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Illusion and Instrument: Problems of Mimetic Characterization in Dostoevsky and Tolstoy

By

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Committee in charge:

Professor Irina Paperno, Chair

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Abstract

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This dissertation focuses new critical attention on a problem central to the history and theory of the novel, but so far remarkably underexplored: the mimetic illusion that realist characters exist independently from the author's control, and even from the constraints of form itself. How is this illusion of "life" produced? What conditions maintain it, and at what points does it start to falter? My study investigates the character-systems of three Russian realist novels with widely differing narrative structures — Tolstoy's *War and Peace* (1865–1869), and Dostoevsky's *The Adolescent* (1875) and *The Brothers Karamazov* (1879–1880) — that offer rich ground for exploring the sources and limits of mimetic illusion. I suggest, moreover, that Tolstoy and Dostoevsky themselves were preoccupied with this question. Their novels take shape around ambitious projects of characterization that carry them toward the edges of the realist tradition, where the novel begins to give way to other forms of art and thought. Reaching beyond the sway of the illusions their novels cast, Tolstoy and Dostoevsky thus each raise questions about where that illusion comes from and how far it extends. My analyses trace the fault lines within techniques that at once intensify the impression of a populated, self-contained fictional world, and push readers past its formal and generic bounds.

Chapter One deals with techniques of mimetic characterization rooted in the stable omniscient narrative of Tolstoy's major novels, and in particular *War and Peace*. I survey the narrative devices cultivating the illusion that the characters of *War and Peace* live independently of device, dependent on persistent contrasts throughout the novel's system of named characters. An unconventional problem taxes this system past its limits: how to represent the lives of the crowds of unnamed figures tangential to the narrative, but ever more central to Tolstoy's conception of his mimetic project. I suggest that *War and Peace*'s notorious digressions are an attempt, in part, to work out a logic of representation beyond the novelistic character-system.

Chapters Two and Three consider Dostoevsky's techniques of characterization, cut off from the dual anchor of Tolstoy's: the social order of "landowner literature," and the narrative and mimetic order of omniscience. *The Adolescent* illustrates the formal chaos this condition creates, suggesting the fullness of its characters' lives just by the degree to which the language of its illegitimate, incompetent narrator-hero appears to screen them. In *The Brothers Karamazov*, destabilizing methods of characterization invite a kind of transcendence. Each Karamazov, left to

negotiate his "own" fluid position in relation to a family identity, opens a site for a redemptive narrative of religious experience for which the secular forms of the nineteenth century Anglo-European novel must be reworked. But the mythical sweep of this narrative is threatened by the textbound character-system that structures the Karamazovs' plot. Like Tolstoy's, Dostoevsky's late novels thus evidence a distrust of the limitations of novel form and mimetic character, balanced only precariously with techniques that fit the novel genre for a new kind of story.

Chapter Four examines the place of Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's characters in the seminal novel theories of Mikhail Bakhtin and Georg Lukács. I argue that both theorists inherited a paradox from the novels they analyze. The "living" novelistic character bears moral, political, and social significance for Lukács and Bakhtin (as for the theory of the novel that developed in their wake). But read closely, their theories consistently link that effect of "life" with attributes of the novel as a self-sufficient and self-contained aesthetic form. Bakhtin and Lukács thus open rather than resolve the tension this dissertation explores, between the compellingly constructed illusion of a character's independent "life," and the dream — written into Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's novels themselves — of making that illusion into a path leading out from the fictional text. Exploring the lifelike quality of Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's characters as a product of language and aesthetic experience, I aim to illuminate more fully the inviting but uncertain passage between the realist novel and its readers' world.

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Introduction

1. Illusion and instrument: A paradox of reading mimetic character

What makes some novel characters seem to be so real?

In the *Poetics*, Aristotle gave shape to the idea of mimetic art as a fiction — the plot-structure formed by the representation of an action, with the power to intellectually and emotionally engage an audience independently of its fidelity to factual truth.[1] As scholars have argued, this conception of mimesis brings to light an internal split between two dimensions of the representational work of art. On the one hand, the artwork depicts a world knowable outside itself: it is "world-reflecting." On the other, the artwork forms a world of its own that temporarily removes its audience from everyday life: it is "world-creating."[2] By this logic, the sense of recognizing an aspect of a mimetic work as true to life can spring from the coherence of the internal organization that draws a reader in and holds her attentive involvement, as much as from the work's conformity to what she knows from her life experience. Thus understood, the term "mimesis" brings together a set of foundational questions — originating with Plato, and continuing through Derrida and beyond — about verisimilitude, form, and aesthetic response. A mimetic artwork draws in an audience thanks partly to its own formal properties, but it engages interpretive categories and strategies grounded in daily life, and so also make claims on readers' existence in the world it models. How does one kind of engagement intensify or interfere with the other? What does an audience bring *to* the experience of a representational work, what can they carry *away* from it, and what belongs uniquely to the moments of captivation "*inside*" it?

Of all the realist novel's devices, the tension between the inward and outward faces of mimesis relates perhaps most directly to character.[3] Paradoxically blending (as one theorist puts

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[1] Aristotle, *Poetics* 1448a1ff. Cf. *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. R. McKeon (New York: The Modern Library, 2001), 1456. On Aristotle's conception of plot-structure or "mythos" as a fiction, see S. Halliwell, *Aristotle's Poetics* (London: Duckworth, 1986). 22; 57; and ibid, *The Aesthetics of Mimesis* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2002), especially 171–76. For a similar interpretation of the essential creativity of Aristotelian mimesis that has been especially influential for literary studies, see Paul Ricoeur's *Time and Narrative*, where he discusses mimetic representation in the *Poetics* as "the break that opens the space for fiction" (P. Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, trans. K. McLaughlin and D. Pellauer [Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1984], 1: 34; 45). Not all scholars share this view of the *Poetics*; for a perspective skeptical about any classical concept of fiction, see D. Konstan, "The Two Faces of *Mimesis*," *The Philosophical Quarterly* 54:215 (April 2004): 301–308.

[2] I adopt Stephen Halliwell's distinction between the "world-reflecting" and the "world-creating" dimensions of mimetic art from his pathbreaking *The Aesthetics of Mimesis*, 5 ff.

[3] I will follow René Wellek's suggestion throughout this dissertation that "realism"/"realist" be used as a "period-term," to describe norms and standards of literary representation predominant in nineteenth century Europe (cf. "The Concept of Realism in Literary Scholarship," in *Concepts of Criticism* by R. Wellek, 222–255 [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963]). Though my study deals with concerns specific to Russian novels of this period, I also turn frequently to the terms "mimesis"/"mimetic," since part of what I set out to trace is the confrontation between

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it) "utter embeddedness and radical detachability,"[4] novelistic characters can be understood to achieve their fullest reality *both* within *and* outside the context of novel-reading. They belong to — are constructed by and help construct — the fictional world the captivated reader creates, according to the instructions and within the frame of the text.[5] But they also offer images of human existence that stand out from this world, available to be related to what the reader knows, believes, or does when she is not absorbed in the novel. Any character can be read as "embedded" or "detachable," contained inside a world-creating mimetic text or emerging from a world-reflecting one, but I would suggest that these modes of reading reach toward opposite results.

The first way of reading is perfected in the illusion I will call the character's "mimetic life": the impression created by and in the text that the character exists autonomously, in and for himself, independent not only of narrative and authorial design, but even of narrative language. The term "mimetic life" can be related (for example) to James Phelan's idea of the "mimetic" component of character, or to what Mieke Bal, following other structuralist theorists, summarizes as the "character-effect."[6] Phelan's and Bal's terms designate the "human" aspects of characters, qualities — like internal consistency and a set of specific personal attributes — that let characters resemble and act on us like "possible people." My term, still more basically,

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Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's realist techniques of characterization, and broader, longer-standing problematics of representational (mimetic) art. For an overview of the use of the term "realism" in criticism (though without reference to pre-Formalist Russian criticism), see L. Herman, *Concepts of Realism* (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1996). As Wellek notes, both Tolstoy and Dostoevsky resisted the unqualified application of the label "realist" to their own work (232).

[4] B. Hochman, *Character in Literature* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985), 72.

[5] I adopt the model of the literary text as a set of instructions for imagining a fictional world from W. Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1978), esp. Chapters Two through Four. See also his *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1974). For Iser, the "implied reader" is "a means of describing the process whereby textual structures are transmuted through ideational activities into personal experiences" (*Act of Reading*, 38). In practice, his discussions are often invested in pinpointing the ethical and aesthetic position constructed in and by the narrative for its reader, who must relate to this position from her own individual perspective. Because my project does not share this emphasis on the reader's "personal experience," I will avoid Iser's popular term "implied reader," though my working model of the reading process largely follows his. I refer, rather, to a more neutral figure — a reader whose attention is engaged by and absorbed in the narrative, occupied with imagining its characters and world according to the cues given in the text. In treating the reader's "attention," as directed by the narrative and its author, as key to exploring effects of characterization, I follow Alex Woloch's understanding of the character-system, which he describes as a "distributed field of attention" (A. Woloch, *The One vs. the Many: Minor Characters and the Space of the Protagonist in the Novel* [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003], 17). On Woloch's theory of the character-system, see more below.

[6] Cf. J. Phelan, *Reading People, Reading Plots* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), 2 ff.; M. Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, 3rd ed. (Toronto: U. of Toronto Press, 2009), 113 ff.

designates techniques in the discourse that work to heighten the reader's (illusory) sense of a character's *self-sufficient* story-world biography, body, and mind.[7]

The second mode of reading, where fictional characters are seen as detachable reflections of the world around them, culminates (I suggest) at an opposite extreme. Here, the character's specific fictional being serves ultimately to illuminate a category of people or "human type," a specific problem, or a truth about the world. Such a reading thus ends by erasing (or at least disregarding) the illusion of the character's individual autonomous "life"; she and her story turn out to have been above all an instrument, a path toward the realization of something else.[8]

The opposition between the character's "life" as an illusion and its "life" as an instrument recalls a division familiar from much twentieth century theoretical writing about character. Where formalist and (post-)structuralist approaches understood the character primarily as an element of composition or plot, "humanist" or "ethical" approaches emphasized the possibility of reading characters as psychologically coherent implied persons.[9] In the wake of the revitalization and reexamination of thought about character that has taken place over the past twenty-five years, theorists have persuasively argued that a separation between the character's formal function, and its capacity to refer to an implied person, is misleading. The character emerges "at the juncture

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[7] Thus, a character who can only metaphorically be called a "person" — for example, the hunting-dog Laska in Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* — can produce the effect that I am calling mimetic life; conversely, a character who is in every way person-like — such as Tolstoy's idealized peasant Platon Karataev — fails, for many readers, to produce this effect. By separating the effect of "life" from specific attributes or requirements of personhood, I hope to be able to isolate and more closely examine such distinctions. I return to the term "mimetic life" in Chapter One.

[8] Though I am using it in a somewhat different sense, I borrow the word "instrument" from a suggestive passage in Georg Lukács's *Theory of the Novel* which can only be quoted at length: "The novel overcomes its 'bad' infinity by recourse to the biographical form. On the one hand, the scope of the world is limited by the scope of the hero's possible experiences and its mass is organized by the orientation of his development toward finding the meaning of life in self-recognition; on the other hand, the discretely heterogeneous mass of isolated persons, non-sensuous structures and meaningless events receives a unified articulation by the relating of each separate element to the central character and the problem symbolized by the story of his life. . . . The novel comprises the essence of its totality between the beginning and the end, and thereby raises an individual to the infinite heights of one who must create an entire world through his experience and who must maintain that world in equilibrium . . . *But just because the novel can only comprise the individual in this way, he becomes a mere instrument, and his central position in the work means only that he is particularly well suited to reveal a certain problematic of life.*" (G. Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel*, trans. A. Bostock [Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1971], 81; 83 [italics mine]).

[9] "Ethical criticism" is Fredric Jameson's useful (albeit pejorative) label for criticism that reads literary texts as centered on unified psychological selves or identities, presenting literature as a mode of access to human experience and truths about personal relations (F. Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981], 59–60).

between structure and reference"[10]; it is "a person-shaped figure made salient by a narrative ground."[11] But this nuanced position awakens further questions. What conditions make and keep figures "person-shaped"; and in that form, what do texts prompt us to do with them? How far can a reader extrapolate from a character's biography to her own or others', while still experiencing the effect of the character as a "living" *individual*, a vividness that depends on precise configurations of language in the text she is reading? Without reverting to a lopsidedly binary vision of literary characters, we can acknowledge a tension they create at the heart of the realist novel that amounts to a kind of paradox: the text works to make characters seem like self-sufficient, present persons, but many novels are invested in using this effect to push readers *away* from text, toward actions in or realizations about their own world.

The Russian realist novel offers rich ground for exploring these questions about the sources and limits of mimetic illusion. My dissertation focuses, specifically, on a group of novels by Leo Tolstoy and Fyodor Dostoevsky. Read in their own time and today as the most innovative practitioners of later Russian realism, both Tolstoy and Dostoevsky can be said to have shaped their major novels around ambitious projects of characterization. Moreover, as I will aim to show, much in these novels suggests that Tolstoy and Dostoevsky themselves were preoccupied with exploring the problematic status of the mimetic characters they created — in dialogue with conventions of the European novel, and also (at times) with one another. To illustrate this central dynamic of my discussion more concretely, I will begin by turning to two well-known passages from Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* (1875–77):

And in that same instant she was horrified at what she was doing. 'Where am I? What am I doing? Why? She wanted to rise, to throw herself back, but something huge and implacable pushed at her head and dragged over her. 'Lord, forgive me for everything!' she said, feeling the impossibility of any struggle. A little muzhik, muttering to himself, was working over some iron. And the candle by the light of which she had been reading that book filled with anxieties, deceptions, grief and evil, flared up brighter than ever, lit up for her all that had once been in darkness, sputtered, grew dim, and went out for ever.[12]	'I'll get angry in the same way with the coachman Ivan, argue in the same way, speak my mind inappropriately, there will be the same wall between my soul's holy of holies and other people, even my wife, I'll accuse her in the same way of my own fear and then regret it, I'll fail in the same way to understand with my reason why I pray, and yet I will pray — but my life now, my whole life, regardless of all that may happen to me, every minute of it, is not only not meaningless, as it was before, but has the unquestionable meaning of the good which it is my power to put into it!' The End[13]

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[10] Woloch, *The One vs. the Many*, 17.

[11] J. Frow, *Character and Person* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 24.

[12] L. Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina*, trans. R. Pevear and L. Volokhonsky (New York: Viking, 2000), 768. [И в то же мгновение она ужаснулась тому, что делала. «Где я? Что я делаю? Зачем?» Она хотела подняться, откинуться; но что-то огромное, неумолимое толкнуло ее в голову и потащило за спину. «Господи, прости мне все!» проговорила она, чувствуя невозможность борьбы. Мужичок, приговаривая что-то, работал над железом. И свеча, при которой она читала исполненную тревог, обманов, горя и зла книгу, вспыхнула более

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Each passage closes the plot of one of the novel's paired protagonists — Anna Karenina and Konstantin Levin, who meet for the first time less than a hundred pages before Anna's death. In a much-quoted exchange with his correspondent S.A. Rachinsky, Tolstoy answered his criticism that the absence of an overt connection between these characters' plots marred the novel's "architecture": "On the contrary, I take pride in the architecture — the vaults are joined up [*svody svedeny*] so that it cannot even be noted where the keystone is" (27 January 1878).[14] Seeking to describe the novel's "architecture," many scholars have read Anna and Levin themselves as counterbalancing forces — belonging not just to different plotlines, but to different genres.[15] The worldview that shows Anna signs and omens wherever she turns, making a pre-integrated whole of her life, also traps her in a tragic *siuzhet* whose beginning foretells its end. Levin's trajectory, by contrast, unfolds (in Gary Saul Morson's term) "prosaically" day by day, without obvious patterning; if Anna's plot is that of a romantic heroine in the process of writing herself, Levin's is that of a protagonist who cannot even conceive of being written.

ярким, чем когда-нибудь, светом, осветила ей все то, что прежде было во мраке, затрещала, стала меркнуть и навсегда потухла. (L.N. Tolstoi, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 90 vols., ed. V.G. Chertkov [Moscow and Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1928–1958], 350). All future citations to Tolstoy in Russian from this edition, hereafter cited by volume and page.]

[13] *Anna Karenina*, 817. [«Так же буду сердиться на Ивана кучера, так же буду спорить, буду некстати высказывать свои мысли, так же будет стена между святая святых моей души и другими, даже женой моей, так же буду обвинять ее за свой страх и раскаиваться в этом, так же буду не понимать разумом, зачем я молюсь, и буду молиться, — но жизнь моя теперь, вся моя жизнь, независимо от всего, что может случиться со мной, каждая минута ее — не только не бессмысленна, как была прежде, но имеет несомненный смысл добра, который я властен вложить в нее!»

Конец (19:400)]

[14] [Я горжусь, напротив, архитектурой — своды сведены так, что нельзя и заметить, где замок. (62:377)] For a classic exploration of this structure, see E. Stenbock-Fermor, *The Architecture of* Anna Karenina (Lisse: Peter de Ridder Press, 1975).

[15] See for example R.L. Jackson, "Chance and Design in *Anna Karenina*," in *The Disciplines of Criticism*, ed. P. Demetz et. al., 315–329 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968); I. Kliger, *The Narrative Shape of Truth: Veridiction in Modern European Literature* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011), esp. 154–176. This line of argument has been most assiduously developed by G.S. Morson, in a series of discussions including "Prosaics in *Anna Karenina*," *Tolstoy Studies Journal* 1 (1988): 1–12; *Narrative and Freedom: The Shadows of Time* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994), 73–74 ff.; "Anna Karenina's Omens," in *Freedom and Responsibility in Russian Literature: Essays in Honor of Robert Louis Jackson*, ed. E.C. Allen and G.S. Morson, 134–152 (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press and New Haven, CT: Yale Center for International and Area Studies, 1995); and *'Anna Karenina' In Our Time: Seeing More Wisely* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007).

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It is seldom noted that this well-established line of argument hews closely to the novel's *own* rhetoric. The "candle" of Anna's conscious understanding does indeed illuminate a book — "that book filled with anxieties, deceptions, grief and evil" — and only in death does she seem to see something beyond it. Levin's epiphany, on the other hand, concerns "my *life* now, my whole *life*, regardless of what might happen to me, every minute of it" (italics mine). Only the closing quotation mark and the authorial note "The End [*Konets*]" bring Levin's "life" (by necessity) back within the strictures of a fictional text. The contrast between "book" and "life" repeats, less baldly, on the level of narrative technique. Where Levin's closing monologue is directly (as novelistic convention has it) "quoted," Anna's is embedded in omniscient narrative and scenic description — the climax of a virtuosic series of passages often counted among the first uses of stream-of-consciousness in the novel canon.[16] Even as we read that Anna's life was a book, we are spectacularly reminded that it was this one: in the narrative of her suicide, the sequence of *Anna Karenina*'s images becomes inextricable from the sequence of Anna Karenina's thoughts. Though both Anna and Levin are vividly mimetic characters, they end the novel facing different directions — Anna *into* the text with which the illusion of "her" mind is so clearly intertwined; Levin *outwards*, toward the readers to whom the illusion of "his" voice is insistently addressed.

Here, then, is a well-hidden keystone of *Anna Karenina*'s central vault. Equally sharing the dedicated narrative attention that constructs what Alex Woloch calls the "space" of the literary protagonist, Levin and Anna are aimed to produce qualitatively different mimetic effects.[17] The concluding scenes of their biographies diverge both in form and in content: the "book" of Anna's thought woven through quoted and narrated monologue into the novel's omniscient narrative; Levin's reflections on his "life" set apart from this narrative by quotation marks, as if to end by detaching Levin "himself" from the novel whose title and epigraph already exclude him. Thus, if Anna's closing monologue amplifies the dependence of vivid novelistic protagonists on techniques peculiar to novelistic texts, Levin's does everything possible to disguise that dependence, as if his vividness had nothing to do with his status as the hero of a novel. A near-invisible chiasmus ties off the productive opposition between these characters: Anna glimpsing, just before death, the novel her life has been; Levin subjected only beyond the end of his story, closed at its most exultant moment, to what turns out to have been the frame of his novel all along. This arrangement offers itself, one might suggest, as a graphic guide for the reader, showing us which example to carry out of the text and which to leave behind. Where Anna ends (so to speak) immured behind the novel's eighth part, Levin comes as close as a

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[16] Cf. Scholes, Kellog, and Phelan, *The Nature of Narrative* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press), 194–195. See also D. Cohn, *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 84–85, and G. Struve, who goes so far as to trace the term "inner monologue" to Nikolai Chernyshevsky's 1856 review of Tolstoy's early work: "Monologue Intérieure: The Origins of the Formula and the First Statement of its Possibilities," *PMLA* 69:5 (Dec. 1954): 1101–1111.

[17] Cf. Woloch, *The One vs. the Many*, 14 ff.. To measure this equivalence crudely — a rough count shows that of the novel's 850 pages in the Jubilee edition of Tolstoy's works, about 385 are dedicated primarily to Levin and Kitty's plotline; about 325 to Anna, Vronsky, and Karenin's. The interesting question, of course, is *how* the allocation of "space" to each protagonist within each narrative contributes to the varied methods of characterization associated with them.

character can to merging with the omniscient narrator who marks the outer boundary of *Anna Karenina*'s vision.

Juxtaposed, the two endings reveal a tension between the inward and the outward faces of mimetic representation. *Anna Karenina* is interested in testing how far the cord can be stretched between mimetic characterizations that *flaunt* their involution in absorbing, world-creating novelistic narrative, and those that attempt to mask it. The difference between these kinds of characterization cannot be fully described with reference to familiar dichotomies — flat and round, minor and major — or explained by taking a position in the classic debate about whether characters should be read primarily as implied persons, or as aspects of texts. It demands, rather, a new attention to the range of effects that mimetic illusion itself can be intended to have on a captivated reader — to the variety of ways in which texts can prompt us to interpret characters like Anna and Levin as "living" persons. In other words, Tolstoy's protagonists place side by side world-creation and world-reflection modes of mimesis: the novel asks us to awaken from our absorption in the fictional heterocosm *Anna Karenina* still holding the model of personhood that Levin has uncovered.

2. Mimesis and the Russian realist novel

In the first chapter of his seminal *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (1947), Erich Auerbach traces a similar tension between "world-creation" and "world-reflection," under a very different set of terms. He begins his history with an opposition between two "basic types" of mimetic representation — one found in Homer's epics, and the other in the Old Testament. Auerbach describes the opposition in terms of stylistic distinctions: in Homer, "fully externalized description, uniform illumination. . . all events in the foreground, displaying unmistakable meanings"; in the Bible, "suggestive influence of the unexpressed, 'background' quality, multiplicity of meanings and the need for interpretation, universal historical claims."[18] But as this list already suggests, style here correlates with the demands the texts make on their readers. Homer's device of "foregrounding," bringing each person and event successively into the luminous present of his narrative, invites only what I would summarize as our absorbed attention: "thus [his heroes] bewitch us and ingratiate themselves to us until we live with them in the reality of their lives; so long as we are reading or hearing the poems, it does not matter whether we know that all this is only legend . . . [Homer's reality] ensnares us, weaving its web around us, and that suffices him." (13). By contrast, Biblical obscurity, which creates a deep sense of its characters' psychology, haunts us beyond the moment of reading and demands our lasting belief: "Far from seeking, like Homer, merely to make us forget our own reality for a few hours, it seeks to overcome our reality: we are to fit our own life into its world, feel ourselves to be elements in its structure of universal history" (15). Homer creates a world; the Bible insists it is reflecting one. Establishing these "types" at the foundation of the Western mimetic tradition, Auerbach invites us to ask how in later works they will clash and combine.

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[18] E. Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. W.R. Trask (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1953), 23. Subsequent citations to this volume parenthetical in the text.

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The arc of his ensuing history of mimesis is well known. Homeric immediacy and stylistic and social elevation, and Biblical authority and universal spiritual significance, transcendently meet in Dante's *Divine Comedy*, where the "foregrounded" vividness of human reality is written into a narrative of the epic sublime. Confronted with that vividness, however, the sublime pattern breaks; after Dante, "the image of man eclipses the image of God" in mimetic literature (202). Mimetic narrative thus gains a Biblical power of embracing all subjects and people in their psychological complexity, but it leaves behind the power the Bible claimed to have: an authority over the lives of those who *encounter* its narrative, which folds protagonists and readers alike into the framework of divine history. Mimetic texts now claim only (in a trend culminating with nineteenth-century realism) to capture the political, social, and historical circumstances that shape the human world they describe. This incorporation of concrete human history and daily life into the material available for literary representation ends, at last, in the radically prosaic detail of twentieth-century modernism. For Auerbach, the "brown stocking" that Mrs. Ramsay knits in Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* emblematizes the richness of modernist mimesis — "the wealth of reality and depth of life in every moment to which we surrender ourselves without prejudice," and the common foundation of human experience represented in such moments. But there is also a note of regret in his conclusion: "So the complicated process of dissolution. . . seems to be tending toward a very simple solution. Perhaps it will be too simple to please those who, despite all its dangers and catastrophes, admire and love our epoch for the sake of its abundance of life and the incomparable historical vantage point which it affords. But they are few in number, and probably they will not live to see much more than the first forewarnings of the approaching unification and simplification" (552-553).[19] I would venture to link this regret with the very modernist universality Auerbach is also celebrating: if *any* moment is material for narrative representation, then no *narrative* has special claim on its reader's world.

But as Auerbach suggests toward the end of *Mimesis*, the "unqualified, unlimited, and passionate intensity of experience in the characters" of Russian realist novels stands to interrupt the trajectory he has mapped. He likens the tragic weight and high spiritual stakes attached to the everyday in Russian realism, and the widely oscillating "pendulum of [the characters'] vitality, of their actions, thoughts, and emotions," to the "Christian realism" of the New Testament. (521-523; cf. 41-49) Refraining from detailed analysis of Russian novels because he could not read them in the original (492), Auerbach thus marks a place for them in his history: a late re-negotiation of the relationship between authority and immediacy. He suggestively associates the "intensity" of Russian realist characters (a keynote of Western readers' reactions since Turgenev, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, and Chekhov were first translated) with the mode of reading that the Bible and other representational Christian texts impose on their readers: an urgent call for interpretation *followed by rejection or assent*. According to this reading, Dostoevsky and Tolstoy — chronologically midway between Balzac and Woolf — make a claim on their readers that

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[19] Many readers of *Mimesis* note that Auerbach allies his critical method with the aesthetics of modernist literature, but fewer dwell on the ambivalence of his attitude toward modernism itself. For an interpretation akin to mine, see for example G. Green, "Erich Auerbach and the 'Inner Dream of Transcendence," in *Literary History and the Challenge of Philology: The Legacy of Erich Auerbach*, ed. S. Lerer, 214-226 (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996).

looks from within the secular genre of the European novel like an anachronism: a fictional world so "real" it demands not aesthetic absorption, but lasting belief.

I suggest that the complexity of the effect Auerbach associates with Russian realism — characters so vivid that they seem to demand *more* of the reader than mere absorption — has not yet been adequately explored.

The strong extra-aesthetic orientation of the nineteenth century Russian novel, its claim to authority about reality and the inner "truth" of things, is often discussed in terms of social, political, and institutional circumstances. Although subject to government oversight and censorship, literature and literary criticism offered relatively open forums for the discussion of social and cultural questions, giving literature a determining role in public discourse. The most viable medium of publication throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, so-called thick journals where installments of novels could be found next to articles and essays that often resonated directly with their subject matter, itself reduced the distance between literature and other kinds of writing.[20] The phenomenon for which scholars attempt to account, in these and other ways, is the unusual permeability of the boundaries that separated Russian realist fiction from its reader's world; and more broadly, of a literary tradition that seems "always about to forget that it is merely made up out of words."[21]

In the pivotal period of the 1860s, the interchange between fiction and reader cohered especially around the discussion of literary "types." Indeed, as it has been argued, an obsession with character and more particularly with type is one of the few characteristics reliably distinguishing nineteenth century Russian literary criticism from the European movements on

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[20] On the institutional peculiarities of Russian realism, see especially W.M. Todd, "The Ruse of the Russian Novel," in *The Novel*, ed. F. Moretti, Vol. 1, 401–423 (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006). See also H. McLean, "The Development of Modern Russian Literature," *Slavic Review* 21:3 (Sept. 1962), 399; G.S. Morson, "Introduction," in *Literature and History: Theoretical Problems and Russian Case-Studies*, ed. G.S. Morson (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1986), 14–27. Other kinds of explanations for the social and spiritual reach of Russian realist literature have also been posited; see for example, on the link between the institutions of the Orthodox Church and literacy, writing, and publishing practices in Russia, N. Rzhevsky, *Russian Literature and Ideology* (Urbana, Chicago, & London: U. of Illinois Press, 1983), 16–17 ff.

[21] C. Emerson, *The Cambridge Introduction to Russian Literature* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 1. A strong extra-aesthetic orientation is by no means a unique feature of the Russian realist novel; it took its own form in other traditions. For one example, on the Anglo-American realist novel's entanglement with the "novel of purpose," see A. Claybaugh, *The Novel of Purpose: Literature and Social Reform in the Anglo-American World* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2007), especially 31–51. The difference, however, is perhaps a matter of degree: literature has long occupied an exceptionally central place in Russian social, political, intellectual, and spiritual life — before, during, and after the time of nineteenth-century realism. On this idiosyncratic history, which provides an important context for my argument, see for example D. Fanger, "Conflicting Imperatives in the Model of the Russian Writer: The Case of Tertz/Sinyavsky," in *Literature and History: Theoretical Problems and Russian Case-Studies*, ed. G.S. Morson (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1986), 111–113.

which it drew.[22] In realist aesthetics, the label "type" combined the Hegelian sense of the ideal — a concretely embodied idea or principle — with the sociological sense of the representative of a class. Following in Vissarion Belinsky's footsteps, radical Russian critics of the 1860s worked with a conception of the "type" as a fictional figure in whom an entire group and way of being are represented and crystallized. Not only did these critics treat such representative fictional heroes as occasions to expand on social developments (most famously, in N. Dobroliubov's "What is Oblomovshchina" [1859] and D. Pisarev's "Bazarov" [1862]); readers themselves modeled their behavior and apprehensions of contemporary life on characters like Bazarov and the heroes of Nikolai Chernyshevsky's *What Is to Be Done?*[23] The careers of these protagonists play out a drama about the conversion, quite literally, of structure into reference and character into person, posing questions about whether and how a figure like Turgenev's Bazarov could come to designate people who actually exist.

Neither Dostoevsky nor Tolstoy is known for writing characters whom critics and other readers extended so far beyond their texts (though Dostoevsky, throughout his career, remained richly engaged with the idea of the type and took pride in having artistically "predicted," among other things, a murder similar to Raskolnikov's in *Crime and Punishment*).[24] But some of their writings about literature show a similar emphasis on character as the primary vehicle of mimetic narrative — and as the primary avenue for its moral and social power. For example, an unsigned 1873 review of Leskov's *Cathedral Folk* (printed in *Grazhdanin*), later attributed to Dostoevsky, praises Leskov's portraits of clergymen as "positive types," adding:

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[22] R. Wellek, "The Essential Characteristics of Russian Literary Criticism," *Comparative Literature Studies* 29:2 [1992], 137–38.

[23] For a survey discussion of the realist "type" as negotiating between the categorizing "social type" and the archetypal (Hegelian) ideal, see Wellek, "Concepts," (242–46). See also L. Ginzburg, *O literaturnom geroe* (Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel', 1979), especially 16-87. Irina Paperno has traced in detail the "remarkable power" of characters understood as typical "to organize the actual life of a reader who, through familiar configurations of a social role that lies behind the text, recognizes himself in the world of a literary text" (I. Paperno, *Chernyshevsky and the Age of Realism: A Study in the Semiotics of Behavior* [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988], 9). A more recent and general discussion of the character-type can be found in Frow, *Character and Person*, 107–148.

[24] For a survey of Dostoevsky's reflections on "type," particularly in his *Diary of a Writer* and other journalistic writings as well as in the novels *The Idiot* and *The Adolescent*, see R.L. Jackson, *Dostoevsky's Quest for Form* (Bloomington, IN: Physsardt, 1978), 92–123. Dostoevsky alluded to the "prophetic" quality of Raskolnikov's crime in a letter to A.N. Maikov (11/23 December 1868); he had in mind the case of a student, A.M. Danilov, who murdered a pawnbroker and his servant at the time the first installment of *Crime and Punishment* was being printed, and whose trial was covered simultaneously with later installments of the novel. (F.M. Dostoevskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 30 vols., ed. G.M. Fridlender et. al. [Leningrad: Nauka, 1972-1990], 28 [II]:329. See also 28 [II]: 489n18 and 7:349-50. Subsequent citations to Dostoevsky in Russian are from this edition.).

Introduction

> The creation of this new type in our literature [*poezii*], a type that is little short of central (because it is close to the heart of life), is a great work, the fruit of a union between steadfast, loving study of one's own native life, and strong poetic inspiration. — It is remarkable that of all European poets none more than precisely the Russians scorn to such a degree all that, which in composition, in a work, may be called in one word intrigue, i.e. chiefly the interaction, combination of forces and persons. A deeply significant, characteristic fact!. . . . It's strange: our poets take life not in its complexity, but in its depth. The form of [our] novel moreover is created precisely by the need for poetic idealization (typicalization) of the complexity of life — and the result? our poets least of all are novelists, while our novelists more than anything are poets. . .[25]

Ten years earlier, in an unpublished draft of a preface to *War and Peace* (tentatively dated late 1863), Tolstoy wrote about his characters in a strikingly similar vein:

> The work at hand comes closest to a novel or short story, but it is not a novel, because I cannot in any way and do not know how to place certain limits on the characters (*litsam*) I have invented — like marriage or death, after which the interest of the narrative would be spent. It ineluctably appeared to me that the death of one character only awakened interest in the others, and marriage appeared more as the opening than the resolution of an interest. I cannot call my composition a short story, because I do not know how to and cannot make my characters act only with the aim of proving or clarifying some thought or succession of thoughts. (13:55)

It should be noted how deliberately these statements invert an Aristotelian emphasis on the plot ("intrigue") as the primary component of mimesis, the definition of poetry as the "imitation of an action." Rather, the mimetic claim to reflection of authentic life and absence of

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[25] The unsigned review — published in *Grazhdanin* (1873 no. 4), the same journal that housed Dostoevsky's 1873 *Diary of a Writer* — is not included in Dostoevsky's complete works, but V.V. Vinogradov makes an extended and convincing case for Dostoevsky's authorship (V.V. Vinogradov, "Dostoevskii i Leskov v 70-e gody XIX veka," in *Problema avtorstva i teoriia stilia*, 487–553 [Moscow: Gosizdat. khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1961]) . He reproduces the review in full; it is partially quoted in Jackson, whose translation I supplement and slightly modify (*Dostoevsky's Quest*, 95). [Создание этого нового типа в нашей поэзии, типа чуть-чуть не центрального (по его близости к сердцу жизни), есть дело большое, есть плод соединения пристального, любовного изучения родной жизни с сильным поэтическим вдохновением. — Замечательно, что из всех европейских поэтов никто в такой степени не пренебрегает, как именно русские, всем тем, что в композиции, в сочинении можно назвать в одном слове интригой, т.е. преимущественно взаимодействием, комбинацией сил и личностей. Глубоко знаменательный, характерный факт!. . . Странно: наши поэты берут жизнь не в ее сложности, а в ее глубине. Форма романа между тем создана именно потребностью поэтической идеализации (типизирования) сложности жизни — и что же? наши поэты менее всего романисты, а наши романисты прежде всего поэты, а потом уже романисты! (Vinogradov, "Dostoevskii i Leskov," 516)]

literary artifice is linked here with the promise of characters that escape the strictures of plot. As Paul Ricoeur has argued, in a theory of narrative based partly on a reading of the *Poetics*, this position might be considered counter-intuitive: the event in time offers a more clearly robust link between (author's and audience's) lived experience, and its narrative re-creation.[26] Nevertheless, Tolstoy and Dostoevsky here join a wide tradition of discourse about the novel by placing the vivid, seemingly unplotted character at the heart of its mimetic and rhetorical power. Indeed, when the theory of the novel emerged as a formal discipline in the twentieth century (in America and Europe as well as Russia), the novel's unique potential to realize characters who seem free from authorial and formal constraint would become all but axiomatic.[27] The complication I would note, however, is that both Tolstoy and Dostoevsky frame this power as antithetical to the European novel form. Invoking the autonomy of characters as key to a novel's authenticity, and its potential for authority about something more than its own fictions, each suggests that this potential must be realized *counter* to the novel's generic tendencies.[28]

　　　Writing in the wake of Mikhail Bakhtin (among others), contemporary scholars of Dostoevsky and Tolstoy have inscribed the "autonomy" of their characters firmly into the generic sphere of the novel, associating the strong realism of their works with experimental methods of characterization that seem to open the fixed frame of the text. Thus, Tolstoy and Dostoevsky employed narrative "sideshadowing," having a narrator tell not just what did happen to a character, but also what could have happened, and what might or might not have happened,

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[26]"The subordination of character to action. . . seals the equivalence between the two expressions 'representation of action' and 'organization of the events.' If the accent has to be placed on this organization, then the imitation or representation has to be of action rather than of human beings" (Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, Vol. 1, 37).

[27] Dorothy Hale has traced the deep-rooted tendency in both novelists' and theorists' statements to understand the novel, above all, as the form in which autonomous *persons* can be represented and encountered — an ideology she calls the "novelistic aesthetics of alterity." See D. Hale, "Aesthetics and the New Ethics: Theorizing the Novel in the Twenty-First Century," *PMLA* 124:3 (2009): 896–903; ibid, "The Art of English Fiction in the Twentieth Century," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Twentieth Century Novel*, ed. R. Caserio, 10–22 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge U.P., 2009); and ibid, "*On Beauty* as Beautiful?: The Problem of Novelistic Aesthetics by way of Zadie Smith," *Contemporary Literature* 53:4 (Winter 2012): 814–844. On the centrality of this position to foundational theories of the novel, see also her *Social Formalism: The Novel in Theory from Henry James to the Present* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998).

[28] In Dostoevsky's case, it should be added that the opposition between "novel" and autonomous character is equivocal. His review goes on to say that to be a real novelist (*romanist*) — as opposed to a "poet" like Leskov — the author has to be able to invent convincing *secondary* characters, who appear to live their own lives even while serving the author's didactic purposes and the mechanism of the plot. But it seems to me that the intention here is to redeem the genre (the novel, *roman*) with which the review first associated the artifice of plot, through an ideal of vivid characterization — not to suggest that the novel is uniquely suited to "freeing" characters from the bounds of form.

in a way that emphasizes the fundamental contingency of being and behavior.[29] They gave their works projected but never written sequels, and protagonists who thus "live" beyond the text, whose undetermined futures make a claim on real-life readers' imaginations.[30] In this context, it has been argued, realist conventions like the typical character aspire toward "less *mimesis* than *mathesis*, less a mode of representation than revelation and a mode of learning."[31]

But it is curious that in celebrating the devices that Dostoevsky and Tolstoy developed to subvert the aesthetic artifice and closure of fictional narrative, recent scholars smooth over the doubts the authors themselves at times expressed about whether this project can really be accomplished within the novel genre — and soften, too, what Auerbach saw as an anomaly in Russian realism's position in the history of mimetic literature. Extending a logic common in contemporary novel theory more broadly, scholars argue that Tolstoy and Dostoevsky exploited and heightened the novel's generic capacity to represent characters who seem morally, spiritually, and narratively indeterminate or unplotted, in order to make an intense claim on the reader's reality. However, this argument elides what I am suggesting is a crucial complication: novelistic effects of indeterminacy and lifelikeness themselves are created by the precise, perfected language of the novel's instructions to its absorbed reader. Thus, it could more accurately (if clumsily) be said that when we read Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, the vivid indeterminacy of their protagonists pulls us strongly into the novelistic texts that represent them, and included in this experience of their fictional "indeterminacy" is the sense of an urgent insistence that we interpret, and affirm or reject, those novels' vision of human reality. To clarify the point by putting it too

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[29] Morson, *Narrative and Freedom*, 117–172. Michael André Bernstein also explores the notion of "sideshadowing," which (according to Morson) he and Bernstein developed in conversation with one another, in his *Foregone Conclusions: Against Apocalyptic History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); cf. *Narrative and Freedom*, 283n4.

[30] Cf. R. Hellebust, "Bakhtin and the 'Virtual Sequel' in Russian Literature," *Slavic and East European Journal* 44:4 (Winter, 2000): 603–622. Hellebust suggests that Bakhtin's account of the novel as unfinalizably and openly engaged depends on the convention, mobilized in Russian novels from Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin* through Nabokov's *The Gift* and Bitov's *Pushkin House*, of a "virtual sequel": a space in which the "mythical social function of literature," its "imagined merger with actuality," can be perpetually and suggestively maintained (610).

[31] On character-type and "mathetic" realism (a concept he explicates with reference to Viacheslav Ivanov's Dostoevsky criticism), see R. Bird, "Refiguring the Russian Type: Dostoevsky and the Limits of Realism," in *A New Word on* The Brothers Karamazov, ed. R.L. Jackson (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press), 19; see also ibid, "Understanding Dostoevsky: A Comparison of Russian Hermeneutic Theories," *Dostoevsky Studies* n.s. V (2001): 129-146; and ibid, *The Russian Prospero: The Creative Universe of Viacheslav Ivanov* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), 176 ff.. I will occasionally adopt Bird's term "mathetic realism," for its obvious advantages over the pejorative "didactic." Alternatively, in a recent dissertation Sarah Ruth Lorenz proposes the related term "visionary mimesis" — representation that straddles the boundary between a (realist) vision of what is and a (utopian) vision of what could or should be: S.R. Lorenz, "Visionary Mimesis: Imitation and Transformation in the German Enlightenment and Russian Realism," Ph.D. Diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2012.

strongly, we could say that one effect these mimetic novels use their protagonists to imitate is the effect of a mimetic sacred text. But in the modern and secular genre of the novel nothing dictates, as it does in the Bible, that the connection between fiction and reality should outlast the moment of the reader's absorption. The force that might move us to take the novel as *more* than a novel rests in the illusory reality of figures created in the act of reading.

In what follows, I argue that both Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's novels show the traces of a persistent engagement with this paradox. These novels encompass a broad spectrum of characters (and degrees of referentiality) — from Natasha Rostova, to Napoleon, to the historical crowds of *War and Peace*; from Ivan Karamazov to his devil. The dynamic tensions between these kinds of mimetic characters move some of the drama of the early 1860s — the blurring between life and text, model and "type" — back between the covers of individual novels. But it is this very *staging* of the realist novel's extension (through character) to the boundaries of history, philosophy, parable, and myth that marks the extension itself as problematic. Written near the end of a period when the novel lay at the center of public discourse in Russia — by authors drawn throughout their lives to other, more direct ways of shaping their readers — each of the works I will analyze points to a shared anxiety. What if the very success of mimetic characterizations within a novel also signals that novel's self-containment, its supreme capacity to involve the reader in a world created by and sealed within text?

I will argue, then, that in attending more closely to what creates the exceptional vividness of Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's characters, we begin to see the *challenge* those characters posed to the exceptional moral and conceptual ambition of their novels. It has long been accepted that these novels' claims to truth about and penetration into the reader's world has most to do with their characters' imitation and invocation of independent, undetermined "life." But I will suggest that Tolstoy and Dostoevsky themselves were concerned with the reverse side of that premise. If "life" is an effect produced by the fictional text, then the moment of absorption in that text may set the limit within which the novels' claims on their readers can be most forcefully made.

3. Russian transformations of European character-systems

What does it mean to press against the limits of characterization in the novel? Before summarizing my dissertation's individual chapters, I want to clarify this idea with reference to recent theoretical approaches to character and characterization, especially in the European novel whose conventions both Dostoevsky and Tolstoy struggled to reshape.

Structuralist and deconstructionist writings published throughout the 1960s and 1970s posed penetrating challenges to the idea (and ideology) of both "character" and "mimesis," with roots in the earliest essays of Russian Formalism.[32] Building on the foundation of V.Ia. Propp's

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[32] Seminal formalist writings that responded to a tradition of ethically and socially oriented criticism by analyzing artistic prose as experimentation in language and narrative, rather than as a representation of persons, include Boris Eikhenbaum's "How Gogol's 'Overcoat' is Made" ("Kak sdelana 'Shinel'' Gogolia," in B.M. Eikhenbaum, *Skvoz' literaturu: sbornik stat'ei*, 171–195 [1924; repr., The Hague: Mouton, 1962], first published 1918), and the essays in Viktor Shklovsky's *Theory of Prose* (V.B. Shklovskii, *O teorii prozy*, [1929; repr., Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1985]). English translations in: "How Gogol's Overcoat is Made," in *Gogol from the*

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Morphology of the Folktale (*Morfologiia skazki*, 1928), the French structuralist A.J. Greimas, in his *Structural Semantics* (*Sémantique structurale*, 1966), assigns the characters of any narrative to one of six "actantial roles," by analogy with the syntactic roles nouns can fill in a sentence.[33] Later structuralist discussions acknowledge the character's hold on a reader's imagination, but only with suspicion. As Roland Barthes writes in *S/Z* (1970), the realist novel's seductive game is to fill the "impersonal network of symbols combined under the proper name 'Sarrasine'" with an illusory plenitude: "all subversion, or all novelistic submission, thus begins with the Proper Name"[34] For Barthes, Genette, Derrida, and others, character thus became a particular focus for the tenet that the "real" signaled in texts (and particularly in novels) is a construct both supporting and supported by a shared contract or code. The claim of access to absolute truth or reality involved in mimetic representation then works primarily to reinforce the accepted order standing behind the codes through which novels are written and read.[35] But even when not explaining away the character's resemblance to the person, or decrying it as one of the novel's hegemonic fictions, structuralist and narratological approaches tend to subordinate the character to the event. Symptomatically, Genette organizes his comprehensive theory of narrative around "categories borrowed from the grammar of verbs."[36]

In the wake of these challenges, contemporary scholars have written with an acute consciousness of how changing literary conventions, dynamics of political power, and the

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Twentieth Century, ed. and trans. R.A. Maguire, 267–291 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974); and V. Shklovsky, *Theory of Prose*, trans. B. Sher (Elmwood Park, IL: Dalkey Archive Press, 1990).

[33] A.J. Greimas, *Structural Semantics: An Attempt at a Method*, trans. D. McDowell, R. Schleifer and A. Velie (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), especially 197–221.

[34] R. Barthes, *S/Z*, trans. R. Miller [New York: Hill and Wang, 1974], 94-95.

[35] On this aspect of structuralist theory generally, see J. Culler, *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics, and the Study of Literature* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1975), Chapter Seven. Especially central essays are: R. Barthes, "The Reality Effect," in *The Rustle of Language*, trans. R. Howard, 141–148 (Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell, 1986) (first published in 1968); G. Genette, "Vraisemblance et motivation [Verisimilitude and Motivation], in *Figures II*, 71–99 (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1969); J. Derrida, "The Double Session," in *Dissemination*, trans. B. Johnson, 175–286 (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1981) and ibid, "Economimesis," *Diacritics* 11:2 (Summer 1981): 2–25 (first published in 1975). For a revision and extension of structuralist and deconstructionist understandings of mimesis in the context of the French realist novel, see C. Prendergast, *The Order of Mimesis: Balzac, Stendhal, Nerval, Flaubert* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 1–82.

[36] G. Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, trans. J. Lewin (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980), 30. But for an intricate structuralist account of the functions of character in narrative, see P. Hamon, "Pour un statut sémiologique du personnage" in *Poétique du récit*, ed. G. Genette and T. Todorov, 115–180 (Éditions du Seuil, 1977), later expanded in his *Le personnel du roman: Le système des personnages dans les Rougon-Macquart d'Emile Zola* (Geneva: Librairie Droz S.A., 1983). See also Lidiia Ginzburg's *O literaturnom geroe* (cited in note 20 above), a theory of characterization focused on the semiotic interplay between literary and social typological categories, functional roles, and individualizing details.

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instabilities inherent in language itself puncture what is presupposed in the category of mimetic character: the aura of hierarchical *correspondence* between reality and representation, and the coherence of the very category of personhood. Nevertheless, a revival of interest in character has given rise to new, increasingly precise lines of approach to the phenomenon of characters' resemblance to persons — and in turn, to questions about the illusion of reality, and the artwork's place in the lives of its readers, that mimetic literature has long raised. Some arguments focus on how characters are developed and their inner lives created in narrative; others, on their special ontological and semantic status.[37] Some trace the historical vicissitudes of fictional characters and conventions for interpreting them,[38] or the cognitive instincts that govern our interest in characters,[39] or the cultural and anthropological notions of personhood that characters help reveal.[40] Still others focus on the rhetorical and ethical weight characters hold for

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[37] Narratological surveys that substantively treat both the textual nature and the technical construction of mimetic character include (prominently): Bal, *Narratology*, 112–133; S. Chatman, *Story and Discourse* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1978), 96–138; S. Rimmon-Kennan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), Chapter Three. This line of approach also includes Dorrit Cohn's foundational account of how characters' inner lives are narrated, *Transparent Minds* (see note 16). On the ontology of fictional characters, from the perspective of possible worlds semantics, see U. Margolin, "Character," in *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative*, ed. D. Herman, 66–79 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007); this essay summarizes the theory of character Margolin works out in a series of articles published between 1987 and 2002.

[38] For histories of the development and reception of conventions of fictional characterization in the English novel, see especially C. Gallagher, *Nobody's Story: The Vanishing Acts of Women Writers in the Marketplace* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994), Chapter Four, as well as later work (recently and illuminatingly, "George Eliot: Immanent Victorian," *Representations* 90:1 [Spring 2005]: 61–74); D. Lynch, *The Economy of Character: Novels, Market Culture, and the Business of Inner Meaning* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1998); R. Greiner, *Sympathetic Realism in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2012). Elizabeth Fowler goes back further, to Chaucer and Spencer, to develop a theory of characterization and interpretation of character that she suggests also has resonance for modern literature: *Literary Character: The Human Figure in Early English Writing* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003). See also a move to extend this history into twentieth century modernism in J. Murphet, "The Mole and the Multiple: A Chiasmus of Character," *New Literary History* 42:2 (Spring 2011): 255–276.

[39] Cf. B. Vermeule, *Why Do We Care About Literary Characters?* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2010). In a similar vein, though lacking Vermeule's framework of recent insights from cognitive science, Baruch Hochman proposed a "taxonomy" for describing readers' evaluations of characters. Cf. Hochman, *Character in Literature*, 89 ff.; and a recent proposal for reviving his model for the classroom in S. Keen, "Readers' Temperaments and Fictional Character," *New Literary History* 42:2 (Spring 2011): 306–307.

[40] Cf. Frow, *Character and Person*; and Fowler, *Literary Character*.

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the readers who encounter their narratives.[41] For all their variety, these different approaches can be brought together under the loose rubric of what has been called a "pragmatics of character": the workings of techniques of characterization as social, formal, and rhetorical tools, within the genres, times, places, and marketplaces that give them shape.[42]

Among these differing accounts of how characters can be used to reflect or evoke persons, Alex Woloch's *The One vs. the Many* (2003) stands out for its single-minded orientation on what one might, again following Stephen Halliwell, term a mimetic model of "world-creation." Woloch's theory stresses not the free-standing character's cultural and formal capacity to resemble the person, but rather the asymmetrical way this capacity is fulfilled in narratives that do not have the "space" for *all* the figures they represent. To describe this asymmetry, he proposes two linked terms. The "character-space" is the "charged encounter" between the narrative designation of an "individual human personality," and the space and position into which the representation of this personality must fit within the narrative. The "character-system" is the "arrangement of multiple and differentiated character-spaces. . . into a unified narrative structure."[43] Based on readings of foundational Western European novels (by Austen, Balzac, and Dickens), Woloch establishes the conventional shape of the character-system: the

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[41] Influential accounts of how mimetic characters can address readers ethically and rhetorically include M. Price, *Forms of Life: Character and Moral Imagination in the Novel* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983); W. Booth, *The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: The University of California Press, 1988), especially 227–291; J. Phelan, *Reading People, Reading Plots: Character, Progression, and the Interpretation of Narrative* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1989) and ibid, *Living to Tell About It: A Rhetoric and Ethics of Character Narration* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005); A.Z. Newton, *Narrative Ethics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995); S. Rimmon-Kennan, *A Glance Beyond Doubt: Narration, Representation, Subjectivity* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1996). For a recent vision of the character as a medium for and rhetorical instrument of cultural discourse, see R. Walsh, *The Rhetoric of Fictionality: Narrative Theory and the Idea of Fiction* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2007), Chapter 8.

[42] Lynch, *Economy of Character*, 4; Lynch herself places her project in terms of the structuralist demystification of character and mimesis (15–16). The overview I give of contemporary approaches to the "pragmatics" of literary character is far from exhaustive: it highlights recent work and discussions that clearly fall into theoretical clusters. Examples of all these approaches and more can be found in a recent special issue of *New Literary History* devoted to character: R. Felski, ed. "Character." Special issue, *New Literary History* 42:2 (Spring 2011).

[43] *The One vs. the Many*, 14. Woloch is not the first to coin the term character-system; see Hamon, *Le personnel du roman* (note 34 above), and Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 161 ff. He does, however, use it differently from Hamon and Jameson — not to talk about the symbolic configuration (Hamon) or "semic production" (Jameson) of characters, but to designate an enclosed dynamic process of mimetic characterization (how many "implied persons" get written into a single narrative). On this process, see also Hochman, who writes of an imbalance between major and minor characters by which a "progressive diminution of [minor characters'] centrality, repleteness, complexity, and interest creates the space within which the central character can be experienced in all her vividness, complexity and coherence" (*Character in Literature*, 68).

protagonist(s), around whom the narrative is built, will be the least subject to the violent excision, suppression, and fragmentation that results from imposing a unified form on many different stories. Characters nearest the center of narrative attention get represented most fully, while those at the margins are distorted, suppressed, and (eventually) annihilated.

Woloch's focus on the limits of the narrative's "attention," as realized in the experience of the reader absorbed in the narrative, suggests an overriding concern with the mimetic work as a captivating and bounded heterocosm. What matters to the realization of a character's potential mimetic effect is whether and when s/he engages narrative attention; and the total amount of attention is limited because it is exercised within and governed by the limits of a text (although a reader can, of course, always choose to begin talking, speculating, or dreaming about a character in a way the text does not directly authorize). Reversing the Proppian idea that characters are prerequisites of narrative structure, whose lifelikeness is incidental to their function, Woloch shows instead how narrative structure governs the illusion of the character's lifelikeness, the emergence of his mimetic individuality "vis-à-vis the other characters who crowd him out or potentially revolve around him" (18). The character-system offers a tool for conceptualizing the effect that *enclosure in narrative* has on characterization.

Addressing the mimetic effect of characters as it is experienced by readers reading, Woloch's theory is especially relevant to the body of questions about Russian realism from which I have begun. What produces various kinds of illusions of the character's lifelikeness or "reality"? And what happens to the mimetic effect of character when a narrative minimizes, or tries to move beyond, the read and imagined fictional heterocosm that limits (and so shapes) its character-system?

The terms of Woloch's theory allow me both to clarify and to expand my argument about the limits or boundaries of realist characterization in Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's novels. I have already referenced discussions of the intensity and indeterminacy of their protagonists as a formal marker of the claim their novels make on the reader's present, beyond her encounter with the written text of the novel. I want to suggest that the ambition to make a claim on the reader shaped Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's approach to characterization in more ways than one. Not only do their novels look for new and more "open" ways of representing characters at the center of the narrative; more broadly, they call into question Woloch's foundational assumption that the center of the character-system is the most fully mimetic position a character can occupy. In other words, the impulse to pull the novel's value away from the center of its fictional plot, which many scholars associate with the Russian tradition more broadly, is reflected in the character-systems of Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's novels. Each experimented with techniques of characterization that could divorce the potential for ample and evocative representation from the lines of attention laid down by the fictional narrative.

Indeed, I will argue that what Woloch paints as a growing "destabilizing" force in French and English novels — the novel's uneasy "awareness of its potential to *shift* the narrative focus away from an established center, toward minor characters"[44] — became a key source of

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[44]*The One vs. the Many*, 18–19 and 31–32. The end of this story of gradual destabilization, as Woloch implies in an epigraph but never argues directly, had been reached by the time of Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* (1895), the center of whose tragedy has clearly shifted from the one to those who are "too menny" (12; cf. 344n12).

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Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's formal innovations. Bounded networks of characters organized around a vivid protagonist or small group of protagonists structure Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's novels, just as they do Austen's, Dickens's, and Balzac's. But generic and formal unorthodoxies allowed them to subvert this conventional asymmetry, or to put it to unfamiliar uses. Thus, as he was writing *War and Peace*, Tolstoy increasingly rested the novel's mimetic claims on its crowds of marginal characters, making their vividness and authenticity depend on their *exclusion* from the main fictional plot. Conversely, Dostoevsky, over the course of *The Brothers Karamazov*, worked out a vision of novelistic protagonists that could remain vivid even when detached from the character-system and fictional plot to which they are central. And in a sense, that vision can be understood as an answer to the problem that (I suggest) Tolstoy poses with the figure of Levin in *Anna Karenina* — how far can a novelistic protagonist be dissociated from the limiting, or even corrupting, influence of the genre that also fosters the intense illusion of his reality?[45] More than they show how characters "jostle for, and within" the space of the narrative, we could then say, Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's novels stage the *author*'s struggle to find a way out of the limits of the character-system itself. The mimetic ideal embodied by a protagonist at the center of an absorbing fictional heterocosm here competes with the ideal of characters that continue, in predictable ways, to capture the attention of a reader *un*bound from the novel's world and text.

The attempt to fulfill this alternate ideal of characterization from within the generic form that Woloch describes creates the tension my chapters will trace. A study of characterization in Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's novels, which make problematic the linear relationship between narrative "attention" and mimesis, stands to add to Woloch's theory by confronting it with techniques that fully and amply realize characters, without necessarily placing them at the center of the fictional heterocosm. But I argue, conversely, that Woloch's theory in turn helps reveal the structural features that limit Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's hopes of transforming characterization in the novel. Each of the novels I analyze subverts the logic of the novelistic character-system from within the novel itself, but each also shows how inextricably the mimetic effect of character depends on relations, descriptive patterns, and economies of attention that only a character-system, set into the bounds of a fictional heterocosm, can support. And each sharply manifests the contradiction between these two conditions.

Thus, precisely at their most lifelike, Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's characters may help illuminate what Boris Eikhenbaum called the "crisis of narrative prose" their major novels

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[45]The structure of Dostoevsky's Karamazov family is, in fact, curiously similar to the structure of Levin's family — two full brothers and a brother who shares their mother becomes two full brothers and a brother who shares their father (plus the illegitimate Smerdyakov). Considering Dostoevsky's passionate intellectual involvement with *Anna Karenina* (recorded particularly in reviews and articles throughout his 1877 *Diary of a Writer*), it does not seem far-fetched to read *The Brothers Karamazov* as a kind of alternate history of Levin's family — a sensualist, an intellectual, and a novice (with the two elder brothers, moreover, squabbling over an inheritance). These parallel structures create a narrative link between two novels that I suspect are dealing with a common formal problem: can a vivid realist protagonist stand as a convincing model of human life without the fictional architecture that *creates* his vividness and his centrality?

represented for the Russian tradition.[46] Testing how far from the center of a fictional narrative the mimetic potential of a character can be realized, these novels create unsustainable, and certainly unrepeatable, constellations. The figures I will highlight — the marginal character who seems to live precisely because he is barely narrated at all, the narrator who obscures and confuses characters rather than portraying them, the protagonist who must be untangled from novelistic plot and narrative description in order to fulfill his most pivotal role in the novel — are not clear building blocks of a continuing realist tradition. In the following chapters I attempt to lay out these experiments in mimetic characterization, and the specific crisis points that signal their limitations. In the process, I also turn new critical attention to the illusion of mimetic characterization in the novel, whose parameters Tolstoy and Dostoevsky deliberately explored.

4. Problems of mimetic characterization in Dostoevsky and Tolstoy

The first three chapters of my dissertation investigate techniques and limit-points of mimetic characterization in Tolstoy's *War and Peace* (*Voina i mir*, 1865–69), and Dostoevsky's *The Adolescent* (*Podrostok*, 1875) and *The Brothers Karamazov* (*Bratia Karamazovy*, 1879–80). In the fourth chapter, I draw out the theoretical stakes of this discussion by turning to the afterlife of Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's mimetic characters, in seminal theoretical writings of Georg Lukács and Mikhail Bakhtin.

My inquiry is primarily concerned with the effect of techniques of mimetic characterization on an absorbed reader: in other words, with the realization of characters' mimetic potential as it is signaled within an unfolding narrative. Again, following a pattern of thought about character now inscribed in the aesthetics of the novel more broadly, I measure "the realization of mimetic potential" — the vivid illusion of the character's self-sufficient humanity — in terms of her apparent freedom from manipulation for the sake of argument or plot. Rather than focusing (as Woloch does) on how the dynamics of the character-system curtail such autonomous "life" in all but the major protagonists, I look at how Tolstoy and Dostoevsky distribute the possibilities for making characters "live" *across* the levels of the character-system.

The novels I discuss employ disparate kinds of narration, from the authoritative omniscient narration of *War and Peace*, to the first-person retrospective narration of *The Adolescent*, to the mixed mode of *The Brothers Karamazov*. In this respect, they offer windows

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[46] I cite the lightning history of nineteenth century Russian prose sketched by Eikhenbaum in *The Young Tolstoy*: "The development of a purely narrative form was the business of the previous generation (the 1830s) — Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's epoch is the crisis of narrative prose. Dostoevsky expands dialogue, curtailing to a minimum the descriptive and narrative component and giving it the character of subjective commentary; Tolstoy develops the concrete detail in descriptions and then links it with a generalization. It is not surprising that after them, the Russian novel halts in its development and that the anecdotes of Chekhov appear in its place" (B.M. Eikhenbaum, *Molodoi Tolstoi* [Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1968 (1922)], 121). Eikhenbaum places the "crisis" in terms of Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's (differing) ways of excising the narrator, the storytelling figures used by Pushkin, Gogol, and Lermontov. I am proposing that it can also be productively analyzed in terms of the extreme techniques of mimetic characterization that this play with narration and narrative structure made possible.

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into the range of innovative methods that Tolstoy and Dostoevsky used and found for the mimetic representation of character. The chronological succession of these novels, however, is also important to my argument. I suggest that the characters of Tolstoy's *War and Peace* set the mimetic standard that Dostoevsky first unraveled (in *The Adolescent*), and then attempted, in *The Brothers Karamazov*, to match, under narrative conditions that he felt more closely reflected the contemporary social order. Together, the three novels thus tell a story about how Tolstoy, and then Dostoevsky, reinflected the basic structure of the character-system to make it accommodate a greater breadth and depth of mimetic representation — and about the limit-points that each of these attempted expansions met. I end by tracing the importance of Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's contrasting (but equally anomalous) experiments in mimetic characterization to the early theory of the novel, as Lukács and Bakhtin made their "living" characters into central paradigms for the novel's ethical, political, and social potential.

A summary of each chapter will help clarify these points.

Chapter One ("'There, that's me!': The Discontent of Character in Tolstoy's *War and Peace*") undertakes a reading of the dynamic interplay between major, minor, and marginal characters in *War and Peace*. I argue that Tolstoy both exploits and experiments with the conventional shape of a novelistic character-system — that is, many minor characters arranged around the few protagonists who are represented most fully. A remarkably neat structure of named families (primary among them the Rostovs and Bolkonskys, peripheral the Kuragins, Drubetskoys, and several others) organizes and moves us through the novel's vast represented world. As in any character-system, contrasts between the central protagonists, to whom the most narrative attention is devoted, and the minor characters who perform functional or oppositional roles, help set the novel's standard for vivid representation, for the illusion of mimetic life. The first part of my chapter, then, describes the thematic architecture of the novel's character-system and the techniques that reinforce it, evoking the bodies and minds of the protagonists that have most to do with physical and spiritual life, and suppressing this mimetic illusion in the minor characters allied with intrigue, artifice, and plot.

But increasingly as it nears its end, the novel turns away from the fictional world supported by this system of named characters, and toward the historical scene unfolding in its margins. *War and Peace* is at once plagued and enchanted by an unconventional problem: how to represent the vivid "life" of people in an anonymous crowd, figures who can take shape *only* at the periphery of the named characters' experience? In the second part of my chapter, I argue that the novel's notorious digressions can be read as an attempt to work out a representational logic beyond that of the novelistic character-system: to found an illusion of life that comes not from the full and intricate representation of a fictional figure, but from a gesture toward all that the narrative will never tell us about him. And yet, this fascination with the mimetic potential of what is barely narrated at all introduces an unsustainable tension into the novel's character-system. The fictional "reality" of the protagonists at its center visibly strains toward the historical "reality" of the figures at its margins, but the fulfillment of this desire could only mean an escape from the novel genre itself, and all that complex, text-bound representation implies. I read the didacticism of Part One of *War and Peace*'s Epilogue as a troubled attempt to bridge this absolute separation between fictional "reality," and the history and present of the novel's reader.

Chapter Two ("Arkady's Overcoat: Character and the Conditions of Envy in Dostoevsky's *The Adolescent*") begins my investigation of Dostoevsky's techniques of mimetic

characterization. Dostoevsky deliberately cut his later novels off from the twin anchors of a Tolstoyan character-system: the social order of what he derided as "landowner literature," and the narrative and mimetic order of omniscience. He thus looked for a way of faithfully representing the "life of the majority": a method of generating vivid characters that would reflect the social and moral rootlessness he saw in the people around him.[47] Nowhere did he commit more radically to this project than in his second-to-last novel, *The Adolescent,* and nowhere is the chaos it invites more visible. Narrated by its illegitimately born hero, Arkady Dolgoruky, *The Adolescent* also performs a kind of formal illegitimacy: in Arkady's incompetent narration, the other characters of his story continually dissolve and cohere into new, unstable figures and configurations. Paradoxically, the novel suggests the fullness of its characters' lives just by the degree to which its narrator appears to screen them.

While this technique of characterization (in less extreme form) is typical of Dostoevsky's later novels, I argue that *The Adolescent* offers a unique window into his own ambivalence about its representational power. In one sense, Arkady's kaleidoscopic narration lets the novel privilege just the kinds of persons and experiences that would be relegated to the periphery of a conventional character-system. It draws our attention to the seedy and shapeless "ordinary" types that, as the narrator of *The Idiot* comments, are nearly impossible to work into a well-wrought novel, and it depicts the extremity of their confusion and rootlessness through the confusion of a narrator faced with the task of representing them.[48] Removing the authoritative basis *for* characterizing and assigning centrality within a stable character-system, the novel clears a space for the emergence of a new type of protagonist. And yet, beginning with the title, motifs of

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[47] The phrase is from his unpublished preface to *The Adolescent* (drafted in March 1875): "Our talented writers, who have been depicting, with high art, the life of our mid-upper-class (family) circle — Tolstoy, Goncharov — thought that they were depicting the life of the majority — I think it was they who were depicting the life of exceptions. On the contrary, their life is the life of exceptions, and mine is the life of the general rule. [Талантливые писатели наши, высокохудожественно изображавшие жизнь средне-высшего круга (семейного), — Толстой, Гончаров думали, что изображали жизнь большинства, — по моему они-то и изображали жизнь исключений. Напротив, их жизнь есть жизнь исключений, а моя есть жизнь общего правила. (16: 329)] For fuller discussion of the preface, see the introduction to Section II of this dissertation (pp. 89–90).

[48] Cf. the discussion of the "ordinary type" at the beginning of Part 4 of *The Idiot* (1868): "There are people of whom it is difficult to say anything that would present them at once and fully, in their most typical and characteristic aspect; these are those people who are usually called 'ordinary' people, the 'majority,' and who indeed make up the vast majority in any society. . . Nonetheless, a question remains before us all the same: what is a novelist to do with ordinary, completely 'usual' people. . .?" (F. Dostoevsky, *The Idiot*, trans. R. Pevear and L. Volokhonsky [New York and Toronto: Knopf, 2001], 461–462) [Есть люди, о которых трудно сказать что-нибудь такое, что представило бы их разом и целиком, в их самом типическом и характерном виде; это те люди, которых обыкновенно называют людьми «обыкновенными», «большинством» и которые, действительно, составляют огромное большинство всякого общества. . . Тем не менее все-таки пред нами остается вопрос: что делать романисту с такими ординарными, совершенно «обыкновенными». . . ? (8:383).]

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gradual accumulation and advancement fill *The Adolescent*; it is haunted by a standard it has not yet reached. The famous self-reflective Epilogue, as well as material from unpublished drafts, give reason to believe that this is partly a *mimetic* standard — embodied, above all, in the vivid characterizations of Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. Aware of their own exile from the techniques that underwrite the luminous illusion of reality achieved in Tolstoy's novels, *The Adolescent*'s characters present an unfamiliarly dismal view of the Dostoevskian form that Mikhail Bakhtin called "polyphony": a structure that incorporates the individual ideological "voice" of each character, unsuppressed by a unifying, monologic plan. Taking to an extreme this ideal of the character's freedom from systematic narrative design, the novel shows how closely it skirts the possibility of his radical dissolution.

In Chapter Three ("'*Not you*': Character and the Conditions of Transcendence in Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*"), I suggest that Dostoevsky's final novel can productively be read as an answer to the formal question that *The Adolescent* so insistently posed. How can a novelist vividly represent contemporary life, without imposing a narrative structure out of tune with the conditions of contemporary society? *The Brothers Karamazov* is narrated (like three of Dostoevsky's last four novels) by a hybrid "narrator-chronicler" — a voice marked with personal pronouns and other occasional details as that of a character in the story-world, but privileged with the kind of information about other characters' biographies and inner thoughts that is generally associated with omniscience. Knowledgeable but partial, this voice does not give the novel's world a foundation of absolute authority; its assertions always leave for doubt. But in *The Brothers Karamazov*, unlike in the other chronicle-novels *The Idiot* and *Demons*, Dostoevsky organizes the novel's fictional world and character-system around a strong family identity much like the ones Tolstoy uses to anchor *War and Peace*. By linking centrality in the novel with a proper name (rather than the authoritative control of an omniscient narrator), Dostoevsky in turn makes possible the illusion that each of the protagonists defines his "own" relationship to this characterizing name and this central position — to the conventions of description and narrative space that govern characterization in the novel.

My chapter thus traces the process by which most of the novel's characters, especially the three Karamazov brothers themselves, reflect upon and reject or embrace the set of traits encompassed in the central family-name "Karamazov." These reflections create an uncertain space *between* Dmitri, Ivan, and Alyosha, and the family-name that encapsulates their narrated identities. In this apparent limbo, Dostoevsky finds a stage for the kind of plot that the secular genre of the Anglo-European realist novel conventionally excludes: for narratives of religious doubt, epiphany, and conversion. This plot unfolds as if beyond the novel and its conventions of characterization, through a variety of inserted genres: saints' lives, miracle plays, folk legends, parables. We are thus invited us to imagine the protagonists as progressively dissociated from the novel in *which* they are protagonists — to carry the compelling illusion of their "life" into generic spheres that do not limit themselves to the elaborate world-making of a novelistic text.

It is the fourth, illegitimate brother Smerdyakov whose crimes set in motion the plot that forces each Karamazov brother to redefine "himself," passing through a radically uncertain moment of openness to God and the devil. But it then becomes especially significant that Smerdyakov is set apart from these redemptive narratives by the only absolute narrative means Dostoevsky has left open — his name. Like the illegitimate Arkady's characters, the illegitimate Smerdyakov reaches toward a Tolstoyan world of omniscient, authoritative characterization.

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Thus, encapsulated and vehemently (but incompletely) cast out in the figure of Smerdyakov is a *doubt* about whether novelistic characters can truly engage in the kind of spiritual self-definition in which *The Brothers Karamazov* is most invested. His position in the structure of *The Brothers Karamazov* — as vital to its plot as he is sidelined in its narrative — tellingly mirrors the novel's relationship to conventional resources of characterization: a *dependence* on the form of novelistic character-systems that Dostoevsky disguised as a move away from their generic limitations. Here, I suggest, the Russian realist transformation of characterization in the novel reaches a final limit.

Chapter Four ("Lives in Theory: Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's Characters in Bakhtin and Lukács") explores the consequences that Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's experiments in mimetic characterization had for the early theory of the novel, as represented by writings of Bakhtin and Lukács. Both Lukács and Bakhtin began writing at a time of intense critical engagement with Russian realism — particularly with the novels of Dostoevsky — in Russia itself and in Europe more broadly. My chapter argues that, in setting up Dostoevsky's and (especially for Lukács) Tolstoy's novels as paradigmatic examples of the genre, these theorists also inherited paradoxes about mimetic characterization that shaped the novels themselves. In key essays by both Bakhtin and Lukács, a desire to single out the experience of reading "autonomous" characters in (Russian) realist novels — as something different from, for example, identification with heroes of popular fiction, or (at the other extreme) dispassionate observation of the experimental subjects of naturalism — competes with the desire to demonstrate the potential moral, social, and political power such experience of novelistic characters holds. An aesthetic encounter with the novel, as an absorbing and self-sufficient heterocosm, provides the necessary context for the experience of character that Bakhtin and Lukács want novel readers to have. But their theories leave unresolved the question that I suggest that Tolstoy and Dostoevsky themselves posed in some of their novels: does the successful creation of vividly autonomous characters draw the novel closer to, or demonstrate its framed separation from, direct activity in its readers' world?

I support this argument through an analysis of several essays that are among Bakhtin's and Lukács's most sustained engagements with Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's characters and novels. In the first section of the chapter, I read Bakhtin's 1929 *Problems of Dostoevsky's Creative Art* (*Problemy tvorchestva Dostoevskogo*) in the light of his earlier (unfinished) essay "Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity" ("Avtor i geroi v esteticheskoi deiatel'nosti," c. 1921–1924). "Author and Hero," marked by significant inheritances from Kantian aesthetics, paints disinterested contemplation from the outside as the unique gift an author or reader bestows on a protagonist, using the "excess" of his vision to create a perfected image of their lives. Bakhtin's Dostoevsky book, by contrast, insists that Dostoevsky found new potential in the novel genre by *refusing* to reduce his characters to finished images that can only be seen from without. But I aim to show that rather than abandoning his early model of the reader's aesthetic contemplation of the novel and its protagonists, Bakhtin retained it as an invisible but essential background. Even in the Dostoevsky book (both in its 1929 and revised 1963 form), it is a disinterested aesthetic stance that constructs the protagonist as an autonomous being, who then appears to escape the position of the passively-viewed "image" in a further development of the mimetic illusion. The very object of Bakhtin's theory — novels and their characters — springs from the aesthetic vision he hopes novel reading can transcend. Bakhtin thus raises questions he does not

conclusively answer about how the act of novel-reading merges into a social and ideological encounter.

The second section of the chapter turns to Lukács's evolving view of Tolstoy and his characters in *The Theory of the Novel* (1916), and the later essay "Tolstoy and the Problems of Realism" (1936). In *The Theory of the Novel*, Lukács paints Tolstoy's novels as tormentingly divided from their own genre. The biographies of their protagonists enact the novels' fruitless reach toward the status of epics: harmonious totalities created in an age when their structure was assumed to *reflect* the structure of a harmonious world. After his conversion to Marxism in 1917, Lukács reevaluated his reading of Tolstoy in the Marxist perspective of the correspondence between the dialectics of human history, and the dialectical structure of great works of literature, including novels. The novel mirrors the world because the lives of its characters are subject to and express the same contradictions that shape human history, and it is the most typical characters, in turn, whose lives express these contradictions most vividly and clearly — beyond the direct control of the novel's author. But unlike with the exaggerated, free-standing types of Balzac's earlier realist novels, the autonomous typicality of Tolstoy's protagonists emerges (as Lukács put it) "polyphonically," through shades of difference and relation with other characters within the work itself. In this early conception of what later (neo-)Marxist theorists like Woloch and Fredric Jameson would call a character-system, Lukács suggests that Tolstoy's novels do reflect the world, but only when they are read as entire self-enclosed heterocosms: frames for the dynamic interactions that reveal some characters as "typical" in relation to others.

My concluding readings of Bakhtin and Lukács look through admittedly small windows into their expansive theories of the novel. Focusing on the essays that deal most directly with the lifelike "autonomy" of Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's characters, I hope only to have begun to show the formidably complex play, within these theories, of what Stephen Halliwell calls the two faces of mimesis. For both Bakhtin and Lukács, the social and political significance of Dostoevsky's and Tolstoy's novels rests largely on readings of their characters as independent from authorial design and will. This conception of the characters anchors a conception of the novels themselves as mimetic, in the sense of world-reflection: encountering these texts and their characters, we also encounter new aspects of language, history, and the present. But a *perception* of the character's lifelike autonomy depends on a conception of the novels as mimetic in the sense of world-creation: we see them in this way only when we approach the novels as self-enclosed systems, intricately unfolding within their own frames. There is nothing simple or direct about the connection between these two kinds of experience of mimetic characters. The questions Bakhtin's and Lukács's theories open about mimetic characterization and the act of reading thus echo questions I have found posed in Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's novels themselves. Are vivid characters a bridge between a novel's world and the world of its readers? Or do characters lead us ever deeper into an artistic text that — contrary to first appearances — in fact must rely on other ways of opening out onto the world it models?

5. *Levin's vault*

> Lying on his back, he was now looking at the high, cloudless sky. "Don't I know that it is infinite space and not a round vault [*kruglyi svod*]? But no matter how I squint and strain my sight, I cannot see it as *not* round and limited, and despite my knowledge of infinite

> space, I am undoubtedly right when I see a firm blue vault, more right than when I strain to see beyond it." Levin had stopped thinking and was as if only listening to the mysterious voices that spoke joyfully and anxiously about something among themselves [*tainstvennym golosam, o chem-to radostno i ozabochenno peregovarivavshimsia mezhdu soboi*]. "Can this be faith?" — he thought, afraid to believe his happiness. (800 [translation modified])[49]

At this decisive moment in his conversion, Tolstoy's Levin embraces the instinctive illusion that the infinite void above him is really a "round and limited" vault, discovering a new affinity between his subjective perception and the world as it is outside him. It is striking that this famous passage — while invoking other intertexts, including the end of Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason* — also inverts one of the shortest and most virtuosic moments of mimetic representation in *War and Peace*: "The stars, as if knowing that no one would see them now, began to play in the dark sky. Now flaring up, now vanishing, now trembling, they were busy whispering something joyful, but mysterious, to one another [*oni khlopotlivo o chem-to radostnom, no tainstvennom, peresheptyvalis' mezhdu soboiu*]."[50] These scenes span the distance between two mimetic utopias: at one pole, the world represented as if by "no one," playing "as if knowing that no one would see it now"; at the other, an individual subject captured at the moment he realizes that his vision of the world, while limited, is also miraculously true.

But for a contemporary reader, it is tempting to hear another echo *forward* to Tolstoy's January 1878 letter to Rachinsky, quoted earlier in this introduction: "the vaults are joined up [*svody svedeny*] so that it cannot even be noted where the keystone is." Levin's vault both fits into and replicates the complex architecture of *Anna Karenina*, the principle of "inner connection" that joins together all its parts, supporting and governing the illusion of its characters' reality. But adapting the language of his character's conversion to his own description of his novel's form, Tolstoy also seems to circumscribe the world that novel so sweepingly represents. The heavenly vault that Levin, as an implied person, elects to see as real runs parallel to the vault that arches over his representation as a character — the vault of the world that opens and closes with the opening and closing of the novel itself.

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[49] [Лежа на спине, он смотрел теперь на высокое, безоблачное небо. «Разве я не знаю, что это — бесконечное пространство, и что оно не круглый свод? Но как бы я ни щурился и ни напрягал свое зрение, я не могу видеть его не круглым и не ограниченным, и, несмотря на свое знание о бесконечном пространстве, я несомненно прав, когда я вижу твердый голубой свод, я более прав, чем когда я напрягаюсь видеть дальше его.» Левин перестал уже думать и только как бы прислушивался к таинственным голосам, о чем-то радостно и озабоченно переговаривавшимся между собой. «Неужели это вера? — подумал он, боясь верить своему счастью. (19:381–82)]

[50] L. Tolstoy, *War and Peace*, trans. L. and A. Maude, ed. A. Mandelker (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 1180 (translation modified). [Звезды, как будто зная, что теперь никто не увидит их, разыгрались в черном небе. То вспыхивая, то потухая, то вздрагивая, они хлопотливо о чем-то радостном, но таинственном, перешептывались между собой. (12:196)]

Introduction

   The readings that follow explore the ways in which the mimetic illusion cast by a character like Levin, which draws us into the world where he seems to be real, depends on the kind of complex textual structure that Tolstoy described in his letter to Rachinsky. I argue that, in marking within their texts the problem of expanding this illusion beyond its supporting structure, Tolstoy and Dostoevsky themselves drew attention to the complexity of the lines of connection between character, text, and reader in the novel. Reading along these lines, we see not just the conditions that create the effect of vividly represented persons, but also the conditions that limit it — a collision between the plenitude and the discontents of the illusion of character that few novels have made so compellingly clear.

"There, that's me!": The Discontent of Character in Tolstoy's *War and Peace*

Section I: Tolstoy

Chapter One
"There, that's me!": The Discontent of Character in Tolstoy's *War and Peace*

1. Approaching the character-system of War And Peace*: Dinner at the English Club*

      Soon after Alexander I's army has lost the Battle of Austerlitz, at the beginning of Book Two of Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace* (*Voina i mir*, 1865–69), the fictional character Count Ilya Rostov organizes a banquet at the English Club in Moscow in honor of Prince Bagration.[1] Collecting together fictional and historical players, the novel's most central protagonists and some of its most evanescent incidental figures, the scene of this banquet extends an invitation into the vast web of characters that populate *War and Peace*.

      Bagration's dinner is narrated three times, in three successive chapters. The first begins: "Next day, the 3rd of March, soon after one o'clock, two hundred and fifty members of the English Club and fifty guests were awaiting the guest of honor and hero of the Austrian campaign, Prince Bagration, to dinner."[2] With this sentence, almost three hundred new characters enter *War and Peace*. All the guests and members — historical and fictional, named and unnamed, familiar and unfamiliar from the foregoing chapters — then receive a collective and limited biography. We see them placed on the second-highest tier of a social hierarchy that unswervingly follows the lead of Count Rastopchin, Prince Dolgorukov, P.S. Valuev, Count Markov, and Prince Vyazemsky (all historical figures). Other individual names — fictional characters we already know — illuminate this group within the novel's own self-contained terms. Thus, Count Rostov is among those in Moscow who "took their opinions from others" (327; 10:14); some of these Muscovites pass on (in his own boastful words) the story of the heroics of Berg, Count Rostov's future son-in-law; only a few lament Andrei Bolkonsky, whom the novel left wounded on the field at Austerlitz.

      The second narrative brings the guests and members of the English Club more concretely into the novel:

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[1] L. Tolstoy, *War and Peace*, trans. L. and A. Maude, ed. A. Mandelker (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 328. Subsequent references to this edition cited by page number parenthetically in the text; spelling has been changed throughout to conform to American English conventions, and where noted, the translation has been modified to correspond more closely to the Russian. I have followed this edition in the English spellings of characters' names. L.N. Tolstoi, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 90 vols., ed. V.G. Chertkov (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1928-1958), 10:15. Subsequent references to the Russian text of *War and Peace* and quotations of the original are from this edition, cited parenthetically by volume and page after the quotation in the footnote, or in the text in the form (English citation; Russian citation).

[2] [На другой день, 3-го марта, во втором часу по полудни, 250 человек членов Английского клуба и 50 человек гостей ожидали к обеду дорогого гостя и героя Австрийского похода, князя Багратиона. (10:14)]

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> On the third of March all the rooms in the English Club were filled with a hum of conversation, like the hum of bees swarming in spring-time. The members and guests of the club wandered hither and thither, sat, stood, met, and separated, some in uniform and some in evening dress. . . Most of those present were elderly respected men with broad self-confident faces, fat fingers, and resolute gestures and voices. (329)[3]

If we first encountered these figures from a distance, we are now close enough to hear the drone of their voices and see their fat fingers. All three hundred guests and members emerge here as fully embodied, though extremely minor, characters — as do the "powdered footmen in livery with buckled shoes and smart stockings. . . anxiously noting visitors' every movement in order to offer their services" (329; 10:16).

Differentiating this burgeoning crowd, the narrative intersperses the collective with the individual and the alien with the known. The scattered guests assemble to watch Bagration's entrance "like rye shaken together in a shovel" (330; 10:17), but when the company toasts the Emperor, "young Rostov's ecstatic voice could be heard above the three hundred others [*iz-za vsekh trekhsot golosov*]" (332). This kind of quick reference groups the guests around Nikolai Rostov in the discourse as clearly as, within the story, they take their places around Bagration: "Three hundred persons took their seats in the dining-room, according to their rank and importance: the more important nearer to the honored guest, as naturally as water flows deepest where the land lies lowest" (332; 10:19). The narrative thus moves in two directions at once, drawing us in to imagine fictional individuals in the crowd of guests and members only to re-present that crowd, from the outside, as a verifiable historical whole.

The third and final narrative starts again from the beginning of Bagration's banquet, this time moving the scene from the public sphere of ceremonious toasts at the head of the table, to the private level of the guests sitting at its middle: Pierre, Nikolai Rostov, and Fyodor Dolokhov. Focalized mainly through Pierre, this rendition of the dinner barely touches on Bagration; the celebration becomes a backdrop to Pierre's realization that Dolokhov is cuckolding him, and to Dolokhov's insult and the challenge Pierre issues him at the end of the night. We learn not only that Pierre looks preoccupied, but also what thoughts are preoccupying him, and how these thoughts sound:

> He seemed to see and hear nothing of what was going on around him and to be absorbed by some depressing and unsolved problem. The unsolved problem that tormented him was caused by hints given by the princess, his cousin, at Moscow, concerning Dolokhov's intimacy with his wife, and by an anonymous letter he had received that morning. . .

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[3] [3-го марта во всех комнатах Английского клуба стоял стон разговаривающих голосов, и, как пчелы на весеннем пролете, сновали взад и вперед, сидели, стояли, сходились и расходились, в мундирах, фраках. . . члены и гости клуба . . . Большинство присутствовавших были старые, почтенные люди с широкими, самоуверенными лицами, толстыми пальцами, твердыми движениями и голосами. (10:16)]

> Pierre absolutely disbelieved both the princess's hints and the letter, but he feared now to look at Dolokhov. . .'Yes, he is very handsome,' thought Pierre. . . (334)[4]

Such intimate access to Pierre's mind alters the texture of the third narrative. If the second employed named fictional characters to construct an idiosyncratic perspective on a historical scene, the third makes one of these same characters the center of its attention, allowing his subjective experience to dictate our view.

Dolokhov's voice, by contrast, never enters the narrator's discourse. We read him only as Pierre does, from the outside: "Dolokhov looked at Pierre with clear mirthful cruel eyes, and that smile of his which seemed to say, 'Ah! This is what I like!'" (335).[5] This external focalization limits Dolokhov's presence in the narrative of the scene. In one respect, however, his role is more central to that narrative than either Pierre's or Nikolai's: it is Dolokhov who initiates the scene's main fictional action by snatching away Pierre's copy of Kutuzov's cantata, the final provocation that precipitates Pierre's challenge and (the next morning) their duel.

The contrast between the representation of Pierre and the representation of Dolokhov, against the backdrop of Bagration's dinner and the now-forgotten footmen, guests, and members of the English Club, throws into relief the lines that separate what I will treat as three basic categories of character in *War and Peace*. They can conveniently be labeled *major, minor,* and *marginal*.

The concept of a novelistic "character-system," as defined in Alex Woloch's *The One vs. the Many*, offers a useful methodological tool for beginning to discuss the relationships between major, minor, and marginal characters. Woloch focuses on the ways in which minor characters in novels by Austen, Dickens, and Balzac are distorted relative to the fuller rendering of central protagonists: on the fact that no novel has enough narrative "space" for all the people it purports to represent. His study develops two linked concepts. The "character-space" is the "charged encounter" between the narrative designation of an "individual human personality" and the space and position into which the *representation* of this personality must fit within the narrative. The "character-system" is the "arrangement of multiple and differentiated character-spaces. . . into a unified narrative structure."[6] As Woloch stresses, the difference between major and minor characters in any narrative is, most fundamentally, a difference of character-spaces: a novel's main protagonist(s) lie(s) closest to the center of its narrative attention, and its most minor or marginal characters, furthest toward the periphery.

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[4] [Он, казалось, не видел и не слышал ничего, происходящего вокруг него, и думал о чем-то одном, тяжелом и неразрешенном. Этот неразрешенный, мучивший его вопрос, были намеки княжны в Москве на близость Долохова к его жене и в нынешнее утро полученное им анонимное письмо. . . Пьер решительно не поверил ни намекам княжны, ни письму, но ему страшно было теперь смотреть на Долохова . . . «Да, он очень красив, думал Пьер. . . (10:20–21)]

[5] [Долохов посмотрел на Пьера светлыми, веселыми, жестокими глазами, с той же улыбкой, как будто он говорил: «А вот это я люблю» (10:23).]

[6] A. Woloch, *The One vs. the Many*: *Minor Characters and the Space of the Protagonist in the Novel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 14. On Woloch's terms and his theory of characterization, see also my Introduction, p. 17–18.

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Viewing Bagration's dinner from this perspective, we might begin by noting that of the eight pages devoted to it in the Jubilee edition of Tolstoy's collected works, about three deal mainly with Pierre, while most of the figures in the group of 300 guests and members squeeze into forty lines of collective description. They comprise, moreover, a group continually in need of differentiation, placement around some vivid point (the guest of honor Bagration, Rostov's cheer) that lends the collective a narratable form. The footmen are even more nebulous than the guests and members, still readier to fade into the margins around the scene's protagonists; indeed, we cannot even count how many individual footmen there are. The character-system works to describe such structural relationships, which weave the spaces of more and less central characters into a unified narrative.

I will aim to show here how Tolstoy's *War and Peace* both exploits and experiments with the conventional contours of a nineteenth-century novelistic character-system — that is, with the arrangement of many minor figures around one or more central protagonists. The terms of the exploitation and of the experiment begin to emerge in the triple narration of Bagration's banquet at the English Club. We are intermittently aware of the fictional characters' organizing centrality in each chapter, and much more so of Pierre's during the third narrative. And yet, the moments when they are central to the scene combine with others when they are absorbed into the crowd of three hundred guests and members, all pressed alike into the service of making Bagration's banquet part of Tolstoy's novel. While reinforcing a configuration of characters centered around Pierre and the Rostovs, these scenes also manipulate that configuration to reveal another, centered around a particular presentation of Bagration.

In this respect, the center of narrative attention in *War and Peace* is divided — not only among its major protagonists (Pierre Bezukhov, Marya and Andrei Bolkonsky, and Natasha and Nikolai Rostov[7]), but *between* these protagonists and the other material, in part historical, that the novel brings to life.[8] A sweeping mimetic ambition distributes the space of *War and Peace*

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[7] Though I have not made a comprehensive study of lists of the novel's protagonists, I should note that shorter lists (typically, Pierre, Andrei, and Natasha), and longer ones (including, for example, Hélène Kuragina, Boris Drubetskoy, and/or Sonya) are not uncommon. However, this list of five protagonists seems to me to be justified, for reasons I hope the ensuing discussion will make clearer: briefly, it is these five figures to whom the novel most consistently returns as its narrative and thematic reference points, whose trajectories in the fictional plot prove to be most closely intertwined, and whose individual perspectives are (in turn) most often intertwined with the main omniscient narrative.

[8] Classically, this division has been framed as a generic split within the novel between "family novel" and historical epic. In his canonical account, Boris Eikhenbaum argues that Tolstoy changed his mind about the novel's genre while writing it, and that the final version reflects the process of this evolution; see B.M. Eikhenbaum, *Lev Tolstoi* (Leningrad: 1931; repr. Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1968), 317 ff. Both Kathryn Feuer and Evelina Zaidenshnur, on the basis of their extensive work with Tolstoy's drafts, express skepticism about the novel's origin as a family-chronicle (a thesis Zaidenshnur traces back before Eikhenbaum's study, to a 1925 article by A.E. Gruzinskii in *Novyi mir*); each identifies an initial political (Feuer) or national-historical (Zaidenshnur) conception for the novel that influences all future drafts and layers (K. Feuer, *Tolstoy and the Genesis of* War and Peace [Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1996],

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among five protagonists, dozens of named minor characters, and literally thousands of soldiers, officers, serfs, tradesmen, workers, doctors, provincial officials, lunatics, children, horses, dogs — even (as we will see) stars.[9] Tolstoy relies on named protagonists to organize a narrative that he continually stretches to encompass the myriad around them: the novel's center is designed only just to support its margins. Flouting conventional economies of structure, he invites us to conclude here, as in "Sebastopol in May" (1855), that the only hero of the story is Truth.

A distinctive formal feature of *War and Peace*, then, is the vital importance it lends to the characters I want to call *marginal*, defined neither as "major," nor as "minor" relative to the novel's major protagonists. This category reflects the novel's guiding representational commitment: not to any of the figures at the center of narrative attention, but to the populous historical world that they and their experiences introduce and organize within the text. Thus, while the protagonists' centrality helps to construct this world, its very dimensions work to dismantle their centrality. Majorness, minorness, and marginality are comparative states based on the distribution of limited space and attention, but I suggest that they also, within the sprawling narrative of *War and Peace*, denote three *absolutely* disparate modes of representation.

The observation that Tolstoy's protagonists are in some sense secondary is far from new. As contemporary critics remind us, early reviewers were preoccupied with *War and Peace*'s peculiarly frequent departures from the biographies of its protagonists.[10] What is more,

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44–53 and 200–06; E.E. Zaidenshnur, '*Voina i mir' L.N. Tolstogo* [Moscow: Kniga, 1966], 5–10 and 391n2). Feuer, however, retains the framework of "stages of composition," in the last of which "the fictional heroes and heroines retired from their roles as chief bearers and witnesses of events" (Feuer, *Genesis*, 210). As I hope to show in what follows, attention to the novel's character-system as a coherent whole, and to its fictional protagonists as consistent presences, offers one way of productively bridging — or at least, of describing in a new context — this narrative/generic divide in *War and Peace*.

[9] Zaidenshnur counts more than 500 characters in *War and Peace*, about 200 of which are historical (*Voina i mir*, 328). The figure grows (necessarily, by an indeterminate amount) if one also counts the many unnamed characters and collective groups — regiments, fleeing residents of Moscow, etc. — encompassed in the novel's narration.

[10] See especially G.S. Morson, *Hidden in Plain View: Narrative and Creative Potentials in 'War and Peace'* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1987), 52–59. The terms in which the critic Pavel Annenkov described this peculiarity (before the novel's second half had been published, in his 1868 review for *Vestnik Evropy*) are striking: "To his heroes and their private lives [Tolstoy] gives as much space, light and air as is necessary only for the support of their existence. This meager ration, this *le strict nécessaire* of the life given to them, amid the luxury and wealth of the condition of everything else, affects the reader unpleasantly and he guesses that in the end the real shortcoming in the whole creation, in spite of its complexity. . . is the lack of any *development in the plot*" ("Historical and Aesthetic Questions in Count L.N. Tolstoy's Novel 'War and Peace'" in *Tolstoy: The Critical Heritage*, ed. A.V. Knowles [London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978], 104–05 [translation modified]; cf. P.V. Annenkov, "Istoricheskie i esteticheskie voprosy. . ." in *L.N. Tolstoi v russkoi kritike*, ed. S.P. Bychkov [Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1960], 240). Annenkov's surprise attests to a character-system that reverses genre conventions: the distribution of narrative resources ("space, light, and air") is

decentralization of the protagonists has been described as a basic feature of Tolstoy's narrative art. As Viktor Shklovsky wrote in his 1928 study of *War and Peace*, "The employment of 'heroes' in Tolstoy generally is to draw in and transform material, and not to display themselves. I don't know about in all literature, but in [Tolstoy] the hero's role is secondary: he is summoned by the action, rather than determining it."[11] Lidiia Ginzburg argues, less categorically, that the vividness of Tolstoy's realism stems from his departure from the model of the Romantic novel centered around an extraordinary hero:

> The Tolstoian hero is not indivisibly attached to his particular personality nor is the novel itself indivisibly attached to its hero. . . Tolstoi was a great master of individual personality, but he went beyond that personality in order to see and reveal the nature of 'life in general' [*obshchaia zhizn'*], and not merely in the sense that what was characteristic of a given human being was also characteristic of human nature but also in the sense that the very processes of life itself — of objective reality as such — had become for him an object of depiction. It is Tolstoi's discovery of "life in general" . . . that undoubtedly explains the inimitable illusion of authenticity, of "real life," that captivated and still captivates his readers.[12]

exactly the opposite of what a competent reader of novels would expect. The British critic Percy Lubbock's explicitly theorizing evaluation of *War and Peace*, in his 1921 *The Craft of Fiction*, as "two novels," a novelistic *Iliad* and *Aeneid* both in one, and his desire "to think away from the novel all that is not owned and dominated by these three brilliant households, Besukhov, Bolkonsky, Rostov," echoes this critique (*The Craft of Fiction* [New York: Peter Smith, 1947], 43). One of Tolstoy's drafts for a never-published preface to the first section of the novel, dated to Sept. 1864, suggests that he himself was well aware at an early stage of the problems of hero and plot that were to trouble his reviewers: "Thus, having moved [the action] back from 1856 to 1805, I intend to take not one, but many of my heroes and heroines from this point through the historical events of 1805 1807, 1812, 1825 and 1856. I do not foresee the dénouements [*razviaki*] of these characters' relationships in any of these epochs. However much I've tried to think up from the beginning a novelistic opening and dénouement, I have become convinced that it is not in my power, and I have decided to give in to my habits and abilities in the description of these characters... I have only tried to make it so that each part of the composition has an independent interest" (13:55; my translation). The tension between "one" and "many" heroes, and the degree to which this tension reshaped the novel's plot and structure, would become only more radical in its later parts.

[11] V. Shklovskii, *Mater'ial i stil' v romane L'va Tolstogo* Voina i mir (Moscow: Federatsiia, 1928), 110; my translation.

[12] L. Ginzburg, *On Psychological Prose*, trans. and ed. Judson Rosengrant (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 246; cf. *O psikhologicheskoi proze* (Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel', 1971), 317. On the conversion of hero into "process," see also *O literaturnom geroe* (Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel', 1979), 130. Ginzburg elaborates on the representation of "life in general" in *War and Peace* in a 1944 essay which, in a different context, anticipates many of the observations about the novel's character-system offered here ("O romane Tolstogo 'Voina i mir,'" *Zvezda* No. 1 [1944]: 125–38).

Both these arguments imply that even Tolstoy's most vivid protagonists are a means to another representational end, rather than ends in themselves. In this interpretation, Tolstoy uses the effect of a protagonist's living individuality as an instrument for a larger mimetic project — to cast what Ginzburg calls "the inimitable illusion of authenticity, of 'real life.'"

In what follows, I hope to build on this line of argument about Tolstoy's protagonists by showing that tensions *between* modes of characterological representation — between major, minor, and marginal characters — are more important to that mimetic project than has previously been recognized.[13] Within the bounds of the novel's fictional narrative, Tolstoy constructs a system of relations and differences between characters that lets him weave the intensely vivid illusion both of his major protagonists' lives, and of the "marginal" world that can emerge *only* at the periphery of their experience. Using formal characterological differences as a marker for its own vision of historical narrative, *War and Peace* ambitiously forwards fiction's claim to model the truth of history. But the very dependence of this model on the bounds of the novel itself sets up a paradox that cannot easily be resolved.

2. Unfolding the character-system of War And Peace*: Anna Pavlovna Scherer's salon*

Early readers found it hard to identify the major characters in the first serial installments of *War and Peace*.[14] In their search for a "hero" to play the role of the novel's protagonist, the opaque but fascinating Dolokhov seemed like a better candidate than the ungainly Pierre. Their confusion points to the success of an important aspect of the mimetic project undertaken in *War*

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[13] I want to note that I do not use "mimetic" and "mimesis" in the restrictive sense summed up, for example, by Lubomir Doležel: "a theory of fictionality that claims that fictions are imitations or representations of the actual world, of real life. Mimetic doctrine is behind a very popular mode of reading that converts fictional persons into live people, imaginary settings into actual places, invented stories into real-life happenings" (*Heterocosmica: Fiction and Possible Worlds* [Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1998], x). As Stephen Halliwell's recent work on classical conceptions of mimesis has helped show, the term designates not just imitation, but also the *impression* that a self-contained fictional world ("heterocosm") can give of being as real and absorbing as life itself (see S. Halliwell, *The Aesthetics of Mimesis* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002]: 23 ff. and Chapter Five; see also his "Aristotelian Mimesis between Theory and Practice," in *Rethinking Mimesis: Concepts and Practices of Literary Representation*, ed. S. Isomaa et. al. [Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012]: 20). It is this mimetic illusion — which I would argue comes close to Doležel's own powerful conception of "possible worlds" in fiction — and not the correspondence of people and events in Tolstoy's novel to their real-world/historical prototypes, on which my discussion concentrates. See the Introduction to this dissertation (p. 1 ff.) for a fuller summary of Halliwell's account.

[14] Only the section that is now Book I, Parts 1 and 2, was serialized in a journal (*Russkii vestnik*, January and February 1865 and March, April, and May 1866, under the title *1805*). Tolstoy began the process of publishing the Books of the novel in their own edition in 1866, and both the complete first edition and a second edition appeared in 1868–69 (16:55–76; 97–131).

and Peace: its calculated move to exchange the obvious trappings of literary form for an appearance of the disorder and indeterminism of non-fictional life.[15]

The hindsight that comes with multiple readings of the finished novel yields a different kind of perspective into this project, and into some of the other techniques on which *War and Peace* rests its construction of a lifelike world. Without asserting that the emergence of the protagonists is (or is meant to be) obvious to unprepared first readers, I want to turn to the distinct narrative signals that begin to divide the novel's space between major, minor, and marginal characters.

The novel opens at Anna Pavlovna Scherer's Petersburg salon. It begins with dialogue, like a play; as in a play, characters are illuminated both by their own speech, and by the spotlight of the discourse as it travels over the movements of each figure.[16] There is little encouragement to delve beneath this surface. Not only are the characters described in external focalization (with interior perspectives preceded by an authorial "as if" ["*kak budto*"]); they are also continually related to the categories and classes to which they belong — including to the class of their own habitual behavior. Thus, of Vasili Kuragin: "He spoke in that refined French in which our grandfathers not only spoke but thought, and with the gentle, patronizing intonation natural [*svoistvennyi*] to a man of importance who had grown old in society and at court" (3-4); "Prince Vasili always spoke languidly, like an actor repeating a stale part" (4); "Prince Vasili did not reply though, with the quickness of memory and perception befitting [*svoistvennoiu*] a man of the world, he indicated. . ." (7).[17] Of Anna Pavlovna Scherer: "To be an enthusiast had become her social vocation" (4); "As she named the Empress, Anna Pavlovna's face suddenly assumed an expression of profound and sincere devotion and respect, mingled with sadness, and this occurred every time she mentioned her illustrious patroness" (6); "Anna Pavlovna, with the womanly and courtier-like quickness and tact habitual [*svoistvennoiu*] to her" (6).[18] Throughout

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[15] On this aspect of *War and Peace*, and for a detailed account of the bewilderment expressed in early reviews of the novel (both Russian and Western), see again Morson, *Hidden*, Chapters Two and Three and *passim*.

[16] A recent dissertation demonstrates that the first chapter of *War and Peace* can be rewritten, with little rearrangement, as a dramatic script with extensive stage directions: K.C. Wiggins, "The Drama in Disguise: Dramatic Modes of Narration and Textual Structure in the Mid-Nineteenth-Century Russian Novel" (PhD Diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2011): 88–97. As Ginzburg notes, this interaction between spoken dialogue and authorial reports on movement, gesture, and motivation is a form of specifically *novelistic* "theatricalism" (*On Psychological Prose*, 297; *O psikhologicheskoi proze*, 375–76).

[17] ["Он говорил на том изысканном французском языке, на котором не только говорили, но и думали наши деды, и с теми тихими, покровительственными интонациями, которые свойственны состаревшемуся в свете и при дворе значительному человеку" (9:4); "Князь Василий говорил всегда лениво, как актер говорит роль старой песни" (9:5); "Князь Василий не отвечал, хотя с свойственною светским людям быстротой соображения и памяти показал движением головы. . ." (9:8).]

[18] ["Быть энтузиасткой сделалось ее общественным положением" (9:5); "В то время, как Анна Павловна назвала императрицу, лицо ее вдруг представило глубокое и искреннее выражение преданности и уважения, соединенное с грустью, что с ней бывало каждый раз,

this initial presentation, the adjective "*svoistvennyi*" (habitual, proper, characteristic) tolls like a bell. Vasili Kuragin and Anna Pavlovna Scherer lend themselves, as the pun with the English "characteristic" makes clear, to easy characterization, because they are types of all the sets they belong to; types (in a sense) of their very selves.

Anna Pavlovna's guests as a group partake in this play of set/type and individual: "The highest Petersburg society was assembled. . .: people differing widely [*raznorodnye*] in age and character but alike [*odinakovye*] in the social circle to which they belonged" (8; 9:9). Indeed, as the guests pass through Anna Pavlovna's salon, the salon itself becomes a kind of machine for the conversion of individuals into typical categories, and vice versa — *each* guest is led up to greet Anna Pavlovna's aunt, and *all* escape with a feeling of relief; *all* are cheered by the sight of the lively, pregnant Lise Bolkonskaya, and *each* is encouraged by her smile to think he is being "specially amiable" (9; 9:10).[19] The salon — which Tolstoy compares to a "workshop" whose "conversational machine" the foreman Anna Pavlovna keeps smoothly running (11; 9:12) — thus also emerges as a factory for totally flat characters, created in transit between "all" and "each." Most of these characters, falling under the heading "and many others" (8; 9:9), are never individually named.

It is this machine, both social and narrative, whose works Pierre threatens to gum almost as soon as he enters the novel:

> One of the next arrivals was a stout, heavily built young man with close-cropped hair, spectacles, the light-colored breeches fashionable at that time, a very high ruffle and a brown dress-coat. The stout young man was an illegitimate son of Count Bezukhov. . . Anna Pavlovna greeted him with the nod she accorded to the lowest hierarchy in her drawing-room. But in spite of this lowest grade greeting, a look of anxiety and fear, as at the sight of something too large and uncharacteristic [*nesvoistvennogo*] of the place, came over her face when she saw Pierre enter. Though he was certainly rather bigger than the other men in the room her anxiety could only have reference to the clever though shy, but observant and natural, expression which distinguished him from everyone else in that drawing-room. (10 [translation modified])[20]

когда она в разговоре упоминала о своей высокой покровительнице" (9:6); "Анна Павловна, с свойственною ей придворною и женскою ловкостью и быстротою такта. . ." (9:7)

[19] On this mechanistic atmosphere, see also J. Love, *The Overcoming of History in* War and Peace (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2004): 87–88.

[20] [Вскоре после маленькой княгини вошел массивный, толстый молодой человек с стриженою головой, в очках, светлых панталонах по тогдашней моде, с высоким жабо и в коричневом фраке. Этот толстый молодой человек был незаконный сын знаменитого Екатерининского вельможи, графа Безухова. . . Анна Павловна приветствовала его поклоном, относящимся к людям самой низшей иерархии в ее салоне. Но, несмотря на это низшее по своему сорту приветствие, при виде вошедшего Пьера в лице Анны Павловны изобразилось беспокойство и страх, подобно тому, который выражается при виде чего-нибудь слишком огромного и несвойственного месту. Хотя, действительно, Пьер был несколько больше других мужчин в комнате, но этот страх мог относиться только к тому

The early clue to Pierre's exceptionality in the discourse is not in the initial description; it is in Anna Pavlovna's immediate inkling of something "uncharacteristic of" the space of her salon — a space itself associated with the characteristic and typical. If Pierre's observant, unstudied gaze sets him off socially from all the other guests, it also sets him off technically from all the other characters: in Pierre's case, the passage from private individual (his gaze, connoting an inner life) to narrative and social category is not represented as smooth. There is a visible gap between Pierre himself, and the public figure that the salon allows him to present.

This divide between individual and type, private and public self, has consequences in both the story and the discourse as they touch on Pierre. On the level of the story, he is out of tune with the mechanism of the salon: eager for substantive conversation, he refuses to pass through the universal filter of a polite exchange with "*ma tante*" (10; 9:12). On the level of the discourse, he becomes the subject of the novel's first passage of unambiguous interior representation: "He knew that all the intellectual lights of Petersburg were gathered there and, like a child in a toy shop, did not know which way to look, afraid of missing any clever conversation that was to be heard" (11).[21] The usual order of character-description in the chapter is here reversed. Only after narrating Pierre's mental state in detail, from his own perspective as an individual, does the narrator step back to relate it to a larger category. This strategy works to produce the impression not so much that Pierre *is* not narrated purely from the outside, as that, alone among all the well-defined social players around him, he *cannot* be.

Pierre's gaze, like his awkward bulk, telegraphs his distance both from these characters as represented, and from the social mode that they themselves represent. Aligned with this technique in the discourse, Andrei's rather patronizing characterization of Pierre could be read almost as meta-fictional: "'You are dear to me, especially since you are the one living person among our whole circle'" (31; translation modified).[22]

Tolstoy thus magnifies the effect of the emerging character-system by introducing his first protagonist into a room full of flat characters who imply *willfully* flat people. The basic rule of Anna Pavlovna Scherer's salon — as signified by the introductions to *ma tante* — is not to impede the smooth converse between "all" and "each," not to deviate in any way from the rigid tracks built into the scene itself. As the novel's omniscient narrator will later comment: "Among that number of innumerable categories applicable to the phenomena of human life there are those in which substance [*soderzhanie*] prevails and those in which form [*forma*] prevails. To the number of that last sort. . . belongs Petersburg life, and especially the life of its salons. That life is unchanging." (757)[23] If a flat character (in E.M. Forster's tenacious formulation) is one who

умному и вместе робкому, наблюдательному и естественному взгляду, отличавшему его от всех в этой гостиной. (9:11)]

[21] [Он знал, что тут собрана вся интеллигенция Петербурга, и у него, как у ребенка в игрушечной лавке, разбегались глаза. (9:12)]

[22] [«Ты мне дорог, особенно потому, что ты один живой человек среди всего нашего света» (9:36).]

[23] [В числе бесчисленных подразделений, которые можно сделать в явлениях жизни, можно подразделить их все на такие, в которых преобладает содержание, другие — в

"never surprises,"[24] then the implied people represented in the milieu of the salon are invested in *performing* their own flatness, their own conformity to a stable pre-established type.

      The opening in Anna Pavlovna's salon, in other words, can be associated with an exceptionally strong mimetic claim overall: it prepares us to believe that the aspects of the novel's represented world that appear artificial are artificial of their own accord, not of the novel's. Conversely and comparatively, through Pierre, we see the standard the novel has set, within its represented world, for what is substantial, natural, and alive. The narrative imbalance that shapes these chapters is less fundamentally an unequal distribution of narrative, than an unequal distribution of the capacity to resemble a "living person."[25]

которых преобладает форма. К числу таковых . . . можно отнести жизнь Петербургского в особенности салонную. Это жизнь неизменна. (11:126)]

[24] E.M. Forster, *Aspects of the Novel* (London: Penguin, 1974 [1927]), 81.

[25] I am far from the first to comment on the central distinction Tolstoy (following in the tradition of Rousseau) makes between social pretense and organic life, or on how it helps organize his characters into "positive" and "negative," "living" and "dead." Particularly relevant here is Lidiia Ginzburg's observation: "The opposition of the authentic [*podlinnogo*] to the spectral and the pretended [*prizrachnomu i minimomu*], so decisive for the whole construction of *War and Peace*, is realized in the very method of representing people and things. All these people inimical to Tolstoy, whether Napoleon. . . German generals, staff careerists or gossiping courtiers — are intentionally represented in a far more conventional, superficial way; they are not psychologized. And Tolstoy does this completely consciously, emphatically, as if refusing these people the right to a full-fledged spiritual life. . . But Tolstoy goes [still] further and deeper. He denies the sense behind the appearances of "pretended reality," turns these appearances into empty signs, deprived of meaning. . ." ("Roman Tolstogo...," 131; my translation). See also John Bayley's suggestive analysis of the comparison of Pierre to an Egyptian statue, as he waits at his father's deathbed while Anna Mikhailovna Drubetskaya and Catiche Mamontova grapple over the will: "The image of those crouching dog-headed statues gives us the thick, three-dimensional presence of Pierre, trying unsuccessfully not to be there, but succeeding completely in not belonging to the tone of the surrounding novel. Beside the novelish personalities of Anna Mihailovna [*sic*] and the Princesses Bezukhova, and their struggle for the inlaid portfolio, he is an uncouth separated being. They are keeping a novel going; he is not. He is different from them in a more absolute sense than that in which one character in a novel is different from another." (*Tolstoy and the Novel* [Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1988 (1966)], 159). Bayley's invocation of the notion of the "pastoral" as described by William Empson — "the process of making everything in a work of literature *characteristic*. . . 'putting the complex into the simple'" (ibid., 147) — has clear echoes with my account of Anna Pavlovna Scherer's salon. But neither Ginzburg nor Bayley goes on to explore the implication that Tolstoy juxtaposes mimetic with non-mimetic characterizations as much for the sake of mimetic illusion as for the sake of social commentary. For a recent account that classifies characters by their thematic (though not representational) associations with "life" and "not life," see S.A. Nikol'skii, "Smysly i tsennosti russkogo mirovozzreniia v tvorchestve L.N. Tolstogo," *Voprosy filosofii* 9 (Sept. 2010): 117–35.

"There, that's me!": The Discontent of Character in Tolstoy's *War and Peace*

If the guests at Anna Pavlovna Scherer's salon are deliberately presented in a setting that demands self-flattening, then, it is not only to make a point about the social world of Petersburg: it also works as a kind of perspectival technique that creates the illusion of life or depth in characters to whom that world is alien. Many of the characters presented in the salon never show themselves outside of it. Some, like Anna Pavlovna herself and the Kuragins, are represented as if they carried this setting with them — from salon to corridor and from corridor to carriage — such that the evocation of the salon itself becomes part of their function in the novel. But not all the novel's protagonists emerge in contrast to the salon atmosphere and the group of characters associated with it: Nikolai and Natasha Rostov and Marya Bolkonskaya all first appear within their own family-circles. How does *War and Peace* transpose the process that links Pierre Bezukhov with "substance" and "life" into other narrative circumstances?

I'll begin by noting the remarkable similarity between the conditions in which the Rostov children enter the narrative, and those of Anna Pavlovna Scherer's salon. It is Natasha and her mother's name-day and the Rostovs are receiving a parade of "guests who constantly succeed one another" (37; 9:43). Count Rostov greets them as they enter:

> 'I am very, very grateful to you, *mon cher*' (or *'ma chère'* — he called everyone without exception and without the slightest variation in his tone, '*mon cher*,' whether they were above or below him in rank) — . . . But mind you come to dinner or I shall be offended, *ma chère. . .*' These words he repeated to everyone without exception or variation, and with the same expression on his full, cheerful, clean-shaven face, the same firm pressure of the hand and the same quick, repeated bows. (38)[26]

The point the passage emphasizes is that Count Rostov (unlike Anna Pavlovna Scherer, with her calibrated hierarchy of bows) greets everyone alike. But it is just this insistent stress on Count Rostov's even-handed hospitality ("everyone without exception. . . with the same expression. . . the same firm pressure. . . to everyone without exception or variation") that serves to flatten the anonymous line of guests in the discourse: like Lise Bolkonskaya and *ma tante*, Count Rostov works as a filter that transforms individuals into a single category. These guests, and the detailed narration of the Rostovs' conversation with the Karagins (the kind where the "first pause" is the cue for the guests to stand up "with a rustle of dresses," [39; 9:44]), all help bring the Rostov's house as close as it can come to the empty formalities of the salon.

Like the room full of comparatively flattened characters itself, a gap in this conversation seems engineered to introduce a new set of protagonists:

> A silence ensued. . . . The visitor's daughter was already smoothing down her dress with an inquiring look at her mother, when suddenly from the next room were heard male and

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[26] [«Очень, очень вам благодарен, ma chère или mon cher (ma chère или mon cher он говорил всем без исключения, без малейших оттенков как выше, так и ниже его стоявшим людям) . . . Смотрите же, приезжайте обедать. Вы меня обидите, mon cher. . . .» Эти слова с одинаковым выражением на полном веселом и чисто выбритом лице и с одинаково-крепким пожатием руки и повторяемыми короткими поклонами говорил он всем без исключения и изменения. (9:43)]

female feet running to the door and the crash of a chair falling over, and a girl of thirteen, hiding something in the folds of her short muslin skirt, darted in and stopped short in the middle of the room. It was evident that she had not intended her flight to bring her so far. Behind her in the doorway appeared a student with a crimson coat-collar, an officer of the Guards, a girl of fifteen, and a plump rosy-faced boy in a short jacket. (41 [translation modified])[27]

The pause that begins the passage sets up an explicit substitution: the dash of "male and female feet," the "crash" of the chair, and Natasha's "short muslin skirt" for the expected valedictory rustling of the guests' dresses. In the moment when the Karagins should according to form have been leaving, Natasha runs — apparently by accident — into Tolstoy's novel.

It is thus as much the background of silence and formality as the figure of Natasha herself that creates such a strong impression of animated motion. She stands out in relief against not only the Rostovs and Karagins sitting in the salon, but also the figures framed behind her in the doorway — Boris, Nikolai, Sonya, and Petya — and even the doll Mimi, hidden under her skirt. More than any other named protagonist, Natasha appears as if she had stumbled into form, both social and narrative, rather than having been created by it: as she is first described, "not pretty, but alive [*nekrasivaia, no zhivaia*]" (41 [translation modified]; 9:47). And this quality of "life," while it will become psychological (with the first chapter focalized through Natasha, I.1.XIII), begins as explicitly physical. Natasha's headlong dash into her parents' salon is the dynamic equivalent of Pierre's "observant, natural" glance into Anna Pavlovna Scherer's, a virtuosic assertion of the protagonist's independence from verbal and social artifice alike.

The circumstances in which both Pierre and Natasha enter the novel suggest that — like internal focalization — the strongest illusion of "life" attaches to only one character at a time. But the illusion is also, potentially, infectious. The four figures suspended in the doorway behind Natasha all come to life in her wake:

Meanwhile the younger generation: Boris, the officer, Anna Mikhailovna's son; Nikolai, the undergraduate, the count's eldest son; Sonya, the count's fifteen-year-old niece, and little Petya, his youngest boy, had all settled down in the drawing-room and were obviously trying to restrain within the bounds of decorum the animation and mirth with which each of their features breathed [*ozhivlenie i veselost', kotorymi eshche dyshala kazhdaia ikh cherta*]. (42; translation modified)[28]

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[27] [Наступило молчание. . . . Дочь гостьи уже оправляла платье, вопросительно глядя на мать, как вдруг из соседней комнаты послышался бег к двери нескольких мужских и женских ног, грохот зацепленного и поваленного стула, и в комнату вбежала тринадцатилетняя девочка, запахнув что-то короткою кисейною юбкою, и остановилась по средине комнаты. Очевидно было, она нечаянно, с нерассчитанного бега, заскочила так далеко. В дверях в ту же минуту показались студент с малиновым воротником, гвардейский офицер, пятнадцатилетняя девочка и толстый румяный мальчик в детской курточке. (9:46–47)]

[28] [Между тем всё это молодое поколение: Борис — офицер, сын княгини Анны Михайловны, Николай — студент, старший сын графа, Соня — пятнадцатилетняя

As we will see, the "animation" at first distributed collectively among Boris, Nikolai, Sonya, and Petya ends by taking four quite different shapes. In their initial presentation, however, all their features "breathe with" the same ungovernable element already associated with Natasha.[29]

Similarly, the quality of the uncharacteristic and natural associated with Pierre gets passed from Pierre to Andrei during their first direct encounter. As with Pierre, little in the initial description of Andrei sets him apart from all the other figures in the salon:

> He was a very handsome young man, of medium height. . . Everything about him, from his weary, bored expression to his quiet, measured step, offered a most striking contrast to his lively little wife. . . . He turned away from her with a grimace that distorted his handsome face. . . (15)[30]

But Pierre interrupts this "grimace" even as it threatens to become characteristic of Andrei, the opposite fixture to his wife's eternally-raised upper lip:

> Pierre, who from the moment Prince Andrei entered the room had watched him with glad, affectionate eyes, now came up and took his arm. Before he looked around Prince Andrei wrinkled his face into a grimace, expressing his annoyance. . . but when he saw Pierre's beaming face he gave him an unexpectedly kind and pleasant smile. (15–16)[31]

Again, a characterological difference emerges as a social one: Andrei's recognition of Pierre (based on a friendship dating back to Pierre's childhood) arrests the flattening effect of the salon itself.

Only Princess Marya Bolkonskaya enters the novel neither in the middle of a large social gathering, nor in the company of one of the other major protagonists. She appears instead out of the long opening portrait of Prince Bolkonsky, her father:

племянница графа, и маленький Петруша — меньшой сын, все разместились в гостиной и, видимо, старались удержать в границах приличия оживление и веселость, которыми еще дышала каждая их черта. (9:48)]

[29] This reading requires qualification, since the words *ozhivlenie* (animation) and *ozhivit'sia* (to become animated) appear frequently throughout *War and Peace*, in many different contexts — including in the satirical opening portrait of "the enthusiast Anna Pavlovna Scherer" (4; 9:5). But here, embedded in the phrase "with which each of their features breathed," I would suggest that the "animation" seems explicitly organic, even physical.

[30] [Князь Болконский был небольшого роста, весьма красивый молодой человек. . . Всё в его фигуре, начиная от усталого, скучающего взгляда до тихого мерного шага, представляло самую резкую противоположность с его маленькою, оживленною женой. . . . С гримасой, портившею его красивое лицо, он отвернулся от нее (9:17).]

[31] [Пьер, со времени входа князя Андрея в гостиную не спускавший с него радостных, дружелюбных глаз, подошел к нему и взял его за руку. Князь Андрей, не оглядываясь, сморщил лицо в гримасу, выражавшую досаду . . . но, увидав улыбающееся лицо Пьера, улыбнулся неожиданно-доброй и приятной улыбкой. (9:18)]

> General-in-Chief Prince Nikolai Andreevich. . . lived [on his estate] continuously with his daughter, Princess Marya, and her companion Mademoiselle Bourienne. . . . He used to say that there are only two sources of human vice — idleness and superstition, and only two virtues — activity and intelligence. He himself undertook his daughter's education, and to develop these two cardinal virtues in her gave her lessons in algebra and geometry till she was twenty, and arranged her life so that her whole time was occupied. . . .With those about him, from his daughter to his serfs, the prince was sharp and invariably exacting. . . every high official appointed to the province in which the prince's estate lay considered it his duty to visit him, and waited in the lofty antechamber just as the architect, gardener, or Princess Marya did, till the prince appeared punctually to the appointed hour. Everyone sitting in this antechamber experienced the same feeling of respect and even fear . . . On the morning of the day that the young couple [Andrei and Lise] were to arrive, Princess Marya entered the antechamber as usual at the time appointed for the morning meeting, crossing herself with trepidation and repeating a silent prayer. Every morning she came in like that, and every morning she prayed that the daily interview might pass off well. (93–94)[32]

In this passage, it is the central figure of Prince Bolkonsky who performs the work of converting large and disparate groups of characters into "alls" and "eaches." Marya herself takes shape in the overlapping descriptions of her father's seclusion and strict daily routine, and the group of "everyone" in whom he inspires fear. The stroke that at once distinguishes her from her father and the uniform group around him, and integrates her perspective into the narrative, is the inner prayer she says daily before knocking on her father's door. The quality of spiritual activity enlivens Marya just as the quality of physical motion enlivens Natasha: if we are meant to see that Natasha has a body, we are meant to see that Marya has a soul.

Most strongly developed in Pierre, Natasha, Marya, and the novel's other protagonists, though not exclusive to them, is an illusion I will summarize here under the term "mimetic life."

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[32] [Генерал-аншеф князь Николай Андреевич. . . жил безвыездно в своих Лысых Горах с дочерью, княжною Марьей, и при ней компаньонкой, m-lle Bourienne. . . . Он говорил, что есть только два источника людских пороков: праздность и суеверие, и что есть только две добродетели: деятельность и ум. Он сам занимался воспитанием своей дочери и, чтобы развивать в ней обе главные добродетели, до двадцати лет давал ей уроки алгебры и геометрии и распределял всю ее жизнь в беспрерывных занятиях. . . . С людьми, окружавшими его, от дочери до слуг, князь был резок и неизменно-требователен. . . каждый начальник той губернии, где было имение князя, считал своим долгом являться к нему и точно так же, как архитектор, садовник или княжна Марья, дожидался назначенного часа выхода князя в высокой официантской. И каждый в этой официантской испытывал то же чувство почтительности и даже страха. . . В день приезда молодых, утром, по обыкновению, княжна Марья в урочный час входила для утреннего приветствия в официантскую и со страхом крестилась и читала внутренно молитву. Каждый день она входила и каждый день молилась о том, чтобы это ежедневное свидание сошло благополучно. (9:105–06)]

"There, that's me!": The Discontent of Character in Tolstoy's *War and Peace*

A character's "mimetic life" is the impression that she gives of existing autonomously, in and for herself, independent of narrative design and even, apparently, of narrative language.[33] Natasha's mimetic life rests in the degree to which we feel that she runs into the salon (and the novel) by accident, from some other place where she could have existed just as well. Marya's rests in the voice in which her inner prayer can be imagined, before we have even heard her speak aloud in the novel. Pierre's is in his "shy, observant, natural" gaze, Andrei's in the conversion of his grimace to an "unexpectedly-good and nice smile," and Nikolai's, Sonya's, Petya's, and Boris's in their effort to "restrain within the bounds of decorum the animation and mirth with which each of their features breathed." Heightened by the contrast with the dead social world around them, these appeals to the characters' mind, mobility, and breathing animation tell us explicitly (rather than assuming we will infer) that they "themselves" transcend the words that narrate them.

3. Intensifying the illusion: Major protagonists and mimetic life

In the case of its major protagonists, *War and Peace* energetically sustains this illusion. It is bound into the narrative techniques used to evoke their bodies and minds. I'll pause here to explore the illusion further by looking at a sequence of passages from later in the novel.

In the first, Natasha has just gone to bed, after talking with her mother about her flirtation with Boris Drubetskoy:

It was a long time before she could sleep. She kept thinking that no one could understand all that she understood and all there was in her. 'Sonya?' she thought, glancing at the curled-up, sleeping little kitten with her enormous plait of hair. 'No, how could she? She's virtuous. She fell in love with Nikolenka and does not wish to know anything more. Even Mama does not understand. It is wonderful how clever I am and how... charming she is,' she went on, speaking of herself in the third person, and imagining it was some very wise man — the wisest and best of men — who was saying it of her. 'There is everything, everything in her,' continued this man. 'She is unusually intelligent, charming... and then she is pretty, uncommonly pretty, and agile — she swims and rides splendidly... and her voice! One can really say it's a wonderful voice!' She hummed a scrap from her favorite opera by Cherubini, threw herself on her bed, laughed at the pleasant thought that she would immediately fall asleep, called Dunyasha, the maid, to put out the candle, and before Dunyasha had left the room had already passed into another yet happier world of dreams, where everything was as light and beautiful as in reality, only better, because it was different. (483–84; translation modified)[34]

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[33] For a brief discussion of related terms that have been used to describe the mimetic aspect of literary characters, see my Introduction, p. 2.

[34] [Она всё думала о том, что никто никак не может понять всего, что она понимает, и что в ней есть. «Соня?» подумала она, глядя на спящую, свернувшуюся кошечку с ее огромной косой. «Нет, куда ей! Она добродетельная. Она влюбилась в Николеньку и больше ничего знать не хочет. Мама, и та не понимает. Это удивительно, как я умна и как... она мила», продолжала она, говоря про себя в третьем лице и воображая, что это говорил про нее какой-то очень умный, самый умный и самый хороший мужчина... «Всё,

Placed on the eve of the ball where Andrei's courtship begins, this remarkable passage might be said to represent the height of Natasha's romance with the narrative itself. The "no one" who *does* understand "all that she understood and all there was in her" — if it is anyone — is the novel's omniscient narrator. He presents what there is to understand by relaying Natasha's game of self-characterization, mediated by a second, mock-omniscient voice of her own creation. The thinking character Natasha exceeds the list of qualities she attributes to herself just as obviously as the novel's *actual* omniscient narrator exceeds her imaginary one. And the beginning and the end of the passage establish a parity, even a conspiracy, between the "reality" of Natasha and this "real" omniscient voice. It is the narrator who habitually describes Sonya as a kitten with a long tail, but it is Natasha looking at her. It is the narrator who continues the narration after Natasha falls asleep, but Natasha's reported dream is enigmatic in her own capricious vein: "everything was light and beautiful as in reality, only better, because it was different."

  The passage thus brings out the ellipsis at the heart of the convention of interior representation. "All there was in" Natasha, it seems, cannot be listed; she, like her dream, is a collusion between the narrator and the ostensible mystery of what he describes, a collusion at times so close that it becomes inseparable from the act of description itself. This device reasserts the fiction behind her entrance, where Natasha seemed to be waiting to run into the novel from somewhere else. If her mimetic life consists in the impression that she "herself" exceeds language, then the novel's verbal narrative can only gesture at what is putatively there — and *by* gesturing seem to demonstrate that there, indeed, it is: that Natasha's reality is one of the terms in which the world of the novel unfolds.

  Even to herself, Natasha appears to point to herself. The enigmatic circularity behind Natasha's interior monologue is echoed in the self-exultation she sees when she looks into a mirror — "'There, that's me!' ['"*Vot ona ia!*"'] the expression of her face seemed to say as she caught sight of herself" (510; 10:223. See also 367; 10:58). This infinite, self-affirming loop sums up the effect on which the illusion of mimetic "life" most fully relies.[35]

всё в ней есть, — продолжал этот мужчина, умна необыкновенно, мила и потом хороша, необыкновенно хороша, ловка, — плавает, верхом ездит отлично, а голос! Можно сказать, удивительный голос!» Она пропела свою любимую музыкальную фразу из Херубиниевской оперы, бросилась на постель, засмеялась от радостной мысли, что она сейчас заснет, крикнула Дуняшу потушить свечку, и еще Дуняша не успела выйти из комнаты, как она уже перешла в другой, еще более счастливый мир сновидений, где всё было так же легко и прекрасно, как и в действительности, но только было еще лучше, потому что было по другому. (10:193)]

[35] On this loop, the "self-enclosed circularity without escape of the experience of character," see J. Hillis Miller's discussion of Wittgenstein's reflections on character in *The Brown Book* (J.H. Miller, *Ariadne's Thread* [New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992], 83–94. For Miller, the loop undermines the construct at once of fictional characters and of moral character or selfhood, but he discusses the novel as a space for "affirming the fiction" of both: "The novel demonstrates, in a safe realm where nothing serious is at stake, the possibility of maintaining the fiction of selfhood in the teeth of a recognition that it is a fictive projection" (ibid., 98). Miller thus makes an intriguing link between "the fiction of selfhood" and fiction itself, but the

Such moments provide the foundation for understanding and assenting to some of the other major characters' responses to Natasha — Nikolai's rapturous "'but this is real'" ["*a vot ono nastoaiashchee*"] (367; 10:59), when Natasha's singing breaks in on his despair over his gambling loss to Dolokhov; or Andrei's approving sense at the ball where he dances with Natasha of having met something in society "that did not have the general social stamp upon it" ["*vstrechat' v svete to, chto ne imelo na sebe obshchego svetskogo otpechatka*"] (493 [translation modified]; 10:204). Andrei's image of Natasha as unstamped material should, perhaps, remind us of the etymology of "character" and "*kharakter*," from the Greek χαρακτήρ, "an instrument for marking or engraving."[36] With Andrei's comment, we arrive obliquely back at the difference Tolstoy's novel makes between the flattened characteristic figure, already primed for signifying abstraction, and the figure that signifies the individual, raw, or real. To imply that Natasha is yet to be stamped is also to imply that she is made of some substance that *could* be stamped; standing behind the novel's strict thematic division between the natural and the artificial is the realist pretense that fiction can include what is not artificial at all, what has not *already* been made by language.

The strength Tolstoy attached to this illusion becomes clear from the weight he is willing to place on it. The climax of one of the novel's most sensorially vivid sequences, the wolf-hunt at Otradnoe (the Rostovs' country estate), is Natasha's famous dance:

> Natasha threw off the shawl from her shoulders, ran forward to face Uncle, and setting her arms akimbo, . . . made a motion with her shoulders and struck an attitude. Where, how, and when had this young countess, educated by an *émigrée* French governess, imbibed from the Russian air she breathed that spirit, and obtained that manner which the

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questions he wants to ask about character (in both English senses) are largely beyond the scope of my study. Notably, the passage from Wittgenstein that Miller discusses begins with drawing a face; in a sense, it is this first step of establishing the extra-linguistic fictional figure, rather than the further steps of interpreting it, that concerns me here. On Miller's account of character, see also note 39 below.

[36] cf. "kharakter," *Etimologicheskii slovar' russkogo iazyka*, M. Fasmer, trans. O.N. Trubacheva, Vol. 4, 2nd ed.; "character, n.," OED Online, September 2013, Oxford University Press. "*Kharakter*" does not standardly refer to fictional personages; for its literary sense, see the 5th definition in the *Dictionary of the Modern Russian Literary Language*, Vol. 17: "An artistic image that consolidates the typical traits of some group of people; a type [*Khudozhestvennyi obraz, obobshchaiushchii tipichnye cherty kakoi-nibud' gruppy liudei; tip.*]." But in Russian, as in English, literary characters also *have* characters, which can come to metonymically stand for the literary person himself; for this sense, see for example the description of "*zapisi kharakterov*" in Shklovsky's essay "O kharaktere kak ob osnove novoi russkoi prozy" (V. Shklovskii, *Povesty o proze: Razmyshleniia i razbory*, Vol. 2 [Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1966], 268–70). See also Lidiia Ginzburg's qualified distinction between "*kharakter*" and "*tip*": "the literary character [*kharakter*] is a dynamic, multidimensional system; vital within it are not the traits that can be listed, but the relationship between them" (*O literaturnom geroe*, 125–26). My association of the "social stamp" with the process of literary characterization has more to do with the dictionary sense than with these subtler usages.

> *pas de châle* would, one would have supposed, long ago have effaced? But the spirit and the movements were those inimitable and unteachable Russian ones that Uncle had expected of her. As soon as she had struck her pose and smiled triumphantly, proudly, and with sly merriment, the fear that. . . she might not do the right thing was at an end, and they were already admiring her. (548–49)[37]

This passage extends Natasha's "There, that's me!" into a tableau, lengthened out by the omniscient narrator's own putative astonishment at what he sees. The narratorial outburst, at this early stage of the novel and so close to one of its fictional characters, is jarring; it is as if the narrator, Atlas-like, had temporarily transferred the weight of a whole mimetic universe to Natasha's shoulders, allowing her to support and affirm it while he stands apart. Readers may disagree about whether the moment succeeds artistically — whether the mimetic presence of Natasha's body sustains the illusory reality of the scene over the narrator's intrusion — but the point here is that Tolstoy acts as though it could.

The passages I have quoted isolate moments that construct Natasha as a substance both raw and uncharacterizable, a figure that establishes itself by pointing to itself. The self-sufficiency of this figure depends, counterintuitively, on a *mediated* fictional mind: filtered through omniscient narration, Natasha's thoughts taper back to a vanishing-point that falls under her name, but can yet remain irreducible to characterizing words. As Natasha's example already begins to suggest, to define this inner "space" Tolstoy uses the technique that has conventionally been the novel's first resource for signifying consciousness in language: a loose internal focalization that establishes itself through a mixture of quoted, represented, and mixed (free indirect) discourse.[38] Further passages will help exemplify the kind of interiority *War and Peace* associates with the fullest illusion of mimetic life.

Pierre's reverie in the post-station at Torzhok offers a rich starting-point:

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[37] [Наташа бросила с себя платок, который был накинут на ней, забежала вперед дядюшки и, подперши руки в боки, сделала движение плечами и стала. Где, как, когда всосала в себя из того русского воздуха, которым она дышала — эта графинечка, воспитанная эмигранткой-француженкой, этот дух, откуда взяла она эти приемы, которые pas de châle давно бы должны были вытеснить? Но дух и приемы эти были те самые, неподражаемые, не изучаемые, русские, которых и ждал от нее дядюшка. Как только она стала, улыбнулась торжественно, гордо и хитро-весело, первый страх. . . что она не то сделает, прошел и они уже любовались ею. (10:266)]

[38] The formulation "space of the protagonist" is Woloch's; he glosses this space as "the interior realm of personality" (*One vs. Many*, 56). For a formulation of the intuitive link between interior representation and fictional "life," as well as fictional centrality, see also Dorrit Cohn: "In depicting the inner life, the novelist is truly a fabricator. . . . The more surprising, then, that the novelists most concerned with the exact representation of life are also those who place at the live centers of their works this invented entity whose verisimilitude it is impossible to verify" (D. Cohn, *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978], 6).

> The post-master, his wife, the valet, and a peasant-woman selling Torzhok embroidery, came into the room offering their services. Without changing his careless attitude Pierre looked at them over his spectacles unable to understand what they wanted or how they could go on living without solving the problems that so absorbed him. . . . No matter what he thought about, he always returned to these same questions which he could not solve and yet could not cease to ask himself. It was as if the thread of the chief screw which held his life together were *stripped*. The screw could not get in or out, but went on twirling, without catching on anything, in the same groove, and it was impossible to stop twirling it. The post-master came in and began obsequiously to beg his Excellency to wait only two little hours, when (come what might) he would let his Excellency have the courier-horses. It was plain that he was lying and only wanted to get more money from the traveler. 'Is this good or bad?' Pierre asked himself. '. . . What is bad? What is good? What should we love and what hate? What do we live for? And what am I? What is life, and what is death? What power governs it all?' he asked himself. (371–72 [translation modified])[39]

Like Natasha's mock-omniscient description of herself, this passage shows with striking clarity the mechanics of a relationship between the omniscient narrator and the life of a protagonist's mind in *War and Peace*. Unlike the post-master, whose speech in free indirect discourse is clearly marked off from the surrounding narrative ("two little hours [*dva chasika*]," "his Excellency [*ego siiatel'stvo*]," "(come what might) [(*chto budet, to budet*)]"), Pierre's thoughts mingle almost indistinguishably with the omniscient narrator's analysis of them. Who envisions the stripped "chief screw" of Pierre's life twirling endlessly in his head — Pierre, or the narrator? The italics suggest that it is Pierre, but it is also not clear that it matters. Indeed, part of what makes Pierre a protagonist of *War and Peace* is the sense that what he says about himself might closely approach what the narrator says about him — cultivated, here, through his wonder that everyone else (the post-master, the valet, the peasant woman) can live without solving the

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[39] [Смотритель, смотрительша, камердинер, баба с торжковским шитьем заходили в комнату, предлагая свои услуги. Пьер, не переменяя своего положения задранных ног, смотрел на них через очки, и не понимал, что им может быть нужно и каким образом все они могли жить, не разрешив тех вопросов, которые занимали его. . . . О чем бы он ни начинал думать, он возвращался к одним и тем же вопросам, которых он не мог разрешить, и не мог перестать задавать себе. Как будто в голове его *свернулся* тот главный винт, на котором держалась вся его жизнь. Винт не входил дальше, не выходил вон, а вертелся, ничего не захватывая, всё на том же нарезе, и нельзя было перестать вертеть его. Вошел смотритель и униженно стал просить его сиятельство подождать только два часика, после которых он для его сиятельства (что будет, то будет) даст курьерских. Смотритель очевидно врал и хотел только получить с проезжего лишние деньги. «Дурно ли это было или хорошо?» спрашивал себя Пьер. «. . . Что дурно? Что хорошо? Что надо любить, что ненавидеть? Для чего жить, и что такое я? Что такое жизнь, что смерть? Какая сила управляет всем?» спрашивал он себя. (10:64–65)]

questions that preoccupy both him, and the novel as a whole.[40] The drama of Pierre's trajectory in the novel — like Levin's in *Anna Karenina* — lies partly in this gradual convergence, in the spectacle of a character thinking his way out *toward* the omniscient narrative. But the terms of this drama dictate that the illusion of Pierre's life within the novel, like that of Natasha's, cannot be primarily based on identification of the character's "own" voice or language. It stems, rather, from a narrative fiat. Mediated by the omniscient narrator, this passage conjures up the activity of Pierre's mind as a part of the same speech-act that conjures up the fictional world of the novel as a whole, a speech-act whose "performative force," as at least one theorist of fictional worlds has acknowledged, is modeled on "the divine world-creating word."[41] The dimensions of a character's mind permeated in this way by narrative attention become temporarily equivalent to, and inseparable from, those of the fictional world itself.

  The ever-present, analytical narrator has often been taken as an earmark of Tolstoy's particular incarnation of psychological realism, which lends to elusive inner experience the solidity of a vividly-narrated landscape.[42] In some accounts — most prominently, Mikhail Bakhtin's — this continual omniscient presence is also a sign of the character's lack of autonomy in Tolstoy's novels. Since I have suggested that this kind of interiority is a key aspect of the illusion of a fictional "life" autonomous from narrative language and design, it may be

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[40] For a different account of the significant convergence between central protagonist and omniscient narrative, see Woloch, *One vs. Many*, 77–82.

[41] Doležel, *Heterocosmica*, 149. It may be helpful to compare this perspective with the radically different understanding of the "performative speech act" of omniscient narration, and the blurring between narrator's and character's speech in indirect discourse, found in J. Hillis Miller: "The language of the narrator is no stable base. It is an anonymous, neutral, collective power of representing the language of the characters by miming them ironically in indirect discourse. The character, however, has [in the case of Anthony Trollope's musing Warden]. . . no language of his own, only a wordless state of mind to which language is ascribed by the narrator. This speech act conjures that state of mind into existence for the reader by waving the magic wand of a performative language that says in effect, 'Let there be the Reverend Septimus Harding, and let his wordless mind be granted speech.'" (J.H. Miller, *Reading Narrative* [Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998], 167). Since it is the mimetic illusion this "magic wand" produces that interests me, I interpret the *effect* of such narration to be the opposite of Miller's *deconstruction* of that effect: its interspersed passage through omniscient discourse supports the illusion of the character's mind, just as that same omniscient discourse supports the illusion of the character's world. Defending his own position, Doležel points to an "imbalance" of deconstructionist epistemology and critical practice in Miller's work: *Possible Worlds of Fiction and History* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2010), 10–12.

[42] Lidiia Ginzburg develops this argument in Part Three of *On Psychological Prose*: 254 (*O psikhologicheskoi proze* 326), and *passim*. V.V. Vinogradov describes in detail the overlap between authorial and characterological "spheres" in the narration of *War and Peace* (a technique he associates with Pushkin); he claims that Tolstoy supplements this paradigm with his own innovation, the prophetic or "Other" (*potustoronnyi*) authorial discourse represented in the digressions ("O iazyke Tolstogo (50–60-e gody)," in *Iazyk i stil' russkikh pisatelei ot Gogolia do Akhmatovoi* [Moscow: Nauka, 2003], 218–28. See also Christian, *Tolstoy's* War and Peace, 145.

worth briefly pausing to clarify my claim in relation to Bakhtin's distinction between Tolstoy's characters and Dostoevsky's.[43] Comparing Tolstoy's monologic to Dostoevsky's dialogic method, Bakhtin makes an example of Tolstoy's story "Three Deaths":

> That external world in which the characters [*personazhi*] of the story live and die is the *author's world*, an objective world vis-à-vis the consciousnesses of the characters. Everything within it is seen and portrayed in the author's all-encompassing and omniscient field of vision [*krugozor*]. Even the noblewoman's world — her apartment, its furnishings, the people close to her . . . — is portrayed from the author's point of view, and not as the noblewoman herself sees and experiences that world (although while reading the story we are also fully aware of her *subjective* perception of that world [*ee sub'ektivnyi aspekt etogo mira*]).[44]

The force of Bakhtin's polemic — his emphasis on the dialogic *interaction* between a character's "word" and the author's or the other characters' — tends to obscure the deeper premise of his argument: that "Three Deaths" does establish a world, and that within it there are characters with their own "subjective perceptions." In Tolstoy, as Bakhtin's account implies, the omniscient narrator's activity produces the illusion of the character's independent subjectivity — just as it also produces the illusion of the weather, the ballroom, or the smell of gunpowder. It is this technical continuity — between characters, "world," and the narratorial speech-act recorded in text that gives them all fictional life — that I want to emphasize here.[45]

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[43] Cf. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, ed. and trans. C. Emerson (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1984): 69–75; M.M. Bakhtin, *Sobranie sochinenii*, ed. S.G. Bocharov and N.I. Nikolaev, vol. 6 (Moscow: Russkie slovari, 2002), 81–88.

[44] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics,* 71; *Problemy poetiki Dostoevskogo*, 6:83.

[45] For a fuller discussion, see Chapter Four of this dissertation, where I argue that the force of Bakhtin's polemical opposition between Dostoevsky and Tolstoy obscures a deeper premise of his account: the dependence of the mimetic personhood of *any* character on her status as an authored image. It is worth noting here that the concept Bakhtin developed some years later, of the "character zone," may be equally relevant to Tolstoy's techniques of characterization. Bakhtin writes in "Discourse in the Novel" ("Slovo v romane," 1934–35) that "character zones" (*zony geroev*) are "formed from the fragments of character speech [*polureč'* (sic)], from various forms for hidden transmission of someone else's word, from scattered words and sayings belonging to someone else's speech, from those invasions into authorial speech of others' expressive indicators (ellipsis, questions, exclamations). Such a character zone is the field of action [*raion deistviia*] for a character's voice, encroaching [*primeshivaiushchegosia*] in one way or another upon the author's voice" ("Discourse in the Novel," *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. M. Holquist, trans. C. Emerson and M. Holquist [Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1981]: 316; Bakhtin, "Slovo v romane," *Sobranie sochinenii*, 3: 70). Bakhtin goes on to write about the extra-linguistic quality of this "zone," particularly as it emerges in free-indirect discourse: "it is precisely this form [*i.e. free-indirect discourse*] that permits us to preserve the expressive structure of the character's inner speech, its inability to exhaust itself in words [*nedoskazannost'*]. . . The area occupied by an important character's voice [*raion deistviia*

We can further explore the technical continuity between the inner life of characters and the fictional world of *War and Peace* by comparing two instances: the landscape Nikolai Rostov glimpses during his first battle; and Andrei Bolkonsky's vision of the clouds at Austerlitz:

> Nikolai Rostov turned away and, as if searching for something, gazed into the distance, at the waters of the Danube, at the sky, and at the sun. How beautiful the sky looked; how blue, calm, and deep! How bright and solemn the setting sun! . . . And fairer still were the far away blue mountains beyond the river, the nunnery, the mysterious gorges, and the pine forests veiled in mist to their summits... There was peace and happiness... 'I would wish for nothing else, nothing, if only I were there,' thought Rostov. 'In myself alone and in that sunshine there is so much happiness. . .' (158 [translation modified])[46]

> It seemed to [Prince Andrei] as though one of the soldiers near him hit him on the head with the full swing of a bludgeon. It hurt a little, but the worst of it was that the pain distracted him and prevented him seeing what he had been looking at. 'What's this? Am I falling? My legs are giving way,' he thought, and fell on his back. He opened his eyes, hoping to see how the struggle of the Frenchmen with the gunners ended, whether the red-haired gunner had been killed or not, and whether the cannon had been captured or saved. But he saw nothing. Above him there was now nothing but the sky — the lofty sky, not clear yet still immeasurably lofty, with grey clouds gliding slowly across it. 'How quiet, peaceful, and solemn, not at all as I ran,' thought Prince Andrei 'not as we ran, shouting and fighting, not at all as the gunner and the Frenchman with frightened and angry faces struggled for the mop: how differently do those clouds glide across that lofty infinite sky!. . . (299 [translation modified])[47]

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golosa sushchestvennogo geroia] must in any event be broader than his direct and 'actual' words [*neposredstvennoi autentichnoi rechi*]" ("Discourse," 320; "Slovo," 3:73–74). The effect I highlight in Tolstoy — the pre- or extra-linguistic illusion of a protagonist's live presence in the text, which must, like the "world" of the text, be created by an author — is fully consistent with this account. The illusion that a character could have a "voice" at all thus seems separable from the *struggle* of this voice with the author's that interests Bakhtin most.

[46] [Николай Ростов отвернулся и, как будто отыскивая чего-то, стал смотреть на даль, на воду Дуная, на небо, на солнце. Как хорошо показалось небо, как голубо, спокойно и глубоко! Как ярко и торжественно опускающееся солнце! . . . И еще лучше были далекие, голубеющие за Дунаем горы, монастырь, таинственные ущелья, залитые до макуш туманом сосновые леса.... там тихо, счастливо... «Ничего, ничего бы я не желал, ничего бы не желал, ежели бы я только был там, — думал Ростов. — Во мне одном и в этом солнце так много счастия. . .' (9:179)]

[47] [Как бы со всего размаха крепкой палкой кто-то из ближайших солдат, как ему показалось, ударил его в голову. Немного это больно было, а главное, неприятно, потому что боль эта развлекала его и мешала ему видеть то, на что он смотрел. «Что это? я падаю? у меня ноги подкашиваются», подумал он и упал на спину. Он раскрыл глаза, надеясь увидать, чем кончилась борьба французов с артиллеристами, и желая знать, убит или нет рыжий артиллерист, взяты или спасены пушки. Но он ничего не видал. Над ним не было

The language in which each character thinks is in a sense consistent with that character's established "voice": the careful ascending, rhetorical logic of Andrei's reflections — "'How quiet, peaceful, and solemn; not at all as I ran, not at all as we ran. . . not at all as the gunner and Frenchman. . . struggled for the mop: how differently do those clouds glide!'" — differs strikingly from Nikolai's outburst — "'I would wish for nothing else, nothing, if only I were there. . .'" This characteristic language is audible, too, in free indirect discourse: from the set cadence of Andrei's "Above him there was now nothing but the sky — the lofty sky, not clear yet still immeasurably lofty. . . [*neba — vysokogo neba, ne iasnogo, no vse-taki neizmerno vysokogo*]," to the emotional immediacy of Nikolai's "How beautiful the sky looked: how blue, calm, and deep! [*Kak khorosho pokazolos' nebo, kak golubo, spokoino, i gluboko!*]" But the difference between Andrei and Nikolai, as characters, is also reflected in the fact that Andrei's revelation comes from the moving clouds and Nikolai's, from the brightly setting sun.[48] Their thoughts take shape in a natural world that, like Andrei and Nikolai, can only be *imaginatively* present in language — but they, like this natural world, seem to partake of their own non-linguistic elements. It might be said that the novel borrows the independent reality of nature to bolster the reality of the characters who see it: the omniscient narrative that calls up the clouds and the sun for Andrei and Nikolai to see, uses the same breath to call up Andrei and Nikolai themselves.

A mirror-image of this mimetic effect occurs at moments when the words or thoughts of major protagonists do overshadow the main narrative in strong free indirect discourse. Thus, in the passages around Prince Nikolai Bolkonsky's death, Marya's "voice" is so prominent that her behavior seems to be presented to us for judgment in the terms of her own moral system:

> There was no hope of recovery. It was impossible for [the old prince] to travel. And what if he died on the road? 'Would it not be better if the end did come, the very end?' Princess Marya sometimes thought. Night and day, hardly sleeping at all, she watched him, and terrible to say, often watched him not with hope of finding signs of improvement, but *wishing* to find symptoms of the approach of the end. (766 [translation modified])[49]

ничего уже, кроме неба — высокого неба, не ясного, но всё-таки неизмерно высокого, с тихо ползущими по нем серыми облаками. «Как тихо, спокойно и торжественно, совсем не так, как я бежал, — подумал князь Андрей, — не так, как мы бежали, кричали и дрались; совсем не так, как с озлобленными и испуганными лицами тащили друг у друга банник француз и артиллерист, — совсем не так ползут облака по этому высокому бесконечному небу. . . . (9:341)]

[48] For an illuminating reading of the differences reflected in these two landscapes, each fitted to the intellectual characters and desires of the protagonists who see them, see P. Carden, "The Expressive Self in *War and Peace*," *Canadian-American Slavic Studies* 12, No. 4 (Winter 1978), 528–29.

[49] [Надежды на исцеление не было. Везти его было нельзя. И что бы было, ежели он умер дорогой? «Не лучше ли бы было конец, совсем конец!» иногда думала княжна Марья. Она день и ночь, почти без сна, следила за ним и, страшно сказать, она часто следила за ним не

If we take it that the omniscient narrative here, as in most of the novel's fictional sections, is establishing a fictional world rather than offering commentary on it, the "terrible to say [*strashno skazat'*]" can only be Marya's. But the world-establishing omniscient narrative provides Marya's consciousness as a vantage-point in the first place — even when this vantage-point temporarily obscures that omniscience.

Thus, the narrator's outburst on Natasha, during which (as I've suggested) the physical figure of Natasha alone sustains the illusion of a world; the continuity between Pierre and the omniscient narrative; the continuity between Nikolai, Andrei, and the experiences of the natural world marked as theirs in the novel; and this passage, where the invisible context of the omniscient narrative creates the figure into whose perspective that narrative has been transferred, mutually illuminate one another. Ranged in this way, the passages offer a gallery of the key techniques the novel uses to suggest the presence and consciousness of its protagonists within, and inextricably from, the discourse that voices its fictional world. But all these strategies depend on an indivisible unit of narration that establishes a kind of limit: the sheer authorial naming of a fictional being in the bounded context of the novel. And the more fully any character's experience evokes what Lidiia Ginzburg calls "life in general" — thought or emotions or dreams as such, unattached to any individual personality — the more closely the character approaches that limit: only the designation of a fictional figure by a proper name ensures that figure's individuality and coherence.[50] The characters most central to the overarching mimetic task of representing "life in general" thus turn out to be *least* defined by technical or linguistic boundaries that separate their minds from omniscient narrative analysis — least identifiable by

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с надеждой найти признаки облегчения, но следила, часто *желая* найти признаки приближения к концу. (11:136)]

[50]Ginzburg frames this tension in terms of Tolstoy's need "to arrest and fix personality as a mobile, changeable, yet *identifiable* [*uznavaemuiu*] structure," a unity that could be the focal point for narrating "the different realms of existence in their different aspects" (*On Psychological Prose*, 249, 252; *O psikhologicheskoi proze*, 320, 324). In her analysis, the trace elements of literary and social "types" in Tolstoy's characters are key to their recognizable identities, which offer a framing medium for the representation of "life in general." Dealing with a similar phenomenon, Georg Lukács argues that the "strict outlines" within which the modulations of thought and feeling in Tolstoy's characters are contained come from the socially-defined possibilities for solutions to the questions that preoccupy them, from the historical "field of force within which all their moods must oscillate" ("Tolstoy and the Development of Realism," in *Studies in European Realism*, [trans. E. Bone] [New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1964], 185–86). (For further discussion of Lukács's account of Tolstoy, see Chapter Four of this dissertation.) I depart from these frameworks to follow Roland Barthes' implication that the character's proper name is what appears to unify such typological and sociohistorical markers, linking them to a fictional body (67–68): "What gives the illusion that the sum [of semes] is supplemented by a precious remainder (something like *individuality*. . .) is the Proper Name. . . The proper name enables the person to exist outside the semes, whose sum nonetheless constitutes it entirely" (*S/Z*, trans. R. Miller [New York: Hill and Wang, 1974], 191). The strong illusion of the protagonist's "life," however, may of course depend in different ways on all these elements.

their "own" word as removed from the language that represents the rest of the fictional world. Continuing this survey through the gallery of some of the other techniques used in *War and Peace* to suggest the inner lives of characters will clarify this claim.

Characters' thoughts in the novel are frequently conveyed through simple quoted monologue[51] — explicitly marked and bounded by thought-verbs and punctuation, which seal it off from the surrounding narrative: " '*La pauvre fille! Elle est diablement laide!*' thought Anatole." (241; 9:274).

Equally well-bounded psychonarration is also frequent, often used to distance or unmask the character who is its object: "Boris felt that Pierre did not recognize him but did not consider it necessary to introduce himself, and without experiencing the least embarrassment looked Pierre straight in the face" (57).[52] Occasionally, this technique is applied to extremely minor or marginal characters, such as the anonymous officer at Enns caught in the act of not reaching for a pastry: "'Look, Prince,' said another [officer], who would have dearly liked to take another pie but felt shy, and therefore pretended to be examining the countryside" (146).[53] Such glimpses into the thoughts of otherwise unidentified characters represent an almost accidental interiority: encounters with minds that, falling into the narrative's path, suddenly and uncomfortably find themselves to be transparent, characterized by what the narrator alone can see.

There are also instances of contained free indirect discourse, distanced from the omniscient narrative and confined to a single passage or paragraph. A particularly clear example is the account of Countess Rostova receiving Nikolai's letter after the Battle of Schön Grabern:

> The countess re-read the letter each time with fresh pleasure and each time discovered in it fresh proofs of Nikolushka's virtues. How strange, how extraordinary, how joyful it seemed, that her son, the scarcely perceptible motion of whose tiny limbs she had felt twenty years ago within her, that son about whom she used to have quarrels with the too-indulgent count, that son who had first learned to say first, 'pear,' and then, 'granny,' that this son should now be away in a foreign land amid strange surroundings, a virile warrior doing some kind of man's work of his own without help or guidance. (251; translation modified)[54]

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[51] Here and following, I use Dorrit Cohn's well-established terms for techniques that convey a character's thoughts in the third person: cf. Cohn, *Transparent Minds*, 14 ff.

[52] [Борис чувствовал, что Пьер не узнает его, но не считал нужным называть себя и, не испытывая ни малейшего смущения, смотрел ему прямо в глаза. (9:65)]

[53] [—Посмотрите, князь, — сказал другой, которому очень хотелось взять еще пирожок, но совестно было, и который поэтому притворился, что он оглядывает местность (9:166).]

[54] [Графиня перечитывала письмо всякий раз с новым наслаждением и всякий раз открывала по этому письму новые добродетели в своем Николушке. Как странно, необычайно, радостно ей было, что сын ее — тот сын, который чуть заметно крошечными членами шевелился в ней самой 20 лет назад, тот сын, за которым она ссорилась с баловником-графом, тот сын, который выучился говорить прежде, «груша», а потом: «баба», что этот сын теперь там, в чужой земле, в чужой среде, мужественный воин, один, без помощи и руководства, делает там какое-то свое мужское дело. Весь всемирный

This paragraph, pronounced all in one of the countess's breaths, is seeded with markers ("Nikolushka"; "first, 'pear,' and then, 'granny [*prezhde, 'grusha,' a potom: 'baba'*]'"; "some kind of man's work [*kakoe-to svoe muzhskoe delo*]'") that set it off from the surrounding discourse, and these markers make her seem to be present within the passage. The linguistic marking-off of this voice makes possible a distinct note of mockery, confirmed by the narratorial comment that closes off her discourse: "The universal experience of ages, showing that children do grow imperceptibly from the cradle to manhood, did not exist for the countess" (251-52).

Each of these techniques is a way of suggesting a personality from the inside. What sets the complex interiority most fully associated with mimetic life in *War and Peace* apart from its component techniques as used in isolation is the blurring effect that weaves the figure of the character in with the textual world (and the text) itself. This technique gives up the attempt to mark the boundaries between narratorial and characterological language, and, I want to suggest, it thus reinforces the sheer illusion of the character's "*self,*" independent of stylized or grammatically-marked inner speech.

Such interior representation, a component part of the illusion I am calling mimetic life, is thus distributed unevenly. Pierre, Andrei and Marya Bolkonsky, and Natasha and Nikolai Rostov frequently have it; Petya Rostov has it only after a certain point in the novel; the artillery captain Tushin has it only when we see him at the Battle of Schön Grabern; Hélène Kuragina never does. The inequality helps indicate a spectrum of mimetic life for the characters of *War and Peace*, one of whose ends is defined by the protagonists, and the other by the anonymous guests at Anna Pavlovna Scherer's salon. To investigate how named fictional characters get placed along this spectrum, I'll turn now to the question of the proper names themselves — of the novel's fictional families and the place each dictates within its character-system.

4. Solidifying the illusion: Family-names and the distribution of mimetic life

Of the four animated figures caught behind Natasha in the doorway when she enters, two are Rostovs, one is a Drubetskoy, and one (Sonya, Count Rostov's niece) never explicitly gets a family-name. These facts have consequences in the character-system of *War and Peace*, a novel where more than one family is described as a "breed" (*poroda*).[55] Descriptions of the characters fall into narrative soil that may or may not sustain the illusion of mimetic life and the possibility of narrative centrality.

There are about a dozen named fictional families in *War and Peace*, if a family is defined as two or more characters represented in the discourse of the novel and sharing the same known family-name. Eight of these are prominent enough within the plot that they come readily to mind: the Rostovs, the Bolkonskys, the Bezukhovs, the Bergs, the Drubetskoys, the Kuragins,

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вековой опыт, указывающий на то, что дети незаметным путем от колыбели делаются мужами, не существовал для графини. (9:286)]

[55] For an account of this family or "breed" force in *War and Peace*, see S. Bocharov, *Roman L. Tolstogo 'Voina i mir'* (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1963), 89–100; he focuses particularly on the system of families defined by the Rostovs, the Kuragins, and the Bolkonskys.

the Karagins, and the Dolokhovs.[56] There are also several story-orphans, like Sonya and Mlle. Bourienne; and a number of discourse-orphans, like Denisov, Nesvitsky, and Platon Karataev, whose families never appear in person. The scarcity of characters completely separated from their families who play significant roles, however, underscores the extent to which *War and Peace thinks* in families. The thematic functions associated with each family-name, which in turn tend to dictate conditions of representation, are contained enough to be given here as a list.[57]

The Rostovs are associated with a conscious and unbounded instinct for life — with knowing how to live, even to excess. The traits of life in excess, passed down in generations — the count's ruinous hospitality, dancing, gambling; the countess's weariness from bearing twelve children and her jealous affection for the living ones; Nikolai's innate skill as a soldier, hunter, and manager of his estates, and his gambling; the instinctive beauty of Natasha's singing and dancing, and her wholehearted susceptibility to male admiration and love; Petya's love of the hunt, the Emperor, and the army, and his extravagant impulse to share all his raisins and flints with Denisov's partisans — make the Rostovs into a coherent set. Their thematic association with excessive vitality defines a sphere in the novel capacious enough for *narrative* excess, for scenes of intensely unplotted life: Count Rostov dancing the Daniel Cooper, Nikolai and then Petya falling asleep on the eve of battle, the wolf-hunt and Natasha's dance, the *sviatki* masquerade, the notorious yellow diaper Natasha shows off to Pierre in the first Epilogue. The odd Rostov out is Vera, whose primness sets her inexplicably apart from her family and so throws their identity into relief; appropriately, midway through the novel, she changes into a Berg.

The Bolkonskys are thematically associated with intellect and the life of the spirit, life as lived in proximity to birth and death. Prince Nikolai Bolkonsky, the most fully developed character in *War and Peace*'s older generation, pursues "activity and intelligence" to the exclusion of all else, especially of open affection toward his family; this dryness endures through his capricious, near-demented senility and weakens only on his deathbed. Andrei Bolkonsky inherits the problem of reconciling intellect and ambition with human ties, played out through the disappointment of his first marriage and his broken engagement to Natasha; he too sees the

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[56] Anna Pavlovna Scherer and "*ma tante*" could be included as another fictional family (though *ma tante* is never named). There are also the three Mamontov sisters, Catiche, Olga, and Sophie (Count Bezukhov's nieces), and the Meliukovs, whom the Rostov children visit in the *sviatki* masquerades. By the criteria I have listed, I have identified no others.

[57] I borrow the term "thematic function" from J. Phelan, *Reading People, Reading Plots: Character, Progression, and the Interpretation of Narrative* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), 9ff. Phelan identifies three components to literary character: the synthetic (the character as a created verbal construct), the mimetic (the character as an image of a possible person), and the thematic (the character as a representative of an idea or class, who can therefore be used to make or support thematic assertions the text makes). He then distinguishes between "dimensions" and "functions": a mimetic or thematic *dimension* may be considered in isolation from the work as a whole; a mimetic or thematic *function* applies this attribute to the developing structure of the text, becoming integral to its unfolding. I discuss these eight families in terms of their thematic functions: the concepts or categories with which they are associated that help organize the novel's fictional world and its representation in discourse.

most convincing solutions to this problem only when he is near death, on the field of Austerlitz and after Borodino. Marya, intensely religious, shelters pilgrims but never manages to become one herself: her narrative trajectory works itself out primarily through the deaths of her sister-in-law, father, and brother. In all, the Bolkonskys bring one birth, three true and three pseudo-deaths into the novel. Even as the narrative drops false clues suggesting that Andrei and (briefly) his infant son Nikolenka (402; 10:100) have died, we become aware of a door between life and death swinging open and closed; this door is represented explicitly in Andrei's dream before his real death, near the end of the novel (1059; 12:63).[58] Thus, just as the Rostovs define a sphere for the representation of sheer life, the Bolkonskys allow for a representation of the problematic passage between life and death. Lise Bolkonskaya is drawn into the family function (like the family name) by marriage, though she presents problems that must be discussed on their own.

The Bezukhovs are less readily described. Count Bezukhov, whom old Prince Bolkonsky mourns as "the second-to-last representative of the *grand siècle*" (99; 9:113), appears in the novel only on his deathbed, in a scene that critics have singled out for its ambiguity.[59] He is rumored to have lost count of his illegitimate children, among whom only Pierre has taken his name. Thus, although Pierre inherits his father's tendency to violent rages (343; 10:31) and perhaps the governing "passion" for women that he confesses when becoming a Freemason, his central inheritance may be the fact of his illegitimacy itself, the ambiguous possession of an indefinite family line. Pierre enters the novel with the potential for a fixed position in its social (and thematic) system, but he is characterized by the *search* for this position — for the meaning of the name "Bezukhov." He finds it partly by testing his own character against the Bolkonskys and the Rostovs. If the Rostovs and the Bolkonskys divide between them experiences tied to the basic binaries of the novel's represented world — earthly life and the life of the spirit — then Pierre Bezukhov is a needle swinging over and around the areas they define. His narrative function is to be changed by what he sees and undergoes (to act, it has been suggested, as a Bildungshero) and this very capacity for change, the instability of any association with his family-name as he embodies it, most nearly defines his character.[60]

I have sketched the Rostovs, the Bolkonskys, and Pierre Bezukhov as a kind of self-sufficient thematic compass; this metaphor suggests itself, even if only temporarily, because of the neatness at the heart of the sprawling representational system of *War and Peace*. Two Rostovs and two Bolkonskys begin the novel at the right age to carry out its main action between 1805 and 1812, and each is associated with a complementary aspect of the family's thematic

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[58] The famous image of the "doorway" is associated with Andrei long before the narration of his death — see 115 (9:131) — and follows him and other Bolkonskys throughout the novel. As Ilya Vinitsky has emphasized, this doorway is not a binary threshold: it represents "a 'question' that the hero and those near him resolve" ("Behind the Door," *Tolstoy Studies Journal* 29 [2007]: 80–86). On the image's double valence, and corresponding association with both Andrei and Natasha, see also M.B. Pliukhanova, "Tvorchestvo Tolstogo," in *L.N. Tolstoi: pro et contra* [St. Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo Russkogo Khristianskogo gumanitarnogo instituta, 2000], 837).

[59] cf. Morson, *Hidden*, 85-86.

[60] On Pierre as a Bildungshero, see most recently L. Steiner, *For Humanity's Sake: The Bildungsroman in Russian Culture* (Toronto and London: University of Toronto Press, 2011): 109 ff.

function, determined partly by gender.[61] These four characters, with Pierre, are the novel's major points of contact with historical events, with the natural world (the sun and moon, birch and oak trees, the Comet of 1812) and more largely, with fundamental aspects of conscious experience: thinking, praying, hearing music, falling in love, falling asleep, dreaming, dying. Reductive as this schema becomes, the novel's structure lends itself to such generalizations.

What helps shade and strengthen them is, in part, the mimetic system of the named families themselves, ranged behind the main protagonists to create the sense that centrality is hereditary, its particulars determined only by the demands of historical material. The Rostovs demonstrate this continuity most clearly: by the second half of the novel, set in 1812, Petya Rostov is old enough to retrace some of Nikolai Rostov's steps. For the other families, it works in glimpses. If the novel had been about Suvorov's campaigns, it seems that one of its main protagonists would have been old Prince Bolkonsky; we catch sight of this novel in his memories of Potemkin, shortly before his death (742; 11:110-111). If the novel had been (as Tolstoy originally planned) about the Decembrists, one of its main protagonists would have been Nikolenka Bolkonsky; we glimpse this novel in Nikolenka's dream at the end of the first Epilogue. Up and down the novel's generations, its thematic structure remains stable. When the Rostovs and the Bolkonskys cross significantly into one another's territory (Andrei's vision of the oak tree that leads to his courtship of Natasha, Natasha's suicide attempt and prayers after her break with Andrei, Petya's death in a partisan raid), the emotional power of these events comes partly from their contrast with the expectations the novel has so clearly established: from the gradual integration of the major families and their primary thematic functions into the tightly-knotted combined family group with which the narrative ends.

Nevertheless, the categories "instinct" and "spirit," "life" and "death" are so elemental as to risk becoming meaningless. They establish the foundation of the world the text represents, but they cannot account for the scaffolding upon which the novel's plot, as well as its strong thematic oppositions, are raised. Four other fictional families provide this structure.

The Bergs, a family formed midway through Book II, mark a transitional point between the organic foundations of the novel and what stands for artificiality within it. Each on their own, Vera and Berg are associated primarily with superfluity — as Vera's mother asks her early in the novel, "Don't you see you are not wanted here?" (48) ["*Razve ty ne chuvstvuesh, chto ty zdes' lishniaia?*" (9:54)]; later, when he visits Boris near Olmütz, Nikolai will say much the same thing to Berg (255; 9:290). Together, they encapsulate what the novel itself codes as superfluous. They give a family name, in other words, to the guiding principle of Anna Pavlovna Scherer's salon. At their housewarming party, "Berg and Vera could not repress their smiles of satisfaction at the sight of all this movement in their drawing room, at the sound of the disconnected talk, the rustling of dresses. . . Everything was just as everybody always has it . . . The old people sat with

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[61] On the structural importance of these brother-sister pairs in *War and Peace*, see Anna Berman, who argues that sibling bonds operate as a model for romantic connections between the members of different families: A. Berman, *Siblings in Tolstoy and Dostoevsky: The Path to Universal Brotherhood* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2015), 34–45. See also her "The Sibling Bond: A Model for Romance and Motherhood in *War and Peace*," *Tolstoy Studies Journal* 18 (2006): 1–15.

the old, the young with the young. . . Everything was just as it was everywhere else" (502-03).[62] Strictly essential neither to the story nor to the discourse, Vera and Berg embody the very principle on which the novel's character-system is divided: the principle, that is, of facile characterization itself. They are a passageway from the natural to the artificial, from the core to the outer surface of Tolstoy's representation of human life.[63]

The Karagins (Marya L'vovna and Julie) play a similar role, but in relation to the artifice of style rather than the artifice of characterization. They are associated with false sentiment, coded through the stylized sentimental novels of the 18th century. Initiated in their first visit to the Rostovs' name-day party, the theme is developed fully through Julie's later appearances — from her long, rapturous epistle to Marya Bolkonskaya, to her affected religious melancholy at the time of Boris's courtship (he reads her Karamzin's *Poor Liza* [590; 10:311]), to her heavy-handed comparison of Pierre to a "knight" from a novel by Mme. de Souza (803; 11:178).[64] Cordoning such patterned feeling off in one family's sphere — and linking it with the prosaic image of Julie's round red face and powdered chin — the novel attacks it even while drawing on plotlines that would not be out of place (as Julie suggests) in a sentimental novella or novel.[65]

The Drubetskoys play a more dynamic role in building the novel's artifice, related to the *mechanics* of its discourse — to the necessity of moving from one place to another, of reaching the right place at the right narrative time. Thematically, they are associated with grasping

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[62] [Берг с Верой не могли удерживать радостной улыбки при виде этого движения по гостиной, при звуке этого бессвязного говора, шуршанья платьев . . . Всё было, как и у всех . . . Старички с стариками, молодые с молодыми, . . . всё было так же, как и других. (10:214)]

[63] It is notable, in this context, that Shklovsky suggests Vera is the only one of Tolstoy's "family heroes" who "apprehends life correctly, canonically," and thus cannot be used for *artistic* purposes of defamiliarization; she is thus technically as well as thematically superfluous. Shklovsky connects this pedestrian quality to her class — she is "a Berg, and not a Rostov, the wife of an army *chinovnik*." (Shklovskii, *Material*, 109–10) For Feuer's more extended argument about the class-based division of heroes, see note 66 below.

[64] Adelaïde de Souza's first and most famous novel, *Adèle de Sénange*, is "an epistolary novel of sensibility... one of many inspired by *Julie, ou la nouvelle Heloïse*" (J.H. Stewart, *Gynographs: French Novels by Women of the Late Eighteenth Century* [Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1993], 153–54). Mme. de Souza is mentioned once previously in *War and Peace*, where Sophie Cottin's 1803 epistolary novel *Amélie Mansfield* is attributed to her, and Pierre's reflections on this romance imply the novel's distance from the conventions of such sentimental fiction: "He began reading about the sufferings and virtuous struggles of a certain Amélie de Mansfield. 'And why did she resist her seducer when she loved him?' he thought. 'God could not have put into her heart an impulse that was against His will'" (372; 10:66). More broadly, on Tolstoy's suspicion of sentimental conventions of friendship on the model of Rousseau's *Julie*, see A. Eakin Moss, "Tolstoy's Politics of Love: 'That Passionate and Tender Friendship That Exists Only Among Women,'" *SEEJ* 53:4 (Winter 2009): 566–86; see especially 567–70.

[65] On Anatole's seduction of Natasha, in particular, as an inserted novella that follows the generic lines of Karamzin's "Poor Liza," see G. Rylkova, "The History of Natasha Rostova's Affair with Anatole Kuragin," *Canadian-American Slavic Studies* 31:1 (Spring 1997), 55–60.

ambition — less for "glory" (*slava*), than for the kind of social and political connections and wealth that Andrei and Pierre have no need to pursue.[66] This thematic function places the Drubetskoys in a position to introduce the narrative itself into new circles. In Book I, as she builds the foundations of her son's career, Anna Mikhailovna leads us from Anna Pavlovna Scherer's Petersburg salon to the Rostovs' name day party in Moscow, and from the Rostov house to the death bed of Pierre's father, Count Bezukhov; in Book II, Boris manages to be among the few present when Alexander and Napoleon meet at the Niemen River. The Drubetskoys' instinct to expand their given sphere simultaneously extends the novel's own flexibility and grasp.

The Kuragins (Prince Vasili and his wife Aline, and their children Hippolyte, Anatole, and Hélène), finally, pull many of the strings behind the novel's fictional plot. They are associated with a cunning animal sensuality that expresses itself in a range of qualities, from Vasili's skill at social manipulation, to Hippolyte's ingratiating stupidity, to Anatole's licentiousness (Hélène, manipulative, stupid, and sensuously beautiful, combines these family traits). They orchestrate two central seductions: Hélène's of Pierre, and Anatole's of Natasha — the episode that Tolstoy, in an often-cited letter to his editor P.I. Bartenev (26 November 1867) called the novel's "hub" or "knot" (*uzel*) (61:184). Their seductions of Pierre and Natasha might, indeed, be characterized as a seduction *into* plot, into the states from which the novel's succeeding fictional episodes attempt to recover the protagonists: their "villainy" (in the terms Propp developed in *Morphology of the Folktale*) creates "the actual movement of the tale."[67] The vicious characterization of the Kuragin family — the inclusion, for example, of Hippolyte, who serves mainly to reveal the "remarkable ugliness" on the reverse side of Anatole and Hélène's beauty (13; 9:15) — helps condense them into the simple functionality captured in Propp's schema.

The Bergs, Karagins, Drubetskoys, and Kuragins, then, carry thematic functions that both complement and parodically distort those of the families at the novel's center. The Drubetskoys' striving and the Karagins' false sentiment are variations on the ambition and spiritual depth of the Bolkonskys; the Bergs' superfluity and the Kuragins' sensuality are variations on the Rostovs' structurally-excessive, instinctive physical life.[68] The behavior associated with these families'

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[66] Indeed, it has been suggested that their social position itself distances Boris Drubetskoy from Tolstoy's conception of the heroic. Kathryn Feuer points out that none of the novel's many "young men from the provinces" — among them Boris, Berg, and Dolokhov — is allowed to become a central protagonist or even a sympathetic character: "Tolstoy's view that only hereditary privilege and fortune can put one outside 'the struggle between conscience and want' not only excludes all these groups [*i.e.* merchants, seminarists, courtiers, bureaucrats] from major roles in *War and Peace*, it also defines — and ruthlessly — the moral status of the novel's characters (Feuer, *Genesis,* 165). She notes that when Tolstoy tried in drafts to make a young man like Boris one of the novel's heroes, he failed.

[67] V. Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, trans. L. Scott and ed. L. Wagner (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968 [1928]), 30.

[68] Donna Orwin points out this connection, "the potential in the Rostovs to become like the Kuragins," and locates the difference between them in the Kuragins' alienation from "living reason," a natural animation (embodied in Natasha) that partakes of *both* mind and feeling (D.

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thematic functions shifts them out from the mimetic core of the novel's represented life — from births and deaths, sleeping and dreaming — towards the marked artifices of discourse and plot. Thus, although the Bergs, Karagins, Drubetskoys, and Kuragins provide a context and impetus for the unplotted inner experiences of the Rostovs, the Bolkonskys, and Pierre, such experiences never enter their fictional lives. They form, in this sense, the "proletariat" of Tolstoy's novel — a doubling, functional outer compass in the system of families that structures *War and Peace*.[69]

The novel implies that the Drubetskoys are represented differently from the Bolkonskys because the quality of their experience is different; this difference in turn fits them for functions that have more to do with the evident constructedness of the novel than with its declared reality. A mimetic justification for the asymmetrical representation of minor characters, however, can go only so far. It is disrupted by characters who are less clearly tied to particular functions and roles, and less logically limited within the novel's system of named fictional identities. I would suggest that Dolokhov (who is, in a sense, Pierre's minor double) and Sonya (who is an *extra* double for Natasha) lie at the crux of this disruption. Turning to them, we approach more closely the question of how Tolstoy's novel represents the literary fact of minorness itself. While distancing its narrative "proletariat" thematically and functionally, how does the novel relate them to the illusion of mimetic life so insistently cultivated in its central protagonists?

5. Fragmenting the illusion: Minor characters and mimetic life

The Dolokhovs and Sonya

In his first appearance, Fyodor Dolokhov stands out from a crowd of eight men at Anatole Kuragin's party: "Another voice, from a man of medium height with clear blue eyes,

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Orwin, *Tolstoy's Art and Thought, 1847–1880* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993], 124-26; see also Bocharov, n. 55 above). The character Aline Kuragina, about whom we know almost nothing, may function to highlight the similarity. She makes the Kuragins, by my count, the only named fictional family in the novel apart from the Rostovs to have both a husband/father and wife/mother represented in the discourse (notably, both Boris Drubetskoy and Julie Karagina lack patronymics). When Hélène and Pierre become engaged, we learn that "she was tormented by jealousy of her daughter's happiness" (226; 9:257); after Natasha and Andrei's engagement, we see this "latent grudge a mother always has in regard to a daughter's future married happiness" echoed in Countess Rostova (525; 10:241). As Konstantin Leont'ev irritably noted, there was no need for Tolstoy to attribute this grudge to *all* mothers (*Analiz, stil' i veianie: o romanakh Gr. L.N. Tolstogo* [Repr. Providence: Brown University Press, 1965 (1912)], 79–81). The echo, however, is not simply a matter of realist cynicism: it underscores the common ground between the Kuragins and the Rostovs.

[69] For minor characters as "the proletariat of the novel... the subordinate beings who are delimited in themselves while performing a function for someone else," see Woloch, *The One vs. the Many*, 27 ff. This classification resonates, in obvious ways, with Feuer's and Shklovsky's arguments about the social and class divisions Tolstoy made between minor characters and heroes. But as Feuer (building on Eikhenbaum) and Shklovsky make clear, Tolstoy's particular ire was reserved for rising and ambitious strivers, linked with the future *raznochintsy*, not for the novel's literal working classes.

particularly striking among all these drunken voices by its sober ring, cried from the window. . . This was Dolokhov, an officer of the Semyonov regiment, a notorious gambler and duelist" (33).[70] The "two distinct smiles" at the corners of Dolokhov's mouth "produced an effect which made it impossible not to notice his face [*nel'zia bylo ne zametit' etogo litsa*]" (34; 9:39). And yet, when the whole room turns to Dolokhov as he drinks a bottle of rum on a high windowsill, the narrative pointedly looks elsewhere: "One of the footmen who had stooped to pick up some broken glass, remained in that position without taking his eyes from the window. . . The Englishman looked on sideways pursing up his lips. . . Pierre hid his face, and a faint smile, forgotten, stayed on his face, although it now expressed horror and fear" (36 [translation modified]).[71] Dolokhov's stunt becomes an opportunity to watch the way in which other characters observe him.

Dolokhov's first appearance sets a pattern for many of his later ones. Reduced to the ranks for throwing a policeman tied to a bear into the Neva after this party, Dolokhov stands out just as conspicuously: " 'What is this?' shouted the regimental commander . . . pointing at a soldier in the ranks of the third company in a greatcoat of bluish cloth, which contrasted with the others. . . 'Your excellency, it's Dolokhov'" (122 [translation modified]).[72] Later, his entire company and commander watch as he argues with the French soldiers at their line: " 'Look! Look there!' one soldier was saying to another, pointing to a Russian musketeer who had gone up to the picket line with an officer. . . The soldier at whom the laughers were pointing was Dolokhov" (187 [translation modified]).[73] Each time he resurfaces, Dolokhov is at the center of someone's attention. But the repeated structure — a description, followed by "it was Dolokhov" — frames each new reappearance as a surprise.

In other words, Dolokhov is always at the center of *someone*'s attention in *War and Peace*, but never at the center of the narrative's. A plot-architect who outdoes even the Kuragins — he provokes the duel that undoes Hélène's marriage to Pierre, ruins Nikolai Rostov in a single game of cards, makes the practical arrangements for Anatole's seduction of Natasha, and helps lead Petya Rostov to his death — Dolokhov seems always to enter from elsewhere. When he loses his duel with Pierre, we learn (via Nikolai Rostov) that "Dolokhov the brawler, Dolokhov the bully, lived in Moscow with an old mother and a hunchback sister, and was the most affectionate of sons and brothers" (339; 10:27). When he appears at the opera with the Kuragins,

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[70] [Другой голос невысокого человека, с ясными голубыми глазами, особенно поражавший среди этих всех пьяных голосов своим трезвым выражением, закричал от окна. . . Это был Долохов, семеновский офицер, известный игрок и бретёр. . . (9:38)]

[71] [Один из лакеев, начавший подбирать стекла, остановился в согнутом положении, не спуская глаз с окна и спины Долохова. . . Англичанин, выпятив вперед губы, смотрел сбоку. . . Пьер закрыл лицо, и слабая улыбка, забывшись, осталась на его лице, хоть оно теперь выражало ужас и страх. (9:41)]

[72] [«... Это что? — крикнул полковой командир. . . указывая в рядах 3-й роты на солдата в шинели цвета фабричного сукна, отличавшегося от других шинелей. . . . — Ваше превосходительство, это Долохов (9:139).]

[73] [—Глянь-ка, глянь, — говорил один солдат товарищу, указывая на русского мушкатера-солдата, который с офицером подошел к цепи. . . Солдат, на которого указывали смеявшиеся, был Долохов (9:212).]

we learn (from Shinshin) that he has been to Persia (600; 10:323). The range of Dolokhov's character and experience appear only obliquely, and in contrast with his fixed trademark: the duplicitous smile that appears when "as if tired of everyday life he had felt a need to escape from it by some strange, and usually cruel, action" (360; 10:51). Glimpses of the thoughts behind this expression are markedly brief and rare.[74]

Dolokhov's mother, Marya Ivanovna, enters the novel in person so briefly that she has time only to point out this asymmetry, the narrative world's unfairness to her son:

> 'Yes, Count,' she would say, 'he is too noble and pure-souled for our present, depraved world. No one nowadays loves virtue, it seems like a reproach to everyone. Now tell me, Count, was it right, was it honorable, of Bezukhov? . . . Those pranks in Petersburg when they played some tricks on a policeman, didn't they do it together? And there! Bezukhov got off scot free, while Fedya had to bear the whole burden on his shoulders. . . . And now — this duel! Have these people no feeling, or honor? Knowing him to be an only son, to challenge him and shoot so straight! (352)[75]

Her sole act in the novel is to comically sketch the outlines of another novel, of which Dolokhov is the hero. The thick irony around Marya Ivanovna's partial maternal account discourages us from taking this possibility seriously, but what would happen if we tried?

Thematically, Dolokhov can be associated (as one study puts it) with an "appetite for personal power" — a desire that alienates him, like the Drubetskoys and Kuragins, from the novel's conception of a moral life.[76] As readers aligned with the implied author's perspective, we hold against Dolokhov his selfish duplicity (to Pierre, Natasha, and Nikolai Rostov; to the soldiers he leads out onto ice that will not hold them at Austerlitz), and (less directly) his attraction toward the conventional adventures that the novel itself wants to sidestep: the duels, affairs, and revenge-plots that animate Dolokhov are not at the center of *War and Peace*, and that is part of Tolstoy's point. But treated as a family, the Dolokhovs bring the fact of narrative

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[74] He can thus be described as a "card" (W.J. Harvey's term for a striking character who combines "relative changelessness" with "a peculiar kind of freedom" [Harvey, *Character and the Novel* [London: Chatto & Windus, 1965], 60]), or an "eccentric" (Alex Woloch's, for a "fragmentary character who plays a disruptive, oppositional role within the plot" [*One vs. the Many*, 25]). But it is notable how insistently the freedom of Dolokhov's unrepresented life in the story shows through the confinement of his represented life in the discourse: he is quite different in this sense from Bertha Mason, whom Woloch gives as the paradigmatic "eccentric" in 19th century literature, and from Dickens's fragmentary minor characters.

[75] [— Да, граф, он слишком благороден и чист душою, — говаривала она — для нашего нынешнего, развращенного света. Добродетели никто не любит, она всем глаза колет. Ну скажите, граф, справедливо это, честно это со стороны Безухова? . . . В Петербурге эти шалости с квартальным там что-то шутили, ведь они вместе делали? Что ж, Безухову ничего, а Федя все на своих плечах перенес! . . . Что ж теперь — эта дуэль! Есть ли чувство, честь у этих людей! Зная, что он единственный сын, вызвать на дуэль и стрелять так прямо! (10:42)]

[76] Cf. Orwin, *Tolstoy's Art*, 120–21.

asymmetry (however faintly) to our attention. In the course of marking the kind of story the novel does not tell and indicating why, they expand its fictional universe, pointing into the story-recesses of what the discourse leaves hidden. But their minorness also points to the limitations of that universe — to the sense in which telling Pierre's story *has* to exclude telling Dolokhov's.

The figure of Dolokhov thus catches the novel in a kind of crisis, between the thematic rigidity that sets the terms of its represented world, and the mirage of *unlimited* representational possibility that makes this world seem to be so real. Following a discussion of Dolokhov's deceptive importance to the narrative, the critic Gary Saul Morson concludes that for Tolstoy, "characters, like incidents, do not have significance, only potential significance. For some, that potential is great; for others, small; some potential is realized, some is not." This unusual flexibility of character and incident, as he argues, helps explain the mimetic power of *War and Peace* — "the instinctive and unexplained feeling that *War and Peace* is more like the world in which we live than any other novel, a 'piece of life' rather than a piece of art."[77] But it is also plausible, I would add, to treat Dolokhov as a sign of the *in*flexibility of Tolstoy's character-system —"for some," the potential for significance "is great; for others, small." Centrality, like so much else in *War and Peace,* is distributed by potential, and this potential is, in a sense, in turn distributed by centrality — by proximity (familial or thematic) to the characters who are in fact the novel's protagonists.[78] Petya Rostov could have been a major protagonist of a novel recognizable as *War and Peace,* but Fedya Dolokhov could not: represented in the narrative as if he were the hero of *a* novel, he is set unmistakably against the parameters that define the world of *this* one. His potential for centrality, and for the kind of representation associated with it, is embedded in a system where it can never be fulfilled.

The power of this system to anchor so comprehensive a represented world comes, then, from its absolute stability. The centrality of the protagonists of *War and Peace* is so much woven into the novel's fabric that it becomes invisible: the narrative condition of being a potential protagonist merges, again, with the condition of living "life" as the novel defines it. If Dolokhov demonstrates this stability by his near-complete exile from that vision of life, Sonya demonstrates it by her crucially incomplete integration.

Sonya's "marginal" status in *War and Peace* has been exhaustively described by other critics.[79] But more striking, I think, than any particular social or moral explanation we can find for this status, is the sheer clarity with which Sonya is placed off-center in the novel's character-system. Her minorness begins with the lack of a family-name, a *semiotic* poverty more essential than the dependent state she shares with Boris Drubetskoy.[80] It continues with the image, at once memorable and distracting, of Sonya as "a pretty, half-grown kitten which promises to become a

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[77] Morson, *Hidden in Plain View*, 151.

[78] It is in this sense, I think, that John Bayley writes of *War and Peace* as "a massive feat of arbitration," where "all the characters . . .— from the greatest to the least — get exactly what their natures require" (*Tolstoy and the Novel*, 78).

[79] See especially S. Grenier, *Representing the Marginal Woman in Nineteenth-Century Russian Literature: Personalism, Feminism, and Polyphony* (Westport, CT and London: Greenwood Press, 2001), 89–99.

[80] Kathryn Feuer notes that Sonya does have two potential last names in drafts of the novel, Cherboff and Niznova (*Genesis*, 261n95); in the final manuscript, both are conspicuously absent.

beautiful little cat" (43; 9:49). This recurring image displaces the accompanying description of her body, and forestalls lengthy forays into her mind. Its self-containment — kitten (inevitably) into cat — captures Sonya's defining stasis, which takes the form of her unchanging desire to become a Rostov by marriage: as she tells Natasha, "'I am in love with your brother once for all [*ia poliubila raz tvoego brata*], and whatever may happen to him or to me I shall never cease to love him as long as I live'" (250; 9:284). When she refuses Dolokhov's marriage proposal, the flattening force of this self-definition shows through the eyes of Nikolai, who thinks: "'My Sonya could not have done otherwise'" (356; 10:46); and of Natasha, who (as we have already seen) knows that Sonya, "the curled-up, sleeping little kitten," will never "understand all that [Natasha] understood and all there was in her . . . 'how could she? She's virtuous. She fell in love with Nikolenka and does not wish to know anything more'" (483; 10:193).

But the innate difference between Sonya and the Rostovs that precludes her inclusion in the family is explicit, though unexplained, in the narrative: "Sonya, as always, did not keep pace with [the Rostovs], though they shared the same reminiscences. Much that they remembered had slipped from her mind, and what she recalled did not arouse the same poetic feeling as they experienced. She simply enjoyed their pleasure and tried to fit in with it [*poddelat'sia pod nee*]" (558; 10:276). And it is obvious to strangers: at Natasha's first ball, "the two girls in their white dresses, each with a rose in her black hair [*s odinakovyvimi rozami v chernykh volosakh*], both curtsied in the same way [*odinakovo priseli*], but the hostess's eye involuntarily rested longer on the slim Natasha" (488; 10:198). Indeed, Nikolai entertains the possibility of making Sonya a Rostov only in the context of the bounded "magical kingdom" of the *sviatki* masquerade, where the world is turned literally on its head: Sonya cross-dresses as a Circassian, and "the snow sparkled with so many stars, that one did not wish to look up at the sky and the real stars were unnoticed. The sky was black and dreary, while the earth was gay. 'I am a fool, a fool! what have I been waiting for?' thought Nikolai" (567; 10:285). There could not be a clearer inversion of the novel's world order.[81]

Sonya cannot be (and cannot be represented like) a Rostov, most basically, because she is defined in terms of her *desire* to be a Rostov. In the Epilogue, this desire emerges as a permanent feature, captured in the logical issue of the image of Sonya as a kitten: "She seemed to be fond not so much of individuals as of the family as a whole. Like a cat, she had attached herself not to the people but to the home" (1235-36; 12:260). Sonya thus becomes Dolokhov's inverse: because her key defining quality is her sense of the Rostovs' centrality, her character could *only* have been realized in this novel of which they are indeed the center.

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[81] Shklovsky sees in this inversion another potential novel, and a parable about the defamiliarizing power of realist art itself: "The Circassian is what Sonya could have been. . . .It is both Sonya, and not Sonya. Perception as if flickers, contradicts itself, doubles. In realist art appearances are real, but they are — whether we relate positively or negatively to them — changed — by the consciousness of that relation. Art can, without touching things, change them, returning them to our consciousness." (*Povesty o proze*, Vol. 2, 208; my translation) But it seems significant that here, the effect of this inversion is temporary: even within the bounded artistic world of the novel, defamiliarization takes place in the context of an order that does not get permanently overturned.

"There, that's me!": The Discontent of Character in Tolstoy's *War and Peace*

If the representation of major protagonists brings us to the limiting bottom foundation of the mimetic capacity of *War and Peace* — the point where the author must simply assert the names of his central characters and the vivid outlines of their figures — then Dolokhov and Sonya define two outer ends of the novel's (so to speak) horizontal range. These characters mark the text *as* a text, by pointing to the absolute and (in an important sense) arbitrary lines along which it distributes the illusion of mimetic life. Such figures show minorness to be a problem that *War and Peace*, no less than any other novel, must negotiate. If the sheer authorial assertion of a reality beyond text and convention is necessary to make a character like Natasha, a character like Sonya comes from the dampening of this sense of reality, of a distracting vividness that must be actively contained in characterizing language.

It is perhaps worth lingering on this point, because Tolstoy's novel has so often been described as a simulacrum of life in which everyone, and even everything, lives.[82] This impression of universal fictional life might be taken to mean that each character fulfills her (or her family's) "nature," as the narrative so authoritatively establishes it. I want to stress, on the contrary, the ways in which the world of *War and Peace* depends for its coherence on a set of characters whose function is *not* to mimetically live — the necessary correspondence between the novel's thematic contours and its distribution of representational techniques. Just as a relatively clear set of narrative strategies, which I have explored with reference to the protagonists, serves to support the illusion of mimetic life, another set of strategies serves to suppress it. Such suppression is absolute in the cases of Sonya and Dolokhov, written into their characters from the beginning. For some other minor characters, it is less firm, fluctuating throughout their interactions with major protagonists. I'll explore a few more examples in detail.

Hélène Kuragina, Boris Drubetskoy, Lise Bolkonskaya, Platon Karataev

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[82] This vision was already expressed in early reviews, perhaps most clearly by Nikolai Strakhov in *Zaria* (No. 1, 1870): "Thousands of characters [*lits*], thousands of scenes, every conceivable scene of public and private life. . . everything is in the picture. And at the same time not a single figure pushes another into the background, not one scene, not one impression interferes with any other, everything is in its place, everything is clear, everything is distinct, everything is in harmony with itself and the whole" (Knowles, *Critical Heritage*, 160 [translation modified]; cf. *Roman L.N. Tolstogo 'Voina i mir' v russkoi kritike*, ed. I.N. Sukhikh [Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Leningradskogo universiteta, 1989], 257–58). For one of the most hyperbolic, and compelling, later expressions of this view, see Isaiah Berlin: "The celebrated lifelikeness of every object and every person in [Tolstoy's] world derives from this astonishing capacity of presenting every ingredient of it in its fullest individual essence, in all its many dimensions, as it were: never as a mere datum, however vivid, within some stream of consciousness, with blurred edges. . .; nor yet calling for, and dependent on, some process of reasoning in the mind of the reader; but always as a solid object, seen simultaneously from near and far, in natural, unaltering daylight, from all possible angles of vision, set in an absolutely specific context in time and space — an event fully present to the senses or the imagination in all its facets, with every nuance sharply and firmly articulated" (*The Hedgehog and the Fox: An Essay on Tolstoy's View of History* [Chicago: Elephant Paperbacks, 1993 (1953/1978)], 41).

"There, that's me!": The Discontent of Character in Tolstoy's *War and Peace*

When Hélène Kuragina first appears at Anna Pavlovna Scherer's salon, she is constantly attended by the epithet "*krasavitsa*" ("the beauty"). The Homeric overtones of "*La belle Hélène*" (217; 9:247) are, of course, pointedly ironic: this Helen had nothing to do with causing the war *War and Peace* describes. Her "antique" or "marble" beauty has thus been imported from another narrative where it would have mattered more.[83] But early in the novel, the remarkable passage in which she seduces Pierre by leaning her shoulders forward clearly enacts her conversion from antique marble into flesh:

> Her bust, which had always seemed like marble to Pierre, was so close to him that his shortsighted eyes could not but perceive the living charm of her neck and shoulders, so near to his lips that he need only have bent his head a little to have touched them. He was conscious of the warmth of her body, the scent of perfume, and the creaking of her corset as she moved. He did not see her marble beauty forming a complete whole with her dress, but all the charm of her body only covered by her garments. And having once seen this he could not help being aware of it, just as we cannot renew an illusion we have once seen through. "So you never before noticed how beautiful I am?" Hélène seemed to say. "You had not noticed that I am a woman?" (219)[84]

Pierre's sudden, multi-sensory apprehension of the live woman beneath Hélène's clothes also embodies her, startlingly vividly, in the text of the novel. The shining white arms and shoulders that have acted as her metonymic identifying trait take on a "living charm," coupled with her warmth and the smell of her perfume. For us, both Hélène's symbolic abstraction and her embodiment are illusory, but the illusions belong to different representational strategies:

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[83] The link, reflected in miniature here, between *War and Peace* and classical epic comes up in contemporary reviews of the novel, in Tolstoy's own diaries and in his famous remark, quoted in Gorky's memoirs, that "*War and Peace* is like the *Iliad*" (M. Gor'kii, *Vospominaniia*. Excerpted in Bychkov, *L.N. Tolstoi v russkoi kritike*, 429). According to Gorky, Tolstoy had been heard to make the same remark about parts of his pseudo-autobiographical trilogy, *Childhood* [*Detstvo*] and *Boyhood* [*Otrochestvo*]). Boris Eikhenbaum comments on Hélène's name and her "antique" beauty as one of the "curious details" Tolstoy uses to strengthen the link with the *Iliad* ("Ocherednye problemy izucheniia L'va Tolstogo" in *Trudy iubileinoi sessii. Sektsiia filologicheskikh nauk* [Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Leningradskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta, 1946], 288). On Hélène as a transformation of Homer's Helen, see also L. Jepsen, *From Achilles to Christ: The Myth of the Hero in Tolstoy's* War and Peace (Author's copyright, 1978), 53–60.

[84] [Ее бюст, казавшийся всегда мраморным Пьеру, находился в таком близком расстоянии от его глаз, что он своими близорукими глазами невольно различал живую прелесть ее плеч и шеи, и так близко от его губ, что ему стоило немного нагнуться, чтобы прикоснуться до нее. Он слышал тепло ее тела, запах духов и скрып ее корсета при движении. Он видел не ее мраморную красоту, составлявшую одно целое с ее платьем, он видел и чувствовал всю прелесть ее тела, которое было закрыто только одеждой. И, раз увидав это, он не мог видеть иначе, как мы не можем возвратиться к раз объясненному обману. «Так вы до сих пор не замечали, как я прекрасна? — как будто сказала Элен. — Вы не замечали, что я женщина? (9:249)]

Hélène's body as Pierre perceives it brings her into the same characterological sphere as Pierre himself, linking her character with the necessity of representing what transcends words.

Hélène's vivid physicality lasts only long enough to lure Pierre into a marriage coded as an *existential* mismatch: "he felt that he was occupying someone else's place here beside Hélène. 'This happiness is not for you, some inner voice whispered to him. This happiness is for those who have not in them what there is in you.'" (226)[85] And when he is faced with the consequences of his marriage, Pierre's instinct seems to be to beat Hélène back into the material of which she was made: " 'I'll kill you!' he shouted, and seizing the marble top of a table. . . he made a step towards her brandishing the slab" (343; 10:31).

Hélène's conversion back into marble and the distant space of mock-epic, however, is not accomplished easily. Indeed, she returns so persistently that some readers, at least, have seen her as one of the novel's heroines. She establishes a salon that rivals Anna Pavlovna Scherer's own; Boris Drubetskoy courts her, Napoleon calls her a "'superbe animal'" (470; 10:177), and Natasha falls under her "shadow" (608; 10:331). After she and Pierre have separated and she has played her secondary role in Natasha's seduction, her place in the novel, surprisingly, grows: she ends by anchoring several caustically-narrated scenes in her own right, as she converts to Catholicism and divorces Pierre. The classical marble impassivity of her beauty has by now been reimagined novelistically, as the "lacquer from all the thousand gazes that have passed over her body [*lak ot vsekh tysiach vzgliadov, skol'zivshikh po ee telu*]" (492 [translation modified];10:203). This "lacquer" of gazes suggests a compromise between the vivid physical life once realized in Hélène, and her distance from the heart of life as the novel represents it.

It might be argued that the narrative begins by lending Hélène a vividly sensuous body so it can end by revealing that this sensuality is self-vanquishing: early in Book IV, she falls ill with "an inconvenience resulting from marrying two husbands at the same time" (12:4) — an apparent euphemism for the abortion of her first, illegitimate pregnancy — and she kills herself soon after. But the very moralistic neatness of this death points up the work the narrative has to do to get rid of Hélène's body, some thousand pages after her physical presence has played its role — to return it to form, once Pierre has seen it as real.

The representation of Boris Drubetskoy follows an opposite trajectory. He begins the novel as an explicitly embodied character, who blushes when the thirteen-year-old Natasha asks if he wants to kiss her (47; 9:53), and again when he wants to aggressively forestall Pierre's impression that he and his mother are fortune-hunters (58; 9:66), and who smiles "the happy smile seen on the faces of young men who have been under fire for the first time" at the Battle of Austerlitz (302; 9:344). But over the course of the novel, this physicality wavers and eventually disappears.[86] Just as Hélène's vivid embodiment emerges in her encounter with a protagonist —

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[85] [ему казалось, что тут, подле Элен, он занимает чье-то чужое место. Не для тебя это счастье, — говорил ему какой-то внутренний голос. — Это счастье для тех, у кого нет того, что есть у тебя. (9:257)]

[86] Though I will not pursue this interpretation in depth, Boris's transformation might be mapped onto the novel's pre-history in drafts. Scholars have traced his passage from central to progressively more minor hero, a process Feuer sums up as a division into "negative and positive characteristics": the novel's initial heroes, "Petr Krinitsyn" and "Boris Zubtsov," combined traits that would later be distributed among Pierre Bezukhov (positive) and Anatole Kuragin

from Pierre's sudden *realization* of her sensuality — Boris's growing transparency follows Natasha's diminishing perception of his body.

The last mention of Boris after he has kissed Natasha, before a 200-page disappearance, is Natasha's summons to sing his part in a quartet at the name-day party — which we know he sings in only because it *was* a quartet (70; 9:79). We do not hear his name again until Natasha confesses that she can no longer picture him when she closes her eyes (249; 9:284). Almost immediately afterwards, the Rostovs begin to discuss Boris in a purely functional role as a broker of connections and ties: "it was decided to send the letters and money by the Grand Duke's courier to Boris, and Boris was to forward them to Nikolushka" (252; 9:287).

This functionality seems to spread from the Rostovs' perception of Boris to his representation in omniscient discourse. When the narrator finds him immediately after this scene, Boris is embedded in a chain of messages and purposeful connections, marked by the conjunction "through" (*cherez*): "Boris during the campaign had made the acquaintance of many persons who might prove useful to him, and by [*cherez*] a letter of recommendation he had brought from Pierre, had become acquainted with Prince Andrei Bolkonsky through whom [*cherez kotorogo*] he hoped to receive a post. . ." (254; 9:287, 288). Tied to a thematic function (ambition) and a narrative task (linking) that send him *through* the novel's other characters, Boris no longer has a consistent physical presence in *War and Peace*. Not even his "white hands" (254; 9:289) recur as a metonymic bodily marker, in the way that Napoleon's and Speransky's famously do.

As I have already suggested, Boris's ghostly transparency is useful to the novel. He observes the meeting of Alexander and Napoleon at Tilsit, timing it to precisely one hour and fifty-three minutes (436; 10:129).[87] He finds a way, too, to observe the conversation, at a ball in June 1812, where Alexander learns that Napoleon has resumed hostilities (656; 11:14). His perspective thus inserts the political pivots of Russia's war with Napoleon into *War and Peace*, even as the nose for historical significance that motivates this eavesdropping keeps him at arm's length from its central narrative. Similarly, Boris intersects with all the major fictional characters — as Nikolai's friend, Andrei's protégé, Pierre's rival, and a suitor to Natasha and Marya — but the connections turn out to be arid: Nikolai and Boris part ways at Tilsit, Andrei's patronage comes to nothing, Pierre never duels with Boris, and Boris does not propose to Marya or Natasha.

(negative); and Andrei Bolkonsky (positive) and Boris Drubetskoy (negative) (Feuer, *Genesis*, 23–24, 62–66, 114–15; see also Zaidenshnur, *Roman Tolstogo*, 158–59). Clear as this division is, I suggest that the traces of Boris's transformation from potentially-major to definitively-minor character remain in the final version of the novel.

[87] Boris's observations closely follow the description of the Tilsit peace in A.I. Mikhailovskii-Danilevskii's *Opisanie vtoroi voini imperatora Aleksandra s Napoleonom*, one of the volumes on which Tolstoy relied (16:142). Indeed, by having Boris time the meeting, Tolstoy places him in the position of a particular observer on the bank, Prince Mikhail Semenovich Vorontsov, Mikhailovskii-Danilevskii's source for the fact that the meeting lasted "one hour and fifty minutes"; Boris (of course) is still more pedantically accurate (*Opisanie vtoroi voini...* [Saint Petersburg, 1846], 364–66. Accessed < http://dlib.rsl.ru/viewer/01003542257#?page=1> [the Russian National Library website]).

It is his final, brief attraction back towards Natasha that best sums up this hybrid place in the narrative, the *palpable* use that narrator and protagonists make of his transparency.

When Boris returns to the Rostovs' house, three years after the novel began, he remembers Natasha as we first saw her, reinvoking his own entrance into the novel: "in a short dress, with dark eyes shining from under her curls and boisterous, childish laughter" (479; 10:189). But in a nighttime talk with her mother, Natasha herself sums up Boris's intervening transformation: "he is so narrow, like the dining-room clock. . . Narrow, you know, gray, light [*svetlyi*] . . ." (483; 10:193). Natasha's image of Boris — gray, clear, and as narrow as a table clock — precisely reflects what we have seen of Boris as he timed the Emperors' meeting at Tilsit.

I have already quoted the passage that follows this conversation, when Natasha, back in bed, attempts to describe herself:

> She kept thinking that no one could understand all that she understood and all there was in her. "Sonya?" she thought. . . "No, how could she! She's virtuous. She fell in love with Nikolen'ka and does not wish to know anything more. Even Mama does not understand. It is wonderful how clever I am and how... charming she is," she went on, speaking of herself in the third person, and imagining it was some very wise man — the wisest and best of men — who was saying it of her. (483–84; 10:193)

Natasha's reference to the difference between herself and Sonya suggests that what "no one understands" has to do with Sonya's constancy to Nikolai and her own repudiation of her childhood love for Boris. But this repudiation is displaced, in the narrative of Natasha's consciousness, by an image of herself through the eyes of a purely *hypothetical* man. Like her image of Boris as a gray clock, Natasha's interior monologue represents her connection with the omniscient narrative at once through Boris, and over his head.

Rejoining the sphere of the novel's protagonists, Boris thus serves as a pretext to renew the illusion of Natasha's mimetic life; he provides the occasion for a new stage in her erotic awareness of herself, though his own fictional body is by now invisible. In both the novel's fictional and its historical plots, he is indispensable as someone to look through, as a cause that fades almost completely into the effect it produces in the discourse.[88] The next sentence after Natasha's dream dispenses with him — "Next day the countess called Boris aside and had a talk with him, after which he ceased coming to the Rostovs" (10:193; 484) By the end of Book II, he has been safely (and satirically) married off to Julie Karagina. After the Battle of Borodino, he disappears from the novel, and his very absence can be taken as the sign of its solidifying central circle — the decisive end of the Emperors' political negotiations; the major characters' clustering closer together, towards what will become their permanent configurations.

But in his time-keeping grayness, the vanishing Boris might be taken for a ghost of his initial self — a kind of remnant of mimetic life. Boris's example, then, pushes the question of

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[88] In Woloch's terms, he has been recast as a "worker" (*The One vs. the Many*, 25); see also W.J. Harvey on "ficelles" (an image borrowed from Henry James's *Portrait of a Lady* preface), characters who "exists in the novel primarily to serve some function" (*Character and the Novel*, 58).

mimetic life further: what discourages or preserves the impulse to see a character's "life" in *War and Peace*? How long does the illusion last?

In Lise Bolkonskaya, Prince Andrei's wife, the problem of the minor character's body (presented so sharply in Hélène Kuragina) meets this problem of her longevity, the span of the minor character's mimetic life.

Lise's raised, downy upper lip may be the most iconic metonym in 19th century Russian literature. As Dmitry Merezhkovsky described this image in his 1900–1902 study of Dostoevsky and Tolstoy:

> Thanks to these repetitions and underlinings of one bodily feature first in the living, then in the dead, then on the face of her statue, and finally, on the face of her son, the "upper lip" of the little princess is engraved on our memory, stamped onto it with indelible clarity, so that we cannot remember the little princess without also imagining the raised upper lip with the little moustache.[89]

Merezhkovsky compares this technique to the layering on of paint, "stroke upon stroke, thickening it more and more"; this device helps make Tolstoy the master in all world literature of "representing the human body by means of the word." But he also notes that such repeated metonyms as Lise's lip can seem fantastically unreal: "In the end, [Speransky's] white hand starts to haunt one, like an apparition: as if it has been separated from the rest of the body — just like the upper lip of the little princess — it acts on its own and lives its own separate, strange, almost supernatural life."[90]

Merezhkovsky's observations capture, among other points, something fundamental about the minor characters of *War and Peace*. The repetition that links "outer" and "inner" reality for many characters throughout the novel — Hélène's shoulders or Anatole's legs and their animal sensuality, Julie Karagina's powdered chin and her false sentiment, Marya's "luminous eyes" and her spiritual depth, Pierre's massivity and his social clumsiness — saturates the details that make its world feel physically real. But in the case of most minor characters, these physical fragments do not correspond to a sustained mimetic life in the novel, the illusion of an autonomous existence within its discourse: in more than one sense, they are present only in isolated parts. Indeed, Viktor Shklovsky describes such characterological compression, a device he calls "accenting," in terms of something very like a character-system. To understand the repeated descriptions of Lise Bolkonskaya's upper lip, he suggests, "it is necessary to explain the difference between Tolstoy's characterization of characters depending on their *métrage*, as a cinematographer would say, or we could say, on the quantity of lines set aside for them. . . . The dimensions of *War and Peace* are extraordinary. . . that is, the quantity of characters and the great historic material that demanded inclusion oppressed" Tolstoy. With little "space" left for secondary characters, Tolstoy "gave them an accent," a recurring image like Lise's upper lip.[91]

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[89] D.S. Merezhkovskii, *L. Tolstoi i Dostoevskii. Zhizn' i tvorchestvo* (Moscow: Nauka, 2000), 91–92; all translations from Merezhkovsky are mine.
[90] ibid., 95; 96.
[91] *Material i stil'*, 100–101.

But Merezhkovsky's description defamiliarizes this device, by emphasizing its uncanniness.[92] Reminded of these bodies while immersed in the stability of the novel's character-system, we may begin to feel that something is living which ought not to be living.

Lise's case is most revealing, perhaps, because the impulse to compare her to the novel's central protagonists comes with her placement in the story as well as her representation in the discourse. Unlike Hélène and Boris, who bring their family spheres into collision with those of the major protagonists, Lise has been annexed (as one sympathetic study points out) to a family in which she evidently does not belong.[93] Because this story-position so often makes her the third to a pair of major characters, Lise shows us how closely the lines of intimacy in Tolstoy's novel follow its character-system. Andrei kisses his wife's hand "as he would a stranger's" (29; 9:34), but to Pierre, he confides that he wishes he had never married: "You are the first and only one to whom I mention this, because I love you [*ia liubliu tebia*]" (30 [translation modified]; 9:35). Evoked primarily by varied portrayals of her upper lip, her presence is overwhelmed by the existential proportions of the scenes in which she is placed. What we see, then, is the poignancy of this very overwhelming: faced with the same door between life and death that helps define Marya and Andrei, Lise simply dies invisibly, offstage.

But Merezhkovsky's description suggests that another, still broader device may be at stake. Lise's upper lip "is engraved on our memory, stamped onto it with indelible clarity [*vrezyvaetsia v pamiat' nashu, zapechatlevaietsia v nei s neizgladimoiu iasnostiu*], so that we cannot remember the little princess without also imagining the raised upper lip with the little moustache." What Merezhkovsky evokes is the power attached to characterization (stamping, engraving) as a literary device — to the containment of a figure in traits or words that can be broken off from the whole of the novel.

The heart of the problem (and also of the potential) presented in Lise, Boris Drubetskoy, and Hélène Kuragina is the fictional body made not just legible — or, as Merezhkovsky has it, "speaking" (100) — but *over*-legible. When Natasha's reflection speaks to her in the mirror, it says — "There, that's me! [*Vot ona ia!*]." When her smile speaks to Pierre, in their first meeting after Andrei's death, it says — "this was Natasha, and he loved her [*eto byla Natasha, i on liubil ee*]" (1198 [translation modified]; 12:215). When the dead Lise Bolkonskaya's expression speaks to Andrei, it says: "'I love you all, and have done no harm to anyone; and what have you done to me? [*chto vy so mnoi sdelali*?]'" (351; 10:40-41). The angel over her grave repeats her question: " 'Ah, why have you done this to me?'" (395) [*"'Akh, zachem vy eto so mnoi sdelali?'..."* (10: 93)]. Lise's "What have you done to me?" is Natasha's "There, that's me!" turned inside out. Where Natasha's face signifies the illusion of irreducible, extra-linguistic presence, Lise's signifies the conversion of presence into utterance, or word.

Lise Bolkonskaya thus distills for us the device by which Hélène's vivid body asks Pierre, " 'You had not noticed that I am a woman?'" (219), and by which Boris appears, to Natasha, to be as "narrow as a table-clock." By allowing the major characters of *War and Peace* to read the minor ones, reducing them to speaking characteristics, this device prompts us in turn to read

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[92] On the Gothic horror of Merezhkovsky's image, see O. Matich, *Erotic Utopia* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005), 35.
[93] See N. Sankovitch, *Creating and Recovering Experience: Repetition in Tolstoy* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 58–64.

them strictly according to the thematic lines of its character-system. A character who can be so consistently read, however, can also be re-written, or transcribed — not just by major characters recounting minor ones, but by readers encountering the descriptions in Tolstoy's text. If, as Merezhkovsky insisted, Lise's upper lip is meant to follow us *through* the larger textual whole in which it is placed, it may be ready to follow us out of the text as well. Lise, like Dolokhov, Sonya, Hélène, and Boris, risks arresting us just to the extent that we imagine her as she was *not* written in *War and Peace*.[94]

In the case of the almost thoroughly idealized character Platon Karataev, I would suggest, Tolstoy attempts to mobilize the same strategy in another way — to write a character who can be detached from the whole of the novel *just* as he was written within it. The image with which Platon's body speaks to Pierre — he is as "round" as the water drop which, in Pierre's allegorical dream, reflects the whole of creation — evokes a part that can separate from the whole while still being *of* it, a complete and perfect copy in itself. But this very portrait of Platon demonstrates the difficulties of this vision, at least from within the framework of mimetic life as represented in realist novels. It separates the ideal of Platon's organic "life" (in the story) out from the technical components of mimesis (in the discourse) by packaging this "life" for export, summing it up in words: "Every word and action of his was the manifestation of an activity unknown to him, which was his life. But his life, as he regarded it, had no meaning as a separate thing. It had meaning only as part of a whole of which he was always conscious. His words and actions flowed from him as evenly, inevitably, and spontaneously as fragrance exhales from a flower" (1048).[95] One might suggest, indeed, that it is Lise Bolkonskaya who shows why Platon Karataev seems fictionally implausible. In Platon's case, theme and technique clash: the difference the novel itself makes between a character given in characterizing descriptions or details, and one made to "live" in excess of the language that directly characterizes him, makes the *description of life* a kind of paradox in itself.[96]

6. Expanding the illusion: Marginal characters and mimetic life

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[94] For this kind of reconstruction of Lise's life — closely following Tolstoy's text, but offering a narrative dissociated from the perspective of its central characters — see again Sankovitch (note 93 above). In her convincing analysis, I would question only whether a "coherent individuality" can be constructed around a "repeated physical attribute": that individuality, it seems to me, must be *filled in*, from clues in the text that permit a sympathetic and interested reader to rewrite the scenes in which Lise appears.

[95] [Каждое слово его и каждое действие было проявлением неизвестной ему деятельности, которая была его жизнь. Но жизнь его, как он сам смотрел на нее, не имела смысла, как отдельная жизнь. Она имела смысл только как частица целого, которое он постоянно чувствовал. Его слова и действия выливались из него так же равномерно, необходимо и непосредственно, как запах отделяется от цветка. (12:51)]

[96] Cf. Jeff Love's suggestive comment that for Pierre Bezukhov, Platon Karataev is an ideal "whose content contradicts its form": just by making him into an ideal, Pierre goes against the everyday, prosaic wisdom that he ought to have learned from Platon's example (*Overcoming History*, 177).

"There, that's me!": The Discontent of Character in Tolstoy's *War and Peace*

I have attempted to describe how the illusion of the major protagonists' lives is woven into the main omniscient narrative of *War and Peace*, and I have discussed a group of minor characters in order to explore what it means not, or not always, to have mimetic life in Tolstoy's novel. In the Kuragins, Karagins, Drubetskoys, and Dolokhovs, in Sonya and in Lise Bolkonskaya, Tolstoy creates figures whose fictional lives are explicitly tangential to the novel's represented world. Building on the signs of their lives that the novel does incorporate — contained interiority and diffused physicality, whether concentrated in the repetition of a single "speaking" body-part or dissipated in the imagination of a body that fades throughout the text — we can imagine what the sustained illusion of their physical presence and the space of their minds would be like. But it is not an act of imagination *this* novel's structure encourages.

In this respect, it is important to recognize that the character-system of *War and Peace* adopts and relies on the constraints of the European novel from which Tolstoy was so anxious to distinguish his book. To the extent that *War and Peace* needs a fictional plot, the Kuragins and Dolokhov provide it with one. When letters or secret notes must be transmitted, Sonya and Boris hand them on. The specter of Lise Bolkonskaya hangs over Andrei's life in the novel, shaping his character and elaborating his family's thematic line. And this kind of functionality, which confines minor characters to their effect on the development of a story focused around major ones, does not stop with "negative" figures, or with the most prominent fictional families. The lisping Denisov, who functions like a Dolokhov transposed into a major key, spends large swaths of the novel offstage, but always returns to pay tribute to the Rostovs. Agrafena Ivanovna Belova, the Rostovs' country neighbor, materializes to take Natasha to church after she has broken her engagement with Andrei, and reappears as Countess Rostova's companion in Part One of the Epilogue. The French drummer-boy Vincent Bosse awakens Petya's compassion; the provincial governor's wife suggests that Nikolai should marry Marya; during the Moscow fires, Captain Ramballe shows Pierre his love for Natasha in a new romantic light.

But Ramballe already leads such an analysis into difficulties. Why should the novel find him again near the end of Book IV, captured by the Fifth Regiment at Krasnoe? And why should we watch his drunken servant Morel sing to the Russian soldiers, and watch one of them try to imitate his French (12:196)? Ramballe and Morel are the only familiar characters to appear in the scene of the camp at Krasnoe, which extends over three vivid chapters. The scene's similarity to a chapter in Book I, where Andrei watches a soldier imitate Dolokhov speaking French with the enemy soldiers, makes us feel how far the narrative has come from home. It is no longer always the case that scenes enter the novel through the network of its known fictional characters' gazes, or even that they are passed directly from familiar eyes to unfamiliar ones. If so minor a character as Ramballe can link us to the regiment at Krasnoe, the network of fictional characters has begun to grow exponentially: coincidence is no longer in the service of coherence. The novel has changed the ground beneath our feet.

The climactic developments in the fictional plot at the end of Book II mark a new stage in the narrative of *War and Peace*. After Natasha's seduction, the burden of movement and event in the novel gets transferred from families like the Drubetskoys, the Dolokhovs, and the Kuragins to historical actors like Kutuzov and Napoleon. Though many of the minor characters reappear from time to time, their appearances are less significant now in terms of the plot, than in terms of historical events. Anna Pavlovna Scherer's salon remains changeless, even in wartime; Boris

Drubetskoy revels in the military power-plays surrounding the Battle of Borodino; Dolokhov is green with fear during the partisan raid in which Petya Rostov dies.

This global shift into the framework of history, however, does not fundamentally disturb the thematic structure that has dictated the terms of the novel's character-system. Rather, that structure is emptied of its reference to specific characters and magnified to embrace a national historical narrative; and eventually, I want to suggest, a *principle* of historical narrative. A look at one of the novel's most remarkable sequences, the eight-chapter gap in Book III, Part 3 between Pierre's meeting with the Rostovs on the emptying streets of Moscow and his first encounter with Captain Ramballe, will begin to clarify this process.

The sequence begins with Napoleon's internal monologue as he waits, in vain, for a deputation from the surrendered capital. The representation of major historical actors in the second half of the novel is consistently more intimate than in the first: they become focalizers (in long scenes, such as Balashev's delivery of Alexander I's letter to Napoleon; or briefly, as when Napoleon attempts to penetrate the confusion at the Battle of Borodino), and their thoughts become a subject of narration. Particularly in the case of Napoleon, this intimate representation serves the historical argument carried on in digressions and in Part 2 of the Epilogue: like the famous scene of Napoleon's plump body being brushed on the eve of the Battle of Borodino (III.2.XXVI), the humiliating frustration of his grandiose plans for Moscow emphasizes his humanity only to prove its limitations. If Andrei's comparison of Napoleon's voice, after the Battle of Austerlitz, to the buzzing of a fly marks the end of his personal enchantment with the myth of Napoleon, these scenes target the same myth at the level of omniscient narration. What begins as a stage in a protagonist's trajectory is lifted to the status of a fact about the historical world *War and Peace* represents.

The space opened by the framework of this represented historical world lets in much that a strict attachment to named protagonists would filter out. Nameless Russian troops, officers, and shopkeepers crowd onto bridges that no longer need a named fictional character at one end or the other. In Books I and II, marginal characters are most often used to bracket and surround the major protagonists' experiences. Exemplary are the staff-members that Andrei and Nikolai hear teasing Kutuzov's cook Tit at the beginning and end of the Battle of Austerlitz (282, 307; 9:342, 9:372); the "humming infantry" that surrounds Tushin's guns "like a frame" after Schön Grabern (208; 9:238); and the troops — among them Boris and Nikolai — whose thoughts we hear communally before the review at Olmütz, each one "aware of being but a drop in that ocean of men, and yet at the same time. . . conscious of his strength as part of that enormous whole" (260; 9:299). But in the scene of Vereshchagin's massacre, at the heart of the 8-chapter sequence I am tracing, we see this collective ocean erupt from its frame and framing function:

> The crowd remained silent and only pressed closer and closer to one another. To keep one another back, to breathe in that stifling atmosphere, to be unable to stir, and to await something unknown, uncomprehended, and terrible, was becoming unbearable. Those standing in front. . . all stood with wide open eyes and mouths, straining with all their strength, and held back the crowd that was pushing behind them. . . . But after the exclamation of surprise that had escaped from Vereshchagin he uttered a plaintive cry of pain, and that cry was fatal. The barrier of human feeling, strained to the utmost, that had held the crowd in check, suddenly broke. . . . Like the seventh and last wave that shatters

> a ship, that last irresistible wave burst from the rear and reached the front ranks, carrying them off their feet and engulfing them all. (955)[97]

Multiplicity has taken on its own independent, if irrational, agency and life.

What happens, then, in between Book II and Book III of the novel, might be described as a reversal of picture and frame. What was the condition for protagonists' action and development — a relationship to historical heroes like Napoleon, a place within a historical crowd — is now itself the action the novel is most invested in narrating. And a final scene, interposed between the humiliation of Napoleon and the lynching of Vereshchagin, helps reveal, in turn, the way that the thematically-central protagonists come to set off these events. The Rostovs have left Moscow, but their servants stay behind. The housekeeper, Mavra Kuzmyshina, offers hospitality and money to a stranded officer who claims to be their distant relative; as she repeatedly says, " 'If the count had been at home. . .[*Kak by graf doma byli. . .*]'" (944; 11: 336). Mavra Kuzmyshina's gift suggests that not only the social, but also the thematic structure of the novel's character-system remain stable in the literal absence of its central protagonists. The Rostovs' generosity stands for a general (national) trait, even as it is still expressed by their servant, with reference to their name.[98] Mavra Kuzmyshina's gift to a Rostov on behalf of the Rostovs speaks to the representative flexibility the novel finds in its character-system, the way in which its thematic lines stretch to the scale of the gargantuan mimetic project in its second half. As Tolstoy has Andrei comment still more directly in one early draft outline: "Our success is the soldiers' success, the success of the *muzhik* . . . I've remembered about Dolokhov. His success is Bonap[arte's]. It is intrigue, it cannot alter, as character [*kharakter*] cannot alter, whatever war

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[97] [Народ молчал и только всё теснее и теснее нажимал друг на друга. Держать друг друга, дышать в этой зараженной духоте, не иметь силы пошевелиться и ждать чего-то неизвестного, непонятного и страшного, становилось невыносимо. Люди, стоящие в передних рядах . . . все с испуганно-широко раскрытыми глазами и разинутыми ртами, напрягая все свои силы, удерживали на своих спинах напор задних. . . . .Но вслед за восклицанием удивления, вырвавшимся у Верещагина, он жалобно вскрикнул от боли, и этот крик погубил его. Та натянутая до высшей степени преграда человеческого чувства, которая держала еще толпу, прорвалась мгновенно. . . . Как последний седьмой вал, разбивающий корабли, взмыла из задних рядов эта последняя неудержимая волна, донеслась до передних, сбила их и поглотила всё. (11: 344–45)]

[98] Gary Saul Morson reads this episode as a "particularly telling example" of creation by potential in *War and Peace*, since it receives such narrative emphasis but has no repercussions on the fictional plot, the lives of the major characters, or the portrait of the abandoned city (*Hidden*, 148–49). A Russian reviewer of Morson's study countered that on the contrary, Mavra Kuzmyshina's donation of her 25 roubles speaks to the "general national sacrifice" and the unity inspired by Napoleon's invasion, one of the novel's most important thematic threads (A.G. Grodetskaia, "Vozzrashchenie k diskussii o zhanre 'Voiny i mira,'" *Russkaia literatura* 3 [1991], 185). My reading falls in between these positions: the episode acts as a bridge between the lives of the major characters, and the national events those lives (in their thematic functions) must be made to illuminate and structure.

brings."[99] What links Napoleon and Dolokhov is their reliance on plotting — their belief in their own capacity to influence and direct the actions of others. Not just character-traits like generosity, but character-functions like "intrigue," thus take on meaning in the terms of Tolstoy's polemical representation of history. Napoleon's orientation on personal power, as the digressions will argue, makes him a "tool" in the hands of history (649; 11:6), subject to its laws precisely because he associates himself with the fate of so many people. The outline fragment encourages us to see him, like Dolokhov, as a weapon in the hands of plot — subject, like any character but particularly any minor character, to the demands that form makes on substance.

But this kind of shift raises a difficult, perhaps insoluble, technical question about the conversion of an individual (fictional) narrative into a collective (historical) one. Its underlying terms are articulated in the digression that opens Part 2 of Book III:

> Napoleon began the war with Russia because he could not resist going to Dresden. . .
> Alexander refused negotiations because he felt himself to be personally insulted. Barclay
> de Tolly tried to command the army in the best way because he wished to fulfill his duty
> and earn fame as a great commander. Rostov charged the French because he could not
> restrain his wish for a gallop across a level field; and in the same way the innumerable
> people who took part in the war [*neperechislimye litsa, uchastniki etoi voiny*] acted in
> accord with their personal characteristics, habits, circumstances, and aims. . . . Such is the
> inevitable fate of men of action, and the higher they stand in the social hierarchy the less
> are they free. (732; 11:98)

The rhetoric in this passage marks and manipulates an aspect of the novel's character-system that has up to now remained in the background of my discussion. Almost half its named characters have real-world referents; they thus, absolutely if not effectively for every reader, operate by different standards of mimetic life.[100] They can neither come alive exclusively within the text,

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[99] [Успех наш — успех солдат, успех мужика, народа, а не Б[арклая] и умирающего Кут[узова]. Я вспомнил о Долохове. Его успех есть успех Бонап[арта]. Это интрига, не может измениться, как не может измениться характер, что будет от войны. (13:36)] Partially cited in Feuer, *Genesis*, 165. According to Feuer, the point here is primarily political: Dolokhov's victory, like Napoleon's, would represent the triumph of a usurper over the natural socioeconomic order.

[100] Many accounts, among them Shklovsky's, would contradict this claim: "if we see Napoleon and Kutuzov next to Natasha Rostova, next to all the Rostovs and Kuragins, we should consider them all in the writer's system of analysis, historical characters on the same footing as imaginary ones" (V. Shklovskii, *Lev Tolstoi* [Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1967], 291; my translation). This view suggests that the narrator's statements about Napoleon and Alexander should, like his statements about Nikolai, be referred back only to his own text. It seems to me counter-intuitive mainly because it undermines the novel's deep interest — acknowledged by Shklovsky elsewhere (cf. *Povesty*, Vol. 2, 281–82) — in the possibility of chronicling *historical* events. Many "possible worlds" theorists of narrative fictionality, however, share a version of Shklovsky's view: see R. Ronen, *Possible Worlds in Literary Theory* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 122–30; and Doležel, *Heterocosmica*, 18; he reaffirms this

like the protagonists, nor have the fullest versions of their lives consigned to other potential novels, like (perhaps) the minor characters. Their lives are in fact realized elsewhere, more completely and definitively than any fictional character's could be.[101] And the proper names that they share with their real-world referents operate as invitations to compare their words and actions in the novel with historical documents and (ultimately, if impossibly) with the persons and events to which these documents refer.[102] Whereas the text makes a reality felt only within its own language, Tolstoy's Napoleon, Kutuzov, and Alexander are fictionalized variants on people who exist in the world outside the novel.

The passage thus establishes a "hierarchy" that is not just social, but also ontological. The narrator's claims about Napoleon, Alexander, and Barclay de Tolly in the context of the digression present themselves as a reading of history, open to support or dispute. But if we wanted to challenge the claim that "Rostov charged the French because he could not restrain his wish for a gallop," we could refer only to the original of this scene in the text itself. As Catherine Gallagher has argued, such ontological shifts are standard in historical fiction even within sentences, between "the fictional bits, the moments of novelistic characterization [of historical characters] that convey judgments and opinions. . . and the historical parts, representing the established facts that are under interpretation."[103]

At the level of the historical *crowd*, however, it is hard if not impossible to decide which mode — fictional, counter-factual, or historical — to read in when. We know where to look for the fullest realization of the lives of "Napoleon" and "Nikolai Rostov." But where are the lives of the "innumerable people" that their behavior, in Tolstoy's theory, exemplifies?

This very mystery, indeed — the slippage between the actual lives of people in a group and the words that try to capture and narrate them — is the foundation of the skepticism about

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position in *Possible Worlds of Fiction and History*, 84–86. For an account that focuses on the special problems raised by the historical novel, and by *War and Peace* in particular, see Dorrit Cohn, *The Distinction of Fiction* (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1998), 153–60. She argues for segregating the narrative portions of the novel, where Napoleon is treated like a fictional character, from the digressions, which remain "sharply separated" from the experience of fictional characters. Catherine Gallagher argues for a more flexible approach, which I largely adopt here: what is said about Napoleon in *War and Peace* may be fictional, but the referent of the name "Napoleon" is not. It is thus a generic requirement of the historical novel that its readers remain alert to constant shifts between fictional, historical, and counter-factual modes: discourse about made-up people, discourse that establishes facts about real people, and discourse that expresses authorial opinion about how these facts should be interpreted or how they could have worked out differently (see C. Gallagher, "What Would Napoleon Do?" *New Literary History* 42:2 [Spring 2011]: 315–336). I return to Gallagher's argument below.

[101] On the logical "incompleteness" of all fictional beings, as opposed to all non-fictional ones, see Ronen, *Possible Worlds*, 109.

[102] I build on Gallagher's view that a real person's proper name links ineradicably to that person as referent, even if the character they are given in a work of fiction is considered speculative or fictional ("What Would...," 316–17 ff.). Gallagher, in turn, relies on Saul Kripke's "rigid designator" theory of name reference (ibid., 328; see also Doležel, *Heterocosmica*, 16–18).

[103] Gallagher, "What Would...," 321; see notes 100 and 102 above.

historical narrative most fully worked out in Part Two of the Epilogue: "History is the life of nations and of humanity. To directly seize and encompass in words, to describe the life of humanity or even of a single nation, appears impossible" (1270 [translation modified]).[104] "Life" is, of course, a term charged throughout the narrative with a particular spiritual and philosophical meaning.[105] But here, as throughout my discussion in this chapter, I want to emphasize its significance as a *representational* ideal. This credo confronts the sphere of historical narrative with the impasse behind the concept of the fictional character-system. It directly poses the problem of describing the lives of *many* historical people.

In this respect, the discussion of free will and necessity in the digressions and epilogues of *War and Peace* is tied up with a question of mimetic characterization: of the relationship between a text and the human figures whose experience it tries to capture and evoke. This relationship may be problematic at best, but Part Two of the Epilogue indicates the *obvious* distortion of a history that insists on minor characters: "So long as histories are written of separate individuals. . . and not the history of *all*, without a single exception *all*, the people who take part in an event, it is quite impossible to avoid ascribing to individuals a force compelling other people to direct their activity towards a single end" (1278 [translation modified]).[106] No such force, the narrator contends, can be explained in human terms. And a narrative structured in terms of such a force thus leaves out almost everyone: "the activity of the millions who migrate, burn houses, abandon agriculture, and destroy one another, never is expressed in the account of the activity of some dozen people who did not burn houses, practice agriculture, or slay their fellow creatures. . . The life of the nations is not contained in the lives of a few men, for the connection between those men and the nations has not been found" (1283, 1284; 12:312, 313). Only a narrative in terms of events themselves, and not of the force of the individual "heroes" who putatively caused them, has a chance of escaping this deceptive asymmetry by acknowledging that the many who take part in the event play a greater role in it than the few who accept responsibility for it (1292; 12:321-22). But to narrate in terms of the accomplished event is to leave out individual wills entirely — to leave out that consciousness of free will which "forms the essence of . . . life" (1294; 12:324) — and thus again to fall short of the ideal of capturing many lives in text.

Though it seems like this position should lead Tolstoy to an aporia, it does not, or at least not entirely. It emerges that historians are presented with events as *faits accomplis* despite "the

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[104] [Предмет истории есть жизнь народов и человечества. Непосредственно уловить и обнять словом, — описать жизнь не только человечества, но одного народа, представляется невозможным. (12:296)]

[105] For a summary of this philosophical theme in *War and Peace*, see Orwin, *Tolstoy's Art*, Chapter 5 (see especially 123–40). For an innovative perspective on the novel's "biological thinking," and the tension between "nature and logic" or truth that conditions it, see Thomas Newlin's "'Swarm Life' and the Biology of *War and Peace*," *Slavic Review* 71:2 (Summer 2012): 359–84.

[106] [До тех пор пока пишутся истории отдельных лиц. . . а не история *всех*, без одного исключения *всех*, людей, принимающих участие в событии, — нет возможности не приписывать отдельным лицам силы, заставляющей других людей направлять свою деятельности к одной цели. (12:305)]

insoluble mystery of the unification of freewill and inevitability" (1297 [translation modified]; 12:327). These data allow historians to draw conclusions about how freedom and necessity — always inverse to one another — interact in our understanding of an action or event. The better we know the causes of an action; the less present the action is to us; and "the less complex the character and mind of the man in question [*chem neslozhnee kharakterom i umom tot chelovek*]," the more necessary that action seems (1300; 12:331). And the less completely we can know or define an action and an acting subject, the freer that action and subject seem to be. In the balance between these inverse qualities, which depends both on the person knowing and on the person and action known, is the descriptive force the theory seeks:

> Reason gives expression to the laws of inevitability. Consciousness gives expression to the essence of freedom. Freedom not limited by anything is the essence of life in man's consciousness. Necessity without content is man's reason in its three forms. Freedom is the thing examined. Necessity is what examines. Freedom is the content [*soderzhanie*]. Necessity is the form [*forma*]. Only by separating the two sources of cognition, related to one another as form to content, do we get the mutually exclusive and separately incomprehensible conceptions of freedom and necessity. Only by uniting them do we get a clear conception of man's life. (1304 [translation modified])[107]

In this passage, we see Tolstoy's own conception of the representational problem of "one" and "many." True history is a "history of all," but this history is governed by a law of necessity in which no living individual, conscious of his sense of freedom, can really believe. Honoring both these truths, the limited science of history can only focus on the ways freedom manifests itself in the external world; in other words, it *asymptotically* approaches the absolute laws of which, in order to experience freedom and life, each individual must in the end remain ignorant.[108]

This logic thus assumes that there is no permanent solution to the representational problem of writing a "history of all." And the Epilogue does not make a positive claim for *War and Peace* itself as an alternative to the inadequate rationalizations of history.[109] But it does, I

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[107] [Разум выражает законы необходимости. Сознание выражает сущность свободы. Свобода, ничем не ограниченная, есть сущность жизни в сознании человека. Необходимость без содержания есть разум человека с его тремя формами. Свобода есть то, что рассматривается. Необходимость есть то, что рассматривает. Свобода есть содержание. Необходимость есть форма. Только при разъединении двух источников познавания, относящихся друг к другу как форма к содержанию, получаются отдельно, взаимно исключающиеся и непостижимые понятия о свободе и о необходимости. Только при соединении их получается ясное представление о жизни человека. (12:336)]

[108] This, as I understand it, is the essence of Jeff Love's conclusion in his detailed reconstruction of Tolstoy's philosophical argument in the digressions and Part Two of the Epilogue: cf. *The Overcoming of History*, 72–95 and 123–56.

[109] Several recent readings have nevertheless focused on pinpointing the relationship between *War and Peace* and historical narrative, some in response to Gary Saul Morson's claim that *War and Peace* uses the freedom of fiction negatively to suggest skepticism about *any* form of historical narration. Andrew Wachtel describes an "intergeneric dialogue" between literature,

"There, that's me!": The Discontent of Character in Tolstoy's *War and Peace*

want to claim more modestly, offer a way of describing the transformation of the novel's own character-system throughout its second half. From the vantage point of the novel's end, clear parallels emerge between Tolstoy's theory of historical action as caught between subjective freedom and objective necessity, and the practices of fictional characterization I have been describing.[110]

At the core of *War and Peace* is a group of figures whose minds and characters are seen as complex, whose actions and decisions are often represented from the inside, as ongoing and undetermined. This group includes not just the novel's protagonists, but also (in Morson's apt formulation) its potential protagonists: Pierre and Natasha, but also Petya Rostov and the artillery captain Tushin. Their consciousnesses do not appear to be self-determining or absolute, but they do consistently appear to be subjectively *present* within, and inextricably from, a surrounding narrative that also represents their external boundaries as figures or "characters," boundaries that they themselves cannot perceive. There is, indeed, a kind of allegory about Tolstoyan freedom

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history, and meta-history, three kinds of narrative in the novel that set problems for and mutually illuminate one another (*An Obsession with History: Russian Writers Confront the Past* [Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994], Chapter 5). Love contends that in *War and Peace*, the "synthetic whole" of fictional "narrative becomes the expression of a resolution to the contradiction" between freedom and necessity (*The Overcoming of History*, 156). Dan Ungurianu argues that *War and Peace* represents a new, realist approach to history in the historical novel; here, "literary fiction ceases being an antonym to nonfiction, turning into something of a supportive discipline in the writer's comprehensive analysis of the world" (*Plotting History: The Russian Historical Novel in the Imperial Age* [Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2007], 120). The historian Ekaterina Tsimbaeva comes to an opposite conclusion: enumerating (in a Shklovskian key) the many ways in which Tolstoy's novel departs from the facts of early 19th century aristocratic life, she suggests that Tolstoy intentionally placed his fictional heroes in a space of "pseudo-history," using some historical details and distorting others to support the vision articulated in a fictional narrative that approaches the timelessness of parable ("Istoricheskii kontekst v khudozhestvennom obraze: dvorianskoe obshchestvo v romane 'Voina i mir,'" *Voprosy literatury* 5 [Oct. 2004]: 175–215). As I will suggest in what follows, it seems to me that any plausible solution to this tangled conceptual web will need to coexist with the significance of the tangle itself.

[110] The surprisingly few prior critical accounts relating Tolstoy's theory of history to his practices of characterization include Michael Holquist's "Character Change as Language Change in *War and Peace*," in *Russianness: Studies on a Nation's Identity* [Ann Arbor: Ardis (Studies of the Harriman Institute), 1990], 215); Jeff Love's *The Overcoming of History in* War and Peace (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2004), Chapter Five; and (most recently) two articles by Lina Steiner: "The Ends of 'Personality': Tolstoy and the Problem of Modern Identity" in *From Petersburg to Bloomington: Studies Presented in Honor of Nina Perlina*, ed. J. Bartle et. al., 355–372 (Bloomington, IN: Slavica, 2012 [*Indiana Slavic Studies*, 18]); and "Tolstoy, Liberal and Pluralist: On 'Personality' and the Protagonist in *War and Peace* (*Russian Literature* 36 [2009]: 424–442. All these readings focus on named, central protagonists; here I offer an account of the Epilogue's relevance to the innovative construction of the novel's character-system as a whole.

and necessity in such mimetic life: a life embedded in text and thus absolutely determined, and yet felt as free, each time we read that text, in the persons of the "live" protagonists themselves.

Contiguous with this core is a larger, but still bounded group of characters who appear to be less complicated, more subject to the laws of the social world around them, and thus easier to represent in terms of these abstract laws and the words that capture them. But this representational method tends to obscure the "life" of these minor characters, even though (as the narrator's rhetoric would lead us to believe) their putative inner lives must be just as fluid and their *felt* sense of freedom just as vivid as those of the major protagonists. I have offered an account here of some ways the novel uses the distortions of the major protagonists' centrality — as any fiction does — to construct an absorbing, thematically-organized world in which minor characters appear to exist less fully. Reading Part Two of the Epilogue as a reflection on narrative characterization, we find a final move to motivate such distortion mimetically rather than formally, with the assertion that our understanding of an action depends on the relative complexity of "the character and mind of the man in question."

Finally — and here is where we must account for the idiosyncrasy of Tolstoy's approach — there is an indefinite (and thus innumerable) group of marginal characters about whom we know so little that almost anything might be true of them. And this ignorance too, as Part Two of the Epilogue suggests, produces an impression of freedom and "life": not because we have access to the characters' subjective sense of their own freedom, but because we know so little about the forces, of character and of situation, that determine their actions. Precisely by preserving its marginal characters on the edge of representation (and thus, too, on the edge of referentiality), *War and Peace* undercuts the textual logic that assumes central figures live while all others cluster around their lives.

In other words, the novel juxtaposes two perspectives on what I have called mimetic life. It "points" at two kinds of fictional figures who appear to have entered the distorting artifice of text from elsewhere and to retain their own lives within it: at protagonists like Natasha, and at marginal characters like the shopkeepers in abandoned Moscow or the soldiers in the camp at Krasnoe. Stretching a little further, we might say that one kind of figure casts the illusion of a life in fiction, the other the illusion of a life in non-fiction: where Natasha's life is encompassed within this text, the shopkeepers' and soldiers' lives extend into the historical moment when the story unfolds.[111] Able only to construct a limited number of historically-placed "lives" from within, the novel indicates others from without, *just by* barely representing them at all.

Interpreted in the limited context of the relationship between a text and the people whose lives it aims to capture, Tolstoy's theory of history helps explain what is odd about *War and Peace*'s character-system: it is essentially performing two jobs at once. It is divided not just between the "living" and the artificial, but also between two kinds of mimetic life; not just between the characters represented as central and those placed off-center in the construction of a stable thematic universe, but also between the characters we happen to experience from the

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[111] Accordingly, the proper names of historical characters who participate in the text indicate a *non-illusory* life in non-fiction (and it is in this respect that an approach like Gallagher's to these characters differs from an approach like Shklovsky's). This referential signal, then, does not change when named historical characters are represented from the same inner perspective of "freedom" as Tolstoy's own fictional characters.

inside and those we happen to experience from without. The difficulty is that one system overlays the other, using the same terms. "Form" [*forma*] has to stand both for the empty artifice of the Petersburg salon (and the artificial representation of those who belong to it), and for the "swarm life" (649; 11:6) of *anyone* represented from the outside, from a distance. "Substance" [*soderzhanie*] has to stand both for what Pierre has (in discourse and story) that Hélène does not, and for the inner consciousness of a living free will that Tolstoy places at the root of *any* felt experience. And the absorption of one sense of "form" and "substance" into the other through the novel's second half is mirrored in the changing balance of its character-system, the large-scale replacement of prominent minor characters with marginal ones; by the Epilogue, only a scattered and easily assimilated handful of minor characters (Mlle. Bourienne, Sonya, Denisov, Mikhail Ivanovich the architect) are left.

The strength of this doubled character-system is in the peculiar aesthetic emphasis it can place on characters who are *continually* poised to disappear from the novel — the three hundred guests and numberless footmen at Bagration's dinner, the crowd that lynches Vereshchagin, the girls Andrei sees stealing plums before the Battle of Borodino, the soldiers Pierre meets on the road from and to Mozhaisk, the peasants muttering behind Dron during the Bogucharovo revolt. It is this very readiness to disappear, often without even a proper name to tie them back to the text, that marks these characters' seeming emancipation from the artifice of fictional narrative. Readers are far more likely to remember the conversation between the Rostov children and the German tutor Dimmler about the immortality of the soul, than the conversation between some soldiers of the 8th company ("Jackdaw," "the dancer," "the red-haired one," Kiselyov) and two sergeant majors, around the fire near Krasnoe, about why the French soldiers' bodies never rot. But one conversation is as vivid and fully realized as the other, each equally complete in itself and woven into the thematic fabric of the novel. Many readers remember the scene where Pierre and Andrei watch the sinking sun from the Bogucharovo ferry, long after it has landed, immersed in their talk about God and the purpose of life. Fewer are likely to remember the scene where some soldiers of the 8th company join the soldiers of the 5th to enjoy the antics of Ramballe's servant Morel, and pause to look up at the stars:

> All the young soldiers smiled merrily as they watched him. The older men, who thought it undignified. . . continued to lie at the opposite side of the fire, but one would occasionally raise himself on an elbow and glance at Morel with a smile.
> 'They are men, too,' said one of them as he wrapped himself up in his coat. 'Even wormwood grows on its own root.'
> 'O Lord, O Lord! How starry it is! Tremendous! That means a hard frost...'
> They all grew silent. The stars, as if knowing that no one would see them now, began to play in the dark sky. Now flaring up, now vanishing, now trembling, they were busy whispering something joyful, but mysterious, to one another. (1180; translation modified)[112]

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[112] [Радостные улыбки стояли на всех лицах молодых солдат, смотревших на Мореля. Старые солдаты, считавшие неприличным заниматься такими пустяками, лежали с другой стороны костра, но изредка, приподнимаясь на локте, с улыбкой взглядывали на Мореля.
— Тоже люди, — сказал один из них, уворачиваясь в шинель. — И полынь на своем

Equated with "no one," the soldiers disappear from the discourse in a different way from Boris Drubetskoy. They vanish not into the psyche of a protagonist, but into the vision of a world. We never find out what the stars "whispered," or whether the soldiers were still watching them, just as we never find out what Natasha dreamt. Common to the soldiers, the stars, and Natasha is the illusion that they lead a life beyond narrative: they are able to play "as if knowing that no one would see them now." If the ineluctable impression of Natasha's life comes from the multitude of words that outline her space within the narrative, the barely-experienced impression of the soldiers' comes from the near infinity of what the narrative will not tell us about them.

      The contrast between its fully-realized protagonists, its partially-realized minor characters, and its almost-fully-unrealized marginal characters measures again the often-observed distance between *War and Peace* as a novel about heroes, and *War and Peace* as a novel about national events. If the first half of the novel establishes a relatively conventional character-system, a relationship between the representation of major and the representation of minor characters that makes us feel what mimetic life is and what it is not, the second half changes our focus from the logic of this character-system to its illogic. It shows how the projection of non-fictional life, in the many characters who are barely represented, begins to overwhelm the realization of fictional life in the few who are fully represented. The novel's marginal characters thus mark a final narrative limit, the upper horizon that is a "history of all": unlike the lives of the Rostovs, Bolkonskys, Kuragins, and Dolokhovs, the life of every person in this multitude could not be written by any novelist, potential or actual.

      As the marginal characters of *War and Peace* limn its representational horizon, its protagonists remain at the core of a narrative that swells larger and larger around them. The story shows this dynamic graphically — as Marya facing the illegible body of the peasants in revolt at Bogucharovo, as Pierre trying to out-shout his fellow noblemen while they debate how many conscripts to give Alexander, as Petya being physically suffocated by a crowd of fellow-adorers at Alexander's balcony. Reading the second half of the novel, we may feel a parallel threat. The character-spaces we have grown to recognize are overwhelmed by others we cannot even place: a form of life illegible by design threatens to crowd out a form of life native to the fictional text.

      There is, however, another way to understand this asymmetry, with recourse to the terms established by Tolstoy's novel itself. The novel cannot show us that life narrated as "form" yearns for a life narrated as "content": presenting some characters purely from the outside, it can only presuppose the infinity of each one's subjective experience. But it can show us how strongly life narrated as "content" yearns for a life as "form." This yearning takes the shape of a protagonist's desire to see himself clearly from the outside, written into the inevitable structure of a story whose meaning and outcome are beyond his view. More than any other character, Pierre Bezukhov makes us see this desire. To explore it, I'll turn now — after this most lengthy interval — to the novel's fourth and final narration of dinner at the English Club.

кореню растет. — Оо! Господи, Господи! Как звездно, страсть! К морозу... — И всё затихло. Звезды, как будто зная, что теперь никто не увидит их, разыгрались в черном небе. То вспыхивая, то потухая, то вздрагивая, они хлопотливо о чем-то радостном, но таинственном, перешептывались между собою. (12:196)]

"There, that's me!": The Discontent of Character in Tolstoy's *War and Peace*

Just after the Battle of Borodino, three soldiers Pierre meets on the road guide him to Mozhaisk. Falling asleep, he begins to remember the battle and the people he saw there, whom he calls "they": "*They*, in Pierre's mind, were the soldiers, those who had been at the battery, those who had given him food, and those who had prayed before the icon. *They*, those strange men he had not previously known, stood out clearly and sharply from everyone else" (904; 11:292). Pierre's thoughts merge into a vivid dream:

> 'To be a soldier, just a soldier!' thought Pierre as he fell asleep. 'To enter that life-in-common [*obshchuiu zhizn'*] completely, to be imbued with what makes them what they are. But how to cast off all the superfluous, devilish, all the burden of this outer man? . . . I might have been sent to serve as a soldier after the duel with Dolokhov.' And the memory of the dinner at the English Club when he had challenged Dolokhov flashed through Pierre's mind, and then he remembered his benefactor at Torzhok. And now a solemn meeting of the Lodge presented itself to his mind. It was taking place at the English Club. . . On one side of the table sat Anatole, Dolokhov, Nesvitsky, Denisov, and others like them (in his dream the category to which these men belonged was as clearly defined in his mind as the category of those he termed *they*), and he heard those people, Anatole and Dolokhov, shouting and singing loudly; yet through their shouting the voice of his benefactor was heard . . . Pierre did not understand what his benefactor was saying, but he knew (the categories of thoughts were also quite distinct in his dream) that he was talking of goodness and the possibility of being what *they* were. And *they* with their simple, kind, firm faces surrounded his benefactor on all sides. But though they were kindly they did not look at Pierre and did not know him. Pierre wanted to attract their attention and speak. (904; translation modified)[113]

Pierre's categories of figures — imported into his dream like "the categories of thoughts" — follow the lines of the character-system proposed in this analysis. But his dream confronts us, further, with the shock of a protagonist who *sees* the system near the center of which he lies.

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[113] [«Солдатом быть, просто солдатом!» думал Пьер, засыпая. «Войти в эту общую жизнь всем существом, проникнуться тем, что делает их такими. Но как скинуть с себя всё это лишнее, дьявольское, всё бремя этого внешнего человека? . . . Я мог еще после дуэли с Долоховым быть послан солдатом». — И в воображении Пьера мелькнул обед в клубе, на котором он вызвал Долохова, и благодетеля в Торжке. И вот Пьеру представляется торжественная столовая ложа. Ложа эта происходит в Английском клубе. . . . С одной стороны стола сидели Анатоль, Долохов, Несвицкой [*sic*], Денисов и другие такие же (категория этих людей так же ясно была во сне определена в душе Пьера, как и категория тех людей, которых он называл *они*), и эти люди, Анатоль, Долохов, громко кричали, пели; но из-за их крика слышен был голос благодетеля . . . Пьер не понимал того, что говорил благодетель, но он знал (категория мыслей так же ясна была во сне), что благодетель говорил о добре, о возможности быть тем, чем были *они*. И *они* со всех сторон, с своими простыми, добрыми, твердыми лицами, окружали благодетеля. Но они хотя и были добры, они не смотрели на Пьера, не знали его. Пьер захотел обратить на себя их внимание и сказать. (11:290–91)]

Pierre finds himself caught between the force of the minor characters and that of the marginal; his dilemma is that of a central protagonist who longs both to step outside his own novel, and to attract its attention. This desire to both be and not be at the subjective center of one's own story is unfulfillable, but it makes poignantly clear Pierre's envy for the social, economic, and (not least) narrative condition represented in the pronoun "*they*." And Pierre's discontent mirrors the novel's own. This scene springs from the representation of Pierre's "living" consciousness, but what the scene shows is his desire to leave behind the center of the fictional text whose center is the only place that consciousness exists.

Pierre's dream thus gives shape to the antinomy the novel cannot solve. Even in a text as expansive as *War and Peace*, one character's mimetic life is defined in relation to others': it is the economies of bounded narrative attention themselves that make possible the illusion of a boundlessly living world. In this sense, the undetermined consciousness that is key to an impression of "life" — both in Tolstoy's theory of history, and in his fictional technique — requires the textual bounds *of* a novel for its representation. But such representation, achieving its fullest form, can only ever be asymmetrical. Pierre's envy for the "they" of his dream points us toward the dynamic discontent at the heart of the character-system of *War and Peace*. Even as the novel reaches away from the limits of its own narrative, toward the distant mimetic horizon of a "history of all," its protagonists reach toward the utopian condition of marginality — of barely being narrated at all. And conversely, the novel's powerful gesture at the lives of crowds remains a gesture, a tug toward stories that seem vivid precisely because they are never told.

7. *"Two, two!": The discontent of character in* War and Peace

Midway through Part One of the Epilogue to *War and Peace*, an otherwise unidentified minor character, Anna Makarovna, finishes knitting a pair of stockings. By some "secret process known only to herself," she is able to knit two stockings on the same needles, one inside the other. When she is finished, she "triumphantly" draws the inner stocking from the outer one, to the Rostov and Bezukhov children's ecstatic cries of "'Two, two!'" (1255-56; 12:280-81).

This episode stands out as a riddle within a narrative that has suddenly, by the beginning of the Epilogue, become relentlessly communicative. A range of prominent issues with contemporary resonances — the "woman questions" that (the narrator observes) were not then considered "questions," the wrong of physical violence, and the moral education of children — assert themselves from within the description of the Rostovs' and Bezukhovs' idyllic family life. And a direct continuity links narrator's pronouncements and characters' illustration — for instance, Natasha's conversion into what Countess Rostova calls "an exemplary wife and mother [*primernoiu zhenoi i mater'iu*]" (1243; 12:266):

> She had grown stouter and broader, so that it was difficult to recognize the slim lively Natasha of former days in this robust mother. Her features were more defined and had a calm, soft and serene expression. In her face now there was not, as before, the ever-burning flame of animation [*neprestanno gorevshego ognia ozhivleniia*] that had constituted its charm. Now her face and body were often all that one saw, and her soul

> was not visible at all. All that struck the eye was a strong, handsome and fertile female [*samka*]. The old fire very rarely kindled in her now. (1242 [translation modified])[114]

This description both narrates Natasha's transformation, and enacts a transformation in her relationship to the narrative. Not only are her soul and fluid consciousness no longer "visible" to the external observer; even a reader's view cannot now access the "flame of animation" that helps define "Natasha." Her characterizing "There, that's me!" ("*Vot ona ia!*") has been absorbed into the face of her baby Petya, which tells her, "Here am I, and he is in me!" ("*A ia vot on, a ia vot on!*") — where the Russian pronoun *on* ("he"), as the Maude translation has it, stands for both Petya and his father Pierre (1247; 12:271).

At the novel's end, a new generality of pronoun and name thus blurs the narrated outline of each individual figure. Displacing the heroes "themselves" and prioritizing the subjects of their conversations, which their lives serve to illustrate, long passages of Part One of the Epilogue begin to resemble didactic or ideological fiction in their redundant clarity.[115] Here then, at the fringes of *War and Peace*, we see yet another potential transformation: one that makes every protagonist — indeed, every figural character — minor, in comparison to the central message from author to audience.

But it is possible, within the novel's structure, to ignore this experiment. Indeed, it may be closer to the experience of many readers to say that Part One of the Epilogue is like a shadow of the text before it — a somewhat ethereal repetition of the fictional world we have come to know. This repetition recapitulates the character-system, following the structure of generations established in the main body of the text. There is another dog Milka, the daughter of the first; another Natasha, who dances; and another Andrei (called Nikolenka), who dreams. As the glimpse of them in the Epilogue suggests, the protagonists of the second novel would displace the old ones, moving Nikolai and Natasha to the distanced representational space their own parents occupied throughout the main body of the novel. In this reading, the Epilogue serves not to transcend the novel's fictionality, but to reaffirm its mimetic pattern: the illusion stops just where we can see it begin to extend into unbounded generational succession.

In other words, *War and Peace*'s epilogue is lit by the intentional gleam of a reality from two separate sources — one inside, one outside of the fictional text. Experimental passages draw our attention to the reality outside by attempting to make fictional characters into bridges: exemplary types, clear conduits for moral and political problems. Part Two of the Epilogue, a never-closed historico-philosophical digression, spectacularly completes this departure from self-contained novelistic illusion. But over and around this experiment wind the threads that encircle

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[114] [Она пополнела и поширела, так что трудно было узнать в этой сильной матери прежнюю тонкую, подвижную Наташу. Черты лица ее определились и имели выражение спокойной мягкости и ясности. В ее лице не было, как прежде, этого непрестанно горевшего огня оживления, составлявшего ее прелесть. Теперь часто видно было одно ее лицо и тело, а душа вовсе не было видно. Видна была одна сильная, красивая и плодовитая самка. Очень редко теперь зажигался в ней прежний огонь. (12:265–66)]

[115] On the link between an "excessive" redundancy that eliminates ambiguity and the ideological novel genre, see S.R. Suleiman, "Redundancy and the 'Readable' Text," *Poetics Today* 1:3 (1980), 119–42.

"There, that's me!": The Discontent of Character in Tolstoy's *War and Peace*

Tolstoy's characters in a text facing inwards, to the bounded, stably asymmetrical world of *War and Peace*. What, then, were the figures folded into the novel's narrative? What do we carry away of them when our reading is done?

In a well-known passage from his essay "The Image of Proust" ("Zum Bilde Prousts," 1934), Walter Benjamin offers a metaphor for the dream-logic of Proust's fictional world that uncovers the root of this problem:

> The similarity of one thing to another which we are used to, which occupies us in a wakeful state, reflects only vaguely the deeper similarity of the dream world in which everything that happens appears not in identical but in similar guise, opaquely similar to itself. Children know a symbol of this world: the stocking which has the structure of this dream world when, rolled up in a laundry hamper, it is a "bag" and a "present" at the same time. And just as children do not tire of quickly changing the bag and its contents into a third thing — namely, a stocking — Proust could not get his fill of emptying the dummy, his self, at one stroke in order to keep garnering that third thing, the image which satisfied his curiosity — indeed, assuaged his homesickness.[116]

One stocking — the fictive image that Proust elaborated in the gap between what was once real and what he was now narrating — is enough, in Benjamin's account, to help us picture the stakes of the world that "detaches itself from the sentences" of his narrative. But Tolstoy dreamed of two. Figuring a near-magical relationship between a container and its contents, the image of Anna Makarovna's stockings draws attention to the ideal that haunts the end of Tolstoy's novel: one stocking drawn triumphantly from the other, the sense of history from the structure of fiction.

The two-part Epilogue of *War and Peace* — half fictional and largely didactic, half philosophical — offers evidence of this desire. And the interleaving of the mimetic, didactic, and overtly non-fictional discourses it employs suggests that their juxtaposition is itself important. It calls our attention, in the midst of this departure from a fictional world, to the fiction that is poised to lure us back. Indeed, *War and Peace*'s very generic hybridity lets it act like a novel in the classic sense that — like *Madame Bovary* or *Don Quixote* — it ends by confronting us with the romance of the novel itself. This confrontation takes shape not around the image of a reading hero or heroine, but around our own reading, suspended at the juncture between a fictional world and its ever-more-urgently omniscient narrator. The novel envisions a fiction that would encapsulate reality, and so no longer need to be fiction. But it shows in the same breath how closely such mimesis, the "life" of novelistic characters, depends on fictional bounds.[117] What,

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[116] W. Benjamin, *Selected Writings*, trans. R. Livingstone et. al., ed. M.W. Jennings et.al. (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1999), 2: 239–40. My reading of this passage is shaped by J. Hillis Miller's in his *Fiction and Repetition: Seven English Novels* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), Chapter One.

[117] The question of the bounds or "frame" of the fictional text — a formulation I borrow here from Iurii Lotman's seminal *The Structure of the Artistic Text* (*Struktura khudozhestvennogo teksta*) — is, as many scholars have suggested, peculiarly central to the wider tradition of Russian realism (cf. my introduction chapter, especially notes 29–31 on p. 13). Morson has written extensively on Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's quest to break or expand these boundaries,

exactly, is the power of the asymmetrical illusion that made Pierre, Natasha, and the crowds around them seem to live, and what is its price? *War and Peace* unveils the Sebastopol narrator's early credo — "The hero of my tale is truth" — not as a solution, but as a problem.

It is the stability of the novel's fictional world, and of the character-system through which this world is elaborated, that makes this sharply destabilizing question possible. No less firm division between major, minor, and marginal characters could anchor such a productive shift in the narrative conventions that underlie it. But no novel less preoccupied with the artificiality of that division could so keenly show the problem of two worlds that appear to be one: a likeness between lived and written life whose clarity depends upon their inner separation.

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though he gives less weight to the workings of the fictional space itself: see especially his *Narrative and Freedom: The Shadows of Time* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994). For a recent perspective that focuses on the importance of such boundary-texts as the prologue, the epilogue, and the projected sequel to the Russian novel tradition, and to Bakhtin's theory of the novel genre, see R. Hellebust, "Bakhtin and the 'Virtual Sequel' in Russian Literature," *SEEJ* 44:4 (Winter 2000): 603–22.

Section II: Dostoevsky

Introduction

In a much-analyzed scene in Part I of Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* (1875–77), the heroine tries to read on the overnight train to St. Petersburg, agitated by thoughts of her flirtation with Count Vronsky. This section of my study begins by glancing into a different car. Here Vronsky, who has followed Anna to confess his love, unwittingly discomfits one of his fellow passengers:

> He sat in his seat, now staring straight ahead of him, now looking over the people going in and out, and if he had struck and troubled strangers before by his air of imperturbable calm, he now seemed still more proud and self-sufficient. He looked at people as if they were things. A nervous young man who served on the circuit court, sitting across from him, began to hate him for that look. The young man lit a cigarette from his, tried to begin a conversation with him, and even jostled him, to let [Vronsky] feel that he was not a thing but a person, but Vronsky went on looking at him as if at a lamppost, and the young man grimaced, feeling that he was losing his self-possession under the pressure of this non-recognition of himself as a person.[1]

This nervous young man opens a kind of window, from the world of Tolstoy's protagonists into the world of Dostoevsky's.

In a remarkable March 1875 note for a projected preface responding to early critics of his novel *The Adolescent* (*Podrostok*, 1875), Dostoevsky laid claim to the representation of what he called "the real man of the *Russian majority* [*nastoiashchego cheloveka* russkogo bol'shinstva]."[2] The "tragedy of the underground" encapsulated in his protagonists, as Dostoevsky wrote, lies in their "consciousness of their monstrosity. . . in suffering, in self-punishment [*samokazn'*], in the consciousness of something better and the impossibility of

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[1] Translation modified from L. Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina*, trans. R. Pevear and L. Volokhonsky (New York and London: Viking Penguin, 2000), 104. [Он сидел на своем кресле, то прямо устремив глаза вперед себя, то оглядывая входивших и выходивших, и если и прежде он поражал и волновал незнакомых ему людей своим видом непоколебимого спокойствия, то теперь он еще более казался горд и самодовлеющ. Он смотрел на людей, как на вещи. Молодой нервный человек, служащий в окружном суде, сидевший против него, возненавидел его за этот вид. Молодой человек и закуривал у него, и заговаривал с ним, и даже толкал его, чтобы дать ему почувствовать, что он не вещь, а человек, но Вронский смотрел на него все так же, как на фонарь, и молодой человек гримасничал, чувствуя, что он теряет самообладание под давлением этого непризнавания его человеком. (L.N. Tolstoi, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 90 vols., ed. V.G. Chertkov [Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1928–58], 18:111)]

[2] F.M. Dostoevskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 30 vols., ed. G.M. Fridlender et. al. (Leningrad: Nauka, 1972–1990), 16:329. My translation. All future references to Dostoevsky's texts in Russian and citations in the original are from this edition, cited parenthetically by volume and page.

achieving it, and mainly, in the clear conviction of these unfortunates that everyone is like them, and so there is no use in reforming." As he suggests, the anguish and depth of this struggle ought to set such characters apart from more classical "representatives of petty self-esteem": Pushkin's Silvio, Lermontov's Pechorin, Tolstoy's Bolkonsky and Levin. And yet, in the act of describing his own "real men," Dostoevsky is advancing their right to be placed alongside these aristocratic literary heroes. The note begins with an impassioned, if disjointed, appeal:

> Facts. They pass by. They don't notice. *There are no citizens*, and no one wants to make an effort and force himself to think and notice. I could not tear myself away, and all the cries of critics that I am representing an unreal life have not deterred me. . . . Our talented writers, who have been depicting, with high art, the life of our mid-upper-class (family) circle — Tolstoy, Goncharov — thought that they were depicting the life of the majority — I think it was they who were depicting the life of exceptions. On the contrary, their life is the life of exceptions, and mine is the life of the general rule.[3]

In response to accusations that *The Adolescent* immersed its readers in an unreal, and unhealthy, "underground" atmosphere, Dostoevsky claimed to be describing a state of contemporary reality that was new to literary representation, the moral lives of people whom Goncharov and Tolstoy — like their well-born characters — continually declined to notice.

But the critics' complaints, as well as Dostoevsky's drafted reply, suggest the complications inherent in this representational project. Reviews of *The Adolescent* placed the novel and its characters on a boundary line between the fantastic and the real. As V.G. Avseenko wrote (*Russkii mir* 27 and 55, 1875), "It has often been said that Mr. Dostoevsky succeeds best with the representation of phenomena of life that stand on the boundary separating reality from the world of ghosts. . . It is not people acting, but some degenerates of the human race, some underground shadows. . ."[4] A similar ghostliness creeps back into Dostoevsky's defense of the verisimilitude of his protagonists, whose defining trait is "a consciousness of their monstrosity." Rather than building up the hero as a collection of specific traits, this characterization casts him as the shadow of a self-consciousness, a pair of eyes traced backwards from the world they see.

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[3] [Факты. Проходят мимо. Не замечают. *Нет граждан*, и никто не хочет понатужиться и заставить себя думать и замечать. Я не мог оторваться, и все крики критиков, что я изображаю ненастоящую жизнь, не разубедили меня. Нет *оснований* нашему обществу, не выжито правил, потому что и жизни не было. Колоссальное потрясение, — и всё прерывается, падает, отрицается, как бы и не существовало. . . . Талантливые писатели наши, высокохудожественно изображавшие жизнь средне-высшего круга (семейного), — Толстой, Гончаров думали, что изображали жизнь большинства, — по моему они-то и изображали жизнь исключений. Напротив, их жизнь есть жизнь исключений, а моя есть жизнь общего правила. (16: 329). My translation.]

[4] Quoted in A.S. Dolinin, *Poslednie romany Dostoevskogo* (Moscow-Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel', 1963), 197–98. For more on the reviews that most directly inspired Dostoevsky's note (Avseenko's and A.M. Skabichevsky's), see J. Frank, *Dostoevsky: The Mantle of the Prophet, 1871–1881* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2002), 168, and Dolinin, *Poslednie romany*, 196–204; for a fuller account of criticism of *The Adolescent*, see 17:345–60.

Section II Introduction

Each of Dostoevsky's "real men" is a fictional person who comes into being, like Tolstoy's young man in the train, "under the pressure of this non-recognition of himself as a person."

The following chapters will focus on the *indirect* techniques of characterization that cast the strong illusion of the lives of Dostoevsky's characters: the indication of a character (as speaker or agent) through the "evidence" of a speech, emotion, or action, rather than through authoritative narrative descriptions.[5] Setting himself apart from writers like Tolstoy who used an omniscient narrator's pseudo-divine "world-creating word"[6] to assign not just their characters' traits, but also their place in a relational hierarchy of illusory self-sufficient life, Dostoevsky used dialogue and the minimally- or unreliably-narrated thoughts and actions of his characters to carve out the particular space into which the impression of "life" seems to rush. He rejected what has been described as the "fantasy" of the omniscient narrator in favor of a different fantasy, the unnarrated character.[7] This character's life springs up not as the object of an all-knowing, all-embracing central eye, but as a result of what Dostoevsky himself called, in the famous prologue to his 1876 story "The Meek One [*Krotkaia*]," the "fantastic" narrative premise that an invisible stenographer could record a character's own thoughts without amendment, word for word.

Indeed, classic Dostoevsky criticism has often related his minimal use of direct characterization to the hybrid mode of "fantastic realism."[8] As Leonid Grossman describes this connection: "Art for [Dostoevsky] lives not in lists of things, but in the transformation of life by thought. Contemporary portraitists pride themselves on the reconstruction of little details from nature. . . Dostoevsky demands another realism — ideological, creatively saturated, problematic, spiritually-enriched. . ." Grossman thus frames Dostoevsky's characters not as "single expressive figures," but as set dramatic types who move from novel to novel playing out a continuous complex of problems.[9] Dmitri Merezhkovsky put a more impassioned case:

> For each of Dostoevsky's heroes a moment comes when they stop 'feeling their bodies upon them.' These are not fleshless and bloodless, not ghostly, beings. We know what kind of body they *had*, when they could still feel it upon them. But the highest rise, the most extreme tension of their spiritual life. . . gives them this freedom from the body, like

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[5]I borrow terms suggested by Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan (building on the work of Joseph Ewan, unfortunately available only in Hebrew), who opposes characterization by "direct definition" (through overt "naming of qualities" by an authoritative narrator) to characterization by "indirect presentation" (through the narration of action, speech, appearance, etc.) (S. Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 2nd ed. [London and New York: Methuen, 2002 [1983], Chapter Five).

[6] L. Doležel, *Heterocosmica: Fiction and Possible Worlds* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1998), 149; cf. my Chapter One, note 44.

[7] On the "fantasy" of omniscient narration (in the context of Dickens's novels), see A. Jaffe, *Vanishing Points* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and Oxford: University of California Press, 1991).

[8] For a survey of critical accounts of "fantastic realism" or "realism in a higher sense," see M. Jones, *Dostoevsky After Bakhtin: Readings in Dostoevsky's Fantastic Realism* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1990), Introduction. See also, in Chapter 7, Jones on Dostoevsky's method of simultaneously evoking and undermining realist norms within a narrative.

[9] L. Grossman, "Dostoevskii — khudozhnik," in *Tvorchestvo F.M. Dostoevskogo*, ed. N.L. Stepanov (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo akademii nauk SSSR, 1959), 368; 399.

> a supernatural lightness, wingedness, a spiritualization of flesh. . . .Their body is transparent to such an extent that, it seems, it is sometimes not visible at all, but only their soul is visible, in contrast to Tolstoy's heroes, for whom often only the body is visible, and 'the soul is not visible at all.'[10]

These analyses suggest that Dostoevsky's characters trade certain conventional elements of realist characterization — physical detail, sensual perception, a "single expressive" individuality — for a more extreme impression of intellectual and spiritual experience than characters like Tolstoy's can readily produce. Crucially, the difference Merezhkovsky and Grossman point out is not so much in the nature of the experience — Konstantin Levin's spiritual aporia is no less wrenching than Ivan Karamazov's — as in the means of its representation. Dostoevsky's characters are narrated in a way that makes their bodies "transparent," their individual figures almost fully available to the ideological problems they enact. The effect of direct access to a character's mind and experience, unmediated by narrated "little details," facilitates the further effect of a character determined by the problem that grips him, rather than by a human author.

      This description of Dostoevsky's indirect techniques of characterization overlaps, of course, with the territory mapped by Mikhail Bakhtin in his book on Dostoevsky (*Problemy tvorchestva Dostoevskogo*, 1929; revised as *Problemy poetiki Dostoevskogo*, 1963). For Bakhtin, the most important effect of these techniques is that they seem to construct the protagonist as the product of his own self-consciousness and ideology, rather than as the object of an author's characterizing word. Bakhtin uses a set of powerful metaphors to describe this effect, chief among them the protagonist's "freedom" from the logic of a story someone else has written about him; his participation in a continual "dialogue" — with himself, the other characters, and the implied author and reader — about his worldview; and the "unfinalizability" [*nezavershennost'*] of the resulting character, who appears to live precisely because "he is not yet finalized, he has not yet uttered his ultimate word" about himself and his worldview.[11] Author and characters relate as equals on the shared level of the word and the idea, each bringing his or her own "idealistic consciousness" to a polyphonic dialogue staged within the novel.[12]

      By offering a description of Dostoevsky's technique that bypasses the image of the idea-hero's essential freedom, I aim not to challenge Bakhtin's argument, but to defamiliarize it: to restore a degree of ghostliness to the fictional hero whose life consists in "his own" word about "himself." Bakhtin's seminal interpretation, I suggest, should not be divorced from

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[10] D. Merezhkovskii, *L. Tolstoi i Dostoevskii,* ed. E.A. Andrushchenko [Moscow: Nauka, 2000], 146 (the last phrase is Tolstoy's description of Natasha Rostova in Part One of the Epilogue to *War and Peace*).

[11] M. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, ed. and trans. by C. Emerson (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 59; cf. M.M. Bakhtin, *Sobranie sochinenii*, ed. S.G. Bocharov and N.I. Nikolaev, vol. 6 (Moscow: Russkie slovari, 2002), 69 [all future Russian citations to Bakhtin in this chapter will come from this volume]. These concepts of freedom, dialogue, and unfinalized "life" are introduced gradually throughout Chapters One and Two. On their metaphorical nature, see for example G. Tihanov, *The Master and the Slave: Lukács, Bakhtin, and the Ideas of their Time* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2000), 200–202.

[12] *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 99; *Problemy poetiki Dostoevskogo*, 114.

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Merezhkovsky's image of the "transparent" character and Avseenko's of the "underground shadow." Reencountering Dostoevsky's techniques on such unstable ground, we may come to find traces within his novels of his *doubts* about these innovatively indirect devices of characterization — taken both on their own terms, and in comparison with his contemporaries'.

        Like a number of recent Dostoevsky critics, I thus focus my analysis of Dostoevsky's techniques of characterization and the illusion they weave on what one study calls "ways of conspicuous non-telling."[13] Scholars have placed particular weight on the rhetorical trope of apophasis in Dostoevsky — telling by denying or by claiming it is unnecessary to tell — and on its counterpart in (particularly Eastern Orthodox) theological discourse — the idea of coming to know God by denying that anything can be known about him, and describing him by naming what he is not. It has been suggested that apophatic narrative devices, often attached to the trope of an untrustworthy or incompetent narrator, indicate Dostoevsky's "basic distrust in the capacity of the word to express a person's essence,"[14] as well as his orientation on the *image* of the divine.[15] Here I explore the instability that attends Dostoevsky's insistence on the need to represent the "real men of the Russian majority" through techniques that mirror the unmooredness of their post-Reform social situation. But I also give a more positive account of the tenuous space for the narration of religious experience that Dostoevsky makes within the conventionally secular genre of the realist novel — in part, as I suggest, by adjusting the place conventionally occupied by the *source* of the trustworthy word about realist characters, the

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[13] On "ways of conspicuous non-telling," see O. Meerson, *Dostoevsky's Taboos* (Dresden: Dresden University Press [Studies of the Harriman Institute], 1998), 11 ff. For the argument that a broader apophatic religious "dynamic" shapes his novels' construction and style, see M. Jones, *Dostoevsky and the Dynamics of Religious Experience* (London: Anthem Press, 2005); G. Pomerants, "Otkrytost' bezdne," in *Otkrytost' bezdne: Etiudy o Dostoevskom* (New York: Liberty Publishing House, 1989), 239–262. See also O. Hansen-Löve, "Diskursivnye protsessy v romane Dostoevskogo *Podrostok*," in *Avtor i tekst*, ed. V. Markovich and V. Shmid, 229–267 (S. Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo S.-Peterburgskogo universiteta, 1996), and I. Lunde, " 'Ia gorazdo umnee napisannogo': On Apophatic Strategies and Verbal Experiments in Dostoevskii's *A Raw Youth*," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 79:2 [April, 2001]: 264–89. Most recently, Carol Apollonio has advocated *reading* Dostoevsky "apophatically" or "against the grain," trusting not what is clearly stated by the narrators and characters of his novels, but the truths and images that underlie and often contradict these superficial narrative facts, including the individual natures and identities of the characters themselves (C. Apollonio, *Dostoevsky's Secrets: Reading Against the Grain* [Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2011]).

[14] P.A. Jensen, "Paradoksal'nost' avtorstva (u) Dostoevskogo," in *Paradoksy russkoi literatury*, ed. V. Markovich and V. Shmid (S. Petersburg: Inapress, 2001), 220.

[15] On Dostoevsky's orientation on the beautiful image, whose apex was the figure of Christ, see Robert Louis Jackson's classic study *Dostoevsky's Quest for Form: A Study of his Philosophy of Art*, 2nd ed. (Bloomington, IN: Physsardt, 1978). See also C. Emerson, "Word and Image in Dostoevsky's Worlds: Robert Louis Jackson on Readings that Bakhtin Could Not Do," in *Freedom and Responsibility: A Festschrift for Robert Louis Jackson*, ed. E.C. Allen and G.S. Morson, 245–65 (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1995); and Apollonio, *Dostoevsky's Secrets*.

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authoritative omniscient narrator. Seen from one angle, Dostoevsky's indirect techniques of characterization create formal and generic chaos; seen from another, they create the vacuum in which he begins to remake the realist character as a site for narratives of spiritual transcendence.

My readings will argue that Dostoevsky himself was aware of this tension. Like Tolstoy, then, Dostoevsky was ambivalent about the limits of the novel genre and his adaptations of it. While founding the illusion of his characters' presence on a repudiation of authoritative narration, a technique that opened a path for some of the most generically radical content of their narratives, he wrote anxiety about the efficacy and legitimacy of his new methods of characterization into the plots, structures, and protagonists of the novels in which this illusion takes shape.

I go on in this section to trace this anxiety in the context of Dostoevsky's two last novels. *The Adolescent* and *The Brothers Karamazov* (*Bratia Karamazovy*, 1879–80) arguably provide the most complete illustration of both the chaos and the transformative potential associated with Dostoevsky's methods of characterization. I will argue that the specter of illegitimate birth, key in different ways to each novel, works as a master-figure both for the social rootlessness and dispossession of the protagonists, and for their *technical* detachment from omniscient narration. I begin with *The Adolescent*, whose narrative is built around the figures that the inattention of more conventional novels creates, but whose characters look enviously back toward the structure of the very kind of novel that excludes them. Framed as the memoir (*zapiski*) of an illegitimate son, *The Adolescent* unrestrainedly explores the thematic and formal chaos that attend the condition of illegitimacy. In the story, its characters are mired in the contemporary disorder of the "accidental family." In the discourse, as figures in Arkady's unreliable memoir, not only are they palpably cut off from any authoritative source of characterization; they appear, in a sense, to know about and resent the unhappy *narrative* circumstances that parallel their unhappy social and historical ones. I will go on to suggest that *The Adolescent* — on some critical accounts a "failed" novel; on others, a novel that achieves its goals through the rhetoric and semblance of failure — also offers an illuminating lens through which to understand the character-system of Dostoevsky's final work, *The Brothers Karamazov*.

As many scholars have documented, *The Adolescent* and *The Brothers Karamazov* emerged from a common set of initial notes, which refer back to Dostoevsky's *Demons* [*Besy*, 1871–72] and to a fragmentary plan for a cycle of novels under the title "The Life of a Great Sinner [*Zhitiie velikogo greshnika*]" (9:503), explicitly conceived as comparable in scale and thematic sweep to Tolstoy's *War and Peace*.[16] A group of stock characters (the "great sinner," the "predatory type") first appeared in the notebooks as three brothers, and only later as Arkady (the "adolescent") and his natural and legal fathers, Andrei Petrovich Versilov and Makar Ivanovich Dolgoruky.[17] Among these early notes are outlines close to what would become the

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[16] cf. Dostoevsky's letters to N.N. Strakhov, March 24 1870 (29 [I]:112), and A.N. Maikov, March 25 1870 (29 [I]: 117).

[17] Dostoevsky's fragmentary plans for elements of this cycle ("Atheism" and "The Life of a Great Sinner") date from 1868–70. For the history of "The Life of a Great Sinner" I draw on the commentary to these plans in the Academy edition of Dostoevsky's complete collected works (Vol. 9). On the links between *Demons*, these plans, *The Adolescent*, and *The Brothers Karamazov*, see among others Dolinin, *Poslednie romany*, 43–59; Frank, *Mantle*, 149–55; and L.

plot of *The Brothers Karamazov*. In a prominent critical narrative, *The Brothers Karamazov* thus works as a standard for what *The Adolescent* could not yet become, and *The Adolescent* is most productively read, in the words of its own Conclusion, as "material" for a future novel.[18]

The reverse move — a reading of *The Brothers Karamazov* through the lens of *The Adolescent* — has been less often attempted. And yet, I want to suggest that the two novels offer edifying mirror-images of one another, and in particular, of one another's character-systems. Working with an overlapping core of protagonists, Dostoevsky wrote two books with opposing compositional centers — one, a putative memoir narrated by an illegitimate son, and specifically structured so as to illuminate the character of its narrator; the other, a chronicle built around the crime of another illegitimate son, whose character remains a stubborn enigma. The second novel turns the narrative fabric of the first inside out, and with this inversion comes a thematic shift. By rigorously sidelining the illegitimate Smerdyakov, *The Brothers Karamazov* explores the possibility that its other protagonists might be redeemed from the contemporary disorder of the "accidental family" — and that what I am calling *technical* illegitimacy or "accident" itself, a method of characterization cut off from any source in authoritative omniscient narration, might in fact hold the potential to transcend the conventional limits of realism.

Both novels thus tell a complex story not just about their protagonists, but about how those protagonists are made. Read from this standpoint, Dostoevsky's final novels are in part about the limitations and capacities of mimetic characterization and the novel genre: about just how far a novel can take the "real man of the Russian majority" toward (in Dostoevsky's iconic phrase) "realism in a higher sense," before both novel and character threaten to dissolve.

Rozenblium, "Tvorcheskaia laboratoriia Dostoevskogo romanista," in *Literaturnoe nasledstvo* 77 (Moscow: Nauka, 1965), 11–13; see also Jacques Catteau's theoretical analysis in his *Dostoevsky and the Process of Literary Creation*, trans. A. Littlewood (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989): Chapters 12–18.

[18] This comparative framework is common both to admiring readings of *The Adolescent* — such as Konstantin Mochulsky's, which paints it as the *Purgatorio* to the *Inferno* of *Demons* and the *Paradiso* of *The Brothers Karamazov* (K. Mochul'skii, *Dostoevskii: Zhizn' i tvorchestvo* [Paris: YMCA Press, 1947], 425–26; cf. K. Mochulsky, Dostoevsky: His Life and Work, trans. M.A. Minihan [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967], 517–18) — and to less enthusiastic accounts like Joseph Frank's, which suggests that the progressive politics of *Notes of the Fatherland* constricted Dostoevsky's realization of plans for a novel that could have become *The Brothers Karamazov* (*Mantle*, 153–55, 171–72). In an illuminating recent transformation of this basic argument, Susanne Fusso suggests that *The Adolescent* (in part by exploring homosexual desire) creates an intense relationship between its narrator and its implied author through which Dostoevsky "'learned to read his own early work,' thus making it possible to grow into the writer who wrote *The Brothers Karamazov*" (S. Fusso, *Discovering Sexuality in Dostoevsky* [Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2006], 67–68).

Introduction

It has often been observed that Arkady Makarovich Dolgoruky, the hero and first-person narrator of *The Adolescent*, is an incompetent storyteller. He "confuses us about times and dates, places wrong emphases, introduces characters with portentous fanfare and then never mentions them again."[1] A number of recent readings of *The Adolescent* have addressed this confusion not as an aesthetic fault, but as a device that allowed Dostoevsky to publically explore a problem he saw as increasingly urgent: what kind of novel, if any, could capture the growing "disorder" of post-reform Russia? How and what was it possible to write at a time when old and established forms, both social and literary, had been outlived? An illegitimately-born narrator-hero who does not yet know how to narrate, Arkady provides an occasion for posing these questions from inside a work of fiction, which takes the form of "notes" (*zapiski*) putatively composed by their subject to fit the contours of his autobiographical narrative. *The Adolescent* thus becomes a workshop for building the elements of a new kind of novel, centered on a new kind of hero: the chronicle of what is famously described, in its final chapter, as an "accidental family."[2]

Both supplementing and shadowing this story of the novel itself as a workshop are the unusually extensive notebooks in which Dostoevsky's plans for *The Adolescent* took shape. They document a competition between two potential protagonists: the character who would become Arkady (the "Adolescent" or "Youth"), and the one who would become Versilov, his natural father ("HE"). Versilov is first conceived as "the real predatory type. . . already a genuine heroic type, above the public and its everyday life [*zhivaia zhizn'*]") (26-27; /16:7 [February? 1874]).[3] His struggles with unbelief and "the ideal" link him to the central character of the 1868 fragment

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[1] This summary from Fusso, "Dostoevsky's Comely Boy," *The Russian Review* 59 (October 2000), 578. See also, for example, L. Grossman, *Dostoevskii* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1965), 492 and 509–510; J. Catteau, *Dostoevsky and the Process of Literary Creation*, trans. A. Littlewood (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 254 and 322.

[2] For this line of argument, see especially O. Hansen-Löve, "Diskursivnye protsessy v romane Dostoevskogo *Podrostok*," in *Avtor i tekst*, ed. V. Markovich and V. Shmid (S. Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo S.-Peterburgskogo universiteta, 1996), 243; P.A. Jensen, "Paradoksal'nost' avtorstva (u) Dostoevskogo," in *Paradoksy russkoi literatury*, ed. V. Markovich and V. Shmid (S. Petersburg: Inapress, 2001), 228; L. Steiner, *For Humanity's Sake: The Bildungsroman in Russian Culture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), Ch. Eight; K. Holland, *The Novel in the Age of Disintegration: Dostoevsky and the Problem of Genre in the 1870s* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2013), Ch. Three [abbreviated as *Age of Disintegration*].

[3] All English quotations of the notebooks from *The Notebooks for a Raw Youth*, ed. E. Wasiolek, trans. V. Terras (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1969); I have frequently revised for closer translation. Corresponding Russian references are to Volume 16 of Dostoevsky's 30-volume collected works, followed by the approximate date of the entry in brackets.

Arkady's Overcoat: Character and the Conditions of Envy in Dostoevsky's *The Adolescent*

"Atheism," later incorporated into the plan for the "Life of a Great Sinner."[4] The figure of Arkady, in turn, recalls the planned first volume on the "Sinner's" childhood and adolescence. An illegitimate son fixated on the "accumulation of riches," the Sinner plans to rise above all others around him: "The dangerous and extreme thought that he was the extraordinary man of the future seized him even in childhood. He thinks about this constantly. Mind, cunning, education — all this he wants to acquire as future means toward the extraordinary (9:136).[5]

"HE" (Versilov) is thus immediately conceived as an extraordinary character, a *narrative* aristocrat ("the real heroic type"). The Youth, by contrast, belongs in a line of characters who work to acquire resources "as a future means toward the extraordinary." But early in his work on *The Adolescent*, Dostoevsky shifted focus away from the more obviously compelling figure: "The BOY, and not HE, is the HERO. . . HE is only an ACCESSORY [*aksessuar*], but for all that, what an accessory!!" (45; 16:24 [July 1874]). "HIS" heroic qualities must emerge through the eyes of the still-ordinary "Youth":

> And all along, about the fascination which He exerts upon [the Youth]. In a word, don't leave the Youth for a single moment. . . But WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT, retain throughout the entire narrative a tone of His unchallenged superiority over the Youth and everybody else, all His comical traits and all His weaknesses notwithstanding; let the reader suspect [*predchuvstvovat'*] all along that, at the end of the novel, He is tormented by a great idea. And motivate the reality of His suffering. (74–75; 16:43 [August 1874])

The finished novel's first-person narrative — unique among Dostoevsky's major novels, which have either an omniscient narrator or a semi-omniscient "narrator chronicler"[6] — appears from the notebooks to result directly from this decision to focus on the story of the Adolescent, rather than the story of the heroic "predatory type." After numerous reminders to himself to provide "a larger role for the Youth," Dostoevsky recorded "AN IMPORTANT SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM. Write *in the first person.* Start with the Word: *I.* 'Confessions of a great sinner, for himself.'" (79; /16:47 [12 August 1874]). He equivocated over this formal "solution" through the end of September 1874; a typical entry reads, "If the novel is to be told in the third person [*ot avtora*], something everybody is *sick and tired of*; and the narrative devices, too, are available in

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[4] As a "predatory type," he also strongly resembles Stavrogin, the main protagonist of Dostoevsky's *Demons*, sections of whose suppressed "Confession" were included in Versilov's "Confession" in the published text of *The Adolescent*.

[5] [Опасная и чрезвычайная мысль, что он будущий человек необыкновенный, охватила им еще с детства. Он беспрерывно думает об этом. Ум, хитрость, образование — все это он хочет приобресть как будущие средства к необыкновенности (9:136).] This figure is echoed in the "ordinary type" described in Dostoevsky's *The Idiot* (1868), epitomized by Ganya Ivolgin. On Versilov's and Arkady's links to characters in *Demons* and *The Idiot*, cf. A.S. Dolinin, *Poslednie romany Dostoevskogo* (Moscow-Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel', 1963), 43–47.

[6] Arkady too, of course, may be read as a narrator-chronicler (cf. Catteau, *Dostoevsky and the Process...*, 315–22). But unlike the chroniclers of *The Idiot*, *Demons*, and *The Brothers Karamazov*, he is telling his own story (in Genette's terms, homodiegetic narration), and is considerably limited by the perspective that comes with his direct participation.

literature; besides, it will be more difficult to make the Youth look original, i.e., to explain why I selected him [*pochemu ego vybral*]" (146; 16:101 [2 September 1874]). In light of the strong reasons Dostoevsky found to have Arkady narrate the novel, the duration of his hesitation is striking. The notebooks record Dostoevsky's hope that Arkady's narration will divert *The Adolescent* from the path of conventional novel form, and from the familiar line of novel-heroes of Versilov's class and social sphere (what Dostoevsky dismissively called "landowner literature").[7] But they say less about the risks attached to this technique. Why *not* use first person narration to motivate the choice of Arkady as hero? What is at stake in this decision?

This string of entries in Dostoevsky's notebooks would suggest that Arkady's narration writes an uneven division of labor into the novel's narrative.[8] By organizing the discourse (*siuzhet*) as Arkady's first person account, Dostoevsky inserts him by a backstairs entrance into a central narrative position. But this account's most compelling source of content, the shadowed center of its story (*fabula*), remains Arkady's father Versilov. The chief challenge as well as the chief advantage of Arkady's narration is that it requires his character to "show itself," to emerge through the method of telling, vividly enough to compete with the figure he himself thinks the tale is about. Narration becomes a way of creating the narrator or source behind it, and the nominal hero of the narrative also works as an excuse — or, indeed, a compulsion — for that narrator to continue narrating.

We cannot sum up the challenge presented by *The Adolescent*'s character-system, then, by saying that its structure vainly attempts to draw attention away from Versilov, an inherently compelling hero, toward Arkady, who should have been a secondary figure.[9] I want to suggest rather that the novel stages a drama of narrative technique: a struggle not between two protagonists, but between two conceptions of what goes into the *making* of a contemporary protagonist. Departing as sharply as possible from the mechanism of omniscient narration, where a disembodied narrator represents the author's absolute power to designate and dispose the population of a fictional world, *The Adolescent* explores the potential contained in a world of

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[7] On this project, see especially Holland, *Age of Disintegration*, 103–04.

[8] On the intrinsically "asymmetric structure" of the character-system of novels narrated in the first person, which create one character as subject and the others as objects, see A. Woloch, *The One vs. the Many: Minor Characters and the Space of the Protagonist in the Novel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 178. The techniques Woloch suggests can mitigate this asymmetry — the use of first person to tell a story about a different protagonist, or of an unreliable narrator "whose narration leads the reader to confer more importance on other characters within the story" — are used in *The Adolescent* to sharpen it: Arkady's character emerges *only* through his unreliability, through passages in which the narrative frame gets in the way of his portrait of his protagonist. In this respect some unexpected parallels might emerge between *The Adolescent* and *Great Expectations*, another first-person narrative in which (as Woloch argues) the fact of Pip's primary subjective perception is made to shape or distort the basic conditions of the novel's fictional world: *The One vs. the Many*, Chapter Three.

[9] Criticism has classically discussed this imbalance in such terms: cf. K. Mochul'skii, *Dostoevskii: Zhizn' i tvorchestvo* [Paris: YMCA Press, 1947], 402–03; Wasiolek, "Introduction," *The Notebooks to* A Raw Youth, 5; J. Frank, *Dostoevsky: The Mantle of the Prophet, 1871–1881* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2002), 176.

characters cut off from the order that created them, emerging only as the effects of a distant authorial conception. And the characters themselves, shown in a fruitless quest for order and "seemliness" (*blagoobrazie*), are made to point out the precarious novelty of this situation.

1. "forgive me for having cut short my life's debut!": The chaos of The Adolescent*'s character-system*

The Adolescent recounts the first year that Arkady Makarovich Dolgoruky spends in St. Petersburg with his sister and their natural father, the landowner Andrei Petrovich Versilov, and mother, Sofya Andreevna Dolgorukaya, born a peasant on Versilov's estate. While Arkady arrives with the intention of discovering the truth about Versilov's character (in particular, about his many rumored relationships with women) and going on to pursue his own "idea," he himself soon becomes infatuated with one of the objects of Versilov's affection, Katerina Nikolaevna Akhmakova. Covering three three-day intervals, Arkady's "notes" (putatively written a year after these events took place) tell the increasingly sordid story of the rivalry between himself and Versilov, and of his entanglements with Versilov's circle, as well as his idyllic encounter with his legal peasant father, Makar Ivanovich Dolgoruky, just before the latter's death. An elaborate blackmail plot, revolving around a "document" in Arkady's possession that could give him power over Katerina Nikolaevna, runs through the novel and culminates in a crisis, averted by chance, in which Katerina Nikolaevna is almost raped by Arkady's former schoolmate Lambert and almost murdered by Versilov. The story ends, inconclusively, with the implication of a future relationship between Arkady and Katerina Nikolaevna and of Versilov's reunion with (though not marriage to) Arkady's mother; the novel's last section is the comments of Arkady's former tutor, Nikolai Semyonovich, on the manuscript of his "notes" (the main text of the novel).

This summary gives only the barest impression of the multitude of figures and events that crowd Arkady's narrative. Many digressions and repetitious subplots hang from the basic plotline — three suicides, at least two other blackmails, gambling episodes, several other rumored rapes, a host of abandoned or illegitimate children. But the Notes nevertheless follow a coherent pattern: they are structured as a Bildungsroman, a series of tests that attempt to illuminate Versilov's true character, and so establish the chief model available for Arkady to define his future path on or against.[10] Along the way they sketch alternative models, but always seen in terms of the light these models shed on what Versilov truly is, and what Arkady might become.

From the beginning, the reader knows that this series of tests and comparative examinations will not be conclusively successful:

> It's curious that this man, who struck me so greatly ever since my childhood, who had such a capital influence on my entire cast of mind and has maybe even infected my whole future with himself for a long time to come — this man even now remains in a great

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[10] On *The Adolescent* as Bildungsroman, see E.I. Semenov, *Roman Dostoevskogo* Podrostok*: Problematika i zhanr* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1979). More recently, see Steiner, *For Humanity's Sake*; and Holland, *Age of Disintegration*. But cf. Horst-Jürgen Gerigk's argument that it belongs to the picaresque genre (Gerigk, *Versuch über Dostoevskijs' Jüngling': Ein Beitrag zur Theorie des Romans*, Forum Slavicum, vol. 4 [Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1965]).

> many ways a complete riddle to me. But of that, essentially, later. You can't tell it like that [*Etogo tak ne rasskazhesh'*]. My whole notebook will be filled with this man as it is. (6 [translation modified])[11]

Claiming that his notebook "will be filled" with Versilov, Arkady defines himself as one whom Versilov has "struck" and "infected," and to whom Versilov presents himself as an inexhaustible riddle. The space in which Arkady emerges as a central character, himself poised to "fill" the novel's pages, is defined primarily by his own meta-narrative commentary: "You can't tell it like that." The illusion of the novel's two central characters' lifelike presence thus unfolds from a single peculiar trope: Arkady, as the narrator inadequate to the task of telling about Versilov; Versilov, as the object inaccessible to Arkady's inadequate narration.

In this narrative driven by the vexed task of capturing a hero's character, it is notable that Arkady's technical weaknesses as a narrator cluster around the introduction of secondary figures. His initial description of Olimpiada, the ward of Katerina Nikolaevna's father old Prince Sokolsky, is symptomatic:

> I looked at her quite closely and found nothing special: not a very tall girl, plump, and with extremely ruddy cheeks. Her face, however, was rather pleasant, the kind that the materialists like. Her expression was kind, perhaps, but with a wrinkle. She could not have been especially brilliant intellectually, at least not in a higher sense, but one could see cunning in her eyes. No more than nineteen years old. In short, nothing remarkable. We'd have called her a "pillow" in high school. (If I describe her in such detail, it's solely because I'll need it in the future.) By the way, everything I've been describing so far, with such apparently unnecessary detail, all leads to the future and will be needed there. (39)[12]

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[11] F. Dostoevsky, *The Adolescent*, trans. R. Pevear and L. Volokhonsky (New York and London: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003), 6. This edition cited parenthetically in the text hereafter, with corresponding citations to Dostoevsky's 30-volume collected works in the footnote or parenthetically in the form (English citation; Russian citation). [Любопытно, что этот человек, столь поразивший меня с самого детства, имевший такое капитальное влияние на склад всей души моей и даже, может быть, еще надолго заразивший собою всё мое будущее, этот человек даже и теперь в чрезвычайно многом остается для меня совершенною загадкой. Но, собственно, об этом после. Этого так не расскажешь. Этим человеком и без того будет наполнена вся тетрадь моя. (13:6)]

[12] [Я глядел на нее довольно пристально и ничего особенного не находил: не так высокого роста девица, полная и с чрезвычайно румяными щеками. Лицо, впрочем, довольно приятное, из нравящихся материалистам. Может быть, выражение доброты, но со складкой. Особенной интеллекцией не могла блистать, но только в высшем смысле, потому что хитрость была видна по глазам. Лет не более девятнадцати. Одним словом, ничего замечательного. У нас в гимназии сказали бы: подушка. (Если я описываю в такой подробности, то единственно для того, что понадобится в будущем.) Впрочем, и всё, что описывал до сих пор, по-видимому с такой ненужной подробностью, всё это ведет в будущее и там понадобится. (13:33)]

This passage might be said to parody the realist convention of the character-portrait. Each feature Arkady mentions calls up a qualification ("however" [*vprochem*], "but" [*no*]) that partially erases it even as it meets the page. He thus performs a series of reversals, simultaneously insisting on and undermining Olimpiada's solidity and significance. She seems to demand close attention, but she is "nothing special." The details of her appearance will be necessary "in the future," but Olimpiada returns only once, and her secret turns out to be only that she — like many women — is infatuated with Versilov. Arkady's error about the *size* of the space that Olimpiada will occupy in his narrative points to a larger struggle, throughout *The Adolescent*, with the basic foundations of a novelistic character-system.[13] But *The Adolescent*'s problem is less that many implied people must be squeezed into small narrative spaces to create a unified structure, than that, as is apparent from an early stage, its narrator may be marking out these spaces and their relation to the larger structure unreliably. A gulf opens not between *most* of the novel's story-people and their narrative representation, but between *any* of its people (not excepting Arkady himself) and *any* representation within Arkady's narrative. Even as the novel signals the conventions of realist characterization, its terms have evidently been disrupted.

Thus, Arkady introduces almost every new secondary character with a portrait similar to Olimpiada's, offering concrete physical details (as Dostoevsky dubbed them in a notebook plan for *The Adolescent*) "à la L[eo] T[olstoy]" (130; 16:87; see also 111; 16:73). But a reader attempting to associate these details with a stably recurring character in a stably-sized space (à la Leo Tolstoy) will be disappointed: Arkady's technical difficulties with describing character surface more consistently than any one of the novel's dozens of minor characters reappears. Thus, Old Prince Sokolsky's "face had a sort of unpleasant, almost indecent property of changing suddenly from the extraordinarily serious to the much-too-playful, so that someone seeing it for the first time would never expect it" (28).[14] A similar changeability, in young Prince Sokolsky, forces Arkady to cut off his description altogether: "Of course, his face was able to turn suddenly from a stern to a surprisingly gentle, meek, and tender expression, the transformation being, above all, unquestionably simplehearted. And this simpleheartedness was attractive.. . . However, it's extremely hard to describe a face in this way. I'm quite incapable of it. (185 [translation modified])[15] In Arkady's introduction of the blackmailer Stebel'kov, Vasin's stepfather, we see why he might despair of "describing a face in this way":

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[13] See Woloch, *The One vs. the Many*, Introduction. I discuss this term more fully in my Introduction (pp. 17–19) and Chapter One (p. 30).

[14] [лицо его имело какое-то неприятное, почти неприличное свойство вдруг переменяться из необыкновенного серьезного на слишком уж игривое (13:24)]

[15] [Вошел молодой и красивый офицер. . . . То есть я говорю красивый, как и все про него точно так же говорили, но что-то было в этом молодом и красивом лице не совсем привлекательное. Я именно замечаю это, как впечатление самого первого мгновения, первого на него моего взгляда, оставшееся во мне на всё время. Он был сухощав, прекрасного роста, темно-рус, с свежим лицом, немного, впрочем, желтоватым, и с решительным взглядом. . . .Но решительный взгляд его именно отталкивал потому, что как-то чувствовалось почему-то, что решимость эта ему слишком недорого стоила. Впрочем, не умею выразиться... Конечно, лицо его способно было вдруг изменяться с

> His hair, dark blond gone slightly gray, his black eyebrows, big beard, and big eyes, not only did not personalize his character, but seemed precisely to endow it with something general, like everyone else. . . . He passes quickly from a laughing to a grave look, from a grave to a playful or winking one, but it is all somehow scattered and pointless... However, there's no sense describing it beforehand. Later I came to know this gentleman much better and more closely, and therefore I have involuntarily presented him more knowingly than then, when he opened the door and came into the room. Though now, too, I would have difficulty saying anything exact or definite about him, because the main thing in these people is precisely their unfinishedness, scatteredness, and indefiniteness. (142)[16]

In these passages, it is as if a Tolstoyan illusion of psychological fluidity (enshrined in a famous phrase from N.G. Chernyshevsky's 1856 review of Tolstoy's early fiction, "the dialectics of the soul") has been allowed to leak out and blur the very outlines of Dostoevsky's characters. The mobile face is a standard feature of physiognomic character-portraits in Dostoevsky's novels.[17] But here the narrating situation underlines this effect and makes it problematic: Arkady's difficulty is not just that the faces of Olimpiada, Stebelkov, and the Princes Sokolsky are changeable, but that his perception of their significance, the dimensions of the "space" they properly occupy in his narrative and how he can designate it, is changeable too.[18]

The later appearances of these and other minor characters reflect the instability of Arkady's initial descriptions. Indeed, the enigmatic note left by Olya, a young girl who commits suicide — "Mama, dear, forgive me for having cut short my life's debut" (179 [translation modified]; 13:149) — provides a credo for all the novel's minor characters. The narrative, like a kaleidoscope, shifts between constellations of these figures, without clarifying the connections

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сурового на удивительно ласковое, кроткое и нежное выражение, и, главное, при несомненном простодушии превращения. Это-то простодушие и привлекало. . . . Впрочем, чрезвычайно трудно так описывать лицо. Не умею я этого вовсе. (13:154)]

[16] [Волосы его, темно-русые с легкою проседью, черные брови, большая борода и большие глаза не только не способствовали его характерности, но именно как бы придавали ему что-то общее, на всех похожее. . . . Со смешливого он быстро переходит на важный вид, с важного на игривый или подмигивающий, но всё это как-то раскидчиво и беспричинно... Впрочем, нечего вперед описывать. Этого господина я потом узнал гораздо больше и ближе, а потому поневоле представляю его теперь уже более зазнамо, чем тогда, когда он отворил дверь и вошел в комнату. (13:118)]

[17] For an exhaustive discussion, see E. Heier, *Literary Portraiture in Nineteenth-Century Russian Prose* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1993), Chapter 7.

[18] In this respect, as Horst-Jürgen Gerigk notes, the unreliability of Arkady's descriptions naturalistically reflect his perceptions (*Versuch*, 147–49). But simply stating this fact evades the point that the novel's fictional world, as presented in the narrative, depends entirely *on* these (mis)perceptions: it is this very naturalism that creates a problem for *The Adolescent*'s narrative and for its readers.

between them or each one's unique significance to the plot.[19] Stebelkov, the blackmailer who dominates the middle third of the novel, is later eclipsed without comment by a second blackmailer, Lambert. The young Prince Sokolsky dies in prison, leaving Arkady's sister Liza pregnant with an illegitimate child who ought to present a narrative problem, but in the final chapter we learn that the baby was never born. Even Makar Dolgoruky, the legal father who, late in the novel, offers Arkady a "seemly" alternative to the disorder around Versilov, dies before his influence can crystallize. Minor characters, often reduced in initial descriptions to a single dominant trait (Petr Ippolitovich, Arkady's "very pockmarked, very poor" landlord (201;13:164); Lambert's hanger-on, the "pretty boy" Trishatov; the mother of the suicide Olya, yellow down to the wax plastered over her index finger [278; 13:227]), unfold like accordions from their functional roles to give speeches that touch on the novel's most central preoccupations, and vanish again for good. Indeed, the very names of these characters are fragmented and unreliable. Lambert and Stebelkov never get first names; Stebelkov, Vasin, Lidiia Akhmakova, and Trishatov all lack patronymics. The old and young Princes Sokolsky share a family-name, but are "merely namesakes," no defined relation to one another (22; 13:19). Olya's mother, called Darya Onisimovna in Part 1, becomes Nastasya Egorovna in Part 3.

The novel's minor characters thus fail to satisfy one of the most basic definitions of realist character ever formulated, as that which results "when identical semes traverse the same proper name several times and appear to settle upon it."[20] The system of repeated descriptions and named families that fixes characters in the social, moral, and (crucially) mimetic system of a novel like Tolstoy's *War and Peace* is not missing from Dostoevsky's *The Adolescent*; it is there, conspicuously running mad.[21]

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[19] The kaleidoscope image is developed in T.V. Tsiv'ian, "O strukture vremeni i prostranstva v romane Dostoevskogo 'Podrostok,'" *Russian Literature* 3 (1976), 243. Arkady's confused presentation, of course, does not prevent these characterological constellations' being reorganized more neatly, as Tsiv'ian has demonstrated in a table of the characters' "valences" (connections and interactions with one another throughout the novel) ("O strukture...," 209).

[20] R. Barthes, *S/Z*, trans. R. Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1974), 67.

[21] Least reliable of all, of course, is Arkady's own name — from his first name, Arkady, which the young Prince Sokolsky often remembers as "Aleksei" and young Versilov as "Andrei"; to his often-fumbled patronymic (Andreevich or Makarovich?); to the surname, "simply" Dolgoruky — a signal of aristocratic lineage that Arkady, with each new acquaintance, inevitably has to deny. For one discussion of this disorder, see Hansen-Löve, "Diskursivnye protsessy," 251. N.G. Pustygina has argued that the name "Dolgoruky" signals an important thematic thread in the novel, the formation of a new spiritual "nobility": "O familii Dolgorukov v romane F.M. Dostoevskogo 'Podrostok,'" *Problemy tipologii russkoi literatury: Trudy po russkoi i slavianskoi filologii* (Tartu: Uchenye zapiski Tartuskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta, 1985): 37–53. In this article, Pustygina proposes arranging Dostoevsky's naming practices hierarchically, whereby the most major characters, furthest from any specific real-life prototypes, receive significant but not precisely "speaking" names (Raskolnikov — *raskol*); important minor characters often have names close to a particular prototype (Dolgushin — Dergachev); and the most minor characters have "speaking" names. But her suggestive hierarchy may not work so consistently for *The Adolescent*, in part because so many characters lack complete names in the first place.

Arkady's Overcoat: Character and the Conditions of Envy in Dostoevsky's *The Adolescent*

Faced even with the less radically confused emotions and motivations that mark the protagonists of Dostoevsky's more often-read novels, many critics conclude that his characters are not meant to conform to the conventions of realism, or even to imply coherent individual people.[22] The relative instability of these characters, combined with their intensity, affiliates them with other literary traditions (such as the Gothic), where authors subordinated conventions of verisimilitude to a more extreme, or sublime, representation of emotion and experience.[23] In a Bakhtinian reading, such conventions bend in Dostoevsky's characters not so much to feelings,

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[22] For two classic examples, see Donald Fanger, incorporating a suggestive passage on the "motivation" of characters in Dostoevsky from Viktor Shklovsky's essay on *Crime and Punishment*: "[Dostoevsky's characters] are compounded of contradictions, always in flux, always liable to realize in action some potentiality hitherto dormant. As Shklovsky observes, in Dostoevsky's later novels 'a double and often even a triple motivation is given for an action; at first an event is narrated and a first clue [*razgadka*] given for the motives of the hero's action; then the motivation is subjected to discussion and replaced. . . the quarrels of the heroes among themselves and the internal division [*razlad*] of the heroes gives a peculiar scintillation [*mertsanie (CK)*] to the motives of the action.' The result, to readers accustomed by modern psychology and modern events to think of human beings in terms of their contradictions and unconscious impulses, appears more lifelike, more 'realistic' than older, more conventional depictions. But at the same time its tendency is to destroy the notion of character altogether. . . . [Raskolnikov] is an ungraspable bundle of contradictions, to which each of the characters he meets possesses a clue: but the clues all together are not susceptible of any final synthesis." (D. Fanger, *Dostoevsky and Romantic Realism: A Study of Dostoevsky in Relation to Balzac, Dickens, and Gogol* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965], 264; cf. V. Shklovskii, "Prestuplenie i nakazanie," in *Za i protiv: Zametki o Dostoevskom* [Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1957], 188). More recently, see Apollonio: the power of Dostoevsky's novels "depends on [his] ability to make us believe in the reality of his characters. . . . But as critics we must return from that seductive world into our own. Greater insight will come to those who stand at a distance and squint, allowing the discrete boundaries between characters in that world to become blurred. Raskolnikov, Svidrigailov. . . these are facets of a *single, shared consciousness*" (*Dostoevsky's Secrets*, 9). Yuri Corrigan considers in detail the implications of reading Dostoevsky's characters as a "shared consciousness": "Amnesia and the Externalized Personality in Early Dostoevski," *Slavic Review* 72:1 (Spring 2013): 79–101.

[23] For an overview of the Gothic novel's self-conscious distancing from realist conventions and use of stock characters, see D. Punter, *The Literature of Terror*, Vol. 1 (London and New York: Longman), Chapter One. Grossman discusses Dostoevsky's abiding fascination with the novels of Radcliffe, Lewis, and Maturin: "Kompozitsiia v romane Dostoevskogo" in L. Grossman, *Sobranie sochinenii v 5 tomakh*, Vol. 2, 21–35 (Moscow: Sovremennye problemy, 1928). See also R.F. Miller's argument that Dostoevsky found in the narrative devices and themes of the Gothic novel "a powerful rhetoric for describing modern man's predicament" ("Dostoevsky and the Tale of Terror" in *Dostoevskii and Britain*, ed. W.J. Leatherbarrow [Oxford and Providence: Berg, 1995], 140).

as to "idea-feelings"; characters embody a personalized and subjective worldview, and his novels' technique functions, above all, to precipitate an encounter between these different perspectives.[24]

The insight that Dostoevsky adapted other (non-realist) generic and formal conventions to his own thematic purposes can help account for the volatility of *The Adolescent*'s characters. But what makes *The Adolescent* and its idea-heroes unusual among Dostoevsky's late novels, I would argue, is the degree to which hero here predominates over idea, and the consistency with which the heightened experience of these heroes falls short of any sublimity. Each character that speaks on the "stage" of Arkady's overwrought narrative (76; 13:64) hints at an everyday actor, capable of pursuing the life just visible in the corners where Arkady's friend Zverev walks on stilts around the courtyard, and the nanny of Versilov's foundling baby asks Arkady, as he is rushing to prevent the rape of Katerina Nikolaevna, to send Nastasya Egorovna over for a chat. Here, Gothic intensity thus operates on a background of ordinary life, shaping the material of a realist Bildungsroman. Instead of taking their places in a central, all-consuming set of ideological conflicts, *The Adolescent*'s minor characters, as we see them, clutter and frustrate Arkady's search for a solid character behind all the contradictory evidence of his father Versilov's behavior. In this respect, their "real life" as a technical illusion can be measured more by *distance* from the narrative than by instantiation in it. Rather than a space for the construction of characters, Arkady's narrative is an overwrought screen we are sometimes invited to picture them escaping.

The clearest ideological function of all "Arkady's" characters, it might be said, thus lies precisely in his failure to represent them as coherent people: in the claim, first, that the figures he encounters in contemporary St. Petersburg are too shifty, their situation too chaotic, to be captured by established literary conventions; and second, that the set of formal conventions suited to the circumstances of their lives has not yet been developed. Nowhere is this narrative argument plainer than in the novel's central characterization, Arkady's representation of Versilov.

From the beginning of Arkady's story, his ambivalence about Versilov stands between us and a full view of Versilov's figure. At first, the "haughty, closed, and negligent" Versilov, who would pull an impression of simpleheartedness "from devil knows where (as if out of his pocket) when he saw that it was necessary" seems to awaken Arkady's aggressive distrust and contempt (7; 13:6-7 and 10; 13:10). But by the end of Arkady's diegetic introduction, the tone of his description has already changed:

> looking at [Versilov] more closely during that whole month, what I saw was an arrogant man, whom society had not excluded from its circle, but rather who had himself driven society away from him — so independent an air he had. But did he have the right to that air — that's what troubled me! I absolutely had to find out the whole truth in the very shortest time, for I had come to judge this man. . . I had either to acknowledge him, or to spurn him altogether. And the latter would be all too painful for me, and I suffered. I'll finally make a full confession: this man was dear to me! (20)[25]

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[24] *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, Ch. 3.

[25] [приглядываясь к нему во весь этот месяц, я видел высокомерного человека, которого не общество исключило из своего круга, а который скорее сам прогнал общество от себя, — до того он смотрел независимо. Но имел ли он право смотреть таким образом — вот что

The standpoint dictated by judgment is different from the standpoint dictated by affection, and each one, in turn, produces different versions of Versilov's character in the novel.

Accordingly, Arkady has trouble finding a way to "stick" the most basic and objective information about Versilov's biography, his service record, into his narrative (76; 13:65). Arkady's portrait of Versilov, too, appears in scattered parts: his age in one description (19; 13:17), his hat and thick gray hair in another (102; 13:86), the pallor of his skin in a third (111; 13:93). The only characteristic that Arkady describes repeatedly is also, pointedly, the one that prevents him gaining a clear impression of who Versilov is — the "wrinkle [*skladka*] in him that he wouldn't drop for anything" (209; 13:171), "as if of sadness and mockery together" (463; 13:372). This "wrinkle" is clearly translated into words in Versilov's unsettling third person warning to Arkady, " 'He [Versilov] lies to you all the time [*On tebe vse lzhet*]'" (260; 13:212).

The story of "the whole truth" about Versilov is thus consistently delayed, and eventually displaced, by the story of how Versilov and Arkady appear to one another at different times — a story told dramatically, as an extended conversation. This dialogue culminates in Versilov's "Confession," a sustained soliloquy in the space of which Versilov "himself" seems to emerge from behind the lens of Arkady's narration, as a sufferer who tries (like Stavrogin and Ivan Karamazov) to work out the problems of atheism and virtue without Christ. But nowhere in this novel-length conversation, not excepting the "Confession," is it possible to take Versilov entirely at his word. No matter how open and sincere the speeches Arkady remembers, he also records the "wrinkle" that seems poised to undermine them. Even in passages of direct recorded speech, the size of the distance between the Versilov of Arkady's Notes and the "real" Versilov they aim to capture is never clear.

Screened by the very text that pursues him, Versilov ends the novel still in the shadow of Arkady's attempts at "explanation": "in my opinion, Versilov, in those moments, that is, in all that last day and the day before, could not have had any firm aim, and I don't think he even reasoned at all here, but was under the influence of some whirlwind of feelings. However, I do not admit of any genuine madness, the less so as he is not at all mad now. . . . But all this is only my guess; to decide for certain is difficult" (552).[26] Arkady's sense of Versilov's character has changed — "I'll say directly that I've never loved him as I do now, and I'm sorry that I have neither time nor space to say more about him" (553; 13:446). But in what "time" and "space" he does have to say more about Versilov, Arkady notes that he is still unmarried to Arkady's mother, and the strength of his new Christian faith still evidently in doubt. Versilov ends as the most

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меня волновало! Я непременно должен узнать всю правду в самый ближайший срок, ибо приехал судить этого человека. . . . мне надо было или признать его, или оттолкнуть от себя вовсе. А последнее мне было бы слишком тяжело, и я мучился. Сделаю наконец полное признание: этот человек был мне дорог! (13:18)]

[26] [. . .по-моему, Версилов в те мгновения, то есть в тот весь последний день и накануне, не мог иметь ровно никакой твердой цели и даже, я думаю, совсем тут и не рассуждал, а был под влиянием какого-то вихря чувств. Впрочем, настоящего сумасшествия я не допускаю вовсе, тем более что он — и теперь вовсе не сумасшедший. Но «двойника» допускаю несомненно. . . Но всё это — только моя догадка; решить же наверно — трудно (13:446)]

elusive of the novel's shifting points, a character whose final trajectory, like his physical form and moral character, remains ambiguous. And yet the *question* of Versilov's "true" character lies firmly at the center of Arkady's story, and of the novel itself.[27]

The Adolescent thus employs two contradictory strategies in the characterization of Versilov that exaggerate and clarify its mimetic technique. The absence of any consistent, reliable word about his character might encourage readers to give up the illusion of an individual person corresponding to the name "Versilov." But to deny the grounds for the search, the generic convention of the character as implied person, is to rob *The Adolescent*'s plot of its meaning.[28] The illusion of a coherent living referent corresponding to his name takes shape in the tension between the strong insistence that there is a Versilov to describe, and the narrative that has no words to fully or reliably describe him. As with the novel's minor characters, this tension reflects both on the nature of this figure, and on the conventions that fail to capture it: it signals both Versilov's essential social and spiritual rootlessness, and the still-inchoate dream of re-forming this rootlessness into a new kind of mimetic novelistic character.

The illusion of a physical person or object to which fictional language refers lies near the heart of realist technique. But it may be worth pausing here to emphasize the contrast between the methods Dostoevsky uses to activate this illusion, and the methods of "our talented writers. . . (Tolstoy, Goncharov)" from whom he intended to set himself apart. The major protagonists of *War and Peace* come alive, as I suggest in the previous chapter, because Tolstoy places them authoritatively at the heart of a system of named characters made to seem to live less fully than they, insisting with explicit descriptors on their vital presence within an ossified social landscape. As the novel progresses, these characters garner repeated descriptions and consistent experiences and narrative functions that shore up their position at the "living" center of this relational system, while more minor characters garner repeated descriptions, experiences, and functions that push them further away. In Tolstoy, moreover, the illusion of "life" at its strongest is essentially circular, irreducibly and uncompromisingly affirmed: when Natasha Rostova looks in the mirror, she is in a position only to say, "There, that's me! [*Vot ona ia*!]." Eschewing this kind of authoritative narration, *The Adolescent* also changes its means of regulating mimetic illusion. Here the sense of a living referent gets strengthened not so much positively, by assertion, as

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[27] As Peter Jensen has pointed out, Arkady's relationship to Versilov thus parodies that of an omniscient narrator to his protagonist: "Instead of seeing the hero 'finished off' [*gotovym*], in action, the reader sees the author Arkady in pursuit of the scattered potential fragments of the biography of his hero Versilov" ("Parodoksal'nost' avtorstva," 231).

[28] For an alternative account, see Hansen-Löve, who argues that Dostoevsky wrote the idea of "each person's guilt for all" into the structure of *The Adolescent* by intentionally making each character play more than one irreconcilable role: Versilov is both a bad and a good father, Makar Dolgoruky both a saint and a pathetic religious and Slavophile fanatic, etc. See also Gerigk's suggestion that Versilov's character can be explained only with reference to what Edgar Allen Poe called the "imp of the perverse"; Arkady's very search for a logical explanation for his behavior is thus flawed (*Versuch*, 114). While these readings are illuminating, neither accounts for the hole that the enigma of Versilov's character makes at the center of the novel's character-system *as represented* by Arkady, whose notes are structured as an attempt (misguided or not) to work through the enigma of that character by telling his story.

negatively, by insinuation: just because the narrative repetitively draws our attention to contradictions, inconsistencies, or gaps in the portrait of Versilov, it urges the necessity of imagining him in excess of the words that inadequately describe him.[29]

2. "I have, my dear, one favorite Russian writer": The envy of The Adolescent'*s characters*

The evolution of Arkady's own character offers a kind of parable about this "negative" or indirect method of characterization.

Arkady begins the novel obsessed with his "idea," the quest to "become a Rothschild" by accumulating capital. Encompassing basic physical functions (what and how much he will eat, where he will sleep, how he should walk to make a pair of boots last longer), Arkady's "idea" —encapsulated in the words *nakoplenie*, accumulation; and *nazhit'*, to gain (by living) — harnesses his very life to the task of accumulating money. It models a version of Arkady that is like Versilov, letting him construct himself as a character who could turn out (in the opening words of a more often quoted first-person Bildungsroman) to be the "hero of his own life." But the task of coming to understand Versilov, and later of recording his encounter with Versilov in his Notes, eclipses this "idea" as a means of self-definition. As Arkady protests late in the novel: "I've already declared a thousand times that I don't want to describe myself at all, and I firmly didn't want to when I began my notes; I understand only too well that the reader hasn't got the slightest need of me. I'm describing and want to describe others, and not myself, and if I keep turning up all the time, that is a sad mistake, because I simply can't avoid it" (347).[30] Just as Arkady is incapable of adequately describing Versilov, he turns out to be incapable of *not* describing himself. Writing his life-story, Arkady thus constructs his own character not (as he would have hoped) as the hero of a narrative about "becoming a Rothschild," but as the speaking subject *behind* an evolution of that narrative. (As in the case of Versilov's fragmented portrait, this situation is reflected visually: although other characters infallibly read his thoughts in his face, Arkady is never physically described.)

More than two different ways of behaving, Arkady's change from hoarder into (auto)biographer reflects two different shapes for his narrative about himself: one a linear cumulative path from poverty to riches; the other a continuous spiral that links the evidence of

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[29] Something like this conception of realist character is implied in Bakhtin's often-repeated formula, the "person's non-coincidence with himself [*nesovpadenie cheloveka s samim soboiu*" in Dostoevsky (M. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, ed. and trans. C. Emerson [Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1984], 59 ff.; M.M. Bakhtin, *Sobranie sochinenii*, ed. S.G. Bocharov and N.I. Nikolaev, vol. 6 [Moscow: Russkie slovari, 2002], 70 ff). A verbal description, whether originating with the narrator, with another character, or with the character being described, is never enough to capture these characters completely; a "loophole" will always remain that allows something in the character to exceed the way s/he is characterized in words, and precisely in this "loophole" we find the illusion of a living, morally free person.

[30] [я уже тысячу раз объявлял, что вовсе не хочу себя описывать; да и твердо не хотел, начиная записки: я слишком понимаю, что я нисколько не надобен читателю. Я описываю и хочу описать других, а не себя, а если всё сам подвертываюсь, то это — только грустная ошибка, потому что никак нельзя миновать, как бы я ни желал того. (13:280)]

himself Arkady leaves in the text, as he struggles to keep abreast or "run ahead" of his chaotic story, to his evolving "I," a vanishing point always to be drawn somewhere beyond it. His Bildungsroman ends with the dissipation of this spiral, a run so far "ahead" that Arkady seems to surpass the text altogether: "I have finished. Maybe some readers would like to know what became of my 'idea' and what this new life is that is beginning for me now and that I've announced so mysteriously. But this new life, this new path that has opened before me, is precisely my 'idea,' the same as before, but under a totally different guise, so that it's no longer recognizable. But it can't be included in my 'Notes' now, because it's something quite different" (559).[31] We have little chance of guessing the content of this new "idea," but there is a clear formal interpretation: over the course of the novel, the original model by which Arkady planned to become the hero of his own story has been replaced.[32] He has become a protagonist defined in the act of writing.

Told in this way, Arkady's Bildung looks like a triumph, a hopeful transformation of the novel form that privileges the development of a new kind of hero over the exposition of the old. But there is room for doubt - can a speaker be defined *only* through his speech? Imagined as the vanishing point behind and beyond his narrative, might Arkady himself become a kind of phantom? Indeed, Arkady's radical continuity with his narrative is more than an indirect device of characterization. At the novel's crisis point, this continuity turns around to become a *condition* of the narrative's story-world, and an entry point into it for what Arkady calls the "fantastic" (337; 13:275).

Very early in the novel, Arkady remembers his childhood tormenter Lambert shooting canaries: "His hair was terribly black, his face white and red-cheeked like a mask, his nose long and with a hump, such as Frenchmen have, his teeth white, his eyes black" (32 [translation modified]). Much later, having fallen asleep in a snowdrift, Arkady dreams of being pummeled by Lambert, and when he opens his eyes he finds the real Lambert kicking him awake: "a man in a rich bearskin coat, a sable hat, with black eyes, pitch-black foppish side-whiskers, a humped nose, his white teeth bared at me, a white and ruddy face like a mask..." (336 [translation modified]).[33] In the context of this novel, the exact reappearance of Lambert's initial portrait is in some ways as improbable as the reappearance of Lambert. His "fantastic" materialization out of Arkady's dream erases the separation between Arkady's mind and the novel's fictional world, as if Arkady were indeed narrating only himself. But it is Lambert's activities that determine the external events of the last third of the novel's plot, far more effectively than anything Arkady has

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[31] [Я кончил. Может быть, иному читателю захотелось бы узнать: куда ж это девалась моя «идея» и что такое та новая, начинавшаяся для меня теперь жизнь, о которой я так загадочно возвещаю? . . . Но в «Записки» мои всё это войти уже не может, потому что это — совсем другое. (13:451)]

[32] For one decoding of Arkady's new "idea," see T.A. Kasatkina, "Roman F.M. Dostoevskogo 'Podrostok': 'Ideia' geroia i ideia avtora," *Voprosy literatury* (2004, no. 1): 181–212.

[33] [Волосы у него были черные ужасно, лицо белое и румяное, как на маске, нос длинный, с горбом, как у французов, зубы белые, глаза черные. (13:27); человек в богатой медвежьей шубе, в собольей шапке, с черными глазами, с черными как смоль щегольскими бакенами, с горбатым носом, с белыми оскаленными на меня зубами, белый, румяный, лицо как маска... (13:274)]

done. And the consistency with which his features are described gives him the stable, if highly stylized, physicality that most of Arkady's characters lack. Essentially coextensive with his own narrated memories, Arkady finds himself subjected to a character with the weight of convention and repetition behind him — a character who seems to have intruded, with improbable authority, from another narrative universe.[34]

This very intrusion, in turn, reinforces the unstable, dreamlike quality of the narrative and narrated world that define Arkady himself. As Arkady puts it, in a famous description of the "prosaic" city of St. Petersburg: "Here they all are rushing and throwing themselves about, and who knows, maybe it's all somebody's dream, and there's not a single true, genuine person here, not a single real act? The somebody whose dream it is will suddenly wake up — and everything will suddenly vanish." (135)[35] As Lambert's appearance demonstrates, the real nightmare is not that "everything will suddenly vanish," but that *not* everything will vanish — that remnants of a dreamed solidity remain to attract and torment those who have awoken into a different world.

Dostoevsky describes such an awakening in his own voice, in his projected preface to *The Adolescent*: "There are no *foundations* to our society, no rules have been lived out yet, because there has as yet been no life. A great upheaval, — and everything breaks off, falls, is negated, as if it had never been" (16:329). Born from narrative conditions that reflect these unstable social ones, the majority of *The Adolescent*'s characters are animated, just as its early reviewers complained, with a dream- or phantom-life — in Versilov's words, "so banal and prosaic that it borders almost on the fantastic" (272; 13:222). It may not be coincidental, I would suggest, that the name Arkady Makarovich phonetically recalls Gogol's Akaky Akakievich, or that toward the end of *The Adolescent*, we find Arkady looking around for the thieves who ought to be trying to steal his fur coat (449; 13:361). Arkady as a "member of an accidental family" joins a line of character-types, the so-called "little men," that extends back to Gogol's Akaky ("The Overcoat [*Shinel'*]") and on to Makar Devushkin, of Dostoevsky's first novel *Poor Folk* (*Bednye liudi*). But Arkady takes Dostoevsky's first extension of Gogol a step further: he becomes responsible not only for his own literary representation, but for representing the population of an entire novel.

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[34] Dostoevsky had used both the details of Lambert's portrait (his mask-like face), and the device of a tormenter who appears out of a dream, in previous works, notably for Svidrigailov in *Crime and Punishment* (see Gerigk, *Versuch*, 121–23). The relationship between Arkady and Lambert also, as many have noted, follows the paradigm of that between Golyadkin Sr. and Jr. in "The Double" (*Dvoinik*, 1846). The persistence of the pattern across these novels, a story visible only over Arkady's head, adds to Lambert's peculiar stability. Eve Kosofsky-Sedgwick discusses the appearance of a powerful double out of a dream — the terror of waking from a dream and "finding it true" — as a central Gothic device, related to a "dangerously insoluble certainty about where to place the perimeters of the self" (*The Coherence of Gothic Conventions* [New York and London: Methuen, 1980], 27–35). In this context, Lambert emerges not just from the precursors of Dostoevsky's other novels, but from a literary tradition whose conventions (unbeknownst to Arkady) shape his style and story throughout.

[35] [а почём знать, может быть, всё это чей-нибудь сон, и ни одного-то человека здесь нет настоящего, истинного, ни одного поступка действительного? Кто-нибудь вдруг проснется, кому это всё грезится, — и всё вдруг исчезнет. (13:113)]

The fluidity of the character-system that results looks like a crisis of what we are used to calling, in Bakhtin's iconic term, polyphony. It is a concatenation of voices cut off from, even tyrannized by, the strong narrative selves and structures that Arkady can seldom let accumulate within the pages of their text. In one sense, *The Adolescent* represents a democratic subversion of the principles by which Tolstoyan characters reach the illuminated centers of their narrative; perhaps, of the very principle *of* a character-system — the more Arkady says about a character, the less firmly fixed that character seems to become. But this subversion is presented less with triumph for the "real men of the Russian majority," than with regret for the forms that no longer suffice for their redemptive, at once harmonious and mimetic, representation.

It is fitting, in this respect, that the dream of "accumulation" — of growing up into something more substantial in time — haunts so many of *The Adolescent*'s represented characters (as well as the novel's title). Most directly, this hope lies at the core of Arkady's "idea," his quest to "become a Rothschild" by collecting more and more capital, using his life to accumulate the material that will turn him into an "extraordinary" or heroic figure. The same logic, differently applied, shapes the theory that causes Kraft's suicide: " '[Kraft] has deduced that the Russian people are a second-rate people. . . whose fate is to serve *merely as material for a more noble race*, and not to have its own independent role in the destinies of mankind.'" (51 [my italics]).[36] And Versilov's Confession shares in this theory, with the revision that the "noble tribe" has already begun to form, within a group of Russian aristocrats dedicated primarily to Europe:

> Yes, my boy, I repeat to you that I can't help respecting my nobility. Over the centuries we have developed a high cultural type never seen before, which does not exist anywhere else in the world — the type of universal suffering for all.. . . There are perhaps only a thousand of us — maybe more, maybe less — but *the whole of Russia has lived up to now only to produce this thousand.* Too few, they'll say, indignant that so many centuries and so many millions of people have been spent for a thousand men. In my opinion, it's not too few. . . . Europe created noble types of the Frenchman, the Englishman . . . Only the Russian, even in our time, that is, long before the general summing up, is capable of becoming most Russian precisely only when he is most European. (468–69 [my italics])[37]

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[36] [«[Крафт] вывел, что русский народ есть народ второстепенный. . . которому предназначено послужить лишь материалом для более благородного племени» (13:44).]

[37] [Да, мальчик, повторю тебе, что я не могу не уважать моего дворянства. У нас создался веками какой-то еще нигде не виданный высший культурный тип, которого нет в целом мире — тип всемирного боления за всех. Это — тип русский, но так как он взят в высшем культурном слое народа русского, то, стало быть, я имею честь принадлежать к нему. Он хранит в себе будущее России. Нас, может быть, всего только тысяча человек . . . но вся Россия жила лишь пока для того, чтобы произвести эту тысячу. Скажут — мало, вознегодуют, что на тысячу человек истрачено столько веков и столько миллионов народу. По-моему, не мало. . . . Европа создала благородные типы француза, англичанина . . . Один лишь русский, даже в наше время, то есть гораздо еще раньше, чем будет подведен всеобщий итог, получил уже способность становиться наиболее русским именно лишь тогда, когда он наиболее европеец. (13:376–77)]

In the reasoning of Versilov's Confession, the "Russian type" of "universal suffering for all" has been developed — at enormous expense of "centuries" and "people" — for the sake of a still higher European ideal. Versilov's sense of illegitimacy thus unexpectedly mirrors Arkady's own. There is only a short distance between a "nonentity" like Arkady, determined to devote all the resources of life to accumulating enough money to gain the "first place," and Versilov's aristocratic "thousand," determined to turn the accumulated Russian material that has gone into their "production" to the salvation — and appropriation — of a European ideal of nobility.[38]

Finally, the novel's Conclusion, Nikolai Semyonovich's appraisal of Arkady's Notes, articulates a narrative device that underlies this pattern of characters reaching above or beyond themselves in the story. The logic by which Arkady tries to approach the higher social level of Versilov, and by which Kraft and Versilov set their sights on the higher cultural level of some ideal "noble tribe," reflects the logic by which (according to Nikolai Semyonovich) "members of an accidental family" stretch toward the mimetic beauty of the *Tolstoyan* aristocratic protagonist. Without mentioning Tolstoy's name, he describes a novelist who writes in the "historical" genre:

> If I were a Russian novelist and had talent, I would be sure to take my heroes from the hereditary Russian nobility, because it is only in that type of cultivated Russian people that there is possible at least the appearance of a beautiful order and a beautiful impression. . . [The novelist] would be unable to write in any other genre than the historical, for the beautiful type no longer exists in our time. . . Oh, in the historical genre it is still possible to portray a great many extremely pleasant and delightful details! One

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[38] The trope of Russia itself as an "illegitimate" child belonging neither to East nor West dates back at least to Chaadaev's first "Philosophical Letter" (1829): "One of the worst features of our unique civilization is that we have not yet discovered truths that have elsewhere become truisms. . . It is the result of our never having walked side by side with other nations; we belong to none of the great families of mankind; we are neither of the West nor of the East. . . 'What is the life of man,' Cicero asked, if the memory of past events does not come to bind the present to the past?' But we Russians, like illegitimate children, come to this world without patrimony, without any links with people who lived on the earth before us; we have in our hearts none of those lessons which have preceded our own existence. Each one of us must himself once again seek to tie the broken thread in the family. . . . Our memories go no further back than yesterday; we are, as it were, strangers to ourselves." (P.Ya. Chaadaev, *Philosophical Letters and Apology of a Madman*, trans. by Mary-Barbara Zeldin [Knoxville, TN: U. of Tennessee Press, 1969], 34; 37. Cf. P.IA. Chaadaev, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i izbrannyie pis'ma*, t. 1, ed. T.I. Oizerman et. al. [Moscow: Nauka, 1991], 89; 92). Similarly, Dostoevsky refers to "Russia's isolation in the European family of peoples" in the 1873 "Diary of a Writer" ("Po povodu vystavki," 21:69–70). As Nina Perlina's analysis implies, it is Versilov's orientation on European deism and nobility (designated by the parodic "*gentilhomme*") that separate his views from Dostoevsky's own (most fully articulated in his speech at the 1880 Pushkin Jubilee). Cf. her suggestive observation that Versilov is "a Tolstoian character in a Dostoevskian novel" (N. Perlina, "Rethinking Adolescence," in *Celebrating Creativity: Essays in honour of Jostein Børtnes*, ed. K.A. Grimstad and I. Lunde [University of Bergen, 1997], 222–23).

can even carry the reader with one so far that he will take the historical picture for something still possible in the present. Such a work, given great talent, would belong not so much to Russian literature as to Russian history. It would be an artistically finished picture of a Russian mirage. (561–62)[39]

He then contrasts the position of this novelist, a talented weaver of illusions, with Arkady's own:

Yes, Arkady Makarovich, you are *a member of an accidental family*, as opposed to our still-recent hereditary types, who had a childhood and youth so different from yours. I confess, I would not wish to be a novelist whose hero comes from an accidental family! Thankless work and lacking in beautiful forms. And these types in any case are still a current matter, and therefore cannot be artistically finished. Major mistakes are possible. . . What, though, is the writer to do who has no wish to write only in the historical genre and is possessed by a yearning for what is current? To guess... and be mistaken. But 'Notes' such as yours could, it seems to me, serve as material for a future artistic work, for a future picture — of a disorderly but already bygone epoch. . . the future artist will find beautiful forms even for portraying the past disorder and chaos. It is then that 'Notes' like yours will be needed and will provide material — as long as they are sincere, even despite all that is chaotic and accidental about them. . (563–64; 13:455).[40]

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[39] [Если бы я был русским романистом и имел талант, то непременно брал бы героев моих их русского родового дворянства, потому что лишь в одном этом типе культурных русских людей возможен хоть вид красивого порядка и красивого впечатления . . . [Романист] не мог бы писать в другом роде, как в историческом, ибо красивого типа уже нет в наше время. . . О, и в историческом роде возможно изобразить множество еще чрезвычайно приятных и отрадных подробностей! Можно даже и до того увлечь читателя, что он примет историческую картину за возможную еще и в настоящем. Такое произведение, при великом таланте, уже принадлежало бы не столько к русской литературе, сколько к русской истории. Это была бы картина, художественно законченная, русского миража. . . (13:453–54)]

[40] [Да, Аркадий Макарович, вы — *член случайного семейства,* в противоположность еще недавним родовым нашим типам, имевшим столь различные от ваших детство и отрочество. Признаюсь, не желал бы я быть романистом героя из случайного семейства! Работа неблагодарная и без красивых форм. Да и типы эти, во всяком случае, — еще дело текущее, а потому и не могут быть художественно законченными. Возможны важные ошибки. . . Но что делать, однако ж, писателю, не желающему писать лишь в одном историческом роде и одержимому тоской по текущему? Угадывать и... ошибаться. Но такие «Записки», как ваши, могли бы, кажется мне, послужить материалом для будущего художественного произведения, для будущей картины — беспорядочной, но уже прошедшей эпохи. . . .будущий художник отыщет прекрасные формы даже для изображения минувшего беспорядка и хаоса. Вот тогда-то и понадобятся подобные «Записки», как ваши, и дадут материал — были бы искренни, несмотря даже на всю их хаотичность и случайность... (13:454)]

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 If Arkady's Notes are ultimately classed as "material for a future artistic work", then the act of narration itself becomes an exercise in accumulation, in storing up fragments of "sincere" observation that may one day add up to something as coherent as the Tolstoyan "artistically finished picture of a Russian mirage."[41] It is impossible to determine the extent to which Nikolai Semyonovich speaks for Dostoevsky. But the characters' attraction to the logic of accumulation is itself significant: created by a vacuum rather than a plenitude of stable and authoritative description, they yearn in the story for what they are denied in the discourse.

In a remarkable passage from a manuscript variant to the novel, Dostoevsky inserts this kind of lament directly into Versilov's "Confession" to Arkady:

> I have, my dear, one favorite Russian writer. He is a novelist, but for me he is almost a historiographer of our nobility. . . In this "historiographer of our nobility" what I like most is that very "seemliness" (*blagoobrazie*) that. . . you and I are seeking [or at least a hint of its possibility] in the characters he represents. He takes a nobleman from his childhood and youth, he draws him in his family, his first steps in life, his first [glances] joys, tears, and all so poetically, so unshakably and inarguably. He is a psychologist of the nobleman's soul. But the main thing is that this is given as inarguable, and of course, you agree. You agree and you envy. Oh, how they envy! There are children who from childhood already begin to become pensive about their families, offended from childhood by the unseemliness of their fathers, their fathers and their surroundings, and, the main thing, already in childhood beginning to understand the disorder and accidentalness (*sluchainost'*) of the foundations of their life, the absence of established forms and inherited wisdom. These should envy my writer, envy [my] his characters and, perhaps, dislike them. Oh, these are not characters, they are sweet children, who have wonderful, sweet fathers, eating at the club, entertaining around Moscow, their older children in the hussars or students at the university, among those who have their own carriages. The writer displays them with all openness: they themselves are often ridiculous or amusing; not rarely, even trivial, but as a whole, as a class, they unarguably represent something finished. . . . And regardless of the realism, of the reality, of the ridiculous and comic, both the touching and the pathetic are possible here. However good or bad all this is in itself, here there is already. . . a lived-out defined order, here rules have accumulated (*tut nakopilis' pravila*), here there is a kind of honor and duty. (17:143)[42]

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[41] It is clear from the notebooks that Nikolai Semyonovich's letter refers to Tolstoy's *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*: see 425 (16:329), 516 (16:410), 529 (16: 420), 538 (16:429), 544-545 (16:435). Mochulsky, citing the manuscript variant I quote below, writes of *The Adolescent* as "Dostoevsky's artistic answer to Tolstoy's *War and Peace*" (*Dostoevskii*, 409). A.L. Bem cites the same passage in discussing Dostoevsky's engagement in *The Adolescent* with Tolstoy's pseudo-autobiographical cycle *Childhood, Boyhood*, and *Youth*: "Khudozhestvennaia polemika s Tolstym (K ponimaniiu 'Podrostka')," *O Dostoevskom*, Vol. 3 (Petropolis, 1936): 192–214. See also Perlina, "Rethinking Adolescence," 221 ff.; Holland, *Age of Disintegration...*, 117–23.

[42] Brackets designate canceled variants; for this reason, I have used parentheses here to set off Russian words and phrases. [У меня, мой милый, есть один любимый русский писатель. Он

It has been suggested that in this passage, through Versilov's lips, Dostoevsky is drawing an explicit comparison between his own childhood and adolescence, and the kind described in the writings of Tolstoy.[43] But it is at least equally true that here, Dostoevsky's *character* envies a group of fictional characters rooted in a different kind of novel — a novel where they are described "poetically, unshakably, and inarguably," where "rules have accumulated" for both behavior and mimetic representation.

Versilov's excised comment offers, still more clearly than the novel's published Epilogue, a meta-fictional gloss on a social condition. Tolstoy's characters are "not characters, they are sweet children, who have wonderful, sweet fathers"; it is, then, as if the very possession of a "father" were enough to realize a character, to convert him from verbal construct into "child." Though there is ample testimony in his notebooks, letters, and publicistic writings to the qualities that Dostoevsky (in his own voice) associated with Tolstoy's characters —in the discourse, a wealth of telling concrete descriptive details; in the story, a narrowness of class, experience, and worldview[44] — Versilov brings these qualities together here in a particularly suggestive way. It is the authority with which Tolstoy's characters and their lives are "drawn," stemming both from Tolstoy's artistic genius and from the stability inherent in the circumstances of their fictional lives, that invites the envy of Dostoevsky's. The stylistic presence of an "unshakeable" narrator

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романист, но для меня он почти историограф нашего дворянства. . . В этом «историографе нашего дворянства» мне нравится всего больше вот это самое «благообразие», которого [ты ищешь или] мы с тобой ищем [или по крайней мере намек на возможность его], в героях, изображенных им. Он берет дворянина с его детства и юношества, он рисует его в семье, его первые шаги в жизни, его первые [взгляды] радости, слезы и всё так поэтично, так незыблемо и неоспоримо. Он психолог дворянской души. Но главное в том, что это дано как неоспоримое, и, уж конечно, ты соглашаешься. Соглашаешься и завидуешь. О, сколько завидуют! Есть дети, с детства уже задумывающиеся над своей семьей, с детства оскорбленные неблагообразием отцов своих, отцов и среды своей, а главное, уж в детстве начинающие понимать беспорядочность и случайность основ всей их жизни, отсутствие установившихся форм и родового предания. Эти должны завидовать моему писателю, завидовать [моему] его героям и, пожалуй, не любить их. О, это не герои, это милые дети, у которых прекрасные, милые отцы, кушающие в клубе, хлебосольничающие по Москве, старшие дети их в гусарах или студенты в Юниверститете [*sic*], из имеющих свой экипаж. Писатель выставляет их со всею откровенностью: они лично часто даже смешны и забавны, нередко и ничтожны, но как целое, как сословье, они бесспорно изображают собою нечто законченное. . . . И несмотря на реализм, на действительность, на смешное и комическое, тут возможно и трогательное и патетическое. Как бы там ни было хорошо всё это или дурно само по себе, но тут уже [порядок, тут воспиталась и сохранилась честь] выжитая определившаяся форма, тут накопились правила, тут своего рода честь и долг.]

[43] Mochul'skii. *Dostoevskii*, 12.

[44] See, for two examples among many, "Razgovor moi s odnym moskovskim znakomym..." in the July 1877 *Diary of a Writer*, discussed by A.L. Bem in "Khudozhestvennaia polemika s Tolstym," 198-99; and Dostoevsky's discussions of *Anna Karenina* in the February and July issues of *Diary of a Writer* (especially "Odin iz glavneishikh sovremennykh voprosov").

merges with the social presence of a "sweet father," pointing up the dual absence that is the strongest characteristic of *The Adolescent*'s plot and its narrating situation. The novel thus offers the ambivalent figure of "illegitimacy" equally as a motivation for unfettered formal adventure, and as a suspicion cast on the very form that results.

A recognition of Versilov's envy does nothing to lessen the artistic force of *The Adolescent*'s structure, by which its multiplying characters perform degrees of disintegration, disorder, and (in rare cases) harmony for the education of its Bildungshero and narrator, Arkady Dolgoruky. Nevertheless, we can accept his provocation to inquire more closely into the techniques that govern this performance. No characters in Russian literature have stood more powerfully than Dostoevsky's for the tenet that great novelistic protagonists seem to take on their own life, independent of their creators. But the characters of *The Adolescent* throw this account back on itself, urging us to ask where the impression of such "life" comes from, and whether it is really, in itself, so desirable, when exchanged for the mirage of a harmoniously created fictional world. Detaching this illusion from the consistent narrative descriptors and techniques of focalization that stabilize it in more conventional realist novels, and even from the consistent *thematic* associations that animate the idea-heroes of Dostoevsky's best-known novels, *The Adolescent* dares us to take the convention of the "real life" of each character whole and for granted — against the apparent promptings of the "living" characters themselves.

Read in the light of this tension, *The Adolescent* is crowded, but only with phantoms who seem to sense the ghostliness of their fictional autonomy. And the question it poses to Dostoevsky's final novel, *The Brothers Karamazov*, is then less about quality than it is about quantity: is this the only way that the "life of the majority" can be written? Can a mimetic principle that generates so many "lives" both gather *and* shape the material of a future novel?

1. "From the author": Narrator and hero in The Brothers Karamazov

 The Brothers Karamazov begins by appearing to step back from the formal questions posed at the end of *The Adolescent*.

 This change of strategy emerges in a notoriously enigmatic introduction entitled "From the author [*Ot avtora*]," which attempts to preempt a number of the implied reader's questions about the novel's hero: "What is notable about your Alexei Fyodorovich, that you should choose him for your hero? What has he really done? To whom is he known, and for what? Why should I, the reader, spend my time studying the facts of his life?"[1] It may turn out, the introduction suggests, that precisely such an "eccentric [*chudak*]" as Alyosha Karamazov "bears within himself the heart of the whole, while the other people of his epoch have all for some reason been torn away from it for a time by some kind of flooding wind" (3). If *The Adolescent* gave itself up to the task of capturing this "flooding wind," and the flimsiness of all those "torn away" by it, *The Brothers Karamazov* focuses on a "hero" who has remained miraculously fixed. And where *The Adolescent* ended with an appeal to a "future artistic work," *The Brothers Karamazov* begins with one:

> . . . the trouble is that while I have just one biography [*zhizneopisanie*], I have two novels. The main novel is the second one — about the activities of my hero in our time, that is, in our present, current moment. As for the first novel, it already took place thirteen years ago and is even almost not a novel at all but just one moment from my hero's early youth. It is impossible for me to do without this first novel, or much in the second novel will be incomprehensible. . . .(3)[2]

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[1] F. Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, trans. R. Pevear and L. Volokhonsky (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1990), 3. This edition cited parenthetically in the text hereafter, with corresponding citations to Dostoevsky's 30-volume collected works in the footnote or parenthetically in the form (English citation; Russian citation). [Начиная жизнеописание героя моего, Алексея Федоровича Карамазова, нахожусь в некотором недоумении. А именно: хотя я и называю Алексея Федоровича моим героем, но, однако, сам знаю, что человек он отнюдь не великий, а посему и предвижу неизбежные вопросы вроде таковых: чем же замечателен ваш Алексей Федорович, что вы выбрали его своим героем? Что сделал он такого? Кому и чем известен? Почему я, читатель, должен тратить время на изучение фактов его жизни?. . . бывает так, что он-то [чудак *(CK)*], пожалуй, и носит в себе иной раз сердцевину целого, а остальные люди его эпохи — все, каким-нибудь наплывным ветром, на время почему-то от него оторвались... (14:5)]

[2] [. . . беда в том, что жизнеописание-то у меня одно, а романов два. Главный роман второй — это деятельность моего героя уже в наше время, именно в наш теперешний текущий момент. Первый же роман произошел еще тринадцать лет назад, и есть почти

"*Not you*": Character and the Conditions of Transcendence in Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*

A reader of *The Adolescent* should be alive not only to the biographical fact that Dostoevsky never *did* write this novel "about the activities of my hero. . . in our present, current moment," but also to the technical difficulties that might have made it all but unwritable.[3] *The Brothers Karamazov* opens by placing a problem that *The Adolescent* makes vividly intractable — the novel of the "present, current moment" — into the background, as if it had already been solved.

These moves suggest a new approach to the problem of how contemporary disorder might one day be shaped into a "beautiful form." Rather than looking forward to a still-unwritable future novel, the introduction declares an intention to search for its seeds in the past. Rather than insisting on an ordinary contemporary hero, for whom the habitual form of Dostoevsky's novels must be bent if he is to become a protagonist at all, it turns to a figure so unusual that he appears to have completely transcended his own "epoch." Moreover, an authorial figure enters from the start to take responsibility for his protagonist (the phrase "my hero" or "my Alexei Fyodorovich" is repeated seven times in the introductory note). Far from putting him, like Arkady Dolgoruky, in a position to earn his own centrality, the "author" absolves Alyosha Karamazov from any action at all; he promises only "one moment from my hero's early youth."

And yet it is evident that this new approach must take shape in narrative conditions similar to those that deform *The Adolescent*. The introduction's very title puts it on a problematic borderline: is this "author" the one on the title page, or the narrator-chronicler who appears on the first page of the text?[4] This ambiguity results in a markedly ambivalent assertion of authorial fiat, smuggling the creation of Alyosha Karamazov into a passage that draws our attention not to

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даже и не роман, а лишь один момент из первой юности моего героя. Обойтись мне без этого первого романа невозможно, потому что многое во втором романе стало бы непонятным. . . . Ну вот и всё предисловие. Я совершенно согласен, что оно лишнее, но так как оно уже написано, то пусть и останется. (14:6)]

[3] It is well known that Dostoevsky did, in fact, plan a continuation of *The Brothers Karamazov*, which might have taken up a part of his plan for "The Life of a Great Sinner" (for a recent consideration of its probable contents, see J.L. Rice, "Dostoevsky's Endgame: The Projected Sequel to *The Brothers Karamazov*," *Russian History/Histoire Russe*, 33:1 [Spring 2006], 45–62). But as many critics discuss (see note 4), this note "from the author" is also woven into the fictional narrating situation of *The Brothers Karamazov*. On the poetic device of the projected sequel more generally, see R. Hellebust, "Bakhtin and the 'Virtual Sequel' in Russian Literature," *Slavic and East European Journal* 44:4 (Winter, 2000), 603–22.

[4] Lewis Bagby proposes that they are writing in tandem; see his "'Brief and Lame': The Introduction to Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*," *Slavic and East European Journal* 55:2 (Summer, 2011): 229–44. , but the novel does not necessarily encourage us to take the narrator-chronicler's word for it. As Nina Perlina notes, Dostoevsky's narrator, unlike Tolstoy's, expects the reader to disagree with him: N. Perlina, *Varieties of Poetic Utterance: Quotation in* The Brothers Karamazov (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1985), 6–7. On the deliberate confusion sown by the introductory note "From the Author," see also W.M. Todd III, "Storied Selves: Constructing Characters in *The Brothers Karamazov*," in *Self and Story in Russian History*, ed. L. Engelstein and S. Sandler (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), 270–71.

him, but to a figure with the putative authority to call him "my hero." Though Dostoevsky could just as well have allowed Alyosha to emerge in the way that, say, Levin emerges as the hero of *Anna Karenina*, he goes out of his way to work with a different set of tools.

In the introductory bridge to these chapters, I emphasized the *indirect* techniques by which Dostoevsky conveys the effect of his characters' living presence, without giving an omniscient narrator the authority to introduce, reinforce, and regulate this effect. Establishing the generic context of realist characterization with a number of signals, including in the case of *The Adolescent* a Bildungsroman plot and a specific but shifting initial portrait of each figure, Dostoevsky uses the "evidence" of the character's speech or behavior in combination with a vacuum of stable narratorial characterization to create the sense of a mobile and autonomous person. The effect of a "living" character thus springs from our constant comparison of narrative exposition or commentary (or the commentary of other characters; or, in the case of Arkady, the anticipated commentary of the reader) to the character's "own" action or speech — and this very process defines, by continual contrasts, the realm of the character's "own," the character "himself." My account is indebted in obvious ways to Mikhail Bakhtin's canonical description of Dostoevsky's techniques of characterization. But by supplementing Bakhtin's ethical metaphors for these techniques with formal ones, I hope to be able to bring out more clearly Dostoevsky's own anxieties about their essential instability. Each located at one extreme of Dostoevsky's attempt to represent a new kind of character and experience, *The Adolescent* and *The Brothers Karamazov* offer complementary perspectives — on what Dostoevsky hoped to change about the Russian realist novel and character, and on the resistance to and uncertainty about this change that his novels also encode.

As the opening of *The Brothers Karamazov* makes clear, the apparent but over-marked exercise of a narrator's authority can create a ground for indirect illusion no less effectively than its chaotic absence. The potential mismatch between the assertions of Alyosha's narrator and Alyosha's "true" character are the conditions in which the illusion of his unmediated presence operates: here as elsewhere in Dostoevsky, characters get defined primarily "on stage in the novel" (18; 14:17). But I will suggest that here, as in *The Adolescent*, there are traces of a subterranean drama *about* this method of characterization. Dostoevsky's final novel explores the thematic and generic possibility of departing from a conventional relationship between novel characters and the defining statements of authoritative narrators, while retaining a clear ordering mechanism for the quality of each character's mimetic representation. Though this departure results here in a less radical form than *The Adolescent*'s, *The Brothers Karamazov* too is troubled by Dostoevsky's misgivings about limiting conventions that linger in the fabric of the novel itself.

2. "Your whole Karamazov question": The character-system of The Brothers Karamazov

The Brothers Karamazov creates a broad and densely populated fictional universe. It has at least seventy named onstage characters, plus another sixty who are counted but not named, and about a dozen significant named offstage characters.[5] The majority of them — monks, rich

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[5] This count excludes incidental figures who do not physically appear in the novel, but are named or mentioned in passing; and characters invented by other characters, such as the Grand

or poor peasants, devout women, gypsy dancers — function mainly to present and strengthen the illusion of the world in which the novel's story takes place.[6] Sometimes, however, there is a blurring effect in this represented crowd, as at the edges of an optical illusion. Nazar Ivanovich, Grushenka's porter, forgets to tell his nephew Prokhor not to let Mitya into her house, and several hundred pages later, Prokhor Ivanovich Nazaryev appears as a juror at Mitya's trial. Lizaveta Smerdyashchaya runs away from the widow Kondratiev's house on the night of Smerdyakov's birth, and Smerdyakov later takes up with Maria Kondratievna (no last name), the daughter of another widow, Fyodor Pavlovich's nextdoor neighbor.[7] Confined to the novel's outer margins, this blurring only hints at disrupting the device by which named incidental characters work (in Barthes' term) as "reality effects," there to signify the verisimilitude of their own presence. But it very slightly pulls away the veneer of everyday reality (and literary realism) that the novel employs, to expose the symbolic system that organizes it on another level.

I will begin here by drawing on the compelling description of this system's dimensions in Robert Belknap's classic study *The Structure of* The Brothers Karamazov.[8] Belknap sketches two "axes" along which characterological attributes and ways of believing and behaving in the novel can be placed. The first ("metaphysical") axis extends from qualities associated with Ivan's devil (self-annihilation or non-being; the lie; mystery and riddle; laughter; sensual cruelty, a concern with earthly bread; attraction to atheism, socialism, and France) up to qualities

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Inquisitor. A partial list of about sixty of the novel's named (on- and offstage) characters can be found in V. Terras, *A Karamazov Companion* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1981), 123–24. For comparison, T.V. Tsiv'ian counts 43 named onstage characters in *The Adolescent*; see his "O strukture vremeni i prostranstva v romane Dostoevskogo 'Podrostok,'" *Russian Literature* 3 (1976), 207. Horst-Jürgen Gerigk gives a slightly longer and more detailed list in his *Versuch über Dostoevskijs' Jüngling': Ein Beitrag zur Theorie des Romans*, Forum Slavicum, vol. 4 [Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1965], 102–103.

[6] David Galef has categorized some of these "mimetic" roles in his *The Supporting Cast: A Study of Flat and Minor Characters* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993), 20–21.

[7] Recent work has drawn attention to the novel's many grieving mothers, and to the inheritance the dead Karamazov mothers leave to their sons (L. Knapp, "Mothers and Sons in *The Brothers Karamazov*: Our Ladies of Skotoprigonevsk," in *A New Word on* The Brothers Karamazov, ed. R.L. Jackson, 31–52 [Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2004]; C. Apollonio, *Dostoevsky's Secrets*, Chapter Eight), but I know of no attempts to account for the still larger group of some dozen Skotoprigonevsk widows, ranging in significance to the plot from Mme. Khokhlakova, to Kolya Krasotkin's mother, to Zosima (as Zinovii)'s and Ivan's landladies. For a beginning, they add to the impression that *The Brothers Karamazov* takes place in a world of abandoned (especially fatherless) families. Widowers, for their part, seem firmly associated with the grasping and demonic — from Fyodor Pavlovich himself; to the greedy innkeeper Trifon Borisovich and the sham widower Gorstkin /Lyagavy; and at last to Ivan's devil ("Such spongers. . . are usually single, either bachelors or widowers," 636; 15:71).

[8] R. Belknap, *The Structure of* The Brothers Karamazov (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1967), 26–50.

associated with Father Zosima, his brother Markel, and Alyosha (active love that inspires love in return, love for God's world, prayer, faith in the redemptive power of childhood memories). The second ("existential") axis extends from the image of "buffoonery" (blathering, lying, aggressive shame, self-dramatization) to the image of the *nadryv*, or strain (pride, dignity, the fear of being base, self-abnegation). Belknap then enumerates a separate cluster of qualities associated with the word *karamazovshchina* (Karamazovism): vileness (*podlost'*), lechery or sensuality (*sladostrastiie*), holy-foolishness (*iurodstvo*), and the thirst for life; as well as their opposites, which the Karamazovs in their "broadness" also embrace: pride, intellectual hunger, the spirit of political revolt, and an attraction to suicide.
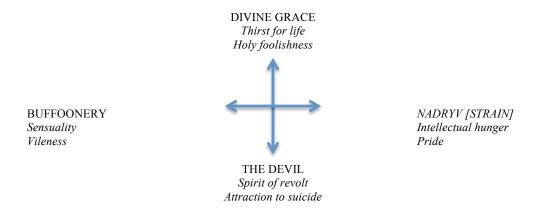
As Belknap is careful to point out, characters combine these different modes of belief and behavior in complex ways; *The Brothers Karamazov* is not a simple allegory. But his near-Cartesian schema shows how existential, metaphysical, and theological oppositions penetrate the novel's character-system, more as Fredric Jameson than as Alex Woloch has used the term.[9] A saintly character like Zosima is answered not just in the vivid image of Ivan's hallucinated devil, but also in the demonic tails (*khvosty*) peeking out more quietly from under two pairs of marginal characters, impoverished women who, as the narrator unaccountably stresses, like to wear dresses "with a very long train [*s predlinnym khvostom*]."[10] This level of organization, again, directs us toward the symbolic structure of opposites and doubles that lies beneath the novel's realist surface.[11]

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[9] Jameson uses "character system" to refer to the "semic production of characters": the ways in which characters can be parsed as (semi-)allegorical combinations of key thematic elements that underlie the narrative, revealing the relationships between these themes through their plotted interactions (cf. his *The Political Unconscious* [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981], 161–69). Woloch, without reference to Jameson, uses the same term to refer to the arrangement of disparate "character-spaces" into a unified narrative — the way in which many implied people fit into a single story centered around one or several protagonists. On their differing uses of the term, see also my Introduction, p. 17 note 43.

[10] The daughters of Trifon Borisovich, the rich peasant-innkeeper in Mokroe, who put on dresses "with three feet of train [*s arshinnym khvostom*]" to go out at night but come home to sweep the floor in the morning (413; 14:373); and Marya Kondratievna, the daughter of the Karamazovs' impoverished next-door neighbor, who goes to their kitchen to receive soup each day but refuses to sell her old dresses with trains (102; 14:95 — a fact repeated more than once [cf. 224; 14:204 and 226; 14:206]). In a notebook draft, Dostoevsky emphasized the attraction Marya Kondratievna's train holds for Smerdyakov: "Smerdyakov very much liked two of her dresses, one with a train [*odno s khvostom*], and the way that she knew how to swing this train [*povernut' etot khvost*]. At first the train awoke his indignation [*on prishel ot khvosta v negodovanie*], but later he came to like it very much. Both of them discerned loftier people [*vysshikh liudei*] in one another" (15:214; quoted in K. Mochul'skii, *Dostoevskii: Zhizn' i tvorchestvo* [Paris: YMCA Press, 1947], 479).

[11] Leonid Grossman gives a seminal account of symbolic antithesis and counterpoint as key principles of Dostoevsky's realist "architectonics"; see his "Dostoevskii — khudozhnik," in

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It is striking that the Karamazovs in particular do not only fit into this symbolic structure; they also play a key role in defining it. In Belknap's analysis, the aspects of *karamazovshchina* provide the component parts of the broader existential and metaphysical axes along which *all* the novel's characters can be organized (see figure below). The correlation indicates that there is no clear way to separate the family's qualities from the parameters of the novel's fictional universe as a whole: to participate in any of the novel's moral categories is to be placed in relation to one or another of the Karamazovs. In this respect, I want to suggest, the four so-named Karamazovs do not only stand as protagonists at the center of the narrative ("Wolochian") character-system of *The Brothers Karamazov*; their characters motivate and circumscribe the dimensions of its thematic ("Jamesonian") character-system as well.

DIVINE GRACE
Thirst for life
Holy foolishness

BUFFOONERY
Sensuality
Vileness

NADRYV [STRAIN]
Intellectual hunger
Pride

THE DEVIL
Spirit of revolt
Attraction to suicide

The pattern is particularly clear in the case of the prominent female characters. Katerina Ivanovna Verkhovtseva's "strained" emotions (captured physically in her persistently flashing eyes) blend Mitya's romanticism with Ivan's overweening pride, and she appears in the novel only to mark tragic junctures in their intersecting love triangles.[12] Grushenka, the most prominent female protagonist, never appears without one of the brothers, and her link to the themes of erotic sensuality and folk religion closely tracks those of *her* rival lovers, Fyodor Pavlovich and Mitya. The intellectual and emotional development of Lise Khokhlakova, briefly Alyosha's fiancée, becomes a mirror of her preoccupation with the Karamazov brothers: when she intends to marry Alyosha, her irrepressible nervous laughter (14:55), though hysterical, is also a sign of gaiety and mischief (15:22), and Alyosha calls her concern for Snegiryov that of a "martyr"; when she becomes infatuated with Ivan, she laughs "wickedly [*zlobno*]" (15:25) and her fantasies are those of a "little demon [*besenok*]."[13] The speeches of her mother, Madame

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Tvorchestvo F.M. Dostoevskogo, ed. N.L. Stepanov (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo akademii nauk SSSR, 1959), 347.

[12] As Carol Apollonio points out, there is more than one tantalizingly quick reference to her visit to Smerdyakov late in the novel, but the absence of this potentially transformative scene is a testimony to how closely the narrative follows the brothers themselves, to the exclusion of others.

[13] On Lise's participation in the dramatic and ideological plot, cf. T.A. Kasatkina, "Vtorostepennyi personazh?" *Nachalo*, vyp. 2 (Moscow, 1992): 88–100 and for an expanded

Khokhlakova, sometimes deal in their own right with the novel's key concerns, but the absurd loquacity that is her chief characteristic cannot help but recall Fyodor Pavlovich's weightier buffoonery. This system of female characters (three young and one old) thus not only mirrors the composition of the central system of Karamazovs; each female character *thematically* mimics and revolves around a specific male counterpart.[14]

Many of the minor male characters display a similar, though less pronounced, formal dependence on the Karamazovs. Even when they are presented as available foci for narrative in their own right, that narrative is (with some minor exceptions) limited to scenes where one of the Karamazovs is present, and also seems confined by the narrative possibilities available to the Karamazovs. Thus, Kolya Krasotkin, a budding atheist like Ivan, tempts the Plotnikovs' errand boy to kill a goose by "speaking only hypothetically" (548-49; 14:496). Pyotr Fomich Kalganov, a distant relative of Pyotr Alexandrovich Miusov (Fyodor Pavlovich's brother-in-law), is described in such detail in Chapter 1 of Book II that he seems poised to begin a different novel. But this hypothetical novel, proceeding parallel to the actually written story of the Karamazovs, ends with a move from Alyosha's own plotline, a projected marriage to Lise Khokhlakova (581; 15:22). Miusov himself is unmistakably thrown forward in the narrative during the opening scene at the monastery, often focalized through his contemptuous "liberal" perspective; when Zosima leaves the cell, Fyodor Pavlovich notes mockingly, "Now it's your turn to speak, Pyotr Alexandrovich, you are the most important man left — for the next ten minutes" (46; 14:43). But even these ten minutes are not given to Miusov. When Zosima and Alyosha return, Ivan and the monks are discussing Ivan's article on the ecclesiastical courts: "Miusov, too, was trying — very eagerly, it appeared — to get into the conversation, but again he had no luck; he was obviously in the background [*na vtorom plane*]. . ." (59; 14:55). Characters less proud than Miusov (Maximov attempting to spring into Fyodor Pavlovich's carriage; the novice Porfiry, visibly "distressed" that Zosima loves Alyosha more than him [286; 14:259]) openly court or envy the Karamazovs.[15]

A kind of paradox emerges from this picture. The world of *The Brothers Karamazov*, full as it is of fictional people, coheres not just around a single family, but around a single name. "Karamazov" and *karamazovshchina* operate as a free-standing central category, a point

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discussion, ibid, *Khatakterologiia Dostoevskogo: Tipologiia emotsional'no-tsennostnykh orientatsii* (Moscow: Naslediie, 1996), 53–67. See also Nathan Rosen, who goes so far as to designate Lise as the "unconscious life of Ivan Karamazov": "The Madness of Lise Khokhlakov," *Dostoevsky Studies* n.s. VI (2002): 154–62.

[14] On this doubling, and the subordination of the female characters' trajectories, see also Mochul'skii, *Dostoevskii*, 493.

[15] Attention was recently devoted to some of *The Brothers Karamazov*'s male minor characters in a special forum on "Money and Minor Characters" in *Slavic and East European Journal*. For an argument about Maximov's structural importance to the novel's engagement with the problem of "universal brotherhood," see G. Matzner-Gore, "Kicking Maksimov Out of the Carriage: Minor Characters, Exclusion and *The Brothers Karamazov*," *Slavic and East European Journal* 57:3 (Fall 2014): 419–436. On Kalganov and the possible social *benefits* of narrative marginality, see E. Naiman, "Kalganov," *Slavic and East European Journal* 57:3 (Fall 2014): 294–418.

conclusively defined by no one figure in the novel (not excepting the semi-omniscient narrator), but to which all its figures necessarily relate. The novel's initial question about Alyosha — "What is notable about your Alexei Fyodorovich, that you should choose him for your hero?" — is thus superseded by what Rakitin calls the "Karamazov question" [*karamazovskii vopros*]: "The whole question of you Karamazovs comes down to this: sensualists, acquirers, and holy fools! [*V etom ves' vash karamazovskii vopros zakliuchaetsia: sladostrastniki, stiazhateli i iurodovye!*" (80 [translation modified]; 14:75). Even as he brings this "Karamazov question" into the novel, Rakitin's parodically crude response sets the question as a central challenge for the reader. What defines the Karamazovs as a unified group, a family-name? Who and what is, and who and what is not, a Karamazov?

This formulation of the novel's guiding question is perhaps counter-intuitive, given the weight of the philosophical and religious problems whose discussion fills so many of its pages. But the plot turns around three prospective unions with the Karamazovs, and a murder committed by Fyodor Pavlovich's probable illegitimate son.[16] The characters who anchor it either are, or have some interest in being, Karamazovs; to us, they appear as doubles, reflections, recombinations, or extreme renditions of traits most basically associated with one or another of the Karamazovs themselves.[17] *The Brothers Karamazov* in this sense is structured, though less directly than *The Adolescent*, around a problem of characterization. Its unifying problems include the question of who its central group of characters "really" are, and the obstacles that resist, delay, confuse, or complicate this discovery.[18] Framed in this way, the plot of *The Brothers Karamazov* is a vehicle for the interrogation not just of God and the good, atheism and the devil, but also of the techniques of characterization that make the interrogators themselves so vivid.

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[16] Gary Saul Morson notes, along similar lines, that "the drama of the novel is already implicit in its title: how many 'brothers' are there?" ("Verbal Pollution in *the Brothers Karamazov*," repr. in *Critical Essays on Dostoevsky*, ed. R.F. Miller [Boston, MA: G.K.Hall, 1986], 241. While marriage to any of the brothers is hardly the focus of the plot, property (as attached to marriage and legal inheritance) lies very near its center: both Katerina Ivanovna and Fyodor Pavlovich have fortunes whose distribution depends on the shifting composition of the Karamazov family.

[17] The obvious and important exception to this generalization is the subplot involving the Snegiryovs, a separate family with a distinct identity that invites comparison to the Karamazovs, but does not envy or attempt to join or court them (indeed, quite the opposite). The minor family provides a vital moral contrast to the major family, but this structural relationship demands a fuller analysis in terms other than the ones I focus on here.

[18] This dynamic is arguably common to all Dostoevsky's major novels: the "hero" half of his "idea-heroes" is solidified by the urgency and difficulty of the question of what kind of "person" a character must be in order to hold (or act as if s/he held) his or her ideological position. The novels' plots often structure themselves around such questions: who (is the man that) killed the old pawnbroker? How to comprehend the social behavior of the "idiot" Prince Myshkin? Michael Holquist draws attention to this structure in his seminal reading of *Crime and Punishment*: cf. M. Holquist, *Dostoevsky and the Novel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 88 ff.

"*Not you*": Character and the Conditions of Transcendence in Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*

As I argue in the previous chapter, *The Adolescent* provides an extreme example of a character-system turned away from any central, authoritative narrative organization, a shifting structure that works to sever the illusion of characters' "lives" from the words of the narration. This indirect illusion reproduces formally the rootlessness that Dostoevsky saw in the new social and moral circumstances of his post-Reform characters, and he preserves within these characters an anxious sense of their comparative lack of mimetic solidity. In *The Adolescent*, that very technical rootlessness — the absence of an omniscient narrator to whom mimetic effects of characterization can be attributed and by whom they can be controlled — thus serves the novel's thematic project. *The Brothers Karamazov* puts characters shaped by similar techniques to a different purpose. Employing the hybrid figure of the semi-omniscient, semi-trustworthy narrator-chronicler, Dostoevsky orders the majority of his characters around a family name summarizing a group of traits that no one figure has final authority to define. Here, Dostoevsky thus models a mimetic system held together by the *tensions* between a central group of "autonomous" fictional "selves," and the old conventions of characterization rooted in authoritative written narrative — a starting-point away from which the protagonists must grow.

Unlike *The Adolescent*, then, *The Brothers Karamazov* uses and intensifies the correspondence between the centrality of a character (in Woloch's terms, the size of his narrative "space"), and the strength of the illusion that makes him seem to be an autonomous, conscious, and embodied person. As "sensualists" (the narrator's and Rakitin's word) or "insects" (Mitya's), the Karamazovs are united in what Ivan calls their "thirst" for earthly life:

> True, it's a feature of the Karamazovs, to some extent, this thirst for life despite all; it must be sitting in you, too; but why is it base [*podlaia*]? There is still an awful lot of centripetal force on our planet, Alyosha. I want to live, and I do live, even if it be against logic. Maybe I don't believe in the order of things, but the sticky little leaves that tumble out in the spring [*kleikie, raspuskaiushchiesia vesnoi listochki*] are dear to me. . . (230 [translation modified])[19]

"Living" and loving life become part of the definition of the family-name at the novel's center. The Karamazovs' defining scenes are linked, in turn, with a markedly sensuous experience of things — cognac, fish soup, and cherry jam; an ugly "crude, flat, somehow curved-under toenail" (484; 14:435); earth and red berries and "sticky leaves." Constructed, in this way, around a quality that also implies a set of literary techniques, the name "Karamazov" both places a thinking, feeling sensuality at the novel's center, and formalizes the criteria for fullest participation in this central lived sensuality, encapsulating these criteria in a single name. As with the Rostovs in Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, being a Karamazov is associated with living "life" within *The Brothers Karamazov*, with vividness and amplitude of representation; unlike *War and*

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[19] [Черта-то она отчасти карамазовская, это правда, жажда-то эта жизни, несмотря ни на что, в тебе она тоже непременно сидит, но почему ж она подлая? Центростремительной силы еще страшно много на нашей планете, Алеша. Жить хочется, и я живу, хотя бы и вопреки логике. Пусть я не верю в порядок вещей, но дороги мне клейкие, распускающиеся весной листочки. . . (14:209)]

"*Not you*": Character and the Conditions of Transcendence in Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*

Peace, which grows almost too large for its central families to anchor, *The Brothers Karamazov* is concentrated near-obsessively around the Karamazov family, their name and its meaning.

At the same time, however, as Mikhail Bakhtin contends in his seminal account of Dostoevsky's strategies of characterization, our belief in the vivid "life" of the Karamazovs is also supported by the illusion that they "themselves" transcend — stand beside to evaluate, argue with, and lie about — this definition, the set of characterizing traits summarized in their name. As Bakhtin argued, this existence in *excess* of a given description lies at the heart of what is new about Dostoevsky's characters. Their lifelike autonomy and unmatched immediacy — our sense of each protagonist as "someone actually present" — stem from Dostoevsky's refusal to define them from the outside, to "finalize" them with another's word.[20] The name "Karamazov" is purposefully linked to a narrated identity, an interlaced but countable set of adjectives and nouns that limn the contours of the novel's moral universe. But the novel most fully invests the mimetic "life" of its protagonists in the *failure* of this definition, in the freedom each Karamazov seems to maintain to slide out from under the narrated identity implied in his name.

The drama of "self"-definition and -affiliation, of negotiation with the identity imposed by the name "Karamazov," is thus also to some extent a struggle against realist narrative itself. Written in language, like the novel as a whole, this drama is nevertheless *set* into a scenic silence: a capacious inner space where the character's "own," undefined, unnarrated voice can seem to enter into dialogue. The readings that follow will emphasize the pivotal scenes in the plot of each Karamazov brother in which — whether by questioning, or by choosing to embrace the bounds of their Karamazovian nature — they seem to leave behind the world of narrative fiat. The exposure of the silent stage where these dramas are performed depends on a turn away from the complexly *narrated* fictional identity associated with characterization in the realist novel, toward something less textbound, more capacious — closer, as inset generic signals throughout the novel urge us to see, to the realm of religious and hagiographic legend and myth.[21]

This experiment in characterization by *un*narrating, *un*writing, and (if only temporarily) unnaming thus has radical formal and generic implications. Robert Bird has recently argued (building on R.L. Jackson's classic account of Dostoevsky's faith in the morally redemptive

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[20] ". . .the author's discourse about a character is organized as discourse about *someone actually present*, someone who hears him (the author) and is *capable of answering him*" (M. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, ed. and trans. C. Emerson [Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1984], 63). [Слово автора о герое организовано в романах Достоевского, как слово о присутствующем, слышащем его (автора) и могущем ему ответить. (М.М. Bakhtin, *Sobranie sochinenii*, ed. S.G. Bocharov and N.I. Nikolaev, vol. 6 [Moscow: Russkie slovari, 2002], 75). All future citations to Bakhtin's *Problemy poetiki Dostoevskogo* in this chapter will come from this volume.]

[21] Critical works investigating such inset genres, cited in more detail below, include notably V.E. Vetlovskaia, *Poetika romana Dostoevskogo 'Bratia Karamazovy'* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1977); Perlina, *Varieties of Poetic Utterance*; D.O. Thompson, The Brothers Karamazov *and the Poetics of Memory* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1991); and K. Holland, "The Legend of the *Ladonka* and the Trial of the Novel," in *A New Word on* The Brothers Karamazov, ed. R.L. Jackson, 192–200 (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2004).

power of aesthetic form) that Dostoevsky engages in *The Brothers Karamazov* with a "mathetic" (transformative) rather than mimetic (imitative) logic of the literary type. By creating in Alyosha Karamazov a new kind of "open-ended type" that remains unformed by set literary or ideological precedents, and thus can only be finished by the reader in an unwritten "beyond the novel," Dostoevsky hoped "to deepen and strengthen the very fact of individual consciousness and being in Russia." [22] While I share Bird's intuition about the scope of Dostoevsky's extra-aesthetic aims, I am not convinced that Alyosha is the only character in which he attempts to realize them — or, conversely, that even Alyosha is so successfully detached from the particular *written* words, forms, and patterns of his text.

In *The Brothers Karamazov*, as I will hope to show, Dostoevsky responded to the formal problem of *The Adolescent*'s chaotic characterizations, without giving up the project of representing post-reform chaos. Still absent a Tolstoyan omniscient narrator who would put and keep characters in their places, the novel relies for its stability on the thematic system centered around the name Karamazov. It gains its fluidity, in turn, from the apparent ability of each protagonist to work out his or her own relationship to the qualities the name "Karamazov" implies. Partly through this compromise, in *The Brothers Karamazov* Dostoevsky worked to solidify a model for novelistic protagonists that he could actively shape, while also creating an impression of "life" defining itself independently, in a space outside the realm of textual realist narrative. But his solution is more limited than the novel's astonishing mimetic illusion makes it seem. If the story of the brothers Karamazov is partly about creating a new kind of realist protagonist, whose near-mythical archetypicality reaches beyond the novel genre, that creation depends on a corresponding definition of what is *not* Karamazov, *not* new Dostoevskian protagonist. Attention to this dependence shows us the formal limitations to Dostoevsky's "mathetic" vision that emerge from the very surrounding structure of his novel. One side of the story is accessible through Fyodor Pavlovich Karamazov and the three sons who share his name; the other, through their shadow-brother Smerdyakov.

3. "all his life, Fyodor Pavlovich was fond of play-acting": The Karamazov family and karamazovshchina

The main narrative of *The Brothers Karamazov* begins with the presentation of a family. Consistently with the generic context of a realist family novel, its patriarch Fyodor Pavlovich Karamazov is defined by a small area at the intersection of disparate social or moral types:

> Alexei Fyodorovich Karamazov was the third son of a landowner from our district, Fyodor Pavlovich Karamazov, well known in his own day (and still remembered among us) because of his dark and tragic death, which happened exactly thirteen years ago and which I shall speak of in its proper place. For the moment I will only say of this "landowner" (as we used to call him, though for all his life he hardly ever lived on his

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[22] R. Bird, "Refiguring the Russian Type: Dostoevsky and the Limits of Realism*,"* in *A New Word on* The Brothers Karamazov, ed. R.L. Jackson [Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2004]; see especially 19–27.

estate) that he was a strange type, yet one rather frequently met with, precisely the type of man who is not only worthless and depraved but muddleheaded as well — but one of those muddleheaded people, however, who still skillfully handle their own little business deals and, it seems, those only. (7 [translation modified])[23]

As the opening account of Fyodor Pavlovich's family life continues, the narrator adds other types to which he belongs, often as a corrective to other characters' misperceptions of him: ". . . whereas he was simply an evil buffoon [*zloi shut*] and nothing more," "Fyodor Pavlovich, the greatest sensualist [*sladostrasneishego cheloveka*] all his life" (8 [translation modified]; 14:8). The most sweeping corrective concerns Fyodor Pavlovich's love of "play-acting, of suddenly taking up some unexpected role right in front of you, often when there was no need for it, and even to his own real disadvantage. . . This trait, however, is characteristic of a great many people, even rather intelligent ones, not like Fyodor Pavlovich" (11 [translation modified]).[24] To the increasingly specific combination of typical categories to which Fyodor Pavlovich belongs, this description adds a meta-category, liking to take on false roles or characteristics. A fluid figure thus appears to emerge who is able to *play* these roles — though he is also a nominal landowner, a muddle-headed but sharp businessman, a sensualist, unintelligent, and so on.

This description gives way to other biographies, one for each of Fyodor Pavlovich's sons. A number of alien generic signals — the narrator's persistent sense that Ivan is "mysterious [*zagadochnym*]" and his arrival in Skotoprigonevsk "inexplicable" (17; 14:17), the hagiographic patterns invoked in the narrator's account of Alyosha's childhood[25] — begin (again) to tug these biographies away from the pattern of the realist family novel. But Fyodor Pavlovich's figure

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[23] [Алексей Федорович Карамазов был третьим сыном помещика нашего уезда Федора Павловича Карамазова, столь известного в свое время (да и теперь еще у нас припоминаемого) по трагической и темной кончине своей, приключившейся ровно тринадцать лет назад и о которой сообщу в своем месте. Теперь же скажу об этом «помещике» (как его у нас называли, хотя он всю жизнь совсем почти не жил в своем поместье) лишь то, что это был странный тип, довольно часто, однако, встречающийся, именно тип человека не только дрянного и развратного, но вместе с тем и бестолкового, — но из таких, однако, бестолковых, которые умеют отлично обделывать свои имущественные делишки, и только, кажется, одни эти. (14:7)]

[24] [Он долго потом рассказывал, в виде характерной черты, что когда он заговорил с Федором Павловичем о Мите, то тот некоторое время имел вид совершенно не понимающего, о каком таком ребенке идет дело. . . Если в рассказе Петра Александровича могло быть преувеличение, то всё же должно было быть и нечто похожее на правду. Но действительно Федор Павлович всю жизнь свою любил представляться, вдруг проиграть пред вами какую-нибудь неожиданную роль, и, главное, безо всякой иногда надобности, даже в прямой ущерб себе, как в настоящем, например, случае. Черта эта, впрочем, свойственна чрезвычайно многим людям, и даже весьма умным, не то что Федору Павловичу. (14:11)]

[25] On these patterns, see Vetlovskaia, *Poetika romana Dostoevskogo 'Bratia Karamazovy,'* Chapter One. See also note 31 below.

repeatedly interrupts these stories — less as part of the story of his struggles with his sons, than in a struggle with the narrator over the terms of his own portrait. This struggle dramatically displaces the story of Alyosha's search for his mother's grave:

> After that, perhaps even for a whole year, [Alyosha] did not visit the cemetery. But this little episode also had an effect on Fyodor Pavlovich — and a very original one. . . . Strange fits of sudden feelings and sudden thoughts come over such individuals. I have already mentioned that he had gone very flabby and fat. His physiognomy by that time presented something testifying acutely to the characteristics and essence of the whole life he had lived. Besides the long, fleshy bags under his eternally insolent, suspicious, and leering little eyes, besides the multitude of deep wrinkles on his fat little face, a big Adam's apple, fleshy and oblong like a purse, hung below his sharp chin, giving him a sort of repulsively sensual appearance. Add to that a long, carnivorous mouth with plump lips, behind which could be seen the little stumps of black, almost decayed teeth. He sprayed saliva whenever he spoke. However, even he himself liked to make jokes about his face, although he was apparently pleased with it. He pointed especially to his nose, which was not very big but was very thin and noticeably hooked. "A real Roman one," he used to say. . . (23 [translation modified])[26]

This description of Fyodor Pavlovich's face strikes many of the notes of a character-portrait in Balzac or Dickens, where an omniscient narrator brings out the harmony between "physiognomy," moral character, and milieu.[27] At the same time, just as Fyodor Pavlovich's

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[26] [С тех пор, может быть даже во весь год, и не бывал на кладбище. Но на Федора Павловича этот маленький эпизод тоже произвел свое действие, и очень оригинальное. . . . Странные порывы внезапных чувств и внезапных мыслей бывают у этаких субъектов. Я уже говорил, что он очень обрюзг. Физиономия его представляла к тому времени что-то резко свидетельствовавшее о характеристике и сущности всей прожитой им жизни. Кроме длинных и мясистых мешочков под маленькими его глазами, вечно наглыми, подозрительными и насмешливыми, кроме множества глубоких морщинок на его маленьком, но жирненьком личике, к острому подбородку его подвешивался еще большой кадык, мясистый и продолговатый, как кошелек, что придавало ему какой-то отвратительно сладострастный вид. Прибавьте к тому плотоядный, длинный рот, с пухлыми губами, из-под которых виднелись маленькие обломки черных, почти истлевших зубов. Он брызгался слюной каждый раз, когда начинал говорить. Впрочем, и сам он любил шутить над своим лицом, хотя, кажется, оставался им доволен. Особенно указывал он на свой нос, не очень большой, но очень тонкий, с сильно выдающеюся горбиной: «Настоящий римский, — говорил он . . .(14:22)]

[27] Cf., for example, the famous portrait of Mme. Vauquer in Balzac's *Père Goriot*, analyzed by Erich Auerbach as a paradigmatic example of the kind of 19th century realist description that links a character to his or her historical and social context: *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. W. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), 468–73. On this mode of description as an aspect of a "romantic realist" tradition that links

characterization in terms of types also projects a figure capable of taking on *false* roles, a figure that exceeds what a narrator can statically define, the narrator's reading of his face is juxtaposed with his "own" observation that he has "the real physiognomy of an ancient Roman patrician of the decadent period" (23; 14:22). Even before Fyodor Pavlovich begins to speak at length, such points in the narrator's portrayal appear to create a physical presence standing alongside the verbal description — a figure capable of (indeed, insistent on) portraying "himself."

Almost from its first appearance, the figure of Fyodor Pavlovich thus inaugurates in *The Brothers Karamazov* a set of techniques of realist characterization — a kind of narrated identity, made up of traits named by the narrator and other characters — and also a way of resisting those techniques. He establishes both a fixed group of "Karamazov" characteristics, and a propensity to slide away from such fixed verbal characterization.[28] Indeed, it is Fyodor Pavlovich who constructs the most comprehensive list of his Karamazovian traits, *by* falsely attributing them to Father Zosima: "you see, I mean, he's a sensualist, he's such a sensualist that even now I'd be afraid for my daughter or my wife if she went to him for confession. . . I said to him: 'You're a scoundrel [*podlets*],' I said. 'No,' he said, 'I'm not a scoundrel, I'm broad-natured [*shirok*]...' It wasn't him, though... It was someone else. . . I was lying" (135).[29]

The energy with which Fyodor Pavlovich attempts to escape a final characterization (by asserting the supplement of his own living, mobile, and lying nature) eventually succumbs to Dmitri's parricidal question: "Why is such a man alive? [*Zachem zhivet takoi chelovek?*]" (74; 14:69). When Fyodor Pavlovich "himself," the locus of this mobile nature, is killed, the component traits of his narrated identity live on — not just genetically, in the natures of his sons, but also textually, written into the thematic system that organizes many of the novel's characters, which (as I suggest) cannot help but be understood in terms of the family-name "Karamazov."

As readers, then, we can provide one answer to Dmitri's question, though not on the religious and ethical terms Dostoevsky intended. Fyodor Pavlovich "lives" in the novel long enough to model the aspects of *karamazovshchina*, and also to show in peculiarly bold strokes

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Dostoevsky, Dickens, and Balzac, see D. Fanger, *Dostoevsky and Romantic Realism: A Study of Dostoevsky in Relation to Balzac, Dickens, and Gogol* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965), 38–43; see also 263. Robert Louis Jackson follows through the connection between Fyodor Pavlovich's physical ugliness (*bezobrazie*) and his extreme moral desecrations, including the crime of spitting on an icon: "The Sentencing of Fyodor Karamazov," in *The Art of Dostoevsky: Deliriums and Nocturnes* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), 306–18.

[28] Following Bakhtin, Malcolm Jones explores the interpersonal dimensions of Dostoevsky's characters' resistance to set labels and social roles imposed from without: *Dostoevsky After Bakhtin: Readings in Dostoevsky's Fantastic Realism* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1990), Chapters Four and Five.

[29] [то есть, видишь, он сладострастник; он до того сладострастник, что я бы и теперь за дочь мою побоялся аль за жену, если бы к нему исповедоваться пошла. . . Я ему говорю: подлец ты, говорю. Нет, говорит, не подлец, а я широк... А впрочем, это не он... Это другой. . . . Я врал. . . (14:124–25)] On Dostoevsky's liars as "verbal self-fashioners," see D. Martinsen, *Surprised by Shame: Dostoevsky's Liars and Narrative Exposure* (Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press, 2003), 20 ff.

how the illusion of individual, autonomous fictional "life" arises in response to (and sometimes in protest of) this narrated identity — lechery (*sladostrastiie*) carrying behind it the implication of sensuous experience; vileness (*podlost'*) opening onto the interior space in which a character judges and evaluates his own traits and rejects the evaluation of others ("I said to him: 'You're a scoundrel [*podlets*],' I said. 'No,' he said, 'I'm not a scoundrel, I'm broad-natured...'"). His foolish or buffoonish blather, which fulfills much the same role in his characterization that Dmitri and Ivan's more structured speeches do in theirs, creates the illusion of a unique individual blatherer, working itself in between all his potentially shared traits.

His death, in turn, leaves a vacuum that calls the composition of the group of protagonists most closely linked to him into question. The remainder of the plot works out a principle to govern and restrict the composition of this group: would a Karamazov have been capable of the crime of killing and robbing Fyodor Pavlovich?

The path that leads from Fyodor to each of his recognized or probable sons thus travels through this cluster of Karamazov traits and their technical (metafictional) implications.

4. "You, Alyoshka, are the quiet type. . .": Alyosha as Karamazov

Early in Alyosha's plot, the seminarian Rakitin offers a suggestively contradictory portrait of his character: "You, Alyoshka, are the quiet type [*tikhonia*], you're a saint, I admit; but you're the quiet type, and the devil knows what hasn't gone through your head, the devil knows what you might know already! A virgin, and you've already dug yourself so deep. . . You are a Karamazov yourself, a full-fledged Karamazov — so race and selection do mean something. You're a sensualist after your father, and after your mother — a holy fool" (80 [translation modified]).[30] The two poles contained within this characterization efficiently mark the distance between two genres: the hagiographic story of a "saint" and the novelistic story of a Karamazov. The novel's narrator, as we already know, prefers the story of the saint: scholars have detailed the ways in which he recounts Alyosha's childhood according to the patterns of a hagiographic chronicle.[31] Rakitin insists on the story of the "full-fledged Karamazov." What makes this

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[30] [Ты, Алешка, тихоня, ты святой, я согласен, но ты тихоня, и черт знает о чем ты уж не думал, черт знает что тебе уж известно! Девственник, а уж такую глубину прошел, — я тебя давно наблюдаю. Ты сам Карамазов, ты Карамазов вполне — стало быть, значит же что-нибудь порода и подбор. По отцу сладострастник, по матери юродивый. (14:74)]

[31] For discussions of the narrator-chronicler's hagiographical relationship to "his hero" Alyosha, and of Alyosha's relation to the hagiographic model (both as a hagiographic hero and as the author of the hagiographic "Life" of Zosima), see (among others) Vetlovskaia, *Poetika romana Dostoevskogo 'Bratia Karamazovy'*; Thompson, The Brothers Karamazov *and the Poetics of Memory*, Chapter Two [hereafter abbreviated as *Poetics of Memory*]; Perlina, *Varieties of Poetic Utterance*, 70–82; J. Børtnes, "The Function of Hagiography in Dostoevskij's Novels," *Scando-Slavica* 24 (1978): 27–33, repr. in *Critical Essays on Dostoevsky*, ed. R.F. Miller (Boston, MA: G.K.Hall, 1986): 188–93; H. Murav, *Holy Foolishness: Dostoevsky's Novels and the Poetics of Cultural Critique* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992), 156–60.

equivocation possible, as his portrait suggests, is that which is *not* narrated: Alyosha's "quietness" — an absence of speech filled only with what the "devil knows."

The theme of silence as a medium for Karamazovism returns in the abbreviated self-portrait Alyosha gives in response to Dmitri's "Confession," his description of the "ladder" of insect-like sensuality:

> "The steps are all the same. I'm on the lowest, and you are above, somewhere on the thirteenth. . . . Whoever steps on the lowest step will surely step on the highest."
> "So one had better not step at all."
> "Not if one can help it."
> "Can you?"
> "It seems not."
> "Quiet [*Molchi*], Alyosha, quiet, my dear, I want to kiss your hand, so, just out of tenderness. That rogue Grushenka has an eye for men; she once told me she'd eat you up some day. I'll be quiet, I'll be quiet! (110 [translation modified])[32]

This ladder of earthly sensuality, on each of whose steps silence has a different content and meaning, again links the question of Alyosha's Karamazovism to the question of "what the devil he might not be thinking about" in the many moments where he does not speak. Silence accommodates the steps up or down it — Alyosha's, Dmitri's, and later, Ivan's ("Ivan knows everything. . . . But Ivan is a grave [*mogila*]"). The ladder thus leads onto a kind of inner stage where a drama removed from the speaking plot of *The Brothers Karamazov* can play out.

Alyosha's image of a ladder suggests that each brother's relationship to the shared elements of Karamazovism is instrumental, for the novel, in exposing this inner stage. As I have already begun to suggest, if the name "Karamazov" marks a narrated identity composed of traits that the narrator and other characters assign, the illusion of an autonomous life lived in excess of narrative comes — for the Karamazov brothers as much as for their father Fyodor Pavlovich — from a process of negotiation with this identity. The primary narrative sign of this negotiating surplus in Dostoevsky's characters, this life in excess of what is narrated explicitly and categorized into consistent named traits, has often (following Bakhtin) been understood as the character's "own" ideologically-charged speech, his "voice." But as other studies have persuasively argued, in *The Brothers Karamazov* this autonomous voice finds its most significant

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[32] [Всё одни и те же ступеньки. Я на самой низшей, а ты вверху, где-нибудь на тринадцатой. . . . Кто ступил на нижнюю ступеньку, тот всё равно непременно вступит и на верхнюю.
— Стало быть, совсем не вступать?
— Кому можно — совсем не вступать.
— А тебе — можно?
— Кажется, нет.
— Молчи, Алеша, молчи, милый, хочется мне ручку твою поцеловать, так, из умиления. Эта шельма Грушенька знаток в человеках, она мне говорила однажды, что она когда-нибудь тебя съест. Молчу, молчу! (14:101)]

role in a "third plot" (neither dramatic nor ideological), dedicated to "the artistic task of bringing [the] protagonists' voices into a dialogic relation with the voice of Christ, of making them aware of this voice within themselves."[33] The prerequisites that allow a character to participate in this key "third plot," I would add, are thus the possession of a *silent* voice, and of a capacious inner space in which that voice can visibly and audibly enter into dialogue. If (in Woloch's terms) the "character-space" of a Jane Austen protagonist is the portion of the narrative that constructs and gives play to her "implied human personality," a Dostoevskian "third" or silent plot requires that the space of its protagonists be turned inside out. Its subject is not the character defined within a narrative space, but the intellectual and spiritual events that occur in the narrative space "within" the character.

At first less developed than his father and brothers as an apparently autonomous "idea-hero," Alyosha Karamazov offers the clearest insight into how narrated identity, speaking voice, and silent or inner stage interact in the construction of this new kind of novelistic protagonist.

The narrator's initial biography and description of Alyosha have already prepared the ground for the importance of his silence, and of that which he is not or is not yet, to his character:

> In his childhood and youth he was not effusive, not even talkative, but not from distrust, not from shyness or sullen unsociability (even quite the opposite), but from something different, from some inner preoccupation, as it were, strictly personal, of no concern to others, but so important for him that because of it he would, as it were, forget others. But he did love people. . . There was something in him that told one, that convinced one (and it was so all his life afterwards) that he did not want to be a judge of men, that he would not take judgment upon himself and would not condemn anyone for anything. (19 [translation modified])[34]

Alyosha is remarkable for his quiet pensiveness, the source of which is hidden; for his reluctance to judge, formulated in three separate negative constructions. He has the gift of "awakening a special love for himself" as a reaction to his presence, with no positive action on his part. At school, he does not show off in front of his classmates; does not ever fear anyone, and never takes pride in his own fearlessness; does not remember or even take account of offenses; cannot bear his classmates' lascivious talk without anguish, but covers his ears "not saying a word to them, not abusing them, silently bearing the offense" (20; 14:20). He comes to Skotoprigonevsk without having finished his high school education, does not or cannot answer when he is asked

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[33] This formulation is Dianne Oenning Thompson's, building on the analyses of N. Perlina and V.E. Vetlovskaia: Thompson, *Poetics of Memory*, 64–65.

[34] [В детстве и юности он был мало экспансивен и даже мало разговорчив, но не от недоверия, не от робости или угрюмой нелюдимости, вовсе даже напротив, а от чего-то другого, от какой-то как бы внутренней заботы, собственно личной, до других не касавшейся, но столь для него важной, что он из-за нее как бы забывал других. Но людей он любил . . . Что-то было в нем, что говорило и внушало (да и всю жизнь потом), что он не хочет быть судьей людей, что он не захочет взять на себя осуждения и ни за что не осудит. (14:18; 19)]

why, and does not speak or react in any particular way to what turns out to be the object of his visit, his mother's grave.

This silence is not just the subject of commentary from the narrator and other characters; the reader experiences and shares in it directly. As Alyosha moves from scene to scene throughout the novel's first half, often with a specific message or commission to carry out, his lines in each conversation are distinguished by their brevity; other characters talk to him or for his benefit, but he does not talk for them in return. Though the narrator often makes a point of saying that Alyosha has vividly relayed events to someone who did not see them, he summarizes Alyosha's accounts rather than quoting them. When Alyosha is most deeply touched by what he has heard from others — as when Fyodor Pavlovich tells him about his mother the "shrieker" or when Ivan affirms the belief that "all is permitted" — he responds in pantomime, "plagiarizing" (as Ivan puts it) the non-verbal essence of his interlocutors' stories as if his only avenue for a positive reply is to *show* them just what they have said. Words betray him at key points: he stammers through his revelation about Katerina Ivanovna's "strained" love for Ivan, and through his indignant repudiation of Ivan's *poema* about the Grand Inquisitor.

More than any other protagonist's character, Alyosha's in the first half of the novel thus appears to depend on the narrator for "translation" into words, through description of gesture or through psycho-narration and narrated monologue.[35] The narrator's continual, though intermittent, attention to Alyosha weaves his thoughts into the narrative of the events at which Alyosha is almost always present. In the filling up of Alyosha's silence with his father's and brothers' talk comes the implicit action of this narrative, running parallel to the main content of the reader's experience: what force can account for Alyosha's continuing spiritual immunity to the dozens of vile stories that he (and we) hear unfolding? And will this immunity be preserved?

At its climax, in the chapter "Cana of Galilee," this fragile absence of positive speech and action changes into a presence. This thought can be expressed more provocatively: Alyosha is converted, midway through *The Brothers Karamazov*, from a Tolstoyan into a Dostoevskian hero.

What is essential to a "Tolstoyan hero" in this context? In the preceding chapter, I quoted Versilov's revealing complaint, from a manuscript variant to *The Adolescent*, about Tolstoy's protagonists: "He takes a nobleman from his childhood and youth, he draws him in his family, his first steps in life. . . all so poetically, so unshakably and inarguably. He is a psychologist of the nobleman's soul. But the main thing is that this is given as inarguable, and of course, you agree. You agree and you envy. . . Oh, these are not characters, they are sweet children, who have wonderful, sweet fathers. . ." (17:143). At the beginning of *The Brothers Karamazov*, Dostoevsky invokes a generically different form of such solicitous narrative authority to have a pseudo-hagiographical chronicler name Alyosha Karamazov "my hero," though it is not yet clear whether Alyosha will turn out to fulfill this role. Alyosha's trajectory in the first half of the novel works, however, to *supplant* this authoritative narrative sanction. Woven into his narrative is the

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[35] L.G. Kashirina touches on this point in her very brief, though suggestive, discussion of Alyosha as a "captive voice [*golos-podkhvat*]" in the novel, a "counterpoint" to the voices of Ivan, Dmitri, and other characters: "Soderzhatel'naia sushchnost' obraza Aleshi Karamazova i ee reprezentatsiia v romane F.M. Dostoevskogo 'Bratia Karamazovy,'" in *Dostoevskii i sovremennost'* (Novgorod, 1989), 52.

construction of the illusion by which not just Alyosha's speaking "voice," but also his unvoiced inner life, come to appear as if detached from authoritative narration.

The narrator's marked, near-proprietary interest in Alyosha and mediation of his story become most noticeable at its crisis point, the death of the elder Zosima and the unexpectedly quick decay (stink) of his corpse, contrary to a widespread expectation that it would be preserved as a mark of his holiness. Here the narrator reiterates, for the first time since the opening chapters, Alyosha's privileged role in his narrative:

> Here again I will add, speaking for myself personally, that I find it almost loathsome to recall this frivolous and tempting occurrence, essentially quite insignificant and natural, and I would, of course, omit all mention of it from my story, if it had not influenced in the strongest and most definite way the soul and heart of the main, *though future*, hero of my story, Alyosha, causing, as it were, a crisis and upheaval in his soul, which shook his mind but also ultimately strengthened it for the whole of his life, and towards a definite purpose. (329)[36]

If this aside still leaves some doubt as to the exact outcome of Alyosha's crisis, it is dispelled at the beginning of the next chapter, with a pious justification of Alyosha's moment of weakness:

> Of course Father Paissy was not mistaken when he decided that his "dear boy" would come back. . . Nevertheless I shall frankly admit that it would be very difficult for me now to convey clearly the precise meaning of this strange and uncertain moment in the life of the hero of my story, whom I love so much and who is still so young. To the rueful question Father Paissy addressed to Alyosha. . . I could, of course, answer firmly for Alyosha: "No, he is not with those of little faith." (338)[37]

It has been observed that here again, as in the introduction, Dostoevsky's narrator adopts the voice of a hagiographic chronicler. He explains the lapse of faith as the consequence of Alyosha's great love for Zosima, awakening a desire for justice that recalls the logic of Ivan's

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[36] [Тут прибавлю еще раз от себя лично: мне почти противно вспоминать об этом суетном и соблазнительном событии, в сущности же самом пустом и естественном, и я, конечно, выпустил бы его в рассказе моем вовсе без упоминовения, если бы не повлияло оно сильнейшим и известным образом на душу и сердце главного, *хотя и будущего* героя рассказа моего, Алеши, составив в душе его как бы перелом и переворот, потрясший, но и укрепивший его разум уже окончательно, на всю жизнь и к известной цели. (14:297)]

[37] [Отец Паисий, конечно, не ошибся, решив, что его «милый мальчик» снова воротится. . . Тем не менее признаюсь откровенно, что самому мне очень было бы трудно теперь передать ясно точный смысл этой странной и неопределённой минуты в жизни столь излюбленного мною и столь еще юного героя моего рассказа. На горестный вопрос отца Паисия. . . я, конечно, мог бы с твердостью ответить за Алешу: «Нет, он не с маловерными». . . . (14:305)]

seductive "rebellion" against God's incomprehensible world.[38] But in his eagerness to "answer for" Alyosha, as in his reluctance to narrate the incident at all, the narrator-chronicler shows an anxiety to relieve this tension before it even begins. The heightened scene of Alyosha's fall and resurrection, immediately juxtaposed with the chronicler's marked intrusion, calls into question the chronicler's function even as it confirms his reading. Alyosha's reverse communion, his willingness to accept Rakitin's sausage and vodka, becomes an induction not just into spiritual and sexual maturity, but also into the "speaking" world of Dostoevsky's novel.

When Rakitin brings Alyosha to see Grushenka, he expects a scene of diabolic temptation, of Alyosha's "fall. . . from the saints to the sinners" (14:310). But in fact, Alyosha has already succumbed to temptation, giving in to despair at the injustice of Zosima's quick decay. In recognizing this prior fall with horror and pity, Grushenka "resurrects" him, as Alyosha breaks his silence at unusual length to explain: "Rakitin," he suddenly said loudly and firmly, "don't taunt me with having rebelled against my God. I don't want to hold any anger against you, and therefore you be kinder too. I've lost such a treasure as you never had, and you cannot judge me now. . . . I came here looking for a wicked soul — I was drawn to that, because I was base [*podl*] and wicked myself, but I found a true sister, I found a treasure — a loving soul...." (351 [translation modified])[39] Rakitin is momentarily stunned: "He had never expected such a tirade from the quiet Alyosha" (355; 14:322).

The flood of speech exchanged between Alyosha and Grushenka is immediately followed by another scene conducted not only in, but *within* silence: Alyosha's revelation after the reading over Zosima's body. Just before this passage, we see Alyosha's scattered thoughts and his dream interwoven with the Biblical reading (the marriage at Cana). The sky above the cell is metaphorically folded into his silence: "shards of thoughts flashed in [Alyosha's] soul, ignited like small stars, and immediately burnt out, replaced by others" (14:325). Alyosha's subsequent vision, after he has left Zosima's cell, vividly literalizes the narrator's metaphor:

> Over him the heavenly dome, full of quiet, shining stars, hung boundlessly. From the zenith to the horizon the still-dim Milky Way stretched its double strand. . . The silence of the earth seemed to merge with the silence of the heavens, the mystery of the earth touched the mystery of the stars... Alyosha stood gazing and suddenly, as if he had been cut down, threw himself to the earth. He did not know why he was embracing it, he did not try to understand why he longed so irresistibly to kiss it, to kiss all of it, but he was kissing it, weeping, sobbing, and watering it with his tears, and he vowed ecstatically to love it, to love it unto ages of ages. "Water the earth with the tears of your joy, and love those tears...," rang in his soul. What was he weeping for? Oh, in his rapture he wept even for the stars that shone on him from the abyss, and "he was not ashamed of this

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[38] On both points, see Vetlovskaia, *Poetika romana 'Bratia Karamazovy'*, 16 and 180–82.

[39] [Ракитин, — проговорил он вдруг громко и твердо, — не дразни ты меня, что я против бога моего взбунтовался. Не хочу я злобы против тебя иметь, а потому будь и ты добрее. Я потерял такое сокровище, какого ты никогда не имел, и ты теперь не можешь судить меня. . . . Я шел сюда злую душу найти — так влекло меня самого к тому, потому что я был подл и зол, а нашел сестру искреннюю, нашел сокровище. . . (14:318)]

> ecstasy." It was as if threads from all those innumerable worlds of God all came together in his soul, and it was trembling all over, "touching other worlds." He wanted to forgive everyone and for everything, and to ask forgiveness, oh! not for himself! but for all and for everything, "as others are asking for me," rang again in his soul. But with each moment he felt clearly and almost tangibly something as firm and immovable as this heavenly vault descend into his soul. Some sort of idea, as it were, was coming to reign in his mind — now for the whole of his life and unto ages of ages. (362–63)[40]

In this passage, Zosima's quoted language intersects anonymously with Alyosha's and with the narrator's about him in free indirect discourse, all gathered into Alyosha's "own" consciousness like the "threads from all those innumerable worlds of God." As for Tolstoy's Levin, the firmness of the "heavenly vault" becomes a visible sign of Alyosha's (re)conversion, but where the vault remains outside and above Levin in *Anna Karenina*'s narrated fictional landscape, in this scene it is drawn into the apparently private boundaries of Alyosha's soul, into an inner silence suddenly grown large enough to include "all those innumerable worlds."[41] It has been observed that Alyosha's embrace of the earth both takes the place of the sexual encounter he escapes with Grushenka, and represents an unexpectedly sacred intercourse with the "earthen [*zemlianaia*] force of the Karamazovs" (220; 14:201) that he has inherited from his father.[42] The product of this intercourse is just as significant: "some sort of idea, as it were, was coming to reign in his mind." His Karamazovian encounter with the earth turns out to be an awakening to his own "idea," and with the birth of this "idea," Alyosha also learns to speak the language of a Dostoevskian protagonist. For Alyosha, unlike for any of his brothers, the illusion of an

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[40] [Над ним широко, необозримо опрокинулся небесный купол, полный тихих сияющих звезд. С зенита до горизонта двоился еще неясный Млечный Путь. . . . Тишина земная как бы сливалась с небесною, тайна земная соприкасалась со звездною... Алеша стоял, смотрел и вдруг как подкошенный повергся на землю. Он не знал, для чего обнимал ее, он не давал себе отчета, почему ему так неудержимо хотелось целовать ее, целовать ее всю, но он целовал ее плача, рыдая и обливая своими слезами, и исступленно клялся любить ее, любить во веки веков. «Облей землю слезами радости твоея и люби сии слезы твои...» — прозвенело в душе его. О чем плакал он? О, он плакал в восторге своем даже и об этих звездах, которые сияли ему из бездны, и «не стыдился исступления сего». Как будто нити ото всех этих бесчисленных миров божиих сошлись разом в душе его, и она вся трепетала, «соприкасаясь мирам иным». Простить хотелось ему всех и за всё и просить прощения, о! не себе, а за всех, за всё и за вся, а «за меня и другие просят», — прозвенело опять в душе его. Но с каждым мгновением он чувствовал явно и как бы осязательно, как что-то твердое и незыблемое, как этот свод небесный, сходило в душу его. Какая-то как бы идея воцарялась в уме его — и уже на всю жизнь и на веки веков. (14:328)]

[41] cf. L.N. Tolstoi, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v 90 tomakh*, 19:381–82. See also Section 5 of the Introduction to this dissertation.

[42] See S. Fusso, *Discovering Sexuality in Dostoevsky* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2006), 72–76, and Apollonio, *Dostoevsky's Secrets*, 163–64.

autonomous ideological voice unfolds from the silent scene of his "dialogic relation with the voice of Christ," and not the other way around.

It seems contradictory, but is in fact symptomatic, that we see much less of Alyosha after this scene than before it. The idea that takes possession of him remains unspecified, though both Zosima's teachings as conveyed by Alyosha, and the advice and prophecies Alyosha offers other characters after Zosima's death, point toward its content. Alyosha begins to articulate it only in the novel's final pages, in his speech to the boys at Ilyusha's grave, where he invokes a reunion in time that could mirror the meeting of God's worlds in space that he himself has experienced:

> You all are dear to me, gentlemen, from now on I shall keep you all in my heart, and I ask you to keep me in your hearts, too! Well, and who has united us in this good, kind feeling, which we will remember and intend to remember always, all our lives, who, if not Ilyushechka, that good boy. . . Let us never forget him, and may his memory be eternal and good in our hearts now and unto ages and ages! . . . "Karamazov!" cried Kolya, "can it really be true as religion says, that we shall all rise from the dead, and come to life, and see one another again, and everyone, and Ilyushechka?"
> "Certainly we shall rise, certainly we shall see and gladly, joyfully tell one another all that has been," Alyosha replied, half laughing, half in ecstasy. (776)[43]

In Alyosha's vision, his and the boys' "hearts" open, as Alyosha's "soul" did when he kissed the ground outside the monastery, to provide a space for such a reunion. There is a long gap between the dedication of Alyosha's voice to this idea of resurrection, and the speech in which he first articulates it.[44] But after his epiphany, neither his receptive silence nor his mirroring gestures are available to invite and crystallize the ideas of others, and he is no longer the main internal focalizer for the narrative. The space of Alyosha's silence, widened in the first half to encompass a number of worldviews and opened at last to show the meeting of "all God's innumerable worlds," closes after this collision with his Karamazovian love for earthly life, which is also a kind of collision with his own centrality. We thus watch the steps by which he is constructed,

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[43] [Все вы, господа, милы мне отныне, всех вас заключу в мое сердце, а вас прошу заключить и меня в ваше сердце! Ну, а кто нас соединил в этом добром хорошем чувстве, об котором мы теперь всегда, всю жизнь вспоминать будем и вспоминать намерены, кто как не Илюшечка, добрый мальчик. . . Не забудем же его никогда, вечная ему и хорошая память в наших сердцах, отныне и во веки веков! . . .— Карамазов! — крикнул Коля, — неужели и взаправду религия говорит, что мы все встанем из мертвых, и оживем, и увидим опять друг друга, и всех, и Илюшечку? — Непременно восстанем, непременно увидим и весело, радостно расскажем друг другу всё, что было, — полусмеясь, полу в восторге ответил Алеша. (15:196)]

[44] On this speech as Alyosha's "one and only monologic performance" in the novel, marking his final assimilation of Zosima's authoritative discourse, see also Perlina, *Varieties of Poetic Utterance*, 44 and 192–94. As R.L. Jackson notes, specific verbal echoes serve to recall and oppose it to Ivan's key monologue in the chapter "Rebellion": "Alyosha's Speech at the Stone: 'The Whole Picture,'" in *A New Word on* The Brothers Karamazov, 234–57.

like most of Dostoevsky's heroes, to express "himself" in his "own" language rather than to spring, like most of Tolstoy's, from a narrator's authoritative description. In this sense what Alyosha meets, in his "idea," is his status as the hero of a never-written sequel to *The Brothers Karamazov*.[45]

5. *"a scoundrel, but not a thief, not a thief, anything you like, but not a thief" --"It was* not you *who killed father": Mitya as not-thief and Ivan as not-murderer*

      The Brothers Karamazov ends with a virtuosic exercise in indirect illusion — four chapters "excerpted" from the prosecution's speech at Mitya's trial and four from the defense, offering characterizations of the novel's protagonists, which we identify as false by comparing them with the "true" and "living" characters constructed within the rest of the novel. It is surely not accidental that Ippolit Kirillovich, the prosecutor, and Fetyukovich, the defense lawyer, make up only one complete proper name between them. These doubles' opposed logic marks the distorting extremes of two possible approaches to narrative characterization. Ippolit Kirillovich offers his portrait as if it were the only possible verbal likeness of Mitya, and Fetyukovich offers a multitude of "novels" about Mitya and the crime to show that no such likeness is definitive. The novel itself suggests both are wrong: there is exactly one verbal likeness of each Karamazov, and its peculiar authority comes from the generic convention that each is *only* a likeness, with an original source who is not to be exhausted in words.[46] Indeed, Dostoevsky emphasizes this generic privilege by making it the grounds for Fetyukovich's defense: "'The prosecution liked its own novel: a man of weak will, who determined to take the three thousand so shamingly offered him by his fiancée, could not, they say, have separated half of it and sewn it into an amulet. . .Well, and what if the thing went quite differently, what if you have created a novel around quite a different person? That's just it, you have created a different person!'" (731-32).[47]

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[45] For a similar reading in different terms, see Apollonio, *Dostoevsky's Secrets*, 164.

[46] Cf. Mikhail Bakhtin's description of this effect, with an ethical rather than a formal emphasis: "The investigator, judges, prosecutor, defense attorney, and commission of experts are all equally incapable of approaching the unfinalized and undecided core of Dmitry's personality, for he is a man who stands, in essence throughout his entire life, on the threshold of great internal decisions and crises. In place of this living core, bursting with new life [*zhivogo i prorastaiushchego novoi zhizn'iu iadra*], they substitute a sort of *ready-made definitiveness*, "naturally" and "normally" *predetermined* in all its words and acts by "psychological laws." All who judge Dmitry are devoid of a genuinely dialogic approach to him, a dialogic penetration into the unfinalized core of his personality. . . . The authentic Dmitry remains outside their judgment (he will pass judgment on himself" (*Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 62; *Problemy poetiki Dostoevskogo*, 73).

[47] [«Обвинению понравился собственный роман: человек с слабою волей, решившийся взять три тысячи, столь позорно ему предложенные невестой его, не мог, дескать, отделить половину и зашить ее в ладонку. . . Ну а что, если дело происходило вовсе не так, а ну как вы создали роман, а в нем совсем другое лицо? В том-то и дело, что вы создали другое лицо!» (15:158–59)]

"*Not you*": Character and the Conditions of Transcendence in Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*

Thus, every passage of psychological "novelization" in the foreground strengthens the novelistic illusion in the background: by having us read for some fifty pages about what they are not, Dostoevsky affirms that the Karamazovs (fictionally) are. But just as Ippolit Kirillovich's speech, taken as a model for the reader, urges on us the impossibility of finalizing Mitya in verbal description, Fetyukovich's attests to the importance of paying attention to the words that do describe him. The particular *ways* in which the novel refrains from finalizing the Karamazovs, even as so many of its characters engage in defining their name, are significant. A closer look at this absence of final, positive characterizations of Mitya and Ivan will add a layer to my discussion of how *The Brothers Karamazov* defines and uses the *inner* space of its protagonists.

Unlike with Alyosha and Fyodor Pavlovich, the narrator does not suggest that Dmitri and Ivan's characters can be read from their physical appearance. Mitya's dramatically staged entrance begins with a portrait whose ambiguity is striking:

> Dmitri Fyodorovich, a young man of twenty-eight, of medium height and pleasant face, appeared, however, much older than his years. He was muscular, and one could guess at considerable physical strength in him; nonetheless something sickly, as it were, showed in his face. His face was lean, his cheeks hollow, their color tinged with a sort of unhealthy sallowness. His rather large, dark, prominent eyes looked out, although apparently with firm determination, yet somehow vaguely. Even when he was excited and talking irritably, his look, as it were, did not obey his inner mood but expressed something else, sometimes not at all corresponding to the present moment. "It's hard to know what he's thinking about," those who spoke with him would occasionally say. Others, seeing something pensive and gloomy in his eyes, would suddenly be struck by his unexpected laughter. . ." (68 [translation modified])[48]

Among the many discrete details of this portrait, the only repeated element is the divide between Mitya's appearance and his inner life. In this sense, that inner life is separated early on from his (narrated) vigorous physical experience in the novel. Ivan, for his part, is never described at all. Fyodor Pavlovich sums up the eerie, perhaps demonic, sense of detachment to which this lack of description contributes: "I refuse to acknowledge Ivan. Where did he come from? He's not our

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[48] [Дмитрий Федорович, двадцативосьмилетний молодой человек, среднего роста и приятного лица, казался, однако же, гораздо старее своего лет. Был он мускулист, и в нем можно было угадывать значительную физическую силу, тем не менее в лице его выражалось как бы нечто болезненное. Лицо его было худощаво, щеки ввалились, цвет же их отливал какою-то нездоровою желтизной. Довольно большие темные глаза навыкате смотрели хотя, по видимому, и с твердым упорством, но как-то неопределенно. Даже когда он волновался и говорил с раздражением, взгляд его как бы не повиновался его внутреннему настроению и выражал что-то другое, иногда совсем не соответствующее настоящей минуте. «Трудно узнать, о чем он думает», — отзывались иной раз разговаривавшие с ним. Иные, видевшие в его глазах что-то задумчивое и угрюмое, случалось, вдруг поражались внезапным смехом его. . . (14:63)]

kind at all. Why should I leave him anything? . . . Ivan is not one of us, people like Ivan are not our people, my friend, they're a puff of dust... the wind blows, and the dust is gone" (175).[49]

These passages provide an impetus to project Mitya and Ivan back from the evidence of their speeches and ideas, rather than forward from physicalizing, authoritative narrative descriptions. But they put the reader in much the same bind as the jurors at Mitya's trial. We risk falling either into something like Fetyukovich's ungrounded, miasmic vision of the Karamazov family — based, after all, on the many possible ways of interpreting "evidence" — or into the deterministic rhetoric of an Ippolit Kirillovich, insisting on the absolute power of a predetermined set of character traits to fix this miasma and define the Karamazovs. For Mitya and Ivan, as for Alyosha, the novel's technical task is to place the protagonists in a position to appear to create their characters "themselves," no longer under the aegis of world-creating narration. The intensely-felt inner visions that set Dmitri and Ivan on their spiritual trajectories, throughout and (in theory) beyond *The Brothers Karamazov*, emerge from the clash of their *Karamazovian* natures with two roles suggested by their individual participation in the crime at the heart of the novel's plot: Mitya as thief, and Ivan as murderer. Forced to acknowledge roles they resist not just in personal but in family (genetic and social) terms, Mitya and Ivan are temporarily emptied even of the narrated identity contained in their family name, the set of traits associated with being a Karamazov. The forced moment of dissociation from that identity clears a way to the inner stage on which each of these newly "autonomous" fictional selves can be re-formed. My discussion will focus on how the novel makes that emptying-out or clearing possible.

From his first extended monologue, Mitya is associated with a specifically vertical interpretation of Karamazovian "broadness":

> I keep going, and I don't know: have I gotten into stench and shame, or into light and joy? That's the whole trouble, because everything on earth is a riddle. And whenever I happened to sink into the deepest, the very deepest shame of depravity (and that's all I ever happened to do), I always read that poem about Ceres and man. Did it set me right? Never! Because I'm a Karamazov. Because when I fall into the abyss, I go straight into it, head down and heels up, and I'm even pleased that I'm falling in just such a humiliating position, and for me, I consider it beauty. And so in that very shame I suddenly begin a hymn. Let me be cursed, let me be base and vile [*podl*], but let me also kiss the hem of that garment in which my God is clothed. . . (107 [translation modified])[50]

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[49] [Да я Ивана не признаю совсем. Откуда такой появился? Не наша совсем душа. И точно я ему что оставлю? . . . Но Иван никого не любит, Иван не наш человек, эти люди, как Иван, это, брат, не наши люди, это пыль поднявшаяся... Подует ветер, и пыль пройдет... (14:159)]

[50] [Я иду и не знаю: в вонь ли я попал и позор или в свет и радость. Вот ведь где беда, ибо всё на свете загадка! И когда мне случалось погружаться в самый, в самый глубокий позор разврата (а мне только это и случалось), то я всегда это стихотворение о Церере и о человеке читал. Исправляло оно меня? Никогда! Потому что я Карамазов. Потому что если уж полечу в бездну, то так-таки прямо, головой вниз и вверх пятами, и даже доволен, что именно в унизительном таком положении падаю и считаю это для себя красотой. И

For Mitya as a Karamazov, there is space for two kinds of passion or beauty at either end of a connecting abyss, one based on the "ideal of Sodom" and the other on the "ideal of the Madonna." But he explicitly distinguishes between these vertical polarities and another category that lies outside them, that of the thief: "I tell you, Alexei: I can be a mean man [*nizkim chelovekom*], with passions mean and ruinous, but a thief, a pickpocket, a pilferer [*vorom, karmannym vorom, vorishkoi po perednim*], that Dmitri Karamazov can never be!" (119; 14:110). Though he implies to Alyosha that he has now made himself a thief by spending the three thousand rubles he was meant to forward on Katerina Ivanovna's behalf, in fact he has kept half the money, sewing it up in a rag that he keeps around his neck "in place of an amulet" (490; 14:441).

As one recent reading has emphasized, Mitya's "amulet" becomes a powerfully concrete symbol for the indeterminate moral potentiality at the center of his story: if he returns the fifteen hundred rubles to Katerina Ivanovna, he is "a scoundrel, but not a thief, anything you like, but not a thief."[51] The amulet also represents, in this sense, a form of self-definition couched in entirely negative terms. Mitya's reluctance to admit that he has stolen Katerina Ivanovna's money is primarily bound to his sense of his own honor, rather than to an aversion to the act of robbery as such. But his peculiar later exchange with Pyotr Ilyich Perkhotin suggests a deeper fissure, a disconnect between thievery and the very foundation of Mitya's sense of himself:

> "Incidentally, Pyotr Ilyich, I wanted to ask you: have you ever stolen anything in your life?. . .From someone's pocket, you see, someone else's property? I don't mean government money. . . I mean someone else's property: right from their pocket or purse, eh?"
> "I once stole twenty kopecks from my mother, from the table, when I was nine years old. Took it on the sly and clutched it in my fist."
> "And then what?"
> "Then nothing. I kept it for three days, felt ashamed, confessed, and gave it back. . . . Why, you haven't stolen anything, have you?"
> "I have," Mitya winked slyly.
> "What have you stolen?" Pyotr Ilyich became curious.
> "Twenty kopecks from my mother, when I was nine, I gave it back in three days."
> Having said this, Mitya suddenly rose from his seat. (407)[52]

вот в самом-то этом позоре я вдруг начинаю гимн. Пусть я проклят, пусть я низок и подл, но пусть и я целую край той ризы, в которую облекается бог мой. . . (14:99)]

[51] Holland, "The Legend of the *Ladonka* and the Trial of the Novel"; see also Holland, *Age of Disintegration*, 175–88. Cf. R.L. Jackson, "Dmitry Karamazov and the Legend of the Grand Inquisitor," in *The Art of Dostoevsky*, 344–45.

[52] [Петр Ильич, хотел я тебя спросить кстати: крал ты когда что в своей жизни али нет? . . . Видишь, из кармана у кого-нибудь, чужое? Я не про казну говорю. . . Я про чужое: прямо из кармана, из кошелька, а?
— Украл один раз у матери двугривенный, девяти лет был, со стола. Взял тихонько и зажал в руку.

Mitya manages to admit to robbery only by immediately sliding away, adopting verbatim the story of another thief. This dialogue reproduces the split between "I" and "Dmitri Karamazov" that appears already in his declaration to Alyosha — if "I" am a thief, then "I" cannot be Dmitri Karamazov. This split, in turn, gives the impetus to his plot and to his eventual transformation.

As Mitya runs from house to house in search of 3000 rubles to repay Katerina Ivanovna (and finance his seduction of Grushenka), he traces a parodic succession of unrealized picaresque and Bildungsroman plots: first a capitalist venture that sends him, like Gogol's Chichikov, from the town into the provinces to find the wealthy peasant trader Gorstkin /Lyagavy; then Mme. Khokhlakova's romantic fantasy of striking it rich in the gold mines (386; 14:349).[53] Mme. Khokhlakova's chatter about Shchedrin and *The Contemporary*, as well as perhaps Mitya's own continual references to "realism," reinforce this jumbled literary context (384; 14:347). The failure of this "realist" literary atmosphere to alleviate the burden of Mitya's theft adumbrates the need for a different genre and plot based on a different model of character — shaped not incrementally, as in a conventional picaresque or Bildungsroman, but suddenly, all at once, by revelation.[54]

Mitya's identification of himself as not-thief, throughout the "torments" (*mytarstva*) of his interrogation, prepares the ground for this new or other model of novelistic character. He admits readily to the "vileness [*podlost'*]" that he has already associated with the Karamazovs, but complex rhetorical convolutions allow him to separate the scoundrel (*podlets*) from the thief:

> Any man can be, and perhaps is, a scoundrel, but not any man can be a thief; only an arch-scoundrel can be that. Well, I'm not very good at these subtleties... But still, a thief is more of a scoundrel than a scoundrel, that is my conviction. Listen: I carry the money on me for a whole month, even tomorrow I can decide to give it back, and then I'm not a

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— Ну и что же?

— Ну и ничего. Три дня хранил, стыдно стал, признался и отдал. . . . Да ты чего уж, ты сам не украл ли?

— Украл, — хитро подмигнул Митя.

— Что украл? — залюбопытствовал Петр Ильич.

— У матери двугривенный, девяти лет был, через три дня отдал. (14: 367)]

[53] On possible literary sources for her "gold mine" scheme, including George Sand's Bildungsroman *Mauprat* (1837), see 15:573.Though the contribution may be less direct, it is tempting to take the scene in which Mme. Khokhlakova hangs a silver icon around Mitya's neck for a deliberate parody of Prince Andrei's departure from Bald Hills to join the war against Napoleon in Tolstoy's *War and Peace* (386; 14:349).

[54] Kate Holland writes, in this context, of Dostoevsky's attempt to "resurrect the novel" through an infusion of folk and religious genres into the text of *The Brothers Karamazov* ("Legend of the *Ladonka*" and *Age of Disintegration*, Chapter Five). Part of this resurrection, I would suggest, depends on forging a new model of the protagonist who can move through this innovative mix of genres. On the mix of religious genres incorporated into the "hierarchy of quotations" that organizes *The Brothers Karamazov*, see Perlina, *Varieties of Poetic Utterance*, Part II, Ch. 1 ff.

> scoundrel, but I can't decide. . . And so I slyly counted out half of the three thousand and sewed it up with needle and thread, cold-bloodedly, I sewed it up calculatingly, I sewed it up even before I went drinking, and then, when I had sewn it up, I went and got drunk on the other half! It took a scoundrel to do that, sir! (493)[55]

Mitya's logic allows him to substitute another name ("scoundrel [*podlets*]") for the name "thief [*vor*]," just as his exchange with Perkhotin allowed him to substitute another referent.[56] Not until the end of his confession, pressed by an interrogator who asks what was wrong with keeping back the money in the amulet, does he decisively call his crime by name:

> That I stole [*ukral*], that's what! Oh, God, you horrify me with your lack of understanding! All the while I carried that fifteen hundred sewn up on my chest, I kept saying to myself every day and every hour: 'You are a thief, you are a thief! [*Ty vor, ty vor!*]' . . . I did not dare to reveal anything about the fifteen hundred even to Alyosha, my brother: so much did I feel myself a scoundrel and a pickpocket [*mazurik*]. But know that all the while I carried it, every day and every hour, I kept saying to myself at the same time: 'No, Dmitri Fyodorovich, perhaps you're not yet a thief [*eshche i ne vor*].' . . . And only yesterday did I decide to tear the amulet off my neck. . . and as soon as I tore it off, at that moment I became a thief, a thief and a dishonest man for the rest of my life. Why? Because along with the amulet, I tore up my dream of going to Katya and saying: 'I am a

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[55] [Подлецом может быть всякий, да и есть, пожалуй, всякий, но вором может быть не всякий, а только архиподлец. Ну да я там этим тонкостям не умею... А только вор подлее полдеца, вот мое убеждение. Слушайте: я ношу деньги целый месяц на себе, завтра же я могу решиться их отдать, и я уже не подлец, но решиться-то я не могу . . . И вот я ехидно отсчитываю половину от трех тысяч и зашиваю иглой хладнокровно, зашиваю с расчетом, еще до пьянства зашиваю, а потом, как уж зашил, на остальную половину еду пьянствовать! Нет-с, это подлость! (14:443–444)]

[56] Here and in the discussion of Ivan Karamazov that follows, I elide some of the complexity of the cluster of themes and characters associated with *podlost'* in the novel, treating it primarily as a component of *karamazovshchina*. As Diane Oenning Thompson has commented, the very invocation of "baseness" or *podlost'* implies awareness of a moral scale whose apex (for Dostoevsky) is the example of Christ; characters who are not (yet) Karamazovs, including Lise and Capt. Snegiryov, also have an understanding of *podlost'* that places them on this moral scale (cf. *Poetics of Memory*, 150). It is, however, curious to note that the moment in which Lise is most strongly identified with *podlost'* (at the end of the chapter "A Little Demon") is also the moment when she is most strongly identified with (Karamazovian) sensuous physical experience, slamming the door on her nail. The word takes on clear class overtones when used about Rakitin and Smerdyakov, resonating with the first definition of *podlyi* in V. Dal''s Russian dictionary ("about a person or state: from the common people, of dark or low birth or tribe, from slaves or serfs") — as in Mitya's provocative rejoinder to Rakitin, "The Karamazovs are not scoundrels [*podletsy*], but philosophers. . . and you . . . are not a philosopher, you're a stinking churl [*smerd*]" (588; 15:28). On Smerdyakov's reaction to this epithet, see note 74 below.

> scoundrel, but not a thief!' [*vmeste s ladonkoi i mechtu moiu poiti k Kate i skazat': 'Ia podlets, a ne vor' — razorval*] (492–94 [translation modified])[57]

The radical nature of this confession is underlined not just by Mitya's agitation, but by a verbal link: he tells his interrogators, "I have, so to speak, torn my soul in half before you, and you take advantage of it and go rummaging with your fingers in both halves of the torn spot [*Ved' ia, tak skazat', dushu moiu razorval popolam pred vami, a vy vospol'zovalis' i roetes' pal'tsami po razorvannomu mestu v obeikh polovinakh!*]" (496 [translation modified]; 14:446). Mitya's decision to tear up the amulet (to become "a thief and a dishonest man") is equivalent to his decision to tear up his soul by confessing to the crime in these terms. Having defined himself as "a scoundrel, but not a thief," by calling himself a thief he empties out his narrated self, makes absolute the split between "I" and "Dmitry Karamazov."

Like the "quietness" that allows Alyosha to be filled, in his moment of revelation, with "threads from all of God's innumerable worlds," this fissure frees a space for the dream of the "wee one [*dityo*]," the vision that allows Mitya to accept his undeserved suffering. The dream unfolds in between the moment when Mitya has given his statement and heard the testimony of witnesses, and the moment when he signs the written transcript of his statement with his own name. The white, black, and brown steppe sketched in this "strange sort of dream, somehow entirely unsuited to the place and time [*kakoi-to strannyi son, kak-to sovsem ne k mestu i ne ko vremeni*] (507 [translation modified]; 14:456)," gives a landscape to Mitya's temporary absence of identity, shaping the gap between his self and his story.[58] The dream does not transform him decisively, but it creates the site of the slow rebirth that follows his arrest for Smerdyakov's crime: as he tells Alyosha in his prison cell, "a new man has resurrected in me [*voskres vo mne novyi chelovek*]" (591 [translation modified]; 15:30).

Through Mitya's "torments" and dream, a picaresque thus becomes a conversion narrative, and its hero — his self-identification as "scoundrel, not thief" temporarily canceled in

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[57] [Да то, что украл, вот что! О боже, вы меня ужасаете непониманием! Всё время, пока я носил эти полторы тысячи, зашитые на груди, я каждый день и каждый час говорил себе: «ты вор, ты вор!» Да и оттого и свирепствовал в этот месяц. . . Я даже Алеше, брату моему, не решился и не посмел открыть про эти полторы тысячи: до того чувствовал, что подлец и мазурик! Но знайте, что пока я носил, я в то же время каждый день и каждый час мой говорил себе: «Нет, Дмитрий Федорович, ты, может быть, еще не вор». . . И вот вчера только я решился сорвать мою ладонку с шеи. . . и только что сорвал, в ту же минуту стал уже окончательный и бесспорный вор, вор и бесчестный человек на всю жизнь. Почему? Потому что вместе с ладонкой и мечту мою пойти к Кате и сказать: «Я подлец, а не вор» — разорвал! (14:444)]

[58] As W.M. Todd points out, "stories and selves fit very poorly together in Dostoevsky's novels, which transform learned treatises into fiction, narrators into liars, and listeners into resentful rebels" ("Storied Selves," 279). This generalization gives perhaps all the more reason to pay attention to moments in Dostoevsky when selves are temporarily left without their stories, and to Dostoevsky's efforts to write characters for whom these moment can be improbably extended and scenically displayed.

his confession to theft — a concrete realist character with something of an archetype's generality. Though Mitya returns, when he answers the charge at his trial, to his old formula — "Dmitri Karamazov is a scoundrel, but not a thief! [*Dmitrii Karamazov podlets, no ne vor!*]" (660; 15:94) — he has accepted the label of "thief" (and not-Dmitri Karamazov) for long enough to admit at least the possibility of transformation. If the two poles encompassed in *karamazovshchina* span the vertical range from damnation to salvation, it is only by a temporary exile from his own nature, enacted through the stages of his torments, that Mitya can travel from one to the other.

<p style="text-align:center">*</p>

The vertical broadness of Mitya's *karamazovshchina* finds an answer in the horizontal broadness of Ivan's. Figured as a "riddle," a "grave," a "puff of dust," his nature spreads over the earth, infecting the lives of those it touches. Ivan's idea that "everything is permitted," a distillation of the sensual principle that governs Fyodor Pavlovich's life, confronts and shapes each of the major protagonists in the novel's ideological plot.[59] But like Mitya's self-definition as "a scoundrel [*podlets*], but not a thief," this idea and the vile [*podlyi*] behavior associated with it allow Ivan to stand at one remove from the murder and theft that comprise Smerdyakov's crime. And as with Mitya, it is the temporary erasure of the distance between "Karamazov" and murderer/thief that loosens Ivan's self-identity, clearing the space where the drama of his salvation begins to play out.

Ivan's key association with the Karamazovian moral category *podlost'* comes in a central passage after his coded conversation with Smerdyakov about the impending murder:

> That night [Ivan Fyodorovich] went to bed late, at about two. But we will not relate the whole train of his thought, nor is it yet time for us to enter into this soul — this soul will have its turn. And even if we should try to relate something, it would be very hard to do, because there were no thoughts, but something very indefinite, and above all, too excited. He himself felt that he had lost his bearings . . . Remembering that night long afterwards, Ivan Fyodorovich recalled with particular disgust how he suddenly would get up from the sofa and quietly, as though terribly afraid of being seen, open the door, go out to the head of the stairs, and listen to Fyodor Pavlovich moving around below, wandering through the downstairs rooms — he would listen for a long time, five minutes at a stretch, with a sort of strange curiosity. . . and why he was doing all that, what he was listening for, he, of course, did not know himself. All his life afterwards he referred to this "action" as "loathsome" [*merzkim*], and all his life, deep in himself, in the inmost part of his soul, he

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[59] Cf. Vladimir Kantor's discussion, in broader social terms: "The theory 'all is permitted' is like a chemically cleansed 'Karamazovism' that has received its theoretical expression, to the extent that 'Karamazovism' is the quintessence of the societal disintegration then underway." Kantor thus treats Ivan's theory as a received idea, which it is Ivan's task to dissociate from his own truer or deeper self ("The Problem of Temptation," in *Dostoevsky and the Christian Tradition*, ed. G. Pattison and D.O. Thompson [Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001], 213. Cf. V. Kantor, *V poiskakh lichnosti: Opyt russkoi klassiki* [Moscow, 1994], 149–74).

considered it the basest [*samym podlym*] action of his whole life. (275–76 [translation modified])[60]

Strikingly, Ivan's designation of his action (or failure to act) as "the basest of his life" folds him into the narrated identity of the very family group from which he is attempting, by this inaction, to distance himself. He familiarizes his participation in the crime of murder in the same way that Mitya familiarizes his participation in the crime of theft, avoiding the *name* of murder while readily confessing to the Karamazovian vileness (*podlost'*) of his desire for the result.

Ivan attests that he shares directly in the name "murderer" only if his participation in the crime is greater than he had thought — if his father was killed not by Mitya, "viper eating viper," but by Smerdyakov acting in accordance with Ivan's philosophy and understood wishes: " 'If it was [Smerdyakov] who killed him, and not Dmitri, then, of course, I am a murderer too [*ubiitsa i ia*]" (617; 15:54). As a recent account has emphasized, he is thus caught between two competing readings of his character: that of Smerdyakov, who insists that Ivan is "the most lawful murderer" (627; 15:63) and that of Alyosha, who unwaveringly repeats the opposite: "'It was *not you* who killed father [*Ubil otsa* ne ty]'" (601; 15:40).[61] Ivan's potential proximity to Smerdyakov creates the need for Alyosha's denial, and the conflict between the positively- and the negatively-framed definitions of Ivan — you or *not you*? murderer or not-murderer? — in turn opens the field for a new exercise in characterization. If Ivan did not put Smerdyakov up to murder, there must be someone else who did. If Ivan is to retain the moral and ontological flexibility of being defined as *not-* — an essential component, I am suggesting, of the state of any protagonist in Dostoevsky — some other character must take on the descriptive attributes that Ivan still hopes to escape. Ivan himself assumes the task of creating this other character, in the form of his hallucinated devil.

Many critical accounts of the chapter "The Devil. Ivan Fyodorovich's Nightmare [*Chert. Koshmar Ivana Fedorovicha*]" emphasize the connection between the devil in Ivan's nightmare, and demonic forces separate from and larger than Ivan himself. Such readings have the

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[60] [Поздно он лег в эту ночь, часа в два. Но мы не станем передавать всё течение его мыслей, да и не время нам входить в эту душу: этой душе свой черед. И даже если б и попробовали что передать, то было бы очень мудрено это сделать, потому что были не мысли, а было что-то очень неопределенное, а главное — слишком взволнованное. Сам он чувствовал, что потерял все свои концы. . . . Припоминая потом долго спустя эту ночь, Иван Федорович с особенным отвращением вспоминал, как он вдруг, бывало, вставал с дивана и тихонько, как бы страшно боясь, чтобы не подглядели за ним, отворял двери, выходил на лестницу и слушал вниз, в нижние комнаты, как шевелился и похаживал там внизу Федор Павлович, — слушал подолгу, минут по пяти, со странным каким-то любопытством. . . а для чего он всё это проделывал, для чего слушал — конечно, и сам не знал. Этот «поступок» он всю жизнь свою потом называл «мерзким» и всю жизнь свою считал, глубоко про себя, в тайниках души своей, самым подлым поступком изо всей своей жизни. (14:251)]

[61] Kantor, "The Problem of Temptation," 191–93. On this point, see also Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 255; *Problemy poetiki Dostoevskogo*, 283–285.

advantage of acknowledging the system of devils that pervades *The Brothers Karamazov*.[62] But one drawback to this perspective is that it begins by solving the very problem that tortures Ivan throughout their conversation, and in the following chapter ("He said that! [*Eto on govoril!*]"): is the devil, whom he addresses in the second person, a "he" or an "I"? Ivan returns repeatedly to two positions — "*It is I, I myself who am speaking, and not you!*" (637; 15:72), and "And, by the way, I should like to believe in you" (645; 15:79). The period in the chapter title also equivocates between these two positions: is the devil Ivan Fyodorovich's nightmare, or does he exist independently of it?[63] An aspect of this question is theological, but another aspect is technical — a question of literary realism.

     Ivan, a perverse Pygmalion, wishes that his seductively mimetic vision could come to life — not because he is in love with it, but so that its self could at last be fully detached from his. Each thought the devil expresses that Ivan cannot remember thinking is evidence either of its true existence, or of Ivan's creative ability: in a sense, of the ability to spin the very fiction of a character's independent life that has often been taken to lie at the aesthetic heart of the realist novel. This link between "nightmare" and artistic creation is explicitly written into one of the devil's comments:

> "*C'est du nouveau, n'est-ce pas?* This time I'll be honest and explain to you. Listen: in dreams and especially in nightmares, well, let's say as a result of indigestion or whatever, a man sometimes sees such artistic dreams, such complex and real actuality, such events, or even a whole world of events, woven into such a plot, with such unexpected details, beginning from your highest manifestations down to the last shirt button, as I swear even Leo Tolstoy couldn't write [*sochinit'*]; and, by the way, it's not just writers who occasionally see such dreams, but quite the most ordinary people, officials, journalists, priests. . . Well, and so it is now. Though I am your hallucination, even so, as in a

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[62] See W.J. Leatherbarrow for one catalogue of the system of devils, which he associates broadly with the "deceptions, deceits, and devices of secular narrative fiction" (W.J. Leatherbarrow, *A Devil's Vaudeville: The Demonic in Dostoevsky's Major Fiction* [Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2005], Chapter Five). He does not, however, comment specifically on the problem of the fictionality of Ivan's devil. For an approach closer to the one I adopt here, see for example the description of Ivan's devil as "embodied shame" in D.A. Martinsen, "Shame's Rhetoric, or Ivan's Devil, Karamazov Soul," in *A New Word on* The Brothers Karamazov, 53–67.

[63] Ivan's relationship to his devil thus parallels the relationship between his character the Grand Inquisitor, and the heretic who may or may not be Christ. Ivan sneeringly points out that "modern realism" (250; 14:228) would say the Inquisitor is mistaken in thinking Christ has returned, but his poem hesitates on the border of a genre where the Inquisitor could be right. For an illuminating discussion of the uncertain "referent" of Ivan's Christ, in the context of the novel's displaced or deconstructed Christianity, see Jones, *Dostoevsky After Bakhtin*, 180. As V. Terras points out, "an ironic *quid pro quo* of fact and fiction runs through the whole novel," in which the idea of realism is implicated; see his "The Art of Fiction in *The Brothers Karamazov*," in *Dostoevsky*: *New Perspectives*, ed. R.L. Jackson (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1984), 197.

> nightmare, I say original things, such as have never entered your head before, so that I'm not repeating your thoughts at all, and yet I am merely your nightmare and nothing more."
> "Lies. Your goal is precisely to convince me that you are in yourself and are not my nightmare, and so now you yourself assert that you're a dream." (639 [translation modified])[64]

If we take this image seriously, we see Ivan as a dreamer in dialogue with his dream, or a writer in dialogue with his own character — or, perhaps, with one of Tolstoy's. The length and detail with which the appearance and social position of Ivan's devil are described (635-36; 15:70-71) parodically mimic the directly authoritative approach to realist characterization that Dostoevsky associated with the omniscient narrators of Turgenev and Tolstoy.[65] To apply this conventional method to a character who exists supernaturally, if at all, is more than a nice stroke of irony; it

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[64] [C'est du nouveau n'est ce pas? На этот раз я поступлю честно и объясню тебе. Слушай: в снах, и особенно в кошмарах, ну, там от расстройства желудка или чего-нибудь, иногда видит человек такие художественные сны, такую сложную и реальную действительность, такие события или даже целый мир событий, связанный такою интригой, с такими неожиданными подробностями, начиная с высших ваших проявлений до последней пуговицы на манишке, что, клянусь тебе, Лев Толстой не сочинит, а между тем видят такие сны иной раз вовсе не сочинители, совсем самые заурядные люди, чиновники, фельетонисты, попы . . . Ну вот так и теперь. Я хоть и твоя галлюцинация, но, как и в кошмаре, я говорю вещи оригинальные, какие тебе до сих пор в голову не приходили, так что уже вовсе не повторяю твоих мыслей, а между тем я только твой кошмар, и больше ничего. — Лжешь. Твоя цель именно уверить, что ты сам по себе, а не мой кошмар, и вот ты теперь подтверждаешь сам, что ты сон. (15:74)]

[65] On the tendency of Dostoevsky and his contemporaries to associate Tolstoy's art, in particular, with vivid realist detail, see the note to this passage in the Academy edition of Dostoevsky's complete collected works, 15:590–91. The editors point out that Dostoevsky had made a similar observation in *Crime and Punishment*, comparing realistic dreams to the inventions of Pushkin and Turgenev. V. Terras and N. Perlina see in Ivan's devil a parody of Turgenev himself (filtered through Dostoevsky's previous parodic portrait of Turgenev, Stepan Verkhovensky of *Demons*), and of some of the qualities of his characters: V. Terras, "Turgenev and the Devil in *The Brothers Karamazov*," *Canadian-American Slavic Studies* 6:2 (Summer 1972), 265–71; Perlina, *Varieties of Poetic Utterance*, 139–41. But multiple interpretations are clearly possible, drawing other real and fictional prototypes into the complex figure of Ivan's devil. As many scholars have discussed, he is strongly associated with Alexander Herzen, whom Perlina calls Ivan's "muse" (*Varieties*, 131). As described in this initial portrait, Ivan's devil also bears a distinct moral, if not physical, resemblance to Dostoevsky's description of Tolstoy's character Stiva Oblonsky, in "One of Today's Most Important Questions [*Odin iz glavneishikh sovremennykh voprosov*]," *Diary of a Writer*, February 1877 (*A Writer's Diary*, trans. and annotated by K. Lantz, Vol. 2 [Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1994], 872); 25:53–54). In Ivan's devil, then, the technique of realist detail is quite broadly linked to a problematic social position and worldview.

implies a suspicion that the method itself is shallow, the characters something less than "real."[66] The spectacle of Ivan struggling to believe in a devil who is also a realist character underscores the difference between Ivan, and realist characters as they have been written before him: Dostoevsky asks us to accept Ivan's mind less as a collection of narrated traits, than as a narrative *place* capacious enough for this struggle and open enough for its exhibition.[67]

In this respect, the setting for Ivan's nightmare — the dream-version of the "real" room, the version where Ivan does wet a towel for his head and does throw a glass of tea at a genuine physical visitor — is a vital component of their conversation. Without the competing claims that empty out the narrated contents of Ivan's name and character— the "you are the most lawful murderer" that pulls him toward Smerdyakov, and the "It was *not you* that killed father" that pulls him toward Alyosha and the "baseness" specific to the Karamazovs — there is no room in which his interview with this devil could take place. Without a self that can be temporarily stripped of its narrated identity, there are no characters fit to present the inner plot of Dostoevsky's novel.

The chilling complaint of Ivan's devil — "I am some sort of ghost of life who has lost all ends and beginnings, and I've finally even forgotten what to call myself [*Ia kakoi-to prizrak zhizni, kotoryi poterial vse kontsy i nachala, i dazhe sam pozabyl nakonets, kak i nazvat' sebia*]" (643; 15:76) — thus just as aptly, at the moment of this chapter, describes Ivan himself. It paints a figural, as well as a supernatural, state of being. The contemporary critics who found in Dostoevsky "phenomena of life that stand on the boundary separating reality from the world of ghosts [*ot mira prizrakov*]"[68] were only a step away from calling his characters "ghosts of life," and in Ivan's conversation with his devil (which may also be a conversation with himself), we see perhaps the primary formal function of this ghostliness. It is important, as Bakhtin stressed, to recognize that each of Dostoevsky's protagonists is a *you*.[69] But it may be just as important that each is also a *not-you*, the illusion of whose life can be separated from narrated details, traits, and names. In the loosening and (for Mitya and Alyosha) reinstatement of their Karamazov identities, the protagonists of *The Brothers Karamazov* open a window onto the kind of scene that could be set only within a characterological ghost.

Tied prominently here, as it is not in *The Adolescent*, to a story of sin, salvation, and resurrection, this method of characterization offers one key to the peculiar position of the protagonists in Dostoevsky. Placed at the novel's thematic cornerstones, they also support a mimetic illusion that depends not on saturating, but on transcending the narrated textual details of a fictional world. They are designed, then, as characters that can be temporarily abstracted

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[66] Thus, as Nathan Rosen notes, "the devil's elaborately described costume is a caricature of Ivan's faith in realism" ("Ivan Karamazov Confronts the Devil," *Dostoevsky Studies* n.s. V (2001), 122)

[67] In a similar vein Mikhail Bakhtin writes, describing Ivan's interview with his devil, of the "combination [of voices] solely within the bounds of a single dismantled consciousness [*odnogo razlozhivshegosia soznaniia*]" (*Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 221; *Problemy poetiki Dostoevskogo*, 246–247).

[68] See my Section II Introduction, p. 90.

[69] *Problemy poetiki Dostoevskogo*, 73.

from any kind of trait an omniscient narrator could assign, stripped down to the fiction of a pure and malleable self. If *The Adolescent* marks the absence of what an omniscient narrator gives "unshakably and inarguably" about Dostoevsky's characters, *The Brothers Karamazov* marks the richness of the narrative that becomes possible within that newly emptied space.

6. "I am [the] murderer, not Karamazov": Smerdyakov as not-Karamazov

This picture would not be complete without a final turn, from the capacious "not you" of the Dostoevskian protagonist to the unexplored and, in sense, unexplorable inner space of the not-Dostoevskian protagonist. In my discussion of the named Karamazov brothers, I have suggested that the name Karamazov, and the set of traits associated with it, provides a central pillar with reference to which each of the characters in the novel, including each Karamazov, is made to define "himself." Alyosha's role as hero is strengthened and sealed in his Karamazovian encounter with the earth and all "God's worlds" beside it; both Mitya and Ivan (temporarily) lose their firm identification with Karamazovian "vileness [*podlost'*]" in a dangerous approach to the literally "*podlyi*" (base-born) Smerdyakov's specific crimes of theft and murder. Through these negotiations of the meaning and limits of the family name Karamazov, the novel establishes its technical ability to stage the novel's "third" or "spiritual" plot, the dramas of fall and resurrection that belong *within* the Karamazovs as specifically Dostoevskian protagonists. Just as important to its structure, then, is the definition of a Smerdyakov, a character marked by his separation from the name Karamazov and constructed through a different set of narrative techniques, whose claim to narrative and spiritual centrality in Dostoevsky's novel is vigorously denied.

In arguing that Smerdyakov could not have been the murderer, the prosecutor asks why Smerdyakov failed to add a sentence to his suicide note: " 'I am the murderer, not Karamazov' [*ubiitsa ia, a ne Karamazov*]" (712; 15:141). Particularly in Russian, which does not specify an article before "murderer" (though the word order makes the definite article most appropriate), this sentence requires only a change of emphasis to imply that "murderer" and "Karamazov" are mutually exclusive categories — "I am a murderer, not a Karamazov." This slippage suggests that the novel needs Smerdyakov for the same reason that Ivan Karamazov needs his devil: if neither Alyosha, nor Mitya, nor Ivan killed Fyodor Pavlovich, there must be someone else who did. It is vital for the novel's thematics to show that any of the brothers *could* have committed Smerdyakov's theft and murder, and that each shares in his guilt. But it is equally salient that it was Smerdyakov who *did* commit the crimes at the heart of the novel's plot. At the moments Ivan and Mitya recognize their proximity to Smerdyakov's actions, they begin to be remade not as Smerdyakovs, but as Karamazovs. Once Smerdyakov confesses to these actions, by contrast, he can only destroy himself: there is no room within his character for any role other than that of the unrepentant thief and murderer. Where, then, is the *characterological* difference between a Karamazov and a Smerdyakov?

Both the narrator-chronicler and the other characters are apt to frame Smerdyakov as a misplaced object, unworthy of careful consideration and unwelcome when he demands it — a reticence that diverts us from his position at the very heart of the novel's plot. Finishing the story of how Lizaveta Smerdyashaya bore Smerdyakov in Fyodor Pavlovich's garden, the narrator puts this reticence in terms of class: "It really is necessary to say something more about him in

particular, but I am ashamed to distract my reader's attention for such a long time to such ordinary lackeys, and therefore I shall go back to my narrative, trusting that with regard to Smerdyakov it will all somehow work itself out [*o Smerdiakove kak-nibud' soidet samo soboiu*] in the further course of the story" (100 [translation modified]).[70] Ivan feels Smerdyakov's unwanted presence viscerally, as a mysterious "anguish [*toska*]":

> Above all, this anguish was vexing and annoyed him by the fact that it had some sort of accidental, completely external appearance; this he felt. Somewhere some being or object was standing and sticking up, just as when something sometimes sticks up in front of one's eye and one doesn't notice it for a long time. . . and meanwhile one is clearly annoyed, almost suffering, and at last it dawns on one to remove the offending [*negodnyi*] object, often quite trifling and ridiculous, something left in the wrong place, a handkerchief dropped on the floor, a book not put back in the bookcase, or whatever. At last, in a very bad and irritated state of mind, Ivan Fyodorovich reached his father's house, and. . . he at once realized what was tormenting and worrying him so. On the bench by the gate, idly enjoying the cool of the evening, sat the lackey Smerdyakov, and Ivan Fyodorovich realized at the first sight of him that the lackey Smerdyakov was also sitting in his soul, and that it was precisely this man his soul could not bear. . . . "But can it be that this worthless villain [*negodiai*] troubles me so much!" he thought with unbearable malice. (265–66 [translation modified])[71]

Ivan's reaction to the Smerdyakov "sitting in his soul" prefigures his later reaction to the devil he sees sitting in his room.[72] The particular emphasis in Smerdyakov's case, however, is on the link

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[70] [Очень бы надо примолвить кое-что и о нем специально, но мне совестно столь долго отвлекать внимание моего читателя на столь обыкновенных лакеев, а потому и перехожу к моему рассказу, уповая, что о Смердякове как-нибудь сойдет само собою в дальнейшем течении повести. (14:93)]

[71] [Главное, тем была она досадна, эта тоска, и тем раздражала, что имела какой-то случайный, совершенно внешний вид; это чувствовалось. Стояло и торчало где-то какое-то существо или предмет, вроде как торчит что-нибудь иногда пред глазом, и долго . . . не замечаешь его, а между тем видимо раздражаешься, почти мучаешься, и наконец-то догадаешься отстранить негодный предмет, часто очень пустой и смешной, какую-нибудь вещь, забытую не на своем месте, платок, упавший на пол, книгу, не убранную в шкаф, и проч., и проч. Наконец Иван Федорович в самом скверном и раздраженном состоянии духа достиг родительского дома и вдруг. . . разом догадался о том, что его так мучило и тревожило. На скамейке у ворот сидел и прохлаждался вечерним воздухом лакей Смердяков, и Иван Федорович с первого взгляда на него понял, что и в душе его сидел лакей Смердяков и что именно этого-то человека и не может вынести его душа. (14:242)]

[72] "as he entered his room, something icy suddenly touched his heart, like a recollection, or, rather, a reminder, of something loathsome and tormenting that was precisely in that room now, presently, and had been there before" (634) [Когда же он ступил в свою комнату, что-то ледяное прикоснулось вдруг к его сердцу, как будто воспоминание, вернее, напоминание о

between offending object and offensive person, *negodnyi* and *negodiai*. Smerdyakov has been left, as if "by mistake," at the very crux of the story of the Karamazov brothers.

The master figure for Smerdyakov's crucial but unauthorized inclusion in the narrative is his illegitimate birth. In an influential reading, Olga Meerson has argued that Smerdyakov's status as one of the brothers Karamazov is the novel's central taboo, the truth that none of the novel's characters (not excluding Smerdyakov himself, or the narrator) is willing to acknowledge. The reader's task, then, is to overcome this silence by recognizing Smerdyakov's claim to (literal and universal) brotherhood.[73] But this task is complicated, I would emphasize, by the cloudiness of Smerdyakov's claim: the real identity of his father is just what no one, including Smerdyakov, can conclusively know. *Is* Smerdyakov a Karamazov brother? It is the uncertainty of his birth, not the narrator's and his brothers' repugnance for him, that makes this question unanswerable. There may thus be less to gain by setting up Smerdyakov's illegitimate birth as a moral trial, than by exploring its narrative consequences. In this sense, I want to depart from Meerson's approach by entertaining the possibility that Smerdyakov's ostentatious exclusion from the narrative is most useful to Dostoevsky *as* an exclusion, not as a veiled bid for Smerdyakov's incorporation into a (universal) brotherhood. Much in the novel's structure depends on the indisputable fact that nominally, Smerdyakov is *not* a Karamazov.[74]

Smerdyakov's nominal exclusion from the circle of Karamazov protagonists and their Karamazov traits, motivated by his illegitimate birth, has three striking correlatives. One is the suicide that literally cuts short his participation in the "third" or "spiritual" plot centered on and within Alyosha, Mitya, and Ivan. Always a "squeamish" eater and a dandy (125-26; 14:115-16), Smerdyakov ends by turning his face away entirely from the depths of the earthy life force that unites the four Karamazovs. This alliance with surfaces rather than depths is reflected, secondly,

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чем-то мучительном и отвратительном, находящемся именно в этой комнате теперь, сейчас, да и прежде бывшем. (15:69)]

[73] See O. Meerson, *Dostoevsky's Taboos*, Chapter Six. The argument about the moral "test" associated with Smerdyakov's brotherhood has recently been expanded by A. Berman, "Siblings in *The Brothers Karamazov*," *The Russian Review* 68 (April 2009): 263–82 and *Siblings in Tolstoy and Dostoevsky: The Path to Universal Brotherhood* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2015), 124–128; and by G. Matzner-Gore, "Kicking Maksimov Out of the Carriage," 421–422.

[74] On the many valences of Smerdyakov's name, and its arbitrary derivation from his mother's epithet, see V.V. Ivanov, "O kompozitsionnoi roli familii geroev u Dostoevskogo. Smerdyakov," in *Miscellanea Slavica to Honour the Memory of Jan M. Meijer*, ed. B.J. Amsenga et. al. (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1983), 381–88. It may be worth adding, here, that Smerdyakov's illegitimate birth affects his symbolic as well as his literal relationship to Karamazovism. Specifically, it inevitably changes his attitude toward the epithet *podlets*, which gives Dmitri and Ivan (I have argued) a verbal way to ally themselves with "Karamazovism" rather than with their particular crimes. Unlike the named Karamazovs, Smerdyakov virulently rejects this label, with its social undertones of low birth: " 'I'd kill in a duel with a pistol the man who said to me that I was base-born [*podlets*] because I came from the Stinkess, without a father. . ." (14:204 [my translation]; cf. 225 in *The Brothers Karamazov*).

in the key aspect of characterization that *formally* curtails his participation in the Karamazovs' inner plot:

> Only rarely did he speak. If at that time it had occurred to someone to ask, looking at him, what this fellow was interested in, and what was most often on his mind, it would really have been impossible to tell from looking at him. Yet he would sometimes stop. . . fall into thought, and stand like that even for ten minutes. A physiognomist, studying him, would have said that his face showed neither thought nor reflection, but just some sort of contemplation. The painter Kramskoy has a remarkable painting entitled *The Contemplator*: it depicts a forest in winter, and in the forest, standing all by himself on the road, in deepest solitude, a stray little peasant in a ragged caftan and bast shoes; he stands as if he were lost in thought, but he is not thinking, he is "contemplating" something. If you nudged him, he would give a start and look at you as if he had just woken up, but without understanding anything. It's true that he would come to himself at once, and yet, if he were asked what he had been thinking about while standing there, he would most likely not remember, but would most likely keep hidden away in himself the impression he had been under while contemplating. These impressions are dear to him, and he is most likely storing them up [*ikh kopit*] imperceptibly and even without realizing it — why and what for, of course, he is not know either; perhaps suddenly, having stored up [*nakopiv*] his impressions over many years, he will drop everything and wander off to Jerusalem to save his soul, or perhaps he will suddenly burn down his native village, or perhaps he will do both. There are plenty of contemplators among the people. Most likely Smerdyakov, too, was such a contemplator, and most likely he, too, was greedily storing up his impressions, almost without knowing why himself. (127)[75]

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[75] [Редко, бывало, заговорит. Если бы в то время кому-нибудь вздумалось спросить, глядя на него: чем этот парень интересуется и что всего чаще у него на уме, то, право, невозможно было бы решить, на него глядя. А между тем он иногда . . . останавливался, задумывался и стоял так по десятку даже минут. Физиономист, вглядевшись в него, сказал бы, что тут ни думы, ни мысли нет, а так какое-то созерцание. У живописца Крамского есть одна замечательная картина под названием «Созерцатель»: изображен лес зимой, и в лесу, на дороге, в оборванном кафтанишке и лаптишках стоит один-одинешенек, в глубочайшем уединении забредший мужичонок, стоит и как бы задумался, но он не думает, а что-то «созерцает». Если б его толкнуть, он вздрогнул бы и посмотрел на вас, точно проснувшись, но ничего не понимая. Правда, сейчас бы и очнулся, а спросили бы его, о чем он это стоял и думал, то наверно бы ничего не припоминал, но зато наверно бы затаил в себе то впечатление, под которым находился во время своего созерцания. Впечатления же эти ему дороги, и он наверно их копит, неприметно и даже не сознавая, — для чего и зачем, конечно, тоже не знает: может, вдруг, накопив впечатлений за многие годы, бросит всё и уйдет в Иерусалим, скитаться и спасаться, а может, и село родно вдруг спалит, а может быть, случится и то, и другое вместе. Созерцателей в народе довольно. Вот одним из таких созерцателей был наверно и Смердяков, и наверно тоже копил впечатления свои с жадностью, почти сам еще на зная зачем. (14:116–17)]

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"Contemplation," as the narrator describes it, is paradoxically both an absolutely superficial and an absolutely closed process. There is no possible access to what the contemplator is thinking; even the contemplator, who remains on the surface level of his "impressions," does not know. Similarly the narrator, associating Smerdyakov with the social type of the contemplator and the image that captures this type, at once implies that Smerdyakov touches a tantalizingly deep cultural vein, and restricts the narrative's treatment of it to the surface of a painted portrait. Like Arkady Dolgoruky at the beginning of his narrative, Smerdyakov lives by "greedily storing up" (accumulating — [*na*]*kopit'*) his resources. But unlike *The Adolescent, The Brothers Karamazov* never replaces the anxious logic of accumulation with any alternative response to illegitimacy. The narrator's description of "the contemplator" at once creates Smerdyakov's character, and preempts further narration. It is as if, for Smerdyakov, the entrance to the kind of "room" where Ivan converses with his devil has been covered over with the canvas of Kramskoy's painting.

We can link Smerdyakov's identification with Kramskoy's "Contemplator," finally, to his affinity for the surfaces of texts, for the letter of a given text rather than its spirit. His snide reaction to Gogol's *Dikanka* stories — "It's written all about lies" (125 [translation modified]; 14:115) — prefigures his opportunistically unquestioning relationship to Ivan's "word," the dictum (as he understands it) that without God "everything is permitted" (632; 15:67).

These metaphors for Smerdyakov's presence and role in the novel — a foreign object accidentally (illegitimately) placed within the group of Karamazovs, a portrait whose essence is also its implacably painted surface, a reader who refuses to see anything more than precisely what is written — help us describe his separation from its protagonists and the particular inner plot associated with them. They indicate that this separation, even before it is moral, is technical. Covered over *from the inside* with an outside observer's portrait, and wanting nothing more than to be governed by the words of such an observer, Smerdyakov is a "living" image of the spiritual limitations of omnisciently narrated "life." He is essential not only to the novel's plot, but also to its claim to formal innovation — created to be cast out, as the antithesis of the "unnarrated" protagonist that Dostoevsky realized most fully in *The Brothers Karamazov*.

Indeed, I will go so far as to argue that in his eagerness to be directed by just what is written or said, Smerdyakov resembles a character in *search* of an omniscient narrator. The only God he recognizes is an invisible and all-seeing eye: " 'That third one is God, sir, Providence itself, sir, it's right here with us now, sir, only don't look for it, you won't find it.' ['*Tretii etot — bog-s, samoe eto providenie-s, tut ono teper' podle nas-s, tol'ko vy ne ishchite ego, ne naidete*']" (623; 15:60). While his crimes set the Karamazov brothers on a trajectory of dissociation from authoritatively narrated traits, they confine Smerdyakov to the small corner of the novel's world in which he can sustain the comforting, albeit vengeful, fantasy of Ivan's perfect omniscience.[76]

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[76] Curiously, as Bakhtin stresses in his analysis, Smerdyakov builds this fantasy of Ivan's omniscience (his perfect understanding of Smerdyakov's own secret thoughts and desires) on a dynamic of which Ivan is ignorant, his apprehension and appropriation of "that voice of Ivan's which Ivan is hiding from his own self," Ivan's desire to kill his father. Whether he controls this voice, as Bakhtin suggests, or simply collaborates with it, it is vital to his private narrative that

(It is perhaps telling, in this respect, that Smerdyakov springs from a small matrix of parodic associations with the era, and even the text, of Tolstoy's *War and Peace*: his adoptive father, Grigory Vasilievich Kutuzov; his adoptive mother Marfa Ignatievna, whom Grigory once abused for performing "the 'Russian dance' in a special manner, not as village women did it, but as she used to dance when she was a servant of the wealthy Miusovs. . . where they were taught to dance by a dancing master invited from Moscow" [94-95; 14:88].)

But in his literally criminalized affinity for the authoritative omniscient narrator, I will end by suggesting, Smerdyakov creates a problem the novel can neither fully exorcise, nor fully contain. His craven response to the task of "storing up" his own character makes him a kind of parody not just of the outmoded Tolstoyan, but also of the new Dostoevskian, protagonist.

Whether built by the dicta of an omniscient narrator, as in Tolstoy, or cast back from behavior and speech attributed "directly" to a character, as in Dostoevsky, the illusion of a character's self-sufficient and independent life demands an apparent separation between character and author, the sense that the character has been released from the author's direct purposes to develop on its own and for itself. The difference that Dostoevsky made between his own characters and Tolstoy's — who are "not characters, they are sweet children, who have wonderful, sweet fathers" — suggests the nature of his technical revision: without an authoritative source that answers for their characters, Dostoevsky's orphaned protagonists answer for "themselves." Through the stinking Smerdyakov, *The Brothers Karamazov* unexpectedly frames such autonomy as the temptation to seek out one's own earthly narrator. A metafictional realization of Ivan's legend of the Grand Inquisitor, Smerdyakov is allied with earthly rather than heavenly bread, a characterological solidity confined to the novel rather than a fate that hangs in the balance beyond its bounds.

Nevertheless, no matter how entangled Smerdyakov's actions may be with a vexed ideal of omniscient authority, Dostoevsky cannot keep them from appearing to unfold from what one critic summarizes as "the fullness of his nature as a cockroach-crushing, cat-hanging, master-and-self-slaughtering fungus."[77] Smerdyakov too, as it turns out, is subject to the pervasive illusion that characters act "freely," according to what they are. Indeed, this illusion of a "self" and "nature" proper to Smerdyakov is so dominant that, as a growing critical literature on his character attests, it is possible to write about him as though he could have acted differently: as though by the end of the novel, he too has found room in himself for a dialogue with the voice of Christ.[78] The novel thus encompasses the possibility that Smerdyakov might be included in the general sweep of its narrative of sin and salvation.

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the voice *appear* to come from Ivan himself, as an external authority. Cf. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 247–48 and 258–60; *Problemy poetiki Dostoevskogo*, 276 and 283–285.

[77] Belknap, *The Structure of* The Brothers Karamazov, 71.

[78] A number of critics have pursued the argument about Smerdyakov's character, evil or redeemable, with remarkable invention and variation. Lee Johnson ("Struggle for Theosis: Smerdyakov as Would-Be Saint," in *A New Word on* The Brothers Karamazov, 74–89) finds evidence of Smerdyakov's quest to partake in the divinity of God in his relationship to the Scriptures and his last-minute association with a book of Isaac the Syrian's writings (a detail in which Olga Meerson also sees "a glimpse of redemption": *Dostoevsky's Taboos*, 200). But

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Here, I believe Dostoevsky places us (and his own novel) in a double bind. To accept Smerdyakov for "what he is" — that is, for what the narrative makes him — is also to follow the novel's representational logic: a character made as Smerdyakov is made is a parody, something *other* or *less* than an implied person. And this parodic figure is the point against which the novel defines, and the narrative context into which it inserts, its claim to be telling a new kind of story about a new kind of protagonist — one whose open transformative potential might transcend the particular written narrative of an artistic text and the specific illusion of "living" characters that such narratives can create. On the other hand, to extend Smerdyakov into "what he might be" — that is, to venture into the intellectual and moral inner space of his character that the narrative seals off, and thus to take seriously the fullest promise of Dostoevsky's indirect illusion — is also to erase "what he is"; to erase "Smerdyakov" *just by* absorbing him into "the brothers Karamazov." Imagining Smerdyakov as a free Dostoevskian implied person means failing to attend to the novel's near-miraculous technical innovation, the illusion of *distinction* that it maintains between an "unnarrated" Karamazov and an *only*-narrated Smerdyakov.

The formal problem Smerdyakov creates for *The Brothers Karamazov*, then, does not vanish with his cancellation either by suicide, or (still more radically) by implied salvation. I have argued that in *The Brothers Karamazov*, Dostoevsky clarifies and mobilizes techniques for writing a new kind of protagonist, one that can seem at the most intense moments of his "life" to

Galina Galagan suggests that in Isaac the Syrian, Smerdyakov saw only a blasphemous challenge to elevate his will above all others' ("'Tsarstvo' razdora i sluga Pavel Smerdyakov," in *Dostoevskii: Materialy i issledovaniia* 16 [St. Petersburg: Nauka, 2001]: 175–87. Vladimir Golstein and Natalia Rogova see in Smerdyakov a tragic, but theoretically preventable, failure of parenting and education (V. Golstein, "Accidental Families and Surrogate Fathers: Richard, Grigory, and Smerdyakov," in *A New Word...*: 90–106; N.B. Rogova, "Ideia dukhovnogo 'otechestva' i 'bratstva' v romane 'Brat'ia Karamazovy': K osmysleniiu obraza Pavla Fedorovicha Smerdiakova," in *Dostoevskii i mirovaia kul'tura* no. 19 [St. Petersburg: Serebrianyi vek, 2003]: 189–99). Among the more adventurous attempts to justify Smerdyakov are V.V. Beliaev's suggestion that in a novel where food is so ideologically significant, the only chef could not possibly be unambiguously evil ("Antinomiia zhivogo i mertvogo v 'Brat'iakh Karamazovykh' Dostoevskogo i obraz Pavla Smerdiakova," in *Dostoevskii i sovremennost': Materialy VIII Mezhdunarodnykh 'Starorusskikh Chtenii' 1993 g.* [Novgorod, 1994], 42–49); and V.G. Shevchenko's deliberately polemical but involved argument that in the unwritten second novel, it must have emerged that Smerdyakov did not kill Fyodor Pavlovich. On the basis of a number of logical implausibilities in the case against Smerdyakov, he contends that a previously unknown or extremely marginal character would have been found to have committed the murder ("Traktat o Smerdiakove," *Dostoevskii i mirovaia kul'tura* no. 10 [Moscow: Klassika plius, 1998]: 196–228). But Carol Apollonio uses some of the same implausibilities to suggest that Smerdyakov committed the murder in such unlikely circumstances that he must not be quite human (*Dostoevsky's Secrets*, 161–62). Such wild critical disagreement implies that Gary Saul Morson may have been right in arguing that Smerdyakov "embodies anomalies to all possible systems" ("Verbal Pollution in *The Brothers Karamazov*," 234) — although his position in the novel is at least perfectly in line with the conventional contours of a novelistic *character*-system.

stand alone without narrated traits, as an undefined and independent self. The space of this self becomes the setting for the kind of scene that is most critical to *The Brothers Karamazov*, in which "the devil is struggling with God, and the battlefield is human hearts" (108 [translation modified]; 14: 100). It emerges, in part, through the persistent contrast between Karamazovs and not-Karamazovs, between a Karamazov and a Smerdyakov. But Smerdyakov's intrusively minimized presence in the discourse perhaps points to something more than a defining contrast with the Karamazov brothers. It suggests Dostoevsky's *awareness* of how thoroughly his figure threatens to collapse the fiction of the Karamazovian "unnarrated" self, and to diffuse the active (anti-contemplative) mode of reading that such protagonists demand.

Both crucial to *The Brothers Karamazov*'s plot and closed off from its spiritual narrative, the figure of Smerdyakov raises the possibility that the composed, written boundaries of the novelistic protagonist may not stretch to the mythical breadth of the genres hopefully signaled within *this* novel's text (legend, parable, saint's life). More precisely, his presence suggests that the novel can make this stretch only asymmetrically — by adapting the asymmetry of any novelistic character-system to a different set of generic purposes. Defining themselves and their Karamazov nature against Smerdyakov and his crime, Alyosha, Mitya, and Ivan open the horizons of other genres; Smerdyakov stays behind to take care of the novel. In turn, he presents the problem of the realist novelistic character boiled down to its strongest concentration. How does the illusion of an *implied* person or consciousness interact with the text that fixes what she or he does and says? Does any novelistic character, even one as abandoned to the illusion of autonomy as Dostoevsky's protagonists, transcend the exact set of characters that compose him?

The end of *The Brothers Karamazov* works powerfully to blur the lingering traces of this doubt. Not only is Smerdyakov dead: his place in the novel's plot has been usurped by Mitya Karamazov, convicted of Smerdyakov's crime and occupying his former room at the hospital (761; 15:183). By the final page, Smerdyakov's name has vanished beneath the boys' shout of "Hurrah for Karamazov! [*Ura Karamazovu!*]" — an exclamation that celebrates at once the novel's central individual hero, its central family name, and the narrative that has set in motion the magnificently choreographed dance of family characterization under which most of its characters are subsumed. But whether ejected from this dance or dissolved within it, Smerdyakov reemerges back at the beginning of the story — inextricable from the material and textuality of narration, misplaced into the heart of a novel bent on converting matter into spirit.

Conclusion

Plato's dialogue *Phaedrus*, dedicated to a discussion of *eros* and the practice of rhetoric, ends with a well-known critique of the written word that serves as a coda to this discussion of Dostoevsky's experimentation with, and anxiety about, the nature of novelistic characters:

> Socrates: You know, Phaedrus, writing shares a strange feature with painting. The offsprings of painting stand there as if they are alive, but if anyone asks them anything, they remain most solemnly silent. The same is true of written words. You'd think they were speaking as if they had some understanding, but if you question anything that has been said because you want to learn more, it continues to signify just that very same thing forever. When it has once been written down, every discourse rolls about everywhere, reaching indiscriminately those with no understanding no less than those who have no business with it, and it doesn't know to whom it should speak and to whom it should not. And when it is faulted or attacked unfairly, it always needs its father's support; alone, it can neither defend itself nor come to its own support. . . .Now tell me, can we discern another kind of discourse, a legitimate brother of this one? Can we say how it comes about, and how it is by nature better and more capable?
> Ph: Which one is that? How do you think it comes about?
> So: It is a discourse that is written down, with knowledge, in the soul of the listener; it can defend itself, and it knows for whom it should speak and for whom it should remain silent.
> Ph.: You mean the living, breathing discourse of the man who knows, of which the written one can be fairly called an image. (276A)[1]

Socrates is concerned with the opposition between the written and the spoken or remembered word, the word that is known by heart. The latter acts like a "legitimate brother," fostered and shored up by learning, strongly enough ingrained to defend and regulate itself. The former is abandoned without the evident protection of a living source or progenitor, the lifeless image of a thought. Knowing and remembering thus carry a lineage of which writing can only be the shell or imitation. Socrates' lesson is that written rhetoric is dangerous or at best innocuous play; only ideas "truly written in the soul" can be considered the speaker's "own legitimate children" (278a). Jacques Derrida, in his extended reading of this passage in "Plato's Pharmacy," disagreed: he frames writing as a liberation from the ever-present scrutiny of the speaker or "father" of the word, an invitation (precisely) to subtler and more variegated play with the text. Dostoevsky's confidence in the written text of his novel, I would suggest, falls in between these two extremes.

As I have argued, it is a Tolstoyan model of realist characterization — the dependence of the illusion of characters' autonomous lives upon the defining word of an omniscient narrator — that Dostoevsky works to minimize in the mimetic order of *The Brothers Karamazov*. The figure of Smerdyakov, the "contemplative" slide of his mind along the surface meaning of the words of others and his tenacious clinging to their static and literal sense, points toward Dostoevsky's

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[1] Plato, *Phaedrus*, trans. and ed. by A. Nehemas and P. Woodruff (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1995), 81. My thanks to Chiara Ricciardone for directing me to this edition of the dialogue.

intrinsic distrust of this model, which goes beyond its social and historical anachronism. That distrust, I want to argue, is above all aesthetic. The problem is not only (as a Bakhtinian reading would suggest) that Dostoevsky's model of personhood precludes the definition of an implied person by another's word, including the word of an omniscient narrator. Rather, Dostoevsky's ideal model of the protagonist transcends the complete and adequate *writtenness* on which Tolstoy's protagonists depend. In his final novel, Dostoevsky makes his closest approach to a set of protagonists whose characters can be emptied of what is written about them, and who yet preserve their designated places in their novel's ordering cosmology. These protagonists begin to turn their written, novelistic text toward the pervasive, oral generic spheres of legend and myth.

In a sense, then, the metaphorical formal and social illegitimacy of Dostoevsky's characters works to overcome what Socrates calls the "illegitimate" nature of the written word. At their most innovative and extreme, his characters seem to become "living, breathing" words spoken, authorized, and defended by themselves. The near messianic importance for Russia's future that Dostoevsky attached to its literature suggests his hope that these characters might be implanted, like the true knowledge Socrates describes, directly within the minds and (as Alyosha's speech at Ilyusha's gravestone stirringly emphasizes) the memories of their readers.[2] But it is telling that characters in whom this illegitimacy becomes *literal* — Arkady Dolgoruky and Pavel Smerdyakov — threaten to return their narratives to a realization of the only-illusory life, the dependence on fictional text, intrinsic to any novelistic character.[3] If Arkady, "himself" coextensive with the text of his memoirs, infects most of *The Adolescent*'s characters with an uneasy sense of the shaky ontological base these memoirs offer, the virulence of Smerdyakov's containment in *The Brothers Karamazov* implies a continuing danger. Exploiting the illusion of the free-standing protagonist, Dostoevsky acknowledges its potential for collapse only in his representation of a character we are all but ordered to ignore.[4]

The project that begins by addressing head on the aim of representing the "real man of the Russian majority," the underground "life of the general rule," thus ends by approaching it

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[2] On this ambition as it shapes characterization in *The Brothers Karamazov*, see again R. Bird, "Refiguring the Russian Type: Dostoevsky and the Limits of Realism*"* (cf. pp. 126–27 above). On Dostoevsky's rhetorical targeting of his readers' memory, see also R. Belknap, "Memory in *The Brothers Karamazov*," in *Dostoevsky*: *New Perspectives*, 227–42.

[3] Dostoevsky's fascination with the illegitimately born protagonist has deep roots in his later novels: the hero of the prospective "Life of a Great Sinner" is illegitimate, and Dostoevsky equivocated at length in notebooks for *The Idiot*, several years earlier, over whether Myshkin should be an illegitimate son. (On these deliberations, see R.F. Miller, *Dostoevsky and* The Idiot*: Author, Narrator, and Reader* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981], 53–62). Dostoevsky thus took quite literally, in various senses, Gogol's injunction at the end of Chapter 11 of Part One of *Dead Souls* to "harness the base one [*Itak, pripriazhem podletsa!*]."

[4] As Nancy Ruttenberg notes, Smerdyakov's relationship with his brothers (especially Ivan) thus "provides a fitting image of the limits of Dostoevsky's democracy" (N. Ruttenberg, *Dostoevsky's Democracy* [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008], 192). She shares this primarily political interpretation of his significance with Leonid Grossman: "Poslednii roman Dostoevskogo," *Bratia Karamazovy: Roman v chetyrykh chastiakh s epilogom*, ed. L.P. Grossman, Vol. 1 (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1935), 48–50.

obliquely, just through the elements that this life shares with what rises above it toward the beauty of a new aesthetic form. Dostoevsky most fully addressed the challenge of portraying contemporary reality by stressing the resources of literary realism, and particularly of the realist character, testing how far a character can be pushed toward chaos or universality before he or she stops seeming to be a "living" individual. In this respect, he and Tolstoy addressed similar problems by opposite methods. Facing the insoluble problem of the "history of *all*, absolutely *all* those who take part in an event," Tolstoy ends *War and Peace* by retreating from the language of realist illusion — first in the didactic idyll of Part One of the Epilogue, and then in the philosophical discourse of Part Two. Facing a problem that proves similarly insoluble, re-forming the "real man of the Russian majority," Dostoevsky stages a conversion of the realist novel and its protagonists into formal hosts for the heroes of other genres, in the hope that realist technique, like this "real man" himself, might one day transcend contemporary reality.

An approach to Dostoevsky's characters through the figure of illegitimacy, which connects the outer skin of *The Adolescent* to the hidden depth of *The Brothers Karamazov*, draws attention to the fragility as well as the power of these techniques. The limit the realism of his protagonists encounters may be, in the end, the limit *of* technique — the "fantastic" premise that an invisible narrator-stenographer could record a character's own thoughts word for word. This premise admits us to the hallucinated room in which Ivan converses with his devil, but it bars us from the mind of a Smerdyakov, who takes refuge in the *letter* of Ivan's dictum that "everything is permitted." In this very split the technical premise, like a hand performing a magic trick, flashes into view. What could it mean for a literary character made of text to think (or refuse to think) for himself or on his own? Are "Arkady's" apparently fatherless characters not *right* to "envy" the vividly-written stability of Tolstoy's? How far can a self-generating illusion be stretched before its textual seams begin to strain?

The Adolescent flaunts this straining-point; *The Brothers Karamazov* near-miraculously conceals it. But the characters of these two novels meet in the astonishing variation with which they can be read, captured in the figural illegitimacy that shapes their fictional worlds. Like the written characters Plato's Socrates describes, Dostoevsky's literary characters never say anything more than what is on the page. But if they seem also to exceed interpretation, to invite a step beyond the boundary between text and "living and breathing" life, it is due partly to the very rootlessness that deliberately severs them from their authoritative generation in narrative. Realist illusion here lives so close to its own unmaking that it seems hardly to be made at all.

Section III: Novel Theory
Chapter Four
Lives in Theory: Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's Characters in Bakhtin and Lukács

Introduction

The symbolist poet and philosopher Viacheslav I. Ivanov's "Dostoevsky and the Novel-Tragedy" (delivered as a lecture 1911, published 1916) begins with an arresting comparison. Tolstoy had died just the previous year, but as an artist, Ivanov wrote, "he already gladdens us only from the heights of the timeless Parnassus, the limpid and distant abode of the ageless muses." By contrast, though Dostoevsky himself had been dead thirty years, his writings remain relentlessly close to hand:

> Dostoevsky died some thirty years ago, but the images of his art, the living ghosts with which he peopled our surroundings, have not stood away from us an inch; they will not retire into the luminous abode of the muses and become the subject of our aloof and disinterested contemplation. Restless wanderers, they knock at our doors in dark and in white nights, they can be recognized on the streets in murky patches of Petersburg fog and they settle in to talk with us in insomniac hours in our own underground.[1]

Ivanov's description of the transfiguration Dostoevsky's works performed — realist material into national and cosmological myth — begins from a vision of his characters as living ghosts, discontented with a Kantian aesthetic of "disinterested contemplation." Exiled by Ivanov's own language from the inherently distant home of art, Dostoevsky's images behave like human spirits — "wanderers" and visitors, infiltrating the world into which his novels have released them.

The rhetorical shift that makes images into persons, aesthetic objects into active (albeit ghostly) subjects, prepares the ground for Ivanov's later discussion of Dostoevsky's search for artistic "forms that are directly didactic."[2] In this respect, the nature of Dostoevsky's novels' protagonists becomes a metaphor for the activity of his novels. By removing the trappings of his

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[1] V.I. Ivanov, "Dostoevskii i roman tragediia," in *Borozdy i mechi: Opyty esteticheskie i kriticheskie* (Moscow: Musaget, 1916), 6 (my translation). [Тридцать лет тому назад умер Достоевский, а образы его искусства, эти живые призраки, которыми он населил нашу среду, ни на пядь не отстают от нас, не хотят удалиться в светлые обитатели Муз и стать предметом нашего отчужденного и безвольного созерцания. Беспокойными скитальцами они стучатся в наши дома в темные и в белые ночи, узнаются на улицах в сомнительных пятнах петербургского тумана и располагаются беседовать с нами в часы бессонницы в нашем собственном подполье. (spelling modernized)]

[2] V.I. Ivanov, *Freedom and the Tragic Life: A Study in Dostoevsky*, trans. N. Cameron (New York: The Noonday Press, 1952), 118. The Russian original of this study on Dostoevsky, which began with an adapted version of "Dostoevsky and the Novel-Tragedy," has been lost, though Ivanov supervised its 1932 German translation. For a summary of the textual history of Ivanov's essays on Dostoevsky, see R.L. Jackson, "Introduction," in V.I. Ivanov, *Freedom and the Tragic Life* (Wolfeboro, NH: Longwood Academic Press, 1989), vii–xxxi, especially vii n. 1.

characters' biographical, time-bound existence to reach the transcendentally free essence of their personalities, thus raising them into the generic realms of tragedy and myth, Dostoevsky also remade the novel itself not as a solitary reading experience, but as the ground for a communal aesthetic and moral event.

Emphasizing the tendency of Dostoevsky's characters to overstep the bounds of artwork and text, Ivanov echoes an earlier, widely influential work of Symbolist criticism, Dmitri Merezhkovsky's *L. Tolstoy and Dostoevsky* (1900–1902). Merezhkovsky's study set the terms of a contrast between Tolstoy and Dostoevsky — as artists, as personalities, and as religious thinkers — that remained key for twentieth century criticism of their works in Russia and Europe.[3]

Continually narrating and repeating the physical details of his characters' bodies and their physical experience, Merezhkovsky writes, Tolstoy gives his readers a hallucinatorily vivid sense of their "flesh." But as only bodies and body-bound souls, captured in the words of their narrator, these figures fall short of "living human persons [*zhivykh chelovecheskikh lichnostei*].'" Merezhkovsky compares them, rather, to "those half-distinct human bodies in haut-reliefs that, as it sometimes seems, are just about to separate from the plane in which they are carved and which holds them back . . .; but it is an optical illusion: they will never fully separate. . . we will never see them *from the other side*."[4] Just as Tolstoy's characters fail to spring, live, from the page, his works fail to achieve the status of prophecy; they convey only a desire to reach toward "the *possibility* of a deeper than aesthetic — religious — contemplation and action."[5]

Dostoevsky, on the other hand, who shows his characters' bodies primarily through their words, brings them impossibly close to the lives of his readers. In a single characterizing

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[3] On the opposition between Dostoevsky and Tolstoy in the context of early 20th c. Russian criticism, cf. E.A. Andrushchenko, "Tainovidenie Merezhkovskogo," in D. Merezhkovskii, *L. Tolstoi i Dostoevskii*, 490–506 (Moscow: Nauka, 2000); G.M. Fridlender, "D.S. Merezhkovskii i Dostoevskii," *Dostoevskii: Materialy i isledovaniia* 10 [1992], 9–14; V.A. Kel'dysh, "Nasledie Dostoevskogo i russkaia mysl' porubezhnoi epokhi," *Sviaz' vremen: Problem preemstvennosti v russkoi literature kontsa XIX-nachala XX v.* (Moscow: Nasledie, 1992), esp. 91–92. As Kel'dysh points out, this opposition of course took on (in critics like Leont'ev, Shestov, and Veresaiev) other forms than those canonized in later Symbolist criticism — most frequently, between Tolstoy as a healthy or "sunlit," realist writer, and Dostoevsky as a diseased or "underground" fantasist. On the outsize influence that Merezhkovsky's *L. Tolstoy and Dostoevsky* (the first of the Symbolist critical analyses of Dostoevsky to be translated) exercised on European Dostoevsky criticism, especially in Germany, see Z.A. Feher, "Georg Lukács's Role in Dostoevsky's European Reception at the Turn of the Century" (PhD Diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1978), 87 n.10.; G. Tihanov, *The Master and the Slave: Lukács, Bakhtin, and the Ideas of their Time* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 179.

[4] [Изображения человеческих личностей у Л. Толстого напоминают те полувыпуклые человеческие тела на горельефах, которые, кажется иногда, вот-вот отделяться от плоскости, в которой изваяны и которая их удерживает. . . но это обман зрения: никогда не отделятся они окончательно. . . никогда не увидим мы их с *другой стороны*. (*L. Tolstoi i Dostoevskii*, 115) My translation.]

[5] *L. Tolstoi i Dostoevskii*, 184.

utterance in Dostoevsky, Merezhkovsky writes, there is "flesh and blood. It is, of course, 'invented,' but it is almost impossible to believe that it was *only invented*. It is just that final little stroke, as a result of which the portrait becomes too live, as if the artist, stepping over the boundary of art, captured in canvas and paints something magical, supernatural — the soul of the portrait's subject, so that one is almost frightened to look at it: it seems about to stir and step out of the frame like a ghost."[6] The distinctive, terrifying power of Dostoevsky's characters lies in their potential to transcend the context of their authors' narratives — in their status as literary distillations of personalities that (as Dostoevsky writes of the Underground Man) "not only could, but even must exist in our society."[7] Staring into the "abyss of the spirit" rather than clinging to (narrated) flesh, Merezhkovsky's Dostoevsky surpassed Tolstoy to become an artistic prophet.[8]

Like his successor Ivanov, Merezhkovsky thus treated Dostoevsky's speaking characters as a sign of the prophetic urgency of his art. Characteristically, both Merezhkovsky and Ivanov contrast the impossibility of merely "contemplating" Dostoevsky's works with the inevitability of contemplating Tolstoy's. As Ivanov writes, Tolstoy "set himself up as a mirror before the world," where Dostoevsky "penetrated" it and "lost himself" within it.[9] Tolstoy gives the framed and lucid reflection; Dostoevsky, the wandering view. Tolstoy holds court on Parnassus; Dostoevsky's protagonists share our sleepless nights.

I will argue in what follows that this understanding of the contrast between Dostoevsky's novels (and characters) and Tolstoy's served a vital purpose for a line of novel theory that grew up in part around analyses of those novels: in particular, for foundational works of Georg Lukács and Mikhail Bakhtin. Like Ivanov and Merezhkovsky before them, Lukács and Bakhtin took the characters they analyzed as models for the conceptual relationships they were working to articulate between novels and the lives of their readers. Where Tolstoy stands in Bakhtin and in early Lukács for what remains static about the novel, making it into an object of contemplation — the novel's hopeless embroilment in fragmented culture, its "monologism" — Dostoevsky's works challenge the bounds of the novel as (only) artistic form. In Dostoevsky, the novel gains the potential to become epic, formally seamless with the world it forms; dialogic, in living

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[6] The immediate context for Merezhkovsky's reflection is the phrase "and to my little chicken [*i tsyplenochku*]" at the end of the note Fyodor Pavlovich leaves for Grushenka in *The Brothers Karamazov*. [Это — только слово, но в нем — плоть и кровь. Это, конечно, «выдумано», но почти невозможно поверить, чтобы это было *только выдумано*. Это именно та последняя черточка, вследствие которой портрет становится слишком живым, как будто художник, переступая за пределы искусства, заключил в полотно и краски нечто волшебное, сверхъестественное — душу того, с кого писал портрет, так что почти страшно смотреть на него: кажется, вот-вот пошевелится и выступит из рамы, как призрак. (*L. Tolstoi i Dostoevskii,* 144)

[7] F.M. Dostoevskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 30 vols., ed. G.M. Fridlender et. al. (Leningrad: Nauka, 1972–1990), 5:99.

[8] *L. Tolstoi i Dostoevskii*, 171; 184. Here, Merezhkovsky (and the Symbolist critics as a group) were reversing what had long been the predominant evaluation of Tolstoy as a more effective realist artist than Dostoevsky — the perception that stood behind Dostoevsky's many defenses of his own "realism in a higher sense."

[9] Ivanov, "Dostoevskii i roman-tragediia," 29–30.

contact with its reader-interlocutors. Bakhtin would later expand his description of the Dostoevskian novel into a theory of the novel's generic capacity for transforming aesthetic and social experience. Lukács, in essays written after his conversion to Marxism, turned to the relatively neglected generic model of Tolstoy's works, to present the realist novel as a true mirror of the world and the historical forces that shape it.

In this chapter, I aim to clarify the rhetorical and conceptual part that Bakhtin's and Lukács's understandings of Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's characters had to play in the stories that each theorist told about the realist novel genre itself. In previous chapters of this study, Bakhtin's and Lukács's insights have often provided a point of departure for my discussion of Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's techniques of mimetic characterization. Embracing the risk of circularity, I want now to take a closer look at how these characters — and sometimes more importantly, the contrast between Tolstoy and Dostoevsky as *authors* of character — shaped the evolving conceptions of the novel with which Lukács and Bakhtin each operated. I will argue that the sharp distinction between Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's approaches to a problem of characterization — how to produce, within form, the illusion of a character's autonomous "life" independent of form — provided Bakhtin and Lukács with two different models for addressing an inverse problem in novel theory: how to conceptualize the meaningful contact between a novel and the world it represents, while preserving the aesthetic privilege of its status *as* a bounded representation. Through arguments about Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's characters, and on the models of the mimetic characters these arguments unveiled, Lukács and Bakhtin each presented the novel as a kind of agent, active in the world and yet integral in itself.

In this respect, their theories hold up perfecting mirrors to the novels that they analyze. Throughout my discussion of the "lives" of Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's characters, I have treated character as a crystallization point for tensions between the illusion cast within the realist novel, conceived as a bounded and integral whole, and the authors' impulse to extend this illusion beyond the whole of the novel, as the basis for general moral, social, or religious truths. A paradox inherent in the realist character brings this tension to the fore: the vivid illusion of a character's *autonomous* existence depends on the bounds of a narrative system and the language of a narrative text. If some characters appear to "live," it is by comparison with others that are represented as if they do not; if some characters appear "free" not just from authorial but from narratorial control, the illusion of freedom is anchored by a plot and thematic configuration of characters in which it becomes meaningful. Each of my readings has identified points in Dostoevsky's and Tolstoy's novels that mark the boundary where the novel seems to come up against the limits of its own mimetic illusion, and the fictionality of its own discourse.

Theory of the novel stands on the other side of this boundary — so to speak, outside the novel looking in. But in their theoretical writings, both Lukács and Bakhtin are particularly concerned with the question of how the realist novel relates to (and acts within) the world it depicts. It does not seem to me to be coincidental that both theorists more than once addressed that question through readings of Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's "autonomous" characters, though the specific answers they found changed substantially over the course of their careers. I want to argue that like Tolstoy and Dostoevsky themselves, Lukács and Bakhtin were engaged with the problems *created by* vivid novelistic mimesis, and particularly, by mimetic characters. Both theorists faced a conflict between maintaining the special aesthetic status of the novel — as a self-contained work within which a particular illusion is cast — and articulating the novel's

social and historical role. In novel theory as in novelistic practice, the "autonomous" mimetic character became a focal point for this tension: offered as evidence for the novel's direct relationship to the world of its readers (unmediated by authorial interference or design), this "autonomy" had at the same time to be connected to the novel's status as an aesthetic object.

The following chapter aims to explore this productive tension in the lives of Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's characters in novel theory, focusing on a few key texts where Bakhtin and Lukács used analyses of those characters to work out the problem of the relationship between novel and world. I hope to tell two complementary stories: about the centrality of Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's characters to the development of Lukács's and Bakhtin's theories of the novel; and about the extent to which these theories of the novel as a social and historical force inherited a problem of the novels at their foundation — the interdependence between "living" novelistic character and textual novel form.

1. Voice and image: Dostoevsky's and Tolstoy's characters in early Bakhtin

Near the beginning of his unfinished essay "Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity" ("*Avtor i geroi v esteticheskoi deiatel'nosti,*" c. 1923–24[10]), Bakhtin diagnoses one form of "disintegration" of the relationship between author and hero:

> The first case: the hero takes possession of the author. The hero's emotional-volitional attitude toward objects, the cognitive-ethical position he assumes in the world, is so authoritative for the author that he cannot see the world of objects through any other eyes but those of the hero . . . . One consequence of this is that the artistic whole exhibits the following peculiarity characteristic for the case we are considering: the background, the world behind the hero's back, is unelaborated and is not distinctly seen by the author/contemplator; instead, it is presented suppositionally, uncertainly, from within the hero himself, the way the background of our own life presents itself to us. Sometimes the background is totally absent: outside the hero and his own consciousness there is nothing that has any stable reality. The hero is not connatural with the background that sets him off. . . he moves against this background as a living human being moves against a background of lifeless and immobile stage scenery. . . . The dialogues between *whole* human beings (in which their faces, their facial expressions, their dress, and the setting beyond the bounds of a given scene are necessary, artistically significant constituents) begin to degenerate into self-interested disputations in which the center of value is located in the problems debated. . . . This type includes almost all of Dostoevsky's heroes,

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[10] On the complications of dating "Author and Hero," see V.I. Makhlin, "Avtor i geroi v esteticheskoi deiatel'nosti [Kommentarii]," in *Sobranie sochinenii* by M.M. Bakhtin, ed. S.G. Bocharov and N.I. Nikolaev, 7 vols. (Moscow: Russkie slovari, 1996—), 1:496–504. For all of Bakhtin's works cited here, I follow the Russian titles and estimated dates of composition or publication given in this edition, abbreviated throughout this chapter as *SS.*

some of the heroes of Tolstoy (Pierre, Levin), Kierkegaard, Stendhal, and other writers. . .[11]

To readers of Bakhtin's seminal works on Dostoevsky, this list is likely to come as a surprise. *Common* to Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's novels is the threat of a protagonist who usurps his author's vision, and thus the very frame that preserves the world of his text as separate from the world of its authors and readers, and his face and figure as separate from the abstract ideological problems that torment him. In this blurring, Bakhtin locates a "crisis of authorship" that leads to an uncertainty about the unique status of literature — "the very place of art in the whole of culture, in the event of being" (203; 1:258). Without the "culture of boundaries [*kul'tura granits*]" that lets author and hero, work and world, meet as *separate* beings, there is no clear place for the work of artistic representation, or for the aesthetic as distinct from any other kind of experience.

This sense of a "crisis" in literature and culture was widespread among members of Bakhtin's intellectual circle (the "Nevel' school" of philosophy and criticism). It cohered especially around discussions of Dostoevsky's novels, and Viacheslav Ivanov's reading of them as "novel tragedies" with transcendentally free protagonists. Building provocatively on Ivanov's interpretation, for example, Bakhtin's fellow critic and interlocutor Lev Pumpiansky took the self-conscious insistence of a Dostoevskian protagonist on his right to be "the artist of his own fate" as a nihilistic bid for liberation from *any* literary form: "The poet's quarrel with the hero reaches its conclusion in Russia; the resistance of the hero becomes the foundational theme of Russian literature, and this means that Russian literature marks the eve of a Europe without

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[11] M. Bakhtin, *Art and Answerability*, ed. M. Holquist and V. Liapunov, trans. V. Liapunov and K. Brostrom (Austin: U. of Texas Press, 1990), 17; 19–20 (translation modified). Citations to this edition parenthetical in the text in the form (English citation; Russian citation), if Russian is not given in footnote. [Первый случай: герой завладевает автором. Эмоционально-волевая предметная установка героя, его познавательно-этическая позиция в мире настолько авторитетна для автора, что он не может не видеть предметный мир только глазами героя. . . следствием этого является, между прочим, следующая характерная для этого случая особенность художественного целого: задний план, мир за спиною героя не разработан и не видится отчетливо автором и созерцателем, а дан предположительно, неуверенно изнутри самого героя, так, как нам самим дан задний план нашей жизни, иногда он вовсе отсутствует: вне героя и его собственного сознания нет ничего устойчиво реального; герой не соприроден оттеняющему его фону. . . движется на нем, как живой человек на фоне мертвой и неподвижной декорации. . . диалоги *цельных людей*, где необходимыми художественно значимыми моментами являются и лица их, костюмы, мимика, обстановка, находящаяся за границей данной сцены, обстоятельства и моменты произведения начинают вырождаться в заинтересованные диспуты, где ценностный центр лежит в обсуждаемых проблемах. . . К этому типу относятся почти все главные герои Достоевского, некоторые герои Толстого (Пьер, Левин), Киркагора, Стендаля и пр. . . . (*SS*, 1:99; 100–101. Subsequent Russian citations to Bakhtin's work in this edition parenthetical by volume and page.)]

literature [*kanun bezliteraturnogo sostaianiia Evropy*]" (*Dostoevsky and Antiquity*, 1922).[12] In Pumpiansky's (admittedly hyperbolic) analysis, an appreciation of the apparent power of Dostoevsky's protagonists to plot *themselves* is a small step away from the realization that the protagonist as such is unnecessary: he comes so close to actually being an autonomous person that he no longer needs to be authored at all.

Bakhtin's unfinished work on "author and hero," and his first published book on Dostoevsky (*Problems of Dostoevsky's Creative Art* [*Problemy tvorchestva Dostoevskogo*], 1929), can both be read in the light of a response to this perceived "crisis of authorship" — of an impulse not, like Pumpiansky, to proclaim the end of literary form, but rather to *re-aestheticize* the "disintegrating" relationship between author and hero, revealing both the social and the artistic potential contained within it. Pursuing this reading of Bakhtin's early discussions of the literary character, I will take the somewhat unusual step of treating "Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity" on a continuum with the first version of Bakhtin's Dostoevsky book, generally considered a transition point between his early work and later texts focused explicitly on the novel. I will argue that a crucial step in Bakhtin's project of re-aestheticization is his move to rethink the difference that he and others in his circle found between classical and contemporary literature, the "crisis of authorship" that had allowed the boundaries between author and hero to become blurred. In between "Author and Hero..." and the 1929 Dostoevsky book, he recasts this difference not as a division between "form" and "not-form" (the author's stable control over his hero, and its destructive absence), but rather as a division between Tolstoy's protagonists and Dostoevsky's; not between literature and the *end* of literature, but between two different types of literary creation. I begin, then, from a question that may at first seem tangential: why does Bakhtin's focus on the aesthetic *potential* of the "autonomous" hero emerge together, in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Creative Art*, with a strong insistence on the distinction between Dostoevsky's protagonists and Tolstoy's? What can Bakhtin's deployment of this well-established opposition tell us about the unfolding terms of his theory of the novel?

Before turning to Bakhtin's distinction between Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's characters in his book on Dostoevsky, I will start with a brief account of the theoretical conditions that allow them, in "Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity," to be collapsed into a single "type."

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[12] L.V. Pumpianskii, *Dostoevskii i antichnost'* (St. Petersburg, 1922. Repr. Bremen: K-Presse [*Studien und texte* no. 1], 1973), 16–17 (my translation). For detailed discussions of the differences and correspondences between Ivanov's, Pumpiansky's, and Bakhtin's readings of Dostoevsky and his characters, see S. Igeta, "Ivanov — Pumpianskii — Bakhtin," *Dialog, Karnaval, Khronotop* No. 3-4 (2000): 4–16; N. Kotrelev, "K probleme dialogicheskogo personazha (M.M. Bakhtin i Viach. Ivanov)," *Kul'tura i pamiat': Tretii mezhdunarodnyi simpozium posviashchennyi Viacheslavu Ivanovu*, Vol. 2, ed. F. Malcovati, 93–103 (Florence: La nuova Italia, 1988); I. Kliger, "Dostoevsky and the Novel-Tragedy: Genre and Modernity in Ivanov, Pumpyansky, and Bakhtin," *PMLA* 126:1 (January 2011): 73–87. On the importance Ivanov's work held for Bakhtin's circle, see also S. Bocharov, "Problemy tvorchestva Dostoevskogo [Komentarii]," in *SS*, 2:433–46.

For Bakhtin, "author" and "hero" are phenomenological as well as formal categories, a conceptual model for the relationship between self and other as well as a literary instance of it.[13] This double valence, along with the unfinished quality of the work itself, should make us cautious about looking to "Author and Hero..." for any systematic discussion of literary character. Nevertheless, "Author and Hero" contains Bakhtin's fullest account of an ideal of figural representation that I will argue remained influential for his later work on Dostoevsky and the novel: the "image" of a character's life that is created by authorial vision and accessible through the work of art.

Bakhtin consistently presents literature from the perspective of what he calls the author-contemplator (*avtor-sozertsatel'*), where author and reader count equally as subjects of aesthetic experience. On this view, the character's conversion into words is incidental to what is most important about him: he is understood as an already whole and living being. Once the author has finished writing the work, its characters too "break away from the process that created them and begin to lead a life of their own in the world," as they are encountered and understood by the work's readers. (1:89–91; 6-8)[14]

The central theme of "Author and Hero...," however, is the nature of the form-granting authorial/readerly vision that instantiates a character in the artwork as what he essentially is. Where ordinary vision of another human being is partial, tied to the seer's circumstances and interests, the author's aesthetic vision of her characters is disinterested and complete. It displays them and the events of their lives as finished, and thus as endowed with the kind of meaningful shape or plot that can be seen only retrospectively: "What makes a reaction specifically aesthetic is precisely the fact that it is a reaction to the *whole of the hero as a human being* [reaktsiia na tseloe cheloveka-geroia], a reaction that assembles all of the cognitive-ethical determinations and valuations of the hero and consummates them in the form of a unitary and unique whole. . ."

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[13] V.L. Makhlin comments on the resonance of Bakhtin's engagement with the problem of the relationship between self and other with Buber's, Heidegger's, Husserl's, Gadamer's, and others', and on his understanding of literature as a "live event" instantiating this relationship ("Avtor i geroi [Komentarii]," *SS*, 1:507–513. Brian Poole traces Bakhtin's significant intellectual inheritance from the phenomenologist Max Scheler, especially evident in "Author and Hero"; Bakhtin's main theoretical innovation, he suggests, was to apply Scheler's phenomenological insights about self and other to problems in narratology (B. Poole, "From phenomenology to dialogue: Max Scheler's phenomenological tradition and Mikhail Bakhtin's development from 'Toward a philosophy of the act' to his study of Dostoevsky," in *Bakhtin and Cultural Theory*, 2nd ed., ed. K. Hirschkop and D. Shepherd, 109–135 [Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2001]).

[14] Bakhtin's roughly contemporaneous essay, "The Problem of Content, Material, and Form in Verbal Art" (*K voprosam metodologii estetiki slovesnogo tvorchestva. I. Problema formy, soderzhaniia i materiala v slovesnom khudozhestvennom tvorchestve*), establishes a specific vocabulary for this conception of the character. "Heroization," "type," and "character [kharakter]" are all "architectonic" forms — forms that belong to the structure of the aesthetic object as experienced and perceived — although they are realized through "compositional forms" and verbal techniques. Cf. 1:278 and Bakhtin, *Art and Answerability*, 270.

(5).[15] This totalizing vision gets "actualized" in the work of art, and in its hero as "artistic image." Thus, the artwork's claim to a unique aesthetic status rests in the author's exercise of her "excess of vision," which reveals the character and his life as a whole, disinterestedly, with a coherence and completeness that no person could possibly reveal in himself (or not, at least, while still being alive to experience that revelation).

   Bakhtin's description of the relationship between author and hero oscillates, then, between two possible modes of experiencing a life. The hero lives his life from within, not knowing the end of his own biography, which for him thus remains open and full of potential. The author/contemplator exercises her special perspective, which Bakhtin calls "outsidedness" (*vnenakhodimost'*) to see the overall shape of the hero's life, the logic that clarifies it only from outside and beyond its bounds. As scholars have noted, Bakhtin thus treats "author" and "hero" as names for available perspectives rather than specific characters or people.[16] But one of the questions that arises in "Author and Hero..." is how both these perspectives can be available at once: how do we come to experience fictional characters as *both* vividly ongoing, and ultimately perfected? In other words, Bakhtin is concerned with problems not just of being, but also of mimetic characterization. He asks how a character can be animated so that we experience a vivid sense of his life as if it were open (as he himself would sense it), even as we *also*, from the aesthetic perspective of his life's endpoint, see its overall, already-finished plot or shape. Since "Author and Hero..." is seldom discussed from this perspective, I will pause over the connection I want to emphasize between what Bakhtin calls "outsidedness" and what he calls "animation [*ozhivlenie*]."[17]

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[15] [Специфически эстетической и является эта реакция на целое человека-героя, собирающая все познавательно-этические определения и оценки и завершающая их в единое и единственное конкретно-воззрительное, но и смысловое целое. (1:89)]

[16] See especially Ilya Kliger, who argues that for Bakhtin, *hero* and *author* are names for "functions" — one situated in time, directed toward an open-ended future; the other oriented on timeless synthesis and contemplation — which can be proportionally combined in any given fictional character, but do not have to be associated with any human figure at all. I will suggest here that there is a further layer of complication Kliger does not acknowledge: animation or vivification (*ozhivlenie*), as Bakhtin most often uses the term, is in turn a function of the relationship *between* author and hero — that is, specifically of figural representation. See I. Kliger, "Heroic Aesthetics and Modernist Critique: Extrapolations from Bakhtin's 'Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity," *Slavic Review* 67:3 (Fall 2008): 551–66; see also his "Dostoevsky and the Novel-Tragedy," 78–79.

[17] Compiling approaches to the discussion of *vnenakhodimost'* in "Author and Hero..." in 1990s Russian and English-language scholarship, Caryl Emerson treats it as "the common denominator between Bakhtin's ethics and his aesthetics," with an emphasis on its ethical rather than narrative implications: see her *The First Hundred Years of Mikhail Bakhtin* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), Chapter Five. Others disagree, suggesting that *vnenakhodimost'* in fact contradicts the orientation of Bakhtin's aesthetic philosophy on ideals like polyphony and carnival — cf. the recent debate between Mark Lipovetsky, Irina Sandomirskaia, and Serguei Oushakine in *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 79 (2006): 7–38 and 73–85. Discussions of Bakhtin's understanding of the mimetic representation of characters, meanwhile, have more often focused

Lives in Theory: Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's Characters in Bakhtin and Lukács

As Bakhtin argues, using as an example the difference between an aesthetic representation and a fantasy or dream, only the external perspective of an author can create an animated "image [*obraz*]." If we try to visualize ourselves, he writes,

> we shall be struck by the peculiar *emptiness, ghostliness,* and an eerie, frightening *solitariness* of this outward image of ourselves. What accounts for this? It is explained by the fact that we lack any emotional or volitional approach corresponding to this outward image that could animate it [*ozhivit' ego*] and include it axiologically within the outward unity of the plastic-pictorial world. . . . In order to animate my own outward image and make it part of a concretely viewable whole [*vozritel'nomu tselomu*], the whole architectonic of the world of my imagining must be radically restructured by introducing a totally new factor into it. This new factor that restructures the architectonic consists in my outward image being affirmed and founded in emotional and volitional terms *out* of the other and *for* the other human being. (30 [translation modified])[18]

"Animation," for Bakhtin, thus designates a kind of interpersonal representational relationship. Lacking the viewpoint provided by another's (an author's) subjective, evaluating vision, my image of myself will remain ghostly and empty — the trace of a life, rather than its "concretely viewable" (*vozritel'nyi* — literally, gaze-*into*-able) representation. I may be able to imagine my own figure and insert it into a particular fantasy or storyline, but according to Bakhtin, the other's (author's) vision is required both to endow my narrated figure with meaning, and to represent it so that the reader can concretely sense what my narrated experience was like: to "fill out the exterior and give it life [*napolnit' i ozhivit' naruzhnost'*], to create a whole human being as a unitary value" (97 [translation modified]; 1:172).[19] "Outsidedness," then, is not only a

on his later work, and especially on the problem of representing speech and "voice"; see for example A. Renfrew, " 'We are the Real': Bakhtin and the Representation of Speech," in *The Contexts of Bakhtin: Philosophy, Authorship, Aesthetics*, ed. D. Shepherd, 121–38 (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1998); A. Wall, "Characters in Bakhtin's Theory," *Studies in 20th Century Literature* 9:1 (Fall 1984): 41–56; and for a discussion that incorporates the relationship between represented speech and its referents into the larger question of mimesis in Bakhtin, A. Jefferson, "Realism Reconsidered: Bakhtin's Dialogism and the 'Will to Reference,'" *Australian Journal of French Studies* 23:2 (1986): 169–84.

[18] [. . . нас поражает в нашем внешнем образе какая-то своеобразная пустота, призрачность и несколько жутка одинокость его. Чем это объясняется? Тем, что у нас нет к нему соответствующего эмоционально-волевого подхода, который мог бы оживить его и ценностно включить во внешнее единство живописно-пластического мира. . . . Нужно коренным образом перестроит всю архитектонику мира мечты, введя в него совершенно новый момент, чтобы оживить и приобщить воззрительному целому свой внешний образ. Этот новый момент, перестрояющий архитектонику, — эмоционально-волевая утвержденность моего образа из другого и для другого человека. . . (1:110–11)]

[19] It should be noted that Bakhtin also uses the verb *ozhivit'* to describe the first stage of aesthetic activity as it relates to natural (authorless) objects, in his discussion of expressivist aesthetic theories: "When I am in the presence of a simple figure, color, or combination of two colors. . .

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transformative relationship toward the living other; it is also the condition that can produce an animated, three-dimensional ("gaze-into-able") *image* of his life on the background of its world.

I stress this point in order to suggest that neither Bakhtin's indifference to a distinction between fictional and non-fictional subjects, nor his polemical lack of emphasis on the technical ("material") level of the literary text, precludes an abiding concern with the question of how mimetic fictional characters are made: that is, of how a character's life can be represented so that the reader experiences it *as if it were still being lived* by the character himself. Paradoxically (but within the tradition of organic aesthetics), Bakhtin presents framing, disinterested aesthetic vision as the factor that makes the "living" hero appear to have been emancipated from the finalizing artifice of the artwork and the author's shaping activity. Only the autonomous image that results from this kind of disinterested, framing vision lets us seem to see the hero's life as he "himself" (rather than an author) would see it, creating the sense of his "extra-aesthetic reality" and his "live resistance" to the finalization of form (199; 1:255).

But when Bakhtin turns to the specific examples of literary works and genres, it emerges that post-classical literature nearly always fails to meet this mimetic standard. In each genre he discusses (confession, biography or autobiography, lyric, the saint's Life), either the boundaries of the hero as an individual person, or the boundaries of the text as a framed work of art, threaten to disappear. Even works based around "characters [*kharaktery*]" and "types [*tipy*]," which have the potential to achieve an individually authored image of the whole hero and his life, are prone to disintegration. The romantic hero can usurp or absorb into himself his author's consummating position; the classical hero declines in modern times into the "sentimental" character (used, like Richardson's Clarissa or Karamzin's Liza, to appeal tendentiously to the reader's sympathies), or the "realist" character (reduced to an illustration of the author's social theories or a mouthpiece for stating theoretical problems). The typical character threatens to become a generalization, his typicality an "insult" to his subjectively-experienced humanity (183; 1:242).

In Bakhtin's analysis, then, post-classical literature seems incapable of producing the hero's "image" — living but also animated by the eye of an author who sees that life as a self-sufficient whole. A work like Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* — each of whose elements "reduces to and serves the question, 'who is [the hero]?'" (174; 1:234) — at once sets an aesthetic and ethical standard for the representation of the hero, and ties it to a worldview that has vanished. Meanwhile modern literature (including the works of Dostoevsky, who is mentioned more often than any other writer in Bakhtin's litany of fallen genres) points up the idealistic purity of this standard by illustrating all the ways in which it can *not* be met. Aligned too directly with the author's overt purposes, the hero disappears as free-standing person; aligned too directly with a narrating situation or an idea, the hero usurps the aesthetic context of his own representation.

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and I attempt to find an aesthetic approach to them, the first thing I must do is animate them [*ozhivit' ikh*], make them into potential heroes — the bearers of a destiny" (66; 1:141). But to perform this animation or personification and "identify" with (*soperezhivat'*) the resulting hero, he stresses, is only the first step in an aesthetic approach to the object: the author-living hero relationship must then be captured and "consummated" in a made work of art. "Animation" thus remains for Bakhtin a problem of representation even when (as with inanimate objects) it first appears as a problem of empathetic imaginative vision.

There is something to be gained, I think, by looking at this account of characterization as continuous with the account in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Creative Art*, and at authors like Tolstoy and Dostoevsky less as fixed points in Bakhtin's analysis, than as markers that can be moved along that theoretical continuum. Precisely by describing an acute "crisis of authorship," Bakhtin clarifies the point that he sees at stake, which is nothing less than the status and value of aesthetic representation — "the very place of art in the whole of culture, in the event of being." Holding up characters like Oedipus as an unattainable standard, he drives home the ambitious promise of the standard itself: the specific function of aesthetic activity is to reveal "*the whole of the hero as a human being*," and literary works thus offer unique access to human images that are *both* "living" and complete. In "Author and Hero...," an opposition between classical ideal and unperfected modern hero lets Bakhtin emphasize the ultimate human value of disinterested aesthetic activity. But in the published version of *Problems of Dostoevsky's Creative Art*, he moves his authorial markers. The opposition between the promise of an ideal aesthetic relationship, and its disintegration in authors like Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, becomes an opposition between the stagnation of this relationship in Tolstoy and its dynamic evolution in Dostoevsky: not between authored "image" and its absence, but between two different *kinds* of authored "image" of the literary character.

Our familiarity with Bakhtin's vision of the Dostoevskian character as "free," an equal participant in dialogue with the author, readers, and other characters in his story, makes it easy to forget the contention at the beginning of Bakhtin's Dostoevsky book: "Any acquaintance with the voluminous literature on Dostoevsky leaves the impression that one is dealing not with a *single* author-artist who wrote novels and stories, but with a number of philosophical statements by *several* author-thinkers — Raskolnikov, Myshkin, Ivan Karamazov. . ." (5; 2:11; 6:9).[20] Claiming that this critical impulse stems legitimately from a formal feature of the texts — what he calls the "polyphony" of Dostoevsky's novels — Bakhtin insists on the need for a different perspective that would make this feature visible *as* formal:

> Both [established] critical approaches — a passionate philosophizing with the characters, and a dispassionate psychological or psychopathological analysis of them as objects — are equally incapable of penetrating the purely artistic architectonics of Dostoevsky's works. The enthusiasm of the one is incapable of an objective, authentically realistic vision of a world of other people's consciousnesses; the realism of the other 'swims in too shallow waters.'" (9 [translation modified])[21]

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[20] My discussion will refer primarily to the 1929 edition of Bakhtin's Dostoevsky book that followed most closely on "Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity." However, for the many passages that appear in similar form in both the 1929 and the 1963 editions, I also give a citation to the corresponding passage in the 1963 edition. For English translations, I have used Caryl Emerson's translation (modified where necessary) of the 1963 edition: *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, trans. and ed. C. Emerson [Minneapolis: U. of Minnesota Press, 1984]).

[21] [Как увлеченное софилософствование с героями, так и объектно безучастный психологический или психопатологический анализ их одинаково не способны проникнуть в чисто художественную архитектонику произведений Достоевского. Увлеченность одних

From one direction, critics who analyze Dostoevsky's characters as the familiar objectified psyches "of the socio-psychological European novel" miss the scale of his creative innovation, the construction of his characters as independent, self-conscious, and self-reflective personalities. From the other, critics who engage with the characters too directly cannot achieve "an authentically realistic vision of a world of other people's consciousnesses."

On reflection, this claim is surprising. According to Bakhtin, *both* critics who attempt "objective" formal readings of Dostoevsky's work *and* critics who remain on the naive "philosophical" level of debate with his protagonists fail to appreciate Dostoevsky's construction of his characters *as people*. To be in a position to see how Dostoevsky embodies ideas "in the living voice of an integral person [*v zhivom golose tsel'nogo cheloveka*]" (10; 2:15; 6:14), a reader has to situate herself neither in the accustomed position of authorial "excess of vision" (a vacant position in Bakhtin's account of Dostoevsky), nor in the unusual position of the Dostoevskian implied author who struggles and dispute with his own characters, but in the critical position of an aesthetic contemplator, entirely outside the text as an authored work of art. It is this vision of the novel as artwork that reveals its characters as "autonomous" people, and its author as resisting the excess of vision that would result in their deadening consummation.

Bakhtin's underlying assumptions about mimetic characterization in Dostoevsky thus begin much closer to the framework of "Author and Hero..." than later formulations in the Dostoevsky book would suggest. Here just as in "Author and Hero," the problem with an objectifying reading is that it threatens to erase the "autonomous" human boundaries of the characters; the problem with a naive reading is that it threatens to erase the boundaries of the work itself. Bakhtin's paradoxical mimetic standard seems to have remained unchanged: a character emerges as a vividly represented person, an "extra-aesthetic reality," only when he is seen from the disinterested, external, aesthetic standpoint demanded by the *artwork* into which he is integrated.

This link between the perspective Bakhtin asks of Dostoevsky's reader, and the "contemplator's" perspective he described in "Author and Hero," is overshadowed and even obscured by his description of the revolutionary form of Dostoevsky's novels. For one among many examples: "The author constructs the hero [*stroit geroia*] not out of words foreign to the hero, not out of neutral definitions; he constructs not a character [*kharakter*], nor a type, nor a temperament, in fact not the image [*obraz*] of the hero at all, but precisely the hero's discourse [*slovo*] about himself and his world" (53).[22] The celebration of this rejection of character, type,

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не способна на объективное, подлинно реалистическое видение мира чужих сознаний, реализм других «мелко плавает». (2:15; 6:13)]

[22] [Он строит героя не из чужих слов, не из нейтральных определений, он строит не характер, не тип, не темперамент, вообще не [объектный — inserted in 1963 ed.] образ героя, а именно *слово* героя о себе самом и о своем мире (2:50; 6:63).] It is tempting to hear an opportunistic transposition, in this list, of one of Merezhkovsky's especially sweeping condemnations of Tolstoy's construction of his characters: "Итак, в произведениях Л. Толстого нет характеров, нет личностей, нет даже действующих лиц, а есть только созерцающие, страдающие; нет *героев*, а есть только жертвы, которые не борются, не противятся, отдаваясь уносящему их потоку стихийно-животной жизни [Thus, in L. Tolstoy's works there are no dispositions, no personalities, there are not even characters, but

and image as representational categories in Dostoevsky's novels comes to a head in an often-quoted summation:

> In Dostoevsky's larger design [*zamysel*], the character is a carrier of a fully valid word and not the mute, voiceless object of the author's words. The author's design for a character is a *design for discourse*. Thus the author's discourse about a character is discourse about discourse. It is oriented toward the hero as if toward a discourse, and is therefore dialogically *addressed* to him. By the very construction of the novel, the author speaks not *about* a character, but *with* him. (63)[23]

The understanding of the character as "discourse about himself and his world," and of the author's narration as part of a conversation with him, seems to leave little room for a concurrent understanding of the character as a represented (authored) "image." It is telling, however, that at the end of this passage, Bakhtin folds an act of representation back into the idea of dialogue in order to account, precisely, for the separation between the author and the objective figure of the hero: "Only through such an inner dialogic orientation can my discourse find itself in intimate contact with someone else's discourse, and yet at the same time not fuse with it, not swallow it up . . . To preserve distance in the presence of an intense semantic bond is no simple matter. But distance is an integral part of the author's design, for it alone guarantees genuine objectivity in the representation [*izobrazhenie* — lit., imaging-forth] of a character" (64; cf. n. 24).[24]

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only the reflecting, the suffering; there are no *heroes*, but rather only sacrifices who do not struggle, do not resist, giving themselves up to the stream of elemental-animal life that carries them away."] (*L. Tolstoi i Dostoevskii*, 126). Bakhtin's point, of course, is the opposite of Merezhkovsky's: if Tolstoy's figures are somehow *less* than characters, Dostoevsky's are more.

[23] [В замысле Достоевского герой — носитель полноценного слова, а не немой, безгласный предмет авторского слова. Замысел автора о герое — *замысел о слове*. Поэтому и слово автора о герое — *слово о слове*. Оно ориентировано на героя, как на слово, и потому *диалогически обращено к нему*. Автор говорит всею конструкцией своего романа не *о* герое, а *с* героем. . . . Только при внутренней диалогической установке мое слово находится в теснейшей связи с чужим словом, но в то же время не сливается с ним, не поглощает его и не растворяет в себе его значимости, то есть сохраняет полностью его самостоятельность, как слова. Сохранить же дистанцию при напряженной смысловой связи — дело далеко не легкое. Но дистанция входит в замысел автора, ибо только она обеспечивает чистый объективизм изображения героя. (2:54; 6:75)]

[24] I am far from alone in noting the importance of representational "distance" and "objectivity" to Bakhtin's account of Dostoevsky's characters. For a discussion of this problem focused on the early Bakhtin's indirect inheritances from Aristotelian "objective" aesthetics, through Friedrich Spielhagen's late nineteenth-century novel theory, see B. Poole, "Objective Narrative Theory — The Influence of Spielhagen's 'Aristotelian' Theory of Narrative Objectivity on Bakhtin's Study of Dostoevsky," in *The Novelness of Bakhtin*, ed. J. Bruhn and J. Lundquist, 107–162 (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2001). (But note G.S. Morson's influential, substantially opposed perspective on Bakhtin and Aristotelian narrative theory, summarized in "Contingency and the Literature of Process," *Bakhtin and the Classics*, ed. R. Bracht Branham,

This shift is symptomatic of Bakhtin's larger strategy. The Dostoevsky book alternates between a striking theoretical foreground — the claim that Dostoevsky, alone so far among novelists, represents his characters by giving them a full and equal "voice" in their novels — and a drabber backdrop — the understanding that this "voice" becomes associated with a human image only through author's and reader's one-sided "act of artistic visualization [*nashe khudozhestvennoe videnie*]" (49; 2:45/6:58 and *passim*). Here as in "Author and Hero," it takes the *image* of the character — that is, the vision of the hero and his life that results from author's and reader's aesthetic contemplation — to reveal "the whole of the hero as a human being": to let us see the finished shape of the hero's life, but also to experience that life as if it were ongoing and free from the author's shaping activity, as the hero would have experienced it if he really were alive and (for himself) *un*finished. The difference is that now, Bakhtin offers Dostoevsky's characters as the example of a transformative new way of using the hero's own discourse about his self and worldview as the keynote of this "image." In Dostoevsky, the author-contemplator's vision serves most significantly to expose the *hero's* (incomplete, ongoing) vision of himself.

The novels of "Turgenev, Goncharov, and L. Tolstoy," then, move into the place vacated in Bakhtin's earlier theoretical schema by classical tragedy, and that place is now assigned a different moral valence: Tolstoy and others create finalized *characterizing* images of their protagonists, perfect only because they are closed off and dead. But what Dostoevsky's "living" characters share with Turgenev's, Goncharov's, and Tolstoy's "dead" ones is in fact their status *as* aesthetic images, which allows them to be realized autonomously from the authors that produce them: "Self-consciousness, as the artistic dominant in the construction of the hero's image, is by itself sufficient to break down the monologic unity of an artist world — but only on condition that the hero, as self-consciousness, is really represented and not merely expressed [*izobrazhaetsia, a ne vyrazhaetsia*], does not fuse with the author, does not become the mouthpiece for his voice. . ." (51).[25] On a basic level, it is the hero's status as an image with its own defined outlines that keeps him from "being expressed" by or "fusing" with his author.

250–73 [Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2002]). Dorothy Hale similarly emphasizes the doubleness of Bakhtin's vision of character, which frequently oscillates between "voice" and "image." (D. Hale, *Social Formalism: The Novel in Theory from Henry James to the Present* [Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998], 170–81). I want to add to these arguments that Bakhtin's double vision springs from his understanding not just of the novel genre, but also of aesthetic experience as such, and especially, of the position of the "author/contemplator" described in "Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity." I am especially interested in Bakhtin's transitional effort to differentiate the experience of *Dostoevsky's* novels from that of other authors', and in how this contrast becomes the basis for preserving an ideal vision of aesthetic experience in general *while* also making social and ethical claims for the novel in particular.

[25] [Самосознание, как художественная доминанта в построении образа героя, уже само по себе достаточно, чтобы разложить монологическое единство художественного мира, но при условии, что герой, как самосознание, действительно изображается, а не выражается, то есть не сливается с автором, не становится рупором для его голоса. . . (2:48; 6:61)]

In drawing attention to this structure, I mean to do more than reiterate Bakhtin's own response to the obvious criticism of polyphony expressed in early and subsequent critiques of his Dostoevsky books — that the polyphonic novel, as Bakhtin defines it, is disunited and "freed" from any authorial control, and that a character (if she is free) cannot also be "an aspect of a work of art. . . wholly created from beginning to end by the author."[26] Bakhtin makes a point of addressing this potential misreading, arguing that in fact no "artistic images" are ever "invented [*vyduman*]" by their authors; rather, they are *discovered*, their inner logic probed, and a "dominant" found for their representation that will allow the author to capture that logic. (64; 6:76/2:55) Revising his book for the 1963 edition, he added several references to "the construction of the image of the hero [*postroenie obraza geroia*]" and cut a sentence denying the existence of an "author's world" in Dostoevsky's novels, driving home the point that what is at issue is not characters without images, but rather a new kind of image coined to produce an unfamiliar vision of characters.[27]

The point Bakhtin does not bring out, which I want to emphasize here, is that these two ways of understanding Dostoevsky's characters — as self-determined "word (discourse)" and as authored "image" — depend on one another even as they seem in many parts of his discussion to be mutually exclusive, contiguous but never coinciding with one another.[28] If defining the characters as "discourse" makes it possible to treat them as interlocutors, equal participants in a dialogue where *all* participants are represented by their own words, then defining the characters as "images" makes it possible to experience those interlocutors as people, their words as the words of persons, and the novels themselves as "a world of other people's consciousnesses." Negotiating between naive readings of the character as a conduit for an idea, and objectifying readings of the character as a device, Bakhtin falls back on the logic of "Author and Hero": it is a disinterested aesthetic approach to Dostoevsky's novels that animates his characters as autonomous people (heroes) distinct from their authors. This consummating vision is the implicit

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[26] On the criticism, see C. Emerson and G.S. Morson, *Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of a Prosaics* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990), 232–33 and 485 n. 2.

[27] Cf. 6:61/2:48, 6:75/2:55; 6:68; for the excised sentence on the "author's world," see 2:70.

[28] A number of scholars have argued that Bakhtin treated these two conceptions of Dostoevsky's characters — as authored/seen image and as free/dialogic word — as separate, or even consecutive. Thus, Morson and Emerson write of "two roles" that Bakhtin's "polyphonic" writer plays in his own works: "he creates a world in which many disparate points of view enter into dialogue, and, in a quite distinct role, he himself participates in that dialogue" (*Creation of a Prosaics*, 239). More recently, Sergei Bocharov (borrowing a phrase from Lidiia Ginzburg) diagnosed Bakhtin's "fruitful one-sidedness" — his decision to focus on the character's "voice" to the exclusion of the other elements involved in her characterization: S. Bocharov, "Bakhtin-filolog: kniga o Dostoevskom," *Voprosy literatury* no. 2 (2006): 48–67. As I understand them, both these interpretations of Bakhtin imply that he recognized but usually chose to set aside the aesthetic nature of Dostoevsky's characters as authored images. I want to argue, rather, that for Bakhtin, the "polyphonic writer" — like the reader — cannot participate in the characters' dialogue unless she *simultaneously* maintains the aesthetic standpoint that reveals these characters as authored images of people. Again, for perspectives closer to what I am arguing here, see note 24 above.

context for any dialogic reading, any engagement with the characters as integral "speaking" persons. Bakhtin's portrait of Dostoevsky's characters is thus — like literary character itself, in one theorist's formulation — "stereoscopic": it achieves depth by layering an explicit account of the idea-hero's conscious vision of himself over an implicit account of the authored image of the idea-hero, which we maintain only by seeing him as "an aspect of a work of art."[29]

At the risk of belaboring an obvious point, I thus want to highlight the extent to which Bakhtin remains, throughout his discussion of Dostoevsky's characters as "discourse," invested in the special status of the human "image," and of these very characters as objects of aesthetic vision. So what is the force of the strong distinction he draws between the unfinalized voices of Dostoevsky's characters, and the consummated figures created by other realist novelists?

It has been argued that Bakhtin's essential goal, in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Creative Art* and its revision, was to show through a reading of Dostoevsky's novels that not just the dead and finished-off "soul" but also the ongoing, living "spirit" could be captured in a work of art.[30] This position offers a persuasive rationale for Bakhtin's argument: affirming the unique value of the *aesthetic* image of a person, he also found, in Dostoevsky, the first example that let him insist that this image does not have to be static or complete.

It ought not escape our notice, however, that this theoretical project itself heavily relies on an exercise in characterization, built on the repeatedly reinforced contrast between Dostoevsky and all other novelists — a portrait of Dostoevsky's protagonists alone as living "spirits" rather than dead souls. By consistently deemphasizing the aesthetic vision that produces Dostoevsky's characters, in favor of the unusual formal qualities that work to set them on the same plane as author and reader, Bakhtin produces his own compelling image of these characters as self-conscious "carriers" of their own words. But that image becomes convincing, in part, because it is juxtaposed with the specter of other characters who are only the passive objects of authorial language. Ironically, insofar as it relies on this authoritative act of characterization, Bakhtin's argument is itself structured rather like a novel — and importantly, structured more like

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[29] The notion of the "stereoscopic character" is John Bayley's; quoted in B. Hochman, *Character in Literature* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1985), 44.

[30] N.K. Bonetskaia, "Estetika M. Bakhtina kak logika formy," *Bakhtinologiia: Isledovaniia, perevody, publikatsii*, 51–60 (Saint Petersburg: Aleteiia, 1995). Cf. N. Bonetskaia, "Bakhtin's Aesthetics as a Logic of Form," in *The Contexts of Bakhtin: Philosophy, Authorship, Aesthetics*, ed. D. Shepherd, 83–94 (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1998). See also a telling comment in Bakhtin's notes published as "Toward a Reworking of the Dostoevsky Book," and included in Bakhtin's *Sobranie sochinenii* as "1961 god. Zametki": "Dostoevsky made spirit, that is, the ultimate semantic position of the personality, the object of aesthetic contemplation, he was able to *see* spirit in a way in which previously only the body and soul of man could be seen. He moved aesthetic visualization into the depths, into deep new strata, but not into the depths of the unconscious; rather, into the depths of the heights of consciousness. [Достоевский сделал дух, т.е. последнюю смысловую позицию личности, предметом эстетического созерцания, сумел увидеть дух так, как до него умели видеть только тело и душу человека. Он продвинул эстетическое видение в глубь, в новые глубинные пласты, но не в глубь бессознательного, а в глубь-высоту сознания]" (*Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 288; *SS*, 5:345).

Tolstoy's novels than like Dostoevsky's. Over the course of his discussion, Bakhtin uses a stable and consistent opposition between Tolstoy's "dead" characters and Dostoevsky's "living" ones to help create the very concept that he wants to call a character's ongoing, unfinalizable life, the consciousness of her own characterization that ensures that she "herself" will always exceed it.

Thus, Bakhtin's longest discussion of Tolstoy in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Creative Art* describes the ease with which Tolstoy follows Ivan Ilyich into death; in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, he added several pages analyzing Tolstoy's story "Three Deaths" as a paradigm of monologic form. Death serves Bakhtin as the most extreme example of a fictional event that extends beyond the horizon of a character who experiences it, but it is not coincidental that it also sharpens the organizing distinction between Dostoevsky and Tolstoy — that in Bakhtin, we most often catch Dostoevsky's characters in the act of speaking and Tolstoy's, in the act of dying. Tolstoy's place in Bakhtin's argument as a poet of death stands behind Bakhtin's description of his ossifying, monologic construction of his characters.

Meanwhile the relative absence of represented death, in Dostoevsky's novels, becomes the mark of *almost* literal life — of characters who come close to exceeding the bounds of the artwork itself:

> But while speaking with himself, with another, with the world, [the Underground Man] simultaneously addresses a third party as well: he squints his eyes to the side, toward the listener, the witness, the judge. This simultaneous triple-directedness of his discourse and the fact that he does not acknowledge any object without addressing it is also responsible for the extraordinarily vivid [*zhivoi*], restless, agitated, and one might say, obtrusive nature of this discourse. One cannot contemplate it [*ego nel'zia sozertsat'*] like lyrical or epic discourse, calmly gravitating toward itself and its referential object; no, first and foremost you react to it [*na nego prezhde vsego reagiruesh'*], respond to it, are drawn into its game; it is capable of agitating and irritating, **almost** like the personal address of a living person [***pochti*** *kak lichnoe obrashchenie zhivogo cheloveka*]. It destroys the footlights, but not because of its concern for topical issues or for reasons that have any direct philosophical significance, but precisely because of [its] formal structure (237 [translation modified; my emphasis])[31]

Bakhtin implies that because the Underground Man's discourse is not epic, neither it nor he can be aesthetically "contemplated": addressed to us "almost like the personal address of a living

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[31] [Но, говоря с собою, с другим, с миром, он одновременно обращается еще и к третьему: скашивает глаза в сторону — на слушателя, свидетеля, судью. Эта одновременная троякая обращенность слова и то, что оно вообще не знает предмета вне обращения к нему, и создает тот исключительно живой, беспокойный, взволнованный и, мы бы сказали, навязчивый характер этого слова. Его нельзя созерцать как успокоено довлеющее себе и своему предмету лирическое или эпическое слово, «отрешенное» слово: нет, на него прежде всего реагируешь, отзываешься, втягиваешься в эго игру; оно способно взбудоражить и задевать, почти как личное обращение живого человека. Оно разрушает рампу, но не вследствие своей злободневности. . . а именно благодаря разобранной нами формальной структуры своей. (2:137; 6:264)]

person," this discourse forces us onto the Underground Man's plane. Bakhtin's "almost" maintains a token sense of the fictive quality of this plane, of the stage whose separation from the audience Dostoevsky makes invisible. But notably, Bakhtin himself switches *grammatical* planes in making this claim, from an impersonal adverbial construction (*ego nel'zia sozertsat'*) to a generalized second person (*na nego prezhde vsego reagiruiesh'*). His rhetoric recapitulates the "obtrusive" structure he finds in the Underground Man's discourse, blurring the line between referential description and addressed instruction. By acknowledging and then closing off the potential standpoint of contemplation — not just logically, but grammatically — he draws the reader into another iteration of the game of realist character, weaving an argument that juxtaposes Tolstoy's characters to Dostoevsky's in what we might call the beginnings of a critical character-system. Within the bounded space of Bakhtin's argument, Tolstoy's characters stand for deadened contemplation; Dostoevsky's, in part *by contrast*, for living form.

Building his argument not around Dostoevsky's and Tolstoy's novels as whole texts, but around their characters, Bakhtin makes the opposition between these characters so vital as to nearly obscure their dependence on, and embeddedness within, the artworks that frame them.[32] In Bakhtin's schema, the aesthetic distance that preserves an image of a character as other coexists with the radical de-aestheticization that results when we imagine that character as responsible for his own representation. His account of Dostoevsky's technique masks a step that complicates its contraction of the distance between author, characters, and readers — and in this sense, I suggest, Bakhtin borrows an illusion from the realist novel itself. On the plane of written or spoken words, Dostoevsky's characters address us "almost like living persons," but we see them *as* persons most completely insofar as we also — at the same moment — maintain a vision of their life as unfolding on a different plane from ours: as "almost."

<div align="center">*</div>

I have focused here on Bakhtin's foundational readings of Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's characters in "Author and Hero..." and the first version of his Dostoevsky book. It is important to note that much of his subsequent work on novelistic character followed other lines of investigation — most richly, perhaps, in "Discourse in the Novel" ("*Slovo v romane*," c. 1930-34), which deemphasizes named characters to focus on the "images of speaking persons, dressed in concrete social and historical clothing," that "show through [*skvoziat*]" from behind each of a

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[32] In his commentary to *Problemy tvorchestva Dostoevskogo*, Sergei Bocharov makes a case for the connection between these aspects of Bakhtin's discussion — his emphasis on the character as word, and his focus on short works — and Bakhtin's engagement with Max Scheler's analysis of confession as a making public or social (through words) of guilt that would otherwise be private (Bocharov, "Problemy [Kommentarii]," *SS* 2:469). As confessional texts, "Notes from the Underground" and "The Meek One [*Krotkaia*]" allowed Bakhtin to fully explore this conversion of interiority into an interpersonal event. I would add, however, that the focus on one-hero (confessional) short texts also drew Bakhtin away from some of the thorniest narratological issues raised by his discussion of Dostoevsky, including the question of how multiple "full-fledged" idea-heroes share the limited space of a text (the question of what Alex Woloch calls a character-system), and the question I aim to highlight here, of how any character's status as represented image implicitly shapes or conditions his status as "speaker" (a question harder to put aside in texts where there are multiple characters, engaged in activities other than speech.)

novel's diverse languages.[33] This essay largely sets aside the opposition between Dostoevsky's and Tolstoy's characters that initially helped Bakhtin stabilize the paradox of the "unfinalized" novel protagonist. The coda to my discussion, then, lies not in Bakhtin's later work on character, but in a look at what essentially superseded the opposition between Dostoevsky and Tolstoy in his theoretical system: the fertile *generic* contrast between "Epic and Novel" (1941).[34]

As "the sole genre that continues to develop" (3; 3:608), dynamically self-consciousness about its own identity, the novel according to Bakhtin lives among other genres in the same way Dostoevsky's characters live among one another, questioning, challenging, and parodying the generic qualities and distinctions that could otherwise resolve into a static harmony. Bakhtin thus understands the novel as the genre of contemporaneity, modeled not in "marble" but in "clay"; if Dostoevsky's characterizations can be opposed to Tolstoy's as "discourse about discourse, addressed to discourse [*slovo o slove, obrashchennoe k slovu*]," the novel can in turn be opposed to the epic as "discourse of a contemporary about a contemporary addressed to contemporaries" [*slovo sovremennika o sovremennike, obrashchennoe k sovremennikam'*"] (13; 3:618). Bakhtin now attributes to *all* novel protagonists a "surplus of humanness" that creates potentials other than those written into the plot. And just as the novelist, unlike the epic poet, is situated on the same temporal and moral plane as the subject she represents, her reader finds an unprecedented kinship between her own world and the images created in the novel she reads: "The image [in the novel] acquires a specific currency [*spetsificheskuiu aktual'nost'*]. It acquires a relationship — in one form or another, to one degree or another — to the ongoing event of current life in which we, the author and readers, are intimately participating." (30-31 [translation modified]).[35]

This vision of the novel's predictive (but not prophetic), permeable relationship "to the ongoing event of current life" is analogous to the vision of the self-conscious protagonists who address us *almost* directly from the pages of Dostoevsky's novels. But even here, I would note, the works' quality as free-standing, autonomous, and internally coherent is directly linked here to their status *as* "images," produced by the specifically aesthetic vision of authors and readers. Only the process of reading novels as finished works of art reveals them and their protagonists as the kinds of coherent, "living" objects that can stand in relation to the unfinalized world of their readers. And this explicitly distanced aesthetic approach, as I have attempted to show, remains a strong undertone in Bakhtin's 1963 revision of his Dostoevsky book, which placed his discussion of Dostoevsky's characters in the context of his later explorations of the novel as a genre.

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[33] 3:90; M. Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel," in *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. M. Holquist and trans. C. Emerson and M. Holquist (Austin: U. of Texas Press, 1981), 336.

[34] First published as "*Epos i roman*," "Epic and Novel" was included in Bakhtin's collected works in the form of Bakhtin's original 1941 lecture "*Roman, kak literaturnyi zhanr*," given partly in response to the polemics surrounding Lukács's 1935 *Literary Encyclopedia* article on the novel. I cite from this text, with corresponding passages from the English translation of "*Epos i roman*": M. Bakhtin, "Epic and Novel," in *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. M. Holquist and trans. C. Emerson and M. Holquist, 3–40 (Austin: U. of Texas Press, 1981).

[35] [Образ приобретает специфическую актуальность. Он получает отношение — в той или иной форме и степени — к продолжающемуся и сейчас событию жизни, к которому и мы — автор и читатели — существенно причастны. (3:634)]

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The evolving chain of paired models that runs through the stages of Bakhtin's thought — classical and modern hero; Dostoevsky's characters and Tolstoy's; and novel and epic — thus gives theoretical terms to a complex, even contradictory desire about the relationship between novels and their readers. Contrasting Dostoevsky's mimetic techniques of characterization to Tolstoy's, and novelistic contemporaneity to epic distance, Bakhtin's theory of the novel envisions an aesthetic interaction, dependent on literary form, that can bring characters and readers onto the same plane. But unlike his predecessors in articulating the terms of this comparison between Dostoevsky's and Tolstoy's techniques of characterization, Bakhtin is not willing to read Dostoevsky as a prophet, or the "resistance" of his characters to fixed forms as a sign of the imminent end of European literature. Instead, his understanding of Dostoevsky's characters as captured but not confined by their nature as aesthetic objects anchors a radical expansion of the novel's zone of contact with contemporary life.

Thus the aspect of the novel as Bakhtin analyzes it that would seem most detachable from its status as part of a bounded aesthetic object — the individual protagonist — may be precisely what keeps Bakhtin's "novel" bounded and aesthetic at all. Bakhtin's idea of the novel as fluid and contemporary depends on characters that cannot stop being images, if the novels that cast them are to act most fully as words.

2. Problems of reflection: Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's characters in later Lukács

During the year that ended with his conversion to Marxism, Georg Lukács published a study of the poetry of his close friend, Béla Balázs, which includes the following pronouncement: "Dostoevsky's people live, without distance, the essence of their souls. Meanwhile the problem of other writers, including even Tolstoy, consists in how a soul can overcome those obstacles by which it is prevented from an attainment, even a glimpse, of itself. Dostoevsky begins where the others end: he describes how the soul lives its own life" (*Balázs Béla és akiknek nem kell* [*Béla Balazs and his detractors*, 1918]).[36]

This comment encapsulates a view both of Dostoevsky's characters, and of the relationship between Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, that remained influential for Lukács's writings about the novel. Lukács's lifelong engagement with Dostoevsky's works — a thread running across the rift between his early and his later, Marxist writings — has been explored in a number of critical and biographical studies.[37] In his outlines and notes for a projected book on Dostoevsky (1914-

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[36] Quoted and translated into German in J.C. Nyiri*,* "Einleitung," in *Dostojewski: Notizen und Entwürfe* (Budapest: Akademiai Kiado, 1985), 27–28. On *Balács Bela* see Nyiri and A. Kadarkay, *Georg Lukács: Life, Thought, and Politics* (Cambridge, MA: B. Blackwell, 1991), 197–98.

[37] See for notable examples: F. Fehér, "The Last Phase of Romantic Anti-Capitalism: Lukács' Response to the War," *New German Critique* 10 (Winter 1977), 140–44.; Z.A. Feher, "Georg Lukács's Role in Dostoevsky's European Reception at the Turn of the Century"; Nyiri*,* "Einleitung," 7–34; M. Löwy, "Naphta or Settembrini?: Lukács and Romantic Anti-Capitalism," *New German Critique* 42 (Autumn 1987): 17–31 (an account that stresses the importance of Russian literature in general and the "imaginary Russia" to the pre-Marxist Lukács and his circle); L. Congdon, *The Young Lukács* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North

15) and in the final pages of the essay that emerged from them, *The Theory of the Novel* (*Die Theorie des Romans*, 1916), Lukács portrayed Dostoevsky as an author of utopian vision, whose "epic" works transcended both the novel genre and the modern "age of absolute sinfulness" it chronicles. After joining the Communist Party, he wrote several brief reviews on Dostoevsky in the early 1920s, casting him as a prophet of the idealized classless society to come at the end of the revolution. He abandoned this controversial thesis in "On Dostoevsky's Legacy" ("*Über den Dostojewski-Nachlaß*," 1931), a notoriously expedient self-critique, but returned to it in softened form in a 1943 essay on Dostoevsky. Lukács's writings from 1914-1945 are thus punctuated with brief or fragmentary but theoretically charged analyses of Dostoevsky. For Lukács, Dostoevsky's books herald a political and aesthetic utopia, offering a vision of a real world in which "the soul lives its own life," and life itself thus takes on the harmonious necessity of a work of art. Dostoevsky's books and their protagonists promise to illuminate the age of the novel from the other side of the novel's generic boundary. But Lukács never completed a study in which his persistent idea of Dostoevsky as an "epic" artist could have been fully worked out.

Lukács's substantial published writings about Tolstoy might be read as the shadow cast by this unwritten work. For obvious reasons, given Dostoevsky's unique cultural and intellectual significance for Lukács and his generation, these writings have drawn less sustained attention from Lukács scholars. Indeed, in considerations of Lukács's Marxist criticism, his defense of Tolstoy's realism often figures as a somewhat dubious "casuistry," for which he bends the course of history in order to place Tolstoy in the camp of the "great" pre-1848 French realists.[38] But to dismiss this move because of its ideological or political motivations is to elide Tolstoy's unique position in Lukács's understanding of the realist novel: if Dostoevsky is consistently placed just beyond the novel's generic and historical border, Tolstoy stands directly, sometimes precariously, upon it. In *The Theory of the Novel*, his novels strain to turn into epic; in the 1930s essays in which Lukács worked out a Marxist aesthetics of the novel, Tolstoy marks the threshold between "old" and "new" realism, and between the realist novel and the socialist epic to come. In Lukács's early work, then, much as in the prevailing Symbolist narrative, Tolstoy plays the role of a forerunner to Dostoevsky. But in later essays, Lukács treats Tolstoy's works as a model for the realist novel — and a path to the new epic — in their own right.[39] Whatever its causes, the theoretical consequences of this shift are worth exploring. Lukács came to read in Tolstoy and his western European predecessors a productive alternative to the (Symbolist-influenced) vision of the social and spiritual power of Dostoevsky's novels.

Carolina Press, 1983), 98–108 ff.; and most recently, G. Tihanov, "Ethics and Revolution: Lukács's Responses to Dostoevsky," *The Modern Language Review* 94:3 (July 1999): 609–625, and ibid., *The Master and the Slave*, 165–87.

[38] For one recent example of this argument, see K. Clark, *Moscow, the Fourth Rome: Stalinism, Cosmopolitanism, and the Evolution of Soviet Culture, 1931–1941* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 164.

[39] This change is described as a conscious process, in the letter (Jan. 31 1940) in which Lukács eventually broke with Balázs: "The revolutionary process of joining the party also involved literature... Thus, for me, Balzac took the place of Flaubert, Tolstoy that of Dostoevsky, and Fielding that of Sterne." (quoted from the original manuscript in Kadarkay, *Georg Lukács*, 357).

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My discussion in this section, then, will pose a kind of thought experiment. It has been argued that in his Dostoevsky book, Bakhtin consciously developed an answer to the question that ends Lukács's *The Theory of the Novel*: are Dostoevsky's works the beginning of a new stage in literary history, and so also the sign of a revitalized "new world"?[40] Lukács's own subsequent writings, I propose, show us the line of development that unfolded when this new vitality was associated less with Dostoevsky's novels, than with Tolstoy's. Just as we can trace through Bakhtin a theory of novelistic mimesis with Dostoevsky's characters at its center, we can trace through Lukács a theory centered on a line of realist character types that ends in Tolstoy's protagonists. And just as Bakhtin built on a shared critical tradition that described Dostoevsky's characters as wandering spirits, speaking mouths incompletely tied down to the fictional texts of their novels, Lukács built on a tradition of describing Tolstoy's characters and their world as a luminously vivid but static reflection — a tradition that includes Merezhkovsky's image of Tolstoy's characters as an "haut relief" (1900) and Ivanov's description of Tolstoy as a "mirror before the world" (1911), but also, of course, Lenin's "Tolstoy as a Mirror of the Russian Revolution" (1908).

After returning briefly to the opposition Lukács drew between Dostoevsky and other novelists, including Tolstoy, in his pre-Marxist writings, I will turn to the most ambitious essay he devoted to Tolstoy, "Tolstoy and the Problems of Realism" ("Leo Tolstoi und die Entwicklung des Realismus"/ "Tolstoi i razvitiie realizma," 1938 [written 1936]; "Tolstoi und die Probleme des Realismus," 1952). As in my discussion of Bakhtin, I will attempt to show how Lukács imagines a relationship between realist novel and world through a relationship between character and narrative. Comparing Lukács's early and later approaches to Tolstoy throws into relief, in particular, his redefinition of the paradigmatic realist character — from a "soul living its own life," to a type that emerges within and through a complex network of other figures.

If the epic, for the Lukács of *The Theory of the Novel*, is the form of a "rounded world" — the world of the ancient Greeks, who felt reality to be at once objective and designed *for them*, imbued with "ever-present meaning" that is ultimately comprehensible in human terms — then the novel belongs to a world whose vast complexity is "strange to the soul [*seelenfremde*]."[41] The aesthetic perfection and harmony of the work of art, which for the Greeks only reflected a world that seemed also to be harmonious and perfect, becomes in the modern age a self-contained fantasy: "Art, the visionary reality of the world made to our measure, has thus become independent: it is no longer a copy [*Abbild*], for all the models have gone; it is a created totality,

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[40] For a strong version of the argument that Bakhtin in his Dostoevsky book was responding directly to Lukács's *Theory of the Novel*, see G. Pechey, "Modernity and Chronotopicity in Bakhtin," in *The Contexts of Bakhtin*, 173–182. G. Tihanov is more circumspect, though he offers conclusive evidence that Bakhtin knew and engaged in discussions of *The Theory of the Novel* during the time when he was drafting *Problems of Dostoevsky's Creative Art* (*Master and the Slave*, 11–12).

[41] G. Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel*, trans. Anna Bostock (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1971), 36; *Die Theorie des Romans* (Neuwied am Rhein: Luchterhand, 1963), 30. Abbreviated as *Theory* and cited parenthetically in the text hereafter, with corresponding citation to the German text where necessary.

for the natural unity of the metaphysical spheres has been destroyed forever" (*Theory*, 37).[42] Lukács makes the heterocosmic quality of the work of art in the age of the novel — that is, the free-standing illusion of a separate reality created within a work of art — into a clear sign of that age's "fallenness."[43]

The problem that Lukács identifies with the age of the novel can thus be understood as a mimetic crisis, interpreting mimesis in its narrower sense of imitation. Aesthetic form still instantiates wholeness or "totality," but that wholeness no longer has the unproblematic status of a *copy* of reality. What sets the epic apart from succeeding genres (drama and novel), above all, is its "indestructible bond with reality *as it is* [*das Dasein und das Sosein der Wirklichkeit*]": the absolute likeness presupposed in the epic between the transcendent perfection of reality, and the transcendent perfection of the work of art (*Theory*, 47; *Theorie*, 42).

The opposition between epic and novel organizes the typology of the novel that Lukács lays out in the second half of his essay: a catalogue of the forms of disjunction between the protagonists of the novel and the world they encounter, which reenacts the disjunction between the aesthetic heterocosm of the novel and reality. Coming at the end of a European novel line that runs from Cervantes through Goethe, Tolstoy serves as the last and bitterest illustration of this disjunction. Lukács attributes to Tolstoy "a form of novel which overlaps to the maximum extent into the epic" — a novel that not only dreams, but concretely envisions a world that could be faithfully reflected in aesthetic form (*Theory,* 146). But whereas in the classical epic, this perfected aesthetic world is a world of culture, Tolstoy identifies it with the world of nature as opposed to culture, and so to the very social and historical circumstances that produce the novel.

Tolstoy's novels are thus divided against their own genre. At their heart lies "the central characters' dissatisfaction with whatever the surrounding world of culture can offer them and their seeking and finding of the second, more essential reality of nature." But essential nature is neither the novel's, nor its major protagonists', true home. Though the protagonists' experiences (especially near death) assure them of nature's existence, in the end they "must irremediably fall back into the world of convention." Only secondary characters (Lukács names Platon Karataev), defined by *contrast* to the "seeking" protagonists, can belong essentially to the natural world and organic form. In the few, tantalizing moments when protagonists too glimpse this world, "the sphere of pure soul-reality in which man exists as man, neither as a social being nor as an

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[42] [Die visionäre Wirklichkeit der uns angemessenen Welt, die Kunst, ist damit selbständig geworden: sie ist kein Abbild mehr, den alle Vorbilder sind versunken; sie ist eine erschaffene Totalität, denn die naturhafte Einheit der metaphysischen Sphären ist für immer zerrissen. (*Die Theorie des Romans*, 31)]

[43] J.M. Bernstein expands on this point at length in his seminal reading of *The Theory of the Novel* in the light of Lukács's Marxist philosophy. He argues that the essay's central opening contention "is that the modern *autonomy* of art and literature is a product of reification or fragmentation, and that it is that autonomy which makes the novel problematic" (J.M. Bernstein, *The Philosophy of the Novel: Lukács, Marxism, and the Dialectics of Form* [Brighton, UK: The Harvester Press, 1984], 49; see also 69–76).

isolated. . . and therefore abstract interiority," Tolstoy's novels point toward a "renewed epic." (*Theory*, 150-52) But the novel genre itself dictates the moment's dissipation or loss.[44]

Dostoevsky, who "did not write novels," lies just across this tormenting generic divide. His characters belong permanently to a world where "man exists as man," imbued with meaning and necessity — a world that matches its own aesthetic copy, presented by Dostoevsky "simply as a seen reality." (*Theory*, 152) We can look to the notes on Dostoevsky that preceded Lukács's *Theory of the Novel* for a fuller account of what it means for man to "exist as man": a decisive liberation from all everyday, culturally-determined forms of life — profession, family, marriage — and also from "genetic" (causal) forms of narration.[45] But the fundamental point for Lukács is that Dostoevsky's ability to *see* (and so copy) this new state of being contrasts with Cervantes', Flaubert's, Goethe's, and Tolstoy's inability to bring it about, just as the unproblematic likeness between epic and life contrasts with the laboriously-maintained heterocosm of the novel. Dostoevsky's creative vision is revolutionary because it reveals a new potential for non-contingent, meaningful human existence in the real world, and thus for a renewed (epic) stability in the mimetic relationship between reality and the artistic text.

This investment in the ideal of a mimetic relationship between aesthetic form and historical reality carries across the biographical and philosophical line marking Lukács's conversion to Marxism. The change through Marxist doctrine comes in Lukács's beliefs about the kind of real-life structure that is available for aesthetic form to copy or reflect. In his earlier work, he recorded the absence in the modern world of a perfected totality that would imbue human culture and individual lives with comprehensible order and meaning. Evoking this totality, the novel's form strains (so to speak) to become a reflection, but it finds no answering original. Lukács's Marxist perspective allows him to replace the problematic gap between representation and original with a stable reflective relationship — not exceptionally, as for the "epics" of Dostoevsky, but as a rule, for all "great" works of realist literature. Marxism finds an affinity between the structure of human history and the plotted, teleological structure of a novel — between historical and aesthetic totality. As Lukács himself insisted, this link allowed him to analyze the great realists — chiefly Scott, Balzac, Stendhal, Goethe, Tolstoy, and later heirs like Gorky and Thomas Mann — to show how the deepest formal structures of their works reflect the structure of historical reality.[46]

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[44] It is important to note that, like Dostoevsky himself, Tolstoy occupies a much more prominent position in Lukács's Dostoevsky notes than in the published text of *The Theory of the Novel*. Particularly striking is Lukács's use of Tolstoy's personal biography — as well as his novels — as an *emblem* of the novel's characteristic split between thought and action, interiority and external world, which results in a worldview he summarizes as "suicidal": cf. *Notizen*, 53. Dostoevsky, by contrast, figures as the only novelist able to capture thought (and dialogue) *as* action, and the self as its own determining agent.

[45] Lukács, *Notizen,* 48; 62.

[46] I follow Fredric Jameson's suggestion that Lukács's understanding of "reflection," first in an epistemological context in *History and Class Consciousness* and then in an aesthetic one in his essays on realism, can be read as a "kind of shorthand . . . the setting in contact with each other of two distinct and incommensurate realities" (F. Jameson, *Marxism and Form: Twentieth-Century Dialectical Theories of Literature* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971], 188–

Lukács's defense of his position during his enforced sojourn in Moscow (1930-1945) requires only a brief summary here. With colleagues at the journal *Literaturnyi kritik*, he argued for a Marxist literary criticism that could embrace the western and Russian classics, despite the dubious class perspectives of their authors. Lukács's school — the "despitists," or *voprekisty* — maintained that a great realist novel can give an unerring critical picture of its age no matter what the novelist's class identity. Their opponents (adherents of Valerian Pereverzev's "sociological" school, and similar theoretical perspectives) argued for a direct link between a writer's class perspective and his novel's content.[47] Lukács's participation in the debate — which took on special intensity around a critique of his entry on the novel for the new Literary Encyclopedia (Dec. 1934–Jan. 1935) — continued through 1939, when he published *Toward a History of Realism* (*K istorii realizma*). A faction led by Alexander Fadeev viciously attacked his position in the Party-sanctioned *Literaturnaia gazeta*, and in 1940, *Literaturnyi kritik* was closed.[48]

During the years when Lukács was advocating a "despitist" literary canon and aesthetics, in articles he later revised and reprinted in numerous anthologies and collections, his theoretical aim was to show the independence of the story-world and the characters of a great realist novel from the dictates of the author's worldview. The central problem he attempted to work out, then, was the integrity of the mimetic relationship between realist novel and historical reality. Though he claimed a foundation for this argument in writings of Engels, Marx, and Lenin on literature, he fleshed out its terms by defining the forms and techniques that mark "great" realism.

As Galin Tihanov has pointed out, Dostoevsky may have been the first writer on whom Lukács practiced this *voprekist* approach. His 1922 essays on Dostoevsky for *Die rote Fahne* turn on an opposition of Dostoevsky the "pamphleteer" to Dostoevsky the artist, stressing Dostoevsky's unique ability to pursue to a spiritual extreme "the social roots of tragedy in certain human types."[49] But the ensuing decade saw both a heightened campaign against Dostoevsky, and Lukács's own attempts to recover from the Party's condemnation of his so-called "Blum theses," so it is unsurprising that other writers provided more viable ground for developing an already controversial defense of nineteenth century realism. In *The Theory of the Novel*, Lukács (much like Bakhtin) had placed hope for the vitality of literature in the *atypical* form of Dostoevsky's novels: his characters' removal from the everyday structures of social and professional life in the story and from "genetic" structures of narration in the discourse, into a "soul-world" of ideas. But in his later work, Lukács took on the opposite task: to define the

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89; 191 ff.) I have not ventured far into the polemics surrounding "reflection theory," whose basic points are concisely summarized in T. Eagleton, *Marxism and Literary Criticism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976), 48–54. My interest is primarily in the kind of relationship between text and world that Lukács posits in his analyses of realist novels, which is evidently committed to Lenin's metaphor of the artwork as a "mirror" of reality.

[47] K. Clark and G. Tihanov, "Soviet Literary Theories in the 1930s," in *A History of Russian Literary Theory and Criticism*, ed. E. Dobrenko and G. Tihanov (Pittsburgh, PA: U. of Pittsburgh Press, 2011), 114–117.

[48] See L. Sziklai, *After the Proletarian Revolution: Georg Lukács's Marxist Development, 1930–1945* (Budapest: Akademiai Kiado, 1992), 222–28; Tihanov, *Master and the Slave*, 15n49.

[49] Cf. *The Master and the Slave*, 185. G. Lukács, "Stavrogin's Confession," in *Reviews and Articles from* Die rote Fahne, trans. P. Palmer, 44–48 (London: Merlin Press, 1983).

narrative techniques of the *main* line of the realist novel so that they supported the claim of mimetic correspondence between novelistic structure and the structure of human history and life.

If in *The Theory of the Novel* Tolstoy's novels served to mark the unbridgeable gap between the "fallen" (European) novel genre and Dostoevsky's "epics," then in Lukács's Marxist essays, Tolstoy occupies the position of a threshold dividing "great" realism from its successors — including both true inheritors like Thomas Mann and Mikhail Sholokhov, and false or dubious ones, especially the naturalist and modernist writers Lukács whom reviled in many essays.[50] I want now to take a closer look at Tolstoy's position in Lukács's later understanding of realism through the essay "Tolstoy and the Problems of Realism," in which Lukács put many of his central claims about mimetic technique toward a sustained analysis of Tolstoy's novels and their protagonists.[51] It is fortuitous, for the larger comparative purposes of this chapter, that Lukács builds his argument about the relationship between novel form, character, and life in Tolstoy around the same metaphor Bakhtin employs for his analysis of the novels of Dostoevsky: many-voicedness, or "polyphony."

Lukács begins by asking how to explain the difference between Tolstoy's novels and those of Flaubert or Maupassant, who were his close contemporaries and shared his limited class perspective. In reply to this question, he proposes to place Lenin's characterization of Tolstoy as a "mirror of the Russian revolution" into a broader theoretical context:

> In the works of a great realist everything is linked up with everything else. Each phenomenon shows a polyphony (*Vielstimmigkeit*) of determinations, a polyphony in the intertwinement of the individual and social, of the physical and the psychical, of private and public, and so on. And because the polyphony of their composition goes beyond immediacy, the number of their *dramatis personae* is always more numerous than any playbill could show. The great realists always regard society from the viewpoint of a grasped living and mobile centre. And this centre is present, visibly or invisibly, in every phenomenon. Think of Balzac. He shows how capital, which he — correctly at that time — saw incarnated in financial capital, takes over power in France. From Gobseck to

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[50] On Lukács's ambivalent relationship in particular to socialist realism as a successor to "great" realism, and to Stalinist cultural policy, see Clark and Tihanov, especially the expanded Russian version of their article: "Sovietskie literaturnye teorii 1930kh godov: V poiskakh granits sovremennosti," in *Istoriia russkoi literaturnoi kritiki*, ed. E. Dobrenko and G. Tihanov (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2011), 284–97. See also G. Belaia, on the eventful history of the "epic" and "novel-epic [*roman-epopei*]" in Soviet literary criticism from the 1920s–1990s, and the paradox of Lukács's lukewarm relationship to much of the socialist realist literature that should in his theory have revitalized the epic genre ("Fokusnicheskoe ustranenie real'nosti," *Voprosy literatury* 1998 [no. 3]: 170–201); and Tihanov, *The Master and the Slave*, Chapter Six.

[51] Dated 1936, and first published as "*Leo Tolstoi und die Entwicklung des Realismus*" (*Internationale Literatur* nos. 10 and 11, Oct. and Nov. 1938); later the same year, as "*Tolstoi i razvitiie realizma*" (*Literaturnoe nasledstvo* vol. 35/36, 1939). The essay was also included in *K istorii realizma*, Moscow, 1939 and *Der russische Realismus in der Weltliteratur*, Berlin, 1949, in later editions under the title "Tolstoi und die Probleme des Realismus"

Nucingen, Balzac creates a long procession of the immediate representatives of this demoniacal force, which subjects everything to itself. But does this exhaust the power of financial capital in Balzac's world? Does Gobseck cease to rule when he leaves the stage? No, Balzac's world is permanently saturated with Gobseck and his like. . . . Tolstoy is the poet of the peasant revolt that lasted in Russia from 1861 to 1905. In his life-work the exploited peasant is this visible-invisible ever-present protagonist [*sichtbar-unsichtbare allgegenwärtige Gestalt*].[52]

"Polyphony of composition," then, designates a complex aesthetic structure: a work or group of works centered around a single phenomenon that necessarily expresses itself through diversity.

Lukács is not using this metaphor for the first time in "Tolstoy and the Problems of Realism." A similar image appears in *The Theory of the Novel*, when he discusses the "dramatic problem" around which an aesthetic totality can be organized: "The problem here is inexpressible because it is the concrete idea of the whole, because only the sounding-together of all the voices [*das Zusammenklingen aller Stimmen*] can carry the full wealth of content concealed in it" (*Theory*, 54; *Theorie*, 50).[53] But in the essay on Tolstoy he describes the same

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[52] G. Lukács, "Tolstoy and the Development of Realism," *Studies in European Realism*, trans. E. Bone (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1964 [1950], 145 [translation modified]. This edition abbreviated as *Studies* and cited parenthetically hereafter, with references to the corresponding German text where necessary. [Bei ihnen (*i.e., die bedeutende Realisten*) ist stets alles mit allem verknüpft. Jede Erscheinung hat eine Vielstimmigkeit der Bestimmungen, eine Vielstimmigkeit in der Verflechtung des Individuellen und des Gesellschaftlichen, des Körperlichen und des Seelischen, des Privaten und des Öffentlichen usw. Infolge dieser über die Unmittelbarkeit hinausgehenden Vielstimmigkeit ihrer Komposition ist die Zahl der "dramatis personae" stets grösser, als sie irgendein Theaterzettel aufzeigen könnte. Die großen Realisten betrachten die Gesellschaft stets von einem lebendig erfaßten beweglichen Zentrum aus. Und dieses Zentrum ist dann in allen Erscheinungen sichtbar oder unsichtbar gegenwärtig. Denken wir an Balzac. Er schildert den Prozeß der Machtergreifung durch das Kapital in Frankreich, das er — damals berechtigterweise — in dem Geldkapital verkörpert sieht. Balzac gestaltet von Gobseck bis Nucingen eine ganze Reihe der unmittelbaren Vertreter dieser dämonischen Macht, die sich alles unterwirft. Ist aber damit die Rolle des Geldkapitals in der Welt Balzacs erschöpft? Hört Gobseck auf zu herrschen, wenn er die unmittelbare Szene verläßt? Nein. Balzacs Welt ist stets und überall von Gobseck und seinen Genossen erfüllt. . . . Tolstoi ist der Dichter der Bauernempörung in Rußland von 1861 bis 1905. In seinem Lebenswerk ist der ausgebeutete Bauer diese sichtbar-unsichtbare allgegenwärtige Gestalt. (G. Lukács, *Werke*, Vol. 5, ed. F. Benseler and G. Markus [Neuwied and Berlin: Luchterhand, 1962-], 197–98). This edition cited parenthetically hereafter by volume and page.]

[53] The convergence here with Viach. Ivanov's (earlier) and Bakhtin's (later) image for the structure of Dostoevsky's novels is striking but not surprising; among other potential common inspirations, as L. Steinby points out, Romantic aesthetic thinkers often introduced musical composition as a metaphor for literary composition. Cf. L. Steinby, "Concepts of Novelistic Polyphony," in *Bakhtin and His Others: (Inter)subjectivity, Chronotope, Dialogism* (New York: Anthem Press, 2013), 42–45.

structure more concretely: a "*dramatis personae*" too numerous for a playbill, each illuminating different aspects of an "ever-present protagonist" who personifies the work's central problem. Lukács turns the idea of the novel's complex, self-enclosed aesthetic "totality" to a new account — it comes to mark the divorce not between novel and world, but between characters and author.

Similarly, in *The Theory of the Novel* the character's "objectivity," her apparent autonomy from her author's intentions, marked the author's stance of "irony," his acquiescence to the impossibility of *imposing* meaningful form. The aesthetic form that objectively dictates the character's trajectory was understood as a substitute for the divine order her author no longer finds outside the novel, and the character's autonomy measured (again) the difference between the bounded form of the novel and the stark formlessness of life. (Cf. *Theory*, esp. 75–76 and 90–93) In his Marxist studies of French and Russian realism, by contrast (including "Tolstoy and the Problems of Realism"), Lukács presents the realist character's independence from her author's conscious beliefs and intentions as another proof of the *resemblance* between the character's life in the novel and a corresponding life in the world: "The characters created by the great realists, once conceived in the vision of their creator, live an independent life of their own; their comings and goings, their development, their destiny is dictated by the inner dialectic of their social and individual existence. No writer is a great realist — or even a truly good writer, if he can direct the evolution of his own characters at will."[54] Realist novels represent social and historical problems not directly, through an author's straightforward stories about the kinds of characters concerned in them, but "polyphonically," through the immeasurably complex interrelations of a world of "independent" characters to each other and to the actual or virtual protagonist who embodies the problem the novel captures.

Lukács thus applies a very different emphasis than Bakhtin to the image of "polyphony." Where Bakhtin focuses on the *diversity* of "dramatis personae" who independently think out the central philosophical problems of Dostoevsky's novels, Lukács focuses on the "living and mobile center" from which Balzac's or Tolstoy's novels portray their worlds. Where for Bakhtin it is important that characters like Dostoevsky's seem to maximize the diversity of voices by forming their "own" approach to the central problem, for Lukács what is important is the marshaling of many diverse figures around a single, historically key master-figure or theme: "The profound realism of Tolstoy's world thus rests on his ability to present an extremely intricate and differentiated world and yet to make it quite clear, by poetical means, that underlying all this intricate diversity of manifestations there is a coherent, unified foundation to all human destinies" (*Studies*, 177; 5:232).[55] So where Bakhtin focuses on Dostoevsky's

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[54] Lukács, "Introduction," in *Studies*, 11. Lukács's introduction to this English-language collection of his essays is dated December 1948; I have been unable to determine from his bibliography whether its original was also published (G. Lukács, "Bibliography," compiled by M. Keiichi, available online at the Lukács Archive of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences Institute for Philosophical Research: http://web.phil-inst.hu/lua/archivum/de/Bibliographie.pdf). However, many formulations roughly parallel to those offered in this essay can be found in German in the foreword to *Balzac und der französische Realismus* (dated October 1951). For the comment on the "independent life" of realist characters, cf. 6:441.

[55] Of course, one might disagree with Lukács's identification of this central problem as "the peasant revolt," and Tolstoy's hidden "protagonist" as the exploited peasant. Lukács's method of

techniques for "freeing" characters from a centralizing authorial perspective, Lukács focuses on showing how Tolstoy's narration reinforces the sociohistorical "center" around which his characters revolve. His argument hinges on a reworking of what many critics consider the defining category of his theory of realism, the literary type.

In what Lukács calls the "old realism," authors "presented the typical by concentrating the essential determinants of a great social trend, embodying them in the passionate strivings of individuals, and placing these personages into extreme situations." The "extremes" of both plot and character served to exaggerate and magnify social and political forces so as to make them visible: the plot became "a poetic form of reflecting reality; i.e. that essential pattern which the relationships of human beings to each other, to society and to nature form in real life." (*Studies*, 168) Each typical character's being and biography thus worked as an index of the environment and historical moment that shaped its course. But post-1848 western European writers lost the ability to participate actively in the world created by capitalism, and so also the ability to conceive of this active, exaggerated form of reflection. Their types became averages — not extreme embodiments of "social trends," placed into the situations in which those trends could most fully unfold, but meticulously detailed *surface* portraits of the way things and people were.

Tolstoy's works too fall under these impoverished political and historical conditions. His protagonists, no less than Flaubert's, live in a "rigid, 'finished' world" where there is no chance of purposeful, effective social activity, and so no scope for the active extremes of a Balzacian plot. But the Russian realists, Lukács argues, struggled against the settled and finished quality of the world their novels represented. Tolstoy made narrative detail itself into a "vehicle" for extreme characters and plots:

> Tolstoy's extreme situations are extreme only intensively. And this intensity can be conveyed only if step by step, minute by minute, in a ceaseless back-and-forth, the moods and the dramatic fluctuation of the contradictions of life emerge beneath the mantle of the unchanging everyday. (*Studies*, 172 [translation modified])[56]

Each detail of Tolstoy's narratives is provided in order to shed light on the character-types whose lives have evoked it. And the weight of the novels' plots rests in these very characterological details, which reveal the minute articulations of everyday experiences or interactions between characters as "decisive emotional turning-points in the lives of people" (*Studies*, 174).

By folding the element of the typical or extreme into details rather than broad narrative strokes, contemplated possibilities rather than realized events, Lukács's Tolstoy turned inward

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reading Tolstoy seems to me to be separable from this specific claim. Nevertheless, considering the number and prominence of the dreams about peasants that haunt Tolstoy's protagonists (as well as the more explicit concerns of characters like Bolkonsky, Bezukhov, and Levin), Lukács's identification of the exploited peasant as Tolstoy's "visible-invisible ever-present protagonist" is suggestive.

[56] [Die Tolstoische extreme Situation ist aber nur intensiv extrem. Und diese Intensität kann nur dadurch gestaltet werden, daß Schritt für Schritt, von Minute zu Minute, in einem unablässigen Auf und Ab die Stimmungen, der dramatische Wandel der Widersprüche des Lebens unter der Decke des unbeweglichen Alltags zutage tritt. (5:226)]

the method of the "great realists." The typically-weighted fates of his protagonists unfold through tiny incidents — Anna's recognition that Karenin has prominent ears, or that Vronsky is disgusted by the way she holds her coffee cup. Their intense discussions of ideas do not spur the protagonists to action; they serve rather to expose, again and again, the potential actions the protagonists will never take, and the "force field [*Kraftfeld*]" in which each character's attitude toward these potential actions oscillates (*Studies*, 185; 5:240). Some characters, like Anna herself, do act on their impulses toward the dramatic and extreme. A character like Levin, however, emerges as "typical" not because he either dominates his peasants or joins them, but because at different times he contemplates and is swayed by both these extreme possibilities.

Typical "extremity" or exaggeration thus becomes linked not only to a historical and political context — in Tolstoy's case, the 1861–1905 peasant revolt — but also to a kind of interior representation and the characters who support it. Because "contained oscillation" is Tolstoy's primary device of characterization, a character's sensitivity to the possibilities for action that he *cannot* realize within his historical context is directly proportional to his centrality to the text, the "interest" that he holds for author and readers. These central figures, in turn, correspond to those "whom Tolstoy wants to represent as living human beings": "The lifelike quality, the inner richness of the characters rests on the fact that such extreme possibilities surface again and again, that the thorn of the conflict between social existence and consciousness never ceases to prick" (*Studies*, 179).[57]

In Lukács's account, then, Tolstoy's methods of characterization recapitulate in miniature the "polyphonic" construction of his novels. The novels send an enormous cast of characters into orbit around a central problem, but they also center on the core of protagonists whose diverse moods and thoughts most actively "oscillate" around forms of that problem, illuminating its aspects and possibilities. The very aesthetic form that looked, in *The Theory of the Novel*, like a mark of Tolstoy's unhappy separation from an immanent world here becomes a lengthening link between the complexity of his novels, and the complexity of the life they reflect. On the level of formal structure, "polyphonic" composition allows a realist novel to mirror the contours of historical reality, despite distorting authorial ideology; on the level of characterization, it compensates for *historical* conditions inimical (in Lukács's view) to the creation of realist types. Because a diversity of characters cannot illuminate the central problem through vivid action, *each* character does so through a diversity of vivid thought.

The result of this analysis is that Tolstoy figures as the harbinger of a new "epic," where the epic is partly a matter of style — a restoration of the "calm and stability" lacking in Balzac's dramatic novels (*Studies*, 179). Tolstoy's conversion into an epic novelist depends, then, on the very qualities the younger Lukács associated with the "fallen" world of the novel — the characters' entrapment in a limited social sphere, and the uncompromising "genetic" detail with which that entrapment (the causal logic of each of their actions) is narrated.[58]

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[57] [Die Lebendigkeit, der innere Reichtum dieser Gestalten rührt daher, daß diese extremen Möglichkeiten immer wieder auftauchen, daß der Stachel des Widerspruchs zwischen gesellschaftlichem Sein und Bewußtsein niemals zu schmerzen aufhört. (5:233)]

[58] This *stylistic* affinity with epic is evidently different from the "epic concentration of detail" that Tolstoy shares (according to Lukács) with Balzac and Scott. Lukács works out this idea most

Is there more to see here than political maneuvering? Certainly Lukács was using Tolstoy to tell a story about novel and epic whose next stage was socialist realism, and which was to end — some time in the indefinite future — with the novel's conversion into the epic of a "classless society." But he was also in the course of developing, in the context of Marxist aesthetic theory, a complex account of forms and techniques by which a novel reflects the intertwinement of people and forces in the world, independently of its author's explicit intention. This account entails a conception of mimetic character in relationship to theme and plot — of what makes a character "lifelike," her actions credibly "hers" — that I believe demands closer study.

Lukács's analysis of Tolstoy draws attention, in particular, to a seldom credited dimension of his approach to the realist type. Balzac's, Stendhal's, and Scott's earlier texts provide the foundation for Lukács's definition of the type — a figure that synthesizes and exaggerates the human qualities most prominently brought out at a given historical moment. In the type, "all the humanly and socially essential determinants are present on their highest level of development, in the ultimate unfolding of the possibilities latent in them, in extreme presentation of their extremes, rendering concrete the peaks and limits of men and epochs."[59] But his widely referenced descriptions of Balzac's techniques of "typical" characterization focus on devices of extremity or exaggeration — the qualities that cause characters to burst the bounds of their role in one novel to become the center of another, and that make them gesture outward, too, toward their real-world counterparts. In this conception, the typical for Lukács becomes what Christopher Prendergast has called an "ostensive" mimetic category — a way of *pointing* from the novel toward the extremes that readers will recognize and acknowledge from their own position in the world.[60]

Lukács's discussion of Tolstoy's novels and protagonists emphasizes, rather, the *closed* circle formed by each novel and the psyche of each individual character. Within this circle, any character emerges as typical only by her prominent relationship to a fixed central problem, and that prominence emerges (in turn) by comparison with a bounded group of other characters. The type here is not just treated as a particular figure pointing toward a general category; typicality, rather, emerges *from* and *within* the narrative and thematic constellations of characters of which the novel is composed.

In other words, as Lukács writes around the same time in "The Intellectual Physiognomy of the Character" ("*Die intellektuelle Physiognomie der künstlerischen Gestalten*"/

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fully in "Narrate or Describe?"; reprinted in *Writer and Critic*, ed. and trans. by A. Kahn, 110–148 (London: Merlin Press, 1978).

[59] G. Lukács, "Introduction," *Studies*, 6. Again, for a parallel formulation in German, see the 1951 foreword to *Balzac und der französische Realismus*: "Der Typus wird nicht infolge seiner Durchschnittlichkeit zum Typus, . . . sondern dadurch, daß in ihm alle menschlich und gesellschaftlich wesentlichen, bestimmenden Momente eines geschichtlichen Abschnitts zusammenlaufen, sich kreuzen, daß die Typenschöpfung diese Momente in ihrer höchsten Entwicklungsstufe, in der extremsten Entfaltung der in ihr sich bergenden Möglichkeiten aufweist, in der extremsten Darstellung von Extremen, die zugleich Gipfel und Grenzen der Totalität des Menschen und der Periode konkretisiert" (6:436).

[60] See especially C. Prendergast, *The Order of Mimesis: Balzac, Stendhal, Nerval, Flaubert* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 32–36.

"*Intellektual'nyi oblik literaturnogo geroia*," 1936), typicality can be understood in part as a *formal* quality, which becomes apparent through internal relationships between the characters of a work: "The typical does not exist in isolation.. . . . A character becomes typical only in comparison with and contrast to other characters who, with more or less intensification, evoke other phases and aspects of the same contradictions decisive to their lives and careers also."[61]

Here, then, Lukács uses the concept of the realist type to designate the underlying relationship between a figural character and the central problem — the "visible-invisible ever-present protagonist" — of her novel, and the way this relationship becomes clear, in turn, from the representation of that character in relation to the novel's other characters. For him the language of typicality overlaps with that of mimesis — "vividness," the "lifelike," resemblance to a "living human being" — and also of narrative centrality, with which it is closely linked. So even though, fundamentally, the term type signals a relationship between a particular fictional character and a general social/historical category, in "Tolstoy and the Problems of Realism" Lukács focuses more closely on the question of how the *impression* of a character's typicality emerges within narrative. This shift lets him treat typicality almost as an aesthetic end in itself — a way of pinpointing narrative and technical qualities that make a character "interesting," vivid, or alive.

Indeed, later (neo-)Marxist critics have developed this relational or "polyphonic" dimension of realist typification, sometimes in explicit polemic with the apparent rigidity of Lukács' conception of the type.[62] It reemerges most obviously in what Fredric Jameson, and

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[61] G. Lukács, "The Intellectual Physiognomy of the Character," in *Writer and Critic*, 159. [Isoliert betrachtet gibt es dichterisch überhaupt keinen Typus. . . .Die Gestalt des Dichters wird also typisch nur im Vergleich, im Gegensatz zu anderen Gestalten, die andere Stufen, andere Erscheinungsweisen desselben Widerspruches, der ihr Schicksal verursacht, ebenfalls in mehr oder weniger extremer Weise aufzeigen. (4:161)]

[62] Cf. Jameson's comment that "Lukács' theory of typification. . . can nonetheless be said to be incomplete on two counts; on the one hand, it fails to identify the typifying of characters as an essentially allegorical phenomenon. . . On the other, it implies an essentially one-to-one relationship between individual characters and their social or historical reference, so that the possibility of something like a *system* of characters remains unexplored" (*The Political Unconscious* [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981], 162). It is striking that Jameson does not cite "Tolstoy and the Problems of Realism" in his recent account of characterization and the changeability or "oscillation" of "affect" in Tolstoy, though he explores some substantially similar ground: F. Jameson, *The Antinomies of Realism* (London and New York: Verso, 2013), Chapter 4. Woloch, while citing a number of the passages in which Lukács adumbrates the idea of relational typification, does not pursue Lukács's own attempt to connect typicality (conceived as an individual representing a category) with its *emergence through* narrative technique. Rather, Woloch explores the interplay between what he calls "static" and "dynamic" typicality: between a concrete individual who consolidates a type, and the field of others in his narrative belonging to the same type, who threaten to re-disperse him. Cf. A. Woloch, *The One vs. the Many* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 246–260 and 370 n.18. More recent readings move further in the direction of acknowledging the relational dimension of Lukács's Marxist theory of realism: see especially Yoon Sun Lee's subtle discussion of time and form in "Tolstoy

more recently Alex Woloch, have each termed a "character-system." Jameson's character-system focuses on the "semic production of characters" — on the ways that the relationships established between Balzac's semi-allegorical characters through the novel's plot mark out a *sub*-narrative, historically-conditioned ideological field. Woloch's takes narrative as a resource that can only be unevenly distributed among *persons* in the story, and that thus creates an asymmetrically-realized group of characters. Casting these senses of the "character-system" back into the language of "Tolstoy and the Problems of Realism," we might say that Jameson has found a way of conceptualizing each character's position in relation to the hidden but ever-present thematic "protagonist" of a novel; Woloch, each character's dynamic relationship to the novel's *actual* protagonist, as defined by the distribution of limited narrative space.

Lukács's image of realist "polyphony" attempts to hold together both these dimensions of the character-system. It is perhaps the very equivocation in his understanding of typicality as both an absolute and an emergent quality — of the type as both a free-standing representative of some larger sociohistorical category, and the effect of a bounded narrative's unfolding — that allows him to keep together what Jameson and Woloch will, later, develop separately. Reading Lukács on Tolstoy, we see that the idea of the type (if anything) *lacks* rigidity; it works here as a device to hold together all the elements, both formal and referential, woven into text and free-standing, that are essential to the mimetic character. Though his reading of Tolstoy is not the foundation for his theory of realism, his interest in the *mechanism* of Tolstoyan reflection points us toward one of that theory's richest elements: the attempt to account technically for the vivid "autonomy" of characters trapped in the enchanted circles of their texts.

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One result of Lukács's account of characterization was to complicate the set opposition between Dostoevsky and Tolstoy that his early work (like Bakhtin's) had left largely intact. When Lukács at length returned to Dostoevsky, it was to stage a convergence between his novels and the whole line of realism from which Lukács had earlier distinguished him.

In the short essay "Dostoevsky" ("Dostojewski," 1943), Lukács diagnoses the "divorce between the lonely individual and the life of the people" as the dominant theme of *all* "bourgeois literature in the second half of the nineteenth century."[63] Tolstoy and Dostoevsky together are credited with raising this problem "in all its depth and breadth" — Tolstoy painting the rural rift between landowner and peasants; Dostoevsky, the urban one between the miserable of Petersburg and the "old life of the people." The telling differences Lukács had seen in their narration fade; now Dostoevsky too makes the "problem of genesis. . . decisive," and the characters' "urban misery" is causally linked to their moral deformation. ("Dostoevsky," 153-55)

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and the Problems of Realism" ("Temporalized Invariance: Lukács and the Work of Form," in *Georg Lukács: The Fundamental Dissonance of Existence*, ed. T. Bewes and T. Hall, 17–35 [London and New York: Continuum, 2011]); and, in the same volume, Patrick Eiden-Offe's "Typing Class: Classification and Redemption in Lukács's Political and Literary Theory" (ibid., 65–78).

[63] G. Lukács, "Dostoevsky," in *Dostoevsky: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. R. Wellek (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1962), 154. The essay, first published in Hungarian, was included in *Der russische Realismus in der Weltliteratur* (Berlin, 1949). Wellek's English translation is abbreviated "Dostoevsky" and cited in the text hereafter.

Lukács thus offers us an unfamiliar spectacle: a Dostoevsky who intensifies and exaggerates, rather than fundamentally reversing, Tolstoy's relationship to his characters.

> Sometimes, rather frequently, the political journalist wins out over the poet: the natural dynamics of [Dostoevsky's] characters, dictated by his vision — independently of his conscious aims — and not by his will are violated and distorted to fit his political opinions. . . . But very frequently the result is rather the opposite. The characters emancipate themselves and lead their own lives to the very end, to the most extreme consequences of their inborn nature. . . . Only there does the depth and correctness of Dostoevsky's questioning assert itself fully. It is a revolt against that moral and psychic deformation of man which is caused by the evolution of capitalism. Dostoevsky's characters go to the end of the socially necessary self-distortion unafraid, and their self-dissolution, their self-execution, is the most violent protest that could have been made against the organization of life in that time. . . .Thus the world of Dostoevsky's characters dissolves his political ideas into chaos. ("Dostoevsky," 156; 158)[64]

The extreme but contained, intellectual oscillation of Tolstoy's characters becomes the *lived* extremes of Dostoevsky's (and in this respect, Dostoevsky continues the dramatic tradition of Balzac's novels). Tolstoy's involution of narrated detail turns out to serve the same purpose as Dostoevsky's narrative "chaos." Dostoevsky's characters thus make polyphonic composition vividly explicit, acting out the structure that liberates the world of *any* great realist novel, as Lukács argues, from direct fidelity to its author's worldview.

In returning to Dostoevsky, Lukács also returns to the rhetoric of characterological "emancipation" from and protest against the author that he shared with so many other post-Symbolist readers of Dostoevsky, including Bakhtin. But carried outside the context of Dostoevsky's novels, his account of the autonomy of realist characters follows a sharply different line of reasoning. In the composition of a realist novel around a particular contradiction or problem, Lukács finds a network of relationships whose complexity transcends authorial control, rather than a network of subjects written so as to seem independent of it.

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[64] [Nicht selten siegtet politische Publizist Dostojewskij über den Dichter: die natürliche, die von seiner Vision und nicht von seinem Wollen diktierte, die von seinen bewußten Zielen unabhängige Dynamik der Gestalten wird vergewaltigt und den politischen Ansichten entsprechend zurechtgebogen. . . .Sehr oft aber ist das Resultat gerade entgegengesetzt. Die Gestallten machen sich selbständig, führen ihr eigenes Leben zu Ende, bis zu den äußersten Konsequenzen ihres eingeborenen Wesens. . . Erst hier kommt die Tiefe und Richtigkeit von Dostojewskijs Fragestellung wirklich zur Geltung. Sie ist eine Revolte gegen jene moralische und seelische Deformation der Menschen, die die kapitalistische Entwicklung hervorgerufen hat. Dostojewskijs Gestalten gehen den Weg der sozial notwendigen Selbstverzerrung unerschrocken zu Ende, und ihre Selbstauflösung, ihre Selbsthinrichtung ist der flammendste Protest, der gegen die Lebenseinrichtung dieser Zeit erhoben werden konnte. . . .So löst die gestaltete Welt Dostojewskijs seine politischen Ideale in ein Chaos auf. (5:174; 175)]

Lives in Theory: Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's Characters in Bakhtin and Lukács

Lukács was plainly distancing himself from his former worldview when he wrote, in his preface to the 1962 edition of *The Theory of the Novel*: "The fact that the book culminates in its analysis of Tolstoy, as well as the author's view of Dostoevsky, who, it is claimed, 'did not write novels,' clearly indicate that the author was not looking for a new literary form, but, quite explicitly, for a 'new world.' We have every right to smile at such primitive utopianism, but it expresses nonetheless an intellectual tendency that was part of the reality of that time" (*Theory of the Novel*, 20; *Theorie des Romans*, 15). Something of this utopian weight, however, seems to remain attached to Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's novels in Lukács's criticism of the 1920s-1940s. Here as in *The Theory of the Novel*, though on quite different theoretical terms, the ideal of mimesis takes on almost miraculous dimensions. By writing novels that, like epics, reflect the world — even a world at the stage of its history with the least potential for positive action or change — Tolstoy and Dostoevsky expose the teleological narrative of *historical* necessity and progress that stands behind the real possibility of *literary* reflection.

Whether or not we follow Lukács so far, it is important to explore the model of characterization he offered in support of his mimetic ideal. I have suggested that one intriguing corollary to his concept of "type" is the implication that the mimetic dimension of characters — their resemblance to living persons — emerges *through* formal relationships, rather than being suppressed or distorted by them. Lukács argues that the lifelike quality of Tolstoy's characters, that which makes them reflect reality despite the limitations of their author's worldview, springs precisely from their frustrated (social and narrative) entrapment: because they cannot be absolutely typical, literally extreme, they are typical and extreme in relation to one another.

This form of "polyphony" skirts the Dostoevskian "soul living its own life," his characters who "emancipate themselves and lead their own lives to . . . the most extreme consequences of their inborn nature," in favor of protagonists whose very extremity is an effect dependent on the network of characters and situations into which they are placed. Conceived for characters who belong to Tolstoy's line rather than Dostoevsky's, it represents an alternative to the Bakhtinian idea of novel-characters (and eventually, entire novels) that affect us "almost like the personal address of a living person." What Lukács develops, rather, is a theory of the novel's relationship to the world that *foregrounds* its characters' status as images, the inseparability of their mimetic quality from the text that sets them in bounded relation to one another. If Lukács, like Merezhkovsky before him, paints the unyielding circumscription of Tolstoyan mimesis as a torment — a "thorn" that "never ceases to prick" (*Studies*, 179) — he also casts it as a central technical resource of the realist novel.

Conclusion

This chapter has aimed to trace the changing lives that Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's characters led in the foundational novel theories of Georg Lukács and Mikhail Bakhtin. I have argued that Bakhtin and Lukács began from an account of Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's characters, and the opposition between them, that was widespread in the wake of early twentieth century Symbolist criticism. The vision of Dostoevsky's characters as autonomous speaking voices, and Tolstoy's as captive but luminous images, stands behind both Lukács's and Bakhtin's analyses of their novels. But I have also tried to point out a chiasmus in the easy oppositions of Tolstoy to Dostoevsky, Lukács to Bakhtin. Lukács was invested in demonstrating the mimetic autonomy of

Tolstoy's "typical" characters from his enfolding worldview, just as Bakhtin was invested in reading Dostoevsky's characters as *both* human voice and aesthetic image at once. For each theorist, then, the paired example of these characters strikes at the root of a common problem: how can realist novels work equally as a form to be contemplated, and a force that bears an active (social, ethical, epistemological) relationship to the world of the reader?

The theoretical solutions at which Bakhtin and Lukács arrived were, in some senses, diametrically opposed. In the end, the extra-aesthetic force of the novel according to Bakhtin lies in its formal capacity for dialogic "speech," its more or less direct intercourse with "the ongoing event of current life" ("Epic and Novel," 31; 3:634). And the force of the novel for the Marxist Lukács lies in its capacity for a particular form of "typical" reflection, a quality that emerges in part through its self-contained complexity as a work of art. At times in each theory, the governing metaphors of speech and reflection are strongly associated either with Dostoevsky's characters, or with Tolstoy's. But in both cases, the opposition between these characters turns out to be largely provisional. Just as Bakhtin, in "Epic and Novel," describes *all* novels as made in the image of Dostoevsky's protagonists, so Lukács, in his essays of the 1930s, extends the quality of true reflection to *all* "great" realists. The technical distinction between Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's mimetic strategies becomes less crucial than the achievement of mimesis itself.

In this respect, dominant readings of Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's characters provided the instruments, at specific points in Bakhtin's and Lukács's intellectual trajectories, for negotiating an ambiguity that (as Stephen Halliwell has argued) inheres in the very concept of "mimesis": is the mimetic artwork a heterocosm that recapitulates, or an image that reflects, reality? Is its task to actively draw us into its own fictive world, or to throw back a clear picture of our real one?[65] Lukács's and Bakhtin's *character-based* theories of mimesis project the struggle between these two possible interpretations as a kind of drama. Bakhtin makes the keynote of Dostoevsky's narrative world his imagined characters' resistance to being "imaged," their technical capacity to draw readers into a representation apparently made on their own, not the author's, terms. Conversely, in his description of Tolstoy's characters, Lukács understands their very typicality — that which allows them to mirror reality — as a function of their social and narrative entrapment in a closed "heterocosm," a network of never-realized possibilities.

The scholar Gary Saul Morson has recently opined that "Bakhtin inherited the moral urgency of Russian literature and turned it into a theory." The premise behind this argument is that both Bakhtin and the Russian novelists he analyzed considered the novel, first and foremost, an ethical experience — an open encounter with the "possible people" evoked through novelistic narration, yielding lessons that carry over to real people in the present world.[66] My discussion in this chapter has aimed to show that this kind of approach to the Russian novel and Bakhtin's account of it, while privileging character above all other devices, also elides an element of mimetic characterization of which both Bakhtin and Lukács were intensely aware: its essential dependence on the context of the novel as a bounded aesthetic object. Concealed as a precondition of Bakhtin's analysis of Dostoevsky, the aesthetic dimension of characterization

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[65] S. Halliwell, *The Aesthetics of Mimesis* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002). See fuller discussions in the Introduction and Chapter One of this dissertation (p. 1 ff.; p. 34n13).

[66] G.S. Morson, "At Last: Bakhtin and the Teaching of Literature," *Research in the Teaching of English* 41:3 (Feb. 2007): 350–57.

lies closer to the surface in Lukács's discussion of Tolstoy, which posits an affinity between the sealed, complex "totality" of the realist novel, and that of human history.

Following Bakhtin and Lukács through their readings of Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's characters, we do, I think, thus find a clear inheritance. But what they inherited was less an uncomplicated sense of the moral urgency of the novel, than the *problem* of how this urgency emerges from and can be reconciled with the novel's status as a work of art. If for both Tolstoy and Dostoevsky (as I have argued), this problem marks a boundary of the novel and a breaking-point of its form, then for Lukács and Bakhtin it marks a point of departure. For each theorist, at key points, Tolstoy's or Dostoevsky's characters become a "living" emblem of how the novel's very bounded aesthetic status could underwrite its active relationship with reality.

My discussion in this dissertation began from two linked questions about the representation of character and the workings of aesthetic education in the realist novel. First, what creates and sustains the illusion of a novelistic character's autonomous "life" — the sense that she exists in and for herself, independent of narrative design and even of narrative language? And second, how do realist novels experiment with the *uses* of this illusion and run up against its limits? I have argued that these questions come together particularly clearly in the Russian realist tradition, and above all in the novels of Leo Tolstoy and Fyodor Dostoevsky. With their intensely vivid characters and exceptionally ambitious designs on the reader, Dostoevsky's and Tolstoy's novels exploit and extend the novel genre's resources for making protagonists appear to "live" on their own terms. Pursuing representational projects that carry their novels into the realms of history, social commentary, religion, philosophy, and myth, both authors (in very different ways) stretched techniques of lifelike characterization beyond the realist novel's habitual protagonists: to the crowds of soldiers, shopkeepers, and peasants on the margins of *War and Peace*'s fictional plot; to the transitional, "accidental" figures that crowd *The Adolescent*, monstrously unmoored from any source of social or narrative authority; and finally, to the Karamazov brothers as archetypal seekers after Christ. My analyses have shown how each novel, in support of these projects, sets its own innovative conditions for reading some characters as "living" in relation to others. But I hope also to have demonstrated that these very innovations expose a seldom appreciated tension between the absorbing illusion of "living" characters that novels create, and the lasting claims they make on the reader's definition of her own reality.

In Tolstoy's case, the stability and strength of the illusion of characters' "lives" are a feat of omniscient narration. The narrator *tells* us which figures breathe, think, and feel, and which ones function as lifeless mechanisms of politics, society, and (not least) narrative. This authority reaches out at last to remake the very terms of novelistic representation: the theory of history that Tolstoy presents in *War and Peace* doubles as a logic for reading the "life" of the novel's most anonymous marginal characters, and the "life" of its fictional protagonists, as equally vivid and compelling. I argue that Tolstoy's bid for all-embracing mimetic representation, which would transcend the terms of the novel's fictional plot and ultimately of fictionality itself, is only but absolutely limited by the limitations of novelistic narrative. The contrasts *War and Peace* sets up between characters, and the disparities between the narrative "spaces" it accords them, are meaningful only within the very narrative bounds that those techniques work to make us forget.

Dostoevsky's late novels, in explicit dialogue with Tolstoy's, work to produce just as strong an illusion of autonomous and vivid characters, without recourse to the anachronistic authority of an omniscient narrator. Dostoevsky relies on indirect techniques of characterization — the character's "own" speech and worldview, rather than a narrator's repeated descriptions — to create his figures and motivate each one's place in the character-systems of his novels. Particularly in his two final novels, he uses this method to experiment not (like Tolstoy) with ways of *expanding* a novel's narrative to animate an unprecedented number of its characters, but still more radically, with ways of appearing to cut vivid representation off from the static textual nature of novelistic narrative itself. Moving the burden of characterization almost entirely onto the character's "own" language, he writes characters that also appear to be almost free-standing,

independent of the language in which they are written and the narratives into which they are set. Through such protagonists, and particularly in *The Brothers Karamazov,* the private experience of reading the precise, set text of a novel moves perhaps as close as it can to a communal encounter with the figures of oral legend or myth. But this illusion too, as I have argued, is ultimately limited by the medium that creates it. Still, albeit stealthily, using contrasts between characters and the spaces into which they are set to create the illusion of their reality, Dostoevsky ties the particular experience of his characters to the act of reading particular novelistic texts.

The works I've analyzed thus expose the boundaries of the novelistic character-system by colliding with them, in what I suggest is an impossible (though astonishingly rich) attempt to make the compellingly "real" figures of novels merge with the crowds of history or the archetypes of myth. But in canonical works of novel theory, Mikhail Bakhtin and Georg Lukács present the "living" protagonists that Tolstoy and Dostoevsky created as the height of what the novel genre can achieve, and moreover, as paradigms that demonstrate how *character* is the clearest mechanism the realist novel has for reflecting and transforming the world of its readers. My final chapter attempted to show that a key, though often minimized, appeal to the frame of the detached aesthetic experience of novel-reading underwrites both Bakhtin's and Lukács's understanding of the social and intellectual realizations that readers can achieve through encounters with Dostoevsky's and Tolstoy's characters. If (as I argue) both theorists would agree that our experience of vividly "living" characters depends on techniques that play on our absorption in a novel's bounded text, it is not clear how our engagement with these characters comes to have an affect beyond the bounds of that absorption, in the reader's conduct and understanding of her day-to-day life. This unanswered question marks a meeting-point between Bakhtin's and Lukács's theories, and the abiding preoccupations of the novels that they analyze.

In my discussions of both novels and theories, I hope to have shown how much there still is to say about what is often taken for granted as the realist novel's most basic and transformative illusion: the character who seems to "live" entirely in and for himself. Our critical sense of what such characters are like — partly as filtered through theorists like Lukács and Bakhtin — is strongly shaped by Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's novels. My readings have explored their versatile techniques for creating the mimetic illusion of character, and also their productive doubts about that illusion's ultimate reach. In Tolstoy's *War and Peace* and Dostoevsky's *The Adolescent* and *The Brothers Karamazov*, we find no easy alliance between the novel's resources for sustaining "autonomous," "flesh-and-blood" characters, and the transformations *these* novelists hoped to work on their readers. Their philosophical, moral, and social ambitions are both driven and vexed by the capacity to weave lifelike characters that lies at the novel's generic core.

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