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# *A New Word on* **The Brothers Karamazov**

Edited by Robert Louis Jackson  
With an introductory essay by Robin Feuer Miller  
and a concluding one by William Mills Todd III



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## Refiguring the Russian Type: Dostoevskȳ and the Limits of Realism

IN THE PROLOGUE to *The Brothers Karamazov*, Dostoevsky warns the reader apologetically that

while I do call Alexei Fyodorovich my hero, still, I myself know that he is by no means a great man . . . The thing is that he does, perhaps, make a figure, but a figure of an indefinite, indeterminate sort. . . . One thing, perhaps, is rather doubtless: he is a strange man, even an odd one. But strangeness and oddity will sooner harm than justify any claim to attention, especially when everyone is striving to unite particulars and to find at least some general sense in the universal senselessness. Whereas an odd man is most often a particular and isolated case.<sup>1</sup>

Like much in Dostoevsky's coy and cryptic foreword, this paragraph takes some sorting out. Dostoevsky claims that the contemporary tendency is "to unite particulars" and find "general sense," that is, to synthesize the chaos of empirical facts into a cogent image that represents both the whole and its particulars. However, he only tentatively asserts that Alyosha "makes a figure" at all, and an "indefinite, indeterminate" one at that. Moreover, this figure is not representative of the whole, but eccentric to it, "a particular and isolated case."

Despite his singularity, however, Alyosha is still typical:

For not only is an odd man "not always" a particular and isolated case, but, on the contrary, it sometimes happens that it is precisely he, perhaps, who 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. (*BK*, 3)

Dostoevsky is implying that, although empirical data can be synthesized into a coherent, unified image, this image might actually be false or "torn away," while an image that seems eccentric to historical reality might turn out to be its "heart." Paradoxically, the improbable hero Alyosha might turn out to be more essential, more real, than his more typical brethren taken

from empirical reality. Empirical reality turns out to be mistaken concerning its own essence and therefore illusory. Indeed, what Dostoevsky presents is not only a logical paradox but also a literary one: Dostoevsky implies recognition of and fidelity to the realist tradition of the type while proclaiming the type's limitations. In what follows, I examine the concept of type in Dostoevsky, especially in *The Brothers Karamazov*, and with reference to the thought of Yury Lotman, Mikhail Bakhtin, and Robert Louis Jackson.

It has long been recognized that Dostoevsky's characterizations stand in complex relation to those of European realism. Dostoevsky's characters are undoubtedly types, but at the same time they are profoundly individual, eccentric, even improbable. One might note that this use of type was to a certain degree traditional in Russian literature. Yury Lotman identified a similar use of type in Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin* and in the literary tradition it engendered, which sought to augment the sense of authenticity or veracity of characters by freeing them from the literary convention of harmony and completion. Since reality was unpredictable, so should its representative be. Next to the open-ended character, even the author ended up seeming like an observer on the outside looking in on the world of the novel; the author was in the same predicament as the reader, and the world of the novel became seen as "a fragment of living life."<sup>2</sup> The book therefore was seen to participate in historical life, and the formation of the characters was completed only by their afterlife in the consciousness and lives of the readership. For Lotman, "Pushkin's task . . . [was] not to turn life into a text, but the text into life."<sup>3</sup>

In a passage that echoes Dostoevsky's prologue to *The Brothers Karamazov*, Lotman wrote:

Earlier, there was a tendency to view life as a series of disconnected observations and to regard the artist as the one who could see the underlying unity or harmony; now [i.e., after *Eugene Onegin*] the reverse occurred. To the ordinary observer man seemed simple and noncontradictory and life appeared unified, while the artist saw that "which unheeding eyes see not"—tragic ruptures and profound contrasts.<sup>4</sup>

In the Russian tradition, the type referred less to a statistical average of some social group than to the individuals who were emerging from the mass, often in direct challenge to it. For Lotman, the very concretization of this "rupture" (Lotman's term) was itself an important catalyst in the transformation of the individual in Russian society—in the development of individual consciousness. For example, chronologically, Onegin and Pechorin preceded the social phenomenon of the "superfluous man," and it is an open question whether these literary characters merely predicted this phenomenon or actually created it, or perhaps both in equal measure. Furthermore,

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the appearance of a new "type" in literature meant that, from its very genesis, it was endowed with a particular semantic aura: the type of the isolated individual entered Russian cultural self-awareness not as a neutral fact, some disembodied constituency, but embedded in a broad depiction of its particular place and even of its specific consequences. Similarly, Dostoevsky's types were not born typical, but they became typical as they spread out into the world. The artistic type according to this conception is less *mimesis* than *mathesis*, less a mode of representation than revelation and a mode of learning.<sup>5</sup>

Dostoevsky's novels are filled with recurring kinds of characters, who, though differing in individual traits, largely fall into the classification elaborated by Leonid Grossman:

They are the thinkers and dreamers, the humiliated girls, the sensualists, the voluntary buffoons, the doubles, the underground men, the Russian broad nature ("the impetuous ones"), the pure in heart, the righteous ("the most wise teachers of life"), the outcasts, the shady dealers, the virtuosi of investigating detectives and the court, the nihilists, the proud and meek women, the impressionable children and meditative adolescents.<sup>6</sup>

The impression is that of a Dickensian gallery of conventionalized social types, similar, perhaps, to what one finds in Gogol. Dostoevsky, however, was critical of "the gruesome world of the Gogolian masquerade—whose participants were not real people but masks."<sup>7</sup>

While they may sometimes seem susceptible to categorization according to social position and general sentiment, in their rich individuality Dostoevsky's characters depart from the typical in the sense of the statistical average; they are famously neurotic, pathological, exaggerated; in a word, improbable. It was for this that Ivan Goncharov upbraided Dostoevsky in his famous 1874 letter to the writer: "You say yourself that 'such a type is arising'; forgive me if I let myself note a contradiction here. If it is arising, then it is not yet a *type*."<sup>8</sup> As Donald Fanger comments, "For a realist like Goncharov, the mere fact that a character may *seem* improbable already constitutes an artistic fault."<sup>9</sup>

In his own defense, Dostoevsky appealed to a concept of realism based less upon observation than upon intuition, moreover an intuition not so much into the general tendency of society than into its future human progeny, which, even if numerically unique, would be fully justifiable, explicable, in a word, typical, like the pinnacle of a vast and unsurveyable mountain. Fanger again comments:

The realist in a higher sense . . . is looking for the adumbration of just those types Goncharov claims do not yet exist—looking not for the statistical average, or the recognizably universal, but rather for the statistical exception and the new guise of the universal that is just coming to birth.<sup>10</sup>

As shown by the rather uninspiring Oblomov and Stolz, Goncharov's types are closed, limited in their capabilities by their initial potential, by their type. Dostoevsky's characters, as Fanger observes, "are compounded of contradictions, always in flux, always liable to realize in action some potentiality hitherto dormant."<sup>11</sup>

This dilemma can be illustrated by the character of Ivan Karamazov, the bedeviled Russian *intelligent* of *The Brothers Karamazov*. In some respects, Ivan is typical in the traditional realist sense. His roots lie in the intellectual climate of the 1840s; in his famous refusal of a "ticket" to God's salvation, he explicitly echoes the sentiments of Belinsky regarding the unjustifiability of human suffering.<sup>12</sup> In 1902, Sergei Bulgakov wrote of Ivan: "Of the entire gallery of types of the novel this image is closest and most akin to us, the Russian intelligentsia; we ourselves experience the pain of his sufferings, we understand his needs."<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, while no one was surprised to see a Russian *intelligent* of the 1860s dissecting frogs in Turgenev's *Fathers and Children*, few would find it typical for the intelligentsia of any time to be publishing articles on theocracy in the ecclesiastical press, as had Ivan. The possibility that Ivan had as his prototype Vladimir Solovyov illustrates Dostoevsky's approach to the type. Dostoevsky was quite impressed by the young Solovyov as an exception to the rule of Russian intellectuals, and he hoped that Solovyov's example would be followed.<sup>14</sup> At the same time, the precarious foundation of Ivan's religious thought—Zosima intuits that Ivan does not even believe in God—would indicate an astute estimation of the inherent ambivalence of modernist religious thought. It was quite prescient of Dostoevsky to foresee the significance of religious issues for the intelligentsia of the 1900s, but even more prescient for him to intuit the inner contradictions of their religious belief and their incompatibility with the more forthright piety of the established church. With the generation of Bulgakov, Florensky, and Rozanov, Ivan *became* typical to a far greater degree than he *was* typical at the time of Solovyov's generation. On the other hand, nobody contributed to the spread of this type more than Dostoevsky himself, whose final novel became the source of continual inspiration for the generation of Bulgakov, Berdiaev, Viacheslav Ivanov, and countless others. The religious intellectual of the early 1900s was just as indebted to Dostoevsky as the superfluous men were to Pushkin and Lermontov. These authors intuited and described these abnormal types.

Thus the problem of type requires a more sophisticated conceptualization, for which I shall refer to the works of Robert Louis Jackson and Mikhail Bakhtin. Jackson focuses on the temporal vector, so to speak, of Dostoevsky's characterization:

Type for Dostoevsky is the artistic medium through which the artist reveals the dynamics of reality, the configuration not only of the past, but also of the future, as it is disclosed in the indications of the present.<sup>15</sup>

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The artist, writes Jackson, "must be a historian of the future . . . The problem content and the spiritual ideals of reality, poetically visualized (formed) by the artist, come back to reality in type and serve, in turn, to educate and re-form man."<sup>16</sup> This statement echoes Dostoevsky's words to his young friend Evgeny Opochinin: "They say that the artistic work must reflect life, and so forth. All that is rubbish: the writer (the poet) creates life, a life in such full amplitude as did not exist before him."<sup>17</sup> I shall return below to this idea, that Dostoevsky's types are "formed" in order that they might "re-form" man, which points to what I call their quality of mathesis.

First, though, I must review Bakhtin's conceptualization of Dostoevsky's types. Here one finds an interesting tension in Bakhtin's construction, between the temporal or phenomenal "unfinalizability" of Dostoevsky's characters and their rather finalized inner content. On the count of unfinalizability, Bakhtin seems to mean that no character can ever be pinned down, defined, and limited by anyone outside of his innermost self, not even by his own consciousness. By way of an example, Bakhtin cites Liza's reproach of Alyosha after the latter deigns to predict that Ilyusha's father will finally overcome his pride and accept charity:

Listen, Aleksei Fyodorovich. Isn't there in all our analysis—I mean your analysis . . . no, better call it ours—aren't we showing *contempt* for him, for that poor man—in *analyzing his soul like this*, as it were, *from above*, eh? In deciding so *certainly* that he will take the money?<sup>18</sup>

The ultimate closing judgment of a man is uttered in a court of law, and Bakhtin notes what "bad psychologists" the authorities at Dmitri's trial are, when they assume that they have defined and delimited "the unfinalized and undecided core of Dmitri's personality."<sup>19</sup>

At the same time, however, these comments of Bakhtin refer less to Dostoevsky's characters as such than to their various statements *about* human character. Bakhtin tends to treat Dostoevsky's novels less as art than as literary-tracts in which the characters are mouthpieces of ideology. In his analyses of works, Bakhtin himself would appear to delimit and limit each character in Dostoevsky by assigning him a particular "idea" toward the embodiment of which the character strives.

And in this resolution of a thought (an idea) lies their entire real life and their own personal unfinalizability. If one were to think away the idea in which they live, their image would be totally destroyed. In other words, the image of the hero is inseparably linked with the image of an idea and cannot be detached from it. We *see* the hero in the idea and through the idea, and we *see* the idea in him and through him,<sup>20</sup>

Here one clearly sees the influence upon Bakhtin of such conceptions as that of Boris Engelgardt, who viewed Dostoevsky's works less as character dramas than as "ideological novels." While, like Jackson, Bakhtin sees Dos-

toevsky's characters as oriented toward the future, it is in a sense a closed, predetermined future; it is the future expression of a predetermined content. Characters are, in Bakhtin's term, "images of ideas," and Dostoevsky's novels received their inner dynamics from the "quarrel" that resulted between "ideas and worldviews, which in real life were absolutely estranged and deaf to one another."<sup>21</sup> The plot is the unfolding of these ideological standpoints; understanding the plot is equated with Bakhtin's ideology. This, in effect, is Bakhtin's concept of dialogue. He concentrates on the form of the dialogue and the idea of the dialogue but fails to see that the specific ideological dialogues of Dostoevsky's works must remain open to another, unpredictable participant—the reader—in order for them to remain effective as works of art. Dostoevsky's novels may be character-driven narratives, but they are still narratives, which, by ordering the world, order the reader's consciousness, making sense of reality and communicating meaning.

It may be concluded, then, that Bakhtin's conception of Dostoevsky's characters shares surprisingly much with the realist view expressed by Goncharov, in that although the characters may develop in a unique manner, they are based upon and limited to an empirically existing model, be it based on observation, as for Goncharov, or on an "idea," as for Bakhtin. For Bakhtin, the artist's job is to set these types against each other, arranging the battlefield and dictating the strategy. What is more, Bakhtin neglects the role of the reader in this dialogue. One can derive two possible stances for the reader in Bakhtin's conception: either the reader remains a passive observer from a foreign vantage point, viewing the conflict of characters and deducing in a purely intellectual fashion the desirability of dialogue; or else the reader begins to formulate his or her own inherent "idea," as a silent participant in the dialogue of the work. The work itself, however, seems to have nothing of its own to communicate to the reader. This conception ignores the mathetic and not simply mimetic nature of Dostoevsky's characters, their ability not only to predict future human types but even to "re-form" man, in Jackson's formulation. When Dostoevsky describes a character, he inscribes this image into his artistic world, but he does not conscribe it to a predetermined ideological content; instead description liberates meaning.

The alternative framework I would suggest for understanding Dostoevsky's characterizations addresses the general question of Dostoevsky's mathetic stance by placing the concept of type into the perspective of Dostoevsky's creative evolution prior to *The Brothers Karamazov*. Arkady Dolinin once characterized Dostoevsky's major novels as one cumulative attempt to locate and depict a "beautiful man."<sup>22</sup> This search obviously consisted not only of empirical research or reading the newspaper, as if a beautiful man could be discovered in observed reality, but it also consisted of Dostoevsky's



creative attempts to introduce into Russian cultural consciousness a realistic ideal of beauty, similar to how Pushkin had created a self-fulfilling ideal of the superfluous man. In *Crime and Punishment*, the mystery-like plot of murder and investigation culminates in an even more mysterious “epilogue” that promises Raskolnikov’s rebirth as a new man:

Here, however, there begins a new story, the story of the gradual renewal of a man, the story of his gradual rebirth, his gradual passage from one world to another, his acquaintance with a new, hitherto utterly unknown reality.<sup>23</sup>

It is legitimate to see Myshkin as a depiction of this new man, but, as Viacheslav Ivanov asserted, Myshkin remained a “stranger” to the world, a passive incarnation of heavenly content, an ideal that was insufficiently inscribed into reality.<sup>24</sup> In Dostoevsky’s artistic world, positive types either languish on the brink of rebirth without fully achieving it or perish at the hands of more potent historical forces.

In Dostoevsky’s next novel, *The Demons*, the locus of positive character energy moved from the hero, who suffers complete degradation and perversion, to the heroine, the minor character Maria Timofeevna Lebiadkina (known as *Khromonozhka*, “the lame creature”). Stavrogin is a black hole, the immensity and gravity of which hints at the positive content that once was possible and perhaps still remains possible within him. Emptied of this potential, Stavrogin serves as the conduit of destructive ideologies in which he does not believe and which supplant the true content of the personalities they infect. Each of the other characters becomes strangely dependent on Stavrogin, who is, however, totally unable or unwilling to perform the leadership role he has assumed. There are two partial exceptions to this: Kirillov, the theomachist man-god, who retains personal energy despite his utter isolation; and Shatov, who idolizes the nation as the bearer of God without believing in God. Even they, however, appear as fragments off Stavrogin’s massive homunculus or else masks by which he conceals his own facelessness. With the abdication of their prince, they are therefore rendered incapable of manifesting themselves fully in their utter isolation. Both Kirillov and Shatov are on the brink of establishing sincere interpersonal contact when they are destroyed in the wave of violence unleashed by Verkhovensky with Stavrogin’s compliance.

While *Crime and Punishment* and *The Idiot* had pursued a positive (if nonextant) type, *The Demons* shows the historical impotence of types in general, understood as existent and existentially closed attitudes of the human will. If Dostoevsky’s novels were in some sense “ideological novels,” then *The Demons* presents the tragic failure of ideology as such. If one connects the type to the ancient concept of *daimonia*, the title *The Demons* might indicate that the novel is concerned precisely with the miscarriage of “noetic” personalities, based on a predetermined “idea.” None of the ideas

current in the world is capacious enough for a human personality without a violent repression of personal freedom. Man had to be reformed not as some personified *idea* but as *man*.

Robert Louis Jackson has noted that it was a mighty task for Dostoevsky "to reconcile his classical higher aesthetic with the demands of a realism that essentially called for a new aesthetic of disfiguration."<sup>25</sup> Jackson also notes, however: "All his life Dostoevsky worshipped ideal form as the symbol and embodiment of moral and spiritual transfiguration. But he did not find this form, this unchangeable unity of being, either in himself, in Russian man, or in human nature at large."<sup>26</sup> But he could, having perceived the image in some form, work toward its realization. So was it Dostoevsky's task to present, against a background of human types, the nucleus of a new man capable of refiguring the types he discerned in life. The resolution of this dilemma lies in the way Dostoevsky re-formed modern social types as the tragic source of a new reality. From the self-destructing rubble of ideology he seeks the emergence of man.

Our understanding of Dostoevsky's goal must not be reduced to a narrowly artistic order. Dostoevsky was concerned with the fate of the human personality in the previous two centuries of Russian cultural history. The Europeanization of Russian culture had introduced the individual as a category of social and metaphysical understanding, yet the resulting individuals had remained only *types*, only grotesque sketches of an elusive, new identity. And Dostoevsky's goal was not merely to point this out but to deepen and strengthen the very fact of individual consciousness and being in Russia. Literature in Russia performs a peculiarly important role as legislator of cultural meaning; it not only endows reality with meaning and valuation but also inscribes values into culture through aesthetic creation.

With respect to *The Brothers Karamazov*, my hypothesis about Dostoevsky's open-ended type suggests that Dmitri and Ivan represent closed types, expressive of an inner idea, but only one that is stillborn in life, which disproves their inner idea at every step. It is notable that, judging by Dostoevsky's manuscripts and other evidence, both characters arose in connection with particular prototypes.<sup>27</sup> Despite boundless potential, they have both delimited their personalities in terms of particular ideas or stereotypes that have closed off their development. Their catastrophe is not merely a personal one, however, for their ideas—the critical humanism of Ivan and the romantic individualism of Dmitri—were ones that inspired large portions of Russian society. Their individual catastrophes are, in a sense, the apotheosis of the intelligentsia and of the superfluous idealist. The fact that future generations nonetheless embodied aspects of Ivan's insincere theological makeup served to confirm the inner contradictions of the type. The overall catastrophe of the novel is, by extension, that of historical Russia: of the church (represented by the monastery), of the courts, of the provinces.

The very name of the Karamazovs' town, Skotoprigonyevsk, recalls the swine being driven off the cliff in order to destroy the demons that have possessed them, a scriptural parable that gave Dostoevsky the title and ruling metaphor of his novel *The Demons*. (*Ps*, 15:15; cf. *Ps*, 15:453–55). Skotoprigonyevsk is where the remnants of ideological types are cast together in a spectacular, renewing explosion. This catastrophe communicates to the reader a cathartic energy, opening him or her up to what Dostoevsky is “teaching” in the novel and leading up to the application of this teaching in praxis.<sup>28</sup> And what he is teaching, above all, is the image of a nonexistent, vague, yet credible “beautiful man.” In Dostoevsky’s manuscripts, Alyosha is often called “the Idiot,” which links him to Dostoevsky’s earlier attempt to depict the “beautiful man” (*Ps*, 15:413–14). In contrast to Myshkin, however, Alyosha is precisely *unformed*; his actions belong to the future, projecting out from the novel into extra-artistic space. One might say that in Dostoevsky’s novel and specifically in the character of Alyosha, new humanity achieves a foothold in Russian culture and opens Russia up in a new direction.<sup>29</sup>

In his discussion of Dmitri, Robert Jackson focuses on the temporal aspect of the character: the need for his future self to find an anchor in the past, through the memory of his highest (and tragically thwarted) aspirations. In reply to Dmitri’s claim that he has been reborn as a “new man” in prison, Alyosha answers, “I say just remember that man always, all your life [. . .] and that is enough for you” (*BK*, 763). As Jackson comments, “Memory here serves to foreground the purity of intention, the point of light toward which Dmitri can strive.”<sup>30</sup> The tragedy of Dmitri’s character is that he has rejected this light in favor of a series of stereotypical decisions, which have conscribed his character. Yet he remains free to reclaim his original existential openness, to redescribe himself and reinscribe himself into his world—through memory. In the terms of my analysis, memory serves a hermeneutical function with respect to the revelation of a new man, spurring the old man to active work toward a perhaps unreachable goal. Moreover, this existential imperative goes equally for the character, for the reader, and even from the author, who can receive from his own works an existential spur.

The artistic process that Dostoevsky intended and Jackson intuitively in Dostoevsky’s works follows the Aristotelian triad which Viacheslav Ivanov first formulated in his essay “On the Russian Idea”: cleansing (catharsis), teaching (mathesis), and action (praxis).<sup>31</sup> In this formulation, it is somewhat reminiscent of the hermeneutical theory of Hans-Georg Gadamer, which stresses both catharsis, as the source of art’s efficacy vis-à-vis the spectator, and application, as the crowning act in the process of understanding by the spectator.<sup>32</sup> Both concepts elucidate how understanding works of art plays an important role in the individual’s construction of a sense of his or her place in time. Catharsis resolves the artwork’s and the spectator’s hori-

zons of meaning into a single event, providing the individual with an interpretation of his or her self vis-à-vis the world outside. This horizon shift and act of understanding is then constitutive of the continuum that grounds all future acts of understanding. At a similar level of generality, one can draw support from Paul Ricoeur:

Fiction has the power to “remake” reality and, within the framework of narrative fiction in particular, to remake real praxis to the extent that the text intentionally aims at a horizon of a new reality that we may call a world. It is this world of the text that intervenes in the world of action in order to give it a new configuration or, as we might say, in order to transfigure it.<sup>33</sup>

For Ricoeur, as for Gadamer, the artwork illuminates the spectator’s past and inspires action in the present in order to direct the future.<sup>34</sup>

To sum up, *The Brothers Karamazov* instills in the reader the image and memory of an “atypical” man, atypical precisely in the degree of his humanity, uncontaminated by reductive ideologies and utterly nonpredetermined. One might object to this interpretation that Dostoevsky intended to provide a continuation of Alyosha’s story, which would close up the character and impose a concrete image or type on the author’s vision of new Russia. The fact is, however, that he did not provide this continuation and that it would be pointless to conjecture on Alyosha’s further exploits or on whether or not he would become the “Great Sinner” of Dostoevsky’s earlier drafts. The reader is provided with the negative example of the prosecutor at Dmitri’s trial, who, in the chapter entitled “The Prosecutor’s Speech. Characterizations,” paints the members of the Karamazov family as types from Russian society: Fyodor Pavlovich “is a father, and one of our modern-day fathers”; Ivan “is one of our modern young men, brilliantly educated, with quite a powerful mind, who, however, no longer believes in anything, who has already scrapped and rejected much, too much in life” (*BK*, 696; *Ps*, 15:126); Dmitri “seems to represent ingenuous Russia . . . she is here, our dear mother Russia, we can smell her, we can hear her” (*BK*, 696; *Ps*, 15:128). In a draft of this scene, the prosecutor says:

The eldest [. . .] is a model of the intelligentsia layer of our society, who has in an abstract-philosophical manner rejected everything, but in whom in a practical sense youth and the good seeds of science and enlightenment are locked in conflict. . . . The other son is mysticism and chauvinism. There remains [i.e., in Dmitri] Russia herself [*neposredstvennaia Rossia*]. (*Ps*, 15:352; translation mine)

These stereotypical characterizations, as Bakhtin points out, are false insofar as they preclude further development of the characters’ innate potential; but they do capture something of the characters. The prosecutor’s characterization of Alyosha is false in another sense. Alyosha, according to the prosecutor, betrays “that timid despair that leads so many in our poor

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society, fearing its cynicism and depravity, and mistakenly ascribing all evil to European enlightenment, to themselves, as they put it, to the 'native soil.'<sup>3</sup> Nothing in Alyosha justifies such an explanation of his novitiate at the monastery, but the prosecutor uses it to predict Alyosha's future membership in another Russian stereotype: "I hope that his youthful radiance and yearning for popular foundations will not turn later, as so often happens, into dark mysticism on the moral side, and witless chauvinism on the civic side" (*BK*, 697; *Ps*, 15:127). With respect to Fyodor Pavlovich, Ivan, and Dmitri, the prosecutor's psychological myopia results in dismissive stereotyping, but in Alyosha's case it leads to utter fantasy. Alyosha simply does not fit any of the patterns extant in Russian society. One of the few indications of Dostoevsky's plan for the second volume of *The Brothers Karamazov* tells us that "Alyosha Karamazov was going . . . to be a hero from which [Dostoevsky] wanted to create a type of Russian socialist, not that common [*khodiachii*] type that we know and which arose fully on a European soil" (*Ps*, 15:485; translation mine). Despite such fragmentary testimony, however, not only is Alyosha's future open, but its very vector remains unknown and unpredictable. And it is because of this profound indeterminacy that the prosecutor's predictions for Russia also ring false. Claiming that "certain basic, general elements of our modern-day educated society shine through, as it were, in the picture of this nice little family," he implies that these are the Sobakeviches, Nozdryovs, and Chichikovs that are drawing the Russian troika to certain doom (*BK*, 695; *Ps*, 15:125). It is no longer Gogol's types drawing this troika, however, but the atypical hero of the new epoch of Russian culture, whose future and fate still hang in the balance.

In conclusion, from the beginnings of the Russian novel in Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin*, characters had been based on types, whether empirically observed or more intuitively foreseen. Dostoevsky's characterizations followed this pattern, allowing for differences in social milieu and psychological makeup. But in his final novel, *The Brothers Karamazov*, Dostoevsky creates a truly open-ended character, one whom the reader must finish beyond the novel. As the critic Evgenii Lundberg wrote, "The novel about the Karamazovs was not finished. Alyosha did not take off his cassock and leave the saving monastery shell for the world. We see what Dostoevsky was preparing for, but we do not know what he could achieve."<sup>35</sup> This unfulfilled achievement is what is passed on to each reader of the novel.

## Notes

1. Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, trans. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (New York: Vintage, 1991), 3 [hereafter cited parenthetically in text as *BK* with page number]; cf. F. M. Dostoevskii, *Pol-*

*noe sobranie sochinenii v tridtsati tomakh*, 30 vols. (Leningrad: Nauka, 1972–90), 14:5 [hereafter cited as *Ps* with volume and page number].

2. Iurii Lotman, "The Tradition Generated by *Onegin*," *Russian Views of Pushkin's "Eugene Onegin*," trans. Sona Stephan Hoisington (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988), 177; I. M. Lotman, *Pushkin* (St. Petersburg: Iskusstvo-SPB, 1995), 462.

3. Lotman, *Pushkin*, 453.

4. Lotman, "The Tradition Generated by *Onegin*," 176; Lotman, *Pushkin*, 461.

5. "Mode of learning" is the formulation of James Redfield: "pathe and learning together constitute the characteristic value of a well-made narrative," which is how Redfield interprets the Aristotelian idea of *katharsis*: "we reconceive our own emotions as the necessary conditions of our comprehension of a formally coherent order. . . . they stand between reality and unreality and are purified as we come to conceive them within the formal order which the work provides"; "pity and fear become modes of learning rather than raw experience"; James M. Redfield, *Nature and Culture in the Iliad: The Tragedy of Hector* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), 67, 236–37.

6. L. Grossman, "Dostoevskii—khudozhnik," in *Tvorchestvo F. M. Dostoevskogo*, ed. N. L. Stepanov (Moscow: Izd-vo Akademii nauk SSSR, 1959), 330–416, at 399; cited by Donald Fanger, *Dostoevsky and Romantic Realism: A Study of Dostoevsky in Relation to Balzac, Dickens, and Gogol*, 2d ed., foreword by Caryl Emerson (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1998), 265.

7. A. L. Bem, "Dostoevskii—genial'nyi chitatel'," *O Dostoevskom* vol. 2 (Prague, 1933), 19; cited by Fanger, *Dostoevsky and Romantic Realism*, 252–53. Dostoevsky asserted that the Gogolian type "is only half of the truth, and half of the truth quite often is a lie" (*Ps*, 26:313).

8. Quoted in Fanger, *Dostoevsky and Romantic Realism*, 216; Robert Louis Jackson, *Dostoevsky's Quest for Form: A Study of His Philosophy of Art* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1966; reprint, Pittsburgh, 1978), 109. Alexis Klimoff has suggested (in a personal communication to the author) that Goncharov's criticism of Dostoevsky's "arising" types may stem from his likely negative reaction to Turgenev's 1869 note "Po povodu 'Ottsov i detei'," where Turgenev describes the genesis of Bazarov as the incarnation of "a hardly born, still fermenting principle, which later received the name of nihilism" (I. S. Turgenev, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem* [Moscow-Leningrad: Nauka, 1967], vol. 14, p. 97). The relationship between Goncharov and Turgenev had soured after Goncharov accused Turgenev of plagiarism in connection with the latter's 1860 novel *On the Eve*.

9. Fanger, *Dostoevsky and Romantic Realism*, 216.

10. *Ibid.*, 217.

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11. *Ibid.*, 264.
12. Vissarion Belinsky, "Letters to V. P. Botkin," *Russian Philosophy*, 1, *The Beginnings of Russian Philosophy: The Slavophiles, the Westernizers*, ed. James M. Edie, James P. Scanlan, and Mary-Barbara Zeldin, with the collaboration of George L. Kline (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1976), 304–11, at 304–5.
13. S. N. Bulgakov, *Izbrannye sochineniia* (Moscow: Nauka, 1993), vol. 2, p. 17 (translation mine).
14. Marina Kostalevsky, *Dostoevsky and Soloviev: The Art of Integral Vision* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1997), 65–67; Sergei Solov'ev, *Zhizn' i tvorcheskaiia evoliutsiia Vladimira Solov'eva* (Brussels: Zhizn' s Bogom, 1977), 41; *Ps*, 15:417–18, 471–73.
15. Jackson, *Dostoevsky's Quest for Form*, 108.
16. *Ibid.*, 123.
17. E. N. Opochinin, "Besedy s Dostoevskim," *Zven'ia*, vol. 6, ed. L. P. Grossman (Moscow and Leningrad: Academia, 1936), 454–95, at 472. Translation cited from Jackson, *Dostoevsky's Quest for Form*, 91.
18. Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, ed. and trans. Caryl Emerson, intro. Wayne C. Booth (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 60.
19. *Ibid.*, 62.
20. *Ibid.*, 87.
21. *Ibid.*, 91.
22. The theme of the "positively beautiful man," as Dostoevskii called Myshkin (*Ps*, vol. 28, pt. 2, p. 251), has also been identified as the common thread in his later novels by Arkady Dolinin; see A. S. Dolinin, ed., *F. M. Dostoevskii. Pis'ma. I. 1832–1867* (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1928), 13.
23. *Ps*, 6:422; cf. Fedor Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, trans. David McDuff (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991), 630.
24. Viacheslav Ivanov, *Sobranie sochinenii*, 4 vols. (Brussels: Foyer chrétien oriental, 1971–86), 4:428.
25. Jackson, *Dostoevsky's Quest for Form*, 113.
26. *Ibid.*, 1.
27. Dmitri was based on Dmitri Il'insky, whose story of wrongful imprisonment for the murder of his father is mentioned in *Notes from the Dead House*; *Ps*, 15:403–5. Possible prototypes for Ivan include Vladimir Solovyov (as mentioned earlier in my essay), but he can also be seen as a development of the type represented by Raskolnikov and Stavrogin. In the central chapter "Rebellion," Ivan famously repeats Belinsky's sentiments; see *ibid.*, 15:470.
28. On this triad of aesthetic principles, see Viacheslav Ivanov, *Selected Essays*, ed., trans., and annot. Robert Bird, intro. Michael Wachtel

(Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2001), 142–43; Ivanov, *Sobranie sochinenii*, 3:337–38.

29. Cf. Ivanov, *Sobranie sochinenii*, 4:577ff.

30. Robert L. Jackson, *Dialogues with Dostoevsky* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 282.

31. Ivanov, *Selected Essays*, 142; Ivanov, *Sobranie sochinenii*, 3:337–8.

32. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2d ed., trans. rev. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (New York: Continuum, 1998), 130ff. (catharsis), 307ff. (application).

33. Paul Ricoeur, *From Text to Action*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and John B. Thompson (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1991), 11.

34. On this Aristotelian tradition of Russian hermeneutical thought, see also Robert Bird, “Understanding Dostoevsky: A Comparison of Russian Hermeneutic Theories,” *Dostoevsky Studies: The Journal of the International Dostoevsky Society*, n.s., 5 (2001): 129–46.

35. Evgenii Lundberg, *Ot vechnogo k prekhodiashchemu* (Berlin: Skify, 1923), 50.