

DOSTOEVSKY AT 200

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Introduction: Dostoevsky and the Novel in Modernity

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At the beginning of *The Idiot* [Idiot, 1869], Prince Myshkin meets Rogozhin and Lebedev in a third-class carriage on the Warsaw-Petersburg train as it approaches its destination “at full speed” [na vsekh parakh].¹ The speeding train, described in the opening sentence, seems at first just a backdrop for Myshkin and Rogozhin’s introduction. Yet in fact it will be explicitly foregrounded as a symbol of catastrophic modernity. The train is a device which introduces into the novel the experience of acceleration so particular to modernity, as analyzed by Reinhart Koselleck and others.² As the inappropriately dressed Myshkin, coming from abroad, converses with his countrymen Rogozhin and Lebedev, the novel opens out onto time; the timeless idyll of the Switzerland Myshkin has left behind is contrasted with the chaotic Russian modernity into which he is arriving, encapsulated by the image of the impenetrable Nastasya Filippovna. This is Myshkin’s first experience of historical time since his convalescence and his first experience of his home country, of which he knows nothing. As their conversation progresses in the railway carriage, time slows, and the characters become so engrossed in their discussion that the train’s arrival in the station even takes them by surprise. Although Myshkin and his new acquaintances forget their train’s movement, the train’s presence at the beginning of the novel emphasizes that this is a novel set squarely in the present, in modern times. Later, Lebedev explicitly articulates this point when he describes the nineteenth century as “our century of vices and railways” [nash vek porokov i zheleznykh dorog] (8:315). The railway comes to represent modernity, the sense of a new temporality.

In *Measuring Time, Making History*, Lynn Hunt examines the history of the concept of modernity and how its secondary definition, that of a comprehensive departure from traditional ideas and values, has its roots in the Enlightenment and the French Revolution.³ The experience of a

radical break in temporality, expressed most explicitly in the conceptualization of the French Republican calendar, can be said to inform the nineteenth-century Russian novel from its beginnings, but it becomes much more palpable in the period following the emancipation of serfs, a moment of rupture perhaps akin to that of the French Revolution in the history of the Russian empire. Hunt emphasizes the essential core of the concept of modernity as being a new way of experiencing time, invoking Koselleck's discussion of "the peculiar form of acceleration which characterizes modernity."⁴ Acceleration in Koselleck's sense, extrapolates Hunt, can be seen as "the 'constant renewal' of the difference between the 'space of experience' and the 'horizon of expectation.'"⁵ In other words, there is a rupture between the experience of the past and expectations for the future. As experience and expectation grow further apart, there is an acceleration to try to rush from one to the other. This sense of acceleration can be found everywhere in Dostoevsky's novels, as it can in other nineteenth-century European texts: Baudelaire's poetry and the novels of Dickens, Balzac, and Zola, to name a few.⁶ *The Idiot* is the first of Dostoevsky's novels to so explicitly contextualize this process of temporal acceleration in technological as well as social, philosophical, and economic terms. Through the device of Myshkin returning from Switzerland to St Petersburg on the train, Dostoevsky stages this moment of rupture between coherent and organized past experience and incoherent and amorphous future possibility as central to the novel that lies ahead. This volume is concerned with the ways in which the particular experience of temporality that encapsulates modernity affects the form of the novel as Dostoevsky conceives it, with the peculiar challenges the form faces as it seeks to convey the acceleration of modern life.

Dostoevsky was writing at a time of remarkable change. His return from Siberian imprisonment and exile in 1859 came on the eve of Alexander II's Great Reforms, a period of social, judicial, economic, administrative, and educational reforms that saw the emancipation of the serfs, the advent of jury trials, and the creation of a state treasury and state bank, as well as other changes. Between 1861 and 1874 the reforms led to rapid social and economic growth. At the same time, the publishing industry expanded significantly as a result of the development of a mass circulation press as well as increased literacy rates.⁷ More information circulated to more people than ever before in the Russian empire. This increase in information flow gave rise to public debates about science, religion, economics, politics, philosophy, and art.⁸ At the same time, new breakthroughs in the sciences, new theories in economics and politics, and new advancements in the arts engaged the growing reading public more quickly and deeply than ever before. The rapid changes in society

in the 1860s and '70s were characterized by a public sense of impending crisis, of swift forward motion, but also an impetus to embrace change as a means to further reform state and society. Russia at this time was a society in transition.

The changes set into motion by the reforms helped transform literature as well. Deborah A. Martinsen has observed that, following the Reforms of the 1860s, "Russians in the 1870s felt the need to master the new facts of contemporary life and to take a personal stand. Literary genres that dealt with clarifying the relation of self to the outside world, such as confessional novels, diaries and notebooks became immensely popular."⁹ Michael Holquist has demonstrated that Dostoevsky's engagement with these genres, his experimentation with form, and his fascination with subjectivity in narrative also emerges from the experience of modernity.¹⁰ As Kate Holland has argued, this period of crisis is also linked to a crisis of form in Dostoevsky's novels of the 1860s and '70s: "[Dostoevsky] examines the tempest of modernization, which has fractured society's image into a multiplicity of fragments, so that it can no longer be imagined or visualized ... The world has taken on a new appearance that can no longer be captured by the old lenses; it requires a new way of seeing."¹¹ Modernity is the backdrop for all of Dostoevsky's major works, their historical context and also their engagement with the questions of form and narrative that we address in this volume. Modernity, with its crises and changes, influenced Dostoevsky's lived and intellectual experiences in innumerable ways and, in so doing, shaped not just his thinking but also his artistic practice.

Modernity was a crucial component of Dostoevsky's artistic vision. He struggled with how to convey the historical experience of modernity within the novelistic form. What does acceleration mean for the novel? In formal terms, the rupture between past experience and future possibility could be viewed as a problem of genre. Discussing *The Idiot* in his study of apocalyptic fiction, David Bethea argues that the novel's plot centres on the dissonance "between Christianity and historicism, between an atemporal ideal and the relentless march of chronos."¹² The train is a significant symbol of the novel's expression of this temporal rupture. As Bethea observes, "Dostoevsky embodies these concerns in his art not only thematically but *structurally*; he visualizes the shape of contemporary history, including what he felt to be the critical 1860s, by reincarnating the flesh-and-blood horse of biblical and folkloric tradition in the horse of modern times – the train."¹³ In the beginning, the train serves to connect Myshkin's idealized Swiss idyll with the violent and artificial world of Russian urban society. As the novel progresses, Myshkin's expected assimilation into this society fails to happen. Instead,

the society is drawn into the Prince's ethical frame, and collapses under its burden. As expectations are thwarted, the novel form accelerates toward an unknown end, the unknowable *obraz* [image].

In the novel, Ippolit articulates the anxiety of this apocalypticism when he crucially asks, "Can one conceive in an image [obraz], that which has no image?" Jackson's formulation of this important question is: "With what *image*—with what sense of form or perfection, inner and outer—can one look at death and disfiguration and still retain one's faith, or, more generally, maintain one's moral-psychological and spiritual integrity?"¹⁴ At the heart of this question is the representation of this unknown and unknowable quantity in terms of its form: *obraz* [image]. Faced with the apocalypticism and speed of his present, Dostoevsky recognized his aesthetic and ethical duty to represent this moment. But to do so required new tools of representation and a transformation of the novel form.

Ever since Georg Lukács claimed, in his *Theory of the Novel* in 1916, that "Dostoevsky did not write novels,"¹⁵ and Mikhail Bakhtin built a theory of the novel on Dostoevsky's novels,¹⁶ there has been intense critical debate focused on the question of the relationship of Dostoevsky's novels to the traditional Western European novel. With their lack of an omniscient narrator, their careering plots, their plunging of the reader *in medias res* at the expense of extensive descriptive scene setting, their substitution of the traditional plots of marriage and inheritance with the drama of the hero's divided selfhood, Dostoevsky's novels seem rather to anticipate the fragmented experiments of the modernist novel that followed them than to adhere to realist novelistic norms. Yet at the same time, they share many of the Western European novel's preoccupations: the contested spaces of identity between self and other, the possibility of retaining one's identity in the urban jungle of the modern city, the need to compromise with social laws and conventions while at the same time never losing the ambition to transform and change them. Critics have always found rich veins to mine in the relationship of Dostoevsky's novels to the domestic literary tradition since Pushkin, finding in his works the latest iteration of the Russian novel's consistent refusal to conform to European type.¹⁷ Dostoevsky was consciously writing in the context of the European novel, as we know from his notes to himself; for example, while working on *The Adolescent*, he wrote a note to himself to write "the anti-Copperfield" (16:22). In setting himself against the trends of the European novel, Dostoevsky deliberately set out to create new forms, to invent a new kind of literature.

Dostoevsky's representation of modernity differs from that of other writers who are concerned with its depiction like Dickens, Balzac, or Baudelaire. In Dostoevsky's works, both the temporality of modernity

and a kind of attempt to recuperate the wholeness of a pre-rupture temporality coexist in the literary text. The novel itself is transformed as it becomes the repository for both these visions. The train in *The Idiot* becomes a radically ambiguous and dualistic image in its representation of both temporalities. However, the transformation of the novel occurs constantly as its form shifts to accommodate the necessary elements that are beyond it. Alyson Tapp, for example, has argued that the embarrassment of Myshkin's presence in Russian upper-class society is "incompatible with novelistic form," but demonstrates the way the social novel nonetheless accommodates this embarrassment through its own transformation.¹⁸ In *The Idiot* the temporal rupture is never overcome, and other works that demonstrate the struggle to represent the dual temporalities of modernity – for example, *Demons* [Besy, 1872] and *The Adolescent* [Podrostok, 1875] – are similarly driven by the problem of acceleration. Of all Dostoevsky's novels, *The Idiot* is most clearly linked to modernity through its opening pages and the image of the train, but all the novels demonstrate Dostoevsky's search for new tools of representation, new forms, and new ways of approaching the problem of modernity.

Dostoevsky's final work, *Brothers Karamazov* [Brat'ia Karamazovy, 1880], is frequently seen as the culminating triumph of his novelistic art. This acknowledged masterpiece has been compared to Chartres Cathedral in that it "can never be seen or fully taken in from any single perspective ... it is manifold and changing from every point of view."¹⁹ It is like an echo chamber in which every new sound gives rise to a multitude of echoes that give a new resonance to the original sound. If we try to isolate a theme or a plot thread, we see how it is connected to all the other themes or plot threads. Even "The Grand Inquisitor," which is frequently removed from the context of the novel and treated as a work that can stand alone, is attached to the novel by thousands of threads. This complicated and intricate work of philosophy in prose came into being through a lifetime, a career, of formal experimentation, narrative innovation, and philosophical questioning. Dostoevsky's literary career spanned around thirty-five years, an incredibly short time when we consider the number of significant works produced between 1846 and 1881: *Notes from Underground* [Zapiski iz podpol'ia, 1864], *Crime and Punishment* [Prestuplenie i nakazanie, 1866], *The Idiot* (1869), *Demons* (1872), and *The Adolescent* (1875), not to mention, of course, *Brothers Karamazov* (1880). This volume is concerned less with Dostoevsky's crowning achievement, the end point of the development of his thinking about the novel, than with the complex set of aesthetic, formal, and ideological questions, problems, and issues encountered along the way. As a result, our focus is less on either the early works of the 1840s or *Brothers Karamazov*, and more on

the works written in between, particularly the major novels, which have variously been praised in terms of form, but which also have been called (including by Dostoevsky), “imperfect,” “failures,” “messy,” “confusing,” and “confounding.”

Just as Dostoevsky was self-consciously rethinking the boundaries of the novel as a form, so too was he engaged in an interrogation of generic concepts. For Dostoevsky, genre plays an integral role in literary creation, in creating and confounding readerly expectations. Emphasizing the link between genre and aesthetic creation, Vladimir Zakharov identifies genre as “one of the key categories of Dostoevsky’s artistic thinking.”²⁰ It ends up being far more than merely a mode of categorization; it becomes a way of looking at the world. The stakes involved in choosing a genre could not be higher. For example, we see it in the deliberate choice of subtitles that categorize works generically, from *The Double* [Dvoynik] as “A Petersburg Poem [Peterburgskaia poema]” to Ivan’s poem in *Brothers Karamazov*, from the *zapiski* and *zametki* in *Notes from Underground* and *Winter Notes on Summer Impressions* [Zimnie zametki o letnikh vpechatleniiax] to the “fantastic stories” in *A Writer’s Diary* [Dnevnik pisatel’ia, 1873; 1876–77], “Bobok” [Bobok, 1873], “A Gentle Creature” [Krotkaia, 1876], and “The Dream of a Ridiculous Man” [Son smeshnogo cheloveka, 1877]. Questions of form preoccupied Dostoevsky throughout his career; he borrowed extensively from diverse generic models such as the romance, the adventure novel, the Bildungsroman, the gothic novel, hagiography, and others.²¹ This borrowing goes beyond the surface level of simulation as genre becomes an essential function within the Dostoevskian novel; as Bakhtin argues, in Dostoevsky’s writing, genre “is placed wholly at the service of the idea.”²² Genre becomes, for Dostoevsky, a way of shaping a particular world view. In this vein, Gary Saul Morson terms Dostoevsky’s *Writer’s Diary* “a threshold work,” that is, “designed to resonate between opposing genres and interpretations.”²³ Placing genres in conflict on the level of form allows Dostoevsky to explore broader ideological, social, and historical conflicts.

Plot provides the framework for the philosophical and aesthetic experiments Dostoevsky planned in his literary fiction. Through emplotment comes the structure and organizing principle of the narrative; in Robert L. Belknap’s concise formulation, “plots arrange literary experience.”²⁴ Plot is a means of structuring the episodes, speeches, and disparate narrative elements of a text that enables their meaning to take form. Peter Brooks defines it as “the design and intention of narrative, what shapes a story and gives it a certain direction or intention of meaning.”²⁵ Dostoevsky’s working notebooks reveal the central importance of plot and its construction, or emplotment, demonstrating the “intention of meaning”

within his art. Within the notebooks Dostoevsky does not just set forth storyline ideas, but rigorously interrogates them.²⁶ In the Notebooks to *The Idiot*, for example, the character that eventually becomes Myshkin in the novel is first introduced as a rapist and arsonist who suffers from violent passions and boundless pride (9:141). Reading the Notebooks allows us to see the author's struggles to determine what shape of plot can best convey the idea that drives the novel's creation; his notes focus specifically on plot, which he mentions continuously. In one instance, after Dostoevsky decides that the Idiot character functions better as a Christ-like figure, he writes the following: "Main problem: the character of the Idiot. Develop it. That is the idea of the novel ... showing the Prince in action will be enough. But! For that the plot of the novel is needed" (9:252). Beyond this articulation of plot's central importance, the adjustments, omissions, additions, and other revisions visible in the Notebooks indelibly link Dostoevsky's emplotment with his philosophical impetus.

While plot provides the framework, characterization is the embodiment of the ideas in Dostoevsky's novelistic art. In this volume, we are interested in characterization as it relates to form. In this we move away from the strong tradition of Dostoevsky scholarship that focuses on analyzing characters from a psychological perspective. The connection between the novelistic hero and the other characters who revolve around him is particularly significant in Dostoevsky's novels, serving to dramatize the protagonist's ideological choices and their ramifications. In *Crime and Punishment*, for example, Sonya, Svidrigailov, and Porfiry Petrovich all offer opposing paths Raskolnikov might follow out of his moral and existential crisis. Similarly, in *Demons* or *Brothers Karamazov*, the protagonists create disciples who preach distorted versions of the ideas they espouse, and parallel and opposed character developments reveal the moral hierarchies of the novelistic universe. René Girard, Joseph Frank, and Robert Belknap have all examined in very different ways the significance of the structural relations between characters for larger thematic or emotional dynamics in the novels.²⁷ More recently, a new strain of scholarship has begun to focus on the particularities of the structural relationships among characters and between characters and narrator in Dostoevsky's novels. This has been in part a response to studies of character and the novel in English and other Western European literatures, particularly Alex Woloch's *The One versus the Many: Minor Characters and the Space of the Protagonist in the Novel* (2003), which seeks to redefine literary characterization by examining "how the discrete representation of any specific individual is intertwined with the narrative's continual apportioning of attention to different characters who jostle for limited space within the same fictive universe."²⁸

The experimentalism and originality of Dostoevsky's approach to narrative perspective emerged fully with Bakhtin's claim that he created the polyphonic novel, a novelistic form that, Bakhtin argued, entailed a new relationship between author and characters, an authorial perspective on the text akin to that of a conductor leading a choir of independent voices, each autonomous in and of themselves, each insistent upon their right to have the "final word."²⁹ Dostoevsky experimented throughout his career with narrative form, from his first novel, *Poor Folk* [Bednye liudi, 1846], with its blending of the sentimentalist form of the epistolary novel with content more associated with Gogol or the authors of the Natural School, and his second novel, the experimental meditation on madness, *The Double*, to his penultimate novel, *The Adolescent*, with its epilogue that reflects on the novel's own form, and his experiments with journalism and fiction in *A Writer's Diary*. He was clearly attuned to the importance of narrative perspective as he debated with himself in the notebooks the question of whether to narrate *Crime and Punishment* in the first person or whether the first-person perspective would make *The Adolescent* too confused and hard to follow.³⁰ In the notebooks to *The Adolescent* he reminds himself that the narrator, Arkady, was not present for the events of a story he narrates: "though he didn't witness anything personally, he still tells the story *as if he had been there*, having warned the reader that it is based on hearsay and on facts gathered by him" (16:47).³¹ Dostoevsky's rejection of a traditional omniscient narrator in the Tolstoian model allowed for the possibility of a variety of different kinds of narrative perspective. We have the blended omniscient/non-omniscient narrator of *Crime and Punishment* who is sometimes able to enter Raskolnikov's mind as well as the first-person narrators like the underground man and Arkady Dolgoruky whose identity crises find form in the disordered prose they narrate. Finally, the narrator-chroniclers of the late novels, whose uneasy participation in the events of the plot, conveyance of rumours, or involvement in the social circles the novels portray, raise the stakes of their narratorial contribution. They render it, on the one hand, radically unreliable, and on the other, expressive of deeper truths about the world the novel represents.

This volume, which marks the bicentenary of Dostoevsky's birth, takes the writer's art – specifically the tension between the experience of living within modernity and formal representation – as its central theme. Many critical approaches to Dostoevsky's works are concerned with spiritual and philosophical dilemmas. As Carol Apollonio observes, "Dostoevsky's writing records a struggle to express in words a truth that lies beyond the feeble powers of human reason to grasp, and of human language to convey."³² Our focus in this volume is precisely the question of *how* this

process of expression led to the creation of novels that Virginia Woolf famously described as “composed purely and wholly of the stuff of the soul.”³³ To help answer this question, we turn to questions of form, design, and narrative to explore Dostoevsky and the novel from a multitude of perspectives.³⁴ Our title “Dostoevsky and the Novel in Modernity” underscores our approach. We are interested in situating Dostoevsky’s formal choices of narrative, plot, genre, characterization, and the novel itself within modernity, that is within the particular experience of temporality of the post-emancipation moment, the sense of acceleration of the reform era. In the chapters that comprise this volume, we ask how form, narrative, and genre shape Dostoevsky’s works as well as how they influence the way modernity is represented. Similarly, we consider how the experience of modernity led to Dostoevsky’s particular engagement with form. Our exploration of Dostoevsky’s works is not comprehensive; the early works have little coverage here, and no chapter is dedicated solely to *Brothers Karamazov*. Instead the volume focuses particularly on works that fail to conform to conventional generic categories or frames of expectation because of their hybridic, confusing, or problematic form, especially *Notes from Underground*, *The Idiot*, *Demons*, and *The Adolescent*.

Each of the chapters in the present volume deals in different ways with the experience of temporality within modernity. The volume begins with a chapter by Kate Holland, which provides an overview of one of the ways Dostoevsky conceived of emplotment through analysis of a gesture across *Notes from Underground*, *Demons*, and *The Adolescent*. We thus begin with a chapter that encompasses the later Dostoevsky, from his first major work after his return from Siberia to the novel that came before *Brothers Karamazov*. Holland’s analysis of the slap within Dostoevsky’s poetics reveals the importance of even minor narrative moments in the writer’s creation of the novel. While slaps often seem like mere sensationalistic embellishment divorced from the novel’s plot, Holland demonstrates that they have, at their core, a connection to the Romantic duel plot and its attendant honour code. Dostoevsky’s slaps are intentional. The slap, in Holland’s reading, becomes a manifestation of semiotic and social breakdown, a symptom of the crisis and uncertainty present in the historical systems at work in late imperial Russia.

Anna A. Berman’s chapter examines another aspect of Dostoevsky’s engagement with plot: his complex treatment of the marriage plot. Focusing particularly on *Brothers Karamazov*, Berman suggests that Dostoevsky’s marriage plots resist the “genealogical imperative,” rejecting the idea of the formation of new family and focusing instead on its retention, on the re-establishment of old relations along new lines. Berman’s exploration

of Dostoevsky's novels' refusal to engage in reproductive futurity finds conceptual support from an unexpected quarter: queer theory, specifically queer temporality, which here serves to cast new light on Dostoevsky's resistance to the traditional family plot. While Berman rejects many of the conceptual implications that a queer theory approach to Dostoevsky's novels might bring, she nonetheless finds the idea of a queer futurity useful as a lens through which to examine Dostoevsky's resistance to the narrative closure imposed by the traditional marriage plot.

Vadim Shneyder also draws on the context of social history in his examination of an aspect of the economic imaginary at work in Dostoevsky's fiction. Shneyder juxtaposes two characters who are also businesswomen – Alyona Ivanovna from *Crime and Punishment* and Grushenka from *Brothers Karamazov* – and contextualizes them not just in their roles in the novel, but also in their historical moment. In studying the small descriptive details used to represent the two women, Shneyder uses the characters as case studies to illustrate facets of the broader representation of women and monetary systems in Dostoevsky's novels, the way the businesswomen become both economic subjects and objects of forces beyond their control. Shneyder's analysis ultimately reveals the way Dostoevsky's economic imaginary is gendered; metaphorically, the businesswomen may resemble their money, as do the businessmen, but the women are unable to hold their shapes and shift into new forms by the end of their narratives.

Shneyder's discussion of metaphor's function in Dostoevsky's poetics complements Melissa Frazier's chapter, which examines the role of allegory in Dostoevsky's critique of positivist science and contextualizes it within a more general late nineteenth-century European movement to do away with the opposition of mind and matter. This movement is encapsulated in George Henry Lewes's understanding of dual-aspect monism, the idea that the mental and the physical are two perspectives on the same substance and exist in a non-hierarchical relationship. Frazier argues that this dual-aspect monism finds expression in *Crime and Punishment* and *Demons*, specifically in Dostoevsky's multifaceted response to Chernyshevsky's vulgar materialism. Dostoevsky breaks down the opposition between materialism and utopia, rejecting the primacy of matter over mind or vice versa and, in the process, remakes allegory in a way that reflects his own more complex understanding of the world.

Examining Dostoevsky's relationship with another of his contemporaries, Alexey Vdovin reads *Notes from Underground* alongside I.M. Sechenov's influential scientific work *Reflexes of the Brain* [Refleksy golovnogo mozga, 1863]. While *Notes from Underground* is often read as a psychological novel, Vdovin's investigation demonstrates not only that Dostoevsky

wrote psychological prose, but also that he drew on contemporary empirical scientific research in creating his narratives. *Notes from Underground* is commonly read as a text that demarcates the early, more Romantic Dostoevsky from the later, more psychological Dostoevsky. Vdovin's chapter demonstrates that this shift is not just perceived, but rather predicated on Dostoevsky's engagement with the natural sciences and investment in the polemics surrounding empiricism and evolutionism.

Complementing these more scientific approaches to Dostoevsky, Sarah J. Young maps the narrative mechanics of senses and embodiment in *Crime and Punishment* and *The Adolescent*, particularly hearing and seeing. In this, she presents a new approach to the question of how Dostoevsky's characters experience their world. Young argues that, through patterns of indirect presentation, these ways of understanding the external world – sensory experience and embodiment – are relegated to the margins of consciousness, displaced spatially and temporally. The subjective self (or the relationship between self and other) forms a large subset of Dostoevsky scholarship, but Young's approach closely connects the representation of self and spatiality within narrative. Ultimately Young's chapter argues that Dostoevsky's novelistic approach requires the self to be uncovered only indirectly, from the outside, demarcating the limits of the material world and realist potential.

In a different approach to sensory experience and spatiality, Katherine Bowers's chapter takes as its focus the duality of the image in *The Idiot*. The chapter considers the well-trod topic of the meaning of Holbein's painting *Body of the Dead Christ in the Tomb* (1521–22) in comparison with the symbolism of the Mazurin murder case that informs several corpses depicted in the text. Reading the painting and these murder victims as gothic bodies, she breaks the novel down into three significant episodes, which rely on gothic narrative force generated by the abject effect of the corpses. As a gothic body, *Dead Christ*, she argues, creates a meaning-laden space in the novel, which enables Dostoevsky to move beyond the depiction of images to prose that, through its very structure and employment of genre, goes beyond the image, engaging the reader on an affective level. In this way, Bowers's reading of Dostoevsky's novel demonstrates the utility of genre as a tool that connects emotional response with realist representation, but also serves to facilitate the duality central to the novel's plot.

Where Bowers uses genre to decode Dostoevsky's mode of emplotment, Greta Matzner-Gore's study takes a more contemporaneously informed approach to the topic; Matzner-Gore examines Dostoevsky's interest in nineteenth-century statistics and probability in *Crime and Punishment* and the ways this engagement shapes the novel's narrative. As

Matzner-Gore argues, in *Crime and Punishment* Dostoevsky rejects “statistical fatalism,” which concludes, through statistics, that free will is illusory and, instead, valorizes statistical outliers, odd people, and unusual events. Matzner-Gore identifies a “poetics of probability,” predicated in the social statistics work being published in Dostoevsky’s time, which she demonstrates informs the novel’s methods of characterization, the structure of its individual scenes, and even the improbable ending of the novel, which sees Raskolnikov’s moral resurrection. In this poetics of (im)probability, Matzner-Gore finds narrative openness and temporal potential.

Matzner-Gore examines narrative through the prism of improbability, while Chloë Kitzinger focuses on illegitimacy in her examination of Dostoevsky’s approach to the problem of novelistic realism. In her analysis of *The Adolescent*, Kitzinger engages with the idea, developed by Lukács, Bakhtin, and Ivanov, among others, that Dostoevsky’s characters lack the mimetic qualities of such protagonists of novelistic realism as Tolstoy’s heroes, that they are less fully fledged embodied characters, and more theoretical entities, idea-principles. She argues that this longing for embodiment finds expression through the voice of Arkady Dolgoruky, the narrator-protagonist of *The Adolescent*. Kitzinger demonstrates that Arkady’s illegitimacy becomes a model through which Dostoevsky explores new aesthetic and narrative possibilities for the novel within the context of the new pressures of modernity.

Finally, rounding out the volume, Ilya Kliger’s chapter examines two of Dostoevsky’s novels, *Crime and Punishment* and *Demons*, as responses to autocratic power and sovereignty. As Kliger points out, Dostoevsky had his own experience with autocratic power in his staged execution. Setting his argument against the long tradition of theory that sees the novel as a social art form, Kliger is interested instead in the novel as a political art form. Beginning his analysis with Dostoevsky’s Siberian odes (1854–56), very rarely examined by critics, he contends that the novels explore how the symbolic apparatus of sovereignty and power affect questions of identity and the possibility of action. This allows him to read Raskolnikov’s and Stavrogin’s crimes in a new way, as sites contested by the symbolic regimes of sovereignty and socialization. This interpretation allows Kliger to analyze the differences between the Russian novel, the product of an autocratic society, and the Western European novel, the product of liberalizing and democratizing societies. In the larger debates about the history of the European novel as a form and theorizing of the realist tradition, there has been much discussion of how to account for both the Russian novel’s similarities with the broader tradition and its differences. We end with Kliger’s chapter

because it provides one possible way of accounting for those commonalities and differences, pointing towards the ways in which Russia's particular historical and political trajectory might have helped shape a different version of the realist novel's general concerns and preoccupations. Future accounts of Dostoevsky's novels and the Russian novel more generally might opt to follow Kliger's lead or else find other explanations for the particularities of the Dostoevskian novel's complex account of Russian modernity.

The chapters presented here are not organized in terms of their chronological or thematic coverage, but, rather, so that they logically flow from one to the next in terms of their approach to Dostoevsky's poetics. They focus on formal elements like emplotment, narrative, characterization, and genre, but also analyze Dostoevsky's engagement with form within the specific experience of temporality in the broader context of modernity from different perspectives. As a result, the chapters also read Dostoevsky in the context of nineteenth-century social change, scientific and economic theories, and the socio-historical development of the literary text.

We have deliberately placed the chapters in this order, but each chapter opens up a myriad of connections with the other chapters, not just those that bookend it. For instance, Holland and Berman's opening chapters take a broad view on how Dostoevsky's approach to emplotment reflects the transitional historical moment within which his novels were written. Holland provides a perspective on emplotment that encompasses Dostoevsky's works of the 1860s as well as his late novels and deals with a kind of crisis of emplotment. Berman shows how this crisis creates new possibilities for old plots, while Shneyder shows how the transformative historical moment and the new economic relations it engenders create new possibilities in the area of narrative, categorization, and description. Metaphor becomes a crucial category for Shneyder, while Frazier finds allegory more useful in demonstrating the difference between Dostoevsky's understanding of the relations between language and the world and that of his vulgar materialist opponents. Vdovin's chapter also deals with scientific and literary discourse, showing how their intermingling forges new developments in narrative. Young's chapter is also concerned with narrative, and both she and Bowers focus on spatial and temporal categories and their significance for Dostoevsky as a novelist. Where Bowers returns us to the realm of generic systems and their shaping of readers' expectations, Matzner-Gore shows how Dostoevsky was working with, and against, different kinds of predictive systems, namely nineteenth-century developments in statistics and mathematical probability and their implications for narrative.

While all the chapters consider aspects of characters in some way, from Holland's study of gesture to Shneyder's examination of metaphor, from Young's emphasis on sensory experience to Matzner-Gore's consideration of predictable action, Kitzinger's chapter is the only one to focus on characterization. Kitzinger's argument that Dostoevsky's characters are idea-principles yearning for embodiment leads in to the question of Dostoevsky's contribution to the novel as a genre, which forms the focus of Kliger's contribution. The questions each chapter asks connect with those posed in other chapters, yet each offers a unique perspective in its consideration of Dostoevsky's poetics of the novel and, specifically, his narrative exploration of the experience of modernity.

As a cohesive volume, *Dostoevsky at 200: The Novel in Modernity* demonstrates the importance of form for Dostoevsky's novelistic art, and, more importantly, it provides a framework for reading each of Dostoevsky's novels as a significant development in the praxis of the novel. Completed during a global pandemic marked by a palpable sense of accelerating modernity, the sudden transfer of almost all communications to a virtual mode, and the repeating patterns that prompt the uncovering of the memory of past pandemics, *Dostoevsky at 200*, and the novelist whose bicentenary it is marking, remind us of the difficulty and yet the necessity of finding an image in that which, as yet, has no image.

NOTES

- 1 F.M. Dostoevskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridsati tomakh*, ed. G.M. Fridlender et al. (Leningrad: "Nauka," 1972–90), vol. 8, 5. Subsequent volume and page number references to this edition will be indicated in the text in parentheses: (vol.:page). All translations in the introduction are our own, unless specified otherwise.
- 2 Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985). For more discussion of this, see Lynn Hunt, *Measuring Time, Making History* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2008), 47–91.
- 3 Hunt, *Measuring Time, Making History*, 47–48, 65–72.
- 4 *Ibid.*, 75.
- 5 *Ibid.*, 76.
- 6 See Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts into Air* (New York: Verso, 1983).
- 7 On the rise of the newspaper, see Louise McReynolds, *The News under Russia's Old Regime: The Development of a Mass Circulation Press* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991). On literacy and the social and cultural developments it engendered, see Jeffrey Brooks, *When Russia Learned to Read: Literacy and Popular Literature, 1861–1917* (Princeton: Princeton

- University Press, 1985) and Damiano Rebecchini and Raffaella Vassena, eds., *Reading Russia: A History of Reading in Modern Russia*, vol. 2 (Milan: Ledizioni, 2020).
- 8 On the influence of new scientific discoveries on Dostoevsky's novels, see Liza Knapp, *The Annihilation of Inertia: Dostoevsky and Metaphysics* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1996). On the influence of the changing status of religion, see Harriet Murav, *Holy Foolishness: Dostoevsky's Novels and the Poetics of Cultural Critique* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), and Linda Ivanits, *Dostoevsky and the Russian People* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). On the changing relationship of literature and economics and their significance for Dostoevsky's novels, see Jonathan Paine, *Selling the Story: Transaction and Narrative Value in Balzac, Dostoevsky and Zola* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019), and William Mills Todd III, "Dostoevsky as a Professional Writer," in *The Cambridge Companion to Dostoevsky*, ed. W.G. Leatherbarrow (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 66–92; "The Brothers Karamazov and the Poetics of Serial Publication," *Dostoevsky Studies Old Series*, no. 7 (1986): 87–93. On developments in philosophy and their significance for Dostoevsky's novels, see James P. Scanlan, *Dostoevsky the Thinker* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), and Svetlana Evdokimova and Vladimir Golstein, eds., *Dostoevsky beyond Dostoevsky: Science, Religion, Philosophy* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2019). On the relationship between Dostoevsky's novels and parallel developments in the fine arts, see Molly Brunson, *Russian Realisms: Literature and Painting, 1840–1890* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2016).
 - 9 Deborah A. Martinsen, "Dostoevsky's 'Diary of a Writer': Journal of the 1870s," in Deborah A. Martinsen, ed., *Literary Journals in Imperial Russia*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 152.
 - 10 See Michael Holquist, *Dostoevsky and the Novel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977).
 - 11 Kate Holland, *The Novel in the Age of Disintegration: Dostoevsky and the Problem of Genre in the 1870s* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2013), 4.
 - 12 David M. Bethea, *The Shape of Apocalypse in Modern Russian Fiction* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 67.
 - 13 Bethea, *The Shape of Apocalypse*, 71.
 - 14 Robert Louis Jackson, *Dialogues with Dostoevsky: The Overwhelming Questions* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 52–3. Italics in original.
 - 15 Georg Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel*, trans. Anna Bostock (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1971), 152.
 - 16 Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, trans. Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).
 - 17 See, for example, William Mills Todd III, "The Ruse of the Russian Novel" in *The Novel*, vol. 1: *History, Geography and Culture*, ed. Franco Moretti, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 401–13; Gary Rosenshield,

- Challenging the Bard: Dostoevsky and Pushkin, a Study of Literary Relationship* (Madison: Wisconsin University Press, 2013).
- 18 Alyson Tapp, "Embarrassment in *The Idiot*," *Slavic and East European Journal* 60, no. 3 (2016): 422–46.
 - 19 Robert Louis Jackson, "Preface," in *A New Word on The Brothers Karamazov*, edited by Robert Louis Jackson, ix (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2002).
 - 20 V.N. Zakharov, *Sistema zhanrov Dostoevskogo: tipologiya i poetika* (Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Leningradskogo universiteta, 1985), 5.
 - 21 Leonid Grossman identifies a number of genres to which Dostoevsky is indebted, which are then explored in great detail by later critics. See Leonid Grossman, *Poetika Dostoevskogo* (Moscow: 39-aia tip. Internatsional'naia "Mospoligraf," 1925); on the adventure plot and genre more broadly, see Bakhtin, *Problems*, 101–80; on Dostoevsky's engagement with Romanticism, see Donald Fanger, *Dostoevsky and Romantic Realism: A Study of Dostoevsky in Relation to Balzac, Dickens, and Gogol* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967); on the gothic novel in Dostoevsky's works, see especially Robin Feuer Miller, *Dostoevsky and The Idiot: Author, Narrator, and Reader* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 108–25; Katherine Bowers, *Writing Fear: Russian Realism and the Gothic* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, forthcoming, 2021), and Bowers's chapter in the present volume; on the *Bildungsroman*, see Lina Steiner, *For Humanity's Sake: The Bildungsroman in Russian Culture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 134–73; on hagiography, see Valentina A. Vetlovskaya, "Alyosha Karamazov and the Hagiographic Hero," trans. Nancy Pollak and Suzanne Fusso, in *Dostoevsky: New Perspectives*, ed. Robert Louis Jackson (New York: Prentice Hall, 1984), 206–26; and Harriet Murav, *Holy Foolishness*, 17–31 and ff. These examples constitute only a handful of a multitude of rich studies of Dostoevsky and genre.
 - 22 Bakhtin, *Problems*, 105. The quote specifically addresses the utility of the adventure plot in Dostoevsky's works, but the example of the adventure plot is representative of the writer's engagement with genre more broadly in Bakhtin's study.
 - 23 Gary Saul Morson, *The Boundaries of Genre: Dostoevsky's Diary of a Writer and the Traditions of Literary Utopia* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 182. Italics in original.
 - 24 Robert L. Belknap, *Plots* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 3.
 - 25 Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), xi.
 - 26 Robin Feuer Miller's reading of Dostoevsky's Notebooks for *The Idiot* is a good example of the way they can be analyzed to determine the writer's design choices; see Robin Feuer Miller, *Dostoevsky and The Idiot*, 46–89.
 - 27 René Girard, *Mensonge romantique et vérité Romanesque* (Paris: Grasset, 1961), English translation: *Deceit, Desire and the Novel: Self and Other in Literary*

- Structure* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1966); Joseph Frank, "The Masks of Stavrogin," *The Sewanee Review* 77, no. 4 (Autumn, 1969): 660–91; Robert Belknap, *The Structure of The Brothers Karamazov* (The Hague: Mouton, 1967).
- 28 Alex Woloch, *The One vs. The Many: Minor Characters and the Space of the Protagonist in the Novel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 13. See, for instance, Greta Matzner-Gore, *Dostoevsky and the Ethics of Narrative Form: Suspense, Closure, Minor Characters* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2020), 71–102. See also the 2014 mini-forum in *Slavic and East European Journal* with articles by Jillian Porter, Eric Naiman, and Greta Matzner-Gore: "Mini-Forum: Money and Minor Characters in Dostoevsky's *The Double* and *The Brothers Karamazov*," *Slavic and East European Journal* 58, no. 3 (Fall 2014): 376–436; Jillian Porter, "The Double, The Ruble, The Real: Counterfeit Money in Dostoevsky's 'Dvoynik'; Eric Naiman, "Kalganov"; Greta Matzner-Gore, "Kicking Maksimov out of the Carriage."
- 29 Bakhtin, *Problems*, 48–56.
- 30 In the notebooks to *The Adolescent*, Dostoevsky writes, "Give it a good deal of thought. Color. Will I succeed in giving life to this character? If I write the novel in the first person, this will undoubtedly give it more unity, and less of that what Strakhov has been criticizing me for, i.e., too many different characters and subjects. But what about the style and the tone of the Youth's narrative? This style and tone may help the reader in anticipating the denouement" (16:87).
- 31 The English translation of the notebooks is taken from Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Notebooks to A Raw Youth*, trans. and ed. Edward Wasiolek (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969). Italics are Dostoevsky's, reproduced in the translation.
- 32 Carol Apollonio, *Dostoevsky's Secrets: Reading against the Grain* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2009), 3.
- 33 Virginia Woolf, "The Russian Point of View," in *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, vol. 4: 1925–1928, ed. Andrew McNeillie (Orlando: Harcourt Books, 2008), 186.
- 34 This focus also informs our individual critical work on Dostoevsky to date. See, for example, our monographs: Sarah J. Young, *Dostoevsky's The Idiot and the Ethical Foundations of Narrative: Reading, Narrating, Scripting* (London: Anthem Press, 2004); Ilya Kliger, *The Narrative Shape of Truth: Veridiction in Modern European Literature* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011); Kate Holland, *The Novel in the Age of Disintegration: Dostoevsky and the Problem of Genre in the 1870s*; Anna A. Berman, *Siblings in Tolstoy and Dostoevsky: The Path to Universal Brotherhood* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2015); Greta Matzner-Gore, *Dostoevsky and the Ethics of Narrative Form: Suspense, Closure, Minor Characters*; Vadim Shneyder, *Russia's Capitalist Realism: Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and Chekhov* (Evanston: Northwestern University

Press, 2020); Chloë Kitzinger, *Mimetic Lives: Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, and Character in the Novel* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, forthcoming, 2021); Katherine Bowers, *Writing Fear: Russian Realism and the Gothic*. Additionally, the following articles and chapters by volume authors take this approach: Sarah J. Young, "Holbein's *Christ in the Tomb* in the Structure of *The Idiot*," *Russian Studies in Literature* 44, no. 1 (2007): 90–102; Ilya Kliger, "Shapes of History and the Enigmatic Hero in Dostoevsky: The Case of *Crime and Punishment*," *Comparative Literature* 62, no. 3 (2010): 228–45; Ilya Kliger, "Dostoevsky and the Novel-Tragedy: Genre and Modernity in Ivanov, Pumpiansky and Bakhtin," *PMLA* 126, no. 1 (January 2011): 73–87; Katherine Bowers, "The City through a Glass, Darkly: Use of the Gothic in Early Russian Realism," *Modern Language Review* 108, no. 4 (2013): 1237–53; Greta Matzner-Gore, "Kicking Maksimov out of the Carriage: Minor Characters, Exclusion, and *The Brothers Karamazov*," *Slavic and East European Journal* 58, no. 3 (Fall 2014): 419–436; Kate Holland, "From the Pre-History of Russian Novel Theory: Alexander Veselovsky and Fyodor Dostoevsky on the Modern Novel's Roots in Folklore and Legend," in *Persistent Forms: Explorations in Historical Poetics*, ed. Ilya Kliger and Boris Maslov (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015), 340–68; Melissa Frazier, "The Science of Sensation: Dostoevsky, Wilkie Collins, and the Detective Novel," *Dostoevsky Studies New Series*, no. 19 (2015): 7–28; Sarah J. Young, "Hesitation, Projection and Desire: The Fictionalizing 'As If' in Dostoevskii's Early Works," *Modern Languages Open* 1 (2018), <http://doi.org/10.3828/mlo.v0i0.183>; Vadim Shneyder, "Myshkin's Millions: Merchants, Capitalists, and the Economic Imaginary in *The Idiot*," *Russian Review* 77, no. 2 (2018): 241–58; Anna A. Berman, "Incest and the Limits of Family in the Nineteenth-Century Novel," *Russian Review* 78, no. 1 (2019): 82–102; Melissa Frazier, "Minds and Bodies in the World: Dostoevskii, George Eliot, and George Henry Lewes," *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 55, no. 2 (2019): 152–70; the cluster of articles by Katherine Bowers, Kate Holland, and Eric Naiman, with Afterword by Robin Feuer Miller, on the Epilogue to *Crime and Punishment* in *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 62, no. 2 (2020): 95–153; Katherine Bowers, "Plotting the Ending: Generic Expectation and the Uncanny Epilogue of *Crime and Punishment*," Kate Holland, "The Clash of Deferral and Anticipation: *Crime and Punishment*'s Epilogue and the Difficulties of Narrative Closure," Eric Naiman, "'There Was Something Almost Cruel about It All ...' – reading *Crime and Punishment*'s Epilogue Hard against the Grain," Robin Feuer Miller, "Afterword. In the end is the beginning"; and M. Vaisman, A. Vdovin, I. Kliger, and K. Ospovat, eds., *Russkii realizm XIX veka: Mimesis, politika, ekonomika* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2020).