

**DOSTOEVSKY'S ENDGAME: THE PROJECTED SEQUEL TO
*THE BROTHERS KARAMAZOV*¹**

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In memoriam

Reginald Ely Zelnik

. . . from a few rumors about the further contents of the novel, rumors current in Petersburg literary circles, I can say only that Aleksei [Karamazov] in time becomes the village schoolmaster, and influenced by some sort of special psychological processes at work in his soul, he actually arrives at the idea of assassinating the tsar [*dokhodit dazhe do idei o tsareubiistve*].

Z, "Zhurnal'nye zametki," *Novorossiiskii*

Telegraf (Odessa), May 26/June 7, 1880²

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² The only North American library location for this title (microfilm) is at the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana. Ellen Knutson of their Slavic Reference Service kindly prepared a legible print of the complete issue in question here.

The Karamazov sequel is a threefold problem. First, we consider how twelve sources from nine hands (including the author's) coalesce into a unified plot that is startling but plausible. As Dostoevsky told an unimpeachable witness, Alesha Karamazov would become a revolutionary, to be arrested and executed for a political crime – in which one recognizes the author's own fate so narrowly escaped in his youth (Suvorin 1923).³

Secondly though also of necessity concurrently, as the sequel sources are vetted and assembled in a hypothetical plot, one naturally reconsiders the great novel that we know, to imagine how it was designed to accommodate such an outcome. Let it be noted at the outset, that almost all the sequel sources originate in the period when Dostoevsky was still writing and serializing *The Brothers Karamazov*. The sequel was thus an actively creative project, concurrent with the novel it was to culminate: a teleological factor in the nature of a subtext – by no means a mere afterthought. That Dostoevsky would in time have altered his plan typically (and necessarily with the actual death of the tsar) is irrelevant to this investigation, for he soon died leaving no drafts extant. *The Brothers Karamazov* and its sequel were conceived in an era when assassination attempts on the life of Alexander II were a routine occurrence. One of our sources reveals unequivocally how that fact influenced Dostoevsky's creative design in this last major fiction.

Thirdly and lastly, the sequel's extraordinary denouement requires at least a few speculative remarks about the personality and career of F. M. Dostoevsky, himself, if not in fact a revisionist vita – to explain this fictive endgame of political violence. Did he, then, live a life without “conversion”, without piously Orthodox patriotism, without lapsing into retrograde

³ Aleksei Sergeevich Suvorin, *Dnevnik* [1923], ed. D. Rayfield, O. E. Makarova, and N. A. Roskina (London, The Garnett Press/Moscow, *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 1999). N. A. Roskina, “Ob odnoi staroi publikatsii,” *Voprosy literatury*, 1968, no. 6, 250-253.

politics, without sincerely universal “reconciliation,” without (in Freud’s formula) “submission to God and Tsar”? It would be a tall order to dispel all of these frequent biographical cliché, yet the *Karamazov* sequel seems to lead insistently in that direction.⁴ So in conclusion and indeed throughout we offer some opinions on the author’s motivation in his great finale, because the materials require it.

All readers of *The Brothers Karamazov* are insistently alerted to a forthcoming sequel by Dostoevsky’s preface (“From the Author”), published with the first installment of the novel on February 1, 1879. The preface is in fact devoted wholly to the sequel.⁵ The main hero will be Alesha Karamazov, as yet “a figure undefined in society,” “strange and even eccentric,” but “bearing within him, perhaps, the very essence of the whole epoch.” The author claims to have “one life story, but two novels” – the first set thirteen years earlier (1866), the second “in our present moment,” ca. 1880, adjusting to the date of the first novel’s complete edition, December 1st of that year. Dostoevsky ends these remarks with cunning obfuscation, archly promising critics who would read both novels “an essential unity of the whole.” On the face of it and until recently, one might suppose he is pulling the reader’s leg.⁶ But now the evidence is at hand not only to reconstruct the plot of the *Karamazov* sequel, but also seriously to argue its essential unity with the novel famous in world literature.

⁴ Typical of the biographical status quo in these respects are: Sigmund Freud, “Dostojewski und die Vätertoetung” in: F. M. Dostojewski, *Die Urgestalt der Brüeder Karamasoff*, ed. Fritz Eckstein and René Fuellep-Müller (Munich, R. Piper, 1928), xi-xxxvi. L. P. Grossman, “Dostoevskii i pravil’stvennye krugi 1870-kh godov,” *Literaturnoe Nasledstvo*, t. 15 (1934), 83-162. L. P. Grossman, “Grazhdanskaia smert’ F. M. Dostoevskogo,” *Literaturnoe Nasledstvo*, t. 22-24 (1935), 683-293. Joseph Frank, “Dostoevsky’s Conversion,” *New York Review of Books*, January 20, 1983. Igor’ Volgin, *Poslednii god Dostoevskogo* [1986], 2nd ed. (Moscow, Sovetskii pisatel, 1991), 23-24. Michael Scammell, “Dostoevsky: The Mellow Years,” *New York Review of Books*, June 30, 2002.

⁵ F. M. Dostoevskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridsati tomakh* [30 vols. in 33] (Leningrad, Nauka, 1972-1990): “Ot avtora,” vol. 14, 5-6.

⁶ Maximilian Brown, “*The Brothers Karamazov* as an Expository Novel,” *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*, 1972, 6, no. 2, 199-208.

The pivotal source for the *Karamazov* sequel is the diary of A. S. Suvorin, first published in 1923 and noticed by a few Dostoevsky scholars half a century later. Aleksei Sergeevich Suvorin (1834-1912) with the help of wealthy investors acquired in 1876 the newspaper *Novoe Vremia*, and made it a great financial success. Often identified with his paper's official conservatism, in private he was a close friend of such gifted and idiosyncratic writers as Rozanov, Chekhov, and Dostoevsky, whose careers he helped to advance. Suvorin also had a dark side, for instance, a wife murdered by her lover in 1873, a son who was to commit suicide in 1887. The Dostoevsky portrayed in Suvorin's diary, according to the great scholar Dolinin, "belies the official legend of a writer who was loyal," revealing in the novelist "an attitude toward the revolutionaries, the active terrorists of the People's Will group, that was complex and contradictory."⁷

Quite so, yet that is not the half of it.

Suvorin wrote two moving obituaries about Dostoevsky, one published the day after his death and a longer essay three days later (January 29 and February 1, 1881).⁸ There politics are of course muted. The diary of Suvorin was kept sporadically, but in September 1899 his first reading of *The Idiot* brought back certain vivid memories of the great writer, focusing upon a private encounter at Dostoevsky's apartment in the early afternoon of February 20, 1880. From the nature of their exchange one can well imagine it was a frequent memory for Suvorin. The diary records that specific meeting twice, first under the date September 28, 1899, then again tripled in length, much richer in recorded speech and detail, under the heading "1903—Memoir

⁷ Suvorin, *Dnevnik*, v-xxxii, 73, 345, 559, 562. A. S. Dolinin, "A. S. Suvorin," *F. M. Dostoevskii v vospominaniakh sovremennikov*, t. 2 (Moscow, Khudozbestvennaia literature, 1964), 327.

⁸ A. S. Suvorin, "O pokoinom," in Dolinin, *F.M. Dostoevskii v vospominaniakh sovremennikov*, 415-424.

Fragments” (probably pages randomly chosen). The diarist’s special effort to recapture this event seems to lend authenticity. Our account below combines both variants.⁹

First Suvorin recalls being reliably told that his obituary of the late writer (probably the longer essay) so moved Count M. T. Loris-Melikov, president of the Supreme Executive Committee (for state security), that he went directly to the tsar and obtained a pension for Dostoevsky’s widow.¹⁰ This in turn carried the diarist back to February 20, 1880, for on that day – though he and F.M. had not yet heard of it when they met – occurred the attempted assassination of Loris-Melikov by the revolutionary Mlodetsky, whose execution two days later on Semenov Square would be witnessed by Dostoevsky. Seven known assassination attempts were organized by People’s Will between autumn, 1879, and March 1, 1881.¹¹ In early 1880 the most shocking attack had been the bomb exploded in the Hermitage banquet hall, an hour too soon, on February 5th. Suvorin, who in those days often saw Dostoevsky privately and at dinner, found him rolling cigarettes at a table in his shabby apartment, his face livid and sweaty after a slight epileptic seizure. He had been brooding about the wave of political terror and the public hypocrisy of indignation, “while as a matter of fact,” he said, “we sympathize with all these attacks.”

Dostoevsky described a hypothetical situation: the two of them outside Datsiaro’s gallery, overhearing one Nihilist telling another that the Winter Palace would be blown up in ten minutes. “Would we go to warn them, or notify the police?” Suvorin recalls his own reply: “No, I wouldn’t.” – “Nor would I,” agreed Dostoevsky, who had already analyzed his own motives,

⁹ Suvorin, *Dnevnik*, 351-352, 453-454.

¹⁰ Suvorin, *Dnevnik*, 351.

¹¹ Michael T. Florinsky, *Russia. A History and an Interpretation*, II (New York, Macmillan, 1955), 1082.

“all trivial”: fear of disgrace as a denouncer, fear of police interrogation, shame at being offered a reward, risk of becoming a suspect, and attack in the press (“The liberals would never forgive me!” – no doubt said ironically – JR). F.M. deplored the impossibility of addressing these issues openly in Russia, developed this topic at length “with inspiration,” and in this immediate context he outlined the *Karamazov* sequel:

And at that time he said that he was going to write a novel with Alesha Karamazov as the hero. He planned to bring him out of the monastery and make a revolutionary of him. He would commit a political crime. He would be executed. He would have sought the truth and in those seekings he would, naturally, have become a revolutionary.¹²

Most striking is the observation, apparently Dostoevsky’s, that to pursue truth in Russia one must necessarily and *naturally* become a revolutionary. No less remarkable is Suvorin’s apparent acceptance of Alesha’s destiny as a revolutionary who will be executed. It would appear that nothing out of character was felt in that prognosis, by an intimate friend of the great writer when his last major fiction was still a work in progress. One here also discerns a central theme of *collective guilt* linking the projected sequel and Dostoevsky’s great novel of parricide. Alesha pledges to watch over his explosive brother Dmitri, but forgets to do so as the family crisis grows. Ivan and in turn Dmitri withdraw from responsibility, abandoning the moral field to their murderous bastard brother Smerdiakov. So too in the psychology of political violence Alesha, so to speak, “bears within him the very essence of the whole epoch.”

¹² Suvorin, *Dnevnik*, 453-454.

Three weeks before Suvorin's dramatic encounter with the novelist, Book Nine of *The Brothers Karamazov* in the serial edition was published, relating Dmitri's arraignment for his father's murder (January 31, 1880). Dostoevsky read excerpts from the next installment to benefit the Slavic Committee in Petersburg on April 27, 1880, and published the complete Book Ten ("The Boys") on May 3rd. On May 26, 1880, in the Odessa daily *Novorossiiskii Telegraf*, a front-page dispatch from Petersburg signed 'Z' ("Notes from My Journal") reviewed Dostoevsky's novel-in-progress through Mitya's arrest (Book Nine). The reviewer had attended the public reading from Book Ten, but the array of new characters bewildered 'Z', who found in them "no possible logical connection" with the earlier parts of the novel. His plot summary concludes with *rumors current in Petersburg*, that Alesha would in time become the village schoolmaster and arrive at "the idea of assassinating the tsar." (See our epigraph.) This formula, so startling in the Russian legal press, is apparently the capstone of rumors set in motion not long before by Dostoevsky himself, Suvorin, and others in their circle discussed below. Regardless of the ultimate source, it tallies with Dostoevsky's creative intent as recorded convincingly by Suvorin.

The author of the Odessa report ('Z') was probably Semen Titovich Gertso-Vinogradov (1844-1903), whose earlier critiques of Dostoevsky had appeared under various pseudonyms, including 'Z.Z.-Z.'¹³ He admires Dostoevsky's "enormous talent" and "scenes of remarkable beauty," but complains of the "chaos of events" in his works, his "mystical world view," his "gallery of pathological types" invisibly linked by "psychiatric constructs" – and his tormenting impact on the reader, who is made terribly uneasy by feelings hitherto unknown! One recalls

¹³ I. I. Mazanov, *Slovar' psevdonimov russkikh pisatelei*, (Moscow, Vsesoiuznaia knizhnaia palata, 1960), 127.

Freud's earnest jest, that in one respect Dostoevsky was a sadist: the way he treats his reader.¹⁴ It may be worth reporting that not long after Alexander II's assassination, Gertso-Vinogradov attempted suicide and dropped out of public life. 'Z' assumed that Alesha's idea of assassinating the tsar would bring to an end the novel in progress (not a sequel), but in any case for him it was evidently fitting or acceptable because "Alesha is a holy fool [*iurodivyi*], whose mother was also a holy fool" – and "no less Zosima, Smerdiakov, and Grushenka." This passing observation is an important insight into Dostoevsky's design, to which we shall return.¹⁵ The *Novorossiiskii Telegraf* was a paper of general and financial news, real estate ads and shipping schedules, with business offices in Moscow, Petersburg, Kiev, Warsaw, and Paris, and a circulation in 1880 of nearly 6000.¹⁶ Alesha's future as a revolutionary thus spread beyond clandestine rumor among the Petersburg literati.¹⁷

In other sources close to Dostoevsky, the revolutionary potential of Alesha is politically euphemized. Sofia Smirnova, wife of the writer's main theatrical contact, reported from a dinner at Suvorin's (February 29, 1880) that Dostoevsky *himself* claimed to be "a Russian socialist, which readers were wrong to overlook in [Book Two of] *The Brothers Karamazov*."¹⁸ The day after Dostoevsky's death, a Petersburg student, Il'ia Tiunenev, wrote unequivocally in his diary

¹⁴ Sigmund Freud, "Dostoevsky and Parricide," *Standard Edition of the Complete Standard Works*, v. 21, ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1961), 178-9.

¹⁵ Liza Knapp, "Mothers and Sons in *The Brothers Karamazov*: Our Ladies of Skotoprigonevsk," in: *A New Word on The Brothers Karamazov*, ed. R. L. Jackson (Evanston, Illinois, Northwestern University Press, 2004), 234-253.

¹⁶ S. M. Kraeva, "*Novorossiiskii Telegraf*" i ego spodvizhniki. (*Materialy dlia kharakteristiki provintsial'nykh gazet*). (Odessa, L. Nitche, 1881), 49. (My thanks to M. E. Buczkowski for this reference.)

¹⁷ Nicholas Tyrras, "On Dostoevsky's Funeral," *Slavic and East European Journal*, vol. 30, no. 3, 1986, 271-277. [Romanov], Velikii Kniaz' Aleksandr Mikhailovich, *Vospominaniia*, 2 vols. in 1 [1st edition in English, 1931] (Moscow, Zakharov AST, 1999).

¹⁸ N. N. Mostovskaia, "Dostoevskii v dnevnikh S. I. Smirnovoi (Sazanovoi)," *Dostoevskii. Materialy i issledovaniia*, 4 (Leningrad, 1980), 271-278.

that the *Karamazov* sequel “would tell of the future fate of Alesha, that new type of Russian evangelical socialist, so the author intended.”¹⁹ And Suvorin in his eloquent obituary essay (February 1, 1881) wrote of the sequel: “Alesha was to be the hero, of whom he wished to make a type of Russian socialist, not the current type familiar to us, which took shape completely on European soil.”²⁰ After Dostoevsky’s celebrated speech at the Moscow Pushkin festivities (June 8, 1880), he told a group of students that “I have yet to write *The Children*, and then die.”²¹ *The Children (Deti)* was a provisional title for the *Karamazov* sequel, in which “the boys” (of Book Ten) would have become men, devoted to their teacher Alesha. The eminent scholar Grossman observed that the leader of the boys, Kolia Krasotkin, is “obviously an embryonic revolutionary,” whose budding left-wing tendencies are portrayed in *The Brothers Karamazov* without the author’s “usual malicious irony.”²² Dostoevsky’s widow Anna Grigorievna, in her memoirs and a private letter (1912-16), attests to F.M.’s undiminished interest in the sequel and his intent to begin writing it after a year or two of journalism.²³ She adds a crucial fact: that Alesha was to endure a complex psychological drama with Lise. Dostoevsky’s Austrian biographer Nina

¹⁹ N. N. Fonikova, “I. F. Tiumentev. Iz dnevnika,” *Literaturnoe Nasledstvo*, t. 86 (1973), 338. I. F. Tiumentev, “Iz ‘Dnevnika’,” *F. M. Dostoevskii v vospominaniakh sovremennikov*, II, ed. K. I. Tiun’kin (Moscow, Khudozhestvennaia literature, 1990), 479-484, 582-583.

²⁰ A. S. Suvorin, “O pokoinom” 1881, in Dolinin, *F.M. Dostoevskii v vospominaniakh sovremennikov*, 415-424.

²¹ A. M. Slivitskii, “Iz stat’i ‘Iz moikh vospominanii o L. I. Polivanove (Pushkinskie dni)’,” Tiunkin, ed., *F. M. Dostoevskii v vospominaniakh sovremennikov*, II, 420-424, 566-567.

²² Grossman “Dostoevskii i pravitel’svennye krugi 1870kh godov,” 107.

²³ A. G. Dostoevskaia, *Vospominaniia* (Moscow, Khudozhestvennaia literature, 1981), 371. V. E. Vetlovskiaia, “Kommentarii” [on six of the *Karamazov* sequel sources], *Dostoevskii, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridsati tomakh*, vol. 15, 485-487.

Hoffmann, who interviewed Anna Grigorievna in 1898, expands this point significantly: Alesha will marry Lise, then leave her for Grushenka.²⁴

D. D. Blagoi's inspired article about Alesha and the thematic links between *The Brothers Karamazov* and its sequel (1974) fell upon deaf ears, for the most part.²⁵ His case rests primarily on four of the sequel sources discussed above: Dostoevsky's preface, Suvorin, Anna Grigorievna, and Hoffmann. Alesha's revolutionary future is clearly foreseen.²⁶ The problem lies in envisioning how Dostoevsky would effect his character change to embrace political violence.

Blagoi notes that the darkness of the secular world intrudes at the outset (abruptly) into the

²⁴ N[ina] Hoffmann, *Th. M. Dostojewski. Eine biografische Studie* (Berlin, Ernst Hofmann, 1899), 425-427. Maja Loehr, "Nina (Anna) Hoffmann-Matscheko (Pseud.: Norbert Hoffmann) 1843-1914," *Der Bund*, IX. Jg., Heft 9, November 1914, S. 14 [Online Ariadne-Home] Hoffmann's trip to Russia in 1898 yielded some further reports about the *Karamazov* sequel. These accounts, dating from long after Dostoevsky's death, may yet be of value. She tells us that "the sinner Grushenka" breaks up Alesha's marriage with Lise and threatens to ruin him, but after his erratic and negative life he returns to the monastery 'purified' (*gelaeutert*), but is still surrounded by the band of youngsters – now men in their twenties – whom he continues to instruct and guide. In a sense this would come full circle to the situation at the beginning of *The Brothers Karamazov*, and indeed a return to the monastery need not preclude Alesha's revolutionary activities with Kolia and the boys. In Dostoevsky's lifetime at least one sensational revolutionary enterprise in a monastery (the famous Kiev Pecherskaia Lavra in 1863) was terminated by a police raid. (V. D. Koroliuk, ed. "Akt obyska v Kievo-Pecherskoi lavre v sviazi s obnaruzheniem v nei podpol'noi tipografii tainogo revoliutsionnogo obshchestva," *Obshchestvenno-politicheskoe dvizhenie na Ukraine v 1856-1862 gg.* (Kiev, Akademiia Nauk URSR, 1963), 219-221 My thanks to Alan Kimball for calling my attention to the incident and this source.) Hoffmann offers this finale: Alesha "is condemned by himself, and perishes for the sake of others, whom he bears in his soul and to whom Russia's future will belong." Thus it might be that others were to commit a terrorist act for which Alesha would feel obliged – rightly – to accept the blame, a thoroughly Dostoevskian turn of events. (See note 57, below.)

²⁵ D. D. Blagoi, "Put' Aleshi Karamazova," *Izvestiia AN SSSR. Seriiia literatury i iazyka*, 1974, t. 33, no. 1, 8-26. Blagoi's contribution of 1974 was at least cited (in a footnote) by Vetlovskaiia (Dostoevskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridsati tomakh*, vol. 15, 486n), but it apparently made no impression on the collective of commentators for that monumental edition. Joseph Frank cites Blagoi's article with enthusiasm: "a powerful case for accepting Suvorin's testimony that Alesha *might* later engage in revolutionary activity" (Frank, *Dostoevsky. The Mantle of the Prophet 1871-1881*, (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2002), 772n – emphasis ours: Suvorin's testimony on this point is not hedged in the least.). However, Frank did not assimilate Blagoi's sources and ideas, and his chronology of Suvorin's involvement in the case is a vague estimate wide of the mark. (*Op. cit.*, 727.)

²⁶ Z's reference to Alesha's idea of *tsareubiistvo* ("assassination of the tsar"), first noted in passing by P. I. Sokolov ("Dostoevskii i revoliutsionnaia Rossiia," *Oktiabr'* 1971, no. 11, 178-213: page 211), was not included in Blagoi's initial case (1974). Blagoi devoted a superficial paragraph to Z in his revised article, quoting the lone phrase from Vetlovskaiia (Dostoevskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridsati tomakh*, vol. 15, 486) without consulting the primary source, *Novorossiiskii Telegraf*. Blagoi rightly says that Z buttresses Suvorin's account of the *Karamazov* sequel: "Put' Alekseia Fedorovicha Karamazova," *Ot Kantemira do nashikh dnei*, 2nd ed., t. II (Moscow, Khudozhestvennaia literatura 1979), 337-368: page 349.

monastic life of Alesha and Zosima. Lacerating encounters culminate in the shattering exchanges between Ivan and Alesha, who is vulnerable to his brother's powers of suggestion. Would Alesha punish the landowner who set his dogs on a peasant boy? "Shoot him!" says Alesha, applauded by Ivan, the devil's advocate. (Five, IV) When the body of Zosima proves corrupt, Alesha, his face twisted in "a crooked ironic grin," echoes Ivan's demoralizing formula: "I do not rebel against my God, it's only his 'world' that I do not accept." (Seven, II) Central to Blagoi's argument is Alesha's collapse upon the earth as a weak youth "as if cut down," to arise "a steadfast warrior for all of his life." (Seven, IV) And the anticipated alliance with Lise seems certain to harden Alesha's heart, according to Blagoi, to ready him for the political arena. The primary novel, in short, prepares Alesha for exalted heroism but also exposes a darker side, governed by "the Karamazov taint" (*karamazovshchina*), a capacity for lust and evil.

This reading may be contested in some particulars, but our purpose here is to buttress Blagoi's argument. As Alesha emerges from the monastery into the secular frenzy, he acquires a double, Rakitin, an alter ego who embodies his corruptibility and seeks to precipitate his fall (a figure in the nature of Goliadkin-Junior or Svidrigailov). Rakitin's allegorical name is ironic, derived from a legend of the broom bush (*rakitnik*), which "stands for the truth" having exposed a murderer.²⁷ Alesha's ruinous involvement with two women (discounted as unlikely by Blagoi) is a situation familiar to readers of *The Idiot*. But more particularly, marriage to Lise bodes ill for Alesha. A self-destructive, paralyzed neurotic, in her worst moments she longs for "evil", threatens "to burn the house down" (a metaphor linking her with the "mystical contemplative" volatility of Smerdiakov), and acts out self-mutilation. Alesha is a textbook case of male hysteria, who falls "as if cut down" by a seizure when his father drunkenly tells of sexually

²⁷ V. L. Dal', *Tolkovyi slovar' zhivago velikoruskago iazyka*, t. 4 [1880] (Moscow, Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel'stvo inostrannykh i natsional'nykh slovarei, 1955), 56.

abusing his son's mother. His approaches invariably induced in the unbalanced woman hysterical seizures which "extraordinarily resembled" Alesha's attack. (Three, VIII) This suggests that Alesha's proclivity to empathize suddenly and overwhelmingly with victims has an organic, pathological base not unusual in Dostoevsky's art.²⁸ His marriage to Lise (who reembodies his mother) invites disaster.

Alesha's character shift from self-abasing conciliation to revolutionary terrorism will have an underlying genesis in illness, albeit consciously driven by political motives and the broader search for truth. The shift from meekness to criminality, several times described in *House of the Dead*, is elaborated in the analysis of Smerdiakov: "Possibly, suddenly, after storing up impressions for many years, he abandons everything and goes to Jerusalem on a pilgrimage for salvation, or maybe he suddenly burns down his native village, or [...] both." (Three, VI) The counterpoise of religiosity and violence equally may predict the future of Alesha, as "evangelical socialist." No doubt, as it was with Vera Zasulich (whose trial Dostoevsky had attended on March 31, 1878.), Alesha's terrorist act would be suddenly precipitated by unbearable circumstances. One recalls that ingenious article by Slonimsky, showing that the adverb *vdrug* ('suddenly') is the very essence of Dostoevsky's creativity.²⁹

A consideration largely neglected by Blagoi is the whole of Book Ten ("The Boys"), which openly introduces the main theme of the sequel – *The Children*, or *The Sons* (to reflect the usual English translation of Turgenev's classic, *Ottsy i deti*), revolutionaries of the next generation, whose leader Kolia Krasotkin at thirteen bonds with Alesha. Kolia's capsule vita is a formula for rebellion, as discerned by Leonid Grossman (above). The most radical variants of the

²⁸ James L. Rice, *Dostoevsky and the Healing Art* (Ann Arbor, Ardis, 1985).

²⁹ Aleksandr Slonimskii, "'Vdrug' u Dostoevskogo," *Kniga i revoliutsiia*, 1922, no. 8 (20), 9-16.

Karamazov sequel, reported by Suvorin and ‘Z’, date from the period when Dostoevsky was writing Book Ten (January 14 to May 3, 1880). By the novel’s end, Alesha has utterly captured the love and respect of the boys, and the book’s epilogue closes with his exhortation to them about facing the future with this moment of camaraderie always in mind (“The Speech at the Stone”). Blagoi comments at some length on this famous passage, but he (as apparently all others hitherto) overlooks the following rhetorical series ominously evoking their collective destiny:

“Even if we were to fall into great misfortune...Maybe we shall even become evil later on, and won’t even be strong enough to avoid a wicked deed...But in any case no matter how evil we may be, which God forbid...The most cruel and most cynical among us, if that is what we become, still inwardly won’t dare laugh at how kind and good he was at this present moment...Maybe just this memory alone will keep him from great evil...I say this in case we become wicked people (continued Alesha). But why should we become wicked, right, gentlemen? First and foremost, we shall be good, then honorable, but then –we shall never forget about each other...³⁰

Suvorin’s report that Dostoevsky’s gentle and beloved hero would be executed as a political criminal must first strike us (says Blagoi) as “fantastic.” Nevertheless the great writer clearly made careful provision for that eventuality in the design of his last famous novel. Without

³⁰ Dostoevskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridsati tomakh*, vol. 15, 195-196. Recent important studies of *The Brothers Karamazov* neglect or dismiss the problem of the sequel, though in some cases raising the issue of the hero’s destiny, and even questioning what manner of “evil” may be in store for him: Robert L. Belknap, *The Genesis of The Brothers Karamazov* (Evanston, Illinois, Northwestern University Press, 1990), Robert L. Belknap, “The Epilogue of *The Brothers Karamazov*,” *Die Brüeder Karamasow: Dostojewskis letzter Roman in heutiger Sicht*, ed. Horst-Juergen Gerigk (Dresden, Dresden University, 1997), 205-212. Diane Oening Thompson, *The Brothers Karamazov and the Poetics of Memory* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991), 339n. Robert L. Jackson, “Alyosha’s Speech at the Stone: ‘The Whole Picture’,” *A New Word on The Brothers Karamazov* (Evanston, Illinois, Northwestern University Press, 2004), 234-253. Harriet Murav, “From Skandalon to Skandal: Ivan’s Rebellion Reconsidered,” *Slavic Review*, Winter 2004, 756-770: 770.

elaboration, Blagoi adds an argument to his case which might be dismissed as ‘unprofessional’, were it not so apt. “The very paradoxical nature of such an abrupt turn in Alesha’s life story could hardly enter the mind of anybody else but Dostoevsky.”³¹ To pursue this line of thought ideally one must enter Dostoevsky’s mind, that is, become his biographer in an ideally symbiotic sense. Here we can do no more than suggest the rudiments of a revisionist vita.

A chronic feature of Dostoevsky’s adult life was epilepsy, which commands our attention with its bizarre symptoms and ancient legends.³² The writer suffered epileptic seizures on the average monthly, competently diagnosed when he was twenty-six, not abating with age, their onset sudden – with warning signs at most a few days in advance.³³ About half of his attacks occurred in sleep without warning. According to medical authorities of the day, any seizure might be fatal, with cumulative debility and early death the prognosis. The novelist’s understanding of his malady’s “dialectic” is memorably formulated in *The Idiot*. (Part Two, V). All of life was therefore an endgame for Dostoevsky, a doctor’s son who kept records of his seizures. His classic premonitory symptom (aura) he described sometimes as “bliss, harmonious peace, ultimate reason,” but in another reliable source he describes it as “inexpressible voluptuousness.”³⁴ On the other hand, severe seizures were routinely *followed* by three to ten days of inability to function, with unfocused guilt feelings, paranoid hallucinations, fear, and

³¹ Blagoi, “Put’ Aleshi Karamozova,” 15.

³² Owsei Temkin, *The Falling Sickness. A History of Epilepsy from the Greeks to the Beginning of Modern Neurology*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971). F. C. Cirignotta et al., “Temporal Lobe Epilepsy with Ecstatic Seizures (So-Called Dostoevsky Epilepsy),” *Epilepsia*, 1980, v. 21, 705-710. P. H. A. Voskuil, “The Epilepsy of Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky (1821-1881),” *Epilepsia*, v. 34, 1983, 658-667. Dietrich Blumer, ed., *Psychiatric Aspects of Epilepsy* (Washington, D.C., American Psychiatric Press, 1984). James L. Rice, “Dostoevsky’s Medical History: Diagnosis and Dialectic,” *Russian Review*, 42, no. 2, 1983, 131-161. Rice *Dostoevsky and the Healing Art*.

³³ S. D. Ianovskii, “Bolezn’ F. M. Dostoevskogo” (Cannes, February 17, 1881), *Novoe vremia*, February 24, 1881. My thanks to Dennis Whelan for sending me this crucial article at a crucial moment, twenty-five years ago.

³⁴ Rice, *Dostoevsky and the Healing Art*, 69, 84.

“mystical terror.” The ancient morbus sacer, or ‘falling sickness’ (Russian *paduchaia*), presents in its persistent legends, superstitions, and complex symptomatology a template of Dostoevsky’s fictive world and idiosyncratic characters like Alesha, whose fall to the earth, epiphany, and militant resurrection are a striking, emblematic example. A critic once hinted at Dostoevsky’s own pathology, and he retorted in his notebook (more circumspectly in print): “There have been many great men with falling sickness, one of whom even overturned half the world after his fashion.” This belligerent allusion to Mohammad is a characteristic model of violent political action arising suddenly out of illness, helplessness, and inspiration, a foreshadowing of *The Brothers Karamazov* and its intended sequel.³⁵

Dostoevsky’s early political activism, though driven by his convictions and the climate of 1848, was also precipitated by genuine mental imbalance and a reckless impulse to challenge authority (at first, the literary establishment), documented in the creative history of “The Double” (1845-6), a spectacularly complex fiction about projective psychopathology that is both introspective and allegorical.³⁶ The author himself was soon to be emotionally dominated by N. A. Speshnev – “my Mephistopheles”, the most radical leader among the Petrashevtsy, which ended in his arrest, solitary confinement, and a death sentence for seditious conspiracy.³⁷ He was subjected to a mock public execution on Semenov Square, Petersburg, then spent four years in prison at Omsk and six more years in Siberian exile. These traumatic reversals made him ever

³⁵ The uniqueness of this leader’s modus operandi (*po-svoemu*: ‘after his own fashion’) rules out other famous conquerors said to be epileptic, whose feats were conventionally military: Caesar, Alexander the Great, Napoleon. Rice, *Dostoevsky and the Healing Art*, [xi], 152-160, 259-279.

³⁶ Richard Rosenthal, “Dostoevsky’s experiment in projective mechanisms and the theft of identity in *The Double*,” *Russian Literature and Psychoanalysis*, ed. Daniel Rancour-Laferriere (Amsterdam, John Benjamins, 1989), 59-88.

³⁷ S. D. Ianovskii, “Vospominaniia o Dostoevskom,” *Russkii vestnik*, 1885, 4, 796-819: 816.

hostile to political demagogues (*The Devils*, 1871-2), but by no means transformed him into a submissive, masochistic citizen of tsarist Russia.

There is no evidence that Dostoevsky underwent a “conversion” in Siberia or later, whether political or spiritual.³⁸ Nor was the hard-time prison a populist revelation that could inspire a patriotic awakening. Immediately upon his release in 1854 he wrote to his brother Misha that the peasant felons “would have eaten us alive if they could”: the Omsk prison had been four years of unrelenting class war, deeply eroding his democratic idealism. “I fear the simple man more than a complex one.”³⁹ And yet, by no means was he converted to a retrograde tsarist bigot. In his notes for a revision of “The Double” (1862) he jotted an apt epigraph for his collected works: “NB. Here is an anatomical dissection of all Russian attitudes toward authority.”⁴⁰ Dostoevsky’s creative writing is indeed a surgical exploration of the moribund tsarist society. One has only to ask, what sort of ‘Russia’ is portrayed in his major fiction, culminating in *The Brothers Karamazov*.

The backstage strategies and vicissitudes of Dostoevsky’s creativity are reflected in his notebooks and letters and in the correspondence and memoirs of diverse acquaintances. Interpretation of his journalism too often overlooks the irony, ambiguity, frivolity, wilful mystification, and “abundance of glib phrases essentially false.”⁴¹ Biographers of the future will be more cautious about these stylistic red herrings, and will analyze the memoir literature more

³⁸ Frank, “Dostoevsky’s Conversion.” James L. Rice. “Psychoanalysis of ‘Peasant Marei’: Some Residual Problems,” Rancour-Laferriere, *Russian Literature and Psychoanalysis*, 245-261.

³⁹ Dostoevskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridtsati tomakh*, vol. 28, kn. 1, 169-172.

⁴⁰ Dostoevskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridtsati tomakh*, vol. 1, 432.

⁴¹ G. F. Fridlender, “D. S. Merezhkovskii i Dostoevskii,” *Dostoevskii. Materialy i issledovaniia*, t. 10 (1992), 3-20: 17.

comprehensively.⁴² One source of exceptional value is the essay by Varvara Timofeeva (1850-1931), who worked with the writer as proofreader, usually alone at night, at the press where *Grazhdanin* was published. Dostoevsky edited the weekly in those years, 1873-4, and contributed his column “Diary of a Writert,” later to become an independent periodical. His young colleague Timofeeva took his drafts directly from his hand for copying, and encountered him often at his worst, physically ill, often mentally exhausted – shouting, making her shake by pounding the table, unleashing his “monstrous ego” and once “screaming like a mullah in a minaret: ‘Antichrist approaches us, and the end of the world is nigh!’” Rumors about his illness were by now common, and Timofeeva could easily believe that such outbursts were “the ravings or hallucinations of an epileptic.” Young radicals of her circle regarded him as “off his rocker – a mystic, abnormal,” in large part because his recent novel *The Devils* struck them as “a monstrous psychopathic caricature” of the revolutionary movement, by contrast with the more subdued press accounts of Nechaev’s trial that appeared about the same time as the separate edition of Dostoevsky’s fiction. Nevertheless, Timofeeva deeply felt the novelist’s greatness and charisma, and his superior, dominant, forceful presence agitated her “unconsciously.”⁴³

Now for the first time Timofeeva read “Notes from Underground” (1864), recommended by a co-worker, and she was enraptured by its creative psychology, stunned by its malignant view of humanity, and horrified to grasp that “this monster lurked in each of us – both in me and in Dostoevsky himself...” When they discussed this great tour de force, ignored by almost all

⁴² S. V. Belov, “F. M. Dostoevskii v vospominaniakh sovremennikov. Bibliograficheskii ukazatel,” Leningradskii Gosudarstvennyi Pedagogicheskii Institut imeni A. I. Gertsena. *Uchenye zapiski*, t. 320 (Leningrad, 1969), 274-316. S. V. Belov, ed., *F. M. Dostoevskii v zabytykh i neizvestnykh vospominaniakh sovremennikov*, (St. Petersburg, Andreev i synov’ia, 1993).

⁴³ V. V. T-va [Timofeeva] (O. Pochinkovskaia), “God raboty s znamenitym pisatelem,” *Istoricheskii vestnik*, 1904. no. 2, 488-542. James L. Rice, “Eros u Dostoevskogo, odnogo iz oblagodetel’stvovannykh sovremennoi zhenshchinoi.” *Fenomen pola v kul’ture*, ed. G. A. Tkachenko (Moscow, Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi gumanitarnyi universitet, 1998), 137-149.

critics of the day (but singled out by V. V. Rozanov in 1894 as the quintessence of Dostoevsky's mature art), F.M. told Timofeeva:

“Kraevsky told me at the time that [“Notes from Underground”] was my real chef d’oeuvre, that I should always write in that genre. But I don’t agree with him. It’s too gloomy. Es ist schon ein ueberwindener Standpunkt. [It’s a point of view now overcome.] Now I’m capable of writing something more radiant [pure, positive], more conciliatory. Now I’m writing a certain piece...⁴⁴

But it would be a mistake to suppose that he underestimated the power of the underground, or that its darkness had been overcome in favor of spiritual harmony. Draft notes for an unrealized fiction exist for this very period, with a hero who demands excessive purity of the world but has no forgiveness, “a Christian with Christian intolerance” and “NB: Either he’s a sweet fellow [...] or a determined killer from the underground.”⁴⁵ Two potentials lurk in readiness for sudden development, the essence of Dostoevsky’s art from beginning to end.⁴⁶ Among the great examples are Goliadkin (1846), several convicts in *House of the Dead* (1860-62), Raskolnikov (1866), Myshkin (1868), Trusotsky (1870), *muzhik* Marei (1876), Smerdiakov (“the mystical contemplative”) and Alesha Karamazov.

A ubiquitous stratagem in Dostoevsky’s fiction is the hero’s generation of (attraction to, repulsion from) another self, a double who is often a personified threat of Evil (Svidrigailov, Rogozhin, Stavrogin), perhaps abstracted in allegory or exacerbated by the hero’s projective

⁴⁴ Timofeeva 1904, 532-3. Nathan Rosen, “Breaking Out of the Underground: The ‘Failure’ of ‘A Raw Youth’,” *Modern Fiction Studies*, 1958 (Autumn), vol. 4, no. 3, 225-239.

⁴⁵ Dostoevskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridsati tomakh*, vol. 9, 32.

⁴⁶ Slonimskii, “‘Vdrug’ u Dostoevskogo.”

psychology. Typical is the weak yet vengeful cuckold Trusotsky, “The Eternal Husband” (1870): “He wanted to kill but did not know he wanted to kill” – until the moment of attack with a razor.⁴⁷ Stavrogin, the burnt-out evil genius of *The Devils* (1871-2), has a vision of primordial peace and purity, like Claude Lorrain’s painting of the mythic Acis and Galatea embracing in a pastoral paradise (which Dostoevsky had studied for hours in the Dresden gallery) – overlooking the fact that in the painting high on a cliff the murderous cyclops Polyphemus spies on his adulterous wife, Galatea.⁴⁸ Two of Dostoevsky’s late fictions precariously contrive escape from underground evil by flight to a nurturing peasant guardian: Makar in *A Raw Youth* (*Podrostok*, 1875), and *Muzhik Marei* (1876). The latter figure, ostensibly non-fictive, has been cited as the ultimate (and only) proof that Dostoevsky underwent “conversion” in Siberia.⁴⁹ But in the author’s drafts one finds dozens of variant “Mareis” (obviously derived from the imaginary Makar), one of them abruptly revealing the violent savage within –

Marei loves his little mare and calls her his ‘wet nurse’. And if he has moments of inward impatience, and the Tatar within him bursts forth and he starts beating his ‘wet nurse’ across her eyes with his knout when she is stuck in the mud with the cart, then just recall the anecdote about the government courier [who beats his coachman, who in turn beats his horse].⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Dostoevskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridtsati tomakh*, vol. 9, 100-102.

⁴⁸ Dostoevskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridtsati tomakh*, vol. 11, 21-22.

⁴⁹ Frank, “Dostoevsky’s Conversion.”

⁵⁰ Rice, “Psychoanalysis of ‘Peasant Marei’: Some Residual Problems,” 245.

The image of the savagely beaten horse is familiar to readers of “Notes from Underground” and *Crime and Punishment*. Such aberration is human nature, in Dostoevsky’s view, only to be expected in his fiction, so it should not come as a surprise that Alesha too is explosively endowed, capable of being disoriented by “the Karamazov taint,” afflicted with a neurasthenic convulsive disorder, and keenly alert to the evil in “God’s world.” Alesha is the ultimate subject for anatomical dissection of all Russian attitudes toward authority.

The doctor who first diagnosed and treated Dostoevsky’s epilepsy, Stepan Dmitrievich Ianovskii (1817-97), remained a lifelong friend, and was his only memoirist who knew him well both before and after his imprisonment. Before Siberia, Ianovskii recalled, F.M. liked to “play the liberal,” while after his return he would often “play the martyr.”⁵¹ His public image was predominantly that of a political convict, portrayed (albeit belletristically) in *House of the Dead* (serialized 1861-2, four more editions through 1875). An aspect of the writer’s martyrdom stands starkly and emotionally apart, the ordeal of his mock execution on Semenov Square before a public crowd of 5000, a firing squad and a cart of coffins standing ready. We cannot say how often Dostoevsky retold this story. His proofreader Timofeeva heard it from him in 1873, and later the young writer Ekaterina Pavlovna Letkova (1856-1937), one Friday at the end of 1878 or early 1879 – in the era of *The Brothers Karamazov* – at the apartment of Dostoevsky’s old friend Ia. P. Polonsky, in a packed drawing room overlooking Semenov Square. The episode was told to brilliant effect in the writer’s distinctive hoarsely emotive voice, dwelling significantly upon his refusal to be confessed by the priest, but consenting when the Crucifix was held up to be kissed. “They surely *couldn’t* be joking even with the Crucifix!” (said with irony, for it was all a grim joke). When he finished, their host urged him to come into the next room for refreshments:

⁵¹ Ianovskii, “Vospominaniia o Dostoevskom,” 812, 819.

“Well, all of that did happen, and it is over, so now let’s have some tea.” “Is it over, really?” [Proshlo li?], asked Dostoevsky “enigmatically.” The enigma may suggest various interpretations, but in our view it unequivocally means that for Dostoevsky there was a vital score still to be settled.⁵² As of that moment, Books One and Two of *The Brothers Karamazov* had already appeared. Ahead of Dostoevsky lay great acclaim, honors as an eminent Russian public figure, even occasional receptions by the imperial family, and yet he remained under police surveillance, his mail opened, perhaps until death, so far as he knew. Although one agency may have lifted the surveillance as early as 1875, other branches diligently persevered, and bureaucratic responses to Dostoevsky’s enquiries about this humiliating and alienating imposition dragged on at least until March 31, 1880, the date of the last police record. In all likelihood, he died uncertain and suspicious of the government’s attitude toward him. Undoubtedly this colored his attitude toward authority and helped determine the underlying psychology of his last major fiction.⁵³

Dostoevsky’s authorized biographer Nikolai Strakhov, a longtime acquaintance, extolled the late writer as “a preacher of love, forgiveness, and peace” and “a leader pointing the way to salvation, especially for repentant nihilists, [giving] us hope for healing that great evil.”⁵⁴

However, in a confessional letter to Leo Tolstoy (sent with a gift copy of the biography, November 28, 1883), Strakhov admitted suppressing his true personal revulsion for Dostoevsky

⁵² E. P. Letkova, “O F. M. Dostoevskom,” *Zveniiia*, I (1932), 459-477: 461n. Frank, *Dostoevsky. The Mantle of the Prophets 1870-1881*, 409-410.

⁵³ G. F. Kogan, “Dostoevskii v dokumentakh III otdeleniia,” *Literaturnoe Nasledstvo*, 86 (1973), 596-604.

⁵⁴ N. N. Strakhov, “Vospominaniia o Fedore Mikhailoviche Dostoevskom,” *Biografiia, pis'ma i zametki iz zapisnoi knizhki F. M. Dostoevskogo*, ed. Orest Miller and N. N. Strakhov (St. Peterburg, A.S. Suvorin, 1883), 177-332: 326-329. A. S. Dolinin, “F. M. Dostoevskii i N. N. Strakhov” and “Pis'ma N. N. Strakhova F. M. Dostoevskomu,” *Shestidesiatye gody*, ed. N. K. Pksanov (Moscow-Leningrad, Akademiia Nauk SSSR, 1940), 278-354. L. M. Rozenblium, *Tvorcheskie dnevniki Dostoevskogo* (Moscow, Nauka, 1981), 30-45 (on Dostoevsky and Strakhov).

and portraying him positively, despite seeing him as “depraved” and “evil.”⁵⁵ Tolstoy chastised Strakhov for perpetuating the widespread public image of Dostoevsky:

You have been the victim of an utterly false attitude toward Dostoevsky, exaggerating his significance according to a cliché that exalts as prophet and saint a person who died in a desperate condition of inner conflict [*vnutrenniaia bor'ba*], of good and evil. He is moving, interesting, but one cannot place on a pedestal, for the edification of posterity, a person who is all [inner] conflict [*chelovek, kotoryi ves' bor'ba*].⁵⁶

Tolstoy's insight, and no less the conflicted ambivalence of Strakhov, will perhaps sound a cautionary note for future biographers. For our immediate concern, the most remarkable distortion in Strakhov's whitewash is his claim that Dostoevsky died in sympathy with revolutionaries who *repent*, and in hope of *healing* the evil of terrorism. On the contrary, his creative energy was directed, at the end, toward making his cherished hero Alesha a revolutionary activist, and accordingly Alesha ends *The Brothers Karamazov* by girding up his loins, preparing himself and his boys for the evil ahead.⁵⁷ Igor Volgin remarks in passing that “of course Dostoevsky would not have approved of the *modus operandi* selected by his beloved

⁵⁵ L. N. Tolstoy/N. N. Strakhov, *Polnoe sobranie perepiski*, t. II, ed. A. A. Donskov (Ottawa, Slavic Research Group at the University of Ottawa and State L.N. Tolstoy Museum, Moscow, 2003), 652-4. Rice, “Psychoanalysis of ‘Peasant Marei’: Some Residual Problems,” 245-247.

⁵⁶ Tolstoy/Strakhov, *Polnoe Sobranie perepiski*, t. II, 655.

⁵⁷ Alesha's execution (predicted by Dostoevsky to Suvorin) tallies with the epigraph to *The Brothers Karamazov*, from John 12:24: “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.”

character [Alesha],” i.e. assassination. But Dostoevsky is after all Alesha’s creator, and his tacit ‘approval’ is now evident enough, though circumscribed by the art of fiction.⁵⁸

Dostoevsky did live and die, as Tolstoy understood, in inner conflict of good and evil, and objectively saw Russia in the same light. This is surprisingly shown in his last piece of journalism, which appeared on the last day of his life, about the Russian capture of a Turkmen mud fortress at Geok-Tepe in Central Asia (along with the massacre of 8000 fleeing noncombatants).⁵⁹ Reporting from Petersburg in a partial news blackout, Dostoevsky now advised his countrymen to forget about competing with Europe, which would always look down on Russia, and to forget about taking Constantinople, even in some remote future. Russia must face east to civilize the Siberian frontier, and build railroads in Siberia and Central Asia. But in the same breath he despaired of this happening. “If only *Englishmen* and *Americans* inhabited Russia,” then the venture capital would readily be found. Russia in fact had no “civilizing mission in Asia,” – something that would have to be invented in the doing! In short, there was no “Russian idea” so often and enigmatically urged upon his readers by Dostoevsky the journalist. If we look carefully through his journalistic career, it becomes apparent that his flights of patriotic optimism are tempered and deflated with irony and mystification. But never are those negative tonalities so evident as in the terminal essay on Geok-Tepe.⁶⁰

The Brothers Karamazov ends with an exhortation to remember the Good, as a means of surviving anticipated, certain, unavoidable Evil, possibly emanating from the self. The sequel will tell a story of rebellion and revolutionary violence. The novelist’s rhetorical strategy, a kind

⁵⁸ Igor’ Volgin, *Poslednii god Dostoevskogo* [1986], 2nd ed. (Moscow, Sovetskii pisatel, 1991), 23-24.

⁵⁹ Peter Hopkirk, *The Great Game* (New York: Kodansha International, 1992), 338-414.

⁶⁰ “Geok-Tepe,” Dostoevskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridtsati tomakh*, vol. 27, 32-41.

of ethical sleight of hand half-concealing evil with good, is the central theme of “Muzhik Marei” (1876). There Dostoevsky the convict is visited with some fragmentary memory from his childhood, which he “analyzes, lending new traits, and especially correcting it, endlessly correcting (my chief amusement)” – and it is this refined verbal artifact that Dostoevsky the journalist offers as the parable of “Marei.” This emblematic “motherly” persona had, we are told, healed the boy Dostoevsky of a hallucinatory terror: a voice crying “Wolf!” Now in turn the touched-up memory of Marei has, it is said, helped the author as political convict confront with equanimity, day after day, the threatening violence of peasant felons who hate him irrevocably as one of the privileged. Marei is a phantasm of the Good, but the convicts remain a palpably real evil, in Dostoevsky’s formula – “alluvial filth.”⁶¹

A subtext from Plutarch provides a useful key to Dostoevsky’s endgame. In Plutarch’s *Life of Caius Marius* (> *Marei*), the plebeian general Marius, seven times elected consul but also imprisoned and exiled, is at the end plagued by despair and memories of his reversals of fortune. In a nightmare a voice intones: “Dreadful indeed is the lion’s lair, even though it be empty” (like the hallucinated voice of “Wolf!” that terrified the boy Dostoevsky). Marius died in bitterness, some say a suicide. By contrast, Plutarch tells us, Plato countered adversity with memory of the Good: “the most secure stockhouse of blessings for a man.”⁶² Curious it is, that Dostoevsky as a boy liked to pretend that *he* was Marius, which he liked to recall. Here too, we surmise, was the source of Alesha’s exhortation to the boys, to cherish good memories as amulets against evil. But also there was this, in the manner of Marius returning from exile in old age:

⁶¹ Dostoevskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridsati tomakh*, vol. 22, 42-50. Rice, “Psychoanalysis of ‘Peasant Marei’: Some Residual Problems.”

⁶² Plutarch, “Caius Marius,” *Lives*, tr. Bernadotte Perrin (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Loeb Classical Library, 1996), 593-599.

. . . then he wished men should pity him; but with his appeal for compassion there was mingled the look that was natural to him and now more terrifying than ever, and through his downcast mien there flashed a spirit which had been, not humbled but made savage by his reverses.⁶³

If this was child's play for Dostoevsky, it was also a model for his adult life and art, in our understanding.⁶⁴

⁶³ Plutarch, "Caius Marius," 581.

⁶⁴ Dostoevskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridsati tomakh*, vol. 19, 70. Upon finishing the first draft of this article in the summer of 2004, I searched GOOGLE for 'Brothers Karamazov Sequel', and to my surprise found 940+ results. Combing through them, I learned that nearly all deal with a vaguely Dostoevskian film starring William Shatner (who played Captain Kirk in the original TV "Star Trek" series). Only one item is a scholarly study of Russian literature, in fact my article here above listed as "forthcoming" in my University of Oregon CV, from which the title had been plucked by the mighty GOOGLE engine. – JR

Dostoevsky's Endgame: The Projected Sequel to The Brothers Karamazov

ABSTRACT

This paper reconstructs the unwritten sequel which Dostoevsky projected for his last novel, *The Brothers Karamazov*. (See his preface "Fom the Author.") Twelve sources are employed, from nine hands including the author. The sequel sources, most of them contemporary with the writing and serialization of *The Brothers Karamazov*, coalesce into one startling but plausible plot: Alesha Karamazov is to become a revolutionary, to commit a political crime (in one source: assassination of the tsar), and to be executed. One earlier publication (Blagoi 1974) covered some of the same ground, but with only four of our sources. Those results are here reviewed. The novel that we know, famous in world literature, is reexamined to see how it was designed to accommodate Alesha's destiny in the sequel. The author's career is also briefly reconsidered to explain what led to this radical endgame. Suggestions are made for a revisionist vita of Dostoevsky.