10 Sovereignty and the Novel: Dostoevsky's Political Theology

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"The Only Entirely Social Art Form"

In theoretical work on the modern novel, there exists something like a consensus characterizing it as a symbolic form rooted in the imaginaries of civil society. Assumed from the start is the existence of autonomous private persons, endowed with certain characteristics (the givens of physical appearance and constitution, social standing, mental abilities, psychological traits, etc.), engaged in specific pursuits (of wealth, status, artistic or romantic fulfilment, etc.), and interacting with each other according to a set of norms. Where the very notion of the autonomous individual comes from, what supplies the range of worthwhile pursuits, how the norms are agreed upon and established – such questions ostensibly lie outside the scope of the novel's imagination. The novel presupposes the social life-world as a given and leaves the act of its making, the constitution of the polity itself, in oblivion. This is, more or less, what Hannah Arendt intends by characterizing the modern novel as "the only entirely social art form."[1] The political, which she understands as the site where fundamental decisions about human togetherness are made, remains for the novel a thoroughly alien problematic.

Literary scholars, scholars of the Western European novel in particular, seem to agree with this diagnosis. Margaret Cohen, for example, has described the dominant novelistic tradition in nineteenth-century France as coming into existence through the foreclosure of the political-constitutional dilemmas explored by the earlier generation of female writers of sentimental fiction.[2] Nancy Armstrong has extrapolated from the history of the British novel the principle that novelistic narratives draw on scenarios of conflict between individual desire and social morality and thus contribute to the sort of education – of the hero and the reader alike – that "does not impose the [political] general will on individuals but rather shapes individuals' wills to regulate their own desires."[3]

Still more forcefully, Fredric Jameson has argued that European realism is committed to an implicit conservatism precisely insofar as it leaves out political considerations. Realism's object is the world as it is, at least at the level of its basic social structure. "The very choice of the form itself," Jameson concludes, "is a professional endorsement of the status quo, a loyalty oath in the very apprenticeship to this aesthetic." Political concerns, questions about foundation and the common good as such, are either dismissed or treated with "satiric hostility," which is "the time-honored mode of dealing novelistically with political troublemakers."[4]

Underlying these and similar views on the modern novel is the work of social and political thinkers grappling with the process of what Arendt has designated as "the rise of the social."[5] Antonio Gramsci's notion of "hegemony," Louis Althusser's account of ideological "interpellation," and Michel Foucault's work on disciplinary techniques of power – all strive to register the emerging modes of subtle production and accommodation of individuals by means less of direct and visible force than of spontaneous and ostensibly non-coercive social interactions. Foucault's distinction between the regimes of sovereignty and discipline has been particularly productive for theorists and historians of the modern European novel since at least D.A. Miller's intervention in *The Novel and the Police* (1988). According to Miller, the nineteenth-century European novel in particular represents (and perpetuates) the world where subtle disciplinary power has triumphed over its spectacular, sovereign counterpart. "The sheer pettiness of discipline's coercions," he writes, "tends to keep them from scrutiny, and the diffusion of discipline's operations precludes locating them in an attackable centre. Disciplinary power constitutively mobilizes a tactic of tact: it is the policing power that never passes for such but is either invisible or visible only under cover of other, nobler or simply bland intentionalities (to educate, to cure, to produce, to defend)." Correspondingly, the novel tends to eschew depictions of centralized, clearly localizable and temporally concentrated acts of spectacular violence or coercion in favour of "a hidden and devious discipline […] defined in terms of the spatial extension of its networks and the temporal deployment of its intrigues."[6]

Franco Moretti articulates a like-minded view, alluding to Gramsci's distinction between the subtly hegemonic civil society and the openly coercive state. For Moretti, the European Bildungsroman occludes the themes and logics of the state, because the latter "embodies a 'mechanical' and 'abstract' form of social cohesion, intrinsically remote and foreign to the countless articulations of everyday life: this is why its exercise of power appears of necessity to be an outside coercion, a force inclined by its very nature to be arbitrary, violent." By contrast, civil society provides proper material for novelistic exploration because it is "the sphere of 'spontaneous' and concrete bonds. Its authority merges with everyday

activities and relationships, exercising itself in ways that are natural and unnoticeable."[7]

Moretti dedicates a separate essay to exploring the consequences of the elective affinity between civil society and the novel by contrast to a similar correlation between tragedy and the state. In his account, the opposing orientations of the novel to everyday social functioning and of tragedy to the imaginary of state crisis produce the following set of corresponding dichotomies: a genuine interest in the details and nuances of everyday life and a high valuation of its enjoyments vs. the sense that simply by being alive, we become entangled in myriad moral compromises and accumulate crushing guilt; focus on the routine, normal course of affairs vs. fascination with the striking exceptional event; a commitment to negotiation and compromise vs. their indignant refusal; an enthusiasm for the vicissitudes of (financial) exchange vs. the fascination with the way money (both its acquisition and its loss) can function as a test of who one really is; the proliferation of polite, potentially endless conversation vs. emphatic, performative speech as the medium for dramatic conflict.[8]

Political Theology in the Siberian Odes

Even a cursory acquaintance with Dostoevsky's novels is sufficient to convince one that the paradigm sketched out above is honoured only in the breach. To go down the list and show how the Russian novelist inverts each of these ostensibly novelistic features would amount to restating some of the best-rehearsed commonplaces of Dostoevsky scholarship: the temporality of his texts is one precisely of crisis; his conversation is far from polite; compromise is, at crucial times, impossible or ignoble; money is interesting primarily as a test of the truth about the self; and exception is more interesting than the norm. Thus, Moretti's rudimentary literary-historical model would seem to suggest that something like the starker problematics of state power (its legitimacy or illegitimacy, stability or instability, etc.) are encoded in the social imaginary of Dostoevsky's fiction, turning it into a zone of resistance or a blind spot vis-à-vis the dominant tradition of thinking about the novel as a socially symbolic form.[9]

It is not difficult to see why this might be the case. In the broadly Western European context, throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the state tends to retreat from the position of privileged addressee and supreme overseer of literary production to become its distant legislator (e.g., through the establishment of intellectual property and authors' ownership rights, through more or less stringent censorship laws, etc.).

In Russia, this process remains evidently incomplete well into the nineteenth century.[10] Here, the direct and at times spectacular exercise of coercion was a perpetual feature of the relationship between Russian authors and the state. And I would suggest that this articulation of the lifeworld of cultural producers to the figure of the sovereign is worth taking seriously as a factor that can influence literary work at the level of form and genre, and can thus account for the inversion of categories which Dostoevsky's texts among others perform upon a model like Moretti's.

Put another way, the relationship between Russia's cultural elite and the state was structured by the perpetual possibility of the kind of dramatic encounter with sovereign power experienced by the young Dostoevsky as he stood in a group of political prisoners condemned to execution by the firing squad. Examining the official documents linked to the execution, Leonid Grossman concludes: "The ritual of the execution presupposed a most elaborate preparation of the ceremony, truly reminiscent of a large-scale staged production […] No wonder that the correspondence between the highest ranked members of the government about the impending execution at times resembles the theatre director's copy of an unwieldy theatre play."[11] The exercise of power in the form of a public spectacle – the spectacle, furthermore, of the taking and subsequent giving of life – belongs to the regime of sovereignty as it has been delineated with particular starkness by Foucault: "a power which, in the absence of continual supervision, sought a renewal of its effect in the spectacle of its individual manifestations [and] was recharged in the ritual display of its reality as 'super-power.'"[12] Richard Wortman has referred to this type of spectacle as a "scenario of power," a symbolically laden ceremonial display of monarchical might, casting the ruler as a figure transcending everyday norms and normative judgments. Within Russian autocracy, writes Wortman, "the exercise of power and the representation of the monarch were reciprocal processes: absolute rule sustained the image of a transcendent monarch, which in turn warranted the untrammeled exercise of power."[13]

The script of the 1849 execution famously and fatefully contained an additional twist: the autocrat's last-moment granting of life through a commutation of the sentence. Sovereign power is the power "to take life or let live,"[14] and one might argue that only pardon transfers the relationship between the sovereign and the offender beyond the rule of law altogether into the sphere of an excruciatingly personal contact, revealing for the first time the true character of their relationship, its immediacy and directness. There exists a long tradition of political thought on the sovereign pardon,[15] but perhaps the most immediately relevant instance of such an act – relevant both because we can be sure it was known

to Dostoevsky and because it appears directly in the dramatic shape of a "scenario of power" – can be found in Pierre Corneille's tragedy *Cinna or the Clemency of Caesar Augustus* [Cinna ou la Clémence d'Auguste, 1643]. In an 1840 letter to his brother, Dostoevsky raves about the play, and specifically about the moment when the Emperor Augustus forgives the political co-conspirators Cinna and Emilie for plotting to assassinate him:

> "Je suis maître de moi comme de l'univers;
> Je suis, je veux l'être. O siècles, o mémoire,
> Conservez à jamais ma dernière victoire!
> Je triomphe aujourd'hui du plus juste courroux
> De qui les souvenir puisse aller jusqua'à vous.
> Soyons amis, Cinna, c'est moi qui t'en convie …"[16]
>
> I'm master of myself as of the world;
> I am. I wish to be. O days to come,
> Preserve for ever my last victory!
> I triumph over the most righteous wrath
> That ever can be handed down to you.
> Cinna, let us be friends. This I entreat …"[17]

"Only offended angels speak this way," comments Dostoevsky.[18] The logic underlying this scene of Octavian's *générosité* [magnanimity, *velikodushie*] begins with the proclamation of self-mastery, the mastery over one's rage, even if it is most righteous. The staging of self-mastery signifies the existence of a principle that supersedes the offended individual himself. The rebels are pardoned for the sake of the stability of the state, which is thus placed beyond the persons of Octavian and Cinna. Or, put another way, pardon marks the site other than the person of the ruler himself at which sovereignty is ultimately located. In showing himself able – unlike the rebels – to act on behalf of the state, the sovereign proves himself worthy of his sovereignty and eminently superior to those he pardons. Hence the Empress Livia's concluding monologue asserting Octavian's place among the gods; hence also Dostoevsky's comparison of the pardoning Augustus to an angel. We will have an opportunity to return to this scenario later in the discussion. For now, it is sufficient to conclude that the staging of both execution and commutation (as a kind of qualified pardon, at least when it comes to the life itself of the accused) is readable as a paradigmatic scenario of sovereign power, asserting the sovereign's divine-like superiority to the subject, their ontological incommensurability – even (especially!) at the moment of their most intimate encounter.

To be sure, Dostoevsky's confrontation with sovereign power at its most distilled does not end with the encounter on Semyonovsky Square. It continues rather, changing media from a carefully scripted and staged ritual to the patriotic ode, embodied in two extant poems Dostoevsky composed in Siberia. Written at the end of the period of penal servitude, the poems – one composed on the occasions of the birthday of the recently widowed Empress Alexandra Fyodorovna, the other for the coronation of Alexander II – are addressed to members of the ruling family in the hopes that they might open the way for him to advance in the ranks and ultimately return to publishing.[19] We have two texts, then, whose proper "literary environment"[20] might be thought of as obsolete, invoking court literature and state patronage – a regime in which serious works are called upon to acclaim the majesty of the ruler.

The odes contain multiple images of royal charisma, consistently conflating the stately with the divine. The first poem, addressing the widowed empress, draws on the high classicist lexical register, framing the image of the recently deceased tsar with the help of the traditional topoi of divinization. Nicholas I is here presented as the solar deity, the fearsome archangel with a fiery sword; his grave is depicted as holy or saintly; his deeds are immortal; he is a god who is known through his works ["Kuda ni vzglianem my – vezde, povsiudu on!"]; he is an object of conversionary faith on the part of the formerly "schismatic" and "blind" lyrical persona ("V kogo uveroval raskol'nik i slepets"). Finally, towards the end of the poem, the heir to the throne makes an appearance as Christ ("Khrani togo, kto nam nisposlan na spasen'e!").[21] The second poem continues in the same vein. Here, Christ appears as "our tsar in a crown of thorns" ("nash tsar' v ventse ternovom"), while both newly crowned ruler and Christian saviour are united in their capacity – sorely needed by the lyrical persona – for "all-forgiveness" ("vseproshchen'e").[22]

Dostoevsky draws from the vast depository of politico-theological scenarios and topoi, at times refracted through the tradition of courtly poetry going back at least to the beginning of the eighteenth century. As Boris Uspensky and Viktor Zhivov have shown in their classical study of the sacralization of monarchical power in Russia, up until the fifteenth century, the tsar could be compared to God only figuratively, by way of rhetorical parallelism, underscoring "the infinite difference between the early tsar and the Heavenly Tsar."[23] The eschatological framework of the doctrine of "Moscow as Third Rome," emerging in the wake of the fall of Byzantium and the Florentine Union, resulted in the ascription to the ruler of the only remaining Orthodox kingdom of a messianic role. This accrual of charismatic power to the monarch allows later rulers to project even (especially!) their excesses as confirmation of their

superhuman status. Anticipating one of the prominent images of royal charisma to which Dostoevsky resorts in his Siberian odes, the epithet "righteous sun" ("pravednoe solntse"), formerly used in liturgy with exclusive reference to Christ, is now applied to both legitimate rulers and pretenders to the throne. In fact, according to Uspensky and Zhivov, the process of sacralization of monarchical power triggers the emergence of the very problematic of pretendership: "The conception of the tsar's special charismatic power fundamentally altered the traditional notion, as the juxtaposition of just and unjust tsar now became that of genuine and false tsar."[24] Unlike the question of the tsar's justice, the question of authenticity cannot be resolved with reference to a pre-existing independent standard (e.g., adherence to divine commandments) but becomes a matter of sheer faith. Paradoxically, the secularizing reign of Peter I emerges as the apogee of this process, with the emperor now frequently referred to as Saviour ("Spas") or Christ. This could not but be perceived as blasphemy by the more traditional segments of the population.[25]

The Siberian odes then testify to the fact that Dostoevsky has thoroughly assimilated the imaginaries of sovereignty as they developed within the local tradition of political theology. As such, they continue what, at least on the scale of Dostoevsky's biography, began on the day of the execution: the unfolding of the scenario elevating the ruler to great charismatic heights through the display of mastery over life and death as well as through odic acclamation and sacralization. Of course, given the accumulated "genre memory" of odic address to the monarch, it is not altogether surprising to find a robust substratum of political-theological motifs structuring Dostoevsky's Siberian poems. But how would such a substratum enter into and interact with the generically hostile environment of the novel? Before addressing this question, and with an eye to adumbrating its stakes and terms, let us revisit briefly the main junctures of the argument so far:

1 The consensus critical view is that the genre of the modern novel tends to draw upon and reinforce the social imaginaries linked to the workings of civil society rather than the state. This entails focus on the spontaneous aggregation of individual wills and on impersonal/disciplinary rather than on personal/coercive modes of constraint.
2 It is not necessary to belabour the fact that Dostoevsky's fiction tends not only to flout but in fact to invert the narrative logics attributed to the novel by currently ascendant theories (as witness the particularly stark contrast with Moretti's description of the genre in "The Moment of Truth").

3 This raises the possibility that Dostoevsky's novels experience the warping effects of social imaginaries associated with the state. Such an affinity – at first glance certainly rather odd – would seem to be more justified within the Russian novelistic tradition, given the state's unusually active role in the literary field through much of the nineteenth century as well as Dostoevsky's own dramatic inclusion into the monarchy's scenarios of power.
4 Dostoevsky's Siberian odes both participate in these scenarios and thematize them, deploying an array of topoi from the tradition of Russian political theology. Could the elements of a political theology derived from the poems help us specify the logic whereby the imaginaries arising within the regime of sovereignty may produce a kind of mutation within the novel form? This is, most broadly understood, the wager of the discussion that follows.

The Sovereign in the Novel

In the remainder of the chapter I will attempt a brief reading of *Crime and Punishment* [Prestuplenie i nakazanie, 1866] and *Demons* [Besy,1872] – the two late novels by Dostoevsky where the political-theological problematic is most clearly elaborated. In broad terms, both novels fall into what might be called "the Life of the Great Sinner" paradigm. *The Life of the Great Sinner* [Zhitie velikogo greshnika] is a provisional title for a novel Dostoevsky planned out in 1869–70. The novel remained unwritten, but the notes proved to contain something like a meta-plot, a mythos, for the last three novels he would complete as well as, anachronistically, for the earlier *Crime and Punishment*. The central plot arc of this quasi-hagiographic tale consists in the account of a turbulent sinner's path to moral regeneration.[26] At the core of the narrative is the notion that one's capacity to fall low in sin indicates a comparable ability to rise high in righteousness.[27] Thus, a certain elemental strength ("a raw, animal strength" [9:128]) emerges as a more fundamental category than sin or virtue themselves. The Great Sinner has been "elected" for greatness; greatness is his natural endowment. The slightly paradoxical ring of the phrase itself – "*great* sinner" – indicates that ethical considerations don't altogether overrule ontological ones: the positive connotations of the adjective are not entirely drowned out by the negative denotation of the noun. Conversion from sin to virtue, from blindness to faith, may or may not take place (it seems to at the end of *Crime and Punishment*, doesn't at the end of *Demons*), but for the time being, we are presented with a series of dramatizations and images of charisma, the aura of superior power, which allows the Great Sinner to say, in Dostoevsky's notes to the novel: "I myself am God" (9:130).

The representational priority of ontological categories (greatness/mediocrity, power/weakness, intensity/tepidness, etc.) over ethical ones (virtue/sin, probity/corruption, kindness/cruelty, etc.) is central to a certain strain within political theology.[28] According to this logic, Uspensky and Zhivov write, the sovereign's "excesses may serve as the mark of charismatic exceptionalism."[29] The question of the ruler's justice is supplanted by the problem of his or her identity; identity is established through the process of (self-)representation on the part of the sovereign as well as faith and acclamation on the part of the subject. The question of the sovereign's identity cannot be resolved once and for all according to a pre-existing standard (i.e., of ethical or just rule). Thus, Peter may appear as Christ and Antichrist, god and idol at once.[30] This way of grasping the stakes of representation in Dostoevsky's late fiction would seem to reinforce – from a different direction – Mikhail Bakhtin's controversial claim for the priority of spatial over temporal categories in his poetics.[31] What Bakhtin calls finalization, which relies on plot to establish once and for all the identity of the hero – is he the real thing or a pretender? – would, in this account, too, withdraw to the background, giving way to an emphasis on moments of arrested time, which function not only as a stage for dialogic exchange but also, perhaps still more prominently, as dramatizations of charisma.

Both Raskolnikov and Stavrogin are endowed with such charisma, which accrues to them through scripts of exceptional, non-normative behaviour, stagings of enigmatic identity, scenarios of power over the lives of others, and striking outward appearance. The theme of sovereign rule is central to the novelistic trajectories of both. Raskolnikov tests himself against the paradigm of foundational politics, represented by the figure of the great lawgiver. The lawgiver is at the same time a criminal, who, in introducing new laws, spurns the laws of "the fathers." The lawgiver – Raskolnikov mentions Lycurgus, Solon, Muhammad, and Napoleon – acts from the place of normative exception, and so his actions invariably carry ambiguous ethical valences, depending on whether one views them from the point of view of their predecessors or successors. As sovereign, the lawgiver transcends ethics altogether and manifests himself – in a mode that mixes ontology with aesthetics – as a kind of higher, more intense being. This zone of indistinction between crime and the foundational act is illuminated during Raskolnikov's walk to the apartment of the old pawnbroker he intends to murder. Here, he entertains plans for expanding the Summer Garden to include the Field of Mars and the garden of the Mikhailovsky Palace. This plan happens to coincide precisely with Peter I's original design of the city. Peter, the one "lawgiver" whose name does not make it to Raskolnikov's list, repeatedly

appears in the notes to the novel in the guise of "the Dutchman" as the model for the kind of world-transformative power Raskolnikov strives to possess ("I need power […] I want everything that I see to be different […] (the Dutchman Peter)" [7:153]).[32] Within the imaginary regime of sovereignty, the conflation between violent crime and the layout of the imperial capital ceases to sound like a mere detail from criminal psychopathology, emerging instead as yet another element in the coding of the crime as a foundational political act.[33]

In a similar vein, the entire central intrigue of *Demons*, as conceived by Petrusha Verkhovensky, hinges on whether or not Stavrogin will agree to be installed as Russia's new tsar once the "show-house" (balagan) of contemporary Russian society finally collapses. "It's nothing for you to sacrifice life, your own or someone else's," Petrusha acclaims, extolling Stavrogin's natural charisma. "You are a leader, you are a sun, and I am your worm" (10:324; 419).[34] At another point in the text, the ardent nationalist Shatov cries in disappointment: "And this is Nikolai Stavrogin's great exploit!" (10:193; 243). To this Stavrogin replies, anticipating Petrusha's later acclamations: "Forgive me […] but you seem to look upon me as some sort of sun" [Izvinite […] no vy, kazhetsia, smotrite na menia kak na kakoe-to solntse, a na sebia kak na kakuiu-to bukashku sravnitel'no so mnoi] (10:193; 243).

The royal emblem of the sun, the sovereign as a solar deity, already familiar to us from the Siberian odes, also appears in *Crime and Punishment* during the third conversation between Raskolnikov and the investigator Porfiry Petrovich. Urging Raskolnikov to embrace punishment, the investigator exclaims: "What matter if no one will see you for a long time? […] Become a sun, and everyone will see you. The sun must be the sun first of all" (6:352; 460).[35] Thus, Raskolnikov is not alone in drawing on the register of sovereign charisma for means of self-definition. His ostensible nemesis, too, despite layers of novelistic equivocation and irony, sees him as an extraordinary man.[36]

Both protagonists are further associated with the figure of the tsar as it is delineated in contemporary folklore. Petrusha wishes to install Stavrogin as the newly revealed "Hidden One," the legendary figure of the legitimate monarch who has miraculously escaped his courtiers' attempt to assassinate him and will soon reveal himself as the people's legitimate ruler and redeemer.[37] In the context of the same speech, Petrusha identifies Stavrogin with yet another such figure, the folkloric Ivan Tsarevich. The same association appears in *Crime and Punishment*, when Raskolnikov is greeted at the police station at the end of the novel with the formula with which unclean powers greet Ivan Tsarevich (and other folk heroes) in fairytales: "Fee, fi, fo, fum, I smell the smell of a Russian man" (6:406; 527).

The charismatic aura with which the protagonists of the two novels are endowed is reinforced by Christological associations. Stavrogin's very name is derived from the Greek for "cross." Raskolnikov is linked to Christ explicitly in the notebooks to the novel as well as, more subtly, in the novel itself.[38] Less directly but perhaps more interestingly, the association comes through in the crucial passages depicting the reading of the Gospel story of the resurrection of Lazarus. Here, Raskolnikov is matched to several potential doubles: the "blind Jews" who come to believe in Christ at last; Lazarus, who is brought back from the dead; and finally Jesus, who allows Lazarus to die in order to be able to perform the greatest miracle of all by resurrecting him. As he says to his disciples: "For your sake I am glad I was not there [to prevent him from dying], so that you may [see the great deed of resurrection and] believe [in me]."[39] Raskolnikov operates within a parallel compulsion: to make it so that a death will have been worth it.

We have unmistakably before us, then, protagonists endowed with political-theological majesty. Thoroughly unsurprising in a patriotic ode or in a tragedy,[40] such an imaginary might be expected to trouble the more traditional representational strategies of the novel. One simple instance of such a troubled relationship between sovereignty and novelistic thematics can be detected at the level of Raskolnikov's motivations for the murder. Here, on the one hand, we have the assertion of godlike, sovereign power over life and death – a miraculous power whose deep-seated political-theological referent can be located at the point of convergence between the figures of Peter I and Christ. At stake here is the sovereign's assertion of the right to act beyond all constraints. On the other hand, the murder is also endowed with more mundane, more properly private or social motivations: his family's poverty, his sister's potentially disastrous betrothal, his need to make a career, certain contemporary ideas circulating in his cultural milieu, and so on. Thus, the central act of the novel is committed at the point of intersection between two symbolic regimes: the regime of sovereignty, asserting ultimate power over life and death in the name of the "new word," and focused on scenes of (self-)acclamation and (self-)doubt; and the regime of socialization, casting the crime and its aftermath as a sequence of social transgression, subsequent alienation, and eventual reintegration.

The second site at which the representational regime of sovereignty traverses the novelistic logics of social everydayness marks the distinction between the private and public domains. This is vividly rendered during the scene depicting an exchange between Raskolnikov and the police clerk Zamyotov. The two of them meet accidentally at a tavern, where Raskolnikov has stopped by to look for accounts of his own crime in

newspapers. Zamyotov sits down next to him and starts a conversation. Raskolnikov taunts the clerk while gradually implicating himself until he comes close to admitting his guilt:

> A terrible word was trembling on his lips […] another moment and it would jump out; another moment and it would let go; another moment and it would be spoken!
>
> "And what if it was I who killed the old woman and Lizaveta?" he said suddenly – and came to his senses.
>
> Zamyotov looked wildly at him and went as white as a sheet. (6:128; 165)

It is possible to read this scene, among similar others in which Raskolnikov brings himself to the edge of exposure, as an index of his conflicted desire to be apprehended. According to this interpretation – which arises by default within the horizon of novelistic psycho-social normativity – having committed the crime, Raskolnikov cannot bear the weight of the guilt and the isolation it imposes on him and begins to seek out exposure and punishment. The trouble with this interpretation is not only that Raskolnikov's feelings of guilt are explicitly ruled out (6:417; 543); the deeper issue is that it covers up the construction of the episode as a kind of scenario of power, in which a witness is called upon to gaze spellbound at the hero, who flickeringly manifests himself as a godlike figure with mastery over life and death; no wonder this profane theophany makes the witness look "wildly" and go "white as a sheet." In other words, Raskolnikov's act of self-revelation is doubly emplotted. On the one hand, we have a violation of the law committed by a private person – and this must remain hidden if the protagonist is to avoid getting caught. On the other hand, we have the crime as the pivotal point in a certain scenario of power – the sovereign's power "to take life and let live" – which must by definition be performed in the open, publicly establishing the identity of the actor through the act. Within the psychological code, we might say that the crime thus conceived produces in the protagonist the contradictory desire at once to remain hidden and, not so much to get caught, as to always be seen.[41]

The interaction of these two regimes (sovereignty and socialization) forms the dramatic kernel of the three extended conversations between Raskolnikov and Porfiry Petrovich. The encounters trace the investigator's struggle first to understand and then to realign the very structure of the protagonist's subjectivity, including, and perhaps most prominently, his sense of time. In Foucault's terms, Porfiry appears here as a paradigmatic "disciplinarian," less concerned with apprehending the criminal than with observing and trying to understand him, less driven to

establish his formal identity than to get to the core of his way of thinking, less preoccupied with punishment than with correction and reform. Put another way, the investigator anchors the techniques and voices the values traditionally understood as novelistic: psychic transparency (to the omniscient gaze of the author/reader), malleability under the pressure of social interactions, openness in biographical time, and so on. Meanwhile, the protagonist adheres to a set of incommensurable imaginaries, associated with the regime of sovereignty: a vision of the subject as a mysterious source of exceptional, norm-destroying deeds, deeds that are on display for public viewing and acclamation (hence, the profound humiliation of having to hide) and thus establish, test, and fortify the identity of the doer.[42] Equally telling in this respect are the agonists' competing notions of identity in time. Here Porfiry is once again on the side of the novelistic impulse to see individuals as relatively mobile and fluid, insisting that confession and imprisonment would not empty Raskolnikov's life of meaning. For the investigator, the double murder, in other words, is only one among the many acts Raskolnikov will perform. For Raskolnikov himself, by contrast, the crime is *the* act, the moment of truth, the ordeal of his calling to law-giving greatness. Here, identity is given once and for all; it may be tested, but not changed.[43]

Somewhat schematically, then, we might say that the titular crime of the novel, and the enigma of identity to which it gives narrative foundation, can be specified as a locus of generic interference, internalizing the mutually contradictory imaginaries of disciplinary sociality on the one hand and sovereignty on the other. The protagonist is both ordinary, socially uprooted, novelistic; and extraordinary, endowed with a political-theological aura. Here, the traditional nineteenth-century novelistic motif that might be designated as "the young man in the city" is traversed by what might be regarded as the "alien" motif of "the sun of righteousness." The latter carries with it a set of distinct narrative logics, such as moment of truth, scene of acclamation, scenario of power, dualistic and ambiguous (rather than fluid) identity, etc.

Narratives of sovereignty, especially inflected by political-theological motifs, tend to rely for their dramatic arc on the opposition between legitimacy and pretendership. Uspensky invokes instances when pretenders to the throne demonstrated their sovereign status to the followers by displaying certain distinctive marks on their bodies.[44] In a similar vein Porfiry expresses concern about the possibility of a mistake about someone's extraordinary status and ironically suggests that it would be easier to tell the special people from the ordinary ones if the former wore distinctive clothes or were marked by brandings [kleimy]. The motif of impostership emerges still more prominently in *Demons*. One of the

most striking passages in this respect depicts Stavrogin's conversation with the lame madwoman Marya Lebyadkina, who is secretly his wife. In the course of the scene, it becomes clear that Marya is expecting to meet a certain "Prince," her redeemer, but by the end of the exchange believes she is speaking to the Prince's murderer instead. Once again, we are confronted by the rigid opposition: Redeemer or Antichrist, Prince or Prince-killer, tsar or anti-tsar. The scene ends with what might be called "disclamation," the exposure and renunciation of the Prince as pretender, encapsulated in the shriek with which Marya chases Stavrogin out of the room: "Grishka Otrepev, anathema!" (10:219; 278).[45]

Central to both texts are the thematics of social disintegration. The stakes of redemption are high, and the yearning for the ruler-redeemer intense when everyone perceives with more or less clarity that the "show-house" of contemporary social life is about to collapse. Alternatively, the order's relative stability might be associated, as in *Crime and Punishment*, with the kind of revulsion Raskolnikov feels at the sight of Sonya prostituting herself for her family. Learning that the Marmeladovs live off of their daughter's misery, Raskolnikov thinks: "What a well they've dug for themselves, however! […] And they got accustomed to it […] Man gets accustomed to everything, the scoundrel [podlets]!" (6:25; 27). Social life does not produce "spontaneous bonds" (Moretti) but spontaneous turpitude [podlost'], unconscious accommodation to horror. What is needed, then, is the non-scoundrel, the one who will refuse to compromise and be compromised, who will have the strength to overstep and begin it all anew (6:25; 27). Thus, Raskolnikov proclaims the "state of exception" and goes on to stage the enigma of his own election.[46]

Stavrogin's election, in turn, is acclaimed or disclaimed by everyone around him. Even members of the older generation indulge in such – similarly ambiguous – speculations. His former tutor Stepan Trofimovich suggests that Stavrogin's scandalous behaviour should be explained as "merely the first stormy impulses of an overabundant constitution […] and that it all resembled Shakespeare's description of the youth of Prince Harry, carousing with Falstaff, Poins, and Mistress Quickly" (10:36; 42). The invocation of the Henriade is significant here precisely as a precedent for exploring the problem of legitimacy. The two parts of *Henry IV* in particular trace out the consequences of Bolingbroke's usurpation and (indirect) murder of the divinely ordained king Richard II. Prince Hal's carousing with vagabonds is explicitly cast as his father's punishment for the (perhaps necessary) transgression; the political-theological essence of the punishment consists in the production of uncertainty about whether or not Bolingbroke's newly established royal line is divinely acceptable after all.

The question that is raised by the drama of legitimacy/pretendership pertains to the enigmatic emptiness of absolute power as such. In a farewell letter to Darya Shatova, Stavrogin writes: "I've tested my strength everywhere […] This testing for myself and for show proved it to be boundless […] In front of your very eyes, I endured a slap from your brother; I acknowledged my marriage publicly" (10:514; 675). The motif of "the test of strength," already familiar to us from *Crime and Punishment*, returns here with the added emphasis on the dimension of publicity, the "for show." Raskolnikov tests his strength with the murder, feels humiliated by the need to hide what he has done, and seeks out ways to put himself on display. Stavrogin tests his strength repeatedly and directly in public, "posing riddles" that attract the almost mystical fascination of the members of society. What happens to be "for show" here is the very capacity to spurn the opinions of those to whom this capacity is being shown. What the public witnesses is the power that rises above the public, utterly transcends it, constitutes a state of exception in its midst.

The first of the two episodes Stavrogin mentions in his letter is especially intriguing in our context. At issue is the scene during which he receives a blow in the face from his former disciple Shatov and does not respond. The episode is set up as the culmination of a long, nearly fifty-page sequence, gathering together most of the significant characters of the novel, whose complex relationships with each other (and to themselves) converge on the figure of the protagonist. Approximately halfway into the scene, Stavrogin himself arrives after a prolonged absence from the provincial town, and all attention focuses on him. Finally, we reach the event of the blow itself. Shatov walks up to Stavrogin, a hush settles over the room; Shatov strikes with all his might, someone cries out, everyone freezes again; silence (10:164; 203).[47] What follows in the dilation of the dramatic moment is a quasi-odic *exemplum*, an extended digression describing a precedent for the hero being acclaimed. Here we have an extended character portrait of the Decembrist Mikhail Lunin, valiant officer known for his recklessness in war and peace alike, whose regicidal plans of 1816 served as a pretext in 1825 for the verdict of life in penal servitude. Thus, indirectly invoked once again, thanks to the extended comparison of Stavrogin to Lunin, is the image of the protagonist as a participant in the drama of sovereignty, this time in the capacity of regicide.[48]

The digression concludes with the narrator's assertion that he has always considered Stavrogin to be the sort of man who would kill an offender on the spot, without even challenging him to a duel (10:165; 205). Yet – and herein lies the ultimate enigmatic exception – Stavrogin does not respond. We are thus confronted by a layered scenario in which

the hero is cast not only as someone in possession of superior power – especially the power for violence – but also as someone capable of mastery over it. The narrator dwells on the scene of self-mastery in particular, comparing Stavrogin's ostensible feelings in the immediate aftermath of the blow to those of a man who tests his strength by clutching a red-hot bar of iron in his hand (10:166; 205). We are thus reminded of Dostoevsky's favourite scene in *Cinna*, the staging of Octavian's capacity to master his righteous rage, transcend even the logic of what is just through the act of pardon, the act whereby one shows oneself capable not only of punishment but of refusing to punish. Traditionally, the ruler's self-mastery, especially mastery over rage, functions as an index of legitimacy, and, in Corneille, this is indeed the act that founds stable rule in Rome. Stavrogin's scenario of power, on the other hand, serves to deepen the charismatic mystery, which projects the self-limitation of power as a mark of its boundlessness. The trouble is that power is limited here by nothing outside the self, no idea or ideal for the sake of which the ruler choses to limit his capacity for violence. What Stavrogin lacks, according to his own confession in the letter quoted above, is precisely Corneille's "générosité" [velikodushie], a dedication to a principle that stands outside and as it were above his own self. Like Raskolnikov, who (at least for the time being) has no "new word" with which to legislate but is preoccupied with capacity alone, so Stavrogin embodies the drama of pure power, beyond all determinations, beyond the distinction between legitimacy and pretendership, the drama, in short, of sovereignty itself.[49]

Entirely Social?

Comically blind to the real stakes of Stavrogin's journey through the novel, members of the older generation in *Demons* – in particular his mother and his former tutor – expect much from the handsome, promising young protagonist. They hope that he will one day stop behaving so strangely, come to his senses, marry a beautiful heiress, and become a brilliant member of society.[50] These properly "social" hopes do not simply go unfulfilled; they seem to be invoked only to highlight their ultimate pettiness by comparison with the novel's more authentic preoccupations. As we have seen, these preoccupations are, in *Demons* as well as in *Crime and Punishment*, better understood as political, or, more properly still, political-theological, foregrounding scenarios of power, acts of violence, scenes of acclamation, scripts of exception, and mysteries of charisma. These novels thus appear to draw upon the imaginaries of sovereign rule just as much as, and in certain ways more than, those of civil society, belying the consensus view of the novel as the genre of sociality

par excellence. The notion that the novel, in order to be a novel, must be preoccupied with the negotiation of the boundaries between individual ambition or desire and social cohesion (Nancy Armstrong) or that the novel predominantly concerns itself with "the sphere of 'spontaneous' and concrete bonds" (Moretti), or that its version of power is subtle rather than brute (Foucault, Miller) – all these notions encounter a stumbling block in Dostoevsky.

When it comes to understanding why that may be the case, three concentric explanatory horizons seem relevant. The first and narrowest is the horizon of Dostoevsky's own ideological commitment, shared with many of his contemporaries of course, to an idealized vision of the monarchy as the political form most proper to the aspirations of the Russian people: "For the people, the tsar is not an external force, not the power of some conqueror (as was the case with the dynasties of former kings in France), but a nation-wide, all-unifying force that the people themselves desired, cultivated in their hearts, loved, suffered for, because from it alone was it expecting its deliverance from Egypt. For the people, the tsar is the embodiment of itself, of its whole idea, of its hopes and beliefs" (27:21; my translation).[51] The symbiosis of the people and the tsar leaves no room for the intermediation of society, understood as a more or less disciplined aggregation of self-seeking individuals. Within this model, the tsar is the One in whom, as in the famous frontispiece to Hobbes's *Leviathan*, the Many are contained. And insofar as the Many are a chosen people, the One is – according to the tradition of political theology that predates Dostoevsky's work by several centuries – their messiah and "earthly god."

This is the vision Dostoevsky offers already in his Siberian poems by drawing on the traditional odic themes, and it opens out onto the broader horizon of his experience as a writer in nineteenth-century Russia. Extensive problems with censorship aside, this experience spans the extremes of staged execution and exile at one end of the spectrum (coercion) and association with the royal family and the affairs of the state towards the end of his life at the other (collaboration). The point to emphasize here is not so much the fact, nor even the constant possibility of persecution, but rather *intimacy* with sovereign power, intimacy that could with comparable probability break a life or endow it with high meaning (sometimes both in the same gesture). In this respect, Dostoevsky's experience may have been among the most breathtaking to contemplate, but it was certainly closer to paradigmatic than to unprecedented.

Paradigmatic, too, because – and here we reach the third and outermost horizon – Dostoevsky's life and work unfolded in a world in which, to quote Antonio Gramsci, "the State was everything, civil society was

primordial and gelatinous."[52] The hypothesis that animates the preceding discussion, then, is that in the midst of this distinctive historical formation, the novel begins to eschew the standard realist scripts of the pacification and accommodation of individuals within civil society and to focus instead on dramatizations of absolute power. The question of how these dramas play out in the work of other nineteenth-century Russian writers evidently reaches far beyond the scope of this chapter. Here, I would only like to suggest that when it comes to the prevalence of the imaginaries of sovereignty, Dostoevsky's work, much like his biography, presents what may be an especially vivid case but certainly not an exception.[53]

NOTES

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1 Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1998), 39.
2 Margaret Cohen, *The Sentimental Education of the Novel* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 77–118.
3 Nancy Armstrong, "The Fiction of Bourgeois Morality and the Paradox of Individualism," in *The Novel*, vol. 2: *Forms and Themes*, ed. Franco Moretti (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 371.
4 Fredric Jameson, "The Experiments of Time: Providence and Realism," in *The Novel*, vol. 2, 113.
5 Hannah Arendt. *The Human Condition*, 38–49.
6 D.A. Miller. *The Novel and the Police* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 23. Foucault himself seemed to view the genre of the novel in this way, suggesting in a lecture course from 1975–76, that there exists an "essential kinship between the novel and the problem of the norm." Michel Foucault. *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France 1975–1976*. (New York: Picador, 1997), 175.
7 Franco Moretti. *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture*, trans. Albert Sbragia (London and New York: Verso, 2000), 53.
8 Franco Moretti, "The Moment of Truth," *New Left Review* 1, 159 (September–October 1986): 42–5.
9 The correlate question of whether or not Dostoevsky's novel can be meaningfully described as tragic remains outside the purview of this study. I

have attempted to address this issue in Ilya Kliger, "Dostoevsky and the Novel-Tragedy: Genre and Modernity in Ivanov, Pumpiansky and Bakhtin," *PMLA* 126, no. 1 (January 2011): 73–87, and in Ilya Kliger, "Tragic Nationalism in Nietzsche and Dostoevsky," in *Nietzsche and Dostoevsky: Philosophy, Morality, Tragedy*, ed. Jeff Love and Jeffrey Metzger (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2016), 143–72.

10 No doubt the trend away from sovereign display and towards discipline and market regulation is visible also in nineteenth-century Russia. See William Mills Todd, III, *Fiction and Society in the Age of Pushkin: Ideology, Institutions, and Narrative* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press: 1986), 45–105, as well as William Mills Todd, III, "The Ruse of the Russian Novel" in *The Novel*, vol. 1: *History, Geography and Culture*, ed. Franco Moretti (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 401–13. But even here important qualifications must be made. We might invoke, for example, the distinctiveness of the Russian case with regard to the regulation of authorial ownership: "The 'police' character of the copyright system was unique to Russia: unlike other European legislation, Russian laws on copyright formed a part of the censorship regulation, and only in 1887 finally entered the Civil Code." See Ekaterina Pravilova, *A Public Empire: Property and the Quest for the Common Good in Imperial Russia* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014), 220. Thus, the establishment of literary ownership in nineteenth-century Russia – an important factor in a properly functioning literary market –remained closely linked to the scenarios of direct prohibition and control.

11 Leonid Grossman, "Grazhdanskaia smert' F.M. Dostoevskogo," *Literaturnoe nasledstvo*, vols. 22–4 (Moscow: Nauka, 1935), 683.

12 Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 17.

13 Richard Wortman, *Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy from Peter the Great to the Abdication of Nicholas II.* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 1. See also the discussion of the symbolic implications of the ritual performance on the occasion of the execution of the five Decembrists, in *Scenarios of Power*, 132

14 Foucault. *Society Must Be Defended*, 241.

15 For a recent overview, see Bernadette Meyler, "Liberal Constitutionalism and the Sovereign Power," in *The Scaffolding of Sovereignty: Global and Aesthetic Perspectives on the History of a Concept*, ed. Zvi Benite, Stephanos Geroulanos, and Nichol Jerr (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), 208–29. For a congenial discussion of the scenarios of power associated with execution and pardon in connection with the genre of tragedy, see Kirill Ospovat. *Terror and Pity: Aleksandr Sumarokov and the Theater of Power in Elizabethan Russia* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2016), 216–34.

16 Pierre Corneille, *Corneille's Cinna ou la Clémence D'Auguste*, ed. John E. Matzke (Boston: D.C. Heath, 1905), 91.
17 Pierre Corneille, *The Cid/Cinna/The Theatrical Illusion*, trans. John Cairncross (London, New York: Penguin, 1975), 189
18 F.M. Dostoevskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridtsati tomakh*, 30 vols., ed G.M. Fridlender et al. (Leningrad: "Nauka," 1972–90), vol 28, bk. 1, 71. Subsequent references to this edition will appear in parentheses in the text with volume and page numbers.
19 Leonid Grossman, "Grazhdanskaia smert' F.M. Dostoevskogo," 686.
20 This is one of the standard translations for the term "literaturnyi byt" coined by the Russian Formalists Boris Eikhenbaum and Yuri Tynianov to mean specific forms of human behaviour and social relations that constitute the immediate context in which literary works are produced and received.
21 Leonid Grossman, "Grazhdanskaia smert' F.M. Dostoevskogo," 710.
22 Ibid., 720.
23 Boris Uspensky and Viktor Zhivov, *"Tsar and God" and Other Essays in Russian Cultural Semiotics*, trans. Marcus C. Levitt, David Budgen, and Liv Bliss, ed. Marcus Levitt (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2012), 6. See also Iurii Kagarlitskii, "Sakralizatsiia kak priem: resursy ubeditel'nosti i vliiatel'nosti imperskogo diskursa v Rossii XVIII veka," *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 4 (1999), n.p. https://magazines.gorky.media/nlo/1999/4/sakralizacziya-kak-priem.html.
24 Uspensky and Zhivov, *"Tsar and God,"* 10.
25 Ibid., 26.
26 For a brief account of the project that gives justice to its complexity, see Kate Holland, *The Novel in the Age of Disintegration: Dostoevsky and the Problem of Genre in the 1870s* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2013), 50–3.
27 In Russian fiction, this motif probably originates with Gogol's *Dead Souls*, whose crooked protagonist is meant for future moral regeneration. See Juriy Lotman, "Gogol's 'Tale of Captain Kopejkin': Reconstruction of the Plan and Ideo-Compositional Function," trans. Julian Graffy, in Ju.M. Lotman and B.A. Uspenskij, *The Semiotics of Russian Culture*, ed. Ann Shukman (Ann Arbor: Michigan Slavic Contributions, 1984), 227.
28 The Western counterpart of this distinction can be found in Thomas Hobbes's influential formula "Auctoritas, non veritas facit legem." Reinhart Koselleck comments: "Laws are made by authority, not by truth. The prince is above the law and at the same time its source; he decides what is right and what is wrong; he is both law-maker and judge […] To the traditional moral doctrines, [Hobbes] opposes one whose theme is political reason." Reinhart Koselleck, *Critique and Crisis: Enlightenment and the Pathogenesis of Modern Society* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1988), 31.

29 Uspensky and Zhivov, *"Tsar and God,"* 8.
30 This is indeed the underlying political-theological paradox of Alexander Pushkin's *Bronze Horseman*.
31 Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, ed. and trans. Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1984), 28.
32 For further invocations of Peter-the-Dutchman, see Dostoevskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 7, 189, 190.
33 Much has been made of Raskolnikov's preoccupation with the figure of Napoleon, but it is important to distinguish among the various valences of the "Napoleonic myth" mobilized by different novelists and in different novelistic traditions. For the protagonists of Balzac, Napoleon symbolizes the unscrupulous energy of a parvenu; for Stendhal's heroes, he stands for spontaneity, impetuousness, and valour; for Raskolnikov, Napoleon is first and foremost a criminal law-giver, a usurper-sovereign, a(n) (imposter) redeemer. See Yuri Lotman's relevant discussion in Iu. Lotman, "Siuzhetnoe prostranstvo russkogo romana XIX stoletiia." *Izbrannye stat'i (v 3-kh tomakh)* (Tallinn: Aleksandra, 1993), vol. 3, 91–106. For Petrine motifs in *Crime and Punishment*, see Clint Walker, "On Serfdom, Sickness, and Redemption: The Peter the Great Subtext in *Crime and Punishment*," *Dostoevsky Studies* New Series, no. 13 (2009), 93–108; Gary Rosenshield, *Challenging the Bard: Dostoevsky and Pushkin, a Study of Literary Relationship* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2013); and, most recently, Kathleen Scollins, "From the New Word to the True Word: *The Bronze Horseman* Subtext of *Crime and Punishment*," *Russian Review* 78, no. 3 (July 2019): 414–36.
34 This translation can be found in Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Demons*, trans. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 419. From now on references to this translation will be supplied in parentheses in the body of the text following the *PSS* reference and set off by a semicolon.
35 This translation can be found in Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, trans. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), 460. From now on references to this translation will be supplied in parentheses in the body of the text following the *PSS* reference and set off by a semicolon.
36 On the concept of the extraordinary in Dostoevsky, and especially in *Crime and Punishment*, see Greta Matzner-Gore's contribution to this volume.
37 For a detailed discussion of the use of folk traditions in the characterization of Stavrogin, see Linda Ivanits, *Dostoevsky and the Russian People* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 106–32. For a similar discussion of *Crime and Punishment*, see pp. 45–76 in the same work.
38 See Dostoevskii, *PSS*, vol. 7, 166, 192, 198. Also see Susan McReynolds, *Redemption and the Merchant God: Dostoevsky's Economy of Salvation and*

Antisemitism (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2008), 117–32. McReynolds notes the centrality of political theology for Raskolnikov's way of imagining his act: "In Raskolnikov's imagination, Christ and political figures like Napoleon merge as 'great men' bringing a 'new word,' benefiting humanity in general but exacting a high price from many individuals" (121).

39 *The New Oxford Annotated Bible: New Revised Standard Version with the Apocrypha*, ed. Michael Coogan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 167.

40 When it comes to tragedy, the link of the genre to the problematic of sovereignty is well attested. See, for example, Glenn Most, "Sad Stories of the Death of Kings: Sovereignty and Its Constraints in Greek Tragedy and Elsewhere" in Benite, Geroulanos, and Jerr, eds, *The Scaffolding of Sovereignty*, 57–79. In a classical text on medieval and early modern political theology Ernst Kantorowicz develops his analysis of kingship with persistent reference to William Shakespeare's *Richard II*. See Kantorowicz. *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016). Also see Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, 174–7.

41 Hence, too, the ambiguity of searching for one's crime in the newspapers to begin with: is it to make sure he is not a suspect, or is it to find the mark he left upon the universe of public deeds?

42 I can do no more here than suggest a relationship between the notion of sovereignty as the source of exception and Mikhail Bakhtin's well-known thesis on the unfinalizable nature of Dostoevsky's heroes. The unfinalizable self, the self who inevitably breaks out of societal norms and expectations, evidently bears at least a structural resemblance to the self of the unlimited ruler, the one who gives laws rather than obey them.

43 To be sure, the protagonist and the investigator should not be regarded as pure embodiments of the imaginaries of sovereignty and disciplinarity respectively. Raskolnikov, for one, turns out to lose control of the crime and must in the aftermath reckon with the need to keep it secret. On the other hand, as we have seen, Porfiry Petrovich invokes the solar metaphor in relation to his suspect and acclaims him in other ways (6:351; 460). The investigator's penchant for seeing the crime less as a moral outrage or an infringement of the law than as an episode in Raskolnikov's – after all "exceptional" – biography should also indicate his partiality for at least an attenuated interpretation of the protagonist within the regime of sovereignty.

44 Boris Uspensky, "Tsar and Pretender: Samozvanchestvo or Royal Imposture in Russia as a Cultural-Historical Phenomenon," in Lotman and Uspensky, *The Semiotics of Russian Culture*, 264, 278. Among other pieces of evidence, Uspensky cites documents from the Pugachev investigation:

> When we had sat down, Karavaev said to Emel'ka: "You call yourself a sovereign, yet sovereigns have the royal signs on their bodies,"

> whereupon Emel'ka stood up and, ripping open the collar of his shirt, said: "There! If you do not believe that I am the sovereign, just look – here is the royal sign." First of all he showed the scars under his nipples left by an illness, and then the same kind of mark on his left temple. The Cossacks – Shigaev, Karavaev, Zarubin, Miasnikov – looked at the signs and said: "Well, now we believe you and recognize you as sovereign." (264–5)

45 In a different context, Bakhtin notes the motif of pretendership in one of Raskolnikov's dreams, linking it to the dream of the False Dmitry in Pushkin's *Boris Godunov*: "Before us is the image of communal ridicule on the public sphere decrowning a carnival king-pretender." (Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 168). For more comments on the motif of pretendership (again, in the context of carnival decrowning) in Dostoevsky, see Mikhail Bakhtin, *Sobranie sochinenii v semi tomakh*, vol. 5 (Moscow: Russkie slovari, 1996), 43–4. Harriet Murav dedicates a detailed discussion to the topic of pretendership in *Demons*, once again linking the protagonist-pretender to *Boris Godunov* and, more broadly, to the historical period of the Time of Troubles. See Harriet Murav, *Holy Foolishness: Dostoevsky's Novels and the Poetics of Cultural Critique* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992), 99–123. In an attempt to make sense of the "Ivan Tsarevich" motif in *Demons*, Olga Maiorova provides an especially pertinent account of the broader post-emancipation mytheme of royal pretendership in Maiorova, "Tsarevich-samozvanets v sotsial'noi mifologii poreformennoi epokhi," in *Rossia-Russia 3 (11): Kul'turnye praktiki v ideologicheskoi perspektive. Rossia XVII-nachalo XX veka.* (Moscow: OGI, 1999), 204–32. In Maiorova's account, the motif invokes contemporary folk legends conflating various members of the royal family with leaders of past peasant uprisings and sectarian leaders in the figure of the sovereign-redeemer. One important distinction that emerges in the process is between bureaucratic and popular notions of monarchical rule. The pretender-redeemer-tsar's legitimacy is evidently based on his messianic charisma rather than of legality or reason. For the role of schismatic-revolutionary imaginaries of sovereignty, see Irina Paperno, "The Liberation of Serfs as a Cultural Symbol" in *Russian Review* 63, no. 4 (October 2004): 417–436, especially 421–36.

46 The term "state of exception," indicating the situation that warrants the suspension of all constitutional norms in the face of an immediate danger to the state, has a long history. For overview and analysis, Giorgio Agamben, *State of Exception*, trans. Kevin Attell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

47 For a discussion of a Dostoevskian poetics of the slap, especially in relation to realized and unrealized scenarios of the duel, see Kate Holland's contribution to this volume.

48 The regicide partakes of the charisma of the sovereign by entering what Clifford Geertz has called "concentrated loci of serious acts": "an arena in which the events that most vitally affect its members' lives take place. It is involvement, *even oppositional involvement*, with such arenas and with the momentous events that occur in them that confers charisma. It is a sign […] of being near the heart of things." See Clifford Geertz, *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretative Anthropology* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 122–3.

49 We find the same motif in Arkady Dolgoruky's fantasy of enrichment for the sake of power (mogushchestvo) in *The Adolescent*. Arkady imagines his own much richer version as Jupiter who is confident enough in his powers to no longer need to display it. Congenial, too, is the script according to which he reaches the heights of power and wealth only in order to renounce it all. Arkady's absolute wilfulness is thus expressed in the rejection of his will (13:74–6).

50 For a discussion of Dostoevsky's suspended marriage plots, see Anna Berman's contribution to this volume.

51 For detailed discussions of Dostoevsky's views on the monarchy, and especially on the relationship between the monarchy and the Russian people, see Igor Volgin, *Poslednii god Dostoevskogo: Istoricheskie zapiski* (Moscow: AST, 2010), 265–7; V.G. Odinokov, *Khudozhestvenno-istoricheskii opyt v poetike russkikh pisatelei* (Novosibirsk: Nauka, 1990), 40–8; V.P. Popov, "Problema naroda u Dostoevskogo," *Dostoevskii: Materialy i issledovaniia* 4 (1980): 41–54; Richard Wortman, "Russian Monarchy and the People," in *Dostoevsky in Context*, ed. Deborah A. Martinsen and O.E. Maiorova (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 77–85.

52 Antonio Gramsci. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 238.

53 I have attempted to explore the ways in which the imaginaries of sovereignty and of state coercion more broadly affect the formal-thematic texture of Russian realist fictions in Ilya Kliger, "Hegel's Political Philosophy and the Social Imaginary of Early Russian Realism," *Studies in Eastern European Thought* 65, nos. 3–4 (September 2013): 189–99, as well as in Ilya Kliger, "Scenarios of Power in Turgenev's 'First Love': Russian Realism and the Allegory of the State," *Comparative Literature* 70, no. 1 (March 2018): 25–45.

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