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ARTICLES

THE ICON IN THE PICTURE: REFRAMING THE QUESTION OF DOSTOEVSKY'S MODERNIST ICONOGRAPHY

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1. Icon or Picture?

The analogy between pictures and realist prose has long been a mainstay of literary criticism on the novel. At once extending and challenging this critical heritage, a growing body of scholarship on the nineteenth-century Russian novel has sought to reconceptualize traditional problems of realist representation through the prism of iconography. In the case of Dostoevsky, such criticism has overwhelmingly adopted the Orthodox icon as its master analog: his prose has been described as a "narrative icon," his urban landscapes as "imaginary icons," and his characters as "living icons."[1] This turn to the Orthodox icon in Dostoevsky scholarship over the past two decades has been motivated in part by a desire to dcenter Western-oriented accounts of the rise of the Realist novel. Erich Auerbach, for instance, relegates Dostoevsky to a subordinate position in his triumphal procession of Western mimesis, arguing that nineteenth-century Russian Realism as a whole is "fundamentally related rather to old-Christian than to modern occidental realism" (520-24). By contrast, a number of recent critics have situated Dostoevsky in an alternative Russian grand narrative by emphasizing the ways in which the author's incorporation of Eastern Orthodox iconography into his novelistic craft augured Modernism's constitutive break from the mimetic norms of nineteenth-century Western Realism. As Konstantin Barsht puts it, Dostoevsky "was no mere realist": "This confluence of aesthetics—Romanticism, realism and Orthodox iconography—carried Dostoevsky toward Modernism before Modernism even existed" (2000, 54).[2]

This marrying of Dostoevsky's novels with the Modernist cult of the icon

has done much to transform the author's outspoken Christian worldview from a perceived liability into an integral component of his poetics; however, this revisionism also carries with it a certain historical cost. Both the Russian icon and Dostoevsky's religiously inflected novels came to full prominence on the world stage during the first decades of the twentieth century, a coincidence of artistic posterity that has helped smooth over conceptual anachronisms in recent criticism.[3] Yet direct comparison between the icon and his novels in their Modernist reincarnations elides not only the problems provoked by Dostoevsky's realism but also the protracted pre-history of the Russian icon's turn-of-the-century "rediscovery." The difference between the picture and the icon in the second half of the nineteenth century lay less between conventional realism and Modernist anti-mimesis than between two forms of reproduction: pictures copy the real, icons copy copies.[4] There are a few dozen icons scattered throughout Dostoevsky's prose fiction, yet the faces painted on them are never described in terms of their shape, expression, position, or color. On the contrary, the divine face of the icon, preserved through the meticulous copying of copies of an ancient original, is reverentially protected by Dostoevsky from the profane gaze of modern realism. The suprasensual lies outside the frame of the picture.

Rather than choosing between realism and iconography, the fecund tensions between these two terms—the first a mode of representation, the latter a canon of recurring images—are better negotiated by substituting the "picture" for the "icon" as the dominant visual analog of Dostoevsky's novelistic iconography. In short, I contend that Dostoevsky cuts a path to Modernism in his iconography less through the Orthodox icon than through a radicalized realism of the picture. Throughout his novels and journalism, Dostoevsky employs the term "picture" *[kartina]* in a variety of different contexts, ranging from actual portraits and paintings to literary *tableaux* and character sketches to mental impressions and memories. Furthermore, in contrast to the Orthodox icon, certain types of verbal images in Dostoevsky's novels do parallel two broad modernizing developments involving Christian iconography in European painting of the second half of the nineteenth century: the increasingly realistic portrayals of Jesus — newly historicized in the works of Strauss and Renan — in both historical and genre painting and even in photography[5]; and the widespread co-opting of Christian martyrology in genre paintings depicting the marginalized social groups of modern industrial Europe, a practice common to such national schools as the *Peredvizhniki,* the *Realistes,* and the Pre-Raphaelites. Concerning the first development, Dostoevsky's image of a silent Christ in the "Grand Inquisitor," at once original and canonical, historical and legendary, represents a unique response to a major mid-century art controversy, one which Dostoevsky himself addresses in his critique of Nikolai Ge's modernized *Last Supper* [1863] as well as in his ekphrasis in *The Idiot* [1869] on Holbein's *The Body of the Dead Christ in the Tomb* [1521]; namely, the representation of the divine in realist art.[6]

Second, pushing the affective limits of socially engaged portraiture from the sentimental to the horrific, Dostoevsky incorporates into his prose fiction a small set of perhaps a dozen thematically linked pictures that delineate the elements of a common, modernist iconography. This iconography is recognizable, above all, by the graphic nature of its subject matter: children and young adults suffering abject punishment, being killed in violent and gratuitous ways, or committing suicide.[7] That the suffering of children represented an iconographic project for Dostoevsky is nowhere clearer than in one of Makar Dolgoruky's stories from *The Adolescent* [1875], in which an artist is commissioned by a grief-stricken merchant to paint the suicide of an eight-year-old boy. Yet it is in Ivan Karamazov's gallery of "charming pictures *[kartinki prelestnye]"* (14: 220) that Dostoevsky's well-crafted iconography of horrors reaches its culmination: a baby shot by the very gun dangled before it as a toy; a serf boy hunted down and killed by the dogs of his master; and a girl, having been beaten by her parents and forced to eat her own excrement, locked all night alone in a latrine. Far from casting a shadow over the whole of Dostoevsky's prose fiction, this dark iconography develops on the distant periphery of his late novels and there brushes against the limits of nineteenth-century realism. In picturing the suffering of children, Dostoevsky modernizes the novel, not just by extending its range of subject matter to the unilluminated corners of modern society, but by shifting the locus of the literary real from the quotidian and the metonymic to the exceptional and the emblematic. Indeed, Ivan's pictures make good on one of Dostoevsky's favorite paradoxes: that which is most exceptional, in the history of the novel if not necessarily in history itself, is what is most unbearably real.

At the other end of Dostoevsky's iconographic imagination lies the Orthodox icon. Icons appear throughout his works, often as if in passing, during descriptions of domestic interiors, monasteries, churches, cemeteries pawnshops, and prison barracks. Whether as an incidental background detail or as a symbolic motif in a character sketch, icons thus form one of the recurring elements in the composite representations of people and places in Dostoevsky's prose fiction. In short, the icon enters the picture. The icon in the picture does not function as a picture in turn, however. Robert Jackson, in an oft-cited passage from his groundbreaking *Dostoevsky's Quest for Form,* observes in relation to Dostoevsky's philosophy of art that the word *obraz,* frequently encountered in the novelist's literary criticism, refers in Russian to both "image" and "icon" (47-48). More recently, such critics as Barsht and Murav have drawn persuasive parallels between *obraz.,* which can also mean "face," and portraiture in Dostoevsky (1996,16-21; 148-50). While acknowledging these varied nuances in Dost-

oevsky's understanding of *obraz,* there nevertheless remain fundamental functional differences between the "icons" (that is, *obraz, obrazok,* or *ikona)* and the "pictures" *(kartiny* or *kartinki)* that actually appear in his prose fiction. Most crucially, whereas Dostoevsky's characters often compare portraits—both their own and others'—with the faces they depict, the faces of his characters are never compared to icons. That several of his female characters are said to resemble famous Renaissance Madonnas[8] further sets in relief the exclusive privilege of inimitability that Dostoevsky accords to the Russian Orthodox icon.

In a similar manner, icons in Dostoevsky's novels may be named, venerated, or even addressed, as if they were persons, but the faces on them remain strictly unrepresentable. Thus while Dostoevsky frequently notes the presence of icons alongside paintings in descriptions of his characters' homes, often without seeming to distinguish between the two, icons do not ever receive the ekphrastic treatment that he lavishes on other forms of visual art, whether photographs, portraits, secular artworks,[9] or even Renaissance religious paintings, including Raphael's *Sistine Madonna* [1514] and Holbein's *Dead Christ.* From George Sand's *La Mare au diable* [1846] to Henry James's satirical "The Beldoland Holbein" [1901], Holbein was widely viewed by nineteenth-century writers and critics as an uncanny arch-realist; like many of his contemporaries, Dostoevsky himself responded to Holbein and Raphael, outside of any ecclesiastical context, as if they were paragons of realism and idealism in the arts, respectively. Lacking entirely in Dostoevsky's prose, however, are the ekphrases of traditional Christian liturgical art that are readily found in the fiction of other nineteenth-century writers: the painting of Saint Rosalia at the Church of the Holy Linden in Hoffmann's *The Devil's Elixir* [1816]; the church-commissioned icon of the Mother of God painted near the end of Gogol's "The Portrait" [1842]; the stained-glass cathedral window at the heart of Flaubert's "La Légende de saint Julien 1'Hospitalier" [1876]; or even the academic religious paintings adorning the "chapel-like" (351) boutique of the artist Chaine in Zola's *L'Oeuvre.* By contrast, even as the icons in Dostoevsky's novels are lit by the "slanting rays of the setting sun," to cite one of his favorite iconographic motifs, the faces these icons depict seem as if placed under an image ban.

This peculiar facelessness, while precluding the icon's role as a visual analog for Dostoevsky's realist prose, enables the icon to assume a unique place as a recurring symbol in his modernist iconography. Central to this iconography is the realism of the picture. As Roland Barthes argues, with the rise of Realism in nineteenth-century prose the "pictorial code" attained preeminence in "literary mimesis" (1974, 55). In a well-known passage from his 1884 essay "Art of Fiction," Henry James goes so far as to assert that "the analogy between the art of the painter and the art of the

novelist is, so far as I am able to see, complete" (25). Despite Dostoevsky's prevalent use of pictorial analogies, however, his polyphonic novels would seem at first glance not only to fit poorly within this tradition but arguably to mark a radical break from it. Whereas a long line of novelists would follow Flaubert in seeking a minimalist mimesis within which their own voices might fade to silence, the cacophony of voices in Dostoevsky's novels shatters the thin mirror of pictorial realism. Be that as it may, the picture plays at least two crucial roles in Dostoevsky's modernist iconography: first, as a visual analog for realism in literature; second, and more provocatively, as a compositional device for compelling his own characters to confront the problem of the real. Here Ippolit's ekphrasis of Holbein's *Dead Christ* lends a lucid metapoetic gloss to the verbal pictures of suffering children constituting this iconography: within Holbein's unsparingly realistic depiction of the entombed Christ, nature assumes the guise of a "machine of the latest design," one which has "senselessly seized, crushed and swallowed a great and priceless being, a being who is himself worth all of nature and its laws, all the earth, which was perhaps created solely for the appearance of that being!" The martyrdom of innocents tears at the fabric of the real within which their suffering is all too accurately pictured. As Ippolit further speculates, "the teacher's disciples must have fled from [this image of his dead body] in the most awful terror, although they each carried away an enormous thought *[gromadnuiu mysl']* which could never be wrenched away from them" (8: 339). In Dostoevsky's modernist iconography the real is never simply an object to be represented, nor an effect, nor even an affect, but a problem, and the picturing of suffering children, far from rendering a metaphysical idea incarnate, unleashes what the novelist himself might call "the most profoundly unbearable questions," "the most disturbing thoughts" (22: 106).[10]

The capacity of a novelistic picture to provoke such problems depends as much on its perceived contemporary urgency as on its visceral effect. Close intertextual links can be found between many pictures of suffering children in Dostoevsky's late novels and his reportage on real-life cases in *Diary of a Writer* [1873-1881]. This intertextual weaving between journalism and literary portraiture, which reflects Dostoevsky's self-styled mission to incorporate new social phenomena into his novels, attains its highest pitch of reality effect in Ivan's pictures of suffering children in *The Brothers Karamazov* [1880]. Not only do many of these "pictures"[11] closely resemble the individual court cases and war atrocities over which Dostoevsky dwells at length in *Diary of a Writer,* but Ivan himself claims to be an "amateur collector" of such "factlets *[faktiki]"* and "anecdoticles *[anekdotiki],*" which he has gathered from "newspapers and stories, from wherever" (14: 218). In order to transform his collected material into pictures, Ivan draws on reports from a variety of sources, constructs tightly-knit narratives, and then derives from

these narratives a stylized iconography. As such a protracted process of redaction might suggest, there is nothing innocent in Ivan's appropriation of the suffering of innocents. Ivan, attempting to justify his rejection of God's creation, relates to his brother Alyosha the same account of a Bulgarian baby being impaled on a Turkish bayonet that Dostoevsky himself employs in *Diary of a Writer* to muster public support for Russian military intervention in the Balkans (14: 217; 25: 219). Moreover, those children and adolescents suffering most abjectly in Dostoevsky's novels tend to be secondary or tertiary characters, without names, who make fleeting appearances in minor subplots only to die under the most grotesque of circumstances. Hovering between the novel and the extra-literary, these pictures of the violation and abjection of children, resistant as they are to narrative development, assume one of the foremost places in the novelist's realist technique.

Furthermore, as the rhetorical virtuosity of Ivan's iconography demonstrates, Dostoevsky does not sap pictures of suffering children of their connotative or affective impact, following Barthes's model of "l'effet du réel." In his critique of Realism, Barthes defines both the "referential illusion" of realist prose (1986,147) and the "photographic paradox" (1977, 19) in terms of denoted messages that ostensibly lack connotation. By contrast, for all the photographic-like immediacy of his gallery of horrors, Ivan shifts back and forth between denoting the raw fact of the suffering children and summoning all heaven and earth to an accounting. In terms of Dostoevsky's realist aesthetics, this doubling of pictured pain and dialectical response receives its most complete theoretical articulation, however paradoxically, in the Grand Inquisitor's defense of the Tempter's three questions to Christ in the wilderness: "Because in those three questions, as it were, the whole future history of humanity is combined in one whole and foretold, and three images *[tri obraza]* appear in which all the insoluble historical contradictions *[protivorechiia]* of human nature will come together on all the earth" (14: 230). The picturing of children's suffering thus generates, to paraphrase the Grand Inquisitor, "images of contradiction," a historically specific form of dialectical image that shares as much with Plato as it foreshadows Walter Benjamin. Whereas the dialectical image in Benjamin arrests a "flow of thoughts" in a "configuration pregnant with tensions" (262), Plato argues in *Republic* that certain sense perceptions, called "provocatives *[parakalounta]"* expose contradictions in the world of appearances and thus summon the soul to contemplate being by the "power of dialectic" (511c, 523c).[12] In Dostoevsky's prose fiction, the image of one character's suffering similarly provokes the dialectical response of a second character, yet in a modern twist on Plato's ancient figure, the Russian novelist taps in the human condition a source of contradiction more profound than mere sense impression. The more disproportionate the pictured suffering of a child to his or her portion of the world's collective guilt, the more unresolvable the contradictions that this suffering generates in the consciousness of a character faced with that picture.

Indeed, thinking not only begins with provocative images in Dostoevsky; often thinking cannot ever extricate itself from them. In an 1876 issue of *Diary of a Writer,* Dostoevsky warns of the detrimental effect on young criminals of the "somber pictures *[mrachnye kartiny]"* they often see with their "childlike souls," the "strong impressions which will of course forever remain with them and will return to them for the rest of their lives in terrifying dreams" (22: 19). Yet even as Dostoevsky exhorts educators in this article to "eradicate" these images, his own characters, young and old alike, witness the abjection borne by children as pictures—images of suffering *in extremis* made sacred through horror and made iconic as scars in memory. Through their repetition in the memory of a harrowed observer, pictures of suffering children thus at last cross the threshold of the iconic in Dostoevsky's modernist iconography.[13] In other words, Dostoevsky's pictures only ever become "like icons" not despite realism but by first passing to the limits of the literary real.

2. *From the Icon to the Image of Contradiction*

Given the extent of recent criticism on the icon in Dostoevsky, and given the pervasive presence of icons throughout his prose fiction from as early as *Poor Folk* [1846], it is remarkable how little he speaks about icons outside his novels. Moreover, Dostoevsky's few extra-literary pronouncements on the icon are devoted to matters of religious belief, not to aesthetics.[14] Dostoevsky's 1873 review of Leskov's "The Ensealed Angel" exemplifies the cursory nature of his otherwise reverent comments on the icon. As the art historian G. I. Vzdornov argues, the popular success of Leskov's novella about a desecrated icon helped for the first time to bring the subject of ancient Russian art from the "thick journals" to the attention of a wider audience (204, 275). In his own review of this novella, however, Dostoevsky no sooner praises the "discussions of the Old Believers [...] about icon-painting *[ob ikonnoi zhivopisi]"* as the "best part in [Leskov's] whole story" than he immediately engages in an extended critique of the story's many sins against realism, all of which left him feeling a "sickly impression and certain mistrustfulness of the truth of what was being described" (21: 55-56). From a historical perspective, it is not entirely surprising that realism should trump the Orthodox icon in Dostoevsky's review of Leskov. The icon's apparent lack of perspective, its disproportionate figures, its inconsistent use of light and shadow, and its dependence on sanctioned models and manuals *[podlinniki]* ensured its general estrangement—in theory and in practice—from mainstream European painting throughout most of the nineteenth century, particularly during the rise of realism in art contemporary with the writing of Dostoevsky's major novels. Even such

a mid-century champion of the Russian icon as Fyodor Buslaev finds himself frequently apologizing for its "low level of artistic development" in his pioneering research: "It's as if [the icon] were afraid of reality" (50).

Paradoxically, however, the same codes of nineteenth-century realism that served to marginalize icons aesthetically also rendered them potent symbols in the Russian Realist novel.[15] The few dozen icons in Dostoevsky's prose fiction play at least three prominent symbolic roles: first, the placement of icons in the background of domestic settings frequently has the effect of sacralizing the space in which characters live and interact with one another; second, the participation of certain characters in the rituals of icon-veneration and iconoclasm dramatizes, often in unexpected or ambivalent ways, their relation toward the divine; lastly, on a small number of occasions icons enter pictures of the abjection of children and young women as discrete iconographic motifs—elements of a realist iconography from which these icons themselves, the medieval copies of even more ancient faces, are nevertheless estranged. Indeed, in all three of these roles, the icon is, literally, "effaced." To draw on a distinction from Peirce's semiotic, the "icon" loses its visual "likeness" to its ancient model upon entering Dostoevsky's prose, where it is transformed into a "symbol" (251).[16]

As the art historian Oleg Tarasov suggests, by the mid nineteenth century in Russia there were millions of icons being produced every year in the artisan centers of Palekh, Mstyora, and Kholui (xiii, xiv). That Dostoevsky should list icons alongside objects of a secular nature in descriptions of domestic settings thus need not, at first glance, signify anything more than a realist's concern for accuracy in representation. In a passage from the opening chapter of *Crime and Punishment* [1866], for example, Raskolnikov notes an icon as he "quickly glances over" the pawnbroker's apartment during a test run of his planned murder:

> But there was nothing particular in the room. The furniture, all very old and made of yellow wood, consisted of a sofa with an enormous arched wooden back, an oval table in front of the sofa, a dressing table with a small mirror between two windows, chairs along the walls, and two or three cheap pictures in yellow frames on which were portrayed young German ladies with birds in their hands — that was it for the furniture. In the corner an icon-lamp *[lampada]* was burning before a small icon *[nebol'shim obrazom],* (6: 8-9)

The words "nothing particular *[nichego osobennogo]"* seem to signify beforehand that the objects described in this passage are mere commonplaces. Indeed, of all the objects noted above, the icon is the only one that arguably reappears in *Crime and Punishment.* After having murdered the pawnbroker on his second visit to her apartment, Raskolnikov finds a ribbon around her neck on which are tied a blood-stained purse of money, two crosses, a ring, and "a little enamelled icon *[finiftianyi obrazok]"* (6: 64). Hundreds of pages later, just after hearing Raskolnikov's confession, Sonya gives him a cross: "Take this cypress one. I have another copper one,

Lizaveta's. We traded—she gave me her cross and I gave her my icon *[obrazok]"* (6: 324).

On a literal level, there is no way to determine whether the initial icon in the corner of the pawnshop is the same as either the one found around the pawnbroker's neck (unlikely) or the one Sonya mentions having given to the pawnbroker's sister, Lizaveta (more probably). On a symbolic level, however, this icon (or icons) appears in a progressively foregrounded manner during three crucial moments in Raskolnikov's moral development: premeditation of crime, the crime itself, and confession. This pattern can be found in several of Dostoevsky's novels; namely, icons shift from an initially incidental and descriptive function to more active roles near the symbolic core of major events. In an 1862 article, Ivan Snegirev, an early historian of the Russian icon, emphasizes its importance in daily Russian life: "Inasmuch as a Christian's household is a domestic church *[domashniaia tserkov'],* holy icons serve to consecrate it and adorn it with holy stucco molding" (104). Dostoevsky, breaking the stylistic bond between secular domestic setting and neutral narration typical of the nineteenth-century novel, transforms the sacralized space of Russian domestic interiors into hidden subtexts, fields of latent symbolism, from which meaning may be tapped at select moments in the narrative.

In a similar manner, the ways in which characters in Dostoevsky's novels engage with icons serve as a ritualistic means for dramatizing their respective belief systems. For many characters, praying before a candle-lit icon suffices to indicate the depth of their unwavering religious devotion.[17] Yet the rituals surrounding icon-veneration, so easily parodied and desecrated, as often as not register various levels of religious ambivalence on the part of Dostoevsky's characters. In *The Devils* [1871], Kirillov confesses to Stavrogin that he sometimes lights a candle before his landlady's icon of the Savior *[obraz Spasitelia],* his ostensible archrival. Later, in an argument on the night of his suicide, Kirillov gestures to the figure in this icon directly: "There is no mystery that will not be made known. *He* said that" (10:471).[18] In *The Idiot,* Nastasya Filippovna, moments before jilting the Christ-like Myshkin on their wedding day, is reported to have bowed before an icon *[obraz]* with a "crooked smile" on her "pale" face (8: 492).

In contrast to such ambiguous participation in icon-veneration as Kirillov's and Nastasya Filippovna's, other characters in Dostoevsky's novels parade their atheism through carnivalesque acts of iconoclasm. After the seventeenth-century schism of the Russian Orthodox Church, many details on the icon were altered, such as the spelling of the name of Jesus and the position and number of fingers in gesturing the sign of the cross. As a result, elaborate and austere public rituals were developed for defacing and burying "heretical" old-style icons produced after the reforms (Uspensky 22). More in keeping with the carnivalesque spirit of Dostoevsky's novels,

in pre-Petrine Russia there had also existed a parallel folk tradition of destroying icons that failed to perform the miracles expected of them (Tarasov 76). In Dostoevsky's late novels, iconoclasm is likewise closely linked not only to the question of miracles but also to ritual acts of violence on the body of the icon itself. In *The Brothers Karamazov,* Fyodor Karamazov recounts to Alyosha and Ivan how he had tried to "beat the mysticism" out of their deceased mother by spitting on her icon: "you take it for a miracle-working icon *[chudotvornyi obraz],* but I'm going to spit on it in front of you right now and nothing's going to happen to me!" (14: 126). In *The Adolescent,* Versilov, in the presence of his family, splits in two Makar Dolgoruky's reputedly miracle-working icon on the very day of the latter's funeral (13: 409). Furthermore, in *The Devils* a certain second lieutenant throws two of his landlady's icons out of his apartment window, one of which, in a ritual murder, he "chops up with an axe" (10: 269). In place of them, the second lieutenant lights candles before the writings of the naturalists Vogt, Moleschott, and Buechner —a sacrilegious co-opting of icon-veneration in which the silent image is displaced by the *ratio* that defaces it. Lastly, again in *The Devils,* Fedka the Convict steals a large church icon of the Mother of God *[ikona bogomateri]* along with precious stones from its silver setting and crown. In a particularly grotesque finishing touch to Fedka's sacrilege, someone else, apparently Liamshin or Pyotr Verkhovensky, places a live mouse behind the broken glass of the icon's case. Fedka himself considers this last gesture insulting to God, even as he paradoxically defends his own "skinning" *[obdiraet]* of the icon before Pyotr Verkhovensky:

> Don't you know from books that in ancient times there was once a merchant, with exactly the same tearful sighs and prayers [as mine], who stole a pearl from the halo of the Mother of God and then, genuflecting before all the people, returned the whole sum at her feet, and that the Mother Intercessor *[mater' zastupnitsa]* shielded him with her veil before everyone, so that even then a miracle appeared [...]. (10: 428)

Despite the optimism underlying Fedka's rendition of this legend, however, the sequel to his own sacrilege is not divine intercession but his violent death. This sequence of events underscores the representational limits constraining Dostoevsky's portrayal of icons. Even as his characters invest the icon with a sacral aura through their alternating acts of devotion and iconoclasm, the miracle-working promise of the medieval icon remains unrealized within the modern world of his novels.

This absence of miraculous intervention is especially significant for understanding the function of icons in the third and final grouping, namely, those appearing within the pictures of suffering children and young women at the center of Dostoevsky's modernist iconography. As Tarasov suggests, nowhere can one find more icons within icons than in imperial Russia (63); these icons commonly depict an icon of the Mother of God, in one of her

various incarnations as the protectress of Holy Russia *[Sviataia Rus'],* guarding besieged towns or miraculously appearing before saints. In Dostoevsky's novels, by contrast, icons of the Mother of God appear in literary portraits alongside young female characters desperate for an intercession nowhere visible within the portraits themselves. Near the end of "The Meek One," for example, a pawnbroker's sixteen-year-old wife,[19] nameless throughout her husband's first-person narration, commits suicide by throwing herself, with an icon pressed to her chest, from their apartment window. At the beginning of this novella, which was first published in the November 1876 issue of *Diary of a Writer,* the heroine enters the narrator's shop in order to pawn an icon. The latter identifies this icon as a "Madonna with Child" *[Bogomater' c mladentsem]:* "it was a domestic, ancient family icon, with a silver and gold setting—costing, well, 6 rubles or so" (24: 8). This initial transgression lays some of the symbolic groundwork for the novella's concluding image. The narrator arrives "five minutes too late" to prevent his wife's suicide; "a handful of blood" from her mouth has collected on the street, and "she is lying with the icon" (24: 33).

In terms of iconography, the inclusion of an ancient icon in a suicide scene shot through with a journalistic aesthetic of shock leads to an effect of cross-genre dissonance. Indeed, Dostoevsky not only insists on the "stenographic" realism of his "fantastic story" in his prefatory remarks to "The Meek One" (24: 5), but the heroine's death reproduces the details of an actual suicide of which he had informed his readers one month earlier in the *Diary's* October issue. As Dostoevsky exclaims of the real-life "Meek One," "this icon in her hands is a strange, unheard-of trait in a suicide!" (23:146). In the Orthodox Church, suicide is, in fact, considered a sin worse than murder, as the former precludes all possibility of repentance. In *Crime and Punishment* a fourteen-year-old suicide is accordingly buried "without icons" (6: 391), a fate which likely awaits the Meek One as well. Moreover, those who forfeit their own life—God's "greatest gift"—represent the only sinners for whom the Orthodox Church does not even pray. Such prohibitions in the case of suicide lend an almost grotesque irony to the icon lying in the Meek One's lifeless hands. As the incredulous pawnbroker himself asks in the immediate aftermath of his wife's suicide, "what does it mean that she prayed before the icon?" (24: 34), Between the iconography of a Mother-of-God icon and the stark realism of a street-side suicide within which this "trait" is pictured, an image of contradiction is drawn in which the oppositions of humility and self-violence, piety and transgression, and intercession and abandonment become entangled in a dense and cryptic configuration.

3. Picturing Child Suicide

In the Meek One's suicide the icon thus generates the kinds of "unbearable questions" characteristic of Dostoevsky's images of contradiction. In

one of Makar Dolgoruky's inset stories in *The Adolescent,* an eight-year-old boy similarly offers a last-minute prayer before taking his own life. Aside from its extraordinary subject matter, what makes this second image of contradiction so remarkable—and its virtual absence from studies on Dostoevsky's aesthetics so peculiar[20]—is the singular metapoetic place it holds within the author's modernist iconography. Rendering the analogy between picture and realist prose explicit, this suicide scene becomes the subject of a commissioned painting in Makar's story. As Makar devotes considerable attention to the fulfillment of this commission, the resulting picture—a rare instance in Dostoevsky's oeuvre of a proposed painting that is actually completed[21]—offers a unique point of departure for analyzing the various components involved in the making of images of contradiction, including their process of production, their intricate narrative framing, their representational limits, and the affect-laden problems they provoke.

In order to complete a character sketch of his legal father Makar Ivanovich, Arkady Dolgoruky, the protagonist of *The Adolescent,* interrupts his own first-person narration to make room for one of Makar's many legends and stories. In his inset story Makar recounts the interactions between a wealthy merchant named Maxim Ivanovich Skotoboinikov and another merchant's impoverished family in the town of Afimyevsk, where Makar had lived for a time. This second merchant, who had long been in debt to Maxim, dies cursing him, after which his widow and their five children—nameless throughout Makar's story—are thrown into extreme poverty. That winter all four of the widow's daughters catch whooping cough and die. Later, her eldest and only surviving child, an eight-year-old boy, collides with Maxim on the street as the latter descends from his carriage. The merchant orders him flogged. After several blows the boy loses consciousness and within days falls ill with pneumonia. Maxim, upon learning of the boy's deteriorating condition, proposes to the widow that she let her child live with him as his adopted son. After a night of tears she agrees. Although the boy recovers his health in his new home, the merchant turns out to be a cruel and exacting benefactor. After accidentally breaking an expensive lamp, the boy flees from Maxim's wrath toward a nearby riverbank. In the presence of Maxim and other witnesses, the boy presses his hands to his chest, looks up to the sky, and then plunges to his death in the river.

In his grief and his guilt, Maxim commissions the town's local artist, Pyotr Stepanovich, to paint the scene of the boy's suicide:

> Paint me the biggest picture you can, on this whole wall, and paint first of all the river, the slope, and the ferry, and all the people here just as they were then—the colonel's wife and the little girl and even the hedgehog. And paint the other bank, too, so that it's seen as it was; and the church, the square, the shops, and where the coachmen stop—paint everything as it is *[vse, kak est', spishi]*. And by the ferry, the boy, above the river, on that very spot, with his little fists pressed to his chest. (13: 319)

Pyotr's picture, more realist in design than the story within which it appears, lays bare many of the techniques of Dostoevsky's modernist iconography. First of all, in terms of production, it is significant that while Pyotr paints the scene of the boy's suicide, the initial idea for this picture lies with its commissioner, Maxim: "if the boy's likeness *[skhozh]* doesn't come out or only a little, I'll give you all of fifty rubles, but if it's really like him *[pokhozh],* I'll give you two hundred" (13: 319). As Robert Jackson (among others) has pointed out, Dostoevsky in his letters and notebooks frequently makes a distinction between the complementary roles of "poet" and "artist" in the making of a work of art, the former being the creator of an idea and the latter the technician who gives this idea flesh (166-67). In Makar's story, however, this doubling of Maxim as commissioner and Pyotr as painter entirely severs poet from artist, and thus the production of the picture of the boy's suicide proceeds less through the incarnation of an idea within the mind of a single poet-artist—with all the romantic or Christological associations such a synthesis might imply—than by a division of labor between the two. Pyotr, after repeatedly assuring Maxim that he "can do it all" (13: 319), carries out his role as an artist-technician with proficiency and seeming detachment. Having seen the finished product firsthand, Makar confirms that Pyotr has fulfilled Maxim's commission: "he satisfied everything" (13: 320).

Moreover, Pyotr's lack of either artistic humility or asceticism—he conies to a violent end in a drunken debauch after receiving payment in full—underscores the purely technical dimension of his artistic achievement. In his art and literary criticism, Dostoevsky frequently polemicizes against "stenographic" or "daguerreotype" realism,[22] yet accuracy in representation nevertheless remains one of the fundamental criteria of his own literary portraiture. Whereas the great ideas of Dostoevsky's characters are so often no sooner uttered aloud than they become endlessly distorted and parodied by others—"dragged out into the street and trampled on," as Stepan Trofimovich puts it in *The Devils* (10: 24)—portraits and photographs tend to render their subjects with remarkable fidelity in his novels. In *The Devils,* Lisa Tushina is shown a "superb miniature" of herself at the age of twelve, and she even tests this miniature against her own reflection in a mirror (10: 89). In *The Idiot,* as Leonid Grossman was the first to point out (117-20), Myshkin's commentaries on the photograph of Nastasya Filoppovna are nearly interchangeable with his direct impressions of her face. In a related manner, Myshkin also remarks that Rogozhin's "copy *[kopiia]"* of Holbein's *Dead Christ,* which he had seen firsthand in Basel, is "excellent" (8: 181). Lastly, in *The Adolescent,* Arkady Dolgoruky, upon viewing a photograph of his mother, writes, "what struck me was [its] uncommon likeness *[skhodstvo];* that is, spiritual likeness—in a word, it was as if it were a real painting [...] not a mechanical print" (13: 369). Mis-

representation besets words far more than pictures in Dostoevsky's realist prose.

As Arkady's observation also suggests, however, mere mechanical reproduction is inadequate, not simply as art, but also as representation. As Versilov explains to Arkady, "a photograph extraordinarily rarely resembles the person. A photograph catches a person as he is *[kak est'],* and it's extremely possible that Napoleon in that moment will look stupid or Bismarck tender" (13: 370). In his art and literary criticism, Dostoevsky argues that reality must pass through the imagination of the poet to become art; or, to quote a more psychologically nuanced version of this process from his review of an 1873 exhibition of the *Peredvizhniki:* "[the painter] perceives nature as it reflects itself in his idea, passing through his senses" (21: 75). In Makar's story, Maxim, as a poet-creator, had indeed been haunted by the image of his adopted son's suicide in his dreams before approaching Pyotr. Yet Maxim's proposal for the picture need not be interpreted as an "idea" in either a psychological or metaphysical sense. Without entirely reducing the question of mimesis in realism to a semiotic matrix of codes, a more minimal displacement can be brought about by translating Dostoevsky's quest for "the synthesis of [his] artistic and poetic idea" (29/1: 24) into the rhetoric of the painter's workshop. Indeed, this displacement already occurs at times in the writer's art criticism. In the same paragraph of this review "apropos of an exhibition," for example, Dostoevsky shifts back and forth from a classical notion of the "idea of a painting" to the pragmatics of portraiture: "a portraitist, for instance, seats his subject in order to take his portrait; he prepares himself; he gazes [...] he tries to seek out 'the main idea of his physiognomy'—that moment in which the subject resembles himself most" (21: 75). In Makar's tale Pyotr likewise reproduces on canvas one moment that Maxim has isolated from an extended narrative sequence; namely, an instant that crystallizes the unbearable and unresolvable implications of the boy's suicide as a whole. In short, the minimum requirement for a picture to become a faithful copy is the enframing of its subject matter at an emblematic moment.

Yet the frame and the real enter into even more intricate configurations in Dostoevsky's images of contradiction than those found more generally in his literary portraiture. The picture of the boy's suicide has multiple frames in *The Adolescent.* Working from outside in, Arkady's first-person narrative frames Makar's story, while Makar's story frames Pyotr's painting, and Pyotr's painting the boy's suicide, as it is reported by the firsthand witness Maxim. Thus multiple frames not only place the suicide of a child at a distance of several removes from the narrative present but also retard the pace of each level of narration. Makar's inset story, which completes a belated character sketch, represents a digression from major plot lines already set in motion in Arkady's narrative; Makar's story dwells three

times on the scene of the boy's suicide, once as it occurs, later as Maxim describes it to Pyotr, and lastly as Makar himself views Pyotr's painting; and, finally, Pyotr's painting arrests the boy's flight toward death at a single moment —his fists on his chest, his face toward the sky, at the river's edge. The synchronic dimension of Pyotr's painting, as the endpoint of a narrative regress, is further underscored by the near absence of verbs in Maxim's and Makar's descriptions of the suicide. The image of a contradiction brings narrative, at all levels, to a standstill.

Thus what lies at the distant margins of social norm in Makar's story— the suicide of a child—represents that which is least recoverable by realist narrative. For that very reason, conversely, this multiply framed picture of a child's suicide—which in being translated from one level of narration to the next, in the logic of realism, would seem to increase the likelihood of its distortion—serves to extend the scope of Dostoevsky's realism to extra-literary subject matter. The realism of the boy's suicide in Makar's story is heightened by intertextual connections with several individual cases of child suicide reported by Dostoevsky and others in Russian newspapers during the 1870s.[23] In an 1874 case from the newspaper *The Voice,* for example, a nine-and-a-half-year-old boy commits suicide, like Makar's boy, after breaking an expensive lamp (Dolinin 98). As a journalist himself, Dostoevsky argued that the suicide of children, a consequence of the modern, accidental family, had only recently arisen in Russian society as a "trait of some new reality" (25: 34). Makar, in his Afimyevsk story, also observes that "there was no memory in those parts of such a small child giving up his life" (13: 318). To cite another rare instance of child suicide in the nineteenth-century novel, Hardy's Jude "the Obscure" explains his young son's suicide and double murder along similar lines: "The doctor says there are such boys springing up amongst us—boys of a sort unknown in the last generation—the outcome of new views of life" (331). What is especially suggestive here of Dostoevsky's (or Hardy's) modernist sensibility is less the novelty of child suicide than the novelist's self-appointed role as witness to its emergence in society. Even as a journalist, Dostoevsky resorts to the novel to prove his case concerning child suicide; thus, in an 1877 article he compares the hero of Tolstoy's *Boyhood* [1854], who contemplates suicide at the age of twelve during his name-day party, with the account by one of his *Diary's* readers of a twelve-year-old boy who had recently carried through with suicide on his own name-day. In other words, this second boy accomplishes in the present that which a literary hero from the past era of the nobility could not: "Count Tolstoy's hero [...] could have even dreamed of suicide, but only *dreamed:* the strict order of the historically fully developed noble family would have held back the twelve-year-old child and prevented his *dream* from becoming *fact."* At the end of this *Diary* issue, Dostoevsky asks, "who will be the *historian* of the remaining

[...] little corners [of Russian life...] to what artist of Shakespearean magnitude will it be given to illuminate at least some small part of this chaos?" (25: 35). Dostoevsky himself, of course, had by this point already portrayed the suicide of two child characters, Makar's boy and the twelve-year-old Matryosha in *The Devils.*[24] Whatever the merit of Dostoevsky's claims concerning suicide rates in the 1870s, there is indeed an epidemic of suicides in his novels without parallel in those of his Russian and European contemporaries. In *The Adolescent* alone four characters take their own lives.

The limit-case realism of Pyotr's picture nevertheless extends beyond claims of sociological novelty to the very problem of representation in Dostoevsky's modernist iconography. As Makar reports, Maxim had initially desired that Pyotr include angels descending from heaven to meet the boy. Pyotr objects, however: "suicide is the greatest of all sins. How can these angels fly down to him after such a sin?" (13:319). As Maxim himself elaborates to the boy's disconsolate mother, "he's a suicide —not a baby *[mladenets]* but already a boy *[otrok],* and he was old enough to receive Communion. They can't admit him there straight away, he must answer for it somehow" (13: 320). In short, a confluence of theological codes involving suicide and the age of discretion[25] prevents a representation of the suprasensual in Pyotr's picture. While theology thus secures this picture's place within the canon of Dostoevsky's realist iconography, the author's own hand is stayed in his novels by his readership's secular notion of the real. Dostoevsky's characters are permitted to portray divine beings in their own inset tales, and he himself at times transgresses the limits of the empirical in his short stories. At the end of the short story "The Boy at the Christmas Tree" [1876], for example, Dostoevsky brings angels down from heaven to meet a five-year-old boy who has frozen to death at night on the streets of Petersburg, thus granting to this tale's hero that which is denied to Maxim's slightly older adopted son. These angels invite the boy to Christ's Christmas tree. No sooner in this short story does Dostoevsky pass from social *expose* to the suprasensual, however, than he feels the need to defend himself before his modern readers: "I promised stories in this ordinary reasonable diary about real events! [...] but as for Christ's Christmas tree—I don't know what to tell you, whether that could have happened or not" (22: 17).

Yet it is precisely the suprasensual that lies outside the frame of the picture in Dostoevsky's novels. In this dark iconography, the divine is evoked only through a series of techniques that render its presence immaterial. First, icons, crosses, and rays of light serve as symbols for the realm of the divine. In Makar's story, the substitution of sign for divine presence is literal; instead of angels descending from heaven, Maxim and Pyotr agree that the latter should paint "a single ray of sunlight" (13: 320). Second, the extra-literary narratives of grotesquely abused children from which images of contradiction derive—

war journalism, the courtroom, the annals of Russian serfdom—are arrested at those instants that resemble the most tragic, and thus most mysterious, scenes of Christian iconography: Gethsemane, the crucifixion, entombment, the martyrdom of saints. Ivan, for example, tends to accentuate the relations between mothers and crucified sons in his pictures. In Makar's story, the boy is depicted, not at the moment of his suicide, but in a final prayer.[26]

Dostoevsky's images of contradiction are designed to provoke a different kind of response than that of traditional Christian iconography, however. In *What is Art?* no less an authority than Tolstoy includes Dostoevsky's novels in his exclusive canon of "Christian art," the "basis" of which lies in "the capacity of people to be infected *[zarazhat'sia]* by the feelings of others" (62). While Tolstoy's almost pathological figure of art as "infective" captures well the poetics of emotionalism common to many trends in Russian literature, painting, and music of the 1860s and 1870s, the affective range of Dostoevsky's modernist iconography is not limited to the communication of his own emotions through artistic means (Tolstoi 62), nor even to the compassion of an observer before images of horror. Aside from the question of actual readers, Dostoevsky always places a second character before pictures of suffering children in his novels. In Makar's story, Maxim jealously guards the painting of his adopted son's suicide, not permitting anyone into his study to see it (13: 320); similarly, Alyosha Karamazov, as if giving voice to an ideal Dostoevsky reader, succumbs to the affect of Ivan's pictures, confessing, "I, too, want to suffer" (14: 221). Yet what distinguishes Dostoevsky's Modernist iconography from Tolstoy's "infective" Christian art is the intimate connection between affects and problems in the former. This distinction can be articulated by comparing Maxim's response to Pyotr's picture with a short story involving one of the period's most emotionally overwrought paintings, Vasily Perov's *Troika* [1866], in which three impoverished child-apprentices pull a cart along a snow-covered Moscow street. In a seemingly true story entitled "Aunt Marya," Perov recounts learning of the death of the boy who had modeled for the painting's central figure. In response, Perov arranges *a* private viewing of *Troika* in the Tretiakov gallery for the boy's mother, who kneels alone in prayer for hours before the likeness of her son (17). Perov's Marya and Dostoevsky's Maxim thus both respond to specific paintings with heightened and sincere emotion—indeed, with a ritual reverence commonly reserved for icons. Yet neither Marya nor her child is burdened with the kinds of moral and metaphysical problems that overwhelm Maxim after the suicide of his adopted son. The function of Pyotr's painting as a channel for Maxim's grief remains inextricably bound to the unbearable question of the boy's uncertain fate in the afterlife.

Borrowing a notion from Dostoevsky's own characters,[27] Pyotr's picture of a boy suicide thus generates specific "idea-feelings *[idei-chuvstva]"* for Maxim, just as Ivan's pictures provoke both Alyosha's compassion and his rejoinders in dialogue. In the case of all these images of contradiction three figures—a pictured child-martyr, a harrowed spectator, and a conspicuously absent divine being—enter into a set iconographic configuration with one another: through a network of non-reciprocal gazes, a suffering child or adolescent in a picture communicates—whether through prayer or an icon—with a divine being beyond that picture's field of representation; this picture in turn generates a problem laden with affect for a second fictional character, who views that picture from the other side of its frame. Ivan Karamazov paints the picture of a five-year-old girl praying all night alone in a latrine to her "dear God *[bozhen'ka],"* whose "ticket" to paradise Ivan declines in the name of her tears (14: 221). And in Pyotr's picture, an eight-year-old child, before taking his own life, prays to the very God whose Church forbids prayer for suicides and whose supreme gift of life he himself rejects. Indeed, that which is most real in Pyotr's picture for Maxim is not just the boy's likeness but also the grim question that his final gaze toward heaven provokes: "What a sin! And what can such a young soul tell God in the next world? Maxim Ivanovich has been sunk in thought over just that ever since" (13: 318). On the path to a difficult moral regeneration in Makar's story, Maxim spends long and lonely hours pondering this question before a picture that endlessly restates it, this image itself having become transfixed as a sacred memento of his adopted son's prodigious sin and of his own ineluctable guilt.

4, The Icon in the Picture

As close analysis of specific images in Dostoevsky's prose fiction reveals, the icon and the picture occupy unequal places in his modernist iconography. If Maxim's picture of his adopted son's suicide exemplifies the realist ethos underpinning this iconography, then one last image of contradiction—this time taken from *The Brothers Karamazov*—renders the incommensurability between the icon and the picture especially distinct:

> [Alyosha] remembered one quiet summer evening, an open window, the slanting rays of the setting sun [...] in the corner of the room an icon *[obraz],* a lighted lamp before it, and on her knees before the icon his sobbing mother, as if in hysterics, screaming and crying, grabbing him in her arms, hugging him so tightly it hurt, and praying for him to the Mother of God *[bogoroditsa],* holding him out in both arms to the icon as if under the Mother of God's protection *[pokrov] [...]* suddenly the nurse runs in and tears him from her in fright. What a picture *[kartina]l* (14:18)

In this "picture" of Alyosha's earliest childhood memory the desire of the gaze, like the screams of his traumatized mother before her silent icon, flows one way. Sofia Ivanovna, Alyosha's late mother, regards an icon of the Mother of God, her Intercessor; Alyosha—to whom this memory, "like a little corner torn from a [faded] picture," returns from time to time—sees his young[28] mother's "frenzied but beautiful" face yet remains silent about the face of the icon. The reader, in turn, witnesses this picture only through the narrator's retelling of Alyosha's memory. While the slanting rays of the sun, which Alyosha remembers "most of all," seem to symbolize a divine response to Sofia Ivanovna's prayer, the source of these rays, the setting sun, also naturalizes, and thus renders ambivalent, their iconographic significance. The beauty of Sofia Ivanovna's face is placed into sharp relief not despite but because of the facelessness of the icon. The iconography of this passage has been insightfully analyzed by a number of recent critics. Yet in contrast to those who have suggested that Alyosha's memory is itself an icon (Murav 157; Ollivier 63),[29] 1 would argue instead, juxtaposing the terms "image *[obraz]"* and "picture *[kartina]"* provided by the passage itself, that within Dostoevsky's modernist iconography the icon remains the picture's blind spot, an absent center upon which feed the contradictions of human yearning before the divine.

Dostoevsky, passing over the faces of icons with a reverential silence while drawing pictures of suffering that push the limits of realism to the unspeakable, exploits the incommensurability between icon-painting and realist portraiture for tragic effect in his modernist iconography. For Sofia Ivanovna, as well as for the nameless heroine of "The Meek One," the intercession promised by icons is nowhere visible within the pictures that frame their suffering. Yet there lies within these pictures an iconography more modern than that of the icons they depict. In 1845 the French archeologist Adolphe Didron sought to explain, with the aid of a recently discovered icon-painter's manual from Mount Athos, why Byzantine icons, unlike Western art from the Renaissance onward, show (what he thought to be) so little evidence of historical changes in style. Didron concluded that "in Greece the artist is the slave of the theologian; his work, which will be copied by his successors, copies the paintings of those before him" (ix). By the 1860s the Russian art historian Fyodor Buslaev had already reversed the value system implicit in Didron's contrast between Eastern and Western European art. For Buslaev, Russian icons had preserved, and were continuing to preserve, the images of true Christian art more faithfully than the "artistic fantasies" of the West: "our ancient icon-painting has the indisputable advantage before Western art already inasmuch as fate guarded it during this critical period from the artistic upheaval commonly known under the name of the 'Renaissance.' [...]. There can be no common ground between Russian and Western church art at the present time" (42, 157).

For Dostoevsky "there is no mysticism" in Russian Christianity, "but only love of humanity and the image of Christ" (24: 14), whom, as Prince Myshkin declares in *The Idiot,* "we have preserved and they did not recognize" (8: 451). In picturing the suffering borne by children and young women, however, Dostoevsky modernizes this notion of the icon as preserved copy, shifting his focus from the messianic role of the Russian people in world history to the intimate and indelible memory of a single character. Like other images of contradiction in Dostoevsky's late prose fiction—including Ivan's suffering children as well as the suicides of the Meek One and Maxim's adopted son—Alyosha's memory of his mother belongs to an iconography as distinct from the Eastern Orthodox tradition as it is from the Renaissance. The iconographic is not merely an otherworldly supplement to the realism of Dostoevsky's portraits of suffering and abjection. On the contrary, the Russian novelist salvages the sacred from a modern and secular world through the very act of picturing its hidden horrors. Renaissance religious painting, as well, had shared a double orientation-toward the real and the iconographic, yet Dostoevsky reverses the relation between the two when drawing his own images of contradiction. Rather than portraying naturalized icons of biblical figures, Dostoevsky develops for modernity an iconography of the real.

NOTES

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1 Harriet Murav analyzes *The Brothers Karamazov* as "a narrative icon" consisting of three parts: "katabasis, or descent into hell; trial; and resurrection, or ascent" (130-35). Marina Kanevskaya similarly argues that "an iconography is often embedded in the structure" of *House of the Dead* (401-12), and Sophie Ollivier interprets "The Landlady" in light of the responses of different characters to three icons of the Mother of God (53-58). Other critics have viewed specific settings or scenes in Dostoevsky's prose fiction as if they were iconic representations. In an article on the epilogues of Dostoevsky's five "great novels," T. A. Kasatkina argues that four of them not only include an icon in their final pages but that these "'icons' of varying subject matter [...] are drawn as if by the very texts of the epilogues themselves" (18-36). Antony Johae likewise interprets a scene from *Crime and Punishment* in which Raskolnikov stands on a bridge as an "imaginary icon" (180-86). Lastly, some critics have focused on the relation between literary portraiture in Dostoevsky's novels and the face of the icon. Agnesh Khavashi analyzes Makar Dolgoruky in *The Adolescent* as "a living icon" (229). In separate readings of *The Idiot,* Leslie A. Johnson compares the penetrating gaze of Myshkin to that "of a Russian icon" (876), Andrew Wachtel argues that the photograph of Nastasya Filippovna can be likened to a "photo-icon" (205-14), and Istvan Molnar and Glenn Arbery refer to Holbein's *Dead Christ* and Rogozhin respectively as "anti-icons" (257; 195).

For a parallel treatment of the Eastern Orthodox icon as a model for Tolstoy's poetics, see especially Richard Gustafson (202-13) and Amy Mandelker (76-80).

2 See also Roger Anderson (78-86). Positioning Dostoevsky in a "postrealist world," Anderson analyzes the intersection between the author's adaptation of the "homiletic properties of the icon" and his "potent modernist use of visual composition."

3 See, for example, Anderson's (87-98) and Ganna Bograd's (314) analyses of "inverted perspective *[obratnaia perspektiva]"* in Dostoevsky. This concept, most commonly associated with Pavel Florensky's 1924 essay of the same name, was first articulated only in 1899 by the French Byzantinist Gabriel Millet. The term "inverted perspective" itself did not attain wide scholarly currency until after Oskar Wulff's 1907 article "Die umgekehrte Perspektive und die Niedersicht." For early discussions of "inverted perspective," see Millet (94-103), Wulff (1-40), and Panofsky (1997,113-14n).

Some sense of Dostoevsky's historical distance from the turn-of-century rediscovery of the Russian icon can be gleaned from Evgeny Trubetskoy, who reflects in his seminal *Theology of Color* [1915] that the novelist never lived to see the full splendor of the icon's restored color: "our icon-painters saw that beauty by which 'the world is saved' [...]. When [Dostoevsky] uttered these words, Russia still did not know the artistic treasures that belonged to it" (36).

4 The mid-century publication of several medieval Greek and Russian icon-painting manuals—notably the Stroganov *podlinnik* in 1869— helped reinforce the widespread perception of the icon-painter as a copyist. See, for example, Leskov's defense of the icon-painter's craft in "The Ensealed Angel." As the icon-painter *[izograf]* Sevastian declares in this novella, "It's an offense to us to think that we simply use set patterns *[poperevodam]* as if they were stencils *[po trafaretam].* In the manual *[podlinnik]* we're given a canon *[zakon],* but how it's followed is left to the freedom of the artist" (269). On the subject of icon-painting manuals see also below, pp. 7, 19.

5 Realist paintings of Christ generated public controversies in one city after another across Europe and the United States throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. Noteworthy (and often notorious) examples include John Millais's *Christ in the House of His Parents* [1850], Alexander Ivanov's *The Appearance of Christ to People* [1857], Edouard Manet's *Les Anges au tombeau du Christ* [1864], Max Liebermann's *Der zwolf-jahrige Jesus im Tempel* [1879], Fritz von Uhde's *Lasset die Kindlein zu tnir kommen* [1884], Vasily Polenov's *Christ and the Adulteress* [1886], and James Tissot's cycle of illustrations *La Vie de Notre Seigneur Jesus* [1896]. Gabriel Harrison's *The Infant Savior Bearing the Cross* [1850] can be cited here as well as an early example of Christ in art photography. See also Wachtel on Dostoevsky and art photography (205-15).

6 I discuss this first component of Dostoevsky's modernist iconography in a separate article (Gatrall). For Dostoevsky's critique of Ge, see "A Propos of the Exhibition" (21: 76).

7 Panofsky's classic definition of "iconography" informs my use of the term in this article:"Iconography is that branch of the history of art which concerns itself with the subject matter or meaning of works or art, as opposed to their form." Within this larger branch of study Panofsky further distinguishes between "iconography" in the narrow sense—the identification of "images, stories, and allegories"—and "iconology," which he defines as the interpretation of "symbolic values" or "intrinsic meaning and content" (1982, 26-35). Dostoevsky's portraits of suffering children, as a discrete set of identifiable verbal pictures, can be compared with other traditions of images, including that of the Orthodox icon. It remains equally important, however, to define how these various traditions differ, both in iconographic and iconological terms.

8 In "A Little Hero" [1875] Mme. M. is said to have the face of an Italian Madonna (2:273); in *Crime and Punishment* Svidrigailov suggests that the face of his young *fiancée* reminds him of Raphael's *Sistine Madonna* (6: 369); in *The Idiot* Myshkin compares Alexandra Epanchina's face to that of Holbein's *Dresden Madonna* (8: 65).

9 See especially the ekphrases of Claude Lorrain's *Ads and Galatea* [1657] in both *The Devils* (11: 21-22) and *The Adolescent* (13: 375-76).

10 Dostoevsky is here speaking of the effect that Gogol's characters have on readers.

11 Ivan uses the word *kartinki,* which can also mean "little pictures" or "illustrations," three times in the chapter "Rebellion" to refer to incidents of suffering children.

12 See also W. J. T. Mitchell's reading of Plato's "provocative images" (92-94, 158).

13 For a masterful analysis of "iconic memory" in *The Brothers Karamazov,* see Diane Oenning Thompson (76-83). Thompson defines an "iconic memory" as "a venerated image which can be evoked through repeated recollections."

14 See letter to A. N. Maikov, December 1868 (28/2: 333); conversation with E. N. Opochinin (468), cited in Molnar (251). See also Dostoevsky's defense of icon-veneration in Russia in the May-June 1877 issue of *Diary of a Writer (25:* 168).

15 This is true of Realist novels across the political and religious spectrum. In *My Past and Thoughts* Herzen's uncle attempts to bless him with a family icon (37), while in Saltykov-Shchedrin's *The Golovlyovs* Porfiry prays theatrically before an icon at the bedside of his dying brother (243). In both cases the realist depiction of a traditional icon ritual exposes the moral hypocrisy of an overbearing patriarchal figure. Especially relevant here as well are the rituals surrounding the roughly three dozen icons permeating all levels of domestic and military life in Tolstoy's *War and Peace* [1869]. It should be noted that—as in Dostoevsky but unlike Gogol's "Portrait" or Leskov's "Ensealed Angel"—these icons from the novels of Herzen, Saltykov-Shchedrin, and Tolstoy do not generally receive ekphrastic treatment.

16 In the context of nineteenth-century notions of iconography, it is interesting to note that Peirce had initially, in 1867, used the word "likeness" in his triadic system of signs, only later settling on "icon" (30, 251n). Both terms, of course, occur together in a passage central to Christian apologetics for icon-painting, namely, Genesis 1:26, in which God creates man and woman in his "image and likeness" (i.e. "kat' eikona" and "kath' homoiosin" in the Septuagint).

17 Ollivier's generalization that "only women pray before the icons in Dostoevsky's works" (64) seems to hold for all of Dostoevsky's works except *House of the Dead,* in which even hardened criminals at times pause to pray before icons on barracks walls (4: 19).

18 Following the pattern outlined above for *Crime and Punishment,* the first-person narrator in *The Devils* casually mentions this candle-lit icon in his initial description of Kirillov's living quarters (10: 91).

19 The narrator returns obsessively to the subject of his wife's young age, mentioning her "sixteen years" no less than six times in the novella. In fact, sixteen was the minimum marrying age for women in late Imperial Russia.

20 Even the few monographs on *The Adolescent*—such as E. I. Semenov's *Dostoevsky's Novel "The Adolescent"* and A. S. Dolinin's *In Dostoevsky's Creative Laboratory (the history of the making of the novel "The Adolescent")*—omit any mention of this painting. On a similar note, Irina Paperno's otherwise insightful recent study of suicide in "Dostoevsky's Russia" fails to address the issue of child suicide altogether.

21 There are too many instances of proposed paintings in Dostoevsky's oeuvre to enumerate them all here. In *The Idiot,* for instance, Myshkin and Nastasya Filippovna recommend as subjects for paintings the execution of a condemned criminal and a contemplative Christ accompanied by a child, respectively (8: 55-56, 378-79).

22 See, for instance, Dostoevsky's critique of photographic realism in "Exhibition in the Academy of Arts, 1860-1861" (19:151-56) and "Stories of N. B. Uspensky" (19:178-86).

23 Dostoevsky was by no means the only Petersburg journalist concerned about the per ceived "epidemic of suicides" (24: 54) plaguing post-Emancipation Russia. See Dolinin (96-104) and Paperno (75-77).

24 The story of Matryosha's suicide, of course, was suppressed by the censor, along with the chapter "At Tikhon's."

25 The age of discretion in Russian Orthodoxy is commonly associated not with first communion, as Maxim suggests here, but with confession, which seven-year-old children traditionally begin attending on Lazarus Saturday (i.e. the day before Palm Sunday). In *The Brothers Karamazov* Ivan provides his own version of this Orthodox doctrine: "Children, while they're still children—until the age of seven, for example—are awfully different from adults: it's as if they were completely different beings, of a different nature" (14:217). In fact, this theological dividing line at age seven between prelapsarian childhood and nascent adulthood greatly informs Dostoevsky's portrayal of individual child-characters.

26 Intertextual parallels linking the boy's final prayer with the iconography of Christian martyrdom make it possible to interpret even the manner of his death as Christ-like. As Paperno argues in her analysis of suicide in Dostoevsky's oeuvre, various early Christian traditions interpreted Christ's own crucifixion as a "voluntary death" (7-9). It is characteristic of Dostoevsky's images of contradiction that one and the same act—suicide—can be read as either the "greatest human sin," as Makar contends (13:310), or as martyrdom in *imitatio Christi.*

27 Kirillov in *The Devils* (10: 157); Vasin in *The Adolescent* (13: 47).

28 Like the Meek One, Sofia Ivanovna marries at the age of sixteen. She dies eight years later (14: 12-13).

29 Thompson's more precise term in reference to this passage—"iconic memory" (82)—remains extremely useful. Murav does express well the difference between the passage's "two images," despite identifying both as icons: "one of the divinized Mother, perfectly replicated, still and silent, and the other, the frenzied, sobbing, human mother—are played off each other" (156-57).

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