, lighting icon lamps, preparing meals, caring for children, and, like Matrena and Dmitry's driver Andrey, recounting folk narratives. A tiny exchange at the end of the novel indicates that within popular Orthodoxy such ordinary acts of kindness were perceived as the normal flow of life. As the Snegirevs leave to bury Iliusha, Alesha asks the old landlady to watch over the family invalids. Her response is simply, "I know what to do. I'll be with them, after all we're Christians too" (15: 191).

Grushenka's story has additional ramifications. It directs us back to the legend "Christ's Brother," from which it is excerpted, and particularly to the

motifs of adoptive brotherhood (the beggar Christ exchanges crosses with the giver of alms) and a journey to heaven (the beggar invites the giver to visit him). The novel reflects both. Conversing in a candle-lit room against the backdrop of Rakitin's spiteful remarks that they are deranged and that there is no reason why he should love them, a confused, grieving Alesha and Grushenka, who has suffered five years of humiliation, engage in an exchange of kindness that uplifts both of them. Each is simultaneously a giver and a recipient of charity, and thus they share the rôles of the beggar Christ and the merciful son or daughter. Immediately after Grushenka makes the sign of the cross, Alesha calls her "sister" (14: 318), symbolically entering into a kinship bond with her that will be strengthened with her betrothal to Dmitry and their common participation in his suffering. Rakitin functions as the "unmerciful" relative; like the evil old lady of the legend, he imprisons himself in the hell of his own malice. Significantly, though he is Grushenka's first cousin, he denies that he is related to her (14: 77).

The legend's "journey to heaven" or, sometimes, to a grand feast finds expression in Grushenka's trip to the town of Mokroe and Alesha's dream during the reading of the story of the wedding at Cana from John's Gospel.[53] Like the giver of alms in the legend who knows neither the identity of the beggar nor the location of his house, Grushenka and Alesha do not quite understand where their journeys will lead. Leaving for Mokroe, Grushenka imagines that she is about to make amends with the man who seduced her five years earlier. But she soon discovers that Dmitry, who will be the host of the great feast and near orgy that ensues, is her true destination, and their betrothal occurs at the very moment he is arrested for his father's murder. Confessing her own guilt for inciting the rivalry between father and son, she now aligns her life with Dmitry's great suffering. When we next see her two months later, her inner peacefulness and resolve attest to a spiritual renewal, and besides visiting and feeding Dmitry in prison, she has taken on the support of the destitute Maksimov.

Alesha returns to the monastery to find Paisy reading the Gospel over Zosima's body. He notices the open window signaling that the smell of decay has worsened, but, no longer disturbed, he joyfully reflects that at Cana Jesus visited poor people not in their grief, but in their gladness and that he must have had "a quiet smile on his face" when he told his mother, "My hour has not yet come" (14: 326). He dozes, senses that the room is expanding, and beholds the wedding feast turned eschatological banquet and his elder, who invites him to drink the new wine of joy with them. For he too gave an onion, he says, and many people at the feast gave only one tiny onion (14: 327). Zosima asks if Alesha has seen Christ, whom he

describes as "our sun," "awesome in grandeur," "terrible in his loftiness, but infinitely merciful" (14: 327), a description which, along with the "quiet smile" that Alesha imagines, evokes Ivan's picture of Christ in his Grand Inquisitor. Alesha fears to look, perhaps because of his sense of unworthiness and perhaps because he must spend a lifetime encountering the "beggar" Christ on earth before he is prepared for this radiant countenance. He awakes, goes out, and falls down on the earth, ecstatically watering it with his tears and sensing that "the threads from all God's countless worlds had come together in his soul" (14: 328) under the starry vault of heaven. Three days later Alesha leaves the monastery to take up his task in the world.

In the novel, then, the "heaven" that Grushenka and Alesha find at the end of their journeys fortifies them for the service of love to others. Grushenka is strengthened for her future ordeal with Dmitry and Alesha for ministering to the Snegirev family and the boys. But the deep sorrow of Iliusha's death and the magnitude of the agony awaiting Dmitry bring us back willy-nilly to Ivan's query about suffering and justice. "Christ's Brother" touches on the problem of suffering: on the journey to heaven the adoptive brother often encounters a series of anguished sinners who wish to know how much longer they will remain in torment, and Christ usually counters with a list of specific sins they have committed.[54] This answer will not suffice for the novel. Nor do the deeds of active charity of which life on earth must consist offer an answer. While these acts "incarnate" the divine in human life, honor the image of God in the other, and often provide concrete relief in destitution and distress, they cannot save Iliusha's life or explain why Dmitry may face twenty years in the Siberian mines without Grushenka. Zosima does not attempt to explain suffering: he tells the peasant woman grieving for her little son Aleksey to keep crying, but not to forget that her child is with God; and he assures her that her great sorrow will gradually turn into quiet joy (14: 46–47). Here he invokes the power of time to change all things as he will in his thoughts on how Job could love his new family after the loss of his former one (14: 265). This response to suffering is categorically different from the enigmatic bow he makes before Dmitry at the monastery. On the night of his death Zosima explains this bow to Alesha: "Yesterday I sensed something terrible . . . He had such an intent look . . . that my heart became suddenly terrified of what this man was preparing for himself. Once or twice in my life I have seen in some people such an expression . . . as if depicting the entire fate of those people and, alas, this fate has come to pass" (14: 259).

Within the novel's structure the episode describing Iliusha's sickness and death relates directly to the atrocities against innocent children that Ivan

described. Throughout the Snegirevs' ordeal, Alesha and the boys attend to their needs, trying in some way to ease their pain. But except for scattered remarks of the precocious would-be socialist Kolia, there is no questioning of the justice of this "death sentence." The dying child, lying in his makeshift bed under an icon of Christ, pulls his friends together into a community of love, and, as Alesha tells them in his speech at the stone in the novel's final pages, their good memories of Iliusha and each other will remain with them all their lives and may some day keep them from great evil (15: 195).

The situation with Dmitry is much bleaker. He has "eaten the apple" and is by no means innocent. Though he prays and speaks about his ecstatic love of God, there is something distinctly pagan in his unrestrained passion.[55] He has not done the deeds of active love or taken responsibility for others. He knows in his heart what he should have done, for he tells Andrey on the way to Mokroe, "One must not trample on other people; one must not spoil the lives of others" (14: 371). Yet he strides through much of the novel drinking, brawling, threatening to kill his father who, he says, has robbed him of his rightful inheritance, and beating down those who get in his way, among them Captain Snegirev, whom he drags out of a tavern by his beard, unmindful of little Iliusha's cries for mercy and Grigory, whom he knocks down when he bursts into Fedor Pavlovich's house seeking Grushenka and almost kills on the night of the murder. The one thing Dmitry does not do is kill his father, and the only explanation he can give is: "God was watching over me then" (14: 355).

Yet there is another side to him. Deep within Dmitry lies a softhearted child who dreams of growing into a new man. Andrey's account of the harrowing of hell catches up both sides of his character and again brings Christ into human suffering. Here it is not the surface of the earth that Christ visits, but its deepest bowels. As he frenetically speeds toward Mokroe believing that he has just killed Grigory, Dmitry asks his driver:

"Andrey, simple soul, tell me, will Dmitry Karamazov land in hell or not, what do you think?"

"I don't know, my dear, it depends on you, because to us you are . . . Well you see, sir, when the Son of God was crucified on the cross and died, then he descended straight from the cross into hell and freed all the sinners who were suffering there. And hell gave out a moan because it thought that now no one would come to it, sinners, that is. And then the Lord said to hell, "Don't moan, hell. For from here will come to you all the rulers, directors, chief judges, and rich people, and you'll be filled up just as you were until the end of time, until I come again." . . . So you see, sir, the sort that hell is intended for . . . But we think that you, sir, are just

like a little child, that's how we think about you . . . Though it's true that you get angry, sir, but the Lord will forgive you on account of your simple heartedness."[56] (14: 371–72)

Dostoevsky uses imagery connecting Dmitry with the under regions of the earth throughout the novel. He bears the name of the Greek goddess Demeter; when he sends Alesha to his father for the three thousand rubles he needs to return to Katerina Ivanovna, he utters a phrase that echoes that of the Prophet Jonah from the belly of the whale ("And you have brought my soul up from hell," 14: 111; Jonah 2: 7).[57] Madame Khokhlakova's bizarre suggestion that Dmitry seek his fortune in the Siberian gold mines represents a perverse echo of this theme and an uncanny forecast of what may come to pass. One must agree with Richard Peace that the novel's epigraph about the seed that must die to bear fruit, which in John's Gospel serves as a sign of Christ's death and resurrection, applies most specifically to Dmitry and that it is no coincidence that Zosima quotes it immediately after the explanation of his bow.[58]

Dmitry later said that during the frantic days prior to his father's murder he was "struggling with his fate and saving himself" (14: 329). Religious imagery permeates the scene at Mokroe. The very name "Mokroe" from the Russian word for "wet" seems to connect with the (burning) lakes that represent hell in Grushenka's fable, "The Wandering of the Mother of God through Hell," and also with "Lake Street" where Iliusha, whom he humiliated, lies dying. It may equally refer to the water of baptism, for this is the moment when Dmitry renounces his old ways and begins to understand his responsibility for his actions. During the interrogation he removes his clothing and puts on someone else's, suggesting the assumption of a new identity. Critics have noted that the term "mytarstva" (ordeals), which Dostoevsky uses for the chapters in which Dmitry is interrogated, appears in Orthodox writings for the trials endured by a soul on its way to heaven.[59] All this prepares Dmitry for the transforming dream in which he is traveling in the steppe and sees a burnt-out village. A poor crying peasant baby grayish from the cold and stretching out its little fists captures his attention:

"Why is it crying?" Mitia insisted as if he were dull-witted, "why are its little hands bare, why don't they cover it up?"

"Why, the babe is chilled through and through, its clothing has frozen and it can't get warm."

"But why is that? Why?" dull-witted Mitia kept persisting.

"Folks are poor, burnt-out, there's no bread, they're begging for their burnt-out village."

"No, no," Mitia said as if he didn't understand, "you tell me why are the burnt-out mothers standing there, why are these people poor, why is the babe poor, why is the steppe bare, why don't they embrace, kiss, why don't they sing joyful songs, why have they become so black from black misfortune, why don't they feed the babe?" (14: 456)

This "good dream" remains with Dmitry in prison, and he later talks about going to Siberia for the "babe." His understanding of responsibility for the child signals that he has moved toward the ethic of love of Zosima's teaching and the legend of Christ as beggar.

But is Dmitry a new man? Jackson is no doubt right in saying he is in transition, no longer the old self, but seeking a new way of being.[60] The legend of the harrowing of hell holds the promise of new life (it is the theme of one of the Orthodox icons for Easter), but it captures the period between Crucifixion and Resurrection. At the end of the novel it is still Holy Saturday for Dmitry; the seed in him has not quite germinated. He is truly a naked beggar, as he casually terms himself during his interrogation (14: 418), and he needs to be able to gaze into the loving faces of Alesha and Grushenka for reassurance. His new self is fragile and even Rakitin can throw him off course with his talk of Claude Bernard, which he perceives as a peril to his self-identity as a resurrected man. Will he be able to endure the great suffering before him when he would likely be separated from the people he loves? Alesha tells him that he is not ready for such a great cross and he need not accept it since he did not kill (15: 185); and he reminds Katerina Ivanovna that in visiting Dmitry she will be "visiting a person who has perished without guilt . . . His hands are clean; there's no blood on them. For the sake of his immeasurable future suffering visit him now! Come and see him off into darkness" (15: 182).

How is the reader to react to the agony that seems to await Dmitry? Might Zosima's bow hint that there exists suffering greater than time can heal? Dostoevsky softens the question by placing the closing scene with Dmitry in the penultimate position and ending his novel with Alesha's speech at Iliusha's stone. But the problem posed by Dmitry's suffering must be addressed even if it cannot be solved definitively. In mentioning that he has seen a facial expression similar to Dmitry's several times before, Zosima directs us to his "mysterious stranger" Mikhail, whose story occupies a pivotal place in his *Life*.[61] In contrast to Dmitry, who has been falsely convicted on the basis of vast circumstantial evidence for a murder he did not commit, Mikhail murdered a woman years earlier for which there was no evidence to incriminate him and the prime suspect died. He married, had a family, and led an upright life as a husband, father, and benefactor of

society (a blueprint of Smerdiakov's recommendation for Foma Danilov). Now his conscience troubles him and Zosima tells him to confess. Though the patterns are reversed, both stories raise the question of unjust suffering. In Mikhail's case, the suffering is not his own, but that of his innocent family, so that, as Caryl Emerson points out, his belated confession would seem to fly in the face of active love.[62] Something similar occurs in the story of St. Alexis Man of God. One of the most troubling aspects of this *Life* is that the saint's resolve to serve God as a beggar inflicts an inconsolable grief on his loving, God-fearing parents and bride that after thirty-four years is as powerful as on the day he left. Yet Alexis is one of the most beloved heroes of the Russian *narod*, and one must suppose this is so because his stark and bizarre story of total self-giving in answer to God's call views human life from the perspective of eternity rather than of earthly contentment.

Ivan's refusal to deal with cosmic questions – with, as he calls it, "all being" (*vse bytie*, 14: 214) – can only lead to despair in the face of such overwhelming pain encountered up close and not from the safe distance of speculation. Zosima speaks of earthly time as an instant in "infinite being (*v beskonechnom bytii*), measured neither by time nor space" (14: 292). Suffering of the magnitude that Dmitry faces and Mikhail and St. Alexis inflict on their innocent families evades human comprehension and must be relegated to Zosima's "infinite being" or what Emerson (following Bakhtin) terms "great time."[63] Zosima would tell us that the God who is present in the small deeds of charity must not be reduced to these small deeds. On earth we cannot fully grasp the divine any more than Alesha (or Ivan) can gaze directly at the radiant face of Christ. Yet, as Alesha discovered lying on the earth under the starry vault of heaven and Dmitry learned when he did not kill his father, we can on occasion experience a mysterious, life-giving bond with this infinite being.

Dostoevsky was right to suspect that Ivan's argument might prove unacceptable to Orthodox authorities. Very few of them would have followed him onto religious terrain where time-honored ascetic precepts might lead to demonic pride and where the gates to heaven and hell were situated within the human heart. *The Brothers Karamazov* leaves us with Zosima's dictum that we have nothing but the image of Christ to guide us; it also leaves us with the dreary figure of the Grand Inquisitor, who looms behind the saintly elder uttering the same words. In his notes toward rebutting a liberal critic who attacked him for his religious ideas and defense of the people's Christianity, Dostoevsky himself confessed that the Grand Inquisitor and Ivan's litany of atrocities against children contain expressions of atheism stronger than anything that had yet appeared in Europe. Therefore,

he continued, "It is not as a child that I believe in Christ and confess him; my hosanna has passed through the crucible of doubt, as my devil puts it in the same novel" (27: 86). But how is it possible to bridge the abyss between the Grand Inquisitor and Zosima? The novel's only answer is the one Zosima gives to Madame Khokhlakova: by persistence in deeds of active love. Zosima's teaching accords with the heart of the people's Christianity as encapsulated in their legend of Christ as an impoverished pilgrim who seeks charity among men and women. Deeply embedded in the text of *The Brothers Karamazov*, this legend helps create the sense that the divine truly becomes one with human life in simple acts of kindness.

Concluding remarks: Dostoevsky and the people

Varvara Timofeeva, a twenty-three-year-old proofreader with ties to the radical intelligentsia who worked with Dostoevsky while he was editor of *The Citizen*, described a remarkable conversation she had with the writer about the Gospels. Their exchange brings us to the core of Dostoevsky's thinking about Christianity:

"Well, and you still haven't told me just what your ideal is," he began . . .

"There's only one ideal . . . for those who know the Gospels . . ."

"And do you know them?" he asked unbelievingly.

"I was very religious as a child and I read them constantly."

"But since then, of course, you've grown up, gotten smarter, having been educated in the higher sciences and art . . ."

On the edges of his mouth appeared the "crooked" smile so familiar to me. But this time it didn't disturb me.

"Then," I continued in the same tone, "under the influence of science my religiousness began to take different forms, but I always thought and still think that we have nothing better and higher than the Gospels!"

"But how do you understand the Gospels? After all, people interpret them variously. What do you think: what is the very essence of them?"

The question that he asked entered my mind for the first time ever. But now it was as if distant voices from the depths of my memory prompted an answer:

"The realization of the teachings of Christ on earth, in our life, in our conscience . . ."

"And is that all?" he went on in a disappointed tone.

I also thought that it was too little.

"No, there's more . . . Not everything ends here on earth. All this earthly life is only a step . . . to other existences . . ."

"To other worlds!" He said ecstatically, throwing his arms up toward the open window, in which could then be seen the beautiful, bright, transparent June sky.

"And what an amazing though also tragic task it is to tell this to people! . . . Amazing and tragic because there is a great deal of suffering here . . . Much suffering but on the other hand how much grandeur!"[1]

This exchange with Timofeeva is reminiscent of Dostoevsky's reflections beside the dead body of his first wife, Masha, about nine years earlier. Then he had said that the highest use human beings could make of their egos was to annihilate them in total self-giving and that the insufficiency of earthly life signaled that "on earth the human being is a creature that is only developing, consequently, is not a finished creature, but transitional" (20: 172–73).

There is no direct mention of the Russian people in Dostoevsky's conversation with Timofeeva or his thoughts at Masha's bier. But both distill what Dostoevsky regarded as the essence of Christianity and thereby point to the reasons why he extolled the *narod* as "God-bearing." He discerned in the lives of many simple people and in their songs and tales an ethic of absolute charity and belief in immortality. No wonder he was disappointed when he thought Timofeeva had limited the Gospel's implementation to this life only. For Dostoevsky, genuine Christianity required *both* the social Gospel *and* eschatology.

When in a notebook entry the writer confessed to sharing the inner content – the heart – of the people's beliefs, he clearly had in mind their capacity for total self-giving and conviction that life goes on after death.[2] Dostoevsky personally engaged in the time-honored feature of popular Christianity of giving alms to beggars. He did not accept the people's archaic cosmology or abundant notions about the spirit world, though he was aware of these and incorporated them into his art. His childhood nanny, Alena Frolovna, may have believed that the house spirit (*domovoi*) was disturbing her sleep and likely placed some credence in the ghost stories that she told the Dostoevsky children. But it was her kindheartedness, her total gift of herself to the family she served and to the burnt-out peasants of Darovoe to whom she offered her life's savings and not this aggregate of popular superstitions that caused the writer to extol her as a genuine saint from the people. The Russian soldier-martyr Foma Danilov about whom Dostoevsky wrote in his *Diary* for January 1877 is another "saint" from the people. His choice to undergo torture and a cruel death at the hands of his captors makes sense only in the light of immortality. No one was present to witness his deed; he could easily have converted to Islam and then, as Smerdiakov casuistically suggests in *The Brothers Karamazov* (14: 117–20), converted back to Christianity and lived a good and useful life. But for this soldier God was absolute and other, not a figment of his imagination or an edifying ideal. Dostoevsky extolled Danilov as the genuine face of the *narod*, one of the diamonds beneath the centuries-long accumulation

of filth, and insisted that among the people there were thousands like him (25: 14–16).

Dostoevsky's Christianity was, like the people's, simple, without a lot of theological baggage.[3] He extolled Orthodoxy as the truest form of Christianity, but in truth, he was not particularly "churchy." It is remarkable how little time we actually spend in church and how seldom the sacraments of Orthodoxy are mentioned outside deathbed scenes in his novels. The social orientation of Dostoevsky's Christianity was always strong because the demand for charity allowed no compromise in the obligation toward the poor and oppressed. This aspect of his thinking has caused some to suspect that the effects of utopian socialism lingered throughout the writer's life. But more likely it was the Gospel mandate to love one's neighbor as expressed in the passage in Matthew in which one's needy neighbor is identified with Christ himself (Matthew 25: 31–46) that informed both his attraction to utopian socialism in the 1840s and his life-long concern with concrete help for the destitute.

Dostoevsky's conversation with Timofeeva and his reflections at Masha's bier encode the spiritual ideal that he perceived in the *narod*, tried to embody in some of his fictional characters, and argued about to the point of tediousness in *The Diary of a Writer*. But they do not contain the full truth about his religious thinking. There is a serenity about them that rings false and does not reflect Dostoevsky's life-long struggle to believe. Faith did not come easy for him, and the overriding problem was the question of the divinity of Christ, the belief that "The Word truly became Flesh" (11: 187–88, 178; 192–93). This was mostly a problem for the educated classes, and Dostoevsky struggled with it fiercely as an *intelligent*. We need to listen to him when he admits to A. N. Maikov that the problem of the existence of God tormented him consciously and unconsciously all his life (29, 1: 117). When in the *Notebooks* to *The Devils* the hero ponders whether it is possible for a civilized man to believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God, we are right to suspect that Dostoevsky was asking the question of himself.

For Dostoevsky, I believe, faith was not natural or instinctive; it was an act of will, a decision to place himself with Christ despite the evil and fragmentation he saw all around him and without the certainty of the more doctrinaire authorities of the Orthodox Church. In this, as many readers have instinctively grasped, he was a citizen of the modern world for whom there was no faith without doubt. Ivan Karamazov's hypothesis that there can be no love without belief in immortality, articulated first

by Miusov, echoed by Dmitry and Zosima, and later used as a rationale for murder by Smerdiakov (14: 64–65; 15: 67) rings truer than a simple articulation of the popular faith, for it contains multiple potentialities and, as Malcolm Jones notes, is the "authentic voice of a soul in torment."[4] To limit our understanding of Dostoevsky's religious thinking to his vision of the ideal is to settle for only half the picture. And without the other half we would not have the great novels, which, as Jones puts it, paraphrasing Dmitry Karamazov, serve as a battlefield where "the devil is struggling with God."[5]

Similarly, we cannot dismiss the overwhelmingly primitive and violent side of Russian popular life. The same *narod* in which Dostoevsky saw the Christianity that he knew from Alena Frolovna and tried to capture in Makar Dolgoruky also taught him the outer limits of willfulness and debauchery in the hearts of human beings. Before he came to regard the *narod* as the bearer of higher truth, Dostoevsky lived in the dark and brutal world of the Dead House. He knew first hand the people's hatred for the upper classes; and he knew that they sometimes rose up and murdered despised *barins* and that while they would not follow the intelligentsia in bringing about social change, they were fully capable of murderous and self-destructive uprisings on a massive scale.[6] The pictures Dostoevsky subsequently gives in his fiction and journalism of wife-beating, child abuse, cruelty to animals, and continual drunken binges indicate that he never forgot this side of the *narod* even when he had learned, as Robert Louis Jackson would have it, to see its true image (*obraz*) beneath ugliness and disorder (*bezobrazie*).[7] Dostoevsky knew that the peasant Marey had a cruel "Tatar" streak that showed in beating his mare across her eyes; but even so he could discern his truer image in the deep motherly kindness with which he comforted a frightened child. But there is movement in the other direction as well. Dostoevsky used the example of Alena Frolovna's total generosity to refute V. G. Avseenko's position that the common people would become kulaks and bloodsuckers once they adopted an active life. But in *The Brothers Karamazov* he presents just such a common person who has become a "bloodsucker" in Trifon Borisovich, the tavern keeper at Mokroe who steals shamelessly from Dmitry and then claims that the people are all robbers (15: 101). Dostoevsky no doubt saw his greed as a result of his wealth – the effect of the idea that "the bag of gold" was everything and ignorance of the popular tradition about the demonic power of money over its possessor (22: 30). Dostoevsky posited a way out for the great sinners among the *narod* in the "Vlas pattern" of sin and dramatic repentance. He saw this pattern ingrained both in popular life and in folk narratives, and he

imagined that it gave witness to the conscience and thirst for redemption deep within the popular psyche. Of course, he failed to convince many of his contemporaries and, I suspect, many readers today.

In the final analysis, we read Dostoevsky not for his words over Masha's bier or his harangues about the superior Christianity of the Russian people, but to experience the worlds of Raskolnikov, Myshkin, Stavrogin, the Karamazov brothers, and a host of other uprooted characters seeking answers to the fundamental problems of human existence. Yet we cannot expect to enter fully into their dilemmas without coming to grips with the ubiquitous folklore imagery of the great novels or the many, often semi-invisible characters from the *narod* that populate the background. Dostoevsky's techniques for incorporating folklore narratives are multiple and vary from novel to novel. The absence of the people and the poor fit of the folklore texts to the hero help create a dark, disjointed world that seems lacking in the grounding of real life in *The Idiot*. In *The Devils*, folklore imagery offers multiple potential identities for Stavrogin and Maria Lebiadkina, and the offbeat nature of the popular spirituality in the novel suggests that the writer at times had doubts about the Christian essence of the *narod*. Most often, folklore imagery embeds the ethical and spiritual values of the people, as in the use of the spiritual song about the beggar Lazarus in *Crime and Punishment* and the legend of Christ wandering the Russian earth in *The Brothers Karamazov*. In these novels the folklore subtext deepens the portraits of Raskolnikov and Ivan Karamazov by revealing the hunger for God lying beneath their rebellious, atheistic fronts.

Notes

INTRODUCTION: THE PEOPLE IN DOSTOEVSKY'S ART AND THOUGHT

1. This, to a large extent, reflects the overwhelming influence of Mikhail Bakhtin on the study of Dostoevskii. See his *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, ed. and trans. Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), pp. 50, 78–79, and elsewhere.
2. G. M. Fridlender, "Dostoevskii v sovremennom mire," *Dostoevskii: Materialy i issledovaniia*, 1 (Leningrad, 1974), 24.
3. For example, Robert Louis Jackson, *Dostoevsky's Quest for Form: A Study of His Philosophy of Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), pp. x–xi.
4. On Dostoevskii's Christianity see, for example, Nicholas Berdyaev, *Dostoevsky*, trans. Donald Attwater (New York: Meridian, 1957); Steven Cassedy, *Dostoevsky's Religion* (Stanford University Press, 2005); Roger L. Cox, *Between Earth and Heaven: Shakespeare, Dostoevsky and the Meaning of Christian Tragedy* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1969); A. Boyce Gibson, *The Religion of Dostoevsky* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1973); Sarah Hudspith, *Dostoevsky and the Idea of Russianness: A New Perspective on unity and brotherhood* (London: Routledge-Curzon, 2004); N. Losskii, *Dostoevskii i ego khristianskoe miroponimanie* (New York: Chekhov Publishing House, 1953); Malcolm Jones, *Dostoevsky and the Dynamics of Religious Experience* (London: Anthem Press, 2005); George Pattison and Diane Oenning Thompson, eds., *Dostoevsky and the Christian Tradition* (Cambridge University Press, 2001); James Scanlan, *Dostoevsky the Thinker* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002); and A. N. Strizhev, ed., *F. M. Dostoevskii i Pravoslavie* (Moscow: Otchii dom, 1997). The most extensive work to date on Dostoevskii and folklore is V. A. Mikhniukevich, *Russkii fol'klor v khudozhestvennoi sisteme F. M. Dostoevskogo* (Cheliabinskii gosudarstvennyi universitet, 1994). One study that probes embedded motifs and integrates the folk tradition and Christianity is V. E. Vetlovskaia, *Poetika romana* Brat'ia Karamazovy (Leningrad: Nauka, 1977).
5. For a discussion of Dostoevskii's inner struggle see Aileen Kelly, "Dostoevskii and the Divided Conscience," *Slavic Review*, 47 (1988), 239–60.
6. See George Gibian, "Traditional Symbolism in *Crime and Punishment*," in Feodor Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, 3rd edn, ed. George Gibian, trans. Jesse Coulson (New York: Norton, 1989), pp. 529–32.

7. Linda J. Ivanits, "Folk Beliefs about the Unclean Force in *The Brothers Karamazov*," in George Gutsche and Lauren G. Leighton, eds., *New Perspectives on Nineteenth-Century Russian Prose* (Columbus, OH: Slavica, 1982), pp. 142–43.
8. See V. E. Vetlovskaia, "F. M. Dostoevskii," in A. A. Gorelov, ed., *Russkaia literatura i fol'klor: Vtoraia polovina XIX veka* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1982), p. 14.

1 THE FACE OF THE PEOPLE, 1821–1865

1. A. M. Dostoevskii, *Vospominaniia* (Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo pisatelei, 1930), pp. 7, 24–27, 47. Andrei was three and a half years younger than Fedor. His *Memoirs*, which serve as our major source for the writer's childhood, were written mostly in the mid 1890s and are inaccurate in some details. Andrei offered much the same material to Orest Miller for his biography of Dostoevskii. See O. F. Miller and N. N. Strakhov, *Biografiia, pis'ma, zametki iz zapisnoi knigi F. M. Dostoevskogo* (St. Petersburg: A. Suvorin, 1883). For a critique of the inadequacies of Andrei's *Memoirs* see V. S. Nechaeva, *Ranii Dostoevskii: 1821–1849* (Moscow: Nauka, 1979), pp. 33–34 and *V sem'e i usad'be Dostoevskikh* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoe izdatel'stvo, 1939), p. 7.
2. Miller and Strakhov, *Biografiia*, p. 12.
3. A. M. Dostoevskii, *Vospominaniia*, p. 27. Miller and Strakhov, *Biografiia*, p. 8, note that Andrei, unlike Fedor, remembered Alena Frolovna as an inferior storyteller.
4. A. M. Dostoevskii, *Vospominaniia*, pp. 33–34. Andrei's *Memoirs*, pp. 57–58, mention mock liturgical processions at Darovoe in which Vera took part.
5. Nechaeva, *V sem'e*, p. 56, notes that Akulina lived many years in the family of the writer's sister Vera.
6. Ibid.
7. A. M. Dostoevskii, *Vospominaniia*, pp. 44–45.
8. Ibid. pp. 69, 38. See also PSS 23: 150.
9. Miller and Strakhov, *Biografiia*, p. 12, and Nechaeva, *Ranii Dostoevskii*, p. 34.
10. In 1971, S. V. Belov heard this story from the granddaughter of A. P. Filosofova, a close friend of Dostoevskii in the 1870s. See Z. A. Trubetskaia, "Dostoevskii i A. P. Filosofova" (publikatsiia S. V. Belova), *Russkaia literatura*, 3 (1973), 117.
11. A. I. Savel'ev, "Vospominaniia o F. M. Dostoevskom," in A. S. Dolinin, ed., *F. M. Dostoevskii v vospominaniiakh sovremennikov*, 2 vols. (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1964), vol. I, p. 100.
12. Geir Kjetsaa, *Fyodor Dostoyevsky: A Writer's Life*, trans. Siri Hustvedt and David McDuff (New York and London: Viking, 1987), p. 5.
13. Miller and Strakhov, *Biografiia*, p. 13.
14. Ibid. p. 15; Nechaeva, *Ranii Dostoevskii*, p. 34.
15. A. M. Dostoevskii, *Vospominaniia*, pp. 56–57.
16. Anna Dostoevsky [A. G. Dostoevskaia], *Dostoevsky*: *Reminiscences*, trans. Beatrice Stillman (New York: Liveright, 1975), p. 284.
17. Leonid Grossman, *Dostoevskii*, 2nd edn (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1965), p. 17.

18. Andrei places the fire in 1833 (*Vospominaniia*, pp. 59–60), but on the basis of church records, Nechaeva places it in 1832 (*V sem'e*, p. 40).
19. See Joseph Frank, *Dostoevsky: The Seeds of Revolt, 1821–1849* (Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 32.
20. Ibid. p. 50.
21. F. M. Dostoevskii, "Zapisnaia tetrad' 1875–1876 gg.," in *Neizdannyi Dostoevskii: Zapisnye knizhki i tetradi 1860–1881 gg.*, Literaturnoe nasledstvo, 83 (Moscow: Nauka, 1971), p. 416.
22. Nechaeva, *Rannii Dostoevskii*, p. 46.
23. A. I. Savel'ev, "Vospominaniia o F. M. Dostoevskom" in Dolinin, ed., *Dostoevskii v vospominaniiakh sovremennikov* vol. I, pp. 99–100. K. A. Trutovskii, "Vospominaniia o Fedore Mikhailoviche Dostoevskom," in Dolinin, ed., *Dostoevskii v vospominaniiakh sovremennikov*, vol. I, pp. 1, 107, notes that the other students respected Dostoevskii for his intellectual and moral superiority.
24. Nechaeva, *V sem'e*, p. 33. See also Kjetsaa, *Fyodor Dostoyevsky*, p. 13.
25. Frank, *The Seeds of Revolt*, p. 71, believes the writer had this incident in mind in a notation for *Crime and Punishment* that reads, "My first personal insult."
26. G. A. Fedorov has argued that Mikhail Andreevich died of a stroke and that the cause of death indicated on the medical records is correct ("K biografii F. M. Dostoevskogo: Domysly i logika faktov," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, June 18, 1975, 7). Kjetsaa, *Fyodor Dostoyevsky*, pp. 29–36, accepts Fedorov's argument and sees no cogent reason to claim that Dostoevskii gave credence to the murder story. Frank, *The Seeds of Revolt*, pp. 86–87, footnote, seems to accept Fedorov's argument, but maintains that Dostoevskii believed the murder story. We may never be absolutely certain whether the peasants murdered Dostoevskii's father, but the evidence Nechaeva presents in *V sem'e*, pp. 49–61 and "Iz literatury o Dostoevskom: Poezdka v Darovoe," *Novyi mir* (March, 1926), 128–44 as well as her refutation of Fedorov in *Rannii Dostoevskii*, pp. 85–94, point strongly in this direction. Nechaeva discovered particularly interesting material in her investigation of the church records for Darovoe and Cheremoshna. She learned that in 1839 the entire male population of Cheremoshna and some of the women, a total of nineteen people, failed to go to confession and receive communion during the Easter season. In previous and subsequent years the maximum number failing to observe their Easter duty was five or six. Later the peasants apparently rectified this situation, for an additional notation appeared after their names. Nechaeva, *V sem'e*, p. 53, hypothesizes that the peasants feared for their souls if they should hide their intention to kill the *barin* from the priest in confession.
27. Aimée Dostoevsky [Dostoevskaia, Liubov'], *Fyodor Dostoyevsky* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1922), pp. 31–37. On serious misrepresentations in Liubov''s account see Frank, *The Seeds of Revolt*, p. 16 and Nechaeva, *V sem'e*, pp. 6–7, 17–19.
28. A. M. Dostoevskii, *Vospominaniia*, p. 110. Nechaeva, *Rannii Dostoevskii*, pp. 90–92, believes that the hush money came from the Kumanins who wanted to preserve the estate for the children and bore no great love toward Mikhail

Andreevich. She thinks the appointment of the local police official N. P. Elagin as temporary trustee may have been part of the pay-off. In a letter to his sister Varvara of November 12, 1839 Mikhail Dostoevskii spoke disparagingly about Elagin, who apparently used his position for his own gain. See A. M. Dostoevskii, *Vospominaniia*, p. 414, n. 56.

29. Included in A. M. Dostoevskii, *Vospominaniia*, pp. 413–14, n. 56. The letter is dated June 30, 1839.
30. Nechaeva, *Rannii Dostoevskii*, p. 100. See also, A. M. Dostoevskii, *Vospominaniia*, pp. 123–24.
31. Nechaeva, *V sem'e*, pp. 51–52 and M. V. Volotskoi, *Khronika roda Dostoevskogo, 1506–1933* (Moscow: Sever, 1933), pp. 56–58.
32. Nechaeva, *Rannii Dostoevskii*, p. 86.
33. This letter is dated May 27, 1837. Nechaeva includes it among the other letters of M. A. Dostoevskii in *V sem'e*, p. 121.
34. Nechaeva, *V sem'e*, p. 51.
35. Ibid. p. 54. See also Nechaeva, "Iz literatury o Dostoevskom," 128–44.
36. Volotskoi, *Khronika roda*, pp. 57–58.
37. Nechaeva, *V sem'e*, pp. 56–59. Nechaeva, p. 55, notes that Church books for the period under consideration generally did not use the family names of serfs in their entries. Interestingly, she suspects that Dostoevskii's reference to a Katia in the village some thirty years later in his jottings for the "Life of a Great Sinner" ("Zhitie velikogo greshnika," PSS 9: 126–27) refers to Katerina (*Rannii Dostoevskii*, p. 42).
38. For the writer's treatment of abused girls in his fiction see Susanne Fusso, "The Insulted Female Child," in her *Discovering Sexuality in Dostoevsky* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2006), pp. 17–41.
39. A. P. Miliukov, "Fedor Mikhailovich Dostoevskii," in Dolinin, ed., *F. M. Dostoevskii v vospominaniiakh sovremennikov*, vol. I, pp. 197–200. Also, PSS 4: 233–34. The second half of this prisoner's story, which concerns his murder of a captain who wanted to punish him when he requested food and water at the end of a hot day's transit, is similar to the story of Luchka in *Notes from the House of the Dead* (PSS 4: 233–34; 89–92).
40. *The Seeds of Revolt*, pp. 87–88. See also Kjetsaa, *Fyodor Dostoyevsky*, p. 28. On the inadequacies of Sigmund Freud's attempt to attribute the onset of Dostoevskii's epilepsy to the guilt of desiring his father's death see Frank, *Seeds of Revolt*, pp. 25–30, 379–91.
41. Nechaeva, *V sem'e*, pp. 62–67.
42. Miller and Strakhov, *Biografiia*, p. 90, note that in the 1870s Dostoevskii remarked privately that important details about the Petrashevskii Circle had escaped the Investigating Commission and that a whole conspiracy had vanished. For an overall discussion of Dostoevskii's thinking about socialism and his political activity in the 1840s see Frank, *The Seeds of Revolt*.
43. Frank, *The Seeds of Revolt*, pp. 275, 267–68. According to Maikov, Dostoevskii attempted to recruit him as the eighth member of Speshnev's group (PSS 18: 191). The names of most of the conspirators remained unknown until 1956

when the diary of another friend to whom Maikov told the story came to light.

44. V. L. Komarovich, "'Mirovaia garmoniia' Dostoevskogo," in *O Dostoevskom: Stat'i* (Providence, RI: Brown University Press, 1966; reprinted from *Atenei*, 1–2 (1924)), 121 states bluntly "Dostoevskii's socialism of the 1840s was in fact nothing other than a peculiar understanding of Christianity." See also his "Iunost' Dostoevskogo," in *O Dostoevskom: Stat'i* (Providence, RI: Brown University Press, 1966; reprinted from *Byloe*, 28 (1924)), 73–115.
45. Savel'ev, "Vospominaniia o F. M. Dostoevskom," p. 104.
46. Quoted in Miller and Strakhov, *Biografiia*, pp. 90–91.
47. Frank, *The Seeds of Revolt*, pp. 228–29.
48. When he believed he was about to be executed, Dostoevskii said to Speshnev, "Nous serons avec le Christ." See Frank, *Dostoevsky: The Years of Ordeal, 1850–1859* (Princeton University Press, 1983), pp. 57–58. In his study of Dostoevskii as a philosopher Scanlan agrees that there is no firm evidence that Dostoevskii ever fully succumbed to arguments against the existence of God and immortality, even in his more radical phase. See his *Dostoevsky the Thinker*, p. 17.
49. Frank, *The Years of Ordeal*, pp. 117, 125.
50. Edward Wasiolek, *Dostoevsky: The Major Fiction* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1964), pp. 23–26.
51. See Fridlender, "Dostoevskii v sovremennom mire," 24 and V. Ia. Kirpotin, "Zapiski iz mertvogo doma," in *Tvorchestvo F. M. Dostoevskogo*, ed. N. L. Stepanov *et al.* (Moscow: AN SSSR, 1959), p. 105.
52. The Polish political prisoner Szymon Tokarzewski transmits a picture of the writer during his time in the stockade as a xenophobic Russian patriot who brandished his status as a nobleman, and P. K. Mart'ianov found him anti-social and sullen. See Frank, *The Years of Ordeal*, pp. 87–88, 111–14 and Mart'ianov, "Iz knigi *V perelome veka*," in *F. M. Dostoevskii v vospominaniiakh sovremennikov*, vol. I, p. 237. See also Shimon Tokarzhevskii [Szymon Tokarzewski], "F. M. Dostoevskii v Omskoi katorge (Vospominaniia katorzhanina)," trans. V. Arendt, in *Dostoevskii i o Dostoevskom*, *Zven'ia*, vol. VI (Moscow, 1936), pp. 495–512. The accuracy of both Tokarzewski's and Mart'ianov's portraits of Dostoevskii in Omsk has been questioned. See also PSS 4: 280–81.
53. The words, "if someone proved to me that Christ were outside the truth, and *in reality* the truth were outside Christ, then I should prefer to remain with Christ than with the truth," are sometimes construed as a fixed statement of Dostoevskii's credo and the key to his post-Siberian religious life. While separation of genuine faith from rational argumentation about faith is characteristic of Dostoevskii, I believe that this statement is not so much an attack on reason as a testament to the difficulty of the writer's continual struggle to believe and orientate his life toward the Gospel. See Robert Louis Jackson, *Dialogues with Dostoevsky: The Overwhelming Questions* (Stanford University Press, 1993), p. 289 and Gibson, *The Religion of Dostoevsky*, p. 22. Scanlan,

Dostoevsky The Thinker, p. 7, argues that in his letter to Fonvizina, Dostoevskii does not fully abandon reason in favor of irrational faith and notes that, in any case, the writer did not think that the truth lay outside Christ.

54. See S. V. Belov, "Katorzhniki Omskogo ostroga 1852–1853 gg.," *Dostoevskii i mirovaia kul'tura*, 14 (Moscow, 2001), 258–63 for a breakdown of the actual prisoners in the stockade.
55. For overall studies of *House of the Dead* see Robert Louis Jackson, *The Art of Dostoevsky: Deliriums and Nocturnes* (Princeton University Press, 1981), pp. 33–170 and Frank, *The Years of Ordeal*, pp. 69–115 and *Dostoevsky: The Stir of Liberation, 1860–1865* (Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 213–32. On narrative and generic peculiarities of *House of the Dead* see also V. B. Shklovskii, *Za i protiv*, in *Sobranie sochinenii*, 3 vols. (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1973), vol. III, pp. 229–30; E. A. Akel'kina, "Nekotorye osobennosti povestvovaniia v *Zapiskakh iz mertvogo doma* F. M. Dostoevskogo," in Problemy metoda i zhanra, 7 (Tomskii Universitet, 1980), pp. 92–102 and Gary Rosenshield, "The Realization of the Collective Self: The Rebirth of Religious Autobiography in Dostoevskii's *Zapiski iz mertvogo doma*," *Slavic Review*, 50 (1991), 317–27. For Dostoevskii's accommodations to censorship see PSS 4: 276–77, 283.
56. Gary Saul Morson, *Narrative and Freedom: The Shadows of Time* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), p. 129. See also Jackson, *The Art Of Dostoevsky*, pp. 35–36.
57. On the "Jesus Prayer" see Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov, *On The Jesus Prayer*, trans. Father Lazarus (London: John M. Watkins, 1965), and Archimandrite Lev Gillet, *The Jesus Prayer*, trans. Timothy Ware (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Press, 1987).
58. On Dostoevskii's anti-Semitism see David I. Goldstein, *Dostoyevsky and the Jews* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981). Isai Fomich was based on the prisoner Isai Bumshtel', a Jew who had converted to Orthodoxy. See PSS 4: 283–84. For a somewhat different perspective on Isai Fomich see Gary Rosenshield, "Isai Fomich Bumshtein: The Representation of the Jew in Dostoevsky's Major Fiction," *Russian Review*, 43 (1984), 261–76.
59. Dostoevskii's rather tolerant treatment of Islam and Catholicism is an indication that at this time he did not view the Russian *narod* as the exclusive preserver of the true faith. See Gary Rosenshield, "Religious Portraiture in Dostoevsky's *Notes from the House of the Dead*: Representing the Abrahamic Faiths," *Slavic and East European Journal*, 50 (2006), 581–605.
60. Jackson, *The Art of Dostoevsky*, p. 107, suggests that the foot washing may signal the narrator's "anointing" at the hands of the people.
61. Ibid. p. 18 and elsewhere. Jackson, p. 72, finds the dressing gown a "symbol of evil incarnate" testifying to "the corruption at the very core of Russian life."
62. See PSS 4: 289.
63. Jackson, *The Art of Dostoevsky*, pp. 39–40, says this frame gives the work its "iconographic and apocalyptic dimension as a drama of death and resurrection."

64. Dostoevskii may have been aware of the popular belief that the activity of the unclean force on earth was especially strong during the dark months of the winter season. See V. I. Chicherov, *Zimnii period russkogo zemledel'cheskogo kalendaria XVI–XIX vekov*, Trudy, 40 (Moscow: AN SSSR, Institut etnografii, 1957), p. 36.
65. On the theatricals see N. K. Piksanov, "Dostoevskii i fol'klor," *Sovetskaia etnografiia*, 1–2 (1934), 154–56, A. Misiurev, "Dostoevskii i narodnoe tvorchestvo (v gody katorgi)," *Sibirskie ogni*, 11 (1971), 178–79, and especially Julie de Sherbinin, "Transcendence through Art: The Convicts' Theatricals in Dostoevskij's *Zapiski iz mertvogo doma*," *Slavic and East European Journal*, 35 (1991), 339–51.
66. This seems to be Jackson's view. See *The Art of Dostoevsky*, pp. 74–75.
67. It appears that Dostoevskii was not personally subjected to corporal punishment in the Omsk Stockade despite Riesenkampf's [Rizenkampf] contention to the contrary. See Frank, *The Years of Ordeal*, pp. 78–80, Riesenkampf's letter to A. M. Dostoevskii of February 16, 1881 in *F. M. Dostoevskii: Novye materialy i issledovaniia*, V. G. Bazanov, D. D. Blagoi *et al.*, eds. Literaturnoe nasledstvo, 86 (Moscow: Nauka, 1973), pp. 548–51; and V. S. Vainerman, "Omskoe kruzhenie Dostoevskogo," *Dostoevskii: Materialy i issledovaniia*, 6 (1985), 178.
68. Dostoevskii's "Siberian Notebook" indicates that he overheard a story on the lines of the one he transmits. See PSS 4: 275.
69. Gary Rosenshield, "Akul'ka: The Incarnation of the Ideal in Dostoevskij's *Notes from the House of the Dead*," *Slavic and East European Journal*, 31 (1987), 16–17.
70. Jackson, *The Art of Dostoevsky*, pp. 89, 92–93.
71. Misiurev, "Dostoevskii i narodnoe tvorchestvo", 181, notes that in the popular consciousness the name "Akul'ka" had connotations of "stupid," a detail which may suggest that Dostoevskii intended her as a sort of holy fool.
72. This Passion narrative had a special appeal for Dostoevskii personally, and he placed a cross at its beginning and end in the copy of the New Testament that the Decembrists' wives had given him. See Geir Kjetsaa, *Dostoevsky and His New Testament* (Oslo: Solum Forlag, 1984), p. 25.
73. See Wasiolek, *Dostoevsky: The Major Fiction*, pp. 25–26.
74. Frank, *The Seeds of Revolt*, p. 167.
75. Miliukov, "Fedor Mikhailovich Dostoevskii," p. 196.
76. Wayne Dowler, *Dostoevsky, Grigor'ev, and Native Soil Conservatism* (University of Toronto Press, 1982), pp. 95–96.
77. Ibid. pp. 96, 102–03, 108. See also A. L. Ospovat, "K izucheniiu pochvennichestva (Dostoevskii i Ap. Grigor'ev)," *Dostoevskii: Materialy i issledovaniia*, 3 (1978), 144–50 and "Zametki o pochvennichestve," in *Dostoevskii: Materialy i issledovaniia*, 4 (1980), 168–73.
78. Dowler, *Native Soil Conservatism*, pp. 66–67.
79. Ibid. pp. 83–84.
80. See V. Kirpotin, *Dostoevskii v shestidesiatye gody* (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1966), pp. 162–63 and elsewhere and Frank, *The Stir of Liberation*, p. 54.

81. Derek Offord, "Dostoyevsky and Chernyshevsky," *Slavonic and East European Review*, 57 (1979), 509–30, shows that although Dostoevskii's public stance toward Chernyshevskii was respectful prior to *Notes from the Underground*, his notebooks and private remarks indicate an intellectual hostility as early as 1861–62.
82. Ellen Chances, "Počvenničestvo – Evolution of an Ideology," *Modern Fiction Studies*, 20 (1974–75), 544–45 and "Literary Criticism and the Ideology of *Pochvennichestvo* in Dostoevsky's Thick Journals *Vremia* and *Epokha*," *The Russian Review*, 34 (1975), 153. See also Stephen Carter, *The Political and Social Thought of F. M. Dostoevsky* (New York: Garland, 1991), pp. 87–101 and Offord, "Dostoyevsky and Chernyshevsky."
83. Frank, *The Stir of Liberation*, p. 190.
84. Ibid. p. 328.
85. Dostoevskii's friends of the late 1870s and 1880 (he died in January 1881) recalled hearing him speak about Christian love as the ability to completely "annihilate" oneself for another, indicating that the understanding of brotherhood expressed as early as *Winter Notes* persisted throughout his life. See E. A. Shtakenshneider (Stakensneider), "Iz Dnevnika," in Dolinin, ed., *F. M. Dostoevskii v vospominaniiakh sovremennikov*, vol. II, p. 304.
86. Frank, *The Stir of Liberation*, pp. 299–301.
87. Ibid. 307. Frank, too, emphasizes the social dimension of Dostoevskii's thinking at Mar'ia Dmitrievna's bier. Commenting on these reflections, Scanlan, *Dostoevsky the Thinker*, p. 83, observes that for the writer the deviation from moral standards "has a single name, and that name is egoism."
88. From his earliest work, his characters' personalities display an openness that indicates an intuitive sense that life on earth is incomplete. On the multidimensional quality of Dostoevskii's early characters see especially Victor Terras, *The Young Dostoevsky (1846–1849): A Critical Study* (The Hague: Mouton, 1969), pp. 109–59.
89. Earlier scholars include André Coeuroy, "Dostoievski et la chanson populaire," *La Revue musicale*, 4 (1922), 149–55, George Gibian, "Dostoevskij's Use of Folklore," *Journal of American Folklore*, 69 (1956), 239–53, and. Piksanov, "Dostoevskii i fol'klor," 152–80. For an overview of early studies on Dostoevskii and folklore see Mikhniukevich, *Russkii fol'klor*, pp. 20–24.
90. The three volumes for the nineteenth century of the series *Russkaia literatura i fol'klor*, ed. A. A. Gorelov (Leningrad: Nauka, 1976, 1982, and 1987) discuss the use of folklore by virtually every major writer of the century and by a large number of minor ones.
91. See Mikhniukevich, *Russkii fol'klor*, p. 43.
92. Frank, *The Years of Ordeal*, pp. 40, 130 and Dostoevskii's statement in his Deposition for the Investigating Commission of the Petrashevsky affair (PSS 18: 126).
93. For the use of memorates (*bylichki*) in *Poor Folk* see V. P. Vladimirtsev, "Opyt fol'klorno-etnograficheskogo kommentariia k romanu *Bednye liudi*," *Dostoevskii: Materialy i issledovaniia*, 5 (1983), 74–80 and "Russkie bylichki

i pover'ia u F. M. Dostoevskogo," in *Zhanr i kompozitsiia literaturnogo proizvedeniia: Istoriko-literaturnye i teoreticheskie issledovaniia* (Petrozavodskii gosudarstvennyi universitet, 1989), p. 94.

94. On *The Landlady* see Gibian, "Dostoevskij's Use of Folklore," 245–48. Much of the folklore of *The Landlady* could have come from literary reworkings of these traditions. See Terras, *The Young Dostoevsky*, p. 29, Iu. Tynianov, "Dostoevskii i Gogol': K teorii parodii," in *O Dostoevskom: Stat'i* (Providence, RI: Brown University Press, 1966; reprinted from his "Dostoevskii i Gogol': K teorii parodii," Petrograd: OPOIAZ, 1921), pp. 151–96, and W. J. Leatherbarrow, "Pushkin and the Early Dostoyevsky," *The Modern Language Review*, 72 (1979), 374–77.
95. See Frank, *The Seeds of Revolt*, p. 341. For a different opinion see Sophie Olliver, "Icons in Dostoevsky's works," in Pattison and Thompson, eds., *Dostoevsky and the Christian Tradition*, pp. 53–58.
96. Frank, *The Seeds of Revolt*, pp. 92–93, suggests that Plaskin did not exert a significant influence on Dostoevskii. The painter Trutovskii, "Vospominaniia o Fedore Mikhailoviche Dostoevskom," pp. 107–08, also studied at the Engineering Academy and recalls that Dostoevskii "opened [his] eyes and explained the depth and significance of Gogol's works," while Plaskin regarded Gogol as an untalented writer whose works were "senselessly crude and dirty."
97. See D. V. Grigorovich, "Iz *Literaturnykh vospominanii*," in Dolinin, ed., *F. M. Dostoevskii v vospominaniiakh sovremennikov*, vol. I, p. 130. For folklore in "The Village" see I. M. Kolesnitskaia, "Pisateli natural'noi shkoly: Grigorovich," *Russkaia literatura i fol'klor*: *Pervaia polovina XIX v.* (1976), pp. 361–64.
98. Vladimirtsev, "Russkie bylichki," p. 95.
99. A. E. Rizenkampf, "Nachalo literaturnogo proprishcha," in *F. M. Dostoevskii v vospominaniiakh sovremennikov*, vol. I, p. 116.
100. Terras, *The Young Dostoevsky*, pp. 109–59.
101. "Dostoevskii i russkaia etnologicheskaia kul'tura," in *F. M. Dostoevskii i natsional'naia kul'tura*, 1 (Cheliabinsk, 1994), 69.
102. On the Siberian notebook see V. P. Vladimirtsev and T. A. Ornatskaia, "Sibirskaia zapisnaia tetrad' Dostoevskogo" and "Primechaniia," in F. M. Dostoevskii, *Moia tetradka katorzhnaia (Sibirskaia tetrad')*, ed. Vladimirtsev and Ornatskaia (Krasnoiarskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1985), pp. 38–58, 59–108. Vladimirtsev and Ornatskaia intimate that the term "Dead House" (*mertvyi dom*) is modeled on "Uncle's House" (*Diadin dom*), an expression widespread among convicts in military prisons (p. 40).
103. On such ideals as constituting what the *pochvenniki* would term the "soul" (*dusha*) of a people see Dowler, *Native Soil Conservatism*, p. 78.
104. M. M. Gromyko, *Sibirskie znakomye i druz'ia F. M. Dostoevskogo* (Novosibirsk: Nauka, 1985) p. 129.
105. Frank, *The Years of Ordeal*, pp. 191–92.

106. Ibid. pp. 168–70. See the many entries on the role of the notorious Third Section of the Tsarist Police in Dostoevskii's correspondence in *Letopis' zhizni i tvorchestva F. M. Dostoevskogo, 1821–1881*, ed. N. F. Budanova and G. M. Fridlender, 3 vols. (St. Petersburg: Akademicheskii proekt, 1999), vol. I, pp. 199–210 and elsewhere.
107. V. A. Tunimanov, "Dostoevskii i Nekrasov," in V. G. Bazanov and G. M. Fridlender, eds., *Dostoevskii i ego vremia* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1971), pp. 33–34.
108. M. M. Gin, "Spor o velikom greshnike (Nekrasovskaia legenda o dvukh velikikh greshnikakh i ee istochniki)," *Russkii fol'klor: Materialy i issledovaniia*, 7 (1962), 84–87.
109. *The Art of Dostoevsky*, pp. 100–01.
110. On Dostoevskii's reaction to *Gor'kaia sud'bina* see A. N. Pleshcheev's letter of December 13, 1859 in A. S. Dolinin, ed., *F. M. Dostoevskii: Materialy i issledovaniia* (Leningrad: AN SSSR, 1935), p. 449 and Frank, *The Years of Ordeal*, pp. 255–56.
111. A. F. Pisemskii, *Gor'kaia sud'bina*, in *Sobranie sochinenii*, 5 vols. (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1982), vol. II, p. 369.
112. By the 1870s, Dostoevskii was arguing that these prisoners were, in fact, repentant. See PSS 21: 18–19 and Chapter 5 of the present work. Olga Meerson, *Dostoevsky's Taboos* (Dresden University Press, 1998), p. 41, argues that Dostoevskii handled the problem of conscience in the Dead House through taboos. Accordingly, Petrov's failure to react to the narrator's remark that hell would resemble their bathhouse implies that Gorianchikov has touched on a sore spot (taboo) masking the convict's actual fear of eternal damnation; this in turn testifies to the existence of conscience in him.
113. Frank, *The Stir of Liberation*, pp. 48–51.
114. See *Vremia*, 2 (February, 1861), part 2, 163–81. The Russian titles of the works listed are, respectively, A. N. Afanas'ev, *Narodnye russkie skazki*, 4 vols. (Moscow: Soldatenkov and Shchepkin, 1858–60); I. A. Khudiakov, *Velikorusskie skazki*, 2 vols. (Moscow: Soldatenkov, 1860–61); P. A. Bessonov, *Kaleki perekhozhie* (Moscow: Semen, 1861), vol. I, part 1; V. Varentsov, *Sbornik russkikh dukhovnykh stikhov*, Kozhanchikov edition (St. Petersburg: Obshchestvennaia pol'za, 1860); F. I. Buslaev, *Istoricheskie ocherki russkoi narodnoi slovesnosti i iskusstva*, Kozhanchikov edition, 2 vols. (St. Petersburg: Obshchestvennaia pol'za, 1861); *Pesni sobrannye P. V. Kireevskim*, (Moscow: Obshchestvo liubitelei rossiiskoi slovesnosti, 1860, 1861), vols. I and II.
115. *Vremia*, 12 (December, 1862), part 2, 78–109; The Russian titles of the works listed in the text are *Pesni sobrannye P. N. Rybnikovym* (Moscow: Semen, 1862), Part 2; I. Pryzhov, *Nishchie na sviatoi Rusi. Materialy dlia istorii obshchestvennogo i narodnogo byta* (Moscow: M. I. Smirnova, 1862); and A. P. Shchapov's *Zemstvo i raskol: Beguny*, appeared in *Vremia*, 10 (October, 1862) part 1, 319–63 and vol. 11 (November 1862), part 1, 251–97.
116. Mikhniukevich, *Russkii fol'klor*, pp. 44, 46–47. For the late 1860s and 1870s, see pp. 41–49.

117. See Frank, *The Stir of Liberation*, p. 136 and Anna Dostoevsky, *Reminiscences*, p. 176.
118. Dowler, *Native Soil Conservatism*, p. 87 and elsewhere.
119. See V. A. Mikhniukevich, "F. M. Dostoevskii i natsional'naia khristianskaia kul'tura," in *F. M. Dostoevskii i natsional'naia kul'tura*, 2 (Cheliabinsk, 1996), 117–41. In a similar vein, Dostoevskii viewed folk laments as encapsulating the grief-filled life of the folk and not, as the collector E. V. Barsov claimed, primarily as ritual and epic phenomena. See V. P. Vladimirtsev, "Narodnye plachi v tvorchestve F. M. Dostoevskogo," *Russkaia literatura*, 3 (1987), 183. On occasion, though, Dostoevskii could be quite playful in his incorporation of folklore. See James L. Rice, "Raskol'nikov and Tsar Gorox," *Slavic and East European Journal*, 25 (1981), 38–53 and G. A. Levinton, "Dostoevskii i 'nizkie' zhanry fol'klora," *Wiener Slawistischer Almanach*, 9 (1982), 63–82.
120. On the place of Il'ia Muromets in the Russian epic tradition and popular imagination see A. M. Astakhova, "Il'ia Muromets v russkom epose," in *Il'ia Muromets* (Moscow and Leningrad: AN SSSR, 1958), pp. 393–419 and James Bailey and Tatyana Ivanova, *An Anthology of Russian Folk Epics* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1998), pp. 25–28, and elsewhere. See also PSS 18: 56 and 20: 379.
121. N. Kostomarov, ed. *Pamiatniki starinnoi russkoi literatury*, 4 vols., Kushelev-Bezborodko edition (St. Petersburg: Count Grigorii Kushelev-Bezborodko, 1860).
122. See L. M. Lotman, "Romany Dostoevskogo i russkaia legenda," in her *Realizm russkoi literatury 60-kh godov XIX veka* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1974), pp. 285–315.
123. See V. Ia. Propp, "Istoriia sobraniia," in *Russkaia skazka* (Leningradskii gosudarstvennyi universitet, 1984), pp. 77–78 and V. S. Kuznetsova, "Predislovie," in A. N. Afanas'ev, *Narodnye russkie legendy* (Novosibirsk: Nauka, 1990), p. 6.
124. *Sovremennik*, 80: 3 (March, 1860), 73–99 and 84: 11 (November, 1860), 25–60.

2 THE WORLD OF THE PEOPLE IN *CRIME AND PUNISHMENT*

1. For the sources and evolution of the novel see Joseph Frank, *Dostoevsky: The Miraculous Years, 1865–1871* (Princeton University Press, 1995), pp. 60–95.
2. For example, Konstantin Mochulsky, *Dostoevsky: His Life and Work*, trans. Michael Minihan (Princeton University Press, 1967), p. 312 and Philip Rahv, "Dostoevsky in *Crime and Punishment*," in *Dostoevsky: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. René Wellek (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1962), pp. 22–23.
3. Mikhniukevich, *Russkii fol'klor*, p. 100 notes that Dostoevskii removed some folklore quotations to avoid ethnographic excesses.
4. Gibian, "Traditional Symbolism in *Crime and Punishment*," pp. 526–27.
5. Ibid. p. 527.
6. Ibid. pp. 529–32.
7. Linda J. Ivanits, *Russian Folk Belief* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1989), p. 42.
8. Vladimirtsev, "Russkie bylichki," p. 104.

9. Robert Mann, "Elijah the Prophet in *Crime and Punishment*," *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, 23 (1981), 261–72.
10. The *Notebooks* indicate Dostoevskii's care in choosing the name "Kapernaumov." At one point he considered using the name "Ukhvatov" from the Russian word *ukhvat* ("oven prongs"). Most likely the writer did not want to adduce his negative assessment of Afanas'ev's article on the Russian peasant dwelling that had attributed a mythological meaning to oven prongs and other household implements. "Kapernaumov" has associations both with the St. Petersburg back streets and the bible. In the 1860s "kapernaum" signified a tavern or bar. But given the emphasis on the pathetic shyness and strange ailments from which the Kapernaumovs suffer, the dominant tonality of the name seems to be biblical: it refers to the Gospel town of Capernaum where Jesus healed many lame and dumb people. See Moisei Al'tman, *Dostoevskii po vekham imen* (Izdatel'stvo Saratovskogo universiteta, 1975), pp. 55–57.
11. D. K. Zelenin, *Ocherki russkoi mifologii*, vol. I: *Umershie neestestvennoiu smert'iu i rusalki* (Petrograd: Orlov, 1916), p. 1 and passim.
12. On Svidrigailov and evil spirits see Linda J. Ivanits, "Suicide and Folk Beliefs in Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*," in Derek Offord, ed., *The Golden Age of Russian Literature and Thought* (London: St. Martin's, 1992), pp. 138–48 and Vladimirtsev, "Russkie bylichki," pp. 99–100.
13. For the bathhouse as an unclean place see Ivanits, *Russian Folk Belief*, pp. 59–60; S. V. Maksimov, *Nechistaia sila. Nevedomaia sila. Sobranie sochinenii*, 20 vols. (St. Petersburg: Samoobrazovanie, 1908–13), vol. XVIII, pp. 51–57; and E. V. Pomerantseva, *Mifologicheskie personazhi v russkom fol'klore* (Moscow: Nauka, 1975), pp. 118, 132.
14. On the name "Sonia" see Al'tman, *Dostoevskii po vekham imen*, pp. 174–76.
15. On Sonia as a holy fool see Harriet Murav, *Holy Foolishness: Dostoevsky's Novels and the Poetics of Cultural Critique* (Stanford University Press, 1992), pp. 66–70 and Ewa Thompson *Understanding Russia: The Holy Fool in Russian Culture* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1987), pp. 144–45.
16. Murav, *Holy Foolishness*, p. 68.
17. For Dostoevskii's understanding of the earth see R. V. Pletnev, "Zemlia," in A. L. Bem, ed., *O Dostoevskom: Sbornik statei* (Prague: Legiografie, 1929), vol. I, pp. 159–62. On the earth's regenerative powers see Maksimov, *Nechistaia sila. Nevedomaia sila*, pp. 259–81 and on the earth as a receiver of confession see G. P. Fedotov, *The Russian Religious Mind*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966), vol. II, pp. 135–37.
18. Folklore narratives sometimes noted that the true cross was made of cypress. See "Stikh pokaianen" in Varentsov, *Sbornik russkikh dukhovnykh stikhov*, p. 57.
19. V. N. Toporov, "O strukture romana Dostoevskogo v sviazi s arkhaichnymi skhemami mifologicheskogo myshleniia (*Prestuplenie i nakazanie*)," in his *Mif. Ritual. Simvol. Obraz: Issledovaniia v oblasti mifopoeticheskogo* (Moscow: Kul'tura, 1976), pp. 193–211.
20. For example, Toporov, "O strukture romana Dostoevskogo"; Roger B. Anderson, "Raskol'nikov and the Myth Experience," *Slavic and East European*

Journal, 20 (1976), 1–17; and T. B. Lebedeva, "Obraz Raskol'nikova v svete zhitiinykh assotsiatsii," in *Problemy realizma* (Vologodskii gosudarstvennyi pedagogicheskii institut, 1976), pp. 80–100.

21. Michael Holquist, *Dostoevsky and the Novel* (Princeton University Press, 1977), pp. 87–88.
22. N. P. Andreev, "Legenda o dvukh velikikh greshnikakh," *Izvestiia Leningradskogo pedagogicheskogo instituta imeni A. I. Gertsena*, 1 (1928), 188, collected around fifty variants of the second type for his study. But, if one adds in known variants of the first type, then evidence for the dissemination of the legend becomes even greater. See Gin, "Spor o velikom greshnike," p. 87.
23. A. N. Afanas'ev, *Narodnye russkie legendy* (Moscow: Shchepkin and Soldatenkov, 1859) (*Slavistic Printings and Reprintings*, ed. C. H. Van Schooneveld, The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1970), pp. 91–97 and A. N. Pypin, "Russkie narodnye legendy (po povodu izdaniia g. Afanas'eva, v Moskve, 1860 g.)," *Sovremennik*, 80: 3 (March, 1860), 93–94.
24. Lotman, "Romany Dostoevskogo i russkaia legenda," p. 286.
25. Andreev, "Legenda o dvukh velikikh greshnikakh," p. 188. Interestingly, when in 1873 Dostoevskii created his own variant of the legend for his "Vlas," the sin became the sacrilege of shooting at the Host, which Andreev finds in Ukrainian but not Great Russian variants (PSS 21: 31–41).
26. See Edward Wasiolek, ed. and trans., *The Notebooks for* Crime and Punishment (University of Chicago Press, 1967), pp. 11–13 and "Raskolnikov's Motives: Love and Murder," *American Imago*, 31 (1974), 252–69. See also W. D. Snodgrass, "Crime for Punishment: The Tenor of Part One," *Hudson Review*, 13 (1960), 202–53.
27. See M. M. Gromyko, "The Custom of Adoptive Brotherhood in the Russian Heroic Poem [*Bylina*]," *Soviet Anthropology and Archeology*, 26 (Summer, 1970), 41–54.
28. Afanas' ev, *Narodnye russkie legendy*, p. 95.
29. Mochulsky, *Dostoevsky*, p. 301.
30. Afanas'ev, *Narodnye russkie legendy*, p. 95.
31. On buried treasure see Maksimov, *Nechistaia sila. Nevedomaia sila*, pp. 171–83.
32. See V. I. Dal', *Tolkovyi slovar' zhivogo velikorusskogo iazyka* (St. Petersburg-Moscow, 1882), vol. III, p. 396 and Vadim V. Kozhinov, "The First Sentence in *Crime and Punishment*, the Word 'Crime,' and Other Matters," in Robert Louis Jackson, ed., *Twentieth Century Interpretations of* Crime and Punishment: *A Collection of Critical Essays* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1974), pp. 20–23.
33. Dostoevskii's understanding of *razum* as the capacity for good judgment is close to Dal', *Tolkovyi slovar' zhivogo velikorusskogo iazyka*, vol. IV, p. 53. *Razum* contrasts sharply with *rassudok*, which is negative and implies calculation. On this distinction in Dostoevskii see also Scanlan, *Dostoevsky the Thinker*, p. 6 and F. I. Evnin, "Roman *Prestuplenie i nakazanie*," in Stepanov, ed., *Tvorchestvo Dostoevskogo*, pp. 160–61.

34. Mikolka belonged to the sect of Runners (*beguny*). Large parts of A. P. Shchapov's work on religious dissenters, *Land and Schism: The Runners* (*Zemstvo i raskol: Beguny*) appeared in the October and November issues of *Time* (*Vremia*) in 1862.
35. Vladimirtsev, "Narodnye plachi v tvorchestve F. M. Dostoevskogo," 189.
36. Ibid. See also Vladimirtsev, "Zal'ius' slez'mi goriuchimi," *Russkaia rech'*, 1 (1988), 119–23.
37. Vladimirtsev, "Narodnye plachi v tvorchestve F. M. Dostoevskogo," 190.
38. Ibid. 189–90.
39. For the social dimension of *Crime and Punishment* see Donald Fanger, *Dostoevsky and Romantic Realism* (University of Chicago Press, 1967), pp. 184–213.
40. Frank, *The Miraculous Years*, pp. 53–54.
41. Dal', *Tolkovyi slovar' zhivogo velikorusskogo iazyka*, vol. II, p. 234 gives the following: "To sing the Lazarus, a song that beggars sing; to ingratiatingly solicit something." See also M. S. Al'tman, *Dostoevskii po vekham imen*, pp. 44–46.
42. Sidney Monas captures it well in his translation of *Crime and Punishment*; he uses, "I'll have to play the part of Lazarus for him, too" (New York and London: Signet, 1968), p. 244. David Magarshak renders it, "I shall have to gush over him, too" (New York and London: Penguin, 1951), p. 263; Constance Garnett uses, "I shall have to pull a long face with him too" (New York: Random House, 1950) p. 242; David McDuff, "I'll have to complain about my lot to this fellow, too" (New York and London: Penguin, 1991), p. 298; and Jessie Coulson, "I shall have to make the most of my illness" (New York and London: Norton Critical Edition, ed. George Gibian, 1989) p. 208. This edition adds a footnote explaining the literal meaning of the expression.
43. See R. G. Nazirov, "Zhesty miloserdiia v romanakh Dostoevskogo," *Studia Russica*, 6 (Budapest, 1983), 249 and Al'tman, *Dostoevskii po vekham imen*, pp. 44–45.
44. For example, Wasiolek, *Dostoevsky: The Major Fiction*, p. 81; Richard Peace, *Dostoyevsky: An Examination of the Major Novels* (Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 46; Holquist, *Dostoevsky and the Novel*, p. 102; and Frank, *The Miraculous Years*, p. 131.
45. See A. N. Robinson, "K probleme 'bogatstva' i 'bednosti' v russkoi literature XVII veka: Tolkovaniia pritchi o Lazare i bogatom," in O. A. Derzhavina, ed., *Drevnerusskaia literatura i ee sviazi s novym vremenem* (Moscow: Nauka, 1967), pp. 124–55.
46. *Vremia*, 2 (February, 1861), part 2, 163–81.
47. P. A. Bessonov, *Kaleki perekhozhie: Sbornik stikhov* (Moscow: Tip. A. Semena, 1861), vol. I, pp. 1–2.
48. Ibid. pp. 56–57.
49. Ibid. p. 58.
50. See, for example, Varentsov, *Sbornik russkikh dukhovnykh stikhov*, pp. 76–77.
51. Bessonov, *Kaleki perekhozhie*, pp. 59–60.
52. G. Fedotov, *Stikhi dukhovnye* (*Russkaia narodnaia vera po dukhovnym stikham*) (Paris: YMCA Press, 1935), pp. 86, 95.

53. M. Rodevich, "*Nishchie na sviatoi Rusi*. *Materialy dlia istorii obshchestvennogo i narodnogo byta v Rossii*. Soch. Iv. Pryzhova. Moskva. 1862," *Vremia*, 12 (December, 1862), part 2, 88–102.
54. Ibid. 100, 88.
55. Ibid. 102.
56. See also V. S. Nechaeva, *Zhurnal M. M. i F. M. Dostoevskikh "Vremia," 1861–1863* (Moscow: Nauka, 1972), pp. 199–200. (Her text, p. 199, mistakenly gives Shchapov instead of Pryzhov as the author of *Nishchie na sviatoi Rusi*.)

    Dostoevskii was personally generous to beggars. His chronic lack of money in the 1840s was due partly to his excessive willingness to give all that he had to someone less fortunate (A. E. Rizenkampf, "Nachalo literaturnogo poprishcha" and S. D. Ianovskii, "Vospominaniia o Dostoevskom," both in Dolinin, ed., *F. M. Dostoevskii v vospominaniiakh sovremennikov*, vol. I, pp. 116–17 and 160). Dostoevskii's second wife, Anna Grigor'evna, testifies to the writer's lavish generosity toward all who asked for a handout. See Anna Dostoevsky, *Reminiscences*, pp. 275–78. Elena Stakensneider (Shtakenshneider), writes in her diary that Anna Grigor'evna complained about Dostoevskii's excessive giving and noted that he did not leave for a walk without at least ten rubles in his pocket for beggars. See her "Iz Dnevnika," pp. 305–06. N. Repin reported a story from the late 1870s according to which a beggar hit Dostoevskii on the head and knocked him to the ground. A certain Egorov from Kolpino was apprehended, but Dostoevskii refused to testify against him and gave the judge three rubles for the poor man. See N. Repin, "Dostoevsky and the Beggar," (as reported in the *St. Petersburg Newspaper* [*Peterburgskaia gazeta*], December 4, 1903) in Peter Sekirin, ed., *The Dostoevsky Archive: Firsthand Accounts of the Novelist from Contemporaries' Memoirs and Rare Periodicals* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1997), pp. 234–35.
57. See Mikhniukevich, *Russkii fol'klor*, pp. 106–07.
58. Frank, *The Miraculous Years*, p. 132, believes the incident of the collars and cuffs encapsulates the theme of Christian love versus restructuring society: "On the one side there is the ethic of Christian *agape*, the total, immediate, and unconditional sacrifice of self that is the law of Sonya's being (and Dostoevsky's own highest value); on the other, Raskolnikov's rational Utilitarian ethic, which justifies the sacrifice of *others* for the sake of a greater social good."
59. Nazirov, "Zhesty miloserdiia," 250, suspects that in this scene Dostoevskii evokes a tendency prevalent among the bourgeoisie to regard poor people as thieves.
60. Wasiolek, *Dostoevsky: The Major Fiction*, p. 61.
61. See Varentsov, *Sbornik russkikh dukhovnykh stikhov*, p. 70.
62. Wasiolek, *Dostoevsky: The Major Fiction*, p. 63. On contradictions and ambiguity in the Marmeladov family see also Victor Terras, *Reading Dostoevsky* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), pp. 58–60, 70–71.
63. On environmentalism in the novel see Derek Offord, "The Causes of Crime and the Meaning of Law: *Crime and Punishment* and Contemporary Radical

Thought," in Malcolm Jones and Garth Terry, eds., *New Essays on Dostoyevsky* (Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 42–43.

64. According to S. V. Maksimov, *Brodiachaia Rus' Khrista-Radi*, *Sobranie sochinenii*, 20 vols. (St. Petersburg: Prosveshchenie, 1908–13), vol. V, pp. 149–52, Russian peasants tended to regard the prayers in response to almsgiving as very powerful. Maksimov notes a ritual of secret almsgiving practiced among Old Believers in Vladimir Province (pp. 150–51). The recipient of such charity was obliged to pray for the anonymous benefactor, and such a prayer was thought to quickly deliver the giver from various misfortunes.
65. As Frank, *The Miraculous Years*, p. 102, notes, Raskol'nikov does not understand why he committed the murder: "He becomes aware that the moral purpose supposedly inspiring him cannot explain his behavior." On Raskol'nikov's inner dialectic see Jackson, *The Art of Dostoevsky*, pp. 189–207 and Rahv, "Dostoevsky in *Crime and Punishment*," pp. 19–22.
66. Nazirov, "Zhesty miloserdiia," 249–50, suggests that Dostoevskii accents something that had gone unnoticed before him – that the defectiveness of civilization resides "not so much in the egoism of the well-fed as in the incapacity of the suffering to accept alms. Since in a bourgeois society alms serve to elevate the giver and debase the receiver, the acceptance of a handout is incompatible with the dignity of the personality."
67. Peace, *Dostoyevsky*, p. 44, relates Porfirii's name to the purple cloak of Byzantine emperors (porphyra).
68. Nazirov, "Zhesty miloserdiia," 149, suggests that Dostoevskii adheres to the popular tradition of confusing Luke's and John's narratives.
69. On problems with censorship over this Gospel passage see Frank, *The Miraculous Years*, pp. 93–95. Sonia's reading casts her in the rôle of a village reader who proclaimed scripture for the illiterate community. See Jeffrey Brooks, *When Russia Learned to Read: Literacy and Popular Culture, 1861–1917* (Princeton University Press, 1985), pp. 22–27. On Sonia's performance from the perspective of Walter Ong's distinction between "orality" and literacy see Dennis Patrick Slattery, "From Silence to Sound: Sonia as Redemptive Muse in *Crime and Punishment*," *Dostoevsky Studies*, 2–6 (1994–98), 19–34. Dostoevskii speaks of his own public readings to soldiers and others of the *narod* in PSS 19: 53, 56.
70. Lotman demonstrates how Dostoevskii adapts a widespread folk legend concerning a drunkard who argues his way into heaven into the text of Marmeladov's speech about forgiveness. See "Romany Dostoevskogo i russkaia legenda," pp. 286–90.
71. In another passage from the *Notebooks* Sonia tells Raskol'nikov: "But in comfort, in wealth you perhaps would not have seen anything of the hardships of people. To those whom God loves very much and places much hope in, he sends many misfortunes so that they might find out for themselves and see more because one sees the grief of others more when one suffers misfortune" (PSS 7: 150).

3 *THE IDIOT*: WHERE HAVE ALL THE PEOPLE GONE?

1. On money in *The Idiot* see Roger Anderson, "*The Idiot* and the Subtext of Modern Materialism," *Dostoevsky Studies*, 9 (1988), 77–89. See also Sidney Monas, "Across the Threshold: *The Idiot* as a Petersburg Tale," in Malcolm Jones and Garth Terry, eds., *New Essays on Dostoyevsky*, pp. 67–93.
2. For example, Frank, *The Miraculous Years*, p. 288; Peace, *Dostoyevsky*, p. 70; Terras, *Reading Dostoevsky*, pp. 80–82; and Wasiolek, *Dostoevsky: The Major Fiction*, p. 109.
3. Wasiolek, "Introduction," in Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Notebooks for* The Idiot, ed. Edward Wasiolek and trans. Katharine Strelsky (University of Chicago Press, 1967), p. 15.
4. Murray Krieger, "Dostoevsky's 'Idiot': The Curse of Saintliness," in René Wellek, ed., *Dostoevsky; A Collection of Critical Essays*, p. 48. Caryl Emerson notes, "Myškin's stubborn reductive benevolence is itself a central factor impelling the novel's heroes to their destruction." See her "Problems with Baxtin's Poetics," *Slavic and East European Journal*, 32 (1988), 515.
5. Krieger, "Dostoevsky's 'Idiot'," p. 44. See also Robert Lord, *Dostoevsky: Essays and Perspectives* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1970), pp. 83, 91, 101.
6. Robert Hollander, "The Apocalyptic Framework of Dostoevsky's *The Idiot*," *Mosaic*, 7 (1974), 136. Other studies of the Apocalypse in *The Idiot* include David M. Bethea, "*The Idiot*: Historicism Arrives at the Station," in his *The Shape of the Apocalypse in Modern Russian Fiction* (Princeton University Press, 1989), pp. 62–104; Roger L. Cox, "Myshkin's Apocalyptic Vision," in his *Between Earth and Heaven: Shakespeare, Dostoevsky, and the Meaning of Christian Tragedy*, pp. 164–91; and William J. Leatherbarrow, "Apocalyptic Imagery in *The Idiot* and *The Devils*," *Dostoevsky Studies*, 3 (1982), 43–51.
7. Holquist, *Dostoevsky and the Novel*, pp. 103, 104. See also René Girard, *Resurrection from the Underground: Feodor Dostoevsky*, trans. James Williams (New York: Crossroad, 1997), p. 79.
8. Wasiolek, *The Notebooks for* The Idiot, p. 159.
9. W. J. Leatherbarrow, *A Devil's Vaudeville: The Demonic in Dostoevsky's Major Fiction* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2005), p. 95, lists a few instances in which the devil is noted, but adds that in *The Idiot* "we should look beyond the conventionally demonic in order to understand the devil's true meaning and purpose."
10. See Robin Feuer Miller, *Dostoevsky and* The Idiot*: Author, Narrator, and Reader* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), pp. 108–25, for the influence of the Gothic novel on *The Idiot*.
11. Ibid. Miller discusses the wiliness of Dostoevskii's narrative technique. She shows that the novel "embodies Dostoevsky's first sustained attempt at creating a narrator-chronicler who alternately practiced deception and truth-telling" (p. vi).

12. Liza Knapp, "Introduction to *The Idiot*, Part 2," in Liza Knapp, ed., *Dostoevsky's* The Idiot*: A Critical Companion* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1998), p. 47. On nature in *The Idiot* see also N. E. Falikova, "Simvolicheskaia topografiia romana F. M. Dostoevskogo *Idiot*," in *Sovremennye problemy metoda, zhanra, i poetiki russkoi literatury: Mezhvuzovskii sbornik* (Petrozavodskii gosudarstvennyi universitet, 1991), pp. 123–31.
13. Lotman, "Romany Dostoevskogo i russkaia legenda," p. 301, conjectures that in moving to the country Ippolit, despite his atheism, hopes subconsciously that Myshkin can miraculously restore his health. As Mikhniukevich, "Dostoevskii i natsional'naia khristianskaia kul'tura," 139 notes, religious legends often presented paradise as a green garden. Mikhniukevich accepts Myshkin as a reworking of the Christ of Russian popular belief and the treatment of nature in *The Idiot* as according with the folklore tradition.
14. "Otradnoe" is also the name of the Rostovs' estate in L. N. Tolstoi's *War and Peace*, a work that Dostoevskii was reading at the same time that he was working on *The Idiot*. See Al'tman, *Dostoevskii po vekham imen*, p. 196 for other instances of the use of "Otradnoe" as a place name in Russian literature. Myshkin has the same name and patronymic as Tolstoi – Lev Nikolaevich. For the influence of Tolstoi on *The Idiot* see Miller, *Dostoevsky and The Idiot*, pp. 59–60.
15. See Holquist, *Dostoevsky and the Novel*, p. 115.
16. Mochulsky, *Dostoevsky*, p. 375. The *Notebooks* to the novel make repeated references to Myshkin as innocent (*nevinen*, PSS 9: 240, 263).
17. Mochulsky, *Dostoevsky*, p. 375, contends that the Prince fails to understand that the path of fallen humanity goes "not back to lost innocence, but forward to the transfiguration of the world." As one anonymous reader pointed out, in *The Idiot* Dostoevskii conducts a covert polemic with the ideas of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Arpad Kovacs, "The Poetics of *The Idiot*: On the Problem of Dostoevsky's Thinking about Genre," in Robin Feuer Miller, ed., *Critical Essays on Dostoevsky* (Boston, MA: G. K. Hall, 1986), pp. 116–26, sees this polemic in good part in the clash between Myshkin's "Swiss" vision in the idyll he relates to the Epanchin girls about the seduced girl Marie and his misapplication of this vision to Nastas'ia Filippovna and Rogozhin.
18. See Holquist, *Dostoevsky and the Novel*, pp. 114–19.
19. For a very different perspective see Gary Saul Morson, "Tempics and *The Idiot*," in Knut Andreas Grimstad and Ingunn Lunde, eds., *Celebrating Creativity: Essays in Honor of Jostein Børtnes* (University of Bergen, 1997), pp. 108–34.
20. A. P. Skaftymov, "Tematicheskaia kompozitsiia romana *Idiot*," in *Tvorcheskii put' Dostoevskogo: Sbornik statei*, ed. N. L. Brodskii (Leningrad: Seiatel', 1924), pp. 149–54.
21. Hollander, "Apocalyptic Framework," 136n, connects green with sexual jealousy and a sense of doom.
22. Ibid. 136.

23. For a discussion of incongruous traits in Nastas'ia Filippovna's portrayal see Skaftymov, "Tematicheskaia kompozitsiia romana *Idiot*," pp. 139–57.
24. See, for example, Frank Friedeberg Seeley, "Aglaja Epančina," *Slavic and East European Journal*, 18 (1974), 8.
25. S. V. Maksimov, *Nechistaia sila. Nevedomaia sila*, p. 12, notes that in folk belief the donkey was a guise that the devil did not assume.
26. For example, Peace, *Dostoyevsky*, p. 68 and Hollander, "Apocalyptic Framework," 126.
27. On carnival elements implied in the image of the donkey see V. A. Mikhniukevich, *Russkii fol'klor*, p. 117.
28. Al'tman, *Dostoevskii po vekham imen*, pp. 73–74, connects these figures with actual owners of large buildings in St. Petersburg who also bore "bird" names.
29. Leatherbarrow, "Apocalyptic Imagery," 47.
30. Bethea, "*The Idiot*," pp. 83, 95.
31. For more allusions to the Book of Revelation in the text see Hollander, "Apocalyptic Framework," 131–36; Leatherbarrow, "Apocalyptic Imagery," 47; and Bethea, "*The Idiot*," pp. 92, 96.
32. A few years after completing *The Idiot*, Dostoevskii indicated that he thought the Antichrist had been born. V. V. Timofeeva, who worked as a proofreader for *The Citizen* (*Grazhdanin*) in 1873, recalls him saying, "The Antichrist is coming to us! He's coming! And the end of the world is near – nearer than people think." See "God raboty s znamenitym pisalelem," in Dolinin, ed., *F. M. Dostoevskii v vospominaniiakh sovremennikov*, vol. II, p. 170.
33. Mochulsky, *Dostoevsky*, p. 352.
34. For the function of magic tales in Myshkin's depiction see Mikhniukevich, *Russkii fol'klor*, p. 116; A. B. Kholodov, "*Idiot*: Motif predsvadebnogo pokhishcheniia nevesty," *Mifopoetika*: *Motif i siuzhet v sisteme mirovedeniia klassika (F. M. Dostoevskii, I. A. Bunin)* (Odessa: Astroprint, 2001), pp. 26–42; and I. R. Akhundova, "'Khoziaika' i 'Idiot' F. M. Dostoevskogo: Poetika fol'klornykh otrazhenii," *Nachalo*, 3 (1995), 99–107.
35. Afanas'ev, "Angel," in *Narodnye russkie legendy*, pp. 88–90.
36. I. A. Slizina, "Traditsii ortodoksal'noi i apokrificheskoi religioznoi literatury v romane F. M. Dostoevskogo *Idiot*," in *Russkaia literatura 1870–1890 godov: Literatura i filosofiia* (Sverdlovsk: Ural'skii gosudarstvennyi universitet, 1984), p. 58.
37. On Myshkin as a holy fool see Murav, *Holy Foolishness*, pp. 71–98 and Margaret Ziolkowski, *Hagiography and Modern Russian Literature* (Princeton University Press, 1988), pp. 143–46. See also Vasilii V. Ivanov, *Bezobrazie krasoty: Dostoevskii i russkoe iurodstvo* (Petrozavodskii gosudarstvennyi universitet, 1993), and on Myshkin and the folk tradition of Ivanushko the Fool see Mikhniukevich, *Russkii fol'klor*, pp. 115–16.
38. Jostein Børtnes, "Dostoevskij's *Idiot* or the Poetics of Emptiness," *Scando-Slavica*, 40 (1994), 9. See also his "Dostoevskian Fools – Holy and Unholy," in Peter Rollberg, ed., *And Meaning for a Life Entire: Festschrift for Charles A.*

Moser on the Occasion of his Sixtieth Birthday (Columbus, OH: Slavica, 1997), pp. 173–76.

39. Vyacheslav Ivanov, *Freedom and the Tragic Life: A Study in Dostoevsky*, trans. Norman Cameron (New York: Noonday, 1959), p. 91.
40. Mochulsky, *Dostoevsky*, p. 375.
41. Al'tman, *Dostoevskii po vekham imen*, pp. 197–98. The contours of Myshkin's story – the return of a prince from an obscure hiding place to claim his inheritance – suggest folk legends about the return of a ruler who will bring justice to his people. See Mikhniukevich, *Russkii fol'klor*, p. 131 and, for a study of these legends, K. V. Chistov, *Russkie narodnye sotsial'no-utopicheskie legendy* (Moscow: Nauka, 1967).
42. Frank, *The Stir of Liberation*, p. 136.
43. A. Shchapov, *Zemstvo i raskol, Vremia*, 11 (November 1862), 260. Hollander, "Apocalyptic Framework," 133, discusses the number "six" in *The Idiot*.
44. Shchapov, *Zemstvo i raskol*, 258, 274.
45. Ibid. 277.
46. Chistov, *Russkie narodnye sotsial'no-utopicheskie legendy*, p. 243.
47. For example, Hollander, "Apocalyptic Framework," 136 and Bethea, "*The Idiot*," p. 95.
48. Peace, *Dostoyevsky*, p. 95.
49. See Al'tman, *Dostoevskii po vekham imen*, p. 71.
50. For Rogozhin and the Castrates see William J. Comer, "Rogozhin and the 'Castrates': Russian Religious Traditions in Dostoevsky's *The Idiot*," *Slavic and East European Journal*, 40 (1996), 85–99.
51. In addition to those mentioned in n. 2, see Miller, *Dostoevsky and* The Idiot, p. 84 and Liza Knapp "Myshkin Through a Murky Glass, Guessingly," in Liza Knapp, ed., *Dostoevsky's* The Idiot, pp. 191–215. See also, Romano Guardini, "Dostoyevsky's *Idiot*, A Symbol of Christ," *Cross Currents*, 5 (1956), 359–82; and Cox, "Myshkin's Apocalyptic Vision," p. 175. Malcolm Jones [Dzhouns], "K ponimaniiu obraza Kniazia Myshkina," *Dostoevskii: Materialy i issledovaniia*, 2 (1976), 106–12, however, shows how Myshkin's morbid prying into the hearts of the other characters distances him from the biblical Jesus.
52. For a village tradition of a false Christ see Gosudarstvennyi muzei etnografii (St. Petersburg), fond 7 (Etnograficheskoe biuro kn. V. N. Tenesheva), ed. khr. 1301 (Penza Province), 26–34.
53. See especially Lotman, "Romany Dostoevskogo i russkaia legenda," pp. 291–303 and Mikhniukevich, *Russkii fol'klor*, p. 128. Mikhniukevich, ibid. p. 115, entitles his chapter on *The Idiot* "Motifs of Popular Christianity in a Novel about the 'Russian Christ'." See also Mikhniukevich, "Kniaz' Myshkin i Khristos religioznogo fol'klora," in G. G. Ermilova, ed., *Roman Dostoevskogo* Idiot*: razdum'ia, problemy: Sbornik nauchnykh trudov* (Ivanovskii gosudarstvennyi universitet, 1999), pp. 31–46 and "Dostoevskii i natsional'naia khristianskaia kul'tura," 130–39; and G. G. Ermilova, "'Kniaz' Khristos i russkii religioznyi mir," *F. M. Dostoevskii i natsional'naia kul'tura*, 1 (1994), pp. 9–37.

54. Respectively, "Chudesnaia molot'ba" and "Chudo na mel'nitse" in Afanas'ev, *Narodnye russkie legendy*, pp. 3–5.
55. Ibid. p. 187.
56. Mikhniukevich, "Kniaz' Myshkin i Khristos religioznogo fol'klora," p. 34.
57. In contrast, Bethea, "*The Idiot*," p. 81, claims that *The Idiot* gives us a romantic Switzerland of beautiful scenery and not the derisive one of Dostoevskii's letters.
58. Hollander, "Apocalyptic Framework," 133; Goldstein, *Dostoevsky and the Jews*, pp. 60–61.
59. This statement may be a subversive echo of Myshkin's words to the Epanchins' lackey about the terror preceding death by execution (8: 21). For a different reading, see B. N. Tikhomirov, "O 'Khristologii' Dostoevskogo," in *Dostoevskii: Materialy i issledovaniia*, 11 (1994), 116.
60. See, for example, Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, rev. edn (London: Penguin, 1993), pp. 20–26 and Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*, 5 vols. (University of Chicago Press, 1971), vol. I (*The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition, 100–600)*, pp. 263–66 and passim. In the early notes for *The Devils*, Dostoevskii gives his hero-Prince the following words: "It is not Christ's morality, not Christ's teachings that will save the world, but precisely faith in the fact that the 'Word became flesh'" (11: 187–88; see also 178–79).
61. Lotman, "Romany Dostoevskogo i russkaia legenda" shows that for the exchange of crosses in *The Idiot* Dostoevskii reworks the legend "Khristov bratets" ("Christ's Brother"), a variant of legends about Christ wandering the Russian land.
62. Gromyko, "The Custom of Adoptive Brotherhood in the Russian Heroic Poem (*Bylina*)," 41–54.
63. For example, Wasiolek, *Dostoevsky: The Major Fiction*, pp. 105–06.
64. *The Oxford Companion to Classical Literature*, ed. Paul Harvey (Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 130. Mother Kseniia [N. N. Solomina-Minikhen] implies that Dostoevskii may also have chosen the word "demon" as an echo of the "le démon" that Renan used in discussing the temptation of Jesus. See her "O roli knigi Renana 'Zhizn' Iisusa' v tvorcheskoi istorii *Idiota*," in T. A. Kasatkina, ed., *Roman F. M. Dostoevskogo* Idiot*: Sovremennoe sostoianie izucheniia* (Moscow: Nasledie, 2001), p. 107. My colleague Slava Yastremski believes that in opting for the word "demon" Dostoevskii suggests that we compare Myshkin with Lermontov's demon ("Demon"), a non-corporal being whose love brings death to an earthly woman.
65. See James L. Rice, *Dostoevsky and the Healing Art: An Essay in Literary and Medical History* (Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1985), pp. 82–85. See also Jacques Catteau, *Dostoyevsky and the Process of Literary Creation*, trans. Audrey Littlewood (Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 108–16. As Kelly contends, "Dostoevskii and the Divided Conscience," 243, Dostoevskii himself did not ground his faith in the "mystic" vision of the instant before a seizure, and his descriptions of his attacks are scientific and lack metaphysical speculation.
66. Hollander, "Apocalyptic Framework," 136.

67. See, for example, Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition*, vol. I, pp. 68–97 and elsewhere; Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels* (New York: Vintage, 1981), pp. 84–122 and elsewhere.
68. Quoted from Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition*, vol. I, pp. 86–87; see also Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels*, p. xix.
69. Leonid Ouspensky, *Theology of the Icon*, 2 vols., trans. Anthony Gythiel (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Press, 1992), vol. I, pp. 8–11. See also Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, pp. 33–34; Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition*, vol. I, pp. 256–77; and St. John of Damascus, *On the Divine Images*, trans. David Anderson (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Press, 1980).
70. See Istvan Molnar, "'One's Faith Could be Smashed by Such a Picture': Interrelation of Word and Image (Icon) in Dostoevsky's Fiction – Holbein's 'Christ in the Tomb' in the Ideological and Compositional Structure of the Novel *The Idiot*," Acta Litteraria Acad. Sci. Hung., 32 (1990), pp. 256–57. See also Bethea, "*The Idiot*," p. 99; Hollander, "Apocalyptic Framework," 137; and Zinaida Malenko and James J. Gebhard, "The Artistic Use of Portraits in Dostoevskij's *Idiot*," *Slavic and East European Journal*, 5 (1961), 243–54. Børtnes, "Dostoevskij's *Idiot* or the Poetics of Emptiness," 13, writes "[T]he dead body of Holbein's painting has been emptied of its divine content, its very emptiness signifying that the sacrifice of Christ has lost its meaning, thereby depriving the whole Christian culture of its meaning, too." See also Sarah Young [Sara Iang], "Kartina Gol'beina 'Khristos v mogile' v strukture romana *Idiot*," in T. A. Kasatkina, ed., *Roman F. M. Dostoevskogo* Idiot*: Sovremennoe sostoianie izucheniia*, pp. 28–41.
71. Michel Quenot, *The Icon: Window on the Kingdom* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Press, 1991), p. 134.
72. For discussions of the influence of Renan on Myshkin's portrayal see D. L. Sorkina, "Ob odnom iz istochnikov obraza L'va Nikolaevicha Myshkina," *Uchenye zapiski*, 48 (Tomsk, 1964), 144–51; E. I. Kiiko, "Dostoevskii i Renan," *Dostoevskii: Materialy i issledovaniia*, 4 (1980), 106–20; I. A. Slizina, "Filosofskie i literaturnye istochniki 'polozhitel'no prekrasnogo cheloveka'," in *Problemy literaturnogo protsessa: Sbornik nauchnlykh trudov*. Russkaia literatura, 1870–1890 godov (Sverdlovsk: Ural'skii gosudarstvennyi universitet, 1985), pp. 54–59.
73. Ernest Renan, *Life of Jesus*, trans. William G. Hutchison (London and New York: Walter Scott, 1897), p. 288. On the impact of Renan on Ippolit's interpretation of the Holbein painting, see Tikhomirov, "O 'Khristologii' Dostoevskogo." See also G. G. Ermilova, "Khristologiia Dostoevskogo," *Dostoevskii i mirovaia kul'tura*, 13 (1999), 37–44.
74. Kjetsaa, *Dostoevsky and His New Testament*, p. 9.
75. Diane Oenning Thompson, "Problems of the Biblical Word in Dostoevsky's Poetics," in *Dostoevsky and the Christian Tradition*, pp. 73–76, notes that the biblical word is "disabled, rendered impotent, like the epileptic idiot hero in this novel."
76. See Jackson, *Dostoevsky's Quest for Form*, p. 214.

77. This reference may also be to a picture of the head of John the Baptist that Dostoevskii saw in Basle. See PSS 9: 433.
78. Hollander, "Apocalyptic Framework," 137.
79. See John Jones, *Dostoevsky* (Oxford University Press, 1985), p. x.
80. See Holquist, *Dostoevsky and the Novel*, p. 113.
81. Peace, *Dostoyevsky*, pp. 97–100.
82. Lord, *Dostoevsky: Essays and Perspectives*, p. 81. See also Girard, *Resurrection from the Underground*, p. 80 and Thompson, "Problems of the Biblical Word," p. 76.

4 FUMBLING TOWARD HOLY RUSSIA IN *THE DEVILS*

1. See the points listed in the *Revolutionary Catechism* as quoted in Franco Venturi, *Roots of Revolution: A History of the Populist and Socialist Movements in Nineteenth-Century Russia*, trans. Francis Haskell (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1966), pp. 365–66. See also Frank, *The Miraculous Years*, pp. 438–52 and D. C. Offord, "*The Devils* in the Context of Contemporary Russian Thought and Politics," in W. J. Leatherbarrow, ed., *Dostoevsky's* The Devils (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1999), pp. 63–99.
2. K. E. Golubov was a peasant Old Believer who converted to the official Church. See PSS 12: 178–80.
3. In a letter to A. N. Maikov from Dresden of March 25/April 6, 1870, Dostoevskii suggested that Tikhon of Zadonsk might be the positive type that Russian literature needed. See PSS 29, 1: 118.
4. Al'tman, *Dostoevskii po vekham imen*, p. 75 notes that the novel's town is modeled on Tver'.
5. A. S. Pushkin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v desiati tomakh* (Moscow: AN SSSR, 1963), vol. III, pp. 176–77. Pushkin's coachman cries out, "We've lost our way, what can we do? . . . A devil's leading us" (*Sbilis' my, chto delat' nam?/ . . . bes nas vodit* . . .). Venturi, *Roots of Revolution*, pp. 336, 354, notes the influence of a radical organization named "Hell" on Nechaev. The anti-nihilist novel in general tended to treat the radicals as "demonic." See Leatherbarrow, "A Devil's Vaudeville: *The Devils*," in his *A Devil's Vaudeville*, pp. 116–39; Murav, *Holy Foolishness*, pp. 115–16; and Serge V. Gregory, "Dostoevsky's *The Devils* and the Antinihilist Novel," *Slavic Review*, 38 (1979), 444–55. Leatherbarrow offers a thorough study of deviltry in the novel.
6. Leatherbarrow, "A Devil's Vaudeville: *The Devils*," pp. 124–25.
7. Ibid. pp. 126–29.
8. Mikhniukevich, *Russkii fol'klor*, p. 161.
9. Leatherbarrow, "A Devil's Vaudeville: *The Devils*," p. 120.
10. Ivanits, *Russian Folk Belief*, p. 39.
11. In 1914 Sergei Bulgakov stated, "Stavrogin does not exist for the spirit of nonbeing possesses him." See "Russkaia tragediia: O *Besakh* F. M. Dostoevskogo v sviazi s instsenirovkoi romana v Moskovskom Khudozhestvennom teatre," in L. I. Saraskina, ed., Besy*: Antologiia russkoi kritiki*, in F. M. Dostoevskii, *Besy*

(Moscow: Soglasie, 1996), p. 492. N. A. Berdiaev remarked, "The action of *The Devils* begins after the death of Stavrogin." See "Stavrogin," in Saraskina, ed., Besy*: Antologiia russkoi kritiki*, p. 519. See also R. M. Davison, "*The Devils*: The Role of Stavrogin," in Malcolm V. Jones and Garth M. Terry, eds., *New Essays on Dostoyevsky*, pp. 104–05.

12. See Liza Knapp, *The Annihilation of Inertia: Dostoevsky and Metaphysics* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1996), pp. 124–25.
13. On the lack of love in the novel see L. I. Saraskina, *Besy: Roman-preduprezhdenie* (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1990), p. 149; Offord, "*The Devils* in the Context of Contemporary Russian Thought and Politics," pp. 83–84; and Nancy Anderson, *The Perverted Ideal in Dostoevsky's* The Devils, Middlebury Studies in Russian Language and Literature, 8 (New York: Peter Lang, 1997).
14. *Skazanie o stranstvii i puteshestvii po Rossii, Moldavii, Turtsii i Sviatoi Zemle postrizhennika Sviatoi Gory Afonskoi Inoka Parfeniia*, 4 vols. (Moscow: A. Semen, 1856).
15. R. Pletnev seems to suggest that Dostoevskii was somewhat in awe of Parfenii's saintliness. See "La légende chrétienne dans l'oeuvre de Dostoievsky," *Etudes slaves et est-européennes*, 6 (1961), 141. I suspect that the writer admired his kindness and determination to seek truth, but was less appreciative of his scrupulousness and preoccupation with the externals of faith. Parfenii's work also served as a stylistic manual for the speech of some of Dostoevskii's lower-class believers. See I. D. Iakubovich, "K kharakteristike stilizatsii v *Podrostke*," *Dostoevskii: Materialy i issledovaniia*, 3 (1978), 136–43.
16. Parfenii, *Skazanie o stranstvii*, vol. I, p. 284. See R. V. Pletnev, "Dostojevskij und der Hieromonach Parfenij," *Zeitschrift für slavische Philologie*, 14 (1937), 38–39.
17. Parfenii, *Skazanie o stranstvii*, vol. I, p. 187. See Pletnev, "Dostojevskij und der Hieromonach Parfenij," 39–40. L. A. Zander, *Dostoevsky*, trans. Natalie Duddington (London: SMC Press, 1948), p. 53 notes that the earth was a liturgical image for the Mother of God. Pletnev, "Zemlia," pp. 157–59, suggests that the tendency to link the earth with Mary stems from the teaching of some theologians that the Mother of God is "the center of created life, the point at which heaven and earth touch."
18. See Vyacheslav Ivanov, *Freedom and the Tragic Life*, pp. 60–63 and elsewhere; Frank, *The Miraculous Years*, pp. 485–87; Murav, *Holy Foolishness*, pp. 113–14; and Louis Allain, "Roman *Besy* v svete pochvennichestva Dostoevskogo," *Dostoevsky Studies*, 5 (1984), 76. I. P. Smirnov, "Drevnerusskie istochniki *Besov* Dostoevskogo," in *Russkaia i gruzinskaia srednevekovye literatury* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1979), pp. 212–17, suggests that Mar'ia Lebiadkina may be modeled on St. Mary of Egypt.
19. Bulgakov, "Russkaia tragediia," pp. 494–95.
20. See Linda J. Ivanits, "Dostoevskij's Mar'ja Lebjadkina," *Slavic and East European Journal*, 22 (1978), 127–40.
21. On the role of rings in wedding divinations see I. Snegirev, *Russkie prostonarodnye prazdniki i suevernye obriady*, 4 vols. (Moscow: Universitetskaia tipografiia,

1837), vol. II, pp. 40–41 and W. F. Ryan, *The Bathhouse at Midnight: Magic in Russia* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), p. 97.

22. Rybnikov's collection appeared between 1861 and 1867. The second volume was reviewed in *Time* (*Vremia*) in December 1862 and contains several variants of the *bylina* about Mikhailo Potyk.
23. Mar'ia the White Swan is associated with the living dead and may be called *erititsa*, a term often signifying a vampire, or dead sorceress. This is clear in the variant of the *bylina* included in Kirsha Danilov, *Drevnie rossiiskie stikhotvoreniia*, 3rd edn (Moscow: tip. A. A. Torletskogo, 1878), p. 153, which Dostoevskii probably would have known, although here the white swan is atypically called "Avdot'iushka Likhovid'evna." See Felix Oinas, "Heretics as Vampires and Demons in Russia," *Essays on Russian Folklore and Mythology* (Columbus, OH: Slavica, 1985), pp. 121–30.
24. See Thompson, *Understanding Russia*, pp. 1–23 for a description of holy foolishness.
25. Al'tman, *Dostoevskii po vekham imen*, pp. 100–01, suggests that Dostoevskii also draws on the portrait of Koreisha that I. G. Pryzhov gives in his "Twenty-six Holy Fools" ("26 iurodivykh") for Semen Iakovlevich, while Pletnev, "Dostojevskij und der Hieromonach Parfenij," 37, demonstrates that the tea-drinking ceremony comes from Parfenii. In the *Notebooks* to the novel Dostoevskii uses Koreisha's name and patronymic, "Ivan Iakovlevich," for his fool (11: 197).
26. Parfenii, *Skazanie o stranstvii*, vol. I, pp. 284–85.
27. PSS 12: 237–53 suggests that Dostoevskii did not reintroduce the Tikhon episode because of censorship. For arguments regarding the missing chapter as integral to the text see Mochulsky, *Dostoevsky*, pp. 424–26; Anderson, *The Perverted Ideal*, pp. 89–122; Frank, *The Miraculous Years*, pp. 434–35, 488–89, and elsewhere; and Vladimir Seduro, "The Fate of Stavrogin's Confession," *The Russian Review*, 25 (1966), 397–404. Arguments against reintroducing "At Tikhon's" include E. Wasiolek, ed., *The Notebooks for* The Possessed (University of Chicago Press, 1968), pp. 17–18; Elisabeth Stenbock-Fermor, "Stavrogin's Quest in *The Devils* of Dostoevskij," *To Honor Roman Jackobson* (The Hague: Mouton, 1967), vol. III, pp. 1926–34; Holquist, *Dostoevsky and the Novel*, p. 144; Jostein Børtnes, "The Last Delusion in an Infinite Series of Delusions: Stavrogin and the Symbolic Structure of *The Devils*," *Dostoevsky Studies*, 4 (1983), 66.
28. Knapp, *The Annihilation of Inertia*, p. 127.
29. Ibid. p. 126.
30. Mikhniukevich, *Russkii fol'klor*, p. 138 suggests that this legend was among many on the theme "If you don't sin, you won't truly repent" (*Ne sogreshish' – ne pokaesh'sia*) toward which Dostoevskii gravitated throughout his life.
31. Nechaev's "Program of Revolutionary Action" made a strong appeal to workers who, it claimed, labor "from early morning until late at night and receive for it a miserly wage, insufficient to support them and restore their wasted energy. Instead of clothes they have filthy, pitiful rags, instead of a dwelling – some kind of repulsive kennel, a damp stinking cellar." Quoted from Philip Pomper, *Sergei Nechaev* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1979), p. 56.

32. Dostoevskii renders this scene additionally confusing by naming the police inspector "Flibust'erov" and having von Lembke refer to the Shpigulins as *flibust'ery* (10: 341–42). On the term *flibust'ery* for "insurgents" see Al'tman, *Dostoevskii po vekham imen*, pp. 82–84.
33. See Offord, "*The Devils* in the Context of Contemporary Russian Thought and Politics," p. 94.
34. Morson, "The Workers Rebel, or Do They?" in *Narrative and Freedom*, pp. 124–26, terms Dostoevskii's technique here (and elsewhere) of creating a field of possibilities "sideshadowing."
35. Leatherbarrow, "A Devil's Vaudeville: *The Devils*," p. 125.
36. Saraskina, *Besy: Roman-preduprezhdenie*, pp. 16, 24, 53–57, devises a chronology for Stavrogin.
37. See, for example, Wasiolek, *Dostoevsky: The Major Fiction*, pp. 119–20 and Holquist, *Dostoevsky and the Novel*, p. 135.
38. Respectively, PSS 10: 36, 151, 84, 165, 38, 83, 155, 150, 326, 204, 400, 401, 219, 201, 325, 218, 218, 219, 202, 214, 323, 323, 205. Studies exist for some of these identities. See, for example, Norman Leer, "Stavrogin and Prince Hal: The Hero in Two Worlds," *Slavic and East European Journal*, 6 (1962), 99–116; Robert Belknap, "Shakespeare and *The Possessed*," *Dostoevsky Studies*, 5 (1984), 63–69; and Elisabeth Stenbock-Fermor, "Lermontov and Dostoevskij's Novel *The Devils*," *Slavic and East European Journal*, 3 (1959), 215–30.
39. Davison, "*The Devils*: The Role of Stavrogin," pp. 95–96, regards Stavrogin as a structural center that disappears until, by the end, his spirit still lingers, while he is strangely absent. Leatherbarrow, "*The Devils* in the Context of Dostoevsky's Life and Works," p. 54, points out another dimension of Stavrogin's "nonbeing": he is a "universal man" (*obshchechelovek*). Dostoevskii stressed that one becomes a universal man at the expense of losing one's particular national identity. In the *Notebooks* Shatov tells the Prince that he cannot love because he is a "universal man" (11: 135). For the motif of the mask in *The Devils* see Milivoje Jovanović, "Tekhnika romana tain v *Besakh*," *Dostoevsky Studies*, 5 (1984), 10–17.
40. Mikhniukevich, *Russkii fol'klor*, p. 155.
41. Chistov, *Russkie narodnye sotsial'no-utopicheskie legendy*, pp. 24–236, terms the narrative the "legend of the returning deliverer."
42. Quoted from Venturi, *Roots of Revolution*, p. 367.
43. Ibid. pp. 367–68. See also PSS 12: 199–200.
44. V. K. Sokolova, "Pesni i predaniia o krest'ianskikh vosstaniiakh Razina i Pugacheva," in *Russkoe narodno-poeticheskoe tvorchestvo: Materialy dlia izucheniia obshchestvenno-politicheskikh vozzrenii naroda*, Trudy, 20 (Moscow: AN SSSR Institut etnografii, 1953), novaia seriia, pp. 19, 35–37, and elsewhere.
45. Vyacheslav Ivanov entitles his chapter on *The Devils* "The Enchanted Bride." See *Freedom and the Tragic Life*, pp. 53–69. Jovanović, "Tekhnika romana tain v *Besakh*," 16–17, suggests that the image of Ivan Tsarevich, who often uses subterfuge to gain the "beautiful maiden," has affinities with that of the "impostor."

46. See P. I. Mel'nikov-Pecherskii, "Tainye sekty," in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 7 vols. (St. Petersburg: Marks, 1909), vol. VI, pp. 270–73.
47. Ibid.
48. See Venturi, *Roots of Revolution*, pp. 430–31. See also R. M. Davison, "Dostoevsky's *Devils* and the Sects," *Die Welt der Slaven*, 26 (1981), 274–84.
49. Mel'nikov-Pecherskii, "Tainye sekty," p. 252.
50. Peace, *Dostoyevsky*, pp. 172–73.
51. Ibid. pp. 171, 190. For more on sectarian Madonnas and Christs see Mel'nikov-Pecherskii, "Tainye sekty," pp. 256–58.
52. See Murav, *Holy Foolishness*, pp. 102–16, and Frank, *The Miraculous Years*, pp. 451–52, and 485–86. See also Jovanović, "Tekhnika romana tain v *Besakh*," 15–19. In adducing Grishka Otrepev as an identity that Maria Lebiadkina ascribes to Stavrogin, Dostoevskii may have known the variant of the historical song about Grishka Otrepev included in Rybnikov's collection that refers to the impostor's wife as "Marina the White Swan" rather than the more usual "Marinka" (in any case, a form of "Mary"). See "Grishka-Rasstrizhka" in *Pesni sobrannye P. N. Rybnikovym*, vol. I, p. 464.
53. Lotman, "Romany Dostoevskogo i russkaia legenda," pp. 285–315, and Saraskina, Besy*: Roman-preduprezhdenie*, stress that Mar'ia Lebiadkina's marriage to Stavrogin implies linkage to the devil and suspect that Dostoevskii drew on folk narratives about love between the devil and an earthly woman. Lotman (pp. 308–15) adduces the tale about the possessed woman Solomoniia that Dostoevskii likely would have known from Kostomarov, ed., *Pamiatniki starinnoi russkoi literatury*, vol. I, pp. 153–68. Saraskina (p. 147) believes that the relationship between Mar'ia and Stavrogin is modeled on ubiquitous village stories about the liaison between a grieving woman and the devil in the form of a flying serpent. Liputin's curious reference to Stavrogin as a landowner "with wings like the ancient Cupids" (*Pomeshchiki s krylushkami, kak u drevnikh amurov*, 10: 84) would seem to fit in with the image of the flying serpent. Leatherbarrow, "*The Devils* in the Context of Dostoevsky's Life and Works," p. 52, notes, "Imposture implies a conscious act of deception, whereas Stavrogin's followers are largely guilty of self-deception in the identities they have ascribed to their 'idol'."
54. See Peace, *Dostoyevsky*, p. 180.
55. Ivanov, *Freedom and the Tragic Life*, p. 64 and Václav Černý, *Dostoevsky and His* Devils, trans. F. W. Galan (Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1975), p. 56.
56. Another possible source for the name "Nikolai" is Nikolai Speshnev. See Frank, *The Miraculous Years*, p. 466. L. P. Grossman, *Dostoevskii* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1965), pp. 417–18, 457, advances Mikhail Bakunin as a prototype.
57. See B. A. Uspenskii, *Filologicheskie razyskaniia v oblasti slavianskikh drevnostei* (Moskovskii universitet, 1982), pp. 6–16 and Aleksei Remizov, *Obraz Nikolaia Chudotvortsa: Alatyr'-kamen' russkoi very* (Paris: YMCA Press, 1931), pp. 11–25 and elsewhere.
58. See Afanas'ev, *Narodnye russkie legendy*, pp. 15–23, 39–43.

59. The spring feast of St. Nicholas (May 9) occurred next to the earth's name day (May 10), and throughout Russia Nicholas was a protector of the peasant's fields and livestock. See Ivanits, *Russian Folk Belief*, p. 25.
60. Quoted in G. Fedotov, *Stikhi dukhovnye*, pp. 61, 62. The saint figures in two of the folklore subtexts evoked in *The Devils*: in the *bylina* of Mikhailo Potyk, Nicholas, disguised as a pilgrim, leads the hero's adopted brothers to the stone in which Mar'ia the White Swan has imprisoned him, and in a widespread song about Grishka Otrepev, the impostor marries Marinka on the eve of the Spring Feast of St. Nicholas and attends the baths rather than church on the day of the Feast.
61. Quoted in notes to PSS 29, 1: 443–44.
62. "Zhitie sviatitelia Nikolaia Mirlikiiskogo chudotvortsa," in *Izbrannye zhitiia sviatykh*, *kratko izlozhennye po rukovodstvu Chetiikh Minei* (Moscow: Bakhmetev, 1860), December pp. 55–72. This is the edition that Dostoevskii had in his library at the time of his death. See L. P. Grossman, "Biblioteka Dostoevskogo," *Seminarii po Dostoevskomu* (Moscow and Petrograd: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1923) p. 43, item no. 185.
63. Historical evidence does not support the presence of Saint Nicholas at the Council of Nicaea. Nevertheless, the episode in the *Life* where Nicholas slaps Arius's face seems to have captured the imagination of the Russian people. Among the *narod* there existed legends in which the heresy for which Nicholas struck Arius was his refutation of Mary's title as "Mother of God" (Theotokos). The following short legend was published in a limited edition in 1905: "At the Nicene Council Arius said, 'You shouldn't call the Mother of God (*Bogoroditsa*) the Mother of God but the Mother of Christ (*Khristoroditsa*).' But Nikola said, 'You lie!' And he up and gave Arius a good one in the ear. For this they placed Nikola under arrest." *Sbornik materialov po etnografii s prilozheniem kartin iz russkoi zhizni izdavaemyi Aleksandrom Burtsevym* [St. Petersburg: Veierman, 1905], vol. I, *Legendy russkogo naroda*, p. 2.)
64. The *Notebooks* suggest that the theme of Christ's moral beauty was to be important in the novel (11: 177–79).
65. See Maksimov, *Nechistaia sila. Nevedomaia sila*. p. 259.
66. Ivanov, *Freedom and the Tragic Life*, p. 60, argues that the devils "in their attack upon the Russian soul, also wound the Mother of God herself (as shown by the symbolic episode of the desecration of the icon)." Dostoevskii likely knew that the rationale for Mary's title as "Theotokos" ("Mother of God"), proclaimed a matter of faith at the Council of Ephesus in 431, was connected with the doctrine of the indivisibility of Christ's fully human and fully divine person. It is thus implicitly Christological. See Jaroslav Pelikan, *Mary Through the Centuries: Her Place in the History of Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), pp. 55–65.
67. Børtnes, "Dostoevskij's *Idiot* or the Poetics of Emptiness," 10–11. On January 1/13, 1868, when he was he living in Geneva and struggling with Myshkin's portrayal, Dostoevskii wrote his niece Sonia that for him Don Quixote represented the most complete attempt in Christian literature at the creation of a

"positively beautiful person" (*polozhitel'no prekrasnyi chelovek*). See PSS 28, 2: 251.

68. For more on the theme of rapprochement between intelligentsia and *narod*, or *pochvennichestvo* in the novel, see Offord, "*The Devils* in the Context of Contemporary Russian Thought and Politics," pp. 92–95.
69. Ivanov, *Freedom and the Tragic Life*, p. 50.
70. For example, Irving Howe, "*Dostoevsky*: The Politics of Salvation," in René Wellek, ed., *Dostoevsky: A Collection of Critical Essays*, pp. 69–70; R. M. Davison, "Dostoevsky's *The Devils*: The Role of Stepan Trofimovich Verkhovensky," in W. J. Leatherbarrow, ed., *Dostoevsky's* The Devils, p. 125; and Anderson, *The Perverted Ideal*, pp. 151–56.
71. There are other references as well. Lebiadkin remarks that he has been living like the monk Zosima, "Sobriety, isolation, and beggary – the vow of the ancient knights (*obet drevnikh rytsarei*)," and Stavrogin responds, "Do you imagine that the ancient knights took such oaths?" (10: 207). Peter tells a wealthy young aristocrat whom he is about to join for a game of cards that he will tell him all about Iulia Mikhailovna and the events of the town, "as much, that is, as chivalry (*rytsarstvo*) will permit (10: 478)." In his childhood, the nobleman Artemii Gaganov, who challenges Stavrogin to a duel, attended a special, aristocratic military school where "poetic" ideas about castles, medieval life, and knight-errantry (*rytsarstvo*) took root in him (10: 224).
72. Susanne Fusso, "Maidens in Childbirth: The Sistine Madonna in Dostoevskii's *Devils*," *Slavic Review*, 54 (1995), 264.
73. Ibid. 270.
74. For example, Davison, "Dostoevsky's *The Devils*: The Role of Stepan Trofimovich Verkhovensky," p. 125.
75. See, for example, Peace, *Dostoyevsky*, pp. 202–06.
76. On Stavrogin's journey see, especially, Stenbock-Fermor, "Stavrogin's Quest in *The Devils* of Dostoevskij." Peace, *Dostoyevsky*, p. 203, notes the umbrella motif.
77. T. N. Granovskii, the well-known Westernizer of the 1840s whose name Stepan Trofimovich bears in the *Notebooks*, also had a passion for chivalry. See Offord, "*The Devils* in the Context of Contemporary Russian Thought and Politics," p. 76.
78. Stepan Trofimovich says, "Polon chistoiu liubov'iu, / Veren sladostnoi mechte." The original reads "Polon veroi i liubov'iu / Veren nabozhnoi mechte" ("Full of faith and love / Faithful to his devout dream"). See Pushkin, "Zhil na svete rytsar' bednyi," *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v desiati tomakh*, vol. III, p. 117. For a discussion of the parallel between Stepan Trofimovich and Don Quixote, see Thompson, "Problems of the Biblical Word," pp. 80–82.
79. Davison, "Dostoevsky's *The Devils*: The Role of Stepan Trofimovich Verkhovensky," pp. 128–32.
80. Thompson, "Problems of the Biblical Word," pp. 79–80, suggests that Stepan Trofimovich does, in a sense, reach Spasov: the biblical word has penetrated

his heart and Dostoevskii renders its effect symbolically, through references to the lake outside his window. Stepan Trofimovich first does not look through the window; but following the delirium that signifies his struggle with devils, he regains consciousness, looks out the window, and exclaims, "Tiens, un lac!" (10: 499).

81. Pushkin, "Zhil na svete rytsar' bednyi," *Polnoe sobranie*, vol. III, pp. 117–18.

5 BACK IN RUSSIA: THE FACE OF THE PEOPLE, 1871–1877

1. For comprehensive treatments of *The Diary of a Writer* see especially Gary Saul Morson, "Introductory Study: Dostoevsky's Great Experiment," in Fyodor Dostoevsky, *A Writer's Diary*, 2 vols. (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1993), vol. I, pp. 1–117 and *The Boundaries of Genre: Dostoevsky's* Diary of a Writer *and the Traditions of Literary Utopia* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1981). See also Joseph Frank, *Dostoevsky: The Mantle of the Prophet, 1871–1881* (Princeton University Press, 2002), pp. 87–119, 199–358 and D. V. Grishin, Dnevnik pisatelia *F. M. Dostoevskogo* (The University of Melbourne, Department of Russian Language and Literature, 1966). Morson, "Introductory Study," p. 8, claims that the *Diary* had "the double and apparently contradictory task of discovering the real moral development of Russia and yet capriciously indulging whatever happened to strike the author's fancy." Hudspith, *Dostoevsky and the Idea of Russianness*, p. 64, believes that one can describe the *Diary* as a "study in Russianness."
2. For more on Dostoevskii's ideological orientation as editor of *The Citizen*, see V. V. Vinogradov, "F. M. Dostoevskii kak redaktor *Grazhdanina* i kak avtor anonimykh fel'etonov v nem," in his *Problema avtorstva i teoriia stilei* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1961), pp. 556–72.
3. For vacillations in the *Diary* see especially Aileen Kelly, "Dostoevskii and the Divided Conscience," 247–48 and "Irony and Utopia in Herzen and Dostoevsky: *From the Other Shore* and *Diary of a Writer*," *The Russian Review*, 50 (1991), 397–416.
4. Stephen Carter, *The Political and Social Thought of F. M. Dostoevsky*, pp. 215–29 considers the period between 1869 and 1873 the "high tide" of the writer's conservatism.
5. See Frank, *The Mantle of the Prophet*, pp. 130–32 and Venturi, *Roots of Revolution*, pp. 496–501.
6. Edward Wasiolek, "Introduction" in Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Notebooks for* A Raw Youth, ed. Edward Wasiolek, trans. Victor Terras (University of Chicago Press, 1969), pp. 1–3. See also Frank, *The Mantle of the Prophet*, pp. 65–86.
7. F. M. Dostoevskii, "Zapisnaia tetrad' 1872–1875 gg," *Neizdannyi Dostoevskii: Zapisnye knizhki i tetradi 1860–1881 gg.*, Literaturnoe nasledstvo, 83 (Moscow: Nauka, 1971), p. 314 and L. M. Rosenblum [Rozenblium], "Dostoevskii v seredine 70-kh godov. Sozdanie *Podrostka*," in "Tvorcheskaia laboratoriia Dostoevskogo-romanista," Literaturnoe nasledstvo, 77 (Moscow: Nauka, 1965), p. 8.

8. Unfortunately this theme prompted some of Dostoevskii's nastiest anti-Semitic remarks. See, for example, PSS 21: 95.
9. Frank, *The Mantle of the Prophet*, pp. 60–61.
10. See also Dostoevskii, "Zapisnaia tetrad' 1872–1875 gg," in *Neizdannyi Dostoevskii*, p. 408.
11. Ibid. p. 311 and Frank, *The Mantle of the Prophet*, pp. 60–61.
12. F. M. Dostoevskii, "Zapisnaia tetrad' 1872–1875 gg," in *Neizdannyi Dostoevskii*, p. 367. See Frank, *The Mantle of the Prophet*, pp. 54–55, 59–60 for Dostoevskii's problems with Prince Meshcherskii.
13. On *The Adolescent* as an artistically inferior work see, for example, Wasiolek, *Dostoevsky: The Major Fiction*, p. 137 and Frank, *The Mantle of the Prophet*, p. 171.

    Rosenblum, "Dostoevskii v seredine 70-kh godov," pp. 7–10, also notes that *The Adolescent* is a lesser work than Dostoevskii's other great novels, but considers it significant that it reflects a slight shift in the writer's attitude toward the young revolutionaries, about whom he now speaks with some sympathy. Even so, as Rosenblum points out, it does not signify that Dostoevskii's fundamental convictions changed. Nathan Rosen, "Breaking Out of the Underground: The 'Failure' of *A Raw Youth*," *Modern Fiction Studies*, 4 (1958), 225–39, argues that the novel is an important step for Dostoevskii in making the transition from the depiction of what Rosen considers almost exclusively "dead-end heroes" (Raskol'nikov, Myshkin, Stavrogin) to heroes who can be regenerated (Dmitrii and Alesha Karamazov).
14. This passage caught Bakhtin's eye and represents a departure from what he views as the monologic tendency of the *Diary*. See Morson, "Introductory Study", p. 111, n. 48.
15. In his "Last Stop: Virtue and Immortality in *The Brothers Karamazov*," in *Dialogues with Dostoevsky*, p. 293, Jackson suggests that absolutism was "not wholly congenial to Dostoevsky."
16. On the *Diary*'s revisionist interpretation of the scene before confession in the Dead House see Jackson, *The Art of Dostoevsky*, pp. 115–16, 140–43; Robin Feuer Miller, "Dostoevskii, the Peasants, and Problems of Representation," in Knut Andreas Grimstad and Ingunn Lunde, eds., *Celebrating Creativity: Essays in Honor of Jostein Børtnes*, p. 179 and Scanlan, *Dostoevsky the Thinker*, p. 114, footnote.
17. Morson, "Introductory Study," pp. 12–13, discusses the writer's tendency to exhibit the "joints" between non-fiction and fiction in the *Diary*.
18. For more on Kornilova see Gary Rosenshield, *Western Law, Russian Justice: Dostoevsky, the Jury Trial, and the Law* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005), pp. 68–104.
19. Ibid. pp. 32–61. Rosenshield suggests that the assault on compassion, the people's greatest virtue, constituted for Dostoevskii the greatest crime of the Kroneberg case (p. 48).
20. In a footnote explaining the verb "*obrazit'*," Dostoevskii notes that it was a term he learned from convicts in Siberia signifying "give an image, restore in a

person his human image" (22: 26). See Jackson, *The Art of Dostoevsky*, pp. 18–19 and elsewhere.

21. See "The Barrel of Gold," in Ivanits, *Russian Folk Belief*, pp. 163–64.
22. G. M. Fridlender, *Realizm Dostoevskogo* (Moscow and Leningrad: Nauka, 1964), pp. 295–308, established that the direct source for this little tale was a ballad by the German poet Friedrich Rükert.
23. Ibid. Fridlender discusses interconnections between the sections of the second chapter and the earlier treatment of Christmas parties for wealthier children.
24. Jackson, *The Art of Dostoevsky* ("The Fourth Window: 'The Boy at Christ's Christmas Party'") shows how Dostoevskii makes the world on the inside of the three windows into which the child looks seem evil "because of its exclusiveness and indifference" (p. 266). He considers the vision of Christ's Christmas party a "fourth window" through which the child can step into a paradise for the poor (p. 268).
25. Jackson, ibid., suggests that while the dream of the Golden Age eludes the fashionable inhabitants of the capital, it is granted the little boy and other poor children like him.
26. For a more on these witnesses see Rosenshield, *Western Law, Russian Justice*, pp. 48–50.
27. Al'tman, *Dostoevskii po vekham imen*, pp. 174–76.
28. Jackson, *The Art of Dostoevsky* ("The Triple Vision: 'The Peasant Marey'"), p. 31.
29. In his "Zapisnaia tetrad' 1875–76 gg.," in *Neizdannyi Dostoevskii*, pp. 411, 416. Dostoevskii writes, "Marei. A picture from childhood . . . true other pictures from childhood make it possible to look at things completely differently," and "Marei. He loves his little mare and calls her his breadwinner. If he experiences minutes of impatience and the Tatar in him breaks through, then he whips his breadwinner hitched to the cart and in the mud across her eyes."
30. Frank, *The Years of Ordeal*, pp. 116–27 believes that this story points to a prison conversion in which Dostoevskii acquired faith in the Russian people as "the human image of Christ" (p. 125). James L. Rice, "Psychoanalysis of 'Peasant Marej': Some Residual Problems," in Daniel Rancour-Laferriere, ed., *Russian Literature and Psychoanalysis* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1989), p. 257, believes that the story encodes Dostoevskii's deep anxiety and "ambivalence toward pathology, sexuality, and faith." See also Jackson, *The Art of Dostoevsky*, pp. 20–32, and Robin Feuer Miller, "Dostoevskii's Parables: Paradox and Plot," in Jostein Børtnes and Ingunn Lunde, eds., *Cultural Discontinuity and Reconstruction: The Byzanto-Slav Heritage and the Creation of a Russian National Literature in the Nineteenth Century* (Oslo: Solum Forlag, 1997), pp. 176–78.
31. Jackson, *The Art of Dostoevsky*, pp. 25–27; Frank, *The Years of Ordeal*, pp. 119–20 suggests that Dostoevskii's prison recollection of Marei likely occurred not the first year he was in Omsk (1850), but the second (1851).
32. E. A. Akel'kina, "K voprosu o filosofichnosti kak osoboi napravlennosti avtorskogo soznaniia i slova v *Dnevnike pisatelia* za 1876 g. F. M.

Dostoevskogo (Traditsii filosofskoi prozy v rasskaze 'Muzhik Marei')," Problemy metoda i zhanra, 14 (Tomskii universitet, 1988), pp. 219–29 reads the story as a philosophical work in which the narrator guides the reader on the path of a search for truth.

33. Regarding Dostoevskii's use of the name "Marei" to link his peasant with the Mother of God see, especially, Jackson, *The Art of Dostoevsky*, p. 27 and Nadja Jernakoff, "'Muzhik Marei' Dostoevskogo," *Dostoevsky Studies*, 9 (1988), 104. Dennis Patrick Slattery, "Memory, Metaphor, and the Image of Christ in Dostoevsky's 'The Peasant Marei'," *Renascence*, 39 (1987), 389 thinks that Marei should be understood as an icon of Christ. See also Rice, "Psychoanalysis of 'Peasant Marej'," pp. 255–57.
34. Morson, "Introductory Study," p. 27.
35. Ibid. p. 17.
36. Rosenshield, *Western Law, Russian Justice*, pp. 77–92.
37. See N. P. Andreev, "Legenda o dvukh velikikh greshnikakh," 185–98 and A. N. Afanas'ev, "Grekh i pokaianie," *Narodnye russkie legendy*, pp. 91–97.
38. N. A. Nekrasov, "Vlas," in *Polnoe sobranie stikhotvorenii*, 2nd edn (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1928), pp. 30–31. The reworking of "The Legend of the Two Great Sinners" that Nekrasov includes in his *Who Lives Well in Russia* (*Komu na Rusi zhit' khorosho*) in the 1870s is closer to Afanas'ev's version "b." See his "O dvukh velikikh greshnikakh," *Polnoe sobranie stikhotvorenii*, pp. 303–04. For a discussion of Nekrasov's text and the original legend see M. M. Gin, "Spor o velikom greshnike," 84–97. For more on the relationship between Nekrasov's and Dostoevskii's "Vlases" and the folk legend see PSS 21: 396–402.
39. Vs. S. Solov'ev's diary entry is dated January 2, 1873. See *F. M. Dostoevskii: Novye materialy i issledovaniia*, Literaturnoe nasledstvo, 86 (Moscow: Nauka, 1973), p. 425.
40. N. K. Piksanov "Dostoevskii i fol'klor," 164–65 notes that the belief that shooting at the Host would give a hunter sure aim was widespread both in western Europe and Russia. Andreev, "Legenda o dvukh velikikh greshnikakh," 188, 191–92 finds legends specifying this offence prevalent in western Ukraine.
41. Frank, *The Mantle of the Prophet*, p. 258.
42. See the lengthy discussion on the reaction of the liberal intelligentsia to "Vlas" in PSS 21: 398–401. The critic writing for *The Voice* (*Golos*) was A. Kovner, who in 1877 would enter into correspondence with Dostoevskii on the Jewish Question. For more on Kovner and Dostoevskii see Harriet Murav, *Identity Theft: The Jew in Imperial Russia and the Case of Avraam Uri Kovner* (Stanford University Press, 2003).
43. Frank, *The Mantle of the Prophet*, p. 107.
44. Vs. S. Solov'ev, "Vospominaniia o F. M. Dostoevskom," in Dolinin, ed., *F. M. Dostoevskii v vospominaniiakh sovremennikov*, vol. II, p. 203.
45. Nekrasov, "Vlas," p. 31. For more on the influence of Nekrasov's "Vlas" on *The Adolescent*, see A. S. Dolinin [Iskoz], *Poslednie romany Dostoevskogo: Kak sozdavalis'* Podrostok *i* Brat'ia Karamazovy (Moscow and Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel', 1963), pp. 129–33 and Tunimanov, "Dostoevskii i Nekrasov," pp. 33–66.

46. Mikhniukevich, *Russkii fol'klor*, p. 184.
47. Malcolm Jones, "*A Raw Youth*: A Novel of Discord," in Robin Feuer Miller, ed., *Critical Easays on Dostoevsky*, pp. 163, 167 also juxtaposes "blagoobrazie" to "bezobrazie." He notes that "blagoobrazie" embeds the concepts of "seemliness" and "harmony."
48. See PSS 17: 309–10.
49. Mikhniukevich, *Russkii fol'klor*, p. 191 compares Makar to a "kalika" (pilgrim minstrel who chanted spiritual songs), but notes that his repertoire consists not of songs, but of edifying precepts and narratives.
50. On Makar's language see I. D. Iakubovich, "K kharakteristike stilizatsii v *Podrostke*," 136–43.
51. Dostoevskii's criticism concerned Leskov's story "The Sealed Angel" ("Zapechatlennyi angel"). See PSS 21: 430–33. For more on the literary relationship between Dostoevskii and Leskov see Vinogradov, "Dostoevskii i Leskov v 70-e gody XIX veka," in *Problema avtorstva i teoriia stilei*, pp. 487–555 and E. M. Pul'khritudova, "Dostoevskii i Leskov (K istorii tvorcheskikh vzaimootnoshenii)," in *Dostoevskii i russkie pisateli* (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1971), pp. 87–138.
52. See Mikhniukevich, *Russkii fol'klor*, pp. 192–208.
53. Ibid. p. 199.
54. Morson and Kelly contend that the writer often seems poised between a "utopian" vision of a transformed world order based on the morality of Christ and led by Orthodox Russia and an inner voice that suspects reality cannot be pulled together to yield a coherent interpretation. See Morson, "Introductory Study," p. 73 and Aileen Kelly, "Irony and Utopia in Herzen and Dostoevsky: *From the Other Shore* and *Diary of a Writer*," 398. Morson uses the term "prosaics" for this doubting voice; Kelly uses "irony."

6 *THE BROTHERS KARAMAZOV:* CHRIST WALKS THE RUSSIAN LAND

1. On Dostoevskii's concern about censorship while writing *The Brothers Karamazov* see Frank, *The Mantle of the Prophet*, pp. 426–39. Like Frank, Victor Terras, *A Karamazov Companion* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1981), pp. 6–7, hypothesizes that the letters to the high-placed Pobedonostsev were in part a precaution against censorship.
2. See *Skazanie o stranstvii i puteshestvii po Rossii, Moldavii, Turtsii i Sviatoi zemle postrizhennika Sviatoi Gory Afonskoi Inoka Parfeniia*, vol. II, pp. 189–91 for a description of the custom of digging up the bones of deceased monks and examining their color that the librarian Father Iosif mentions (PSS 14: 300).
3. L. M. Lotman, "Romany Dostoevskogo i russkaia legenda," pp. 306–07. See also V. A. Mikhniukevich, *Russkii fol'klor*, pp. 224–25.
4. *Letopis' zhizni i tvorchestva F. M. Dostoevskogo*, vol. III, 1875–81, p. 279. For a different view of Dostoevskii's behavior see Gennadii Belovolov, "Optinskie

predaniia o Dostoevskom," *Stat'i o Dostoevskom, 1971–2001* (St. Petersburg: Serebrianyi vek, 2001), pp. 171–73.

5. See Mochulsky, *Dostoevsky*, p. 589 and I. M. Kontsevich, *Optina Pustyn' i ee vremia* (Jordanville, NY: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1970), pp. 598–99.
6. See Sven Linnér, *Starets Zosima in* The Brothers Karamazov: *A Study in the Mimesis of Virtue* (Stockholm: Almquist and Wiksell, 1975), pp. 96–111 and Sergei Hackel, "The Religious Dimension: Vision or Evasion? Zosima's Discourse in *The Brothers Karamazov*," in Malcolm Jones and Garth Terry, eds., *New Essays on Dostoyevsky*, pp. 139–68. In contrast, N. V. Prashcheruk, "L. Leon'tev i F. Dostoevskii: Spor o khristianskom ideale," F. M. Dostoevskii i natsional'naia kul'tura, 2 (Cheliabinsk, 1996), pp. 142–63 places Zosima in the tradition of the "luminous Orthodoxy" of Sergei of Radonezh, Nil Sorskii, Tikhon of Zadonsk, and Serafim of Sarov.
7. See, for example, Jones, *Dostoevsky and the Dynamics of Religious Experience*, pp. 114–19, 124–46; Linnér, *Starets Zosima*; Hackel, "The Religious Dimension: Vision or Evasion?"; R. Pletnev, "Serdtsem mudrye (O startsakh u Dostoevskogo)," in A. L. Bem, ed., *O Dostoevskom* (Prague: Khudomel, 1933), vol. II, pp. 73–92; Linda J. Ivanits, "Hagiography in *Brat'ja Karamazovy*: Zosima, Ferapont, and the Russian Monastic Saint," *Russian Language Journal*, 34 (1980), 109–26; and Roger B. Anderson, "Mythical Implications of Father Zosima's Religious Teachings," *Slavic Review*, 38 (1979), 272–89.
8. See V. K. Lebedev, "Otryvok iz romana *Brat'ia Karamazovy* pered sudom tsenzury," *Russkaia literatura*, 2 (1970), 123.
9. Nathan Rosen, "Style and Structure in *The Brothers Karamazov* (The Grand Inquisitor and The Russian Monk)," *Russian Literature Triquarterly*, 1 (1971), 352.
10. For a general account of the folklore references present in *The Brothers Karamazov* see Mikhniukevich, *Russkii fol'klor*, pp. 212–80; for the fable about the onion, Sarah Smyth, "The 'Lukovka' Legend in *The Brothers Karamazov*," *Irish Slavonic Studies*, 7 (1986), 41–51; for St. Alexis "Man of God," Vetlovskaia, *Poetika romana* Brat'ia Karamazovy (Leningrad: Nauka, 1977), pp. 168–92; on laments see Vladimirtsev, "Narodnye plachi v tvorchestve F. M. Dostoevskogo," 179–90 and Tatyana Buzina, *Dostoevsky and Social and Metaphysical Freedom* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2003), pp. 249–91; on Dostoevskii's adaptation of the legend as a genre, Kate Holland, "Novelizing Religious Experience: The Generic Landscape of *The Brothers Karamazov*," *Slavic Review*, 66 (2007), 63–81; on the earth, Anderson, "Mythic Implications of Father Zosima's Religious Teachings," V. V. Borisova, "Fol'klornomifologicheskaia osnova kategorii zemli u F. M. Dostoevskogo," in *Fol'klor narodov RSFSR: Mezhvuzovskii sbornik* (Ufa: Bashkirskii universitet, 1979), pp. 35–43, and Pletnev, "Zemlia", pp. 153–62; and on demonology Linda J. Ivanits, "Folk Beliefs about the Unclean Force in *The Brothers Karamazov*," in George J. Gutsche and Lauren G. Leighton, eds., *New Perspectives on Nineteenth-Century Russian Prose*, pp. 135–46 and W. J. Leatherbarrow, *A Devil's Vaudeville*, pp. 140–77.

11. "Zapisnaia tetrad' 1875–1876 gg.," in *Neizdannyi Dostoevskii*, p. 400. This assertion is one of many in which Dostoevskii plays with the similarity in sound between the Russian words "peasant" (*krest'ianin*) and "Christian" (*khristianin*).
12. Bruce K. Ward, "The Absent Finger of Providence in *The Brothers Karamazov*: Some Implications for Religious Models," in Peter Rollberg, ed., *And Meaning for a Life Entire: Festschrift for Charles A. Moser on the Occasion of his Sixtieth Birthday*, p. 150.
13. Ibid.
14. Diane Oenning Thompson, The Brothers Karamazov *and the Poetics of Memory* (Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 35.
15. Mikhniukevich, *Russkii fol'klor*, pp. 196–97 suggests that the source for the hooks may be some variants of the song about the beggar Lazarus.
16. Dostoevskii probably took the story of the flying coffin from a history of Optina Pustyn' Monastery. The decapitated saint is most likely St. Denis of Paris, but may be St. Merkurii of Smolensk. See Terras, *A Karamazov Companion*, pp. 139, 146; PSS 15: 528, 530–31; and Pletnev, "La Légende chrétienne dans l'oeuvre de Dostoievsky," 136–39.
17. Ivanits, "Hagiography in *Brat'ja Karamazovy*," 111.
18. See Knapp, *The Annihilation of Inertia*, pp. 194–96 for more on Zosima's concept of time.
19. Ibid. p. 214.
20. Ward, "The Absent Finger of Providence," p. 153, argues persuasively that Dostoevskii intended to offer in Alesha a "concrete embodiment of a religiosity viable in the modern context."
21. See Frank, *The Mantle of the Prophet*, p. 394 and Linnér, *Starets Zosima*, p. 52 on Dostoevskii's adherence to the conventions of literary realism in handling the issue of miracles.
22. Leatherbarrow, *A Devil's Vaudeville*, p. 152 draws a connection between the little details that obscure rather than reveal truth and the demonic, noting that the word Dostoevskii often uses for "details" (*chertochki*) seems like a diminutive form of "devil" (*chert*).
23. Ward, "The Absent Finger of Providence," p. 156, notes that Paisii's critique seems directed not so much at science, as at scientific reductionism or scientism. On Dostoevskii and science versus "scientism" in *The Brothers Karamazov* see also Michael R. Katz, "Dostoevsky and Natural Science," *Dostoevsky Studies*, 9 (1988), 63–76; Diane Oenning Thompson, "Poetic Transformations of Scientific Facts in *Brat'ja Karamazovy*," *Dostoevsky Studies*, 8 (1987), 73–85; and Knapp, *The Annihilation of Inertia*, pp. 172–216.
24. Katz, "Dostoevsky and Natural Science," 72, points out that Dostoevskii respected Bernard for the breadth of his education and knowledge. But in the novel he renders him a symbol of "the radical, free-thinking, scientific, deterministic approach that [he] unconditionally opposes."
25. For Smerdiakov and the devil see Ivanits, "Folk Beliefs about the Unclean Force in *The Brothers Karamazov*," pp. 141–43 and Leatherbarrow, *A Devil's Vaudeville*, pp. 163–67. For a discussion of imagery suggesting that Smerdiakov has the

potential for sainthood see Lee D. Johnson, "Struggle for Theosis: Smerdyakov as Would-Be Saint," in Robert Louis Jackson, ed., *A New Word on* The Brothers Karamazov (Evanston, IL: Northewestern University Press, 2004), pp. 74–89.

26. Johnson, "Struggle for Theosis," pp. 81–84, suggests that Smerdiakov's question about the origin of light on the first day may embed a reference to the Orthodox theological concept of the Hidden Light that emanates directly from God and is manifest in the Gospel story of the Transfiguration.
27. On sectarian imagery in Smerdiakov's portrayal see Peace, *Dostoyevsky*, pp. 260–63.
28. Vladimir Kantor, "Pavel Smerdiakov and Ivan Karamazov: The Problem of Temptation," trans. Caryl Emerson, in Pattison and Thompson, eds., *Dostoevsky and the Christian Tradition*, pp. 206–08. See also Gary Saul Morson, "Verbal Pollution in *The Brothers Karamazov*," in Robin Feuer Miller, ed., *Critical Essays on Dostoevsky*, p. 238.
29. For more on this passage see Kantor, "Pavel Smerdiakov and Ivan Karamazov," pp. 193–94.
30. Leatherbarrow, *A Devil's Vaudeville*, p. 153.
31. See Kantor, "Pavel Smerdiakov and Ivan Karamazov," pp. 195–97. On Job in *The Brothers Karamazov* see also N. Efimova, "Motif bibleiskogo Iova v *Brat'iakh Karamazovykh*," in *Dostoevskii: Materialy i issledovaniia*, 11 (1994), 122–31.
32. Val Vinokur, "Facing the Devil in Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*," *Stanford Slavic Studies*, 30 (2005), 469.
33. Ralph E. Matlaw, The Brothers Karamazov*: Novelistic Technique* (The Hague: Mouton, 1957), p. 16. Curiously, when Dostoevskii chose to read the Grand Inquisitor at a literary evening at St. Petersburg University, the theological authorities refused him permission to include this list of medieval works. See Frank, *The Mantle of the Prophet*, p. 469.
34. On the possible divine spark remaining deep within Fedor Karamazov see V. V. Zenkovskii, "Fedor Pavlovich Karamazov," in A. L. Bem, ed., *O Dostoevskom*, vol. II, pp. 93–114.
35. Jackson, *The Art of Dostoevsky*, p. 313.
36. Liza Knapp, "Mothers and Sons in *The Brothers Karamazov*: Our Ladies of Skotoprigonevsk," in Jackson, ed., *A New Word on* The Brothers Karamazov, p. 33. For the possible influence of Hugo's novel on the depiction of the Grand Inquisitor, see Robert Belknap, *The Genesis of* The Brothers Karamazov (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1990), pp. 112–14.
37. See V. E. Vetlovskaia, "Dostoevskii i poeticheskii mir drevnei Rusi: Literaturnye i fol'klornye istochniki *Brat'ev Karamazovykh*," *Issledovaniia po istorii russkoi literatury XI–XVII vv*. Trudy, 28 (Leningrad: AN SSSR, Otdel drevnerusskoi literatury, 1974), pp. 297–307, for versions of "The Wandering of the Mother of God through Hell" that Dostoevskii may have seen. Vetlovskaia places particular stress on the role of "The Conversation between Christ and the Devil" ("Prenie gospodne c diavolom") and various apocrypha about the end of the world in the Grand Inquisitor. On "The Wandering of the Mother of

God through Hell" and spiritual songs about the suffering of the innocent in Ivan's poem see Buzina, *Dostoevsky and Social and Metaphysical Freedom*, pp. 249–91. For discussion of how "The Wandering of the Mother of God through Hell" and Grushen'ka's fable "The Onion" relate to the Orthodox understanding of grace and embed the possibility of salvation from hell see Ivan Esaulov, "The Categories of Law and Grace in Dostoevsky's Poetics," trans. Diane Oenning Thompson, in Pattison and Thompson, eds., *Dostoevsky and the Christian Tradition*, pp. 121–24.

38. The poem, "Eti bednye selen'ia," dates from 1855. See F. I. Tiutchev, *Sochineniia*, 2 vols. (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1984), vol. I, p. 171.
39. A. N. Afanas'ev, *Narodnye russkie legendy*, p. xv.
40. Ibid. pp. 129–31. On "Christ's Brother" in *The Brothers Karamazov* see Lotman, "Romany Dostoevskogo i russkaia legenda," pp. 305–07 and Smyth, "The 'Lukovka' Legend in *The Brothers Karamazov*," 46–49.
41. Knapp, "Mothers and Sons in *The Brothers Karamazov*," pp. 47–48.
42. For example, Afanas'ev, *Narodnye russkie legendy*, pp. 30–32.
43. Ibid. pp. 3, 5 gives the following typical beginnings for the legend: "Once it happened that Christ assumed the guise of an old man beggar and walked through a village with two apostles"; "Once Christ came to a mill in poor, beggarly dress and began to beg the miller for holy alms."
44. Jackson, *The Art of Dostoevsky*, p. 329.
45. For more on Ivan's devil see Vinokur, "Facing the Devil in Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*."
46. See Ivanits, "Hagiography in *Brat'ja Karamazovy*."
47. For an excellent discussion of love in Dostoevskii's ethical philosophy see Scanlan, *Dostoevsky the Thinker*, pp. 81–117.
48. Jostein Børtnes, "The Function of Hagiography in Dostoevskij's Novels," in Miller, ed., *Critical Essays on Dostoevsky*, p. 192.
49. See "Zhitie prepodobnogo ottsa nashego Aleksiia, cheloveka Bozhiia," in *Izbrannye zhitiia sviatykh, kratko izlozhennye po rukovodstvu Chetiikh Minei*, 17 March, pp. 119–30.
50. For a lengthy discussion of this comparison see Vetlovskaia, *Poetika romana* Brat'ia Karamazovy, pp. 168–92.
51. See Thompson, The Brothers Karamazov *and the Poetics of Memory*, pp. 312–13 for a discussion of St. Alexis versus Christ in Alesha's depiction.
52. Gary Saul Morson, "The God of Onions: *The Brothers Karamazov* and the Mythic Prosaic," in Jackson, ed., *A New Word on* The Brothers Karamazov, p. 112, terms the Christianity that focuses on small acts of kindness rather than great feats of "prosaic" Christianity.
53. Smyth, "The 'Lukovka' Legend in *The Brothers Karamazov*," 47–48, discusses the journey to heaven as it pertains to Alesha, but not to Grushen'ka. See Mikhniukevich, *Russkii fol'klor*, pp. 220–23 for folklore motifs connected with fertility in the scene at Mokroe and pp. 235–36 for folklore language in Grushen'ka's depiction.
54. For example, Afanas'ev, *Narodnye russkie legendy*, pp. 31, 124.

55. See, for example, Rimvydas Silbajoris, "The Children in *The Brothers Karamazov*," *Slavic and East European Journal*, 7 (1963), 32.
56. Mikhniukevich, *Russkii fol'klor*, pp. 267–68, suggests that Dostoevskii adapted Andrei's legend from a variant of the extremely widespread "Dream of the Mother of God" ("Son Bogoroditsy"). But the list of people destined for hell was changed from clerics to the world's rich and powerful. See PSS 15: 575–76.
57. See PSS 15: 543–44.
58. Peace, *Dostoyevsky*, p. 285.
59. Leatherbarrow, *A Devil's Vaudeville*, p. 150.
60. Jackson, *The Art of Dostoevsky*, p. 340.
61. For a penetrating discussion of the importance of the story of Mikhail as a refutation of the Grand Inquisitor see Caryl Emerson, "Zosima's 'Mysterious Visitor': Again Bakhtin on Dostoevsky and Dostoevsky on Heaven and Hell," in Jackson, ed., *A New Word on* The Brothers Karamazov, pp. 155–79. See also Mikhniukevich, *Russkii fol'klor*, p. 238.
62. Emerson, "Zosima's 'Mysterious Visitor,'" pp. 165–69.
63. Ibid. pp. 170–74.

CONCLUDING REMARKS: DOSTOEVSKY AND THE PEOPLE

1. V. V. Timofeeva (O. Pochinkovskaia), "God raboty s znamenitym pisatelem," p. 150.
2. "Zapisnaia tetrad' 1875–1876 gg.," in *Neizdannyi Dostoevskii*, p. 400.
3. Jones, *Dostoevsky and the Dynamics of Religious Experience*, p. 123, notes that Zosima escapes the "straightjacket of Orthodoxy." We could no doubt say the same for Dostoevskii.
4. Ibid. p. 23.
5. Ibid. p. x.
6. See Frank, *The Years of Ordeal*, p. 103.
7. Jackson, *The Art of Dostoevsky*, p. 18 and elsewhere.

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Index