TRANSFORMATIONS OF AGGRESSION

OR, HOW DOSTOEVSKY CAME TO LOVE "BIG BROTHER"

Gilbert J. Rose

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The first chapter ended with introducing the discussion that will occupy us for some time-a consideration of the various forms of splitting that occur in clinical and creative processes-in order later to compare the reintegrative mastery that occurs in psychoanalysis and art.

A double is one form of splitting-a conscious or unconscious displacement to the external world of various idealized or despised aspects of the self. Freud experienced it as an uncanny mixture of familiarity and unfamiliarity; he felt a simultaneous attraction for and reluctance to meet creative writers like Schnitzler, Rolland, and Mann. In that they embodied and reflected aspects of himself that Freud valued highly, these were benevolent doubles. Because he also realized that these other men were quite different from him, the displacements were conscious.

For the creative writer, fictional characters, like doubles, also represent aspects of the self, split off and displaced to the outside world. In that they are products of the imagination, they are familiar, like imaginary companions; but because they may surprise even their author by sudden, unexpected motivations and actions, they may at the same time be unfamiliar, like dreams. Thus, for their author they fall midway between imaginary companions-familiar, conscious, controllable-and dream products-strange, surprising, possibly alien. Like doubles in life, dreams,

and other displacements, they are at once close and distant.

In *The Double*, Dostoevsky used fictional characters to portray the subjective experience of being harassed by a *malevolent* double-one that represents the existence of *unconscious conflict* with unacceptable aspects of oneself and the wish to extrude them into the outside world. There is reason to believe that this conflict was precipitated by actual traumatic experiences in his life. Using dreams, fantasies, and other displacements, Dostoevsky went on in subsequent works-*Crime and Punishment* and "The Peasant Matey"-to elaborate and work out this intolerable conflict in two opposite ways. Thanks to the act of writing and the creation of fictional characters who could act as proxies for himself, both resolutions were vividly close to, yet at a safe remove from, the feelings associated with his original trauma.

The tradition of the double reaches as far back as ancient Egypt, where every man was believed to have a *Ka,* or soul, that was his exact likeness in miniature.[4] In Egyptian monuments, the *Ka* of a king is represented as a mannikin standing behind him-evidently a precursor of the homunculus, or magic dwarf, of later folklore. Greek mythology offers the related subject of reflections and mirroring. Narcissus's death, hopelessly entranced by his own reflection in the water, was the gods' punishment for his having spurned the nymph Echo, who was cursed with the opposite frustration. Speechless except to repeat the last words spoken in her presence, she can only mirror others.

Dostoevsky's *The Double* falls within a literary tradition studded with well-known titles. Shelley's Frankenstein and Stevenson's Mr. Hyde torment their creators with their untamed passions. Wilde's picture of Dorian Grey reflects the inner corruption of its subject, so well-concealed behind his attractive facade.

These alter egos, who carry on lives of their own quite independent of their counterparts, are by no means always malevolent. Conrad's "secret sharer," Leggatt, is like a trusted and

enlightening friend to the young sea captain, who is something of a stranger to himself.

The tradition of the double continues in contemporary literature and includes works by Dostoevsky's compatriot, Nabokov. At least four of his short stories center on this theme. In "A Forgotten Poet," an old man claims to be a young poet who is believed to have died fifty years before. In "Conversation Piece," a writer has a disreputable namesake who causes him all kinds of confusion. "Scenes from the Life of a Double Monster" is about one of a pair of Siamese twins. And "Terror" depicts the attacks of panic that accompany the protagonist's sense of having a double-looking in the mirror and not recognizing himself, suddenly sensing another person's presence in the room with him, abruptly feeling that familiar objects have been robbed of their quality of realness. If the double has a cathartic purpose in art, Nabokov offers another final twist in "Terror"; the double is exorcised. At the end of the story, the protagonist visits his dying mistress. Unseeing, in her delirium, she smiles at his imagined image. "My double died with her," he concludes, "[and] saved me from insanity" (Nabokov 1975, 121).

In Dostoevsky's *The Double*, secret rebelliousness against the authorities and hypocritical fawning are in such intense conflict with each other in the protagonist's mind that they cause his personality to split in two. Dostoevsky wrote the story at age twenty-five, and probably coincided with the period of his underground revolutionary activity.

The tale associated with Dostoevsky's subversive activity is well known. The secret meetings of the group of radical utopianists had been exposed; the existence of their illegal printing press had been discovered. Dostoevsky and his fellow prisoners were already before the firing squad, condemned to death for revolutionary activity when, at the last moment, the Tzar's reprieve arrived, commuting the death sentence. The young author was deported in chains to a penal colony in Siberia, there to serve a four-year sentence at hard labor, followed by four years' compulsory military duty.

The physical and mental pain of the prison experience amid the outcasts and misfits of society brought about a profound change of heart in the young Dostoevsky. He abandoned the liberal atheistic ideologies of Western Europe and turned to religion and the belief that Orthodox Russia was destined to be the spiritual leader of the world.

The detailed images of what went into the transformation of his attitudes toward authority are to be found in *Crime and Punishment*, written twenty years after *The Double* at age forty-five, and "The Peasant Matey," written ten years later. The murderous rage of the twenty-three-year-old protagonist of *Crime and Punishment,* Raskolnikov, refers to the "criminal" Dostoevsky before his arrest and deportation to Siberia. The pious genuflexions of "The Peasant Marey" refer to the penitent Dostoevsky at twenty-nine or thirty, undergoing his punishment in the penal colony.

THE DOUBLE: A ST. PETERSBURG EPIC

Yakov Golyadkin, a titular councilor, wakes up from a long sleep, not quite certain whether he is still dreaming or awake. He runs straight to the mirror, then to the window, then to his pocketbook. He has hired a fancy carriage for the whole day for twenty-five rubles. In full-dress coat, silk cravat, and boots, he goes out for a drive.

Soon a fashionable droshky drawn by a smart pair of Kazan horses drives up rapidly on his right. He is terrified to see that the gentleman inside is Andrey Filippovich, the section head of the office in which Golyadkin is employed as assistant to the chief clerk. (Perhaps Golyadkin was playing hookey.) It is impossible to hide from the astonished gaze of Andrey Filippovich.

"Bow or not? Call back or not? Recognize him or not?" our hero wonders in "indescribable" anguish. "Or pretend that I am not myself, but somebody strikingly like me, and look as though nothing were the matter.'' Simply not I, not I, and that's all," thinks Golyadkin,

taking off his hat to his superior and keeping his eyes fixed upon him. “I’m . . . I’m all right,” he whispers with an effort, “I’m . . . quite all right. I, it’s not I--” (Dostoevsky [1846] 1950, 142).

TABLE 1
Abbreviated Chronology of Dostoevsky’s Life

Age	
-1 year	Brother Mikhail born
Born, Moscow (10/20/1821)	
1	Sister Varvara born
4	Brother Andrey born
8	Twin sisters born; one died within a few days
	Brother and sister born
10	Summers at Davaroe; episode of wolf terror
15 (2/27/1837)	Mother died. Travel with father and brother to St. Petersburg. Courier-horse episode
16	Separated from brother
17 (6/18/1839)	Father killed by serfs at age 50
25	First work published: *Poor Folk*
	Second work published: *The Double*
25-26	First evidence of epileptic fits
	Secret meetings with revolutionaries
27	Arrested, tried for treason, condemned to die
28	Reprieve from execution; sent to Siberia
29-33	Convict in Siberian penal colony

33-37	Service in army in Siberia
37	Married. Wife died. Brother died
39	*The House of the Dead*, memoirs of prison
45 (1866); 46	*Crime and Punishment, The Idiot*
55-58	*A Writer's Diary,* including "The Peasant Marey." *The Brothers Karamazov*
59	Died in St. Petersburg

Later, dropping in to see his doctor for no apparent reason, he volunteers: "There's no need for me to conceal it. . . . I'm an unimportant man, as you know; but, fortunately for me, I do not regret being and unimportant man. Quite the contrary . . . I'm proud that I'm not a great man. . . . I'm not one to intrigue, I ... I don't act on the sly, but openly, without cunning. . . . I set to work ... by no devious ways, for I disdain them. . . . I've no taste for contemptible duplicity. ... I only put on a mask at a masquerade, and don't wear one before people every day" (p. 147). He goes on to tell the doctor, darkly, that the mask will drop off the faces of certain others who do lie and deceive. But to two junior clerks in his office he later hints: "You all know me, gentlemen, but hitherto you've known only one side" (p. 156).

The inner turmoil grows in intensity. Mr. Golyadkin wanted only to hide somewhere from himself, cease to exist, and turn to dust.

Just after losing his right galosh in the snow and slush, he has the impression that someone is standing near him, leaning on a railing, as he is, and dressed exactly like him from head to foot. He senses this someone again later, then again, and yet again. Suddenly his strength fails him, his hair stands on end; he recognizes that it "was no other than himself, Mr. Golyadkin himself, another Mr. Golyadkin, but absolutely the same as himself-in fact, what is called his double in every respect" (p. 179). "Who authorized this? Am I asleep, am I in a waking dream?"

(183).

In due course, Golyadkin makes the acquaintance of his double. Finding him to be impoverished and without quarters, he befriends him, invites him to his flat, feeds him, lets him spend the night. The double is shy, timid, fearful. They drink together. Golyadkin says: “You and I will take to each other like fish to water, Yakov Petrovich; we shall be like brothers; we’ll be cunning, my dear fellow, we’ll work together;. . . .we’ll get up an intrigue, too. . . . And don’t you trust any of them. . . .You must hold aloof from them all, my boy”(196).

The next morning, to Golyadkin’s astonishment, his double has vanished without a trace. Moreover, the next time he meets him, the double is cool and distant. Later, he even becomes sly, ridiculing

Golyadkin, and then obscenely familiar, pinching his cheek, flicking his paunch, and making fun of him in front of others.

Our hero is exasperated beyond endurance. All his protests about his own honesty as contrasted to the masks, imposture, shamelessness, and deception of others are of no avail. The double begins to take over on the job, fawning on everyone, whispering, wheedling, conniving against Golyadkin, who is driven more and more to distraction by such insolent falseness. Golyadkin tries unsuccessfully to reconcile himself to his double’s existence: "It doesn’t matter. Granted, he’s a scoundrel, well, let him be a scoundrel, but to make up for it, the other one’s honest: so . . . that this Golyadkin’s a rascal, don’t take any notice of him, and don’t mix him up with the other . . . {who is] honest, virtuous, mild, free from malice, always to be relied upon in the service, and worthy of promotion; that’s how it is, very good. . . . But what if . . . what if they get us mixed up? . . . . What a calamity!” (215).

When the double threatens to squeeze Golyadkin out of his position, with increasingly

outlandish blandishments, he finally seeks out his superior, Andrey Filippovich, and begs for an audience. He protests his loyalty and obedience: "I look upon my benevolent superior as a father and blindly entrust my fate to him" (p. 244). Again and again (p. 267) he throws himself upon Filippovich's mercy, as a son on a father's, entrusting his fate utterly to his chief, entreating him to "defend" him from his "enemy" (p. 267). (Twice, during his mounting confusion and excitement, he mistakes a doorway for a looking glass and sees his double reflected there.)

Despite Golyadkin's insistent protestations about his blind devotion, his true attitude toward masculine authorities and father figures is by now transparently evident to the reader. It is that of his conniving double: hostile, envious, and venal. His ambition includes owning a carriage like that of His Excellency and even eloping with his superior's daughter. Golyadkin's attitude is, in fact, the *deceitful* version of the way his shiftless, untrustworthy servant *openly* behaves toward him.

At the conclusion of the story, the false double, blowing kisses at Golyadkin, helps push him into a carriage, followed by a doctor. "The carriage door slammed. There was a swish of the whip on the horses' backs . . . the horses started off (p. 283). The horses take him along an unfamiliar, desolate road, through dark woods, on the way to an insane asylum.

In order to examine the transformations of Dostoevsky's attitudes toward authority let us turn for background for what is known about his actual father.

Dostoevsky's father was a stern ex-army surgeon. While he did not believe in corporal punishment for children, he was certainly known for his violence. One of the serfs on the family farm recalled: "The man was a beast. His soul was dark,-that's it. . . . The master was a stern, unrighteous lord, but the mistress was kind-hearted. He didn't live well with her; beat her. He flogged the peasants for nothing'' (quoted by Mochulsky 1947, 4).

It is generally believed-and Dostoevsky certainly believed it-that his father was murdered by serfs rebelling against his drunken, violent floggings. It has also been suggested that they murdered him out of revenge for his living with Katerina, the young daughter of a serf, who had borne him an illegitimate child the year before. In either case, if it was murder, including, as some said, castration, most of the male population of the village of Davaroe must have been implicated and kept silence. An official investigation reported only that there were no marks on the body and that the victim appeared to have died of suffocation during an apoplectic fit.

On the other hand, if it were a case of murder, the Dostoevsky family might have hushed it up to preserve the property and avoid scandal. A more recent theory (Frank 1976) is that the murder story is only a rumor originated by the retired mayor of the village. He had a lawsuit against the elder Dostoevsky, and if the murder charge against the Dostoevsky serfs had been upheld, they would all have been sent to Siberia; he could then have snapped up the property for a song.

The last time the younger Dostoevsky had seen his father was two years prior to his death. Dostoevsky was fifteen. His young mother had died a few months earlier of "malignant" tuberculosis-probably hastened by the birth of eight children within little more than a decade. Father, Fyodor, and older brother Mikhail were on a long carriage trip from Moscow to St. Petersburg to enroll the boys in the School of Military Engineers.

Waiting in a wayside inn during one of many stops for the carriages to be changed, Dostoevsky witnessed a scene that made a profound impression on him (Dostoevsky 1876a). An official government courier, in full, plumed uniform, dashed into the post coach station, probably had a customary vodka, rushed out, and sat down in a small carriage. A large, red-faced man, he half-rose again, silently lifted his enormous right fist, and gave the coachman's neck a mighty blow. The coachman collapsed forward, lifted his whip, and lashed the middle horse of the troika with all his might. The horses strained forward. But this in no way deterred the courier. He hit

the coachman on the neck again and again, not with irritation but methodically , out of long experience. The coachman, in turn, though hardly able to sit up, whipped the horses so that they flew like mad. This continued until the troika disappeared from view.

It is surprising that the well-worked territory of Dostoevsky's life has yielded so little attention to this traumatic episode in his adolescence, especially since he himself dated his sense of social outrage to it and connected it to his joining a revolutionary group opposed to serfdom (Frank 1976). It was his membership in this radical organization that some years later led to another traumatic event in his life-his arrest and sentencing to Siberia.

"This revolting picture remained in my memory for life . . . like an emblem, like . . . cause and effect. Here, every blow that hit the animals sprang forth as though by itself from every blow that fell on the man" (Steinberg 1966, 21). Dostoevsky imagined the chain of cruelty extending still further-to the coachman's wife, who would surely be beaten that night to avenge his own pain and humiliation.

RASKOLNIKOV'S RAGE

The intense affect and visual detail of Dostoevsky's traumatic memory are appropriate to its dramatic content. In this it differs from a screen memory, which, typically, is relatively bland in content. Like a screen memory, however, a traumatic memory may not only conceal allied memories, but also condense key elements of the deeper structure of the person.

There can be little doubt that Dostoevsky saw himself as another victim in the chain of abuses. (His first published work, *Poor Folk,* already showed his characteristic compassion for the downtrodden.) At any rate, this traumatic memory may be taken as emblematic of a whole series of sadomasochistic relationships: his father beating his wife and flogging his serfs; the Czarist authorities terrorizing Dostoevsky with a mock execution, his fellow convicts terrorizing

each other.

The courier-horse episode is also directly relevant to *Crime and Punishment.* In his working notebooks for that book (Wasiolek 193 1), there are six explicit references to the memory, most of them in the context of reconciling rage against humanity with trying to love it.

A few excerpts from these notebooks will suffice for illustration. Unless otherwise indicated, the thoughts and actions refer to the main character, Raskolnikov. The bracketed material represents interlinear additions by Dostoevsky. Italics are mine.

> p. 54: Main Idea of the Novel. . . . Can one love them? Can one suffer for them? Hate for humanity. [During his wanderings *memories about the horse.}*
>
> p. 64: My first personal insult, *the horse, the courier.* Violation of a child.
>
> p. 81: How low and vile people are. . . . No: gather them up in one's hand, and then do good for them. . . . Hatred choked me, and I lay down. Memories: *horse with a stick.*

In the excerpts that follow it becomes clear that both Dostoevsky and Raskolnikov are identified with the victims-human victims nearly trampled under the hooves of horses, or horses being victimized with the whips, which drive them to the point of trembling, or women as victims of beatings at the hands and boots of men.

> p. 137: A driver [of a carriage] gave me a good whack across the back with his whip because I had almost fallen at the feet of his horses. . . . The whip's blow made me so furious.
>
> p. 138: (The significant detail on this page is that Raskolnikov remembers being a student "thirty years ago." Since Raskolnikov is

> only twenty-three years of age, this must refer to the forty-five year-old author. "Thirty years ago," therefore, recalls Dostoevsky at age fifteen-the time of the courier-horse memory, when, just after his mother's death, he is on the way to becoming a student in St. Petersburg. [G.J.R.])
>
> pp. 139-40: ". . . trembling all over, no longer from the fever but from weakness *[like a driven horse, which I had seen in my childhood]* ..." (Raskolnikov passes out. He awakens to the terrible screaming of his landlady, who is being beaten, and sits up in terror, paralyzed. [G.J.R.]). "[Soon they will come for me, I thought.]"

One may find a direct reflection of the courier-horse memory in the dream Raskolnikov has early on in *Crime and Punishment*.[5] He had just drunk a glass of vodka in a tavern. On his way home, he feels completely exhausted. He turns off the road into the bushes, where he instantly falls asleep on the grass and has a dream.

Dostoevsky introduces the dream with the following commentary: (1866, 55).

> In a morbid condition of the brain, dreams often have a singular actuality, vividness, and extraordinary semblance of reality. At times monstrous images are created, but the setting and the whole picture are so truthlike and filled with details so delicate, so unexpectedly, but so artistically consistent, that the dreamer, were he an artist like Pushkin or Turgenev even, could never have invented them in the waking state. Such sick dreams always remain long in memory and make a powerful impression on the overwrought and deranged nervous system.

In the dream, Raskolnikov sees himself as a child of seven in the town of his birth. He is holding his father's hand and they stand in front of a tavern. A drunken crowd spills out of the tavern and piles into a cart hitched to a small mare. The crowd cheers and joins in when the owner beats the mare, which is struggling to pull the overloaded cart. She staggers and falls

under the rain of blows; the owner bludgeons her to death.

Raskolnikov awakens in terror. He is gasping and soaked with perspiration. " 'Good God!' he cries, 'can it be, can it be, that I shall really take an axe, that I shall strike her on the head, split her skull open. . . . No, I couldn't do it, I couldn't do it. . . . Why, why then am I still. . . ?' " (p. 61).

This dream marks the psychological pivot-point at which Raskolnikov's daydreams of murdering the old woman pawnbroker turn into deliberate plans.

The dream starts peacefully enough. On a holiday evening, the seven-year-old Raskolnikov and his father are walking hand in hand to visit the graves of the boy's grandmother, *whom he had never seen*, and his younger brother, who died at six months of age and *whom the boy did not remember at all.* There is a church in the middle of the graveyard where Raskolnikov used to go two or three times a year with his father and mother.

Since he used to go there with both parents, why is mother not present in the dream for the traditional visit to the cemetery? Because Raskolnikov's dream is no longer about Raskolnikov's childhood but about Dostoevsky. The fictional dream of the mare being beaten to death, based on the memory of the whipping of the horses en route to St. Petersburg, returns us to the time in Dostoevsky's life just after his mother's death. The absence of Raskolnikov's mother from her expected place in the dream affirms Dostoevsky's mother's death. At the same time, displacing the fact to a visit to the grave of the long-since-dead-and-never-seen "grandmother" serves the emotional need to deny this fact.

What about the grave of the "little brother" whom Raskolnikov no longer remembered? This also refers to Dostoevsky's life. When Dostoevsky was about the same age (eight) as Raskolnikov in the dream (seven), a momentous event occurred: twin sisters, Vera and Lyubov, were born. Within a few days Lyubov died. Dostoevsky might indeed have remembered his

sister's death almost as well as his mother's because, according to custom, before the burial the child's body had rested in its coffin in the Dostoevsky home, in full view of her siblings.

As is so often the case with dreams, the setting is like the prologue. It says, in effect, "This dream is going to be about the death of my mother and what I imagine happened to her, and perhaps my baby sister before that, and what I am afraid might happen to me." We are then presented with the main body of the dream, bearing its latent unconscious fantasies.

The mare of the Raskolnikov dream was a thin little sorrel beast, gasping, tugging the overloaded cart, feebly kicking under the shower of blows. (At the time of her death, recall that Dostoevsky's mother was emaciated with tuberculosis, after eight pregnancies within ten years.) The master of the mare was Mikolka, "a young, thicknecked peasant with a fleshy face as red as a carrot" (p. 57). He first used a whip to beat her body, face, and eyes, then "a long, thick shaft" on her spine, and finally an iron crowbar to do her in "with measured blows" (59). The drunken crowd of men joined in with whips, sticks, and poles.

If this dream has to do with Dostoevsky's inner image of the cause of his mother's death, as well as fears for himself, it represents this: repeated phallic attacks on an emaciated body, overstrained under the load of multiple pregnancies, until final collapse.[6] In this classically unconscious, sadomasochistic representation of the primal scene, the mare stands for the mother as well as for the seven-year-old Raskolnikov identified with her. Mikolka, the master of the mare, is a sadistic representation of the father. The overloaded cart stands for the many pregnancies. These are also implicated in her death by a telling detail: the number of assailants in the cart, besides Mikolka, is six-exactly the number of Dostoevsky's living siblings.

The dream not only accuses, it alibis. Dostoevsky himself is exonerated from guilty participation in causing mother's death, for he, after all, as the young Raskolnikov, flailed ineffectually at the attackers, received a cut with the whip across his own face, and in the end

embraced the dead head “and kissed it, kissed the eyes and kissed the lips. . . . Then he jumped up and flew in a frenzy with his little fists out at Mikolka” (60).

The image of the mother is split. On the one hand she is charged with participating in her own death by behaving like a dumb, abused beast of burden, emaciated and dying under phallic attacks and multiple pregnancies. The other representation of the mother in the dream is that of a jolly participant in the (sexualized) goings-on: "a fat, rosy-cheeked woman . . . cracking nuts and laughing” (57). Again: “The woman went on cracking nuts and laughing.” (59).

The father-image is also split. In the form of Mikolka, he is condemned as the chief murderer. In his own person as father, however, he is portrayed as impotent-totally ineffectual at rescuing either mare or son. He is even more helpless, in fact, than the little boy, who at least tries to save the poor mare-mother.

In the rough draft of a letter to his publisher (Wasiolek 1931, 171-73), Dostoevsky stated that the original motive for the murder in *Crime and Punishment* is Raskolnikov’s love for his suffering mother and the wish to save her and his sister. The notebooks make it apparent that the actual process of writing forced Dostoevsky to recognize that the relationship between Raskolnikov and his mother is much more complex. While he feels love and pity for mother, he also expresses coldness and hatred for her (pp. 176, 203, 212, 217-18, 220). He fears her judgment (pp. 84, 91), he resents the guilt and shame she makes him feel for failing to live up to her expectations, and he also resents her constantly reminding him of his duty toward her. Thus, her love is a burden (pp. 65 ~66); and he hurts her (pp. 48, 66, 70, 240), sometimes openly: “He beats his mother” (p. 176). The mutual aggression between them is veiled in the final version of the novel by repeated professions of love.

All this supports what many analysts have contended-namely, that the pawnbroker who preys on the youth of St. Petersburg stands for the mother who preys on Raskolnikov with love

and guilt. It also helps explain the impact of the courier-horse memory on Dostoevsky himself. When it was transported into *Crime and Punishment* in the form of the dream of the peasants beating the mare to death, Raskolknikov's horror in the dream was at the glimpse of his own projected murderousness. It was recognized in indirect form immediately on awakening: his shocked realization that he would indeed commit murder-of that other grasping old lady, the pawnbroker. But for a higher good: "Poor mother, poor sister. I did it for you." And, almost immediately after this entry in his working notebook: "Memories: horse with a stick" (p. 81). Identification with his mother's struggle under the weight of eight births and her final succumbing to tuberculosis combined with love and compassion to place upon Dostoevsky a burden of hatred, self-hatred, and guilt. Hatred for her because of her helplessness and his own to rescue her; self-hatred for his impotence and hatred of her; guilt, requiring him to suffer, perhaps die, in order to gain spiritual rebirth and the ability to love again. Basically, he probably hated her because, in her inability to protect herself, he saw himself: helpless in the face of his own sadism, masochism, guilt.

"THE PEASANT MAREY"

Just as love for mother turned to hate and erupted in the murder of *Crime and Punishment*, "The Peasant Marey," written ten years later, performs a similar alchemy on Dostoevsky's feelings of rage toward his father, and people in general. In this autobiographical story, he relates that during his time in the Siberian prison he kept working and reworking memories of his past, "adding new touches to an event that had happened long ago and, above all, correcting it, correcting it incessantly'' (Dostoevsky [1876b] 1964, 101). By thus breaking down and reassembling memories, he succeeded in metabolizing his loathing for his fellow-convicts and assimilating it in the form of "love'' for the inner beauty of the Russian people, which he felt he had discovered "under impassable alluvial filth" (Dostoevsky [1876a] 1979, 202).

"The Peasant Marey" records another childhood memory in the form of a story. He

recalled it, perhaps, during a pilgrimage to the family farm at Davaroe, where he had spent his summers between the ages of ten and fifteen, and where his father had been murdered. Dostoevsky had not been there in the forty years since his mother died and his father retired there. He wandered it step by step and reconstructed long-forgotten scenes. (It was here that he may also have traced in his mind the first outlines of *The Brothers Karamazov*, which appeared three years later. One solid fact is that he gave the name of some woods on the farm, Chermashnya, to a village that plays some part in *The Brothers* [Carr 1931].)

In the story, the childhood memory is described as having been recollected in prison twenty years after the event. It is Easter Monday in the Siberian prison. The convicts are not working; they drink, curse, fight, run amok, lie half-dead. Dostoevsky feels blind fury and disgust toward them (much the same sentiments expressed in his working notebooks for *Crime and Punishment).* A Polish political prisoner, echoing his contempt, hisses, *"Je hais ces brigands. "* He goes back into the barracks and sees the drunken Tartar Gazin lying unconscious, having been beaten senseless by fellow convicts. (Gazin is described in *The House of the Dead* as a sadist who lures children to remote places, taunts them, and cuts their throats.)

Lying down himself and trying to sleep, he recovers a vivid childhood memory of an excursion into the forest. He believed he heard the cry, "A wolf is on the loose!" Panicked, he ran up to a thick-set, peasant man of about fifty who was plowing a field with his mare. Marey, the peasant, comforted him "with a slow motherly sort of smile" and "gently touched [his] trembling lips" (Dostoevsky [1876b] 1964, 103).

Dostoevksy never forgot the kindness of the serf to the son of the master who held him in serfdom. Armed with this loving memory, the convict Dostoevsky now was able to look at his fellow-convicts in a different light, without either anger or hatred, as if lifted by some miracle. Indeed, he could even feel contempt for the Pole, who could not appreciate the true Russian soul beneath the coarseness.

A comparison of Raskolnikov's dream of his childhood and the memory of Dostoevsky's childhood recalled in "The Peasant Marey" immediately brings out some intriguing temporal relationships (see table 2). The working notebooks for *Crime and Punishment* connect that book with Dostoevsky's courier-horse memory at the age when his mother died, and thus connect Dostoevsky at that time to his fictional stand in, Raskolnikov. In the case of "The Peasant Marey" there is the possibility of an indirect linkage to that same time in Dostoevsky's life-the time of his mother's death. In "Marey" Dostoevsky is writing of himself when he was a convict in Siberia. He mentions "just as an interesting detail" (Dostoevsky [1876b] 1964, 100), that when he had earlier written of this period of his life as a convict (in *The House of the Dead)* it was in the person of a fictitious character who was supposed to have killed his wife. While he includes this "interesting detail," Dostoevsky does not explain something more central: why the important memory of the "motherly" Marey was *not* included in those earlier memoirs of his experiences as a convict. Might this surprising omission, as well as the gratuitous invention of a wife-killer character, represent unconscious references to his mother's death?

Second, although both *Crime and Punishment* and "The Peasant Marey" were written long after the author's release from Siberia, they stand in a before-and-after relationship to that imprisonment. Raskolnikov was twenty-three when he murdered the pawnbroker woman, not much younger than Dostoevsky when he was involved in revolutionary activity (twenty-five to twenty-six), arrested, tried for treason, and condemned to death (twenty-seven). In "The Peasant

Marey" Dostoevsky was writing of himself in a Siberian penal colony at twenty-nine or thirty, after having been granted a reprieve from execution (twenty-eight).

Finally, both works refer to childhood memories: the Raskolnikov dream to an actual experience at age fifteen ascribed to Raskolnikov at about seven, and "The Peasant Marey" to one experienced between ten and fifteen and fictionalized to age nine. Might these fictionalized ages of seven and nine also stand in a before-and-after relationship to some unspecified "crime"? As

mentioned earlier, the one event that did, in fact, occur between ages seven and nine, when Dostoevsky was eight, was the death of one of a pair of twin sisters shortly after birth.

Aside from these similarities, Raskolnikov's dream and the "Peasant Marey" memory are identical in a number of respects. The dream takes place in the town of Raskolnikov's birth, the "Peasant Marey" memory in the village of Dostoevsky's early childhood. It is a holiday eve in one and the second day of Easter holidays in the other. The young Raskolnikov is filled with rage, horror, and pity; the young convict in "The Peasant Marey" is first full of "blind fury" at his fellow-convicts, then remembers his childhood horror of the wolf, the compassion shown him by the "coarse, savagely ignorant Russian serf," and finally his love for "that rascal of a peasant with his shaven head and branded face, yelling his hoarse drunken song at the top of his voice" (p. 105).

The Raskolnikov dream starts peacefully enough: the little boy walks hand in hand with his father to vist the graves of his grandmother and younger brother. The "prologue" that ushers in the "Peasant Marey" memory is the sight of Tartar Gazin, the child-killer, lying unconscious, without any sign of life, having been beaten into insensibility by fellow-convicts. This leads young Dostoevsky to lie down himself, pretend to sleep, and thus recover the memory of his having been "rescued" as a child by Marey.

Now to the details of that rescue. He recalled that it was a late summer day on the family farm and that he was dreading his return to Moscow, where he would have to spend the whole winter over boring French lessons. This detail deserves a digression at this point. For the fact is that Dostoevsky's tutor for Latin was his father. That his father was a harsh taskmaster we know from his younger brother Andrey, who recalled in his memoirs: "When my brothers [Mikhail and Fyodor] were with my father [for Latin lessons], which was frequently for an hour or more, they not only did not dare sit down, but even lean their elbows on the table" (quoted by Mochulsky 1947, 4).

Dostoevsky recalled that on this particular day in the country, he heard in the distance the voice of a peasant calling “Gee up! Gee up!” to the plough horse. Exactly what had he been doing at the time-' “I was too busy, breaking off a switch from a hazel-tree *to strike frogs with.* ... I was also interested in beetles and other insects . . . but I was afraid of snakes” (101, italics added).

The author then tells us about his love of the woods, its flora and fauna, and its damp smells. Suddenly the child imagined that “amid the dead silence” he “heard clearly and distinctly the shout, ‘Wolf! Wolf!’ ”(102). Panic-stricken, young Dostoevsky screamed at the top of his voice and rushed straight out to the ploughing peasant, Marey, who comforted him.

How might we reconstruct the inner, unconscious dynamics of this narrative-' Having seen the brawling, drunken convicts all around and Tartar Gazin beaten into unconsciousness, the young political prisoner Dostoevsky wonders at the real likelihood of being himself attacked, beaten, possibly killed. How easy it would be for these savage peasants to turn the tables and do whatever they liked to the defenseless son of a serf-owner. His father, after all, had probably been killed-possibly even castrated-by similar peasants.

He recalls other times when he felt helplessly dominated. During those long winter lessons his father would not let him sit or rest. The only escape was in the summer. Memories of summer vacations relieve the anxiety temporarily. At those times he was free to roam in the woods. He was not a prisoner of anyone; he was his own master. If he wished, he could cut hazel switches and strike the frogs-be a bully himself.

A peaceful pause of a few sentences, describing the pastoral scene; they mark the attempt to contain the mounting anxiety at the perception of his own sadism. Then it breaks out in a full-blown attack: the sadism is projected in the form of an auditory hallucination that a wolf is on the loose. Again, the fear of being attacked. He rushes into the clearing and clings, pleading, to Marey.

The story of Marey is successful in keeping sadism, both his own and that of others, largely at bay, like the imaginary wolf. Tartar Gazin had already been attacked; we never see it. And, being a child-killer, he probably deserved it. The boy Dostoevsky was about to strike the frogs but did not actually get to it because of the imagined wolf, which never materialized.

In sharp contrast to this carefully distanced sadism, the Raskolnikov dream of childhood is full of raw violence. The mare of the dream is a thin little beast, gasping, tugging the overloaded cart, feebly kicking under the shower of blows. Her master was Mikolka, of the fleshy carrot face, with crowbar in his fist, beating on her spine.

How different from Marey, that other father figure (who, like Dostoevsky's father at the time of his death, is fifty years of age). Marey is a grizzled, benevolent master who encourages the mare in her efforts to plough up the steep slope of the hill.

The seven-year-old Raskolnikov had manfully torn himself from his father's hand and rushed in to try to protect the mare from Mikolka, only to receive a cut with the whip across the face. The fictionalized nine-year-old Dostoevsky had screamed, terrified, and clutched pleadingly at Marey's sleeve. In return he received compassion, protection, and a blessing.

Since everything has a price, at what cost such protection? "He [Marey] quietly stretched out his thick finger with its black nail, smeared with earth, and gently touched my trembling lips." (Dostoevsky [1876b] 1964, 103). Again: "I remembered . . . particularly that thick finger of his, smeared with earth, with which he touched my twitching lips so gently and with such shy tenderness" (p. 104). The answer appears to be submission to a man.

And if it is to be submission to a man, better to a loving, "motherly" one, with the power to invoke religion ("he made the sign of the cross over me, and then crossed himself, too" [p. 103]), than to the "devil" Mikolka. Of course, the sexual implications of such submission remain in

either case. But if one is to be feminized anyway, better through an act of love than by lethal rape-better to be a mare hitched to Marey's plough than to Mikolka's overloaded cart, felled under his crowbar.

Fear and hatred of Tartar Gazin, the child-killer, reminded Dostoevsky of his childhood fears of being consumed by his own aggression, projected in the form of the imaginary wolf. Back then, his submissive pleading had transformed a potentially murderous father figure into a protective, motherly one. Submissiveness to the power of Marey, who could have inflicted abuse but chose not to, transformed the boy's hatred and fear into gratitude and love; it protected him from anxiety stemming from his own sadism.

TABLE 2

Comparison of Raskolnikov's Dream of Childhood

and

"The Peasant Marey" Memory of Childhood

	Raskolnikov's Dream	Peasant Marey Memory
Dostoevsky's age at time of writing:	45	55
Age at actual memory:	15	10-15
Protagonist's age:	23 (pre-Siberia)	29-30 (in Siberia)
Age at fictionalized memory:	7+/-	9
Location:	Town of birth	Village of childhood
Time:	Holiday eve	2d day of Easter

Onset of Memory:	En route to visit family graves	About to strike frogs
Atmosphere:	Drunken noise and singing	Same
Victim of beating:	Old mare killed	Childkiller beaten
Affects:	Horror, rage, pity	Same
Action of mare:	Straining to pull overloaded cart	Hard plowing uphill
Caress:	Raskolnikov kisses mare's lips	Marey touches child's lips
Mother:	Absent	Absent
Father:	Split-image:	Split-image:
	Ineffectual/murderous	Nurturant/murderous

One might ask why such love of the peasantry no longer led Dostoevsky to continue to work to improve their lot in life. On the contrary. What had begun as revulsion against the chain of injustice which he saw passing from the uniformed government courier to coachman to mare and to wife and which had at first turned him to revolutionary activity, finally became remorse and apology, submission to Czar and God. He even came to believe in a higher purpose that justified, indeed necessitated, suffering and submission.

As Freud ([1928] 1961, 177) concluded: "He landed in the retrograde position of submission both to temporal and to spiritual authority, of veneration both for the Tzar and for the God of the Christians, and of a narrow Russian nationalism-a position which lesser minds have reached with smaller effort."

Dostoevsky ends "The Peasant Marey" on a note of complacent superiority toward the Polish political prisoner who was unable to do what Dostoevsky succeeded in doing in prison: convert his earlier rebellion against injustice, like that of the boy Raskolnikov, into a quasi-

religious acceptance.

A century before Orwell's *1984* he anticipated the history of his country: he learned to love "Big Brother."

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Notes

4 For a classic essay on the subject, cf. Rank (197 1). A recent psychoanalytic study of Dostoevsky is that of Dalton (1979).

5 This dream, incidentally, occupies an historic place in psychoanalysis, having first come up for consideration at the March 8, 1911, meeting of Freud s Vienna Psychoanalytic Society (Nunberg & Federn 1974).

6 The unconscious pregnancy and birth/death symbolism of the seven-year-old Raskolnikov is identical to that of Freud's Analysis of a Phobia in a Five-Year-Old Boy (1909). The child was afraid to go out into the street lest he see a horse beaten and fall down while pulling a loaded cart.