

THE INFLUENCE OF FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY  
ON E.M. FORSTER AND VIRGINIA WOOLF

---

A Thesis presented to  
the Faculty of the Graduate School  
at the University of Missouri-Columbia

---

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts

---

by  
ASHLEY DOLAN  
Dr. Frances Dickey, Thesis Supervisor

MAY 2011

The undersigned, appointed by the dean of the Graduate School,  
have examined the thesis entitled  
THE INFLUENCE OF FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY ON E.M FORSTER AND  
VIRGINIA WOOLF

Presented by Ashley Dolan

A candidate for the degree of Master of Arts in English

And hereby certify that, in their opinion, it is worthy of acceptance.

---

Frances Dickey

---

Elizabeth Chang

---

Martha Kelly

---

---

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank Dr. Frances Dickey for her guidance and suggestions on this thesis at every stage of its development and for her willingness to serve as my advisor and committee chair. I would also like to thank Dr. Elizabeth Chang and Dr. Martha Kelly for serving on the thesis committee, reading the thesis, and taking part in the thesis defense.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	ii
ABSTRACT .....	iv
CHAPTERS	
1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
2. SECTION I: ‘A TRANSLUCENT GLOBE’: THE INFLUENCE OF DOSTOEVSKY ON E.M. FORSTER’S <i>A PASSAGE TO INDIA</i> .....	8
a. The Prophetic Novel: <i>Aspects of the Novel</i> .....	11
b. <i>A Passage to India</i> : Prophetic Moments	
i. The Song of the Milkmaid.....	14
ii. The Marabar Caves.....	18
iii. Godbole on Good, Evil, and Guilt.....	23
iv. The Trial.....	26
v. The Hindu Ritual.....	29
3. SECTION II: ‘THE VOICE OF PROTEST’?: THE INFLUENCE OF DOSTOEVSKY ON VIRGINIA WOOLF’S <i>MRS. DALLOWAY</i> .....	34
a. The City.....	40
b. Insanity.....	45
c. The “Soul” and the Spiritual Message of the Novel.....	51
4. CONCLUSION.....	63
NOTES.....	71
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	80

## Abstract

Dostoevsky's novels intrigued many English novelists when Constance Garnett's translation of *The Brothers Karamazov* introduced him to English readers in 1912. Both Virginia Woolf and E.M. Forster wrote critically about Dostoevsky's works and published major novels, *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) and *A Passage to India* (1924), in the wake of the "Dostoevsky cult." This study examines the influence of Dostoevsky's fiction on Forster's and Woolf's novels and suggests that both works are influenced by Dostoevsky in their depictions of character and their expression of a spiritual message.

Forster's *A Passage to India* has distinct parallels to Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, especially in its expressions of collective guilt and its emphasis on the oneness of all beings, and this study argues that Forster's novel seeks to delineate a new form for the novel, one that emphasizes oral tradition and communal existence over the novel's traditional emphasis on individuality. *A Passage to India* is Forster's own attempt to write a "prophetic novel," a form he associated with Dostoevsky and envisioned as capable of conveying the spiritual message of interconnectedness.

Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* also draws from Dostoevsky to create a concept of the self or character which is permeable to the surrounding environment and to other characters in the novel, and her work uses structures that are integral to Dostoevsky's fiction, such as double characters and the sacrificial narrative, to communicate her message about insanity, society, and spirituality.

## Introduction:

When Virginia Woolf wrote in 1925 that “the most elementary remarks upon modern fiction can hardly avoid some mention of the Russian influence,” her words summed up the surge of interest in Russian literature, especially in Dostoevsky, that had occurred in England in the roughly fifteen preceding years.<sup>1</sup> Although English readers had been acquainted with the Russian authors Tolstoy and Turgenev prior to the turn of the nineteenth century, Dostoevsky had been very rarely translated and received little critical attention.<sup>2</sup> The lack of interest in Dostoevsky was due in large part to this lack of English translations of his work. Though there were German and French translations of Dostoevsky in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the English did not have any translated work by Dostoevsky until his death in 1881, when *Notes from the House of the Dead* was translated.<sup>3</sup> Dostoevsky was so little discussed that in 1910, the English critic of Russian literature Maurice Baring claimed, “In England, Dostoevsky cannot be said to be known at all, since the translations of his works are not only inadequate but scarce and difficult to obtain.”<sup>4</sup> Before 1910, interest in Russian literature was primarily an interest in Turgenev and Tolstoy, and Dostoevsky was widely either unread or dismissed—but all this would soon change.

In the years between 1912 and 1925, Dostoevsky’s popularity dramatically increased so that the English interest in all things Russian, identified by some critics as the “Russian craze” or “Russophilia,” was contemporaneous with what scholars of Dostoevsky’s reception term “the cult of Dostoevsky.”<sup>5</sup> What transformed Dostoevsky

from a little-read novelist to a cult figure that helped fuel a sweeping English interest in all things Russian? The fever for Dostoevsky began with one event, Constance Garnett's English translation of *The Brothers Karamazov* in 1912—the first time this work had appeared in English. It was what Charles Moser calls “a genuine literary event”—it received enormous critical attention.<sup>6</sup> Helen Muchnic's comprehensive study of Dostoevsky's English reception explains that in the years following this translation, interest in Dostoevsky surged: “On the whole, admiration of Dostoevsky was ardent not to say excessive; within four years after the publication of *The Brothers Karamazov* it reached the proportions of a cult.”<sup>7</sup> Over the next eight years, Garnett worked to translate all of Dostoevsky's major novels, providing English readers with access to the range of his works. The interest that Garnett's translation aroused never quite subsided, and Dostoevsky remains one of the most widely read Russian authors, identified by many critics as the most “modern” of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian novelists.<sup>8</sup>

Dostoevsky was not just one Russian author among the many that English readers devoured during this period—he was the “new” author, the unfamiliar writer associated more with the modern age than the preceding Victorian century to which he actually belonged. His observations were startling, frightening, and fascinating. John Galsworthy wrote about reading *The Brothers Karamazov* in the wake of reading Tolstoy's more familiar *War and Peace* and exclaimed, “Amazing in places, of course; but my God! what incoherence and what verbiage, and what starting of monsters out of holes to make you shudder.”<sup>9</sup> Galsworthy's mixed reaction to Dostoevsky—part admiration and part shock—indicates that many elements of Dostoevsky's fiction were de-familiarizing; his characters were “monsters” and his form was “incoherence” and “verbiage.” English

readers and even writers like Galsworthy seem to have been both attracted and astonished by the “newness” of Dostoevsky’s novels. In a time of radically shifting artistic ideas, this newness was something to seize at—something to potentially compare English fiction to or attempt to model English fiction upon. This newness would become incredibly influential to those authors seeking to use the novel form in new ways, to address new issues, and modern novelists like Virginia Woolf, E.M. Forster, Joseph Conrad, and D.H. Lawrence wrote about Dostoevsky’s literary techniques.<sup>10</sup>

To understand Dostoevsky’s reception in England is to understand better the beginnings of English modernism, because his novels are an integral part of the English intellectual climate of the early twentieth century. He was a new writer in an age in which English writers were seeking to break from the forms and interests of the past, and their interest in Dostoevsky therefore indicates that Dostoevsky’s novels in part enabled their innovations. Helen Muchnic begins her study by explaining that English interest in Dostoevsky and critical writing about him encapsulates the artistic developments of the modern age: “The intellectual development of an age is often visible in the reputation of a single author, of an author, that is, whose work is deep enough to rouse judgments of such metaphysical and aesthetic implications as the merely superficial estimates of fashion cannot touch. Dostoevsky is such an artist.”<sup>11</sup> The sustained English interest in Dostoevsky during the years following 1912 is therefore integral to understanding the English fiction that arose during and following this period, because this interest indicates “the intellectual development” of this age—what we now know as the modern novel and its innovations in character and form. These influences, however, are particularly complex in two novelists, Virginia Woolf and E.M. Forster, who both expressed a great

deal of admiration for Dostoevsky's work but were uncertain about how it could inform English fiction.

Virginia Woolf and E.M. Forster both wrote critically about Dostoevsky's works and published major novels, *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) and *A Passage to India* (1924), in the wake of the "Dostoevsky cult." E.M. Forster first read a French translation of *The Brothers Karamazov* in 1910, and Dostoevsky's novels made such an impression on him that in *Aspects of the Novel* he developed his idea of "the prophetic novel" based largely on Dostoevsky. Virginia Woolf first read Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* (like Forster, in French translation) in 1912 on her honeymoon, and throughout her career his work and the works of other Russian authors continued to inform her writing. Woolf's interest in Russian literature took many forms—she wrote essays about a variety of Russian authors, including Dostoevsky, she attempted to learn the Russian language, and she worked as co-translator with a Russian speaker and translator, S.S. Koteliansky, to translate a previously unpublished section of Dostoevsky's *The Possessed*.<sup>12</sup> As she wrote *Mrs. Dalloway*, she consciously compared her writing to Dostoevsky, pondering in her diary whether her own writing came from the "deep feeling" that Dostoevsky advocated and captured the "true reality" his work had depicted.<sup>13</sup>

Dostoevsky was thus more than a fashionable author and a passing interest for Forster and Woolf—they were in direct conversation with his work. In what follows, I examine both Forster's and Woolf's critical attention to Dostoevsky and the relationships between their major novels and his own. My thesis is divided into two sections, the first devoted to Forster's *A Passage to India*, and the second section devoted to Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*. In the first section, I suggest that Forster's *A Passage to India* has distinct

parallels to Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, especially in its expressions of collective guilt and its emphasis on the oneness of all beings, and I argue that Forster's novel seeks to delineate a new form for the novel, one that emphasizes oral tradition and communal existence over the novel's traditional emphasis on individuality. Read in connection with *The Brothers Karamazov*, *A Passage to India* emerges as Forster's own attempt to write a "prophetic novel," a form he associated with Dostoevsky and envisioned as capable of conveying the spiritual message of interconnectedness.

This link between Forster's novel and Dostoevsky's is important, because although Forster's novel is often discussed, especially in a post-colonial context, the relationship between this novel's form and Forster's theory of the novel (outlined in *Aspects of the Novel*) has not been fully accounted for. Critical discussions of *A Passage to India* are often framed as one of two inquiries: to what extent the novel's depiction of otherness is problematic and to what extent the novel's form is "modern."<sup>14</sup> The Russian influence is actually related to both of these issues, because it provides a model for innovations on the novel form as well as an example of the spiritual message of connectedness that Forster embraces as a solution to racial difference and injustice. Understanding the nature of Dostoevsky's influence on Forster is thus important to understanding both the form and the message of the novel. Forster's concept of the prophetic novel, drawn from Dostoevsky, becomes a vehicle for negotiating new ideas about the self and about spiritual meaning in the modern world, and these ideas are Forster's attempt to address the colonial issues of the novel.

In the second section, I examine Woolf's critical writing about Russian authors, especially Dostoevsky, and I argue that Woolf, like Forster, saw in Dostoevsky examples

of new characters and new forms. Woolf's relationship with Russian literature has garnered more critical attention than Forster's.<sup>15</sup> Most critics agree that Woolf was in some way influenced by Dostoevsky, though the extent to which she admired him as a literary artist is debated.<sup>16</sup> Many of these studies, however, take the form of overviews of Woolf's writing about Russian literature and not comparative textual analysis.<sup>17</sup> My own analysis compares Woolf's novel to Dostoevsky's and suggests that Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* shares many characteristics with Dostoevsky's novel *Crime and Punishment*. I argue that Woolf's novel draws from Dostoevsky to create a concept of the self or character which is permeable to the surrounding environment and to other characters in the novel, and her work uses structures that are integral to Dostoevsky's fiction, such as double characters and the sacrificial narrative, to communicate her message about insanity, society, and spirituality. I also argue that Woolf attempts to negotiate the English novel's difference from the Russian novel—a difference she spoke frequently about in her essays. I suggest that *Mrs. Dalloway* rejects Dostoevsky's ideas about passive religious suffering and the religious soul, and that the novel offers an example of how the English novel could be spiritually meaningful (a quality Woolf identified and praised in the Russian novel) without relying on institutionalized religion.

One final word ought to be said about the nature of the influence I attempt to trace in the sections which follow. It can be difficult to prove direct influence of one writer upon another, because as Susan Bassnett explains, "Writers draw their inspiration from all kinds of sources, some conscious, some unconscious, some acknowledged, some vehemently denied."<sup>18</sup> I certainly do not imply that all the connections I suggest between Dostoevsky's fiction and Woolf's and Forster's registered on the conscious level for

these authors or directly caused their works to exist.<sup>19</sup> We do, however, know that both authors read Dostoevsky's fiction, and we know from their writings about him that they sought to understand his contributions to the field of literature even as they were simultaneously developing their own literary art. The connections between their writings and his, then, show that Dostoevsky *did* influence their writing, even if his presence was not always consciously felt or accepted.

The sections which follow, then, suggest that the major novels of both Woolf and Forster would not have been the novels they are without Dostoevsky's example. The Dostoevsky craze of the decade before these novels were published brought Russian literature to the forefront of English attention, and Dostoevsky's strangeness and newness symbolized a potential for the novel form that English authors were not yet accessing. Forster's and Woolf's novels experiment with elements of character and form that they point to in Dostoevsky: interconnected, permeable characters and mystical, spiritual elements that defy traditional ideas about action, plot, and time. As important contributions to the development of the "modern novel," *Mrs. Dalloway* and *A Passage to India* are on some level deeply indebted to the fiction of Dostoevsky. And yet the novels of Woolf and Forster were distinctly their own—distinctly a part of their own nation and time period. Their engagement with Dostoevsky indicates not only the importance of Dostoevsky's fiction to the modern English novel but also the ability of both Woolf and Forster to "translate" the ideas of Dostoevsky in a way that spoke to their own age and readership.

## Section I:

### “A Translucent Globe”:

#### The Influence of Dostoevsky on E.M. Forster’s *A Passage to India*

*“Dostoevsky’s characters ask us to share something deeper than their experiences. They convey to us a sensation that is partly physical—the sensation of sinking into a translucent globe and seeing our experience floating far above us on its surface, tiny, remote, yet ours” –E.M. Forster in Aspects of the Novel, pp. 194-5*

In a 1941 BBC radio broadcast, E.M. Forster announced, “I realized that there is a natural affinity between the Indian and the Russian outlook.”<sup>20</sup> Now Forster had spent time in India, but for a man who just moments later admitted he had never been to Russia,<sup>21</sup> that was quite a comparison to make. Where did Forster get such a conclusive sense of the “Russian outlook” that he could speak confidently about it with little first-hand knowledge? The answer seems to be, from Dostoevsky.

What in fact brought Forster to this statement is his recounting of an experience he had while in India, lecturing on English literature to Indians. For the most part, his lectures were unsuccessful, because the Indians (at least in Forster’s view) were not interested in English literature, but there was a moment of connection when Forster switched to Russian literature and retold the Indian audience an episode from Dostoevsky’s *The Brothers Karamazov*. Forster’s version of Dostoevsky was short but potent, and he retold it again for his radio listeners:

Once upon a time, says Dostoevsky, there was a poor woman who was extremely wicked. She was so wicked that in the whole of her life she only did one good deed. She did on one occasion give away an onion to a woman who was even poorer than herself. With this exception her conduct

was wholly bad, and when she died she went straight to Hell. As she lay burning there, an angel appeared up in Heaven, and lowered down to her the onion which she had once given away. She clung on to it, and he began to pull her out. Another of the damned saw what was happening and clung on too. This enraged the woman, and she cried out 'No, no, I won't have this. It's my onion.' And as soon as she said 'It's my onion' the stalk of the onion broke, and she fell back into the fire.<sup>22</sup>

According to Forster, his Indian audience connected powerfully with this episode: "This story delighted my audience in this remote Indian state. They called out 'This we understand. This is *bhakti*,'" a term Forster glosses as "a belief that we are all indivisible and bound together through love and that personal ownership impedes."<sup>23</sup> This Russian story is Forster's way of accessing the Indian outlook; it led him to his realization that, at least in his mind, there is something fundamentally *alike* in the Indian and the Russian outlook, even though his only experience with the Russian outlook comes from Russian literature—*not* from Russians. Forster thus compares the real-life Indians he encounters with either Russian writers or Russian characters (or both)—a comparison he finds not only un-problematic but productive.

Forster's identification of the Indian and Russian outlook is important to understanding his overall project in *A Passage to India* and the literary influences that shaped his form and message.<sup>24</sup> A great deal of criticism about *A Passage to India* has highlighted the post-colonial concerns of the novel and the way in which the text defines otherness as mystical or exotic.<sup>25</sup> The mystical element is part of Forster's attempt to answer the problem of otherness which *A Passage to India* addresses, a way for him to reject the Western novel's emphasis on the individual self and instead emphasize the communal experience found in oral tradition. Forster's work presents ideas of collective

guilt and interconnectedness and the importance of silence and mystery in creating meaning—ideas for which the traditional novel form could not serve as a vehicle.

The novelistic relationship between Dostoevsky and Forster has been examined most closely by Peter Kaye in *Dostoevsky and English Modernism, 1900-1930*. Kaye argues that Forster, like other English modernists, admired Dostoevsky but did not really take him as a model, believing him to be lacking in artistry. Kaye acknowledges that Forster was intensely attracted to the mystical elements of Dostoevsky's fiction but states that ultimately Forster could not follow Dostoevsky's example:

The elements of Dostoevsky's world—its frank exploration of passion, its quest for transcendent truths, its moral sentiments, its suspicion of the intellect, and its probing of interior lives—appealed to many sides of Forster. Yet however much he appreciated the power and pathos, he was unwilling to abandon the cultural tradition of his class, with its emphasis on restraint, balance, and rationality. Forster could endorse Dostoevsky as a stimulus but not as a model: gentleman-writers should read his works but not follow his ways.<sup>26</sup>

Kaye concedes that in *Aspects of the Novel*, Forster's series of lectures on novels and novel-writing, Forster seems interested in Dostoevsky and especially his success as what he calls a "prophetic" novelist, but Kaye ultimately decides that Forster himself could not succeed in being a "prophetic novelist" and that his attempts to end novels in a prophetic way (as in, for example, *Howards End*) were unsuccessful.<sup>27</sup>

While Kaye's study brings together various aspects of Forster's writing—his radio address, his novels, his lectures—and identifies the "prophetic novel" as the potential point of connection between Forster and Dostoevsky, his argument against significant influence does not fully account for the Dostoevskian elements in Forster's fiction. Kaye does not discuss *A Passage to India* when discussing formal links between

Dostoevsky and Forster and his failure (according to Kaye) as a “prophetic novelist,” but this novel is in fact the clearest example of Dostoevsky’s influence on Forster. By comparing elements of Forster’s novel to characteristic moments and techniques in Dostoevsky’s novels, with an emphasis on *The Brothers Karamazov*, I suggest that in *A Passage to India* we see Forster following Dostoevsky in constructing mystical elements to write a “prophetic novel.”

### I. The Prophetic Novel: *Aspects of the Novel*

In Forster’s *Aspects of the Novel*, a collected set of lectures given at Trinity College in 1927, Forster explains his views on several elements of novel writing, including story, plot, characters, and what we might perhaps term the psychological element, though Forster is more cryptic about this, calling it “a vague and vast residue into which the subconscious enters.”<sup>28</sup> In talking about this psychological element of novels, Forster points to two main categories, fantasy and prophecy, but his explanations for these categories are also somewhat mysterious and metaphysical. Forster explains that fantasy and prophecy are related but different: fantasy is rooted in the things of earth, even while it pushes these limitations (162).<sup>29</sup> Prophecy, however, seems even harder for Forster to define. Unlike fantasy, it transcends the earth and the physical world, but its theme and intentions are harder to pin down. Speaking of the prophetic author, Forster writes, “His theme is the universe, or something universal, but he is not necessarily going to ‘say’ anything about the universe; he proposes to sing, and the strangeness of song arising in the halls of fiction is bound to give us a shock” (181). Forster suggests here that the prophetic novel strikes readers by using the novel form in a radically different way—it does not tell a “story” in a traditional narrative structure, taking individual character

development as its focus. Instead, it is more like a “song” because, like the songs of oral tradition, it attempts to speak about universal (rather than individual) experiences.

The “song” and the “shock” are essential elements of the prophetic novel. Forster explains that in prophetic novels, there is something poignant and yet almost destructive: “the novel through which bardic influence has passed often has a wrecked air, like a drawing-room after an earthquake or a children’s party” (181-2). Forster’s metaphor here is particularly evocative: it combines a sense of what is proper and man-made with what is natural, wild and uncontrollable. His emphasis on child-likeness is reminiscent of his discussion of the Russian novel in his radio address, which he called, “like a child, full of energy and hope.”<sup>30</sup> This is significant, because Forster’s primary example of a prophetic novelist is Dostoevsky, and he turns to *The Brothers Karamazov* to illustrate his claims about the prophetic novel. Forster uses the passage from *The Brothers Karamazov* which describes Dmitri Karamazov’s dream to suggest that Dostoevsky’s characters transcend reality to attain a greater significance. He explains, “In Dostoevsky the characters and situations always stand for more than themselves; infinity attends them; though yes they remain individuals they expand to embrace it and summon it to embrace them” (192). In other words, Dostoevsky’s characters seem to be some mixture of symbol and individual—they are at once themselves and more than themselves. As in the songs of oral tradition, these characters become metaphors for their collective culture and for the listeners themselves.

Forster explains that we experience Dostoevsky’s characters in a way that seems radically different from the way we traditionally experience character: “Dostoevsky’s characters ask us to share something deeper than their experiences. They convey to us a

sensation that is partly physical—the sensation of sinking into a translucent globe and seeing our experience floating far above us on its surface, tiny, remote, yet ours” (194-5). Forster here suggests that Dostoevsky’s characters are so vivid that we are asked to participate in them almost physically—even though they are characters, we seem to *become* them. In this way, readers of the prophetic novel must participate in the creation of meaning in the text—they must share the communal experience of the characters. We must, Forster says, feel our kinship with the characters, somewhere off the page, in some transcendent, mystical realm: “Mitya [Dmitri Karamazov] is—all of us. So is Alyosha, so is Smerdyakov. He is the prophetic vision, and the novelist’s creation also. . . . The extension, the melting, the unity through love and pity occur in a region which can only be implied and to which fiction is perhaps the wrong approach” (194). This sharing of experience allows readers to transcend national boundaries and even the boundary of the self—the characters become a way to free oneself from the bounds of individual existence.

*Aspects of the Novel*, while articulating a great appreciation for Russian literature and for Dostoevsky, gives us only hints of how Dostoevsky may have influenced Forster. If we look at Forster’s own writing alongside Dostoevsky’s, we can get a much clearer sense of the elements that Forster admired in Dostoevsky and considered “prophetic.” Taking the basic outline Forster gives us of the prophetic novel—the surprising, partly symbolic characters and the element of a song—we can see Forster at work in *A Passage to India* on a novel which attempts to mystically transcend its local plot to become a story about fundamental human (and spiritual) experiences.

## II. A Passage to India: Prophetic Moments

There are five central prophetic moments in *A Passage to India* that dramatize mystical experiences and connect to important moments in Dostoevsky's fiction: Professor Godbole's song of the milkmaid, Mrs. Moore's experience in the Marabar caves, Godbole's explanation of good and evil, Adela's confession at Aziz's trial, and the Hindu ceremony. The episodes or elements that make this novel prophetic, or give it a mystic quality, seem to center around two characters, Mrs. Moore and Professor Godbole. The other characters that make up the novel—Adela, Ronny, Aziz, and even Fielding—are incredibly interesting but they do not have either the element of the “singer” or the sense of being “all of us.” Mrs. Moore and Professor Godbole, however, are different—each in their own way achieves this sort of prophetic element. If we compare these moments to similar moments in Dostoevsky's novels—especially *The Brothers Karamazov*—we can see that they share striking similarities, suggesting that Dostoevsky informed or enabled Forster's own attempts at a prophetic novel.

### 1. The Song of the Milkmaid

When first introduced, Professor Godbole seems to be a minor character. He attends lunch at Aziz's with Fielding, Adela, and Mrs. Moore, but he at first participates only marginally, preferring to eat and observe.<sup>31</sup> It is only when the guests begin to plan the expedition to the Marabar Caves that Godbole becomes talkative, and he gives a description of the caves, because, as it turns out, he is the only one familiar with them, since Aziz has never seen them. Listening to Godbole's description of the caves, Aziz realizes that there is something left unsaid, an undercurrent which only he is aware of:

“Aziz realized that he was keeping back something about the caves. . . . Godbole had been silenced now; no doubt not willingly, he was concealing something” (80). It is Godbole’s silence here—and Aziz’s unsuccessful attempts to find out what that silence conceals—that first introduces the mystical element of the novel and suggests that silence can convey spiritual meaning.<sup>32</sup> The Marabar Caves here seem like Forster’s descriptions of characters in Dostoevsky—they are themselves, but they are also so much more: “the characters and situations always stand for more than themselves; infinity attends them” (*Aspects* 192). The Marabar Caves here signify something deeper than themselves, an experience that language cannot fully express and which readers themselves will experience later through the character of Mrs. Moore.

Just moments later, when the party begins to break up, it also becomes clear that Professor Godbole may be more important than he at first seemed. When leaving, Adela turns to him and says in passing, “It’s a shame we never heard you sing,” and then, in response, he begins to sing (84). Forster describes Godbole’s song as intensely powerful, elusive, and unintelligible:

His thin voice rose, and gave out one sound after another. At times there seemed rhythm, at times there was the illusion of a Western melody. But the ear, baffled repeatedly, soon lost any clue, and wandered in a maze of noises, none harsh or unpleasant, not intelligible. It was the song of an unknown bird. Only the servants understood it. They began to whisper to one another. The man who was gathering water chestnut came naked out of the tank, his lips parted with delight, disclosing his scarlet tongue. The sounds continued and ceased after a few moments as casually as they had begun—apparently half through a bar, and upon the subdominant. (84-5)

Godbole’s song exemplifies Forster’s concept of what the prophetic novel does—that is, it “proposes to sing,” and the uncanny nature of Godbole’s song illustrates Forster’s claim that “the strangeness of song arising in the halls of fiction is bound to give us a

shock” (181). At this moment, the text transcends its characters, its plot, its story—it seems no longer about a handful of characters in a personal drama in India. Now it has become about larger cultural issues between the Indians and the British, whom the song affects differently, and even more about the fundamental human experience of music itself which seems incredibly powerful and yet somehow inexplicable.

Now, it could be said that Forster is not speaking of literal singers and actual songs when he discusses the concept of the prophetic novel and that he really means a kind of metaphorical singer and song. His selection from Dostoevsky illustrates his concept without any examples of singing, certainly. Forster does emphasize performance and testimony, however; he speaks of the sermon about Jonah in *Moby Dick* (201-2) and the trial in *The Brothers Karamazov* (196), and he emphasizes the quality of sound in *Wuthering Heights*, which he calls prophetic because it is “filled with sound—storm and rushing wind—a sound more important than words and thoughts” (209). We see these characteristics—this emphasis on performance and sound—in Godbole’s song. Dostoevsky himself used similar devices, though not literal songs—several of the most memorable and iconic moments in his novels focus on an oral performance as a powerful spiritual moment. Sonia’s reading of the Lazarus story from the Gospel of John in *Crime and Punishment*, Ivan Karamazov’s narration of the Grand Inquisitor section of *The Brothers Karamazov*, and Aglaya’s recitation of a Russian poem before Prince Myshkin in *The Idiot* are all oral performances which dramatize the themes of their respective novels. Forster attempts a similar move with Godbole’s song, seen for the first time in this scene but alluded to later in the novel. By drawing on this older, even pre-literate oral

tradition, Forster suggests that the traditional form of the novel cannot fully express spiritual meaning.

The subject matter of Godbole's song is also important here, because it seems potentially influenced by the onion episode from Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* which I began by discussing. When Fielding asks Godbole to explain the song, he tells the listeners that it depicts a maiden's interaction with the god Krishna:

It was a religious song. I placed myself in the position of a milkmaid. I say to Shri Krishna, 'Come! Come to me only.' The god refuses to come. I grew humble and say: 'Do not come to me only. Multiply yourself into a hundred Krishnas, and let one go to each of my hundred companions, but one O Lord of the Universe, come to me.' He refuses to come. (85)

Mrs. Moore seems intrigued by this and asks, "But He comes in some other song, I hope?" Godbole, however, replies, "Oh no, he refuses to come. . . . I say to Him, Come, come, come, come, come. He neglects to come" (85). Mrs. Moore seems to be approaching the song as either a romantic song about love or a religious song about divine guidance: she seems to assume that the tale will eventually end with the god coming to the girl. But the heart of Godbole's song is about religious selfishness: the girl begs, "Come to me only," and the exclusivity of her plea is rejected. Even when she expands her plea, she cannot think outside of her immediate circle of companions, and her plea is again not answered. According to Jeffrey Heath, Dostoevsky's tale of the woman and the onion shares with Godbole's song the underlying theme of selfishness. Heath writes, "Indeed, the old woman's selfishness in wanting to be saved, all alone, from the lake of fire ('it's my onion, not yours') bears a striking similarity to Godbole's song of the milkmaid. . . . Krishna 'neglects to come' . . . because to come to one person, or even to a hundred, is to ignore the rest of humanity" (660-1). Forster seems to

have borrowed here Dostoevsky's device—though it is a song here and not a story—and he uses this episode to depict not just the “affinity” between the Indian and the Russian outlook but also the prophetic message of his own novel. Both Dostoevsky and Forster portray selfishness as a barrier to redemptive, universal oneness, and Forster's novel suggests that his characters are never able to fully overcome their racial issues because of such self-centeredness. Even at the very close of the novel, there remains a barrier between Fielding and Aziz, and the divine oneness expressed in Godbole's song never materializes. Though Fielding and Aziz have certainly progressed to more intimate terms, they can only move towards interconnectedness in a very limited way, because as Forster says, their setting and time period actively resist such unity.<sup>33</sup>

## **2. The Marabar Caves**

After Godbole's song, his character resumes a rather marginal role, and the mystical elements that he introduced with both his discussion of the caves and his song of the milkmaid seem to submerge back into the text—that is, until the expedition to the Marabar Caves, where the prophetic elements of the novel burst out again. When Mrs. Moore first comes to India, she seems to believe in Christian theology, arguing that the English should treat the Indians pleasantly, “Because India is a part of the earth. And God has put us on the earth in order to be pleasant to each other. God . . . is . . . love” (53).<sup>34</sup> Even if Mrs. Moore's attitude toward English and Indian relations seems simplistic, her treatment of Aziz seems genuine, and readers are likely to admire her goodness. But at the Marabar Caves, things seem to change for Mrs. Moore. Inside the cave, Mrs. Moore is terrified by the darkness, the suffocation, and the press of the crowd, but she is especially horrified by “a terrifying echo” (162). Immediately after this description of the

horror of the caves, which culminates in the mention of the echo, Mrs. Moore's thoughts turn to Professor Godbole: "Professor Godbole had never mentioned an echo; it never impressed him, perhaps" (163). Forster's use of "perhaps" here highlights the reader's own uncertainty—perhaps the echo is what Godbole was concealing about the caves, in that moment when Aziz senses that he has a secret—the echo is the caves' most terrifying and most unexplainable characteristic.

What does this echo mean? For it certainly means something; it takes on a great deal of significance as the scene unfolds and reappears at multiple times in the narrative.<sup>35</sup> The narrator describes the echo as monotonous and explains its power in eerie, serpentine terms:

The echo in a Marabar cave is not like these [other echoes in India], it is entirely devoid of distinction. Whatever is said, the same monotonous noise replies, and quivers up and down the walls until it is absorbed into the roof. "Boum" is the sound as far as the human alphabet can express it, or "bou-oum," or "ou-boum,"—utterly dull. Hope, politeness, the blowing of a nose, the squeak of a boot, all produce "boum." Even the striking of a match starts a little worm coiling, which is too small to complete a circle but is eternally watchful. And if several people talk at once, an overlapping howling noise begins, echoes generate echoes, and the cave is stuffed with a snake composed of small snakes, which writhe independently. (163)

Here we see another prophetic moment in Forster's novel. The echo in the cave fills the novel the way Forster described the sound of wind filling *Wuthering Heights*. It is both a real echo and a symbol of something deeper, something connected to human experience. It signifies something so profound that language cannot even reproduce it but must approximate it. The visceral nature of Forster's description of the echo is important here: he emphasizes tactile actions, like "striking" and "coiling" and "writhing," and he makes the sound visible by portraying it as a multitude of snakes stuffing the cave. His

descriptions are evocative but not definitive—it is clear that he wants to emphasize the sense of endlessness (“eternally watchful”), as well as chaos (“overlapping howling”) and darkness.

What is it that Mrs. Moore experiences here? The sense of the futility of life? The endlessness of existence? Her own insignificance? In some sense, it seems to be all of these things. When Mrs. Moore collects herself enough to remember the episode, “the echo began in some indescribable way to undermine her hold on life” (165). Forster’s contemporaries Roger Fry and Leonard Woolf disliked the “mysticism” of this moment, but Wilfrid Stone argues that “Forster is not a mystic and the mystery of the echoes is not ‘mysticism’ . . . We do best if we go not to religion, but to psychology, for an explanation of the caves and their echoes.”<sup>36</sup> While it certainly seems true that Mrs. Moore’s experience is related to the psychological unconscious, as Stone goes on to argue, we cannot, I think, escape the fact that Forster describes her experience in religious terms and continues, throughout the novel, to link this experience with other spiritual experiences (like the Hindu ritual). What Mrs. Moore experiences here is so spiritually profound that it destroys the Christianity she displayed early in the novel because she can no longer comprehend eternity: “it robbed infinity and eternity of their vastness, the only quality that accommodates them to mankind” (165). Later, as Mrs. Moore leaves India, the narrator reflects that her experience had been a vision of eternity but a terrifying vision—“Visions are supposed to entail profundity, but—Wait till you get one, dear reader! The abyss also may be petty, the serpent of eternity made of maggots” (231).

Mrs. Moore’s horror that the afterlife, “the serpent of eternity,” may in fact exist but yet be utterly meaningless and an inversion of our expectations, “made of maggots,”

bears striking similarities to Dostoevsky's passage in *Crime and Punishment* in which Svidrigailov suggests that eternity might be only a room with spiders:

'Eternity is always presented to us as an idea which it is impossible to grasp, something enormous, enormous! But why should it necessarily be enormous? Imagine, instead, that it will be one little room, something like a bath-house in the country, black with soot, with spiders in every corner, and that that is the whole of eternity. I sometimes imagine it like that, you know.' (244-5)

Like Mrs. Moore, Raskolnikov in *Crime and Punishment* is sensitive to the religious implications of such an idea:

'But surely, surely you can imagine something juster and more comforting than that!' exclaimed Raskolnikov, painfully moved.

'Juster? For all we know, that may be just; and, you know, I would certainly make it like that, deliberately!' (245)

The source of fear here is different, but the resulting religious doubt is the same. Mrs. Moore seems horrified that the afterlife or eternity is meaningless because God does not exist, while Svidrigailov and Raskolnikov clearly still conceive of the universe as created (since Svidrigailov hypothetically positions himself as creator). Svidrigailov introduces the idea that this creator may not be benevolent, but rather, like himself, malicious. Here, however, as in Forster, the idea that eternity may not fulfill our expectations introduces religious doubt; it brings up questions that do not seem to be answered. The narrator of *A Passage to India* explains that after this mystical experience in the cave, Mrs. Moore can think only of the sameness that the echo creates, the meaninglessness that it seems to suggest: "Then she was terrified over an area larger than usual; the universe, never comprehensible to her intellect, offered no repose to her soul" (166).

This description of her terror is especially important in the context of Dostoevsky's influence on Forster, for it borrows several ideas that seem integral to Forster's understanding of Dostoevsky as a prophetic novelist. The expansiveness of Mrs. Moore's terror ("an area larger than usual"), for example, suggests Forster's emphasis on the expansiveness of Russian literature and the Russian landscape, and his mention of the "universe" as an incomprehensible idea powerfully suggests his description of the prophetic novelist, of whom he wrote, "his theme is the universe, or something universal" (181). Finally, his emphasis on Mrs. Moore's "soul" here is crucial, for Forster (like other English writers) associated Dostoevsky with the idea of the human soul, claiming, "No English novelist has explored man's soul as deeply as Dostoevsky" (19). The resounding quality of the echo may also reflect the influence of Dostoevsky in some way. Speaking of Russian literature in her essay "Modern Novels," Virginia Woolf described "the inconclusiveness of the Russian mind. . . . the sense that there is no answer, that if honestly examined, life presents question after question which must be left to sound on and on after the story is over in hopeless interrogation that fills us with a deep, and finally it may be with a resentful, despair."<sup>37</sup> Woolf's description of the Russian style is strikingly like Forster's description of the echo—she says it sounds on and on without achieving meaning, without achieving resolution. Russian literature, in Woolf's description, leaves us with a profound despair, just as the echo leaves Mrs. Moore. Woolf seems to think that English novelists are incapable of portraying this sort of endlessness and inconclusiveness, but I would argue that Forster has tried to do just this in *A Passage to India*—the cave is his example of this resounding uncertainty and despair that Woolf so associates with Russian literature.<sup>38</sup>

Mrs. Moore's experience in the cave emerges, then, as another side of Professor Godbole's song and silence. Both moments represent an engagement with a pre-literate, pre-individualistic existence, which translates for Mrs. Moore into nihilism and terror. For Godbole, on the other hand, this existence, associated with oral tradition and with silence, translates into a way to access communal spirituality. Forster's use of both of these reactions to the same sort of experience suggests that the novel form must incorporate prophetic moments in order to deal with the range of spiritual existence.

### **3. Godbole on Good, Evil, and Guilt**

Mrs. Moore never recovers from her experience in the cave. Though her presence continues in the narrative, none of her later experiences attain the prophetic significance of her moment in the cave. Instead, the novel turns to the character of Godbole for its prophetic element. When Fielding and Godbole discuss Aziz's arrest, we can see again the element of inconclusiveness in Godbole's character. Fielding asks Godbole whether he believes Aziz is guilty or not, and Godbole cryptically explains,

[N]othing can be performed in isolation. All perform a good action, when one is performed, and when an evil action is performed, all perform it. . . . I am informed that an evil action was performed in the Marabar Hills, and that a highly esteemed English lady is now seriously ill in consequence. My answer to that is this: that action was performed by Dr. Aziz . . . It was performed by the guide. . . It was performed by you. . . . It was performed by me. . . And by my students. It was even performed by the lady herself. When evil occurs, it expresses the whole of the universe. Similarly when good occurs. (196-7)

The very rational, very English Fielding is incredibly frustrated by this response, and readers might be as well, because such a concept defies Western ideas of self and responsibility since the Enlightenment, but Godbole's words are reminiscent of Mrs. Moore's spiritual interpretation of the echo—the echo unites all sounds and reduces

everything to sameness, just as the universe, in Godbole's explanation, unites all actions so that they are inextricable.<sup>39</sup>

In this description of good and evil, Jeffrey Hatch finds an important connection to Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, noting, "Forster's account [in the BBC radio address] of how difficult it is to assign blame for the murder of 'old Karamazov' is suggestive of Aziz's much shorter trial in *Passage* and of the various attempts, by the English, to single out one culprit for the 'attack' on Adela."<sup>40</sup> What Hatch notes but does not really develop further is that there is a connection here between Forster's *Passage* and Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* because both novels question the notion of guilt and culpability. Both Forster and Dostoevsky build their novels around a question—Who attacked Adela? Who killed Karamazov?—and both authors suggest that individualistic notions of guilt and morality will not suffice.<sup>41</sup> As Forster explains in *Aspects of the Novel*, Mitya (Dmitri) "is indeed spiritually though not technically guilty" of the murder of his father (188), and the novel illustrates that his intellectual brother Ivan also shares Dmitri's spiritual culpability.<sup>42</sup> Unlike Dostoevsky, Forster refuses to answer his question conclusively (we know that Aziz did not attack Adela but we do not know who did), but what Godbole points out to us is that no one involved can escape the blame. In *The Brothers Karamazov*, Father Zossima articulates the idea that all mankind are connected:

For I want you to know, my beloved ones, that every one of us is responsible for all men and for everything on earth, not only responsible through the universal responsibility of mankind, but responsible personally—every man for all people and for each individual man who lives on earth.<sup>43</sup>

Just like Dostoevsky, Forster tries to introduce the concept of spiritual responsibility, by having Godbole explain that everyone from Fielding, to Aziz, to himself, to Adela participated in the action.

Even though such a notion of collective guilt may be at odds with legal concepts of guilt and selfhood (and thus frustrating for Fielding), Godbole insists that this idea of interconnected responsibility is instrumental in linking each “self” to the divine presence. In order to illustrate his claim, Godbole refers back to the song he sang earlier in the novel, saying that both evil and good are “aspects of my Lord. He is present in the one, absent in the other, and the difference between presence and absence is great, as great as my feeble mind can grasp. Yet absence implies presence, absence is not non-existence, and we are therefore entitled to repeat, ‘Come, come, come, come’” (198). Godbole reminds readers that absence and silence have effects and are therefore real, existing forces. This juxtaposition of good and evil, absence and presence is reminiscent of Mrs. Moore’s experience of nothingness in the cave, but Godbole is at peace with this paradox and not horrified. Godbole’s words here bear a similarity to the paradox articulated in *The Brothers Karamazov* by Father Zossima about Ivan doubting the existence of God: “If the answer cannot be affirmative, it can never be negative either, for, as you know very well yourself, that is a peculiarity of your nature, and the source of your suffering” (81). Zossima here explains that God has both a presence and an absence for Ivan because Ivan is too skeptical by nature to believe conclusively in either God’s existence or non-existence. Ivan, like the milkmaid in Godbole’s song, pleads continuously for a resolution to his religious doubt but is incapable of finding it.

Godbole's words here, "Come, come, come, come," recall his song of the milkmaid, but they also bear a striking phonetic resemblance to Forster's description of the echo in the earlier scene with Mrs. Moore: "'Boum' is the sound as far as the human alphabet can express it, or 'bou-oum,' or 'ou-boum,'—utterly dull" (163). Both Godbole and Mrs. Moore fixate on these resounding monosyllabic expressions—"come" and "boum"—but where Mrs. Moore can only perceive absence and futility and meaninglessness, Godbole realizes that even divine absence is a kind of presence and all actions achieve importance. Mrs. Moore and Godbole thus show alternate sides of the prophetic vision—on the one hand, it is inconclusiveness and nothingness, but, on the other hand, there is some mystical attainment of meaning and significance, even if, as Godbole says, our "feeble minds" can barely grasp it.

#### **4. The Trial**

In both *The Brothers Karamazov* and *A Passage to India*, these issues of collective guilt culminate in dramatic trial scenes. Both trial scenes are pivotal to their novel's narrative, for they partially clear up the mysteries of the novels (who assaulted Adela and who killed Karamazov), and they serve as moments of dramatic self-realization for the characters involved. In *A Passage to India*, when Adela is on the witnesses stand, the narrator describes her thoughts extensively, telling us that she is able to recreate in her mind a vision of what happened in the caves. As she recreates the image, she realizes that she does not know whether Aziz followed her into the cave, and the narrator tells us, through Fielding, what is about to happen: "Slight noises began in various parts of the room, but no one yet understood what was occurring except Fielding. He saw that she was going to have a nervous breakdown and that his friend was saved"

(255). Adela, then, makes her own confession on the stand—she confesses that she was mistaken, perhaps influenced by the suggestions of others. Chaos ensues in the courtroom, but it is a pivotal moment to Adela understanding her own nature because she acknowledges the incompleteness of her knowledge (which, as we saw, terrified Mrs. Moore).

Ivan's confession of his spiritual guilt in *The Brothers Karamazov* is narrated differently; we have no access to Ivan's internal thoughts leading up to his confession. The narrator describes only Ivan's physical appearance, not his thought-processes:

Ivan came in very, very slowly, his head down, and not looking at anyone, as though he were trying hard to work something out. His brow was knit in concentration. He was immaculately groomed and dressed, but his face made me, at least, think he looked sick; it was grayish, rather like the face of a dying man. When he finally raised his eyes and his look slowly swept the courtroom, I was struck by the opaque dullness of those eyes. (823)

Even though the narrator is not privy to Ivan's internal thoughts here, Ivan's appearance is a physical manifestation of his internal struggles and the guilt he feels. Both Forster and Dostoevsky, however, choose to reveal the confession through an observing character. Just as Fielding can foresee Adela's confession, Alyosha, understanding his brother's personality, can foresee Ivan's: the narrator says, "I remember that Alyosha, making as if to jump up, let out a moan: 'Ah!' I remember it clearly, but I don't think many other people noticed it" (823). After Ivan's confession, the courtroom erupts into chaos, just as it does in *Passage*, though Dostoevsky structures his trial scene around two pivotal confessions, and Ivan's confession is closely followed by Katya's attempt to save Ivan by revealing Dmitri's letter.

Katya's confession, perhaps even more than Ivan's, seems a parallel to Adela's in that it represents a "heedlessness" for her own reputation and social standing; the narrator explains that in delivering it "she felt as if she had leaped into an abyss" (829). Like Adela, Katya speaks from an almost dream-like state. Forster's narrator explains that when Adela confesses, it is as if she is returning from a vision: "Something that she did not understand took hold of the girl and pulled her through. Though the vision was over, and she had returned to the insipidity of the world, she remembered what she had learnt" (256). Like Adela, Katya is somewhere between a nervous breakdown (the narrator calls her "hysterical") and an almost mystical lucidity, and the narrator describes her as speaking "with the great clarity that often appears at moments of highest nervous tension" (831). Examining trial scenes in *A Passage to India* and *The Brothers Karamazov* (as well as other novels), Lynn Franken explains that according to Bakhtin, the scandal of a trial scene in a novel is a moment of intense truth-telling that breaks our expectations for linear narrative: "For Bakhtin, scandal is important as the site of system-exploding, truth-generating surprise, where "the 'rotten cords' of the official and personal lie are snapped . . . human souls are laid bare . . . and there opens up another—more genuine—sense of themselves and of their relationships to one another."<sup>44</sup> When we compare Dostoevsky's and Forster's trial scenes, we can see that they indeed operate as revelations of truth, because both scenes dramatize the limits of human knowledge and present the question of collective guilt. Forster's description of Adela's confession is an explosive moment in the novel, in which Adela realizes her own absence of knowledge. When we consider Forster's trial scene in light of Dostoevsky's, we can see that Forster is able to achieve this effect by structuring this confession in a way that parallels

Dostoevsky's trial scene: the confession is partially foreseen (by other characters and thus by readers) and thus somewhat inevitable and yet still seems to occupy a mystical space in the novel, a place that is inexplicable because it is somewhere between supernatural vision and actual illness.

## 5. The Hindu Ritual

The final and most intense prophetic moment in Forster's novel comes toward the end of the novel, when Godbole's vision culminates in the beginning of the last section, entitled "Temple." In this episode, Forster portrays Godbole's participation in a Hindu ritual, and this section of the novel is especially mystical and mysterious, sharing several characteristics of the prophetic novel that we saw in previous episodes with Godbole.<sup>45</sup> This episode repeats snatches of a song about the oneness of all people and the oneness of the human and the divine: "Tukaram, Tukaram,/ Thou art my father and mother and everybody" (317). We thus see here the theme of oneness that Godbole relishes but Mrs. Moore shrinks from communicated in a song. We see also the fulfillment of Godbole's song about Krishna's presence. While Godbole explained after his song that Krishna "neglects to come," here he reenacts the birth of Krishna, christening a napkin Shri Krishna, and responding emotionally to the significance of the moment: "Tears poured from his eyes, because he had seen the Lord's salvation" (323). Finally, we see in Godbole's ceremony the ultimate fulfillment of Mrs. Moore's initial Christianity. Mrs. Moore had haltingly explained to Ronny early in the novel, "God . . . is . . . love" and encouraged him to be kind to the Indians as a gesture toward God, but during the Hindu ceremony here, an inscription hangs on the wall which is mistakenly translated "God si Love" (320). As Godbole and the other Hindus participate in the ritual, the sign bears

witness not only to Mrs. Moore's original philosophy but also to its translation. The humor and irony and profoundness of this message combine to remind readers of how vast and yet how small a gulf exists between Mrs. Moore's early Christianity, her later embrace of what seems to be nihilism, and Godbole's Hinduism. And yet these concepts are not stated by the novelist—they are sung through these phrases, as Forster suggests they should be in a prophetic novel.

The closest parallel to this scene in Dostoevsky is Alyosha's mystical experience after Father Zossima's death in *The Brothers Karamazov*, which occurs immediately after Alyosha visits Grushenka and hears the story of the onion.<sup>46</sup> Like Godbole, Alyosha participates in a religious ritual; he is at prayer during the reading of the gospel account of the wedding at Cana of Galilee. When we look at this scene, we can see a number of ways in which it may have served as a model for Forster's depiction of a religious mystical experience. Dostoevsky here weaves together Alyosha's thoughts, prayers, and the oral recitation of the religious text, just as Forster weaves together his descriptions of the Hindu ritual with words from the song, as well as Godbole's own thoughts. Just as Godbole's mystical experience culminates in a physical experience of the vision and an outburst of tears, Alyosha also experiences the spiritual physically: "A bright flame burned in Alyosha's heart. His heart was full to the brim and even pained him. Tears of rapture welled up from his soul. He stretched out his arms and awoke . . ." (438). Though Godbole's religious ritual is Hindu and Alyosha's is Orthodox, their religious experiences have a fundamentally similar result, an outpouring of love, because those experiences connect them to all mankind.

Dostoevsky explains that Alyosha's vision compels him to leave the monastery, to express through contact with the natural world this mystical connection to all things:

He did not know why he was hugging the earth, why he could not kiss it enough, why he longed to kiss it all . . . He kissed it again and again, drenching it with his tears, vowing to love it always, always . . . It was as if the threads of all those innumerable words of God had met in his soul and his soul was vibrating with its contact with 'different worlds.' . . . He craved to forgive everyone and everything and to beg forgiveness—oh, not forgiveness just for himself, but for everyone and everything. (439)

Godbole's experience results in this same two-fold desire—to forgive and yet to be forgiven, to both receive and administer divine love. Godbole's ritual ends with his memory of Mrs. Moore, and he feels intensely connected to her as a part of humanity: "He was a Brahman, she Christian, but it made no difference. . . . It was his duty, as it was his desire, to place himself in the position of the God and to love her, and to place himself in her position and to say to the God, "Come, come, come, come" (326).

This last scene with Godbole is the most prophetic episode of the novel, for it comes the closest to Forster's own characterization of the prophetic novel. On one level this scene with Godbole seems absurd; it seems laughable—the emotion seems disproportional, the actions seem ridiculous, the words themselves seem ironic. Even Dostoevsky's portrayal of Alyosha might seem sentimental, its pathos not quite proportional. But Forster actually cautions that the prophetic novelist, when seen in the wrong light, *will* seem absurd: "Before we condemn him for affectation and distortion we must realize his view point. He is not looking at the tables and chairs at all, and that is why they are out of focus. We only see what he does not focus—not what he does—and in our blindness we laugh at him" (182-3). Speaking later of Dostoevsky's Mitya in *The Brothers Karamazov*, Forster says, "Mitya, taken by himself, is not adequate. He only

becomes real through what he implies, his mind is not in a frame at all. Taken by himself he seems distorted out of drawing, intermittent” (193). Forster’s depiction of Godbole and the Hindu ritual has precisely this same quality—it seems ridiculous and out of focus, until we look past the details to the idea of oneness that motivates this episode. It combines elements of all the prophetic scenes in the novel—the song of Krishna, Mrs. Moore’s explanation and rejection of Christian love, the oneness of all things and words and sounds, and the participation of all people in the divine aspect. This universal oneness and interconnectedness is at the heart of the prophetic vision of the novel.

These questions about the divine presence and the oneness of all beings may not be conclusively answered (perhaps they cannot be answered), but Forster explains in *Aspects of the Novel*, that the prophetic genre is not supposed to be conclusive or didactic: “We are not concerned with the prophet’s message, or rather (since matter and manner cannot be wholly separated) we are concerned with it as little as possible. What matters is the accent of his voice, his song” (195). Peter Kaye argues that Forster could never attain the role of the prophet, that “However much Forster admired the ‘manner’ of prophetic fiction, he could never wholly believe in its ‘matter.’”<sup>47</sup> What I have demonstrated here is that Forster did in fact write a prophetic novel in *A Passage to India*. These prophetic moments may be surprising, or confusing, or even “shocking,” as Forster says, but they carry us away from the text; they simultaneously lift us out of the fictional world and into ourselves. In *A Passage to India*, Forster’s sense of the Russian outlook, the Indian outlook, and his own English outlook seem to combine to form what he calls, when speaking of Dostoevsky’s characters, “a translucent globe” in which we can see ourselves. The novel transcends, through its prophetic elements, the national

considerations of what is Russian or Indian or English to become a prophetic song about human experience; it gives us that Dostoevsky-like ability of “seeing our experience floating far above us on its surface, tiny, remote, yet ours” (194-5).

## Section II:

### The “Voice of Protest”? :

#### The Influence of Dostoevsky’s *Crime and Punishment*

#### on Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway*

When Constance Garnett began translating Dostoevsky’s major novels into English in the early years of the twentieth century, her translations served as many readers’ first introduction to the Russian novelist.<sup>48</sup> Garnett’s translations brought Dostoevsky and other Russian writers to the attention of the modern writers, and in some literary circles the interest in Russian literature reached the level of what one critic calls “Russophilia.”<sup>49</sup> For many writers, Russian literature was now part of the literary landscape, and the question seemed to be whether English literature could remain the same after this addition. In 1917, Virginia Woolf explained that Garnett’s translations of Dostoevsky had made him a part not only of the way one read but also of the way one thought:

Each time that Mrs Garnett adds another red volume to her admirable translations of the works of Dostoevsky we feel a little better able to measure what the existence of this great genius who is beginning to permeate our lives so curiously means to us. His books are now to be found on the shelves of the humblest English libraries; they have become an indestructible part of the furniture of our rooms, as they belong forever to the furniture of our minds.<sup>50</sup>

For Woolf, Dostoevsky's novels seem to have "permeated" the realms of both literature and psychology, and she viewed readers as having somehow internalized the significance of his novels. Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* serves as an example of the extent to which Dostoevsky's fiction had indeed permeated the literary consciousness, for it builds upon many of the elements Woolf associated with Dostoevsky and Russian literature.

Like Dostoevsky's novel *Crime and Punishment*, *Mrs. Dalloway* is structured around the idea of a double character and attains its resolution through the sacrifice of the double. Woolf's novel examines the issues at the very heart of Dostoevsky's work—guilt, suicide, insanity, and spirituality. Her novel and his both dramatize how very permeable characters in a novel could be when novelists sought to expose character consciousness—permeable to the surrounding city, to other characters, to mental illness, and, ultimately, to spiritual revelations. Woolf's novel takes Dostoevsky's method in *Crime and Punishment* of depicting consciousness through internal monologues, compressions and extensions of time, and the physical space of the modern city, and she examines a key feature of Dostoevsky's work, the altered state of consciousness of mental illness. What she is able to achieve, however, is a work that distances itself from the overtly religious overtones of the Russian emphasis on "soul" (figured in part by Miss Kilman's character) in order to celebrate a secular version of life and of self-consciousness.

Woolf's interest in Russian literature is well-documented, both by critics and by herself, for she wrote extensively about several Russian authors, including Dostoevsky, Tolstoy and Chekov, attempted at one point to learn the Russian language, and worked with a Russian translator, Koteliansky, to publish Russian translations from the Hogarth Press (including a previously unpublished section of Dostoevsky's *The Possessed*).<sup>51</sup> But

though Woolf was fascinated by a great deal of Russian literature, Dostoevsky's writing had a particular quality which appealed to her, a distinct ability to capture the way in which the mind worked:

Alone among writers Dostoevsky has the power of reconstructing those most swift and complicated states of mind, of rethinking the whole train of thought in all its speed, now as it flashes into light, now as it lapses into darkness; for he is able to follow not only the vivid streak of achieved thought, but to suggest the dim and populous underworld of the mind's consciousness where desires and impulses are moving blindly beneath the sod.<sup>52</sup>

Though Woolf acknowledges Dostoevsky's method of reproducing consciousness in this 1917 essay well before her own major experiment in consciousness, *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), she clearly saw Dostoevsky as an artist who depicted consciousness in a new way. Her insistence that Dostoevsky can reproduce both consciousness and sub-consciousness ("the dim and populous underworld") and can capture the speed and intensity of thought as it actually unfolds foreshadows her own method and indicates that she saw Dostoevsky's writing as a successful model for depicting mental processes.

Several critics have in fact noted both formal and thematic connections between Dostoevsky's work and Woolf's own, such as the themes of suicide and insanity and techniques such as double characters and fragmented narration.<sup>53</sup> Others have noted Woolf's interest in the idea of the "soul" and have suggested that she took this idea from Dostoevsky and transformed it into a more modern idea, a "catchword to describe the new focus of the modern novel: the interior life."<sup>54</sup> Many critics agree that Dostoevsky offered Woolf an example of "freedom from conventions of content and form,"<sup>55</sup> though some disagreement exists about the level of Dostoevsky's influence on Woolf.<sup>56</sup>

It is true that Woolf expressed some hesitation about Dostoevsky, and it is also true that her descriptions of his writing could be interpreted negatively or condescendingly. She called him “surprising” and “bewildering,”<sup>57</sup> said he “writes badly,”<sup>58</sup> and wrote in her diary that one “can’t read D[ostoevsky]. again.”<sup>59</sup> And yet it is also true that Woolf sometimes wrote exaggeratedly, hyperbolically, at least partially tongue-in-cheek. When she criticizes the chaos of Dostoevsky’s *The Gambler*, she explains that she dislikes the chaotic disruptions, madness, and violence, but she is careful to point out that the novel overwhelms us with its depictions of consciousness and the “soul” not because the artist is naïve but because he is so capable of depicting consciousness that he cannot seem to stop. She writes wryly that the novel has a rush of people “who wander in and begin to talk and reveal their souls, not that they are wanted, but because Dostoevsky knows all about them and is too tired to keep them to himself.”<sup>60</sup> Woolf’s writings about Dostoevsky in her essays and her diaries confirm that she is a careful reader of the Russian novelist; she tempers what might seem like exaggerated praise with what also seems to be caution. It is clear that she does not think that the English novel should simply imitate the Russian novel—in fact, that seems impossible. The English have not, she writes in “The Russian View,” the same experiences as the Russians or the same depth of religious feeling:

The gulf between us and them is clearly shown by the difficulty with which we produce even a tolerable imitation of the Russians. We become awkward and self-conscious, or worse, denying our own qualities, we write with an affectation of simplicity and goodness which soon turns to mawkish sentimentality. The truth is that if you say ‘brother’ you must say it with conviction, and it is not easy to say it with conviction. The Russians themselves produce this sense of conviction not because they acquiesce or tolerate indiscriminately or despair, but because they believe so passionately in the existence of the soul.<sup>61</sup>

What, then, was the extent of Woolf's engagement with the Russians and particularly Dostoevsky? He is certainly, as Rubenstein, Reinhold and others have shown, a formal model for Woolf, especially for her depictions of consciousness, but he is also, as Kaye indicates, an important point of departure. In creating new forms for ideas and feeling which were distinctively Russian, Dostoevsky inspired Woolf to create a new novelistic form for the ideals she would characterize as distinctively English.

This is why Woolf's discussions of Dostoevsky and of Russian literature often lead to meditations about the particular strengths of English novelists. She insists in "The Russian View" that English writers do have something that the Russian writers cannot access, "that instinct to rebel against sorrow, to make something brave, gay, romantic, intellectual, out of life, which the literatures of France and England so splendidly express."<sup>62</sup> After meditating on the strengths of the Russian novel in "Modern Novels" and finding the Russian influence so impressive and profound that "if the Russians are mentioned one runs the risk of feeling that to write of any fiction save theirs is a waste of time," Woolf suggests that the English novelists should resist the urge to imitate the Russians and instead capitalize on their own strengths:

But perhaps we see something that escapes them, or why should this voice of protest mix itself with our gloom? The voice of protest is the voice of another and an ancient civilization which seems to have bred in us the instinct to enjoy and fight rather than to suffer and understand. English fiction from Sterne to Meredith bears witness to our natural delight in humour and comedy, in the beauty of earth, in the activities of the intellect, and in the splendor of the body.<sup>63</sup>

According to Woolf, then, Russian literature opens up important possibilities for the novel form which English novelists must consider while still emphasizing what is

particular to them—their imagination, bravado and emotion, their sense of humor and their connection to the natural world.

Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* is precisely this type of experimentation with Dostoevsky's influence—her voice is in direct conversation with Dostoevsky's, but it is at the same time what she calls in her essay “the voice of protest.” Her novel has important formal connections to his work and yet achieves very different results. We know from Woolf's diaries that Dostoevsky's writing was in her thoughts as she began work on *Mrs. Dalloway* (tentatively titled as *The Hours* when Woolf first conceptualized it). In an entry on June 19, 1923, she meditates on the connections between her writing and his, wondering if she conveys the same passion he does:

But now what do I feel about *my* writing?—this book, that is, *The Hours*, if that's its name? One must write from deep feeling, said Dostoevsky. And do I? Or do I fabricate with words, loving them as I do? No I think not. In this book I have almost too many ideas. I want to give life & death, sanity & insanity; I want to criticize the social system, & to show it at work, at its most intense—But here I may be posing.<sup>64</sup>

After thinking about other matters, Woolf comes back to this comparison, meditating more deeply on the connections between Dostoevsky's novels and hers.

Am I writing *The Hours* from deep emotion? Of course the mad part tries me so much, makes my mind squint so badly that I can hardly face spending the next weeks at it. Its a question though of these characters. People, like Arnold Bennett, say I cant create, or didn't in *J's R*, characters that survive. My answer is—but I leave that to the Nation: its only the old argument that character is dissipated into shreds now: the old post-Dostoevsky argument. I daresay its true, however, that I haven't that 'reality' gift. I insubstantiate, willfully to some extent, distrusting reality—its cheapness. But to get further. Have I the power of conveying the true reality? Or do I write essays about myself?<sup>65</sup>

Here she seems to imply that though *Mrs. Dalloway* is radically different in its portrayal of character, its characters are still enabled by the innovations of Dostoevsky. In her

words, Dostoevsky's novels tear characters to shreds; they capture a "true reality." Her own novel was meant to do the same—it would express two parts of one integral self, what she called elsewhere "the sane and the insane side by side,"<sup>66</sup> and it would convey a reality that was unexpected but true, because it would reveal the internal self, a realistic depiction of consciousness. The consciousness of characters that emerged in Woolf's fiction proved to be in many ways similar to Dostoevsky's work, because of its "permeability" to other forces, including the modern city.

## I. The City

The presence of the city in modern novels has been studied by numerous critics, often influenced by Walter Benjamin's concept of the flaneur, or "streetwalker."<sup>67</sup> The important element of Benjamin's concept for readings of Woolf and other modern "city novels" is that the streetwalker's experience of consciousness and of the self is inextricable from his (or her) experience of the modern city. As Hana Wirth-Nesher explains, "In the modern urban novel cityscape is inseparable from self."<sup>68</sup> Many critical readings of Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* have noted this flaneur quality of the novel.<sup>69</sup> Street-walking in *Mrs. Dalloway* "signals the possibility of gaining a more generalized freedom,"<sup>70</sup> and Woolf uses street-walking to express the possibility of knowing the self and recognizing consciousness (a particular kind of freedom often hindered by constraints). It is useful to think of Dostoevsky's example here, for he employs a very similar technique in *Crime and Punishment* to reveal the consciousness of his main character Raskolnikov.

*Crime and Punishment* is a street-walking narrative which is intensely connected to the urban city of St. Petersburg. The novel is in fact so consistent with the actual city that scholars have been able to name particular streets and places even when Dostoevsky (frequently) replaces them with blanks.<sup>71</sup> But, as Richard Pevear states, the city is more than a setting for the novel; it seems to be a permeable membrane which both gives shape to and receives the shape of the main character's consciousness: "Petersburg is not a backdrop for the events Dostoevsky narrates, but a constant participant in them, and a mirror of Raskolnikov's soul."<sup>72</sup> We can see this permeability very early on in the novel, for Dostoevsky's descriptions of the city emphasize the setting's relationship to Raskolnikov's consciousness:

The heat in the streets was stifling. The stuffiness, the jostling crowds, the bricks and mortar, scaffolding and dust everywhere, and that peculiar summer stench so familiar to everyone who cannot get away from St. Petersburg into the country, all combined to aggravate the disturbance of the young man's nerves.<sup>73</sup>

Here we see the city as an oppressive presence—dirty and suffocating, it is a thing to be escaped. The social implication here is that the city oppresses the poor particularly, because they would be the class least likely to escape to the country, but we also see that the important part of the description of the city is how it affects Raskolnikov's nerves—it is an aggravation to them. The disturbed nature of the city is a reflection of his own disturbed nerves, a picture of his own imbalanced mental state.

Even the act of walking through the city to the pawnbroker's, to rehearse the murder (which readers only later find out is what is happening in the passage above), is something that Raskolnikov does mentally as well as physically—he has internalized the

city streets and walking through them intensifies his mental anguish because it also signifies exploring his own murderous desires:

He had not far to go; he even knew how many paces it was from his own door—exactly seven hundred and thirty. He had counted them once, when he had first begun to give his imagination free reign . . . He was now engaged in rehearsing his project, and his agitation increased with every step he took (3).

Raskolnikov eventually even makes up his mind to commit the murder while walking through the streets, because he takes one path instead of another (through the Haymarket, the poor district) and thus overhears that the pawnbroker will be alone at a particular time (51-2). Again, readers see that the idea of physical walking is connected to his mental awareness and his exploration of his consciousness and desires. The physical spaces which he occupies and traverses seem symbolically to represent and enable his discovery of himself, or conversely, to epitomize his entrapment within himself. Dostoevsky explains that Raskolnikov's poverty-stricken, cramped apartment oppresses him mentally as well as physically: "At last it began to seem close and stuffy in the shabby little room, so like a box or a cupboard. His eyes and his thoughts both craved more space" (33). After the murder especially, Raskolnikov seeks physical space and often walks the streets, alongside the Neva, and readers can interpret this as an attempt to obtain mental freedom as well as physical freedom—mental freedom from his own muddled thoughts, paranoia, and guilt.

The city, then, is in part an expression of Raskolnikov's consciousness, but it also takes an active part in shaping Raskolnikov's experience of consciousness. Dostoevsky explains, as Raskolnikov walks, that his thoughts are connected by the visual impressions made on him by the city:

Passing the Yusupov Gardens, he began to consider the constructions of tall fountains in all the squares, and how they would freshen the air. Following this train of thought he came to the conclusion that if the Summer Gardens could be extended right across the Champ de Mars and joined to those of the Mikhaylovsky Palace, it would add greatly to the beauty of amenities of the city. Then he suddenly began to wonder why, in big towns, people chose of their own free will to live where there were neither parks nor gardens, but only filth and squalor and evil smells. This reminded him of his own walks in the neighborhood of the Haymarket, and brought him back to himself. (62)

Dostoevsky here anticipates Woolf's stream-of-consciousness narrative style—he moves from one thought to another, reproducing the connections between thoughts (something which Woolf herself submerges in her text) and expanding a very compressed train of thought to emphasize its multiplicity. The emphasis on physical space and actual location here is important, for it is a device Woolf also uses in her depiction of street-walking, constantly giving the exact street names and paths taken by characters in the novel.

Woolf's characters receive their impressions from the city in a way that is very similar to Dostoevsky's Raskolnikov. However, because Woolf has divided the consciousness of her characters into two distinct halves (the sane and the insane), her characters receive very different impressions. Clarissa, like Raskolnikov, experiences her passions and desires as a result of street-walking, but for her (partly because of her sanity and partly because of her upper-class status), this results in a joyous celebration of life:

Such fools we are, she thought, crossing Victoria Street. For heaven only knows why one loves it so, how one sees it so, making it up, building it round one, tumbling it, creating it every moment afresh . . . In people's eyes, in the swing, tramp, trudge; in the bellow and the uproar; the carriages, motor cars, omnibuses, vans, sandwich men shuffling and swinging; brass bands; barrel organs; in the triumph and the jingle and the strange high singing of some aeroplane overhead was what she loved; life; London; this moment of June.<sup>74</sup>

Though the connections between Clarissa's thoughts are not made explicit here as they are in the above passage from Dostoevsky, we can still tell from details of the passage exactly what Clarissa observes in the city and what her resulting realization is, and the ultimate result of street-walking for both Clarissa and Raskolnikov is self-discovery.

Unlike Clarissa, Septimus Smith feels incredibly paranoid as he walks in the city. As the motor car draws attention in the street, Septimus suspects that he is being observed by the crowd:

And there the motor car stood, with drawn blinds, and upon them a curious pattern like a tree, Septimus thought, and this gradual drawing together of everything to one centre before his eyes, as if some horror had come almost to the surface and was about to burst into flames, terrified him. The world wavered and quivered and threatened to burst into flames. It is I who am blocking the way, he thought. Was he not being looked at and pointed at; was he not weighted there, rooted to the pavement, for a purpose? But for what purpose? (15)

For someone with an altered state of consciousness (madness), the city is a terrifying place, a place of exposure, judgment, and ridicule. Hana Wirth-Nesher has noted that Septimus feels exposed to people in the street and thinks that they are also exposed to him.<sup>75</sup> Raskolnikov is similarly paranoid, because like Septimus he experiences feelings of guilt and mental hallucinations. After the murder, when he wanders the streets, deciding what to do with the stolen goods, he thinks that everyone must be watching him: "Even as it was everybody he met looked at him as if they had some business with him. 'Why is that, or am I just imagining it?' he thought" (90). But like Septimus, Raskolnikov also feels that he somehow can interpret the crowd, as if their minds are exposed to him. As he contemplates confessing, he assumes that he knows the mental states of the crowd, and he resents the judgment that he interprets from them: "Look at all these scurrying

about the streets, and every one of them is a scoundrel and a criminal by his very nature, and worse still, an idiot! But try to save me from exile and they would all go mad with righteous indignation! Oh, how I hate them all!” (440). Both Septimus and Raskolnikov, in varying stages of madness, project their paranoia onto the crowd, so that they constantly feel watched and judged, and as a result they turn against the other inhabitants of the city and live increasingly within their own minds

## **II. Insanity**

As Septimus and Raskolnikov turn inward, we begin to see the inner workings of an unwell consciousness. Both Dostoevsky and Woolf portray mental illness through similar narrative devices, placing us inside the minds of the sick men themselves, showing their hallucinations, their conscious understanding of their own sickness, and their reactions to institutionalized treatment. Like Raskolnikov, Septimus’ mental illness is partially a manifestation of his sense of guilt. While Raskolnikov’s guilt and paranoia spring from his murder and robbery and Septimus’ insanity results from his experiences in the war, both men feel they are essentially to blame for the traumatic incidents in their lives and interpret their psychological suffering as punishment for their guilt. Raskolnikov’s crime is a result of his philosophical theory of extraordinary men, and his mental inability to deal with his crime indicates the falseness of his theory. Faced with his error, Raskolnikov experiences mental punishment for his mental crime in the form of delusions and paranoia. Just after the murder, Raskolnikov experiences hallucinations—in his apartment he hears the sounds of a violent altercation and the voice of the police detective and the reaction of a crowd of onlookers, all of which are in his mind (97). Dostoevsky emphasizes that Raskolnikov’s state of mind after the murder is precarious—

it is a state of altered consciousness that is even more confused than his pre-murder angst and paranoia: “He was not entirely unconscious throughout the whole time of his illness; he lay in a fever, delirious and sometimes half-conscious” (99). During this period of altered consciousness, Raskolnikov experiences visual hallucinations that indicate his guilt:

At one time it seemed to him that he was surrounded by many people, who wanted to carry him away somewhere, and that they were wrangling and quarrelling over him. Then suddenly he was alone in the room; everybody had gone out, they were afraid of him, and only occasionally opened the door a crack to look in at him. They would threaten him, hatch out plots among themselves, laugh and jeer at him. (99)

Like Septimus, Raskolnikov’s insanity here takes the form of paranoia—he imagines that he is subjected to the unsympathetic gaze of the crowd, just as Septimus imagines happens during the motor car scene. But Raskolnikov here imagines not only the observation but the people involved as well, and his hallucination dramatizes the deepest anxieties of his illness. He is threatened by the crowd, and he fears the physical contact that results from being surrounded and fought over by them, but at the same time he is afraid of being isolated, ridiculed, observed and discussed.

Like Raskolnikov, Septimus’ hallucinations involve sensory perceptions not based in reality—he sees and feels what is not actually present or what is an exaggerated intensification of the present. At one moment, he sees the dead soldier Evans, a manifestation of his guilt: “White things were assembling behind the railings opposite. But he dared not look. Evans was behind the railings!” (25). Septimus’ reactions to his hallucinations indicate that he is afraid of much the same thing Raskolnikov fears—unsympathetic observation, ridicule, and analysis. Septimus insists, “Away from

people—they must get away from people” (25). But though Septimus’ hallucinations take the form of sensory perceptions, Septimus interprets them philosophically. For him, these hallucinations are a revelation of new truths, concepts like “There is a God,” “No one kills from hatred,” “there is no crime,” and “there is no death” (24-5). Septimus constantly struggles between the message that he senses he has been given and the solitariness forced upon him by his hallucinations and his guilt. He is fascinated enough by these revelations to consider his ideas exaggeratedly important and yet despondent enough to resist these hallucinations:

Look the unseen bade him, the voice which now communicated with him who was the greatest of mankind, Septimus, lately taken from life to death, the Lord who had come to renew society, who lay like a coverlet, a snow blanket smitten only by the sun, for ever unwasted, suffering for ever, the scapegoat, the eternal sufferer, but he did not want it, he moaned, putting from him with a wave of his hand that eternal suffering, that eternal loneliness. (25)

We can see in this passage that Septimus is unwell, because the narrator intentionally exaggerates Septimus’ hallucinations about himself. He hears voices which persuade him of his own importance as a sacrificial figure, a religious figure, and yet he does not embrace these delusions—he resists the suffering which this identification would bring.

The philosophical element in Septimus’ madness strikingly parallels Raskolnikov’s mental illness. Raskolnikov seeks an intellectual justification for his criminal behavior and finds it in his theory of the “extraordinary man,” the man who “has the right in himself, to permit his conscience to overstep . . . certain obstacles, but only in the event that his ideas (which may sometimes be salutary for all mankind) require it for their fulfillment” (219-20). Raskolnikov seeks a philosophy that justifies his behavior and indicates that ideas about guilt and conscience do not apply to certain people or

situations. When he later tries to account for his motivation for the crime to Sonia, he explains that it resulted from his sense of a new, brilliant idea about the moral basis of the world:

I had a thought then, for the first time in my life, that nobody had ever had before me! Nobody! It was suddenly as clear as daylight to me: how strange that not one single person passing through this nonsensical world has the courage, has ever had the courage, to seize it by the tail and fling it to the devil! I . . . I wanted to have the courage, and I killed . . . I only wanted to dare, Sonya, that was the only reason! (353)

If we return to *Mrs. Dalloway*, we see that Septimus' revelations indicate that he too seeks a philosophy that can make sense of his war experiences and his ensuing guilt. If there is a God but no death and no crime, and if Septimus is "the Lord who had come to renew society," then Septimus need not feel guilty about his war experiences—they are sacrifices made for the greater good. Raskolnikov rationalizes his behavior in a similar way—both traumatized men see themselves as suddenly understanding truths that will make more sense in the world in which they find themselves.

Both Dostoevsky and Woolf seem to use these protagonists as a method of critiquing their societies. Both characters are sensitive but impoverished; they are lower class and yet have intellectual aspirations. The authors suggest that these characters have great potential which is stifled by their society—neither character is able to find socially acceptable outlets for their mental anguish and guilt, and each is driven to violence as a result. Both Woolf and Dostoevsky investigate the same question: what will become of the individual who cannot find a place in society? Raskolnikov's poverty and lack of intellectual opportunity clearly illustrates that there is a problem in the social order that seems impossible to get out of without some drastic action—as Raskolnikov thinks to

himself when rationalizing his crime, “I have only one life given to me, and it will never come again. . . . I want to have my own life, or else it is better not to life at all” (233).

Septimus’ madness rather heartbreakingly indicates a different social problem—the national willingness to enter war and yet the incapability of society to deal with the experiences of that war. In their struggles to philosophically justify the issues that underlie their mental torment, both men uncover the important issues that their respective novels seek to address, and the “insane” figure in Woolf’s novel, as in Dostoevsky’s becomes a vehicle for social critique.

This social critique is particularly emphatic in both novels because both authors draw readers into the subjective experience of mental illness by reproducing the inner workings of the unwell conscious. Readers experience the intense anguish of both Raskolnikov and Septimus because these characters constantly question their psychological stability. After the murder, when Raskolnikov is in a state of heightened paranoia, he begins to fear that his mental state will interfere with his sensory perceptions: “Now a strange idea entered his head: perhaps all his clothes were soaked and stained with blood and he could not see it because his mental powers were failing and crumbling away . . . his mind was clouded . . .” (76-7). Raskolnikov begins to consciously reflect on his own mental wellness here; he displays knowledge of the way in which insanity works (mental problems have physical manifestations), and he suspects that he suffers from sensory delusions. Septimus, though perhaps more obviously unwell than Raskolnikov, displays this same sort of awareness of insanity. Like Raskolnikov, he thinks often about insanity and attempts to resist it when he feels its physical manifestations. As he meditates upon the “excitement” of the natural world and visual sensations, he realizes that these things “would have sent him mad. But

he would not go mad. He would shut his eyes; he would see no more” (22). Septimus senses that he can control the intensity of his hallucinations by limiting his sensory experience—he seems to understand that his intense experiences do not correspond with what is actually happening around him. Though he seems to believe in his philosophical revelations even more strongly than Raskolnikov believes in his, he still understands that something is wrong with his conscious perceptions. Because Woolf and Dostoevsky both depict their characters’ conscious reflections on mental stability, both novelists are able to give readers a sense of the subjective experience of mental illness—something the medical figures in both novels seem not to understand.<sup>76</sup>

Septimus and Raskolnikov, then, understand their own conditions more than the institutional figures who attempt to treat them. Zosimov, the doctor who examines Raskolnikov during his most intense post-murder illness, tries to make Raskolnikov accept responsibility for his mental suffering and for his improvement: “Confess now that perhaps you were to blame . . . your complete recovery now depends chiefly upon yourself. . . it is essential to remove the original, so to speak, radical causes whose influence caused the inception of your unhealthy condition, and then you will be cured” (188-9). We see here a faulting of the unwell individual—a blaming of them for allowing themselves to fall under the influence of unhealthy influences—and a belief that the mentally ill can “bootstrap” out of their despondency.

Septimus’ doctors also profess a naïve belief that all can be well. Doctor Holmes belittles Septimus’ condition, telling Lucrezia that he has “nothing whatever seriously the matter with him” and needs to “take an interest in things outside himself” (21), and “notice real things” (25). Dr. Holmes understands that Septimus suffers from

hallucinations, perceptions of things that do not exist, but Septimus himself, as we have seen, also realizes this and even resists it. But what Holmes cannot realize is the philosophical and psychological basis of Septimus' suffering—his struggle with his own guilt and a society which has no place for him because it is not equipped to deal with his problems. Septimus' second physician, Dr. Bradshaw, is more perceptive—he is able to ascertain that Septimus' illness is mental, that it is a “complete physical and nervous breakdown” (95). But Dr. Bradshaw is concerned mostly about preventing Septimus' suicide and removing him from society, because, as he assures Septimus' wife, “It was a question of law” (97). Bradshaw can only sympathize with Septimus superficially; he too fails to understand the philosophical and social issues which fuel Septimus' illness, saying only, “We all have our moments of depression” (97). After that trite phrase, Bradshaw becomes the same for Septimus as Dr. Holmes, and Septimus realizes that he cannot escape their insistence on observation and diagnosis. Because his mental experience of consciousness is so very different, he has become a person whom society cannot deal with, and the doctor's insistence on treating and understanding his illness literally corners him: “Once you fall,” he thinks morbidly, “human nature is on you. Holmes and Bradshaw are on you” (98). Faced with the world of Holmes and Bradshaw, Septimus decides conclusively on suicide as a relief from his mental sufferings—a choice Raskolnikov too ponders several times but ultimately rejects.

### **III. The “Soul” and the Spiritual Message of the Novel**

Dostoevsky and Woolf, then, both introduce mental illness as a vehicle for (at least some of) the philosophical issues of their novels. Because Raskolnikov and Septimus are unwell, their ability to resolve these issues is limited, and both novels rely

upon dramatic resolutions to their psychological problems. Raskolnikov, plagued by doubts about his theory and increasing paranoia, eventually resolves to confess his crime and is exiled to Siberia. But there, in Dostoevsky's notorious epilogue, Raskolnikov becomes regenerated by Sonia, the devout prostitute who serves as the novel's Christ figure. Sonia's love (and implicitly, the Christian faith) provide for Raskolnikov what his philosophical theories cannot provide—a way for him to be reintegrated into society and restored to mental health. Like Christ's raising of Lazarus, a trope which features prominently in the novel, Sonia figuratively redeems Raskolnikov from the hopelessness of his philosophy: "Love had raised them from the dead, and the heart of each held endless springs of life for the heart of the other" (463). The final words of the novel emphasize the redemptive power of this religious resolution: "But that is the beginning of a new story, the story of the gradual renewal of a man, of his gradual regeneration, of his slow progress from one world to another, of how he learned to know a hitherto undreamed-of reality" (465).

Critics have often rejected Dostoevsky's epilogue or have struggled hard to defend it.<sup>77</sup> The trouble may perhaps lie in the fact that so much about the novel seems quite modern even to us now—its philosophical questions, its engagement with social issues like poverty, and its probing of consciousness and insanity. And yet this epilogue, with its turn to romance and religion, seems more fitting to the sentimental novels of an earlier era—it seems to provide too conclusive an answer to a modern audience accustomed to more open-ended pronouncements.

Woolf could offer her mental sufferer Septimus no such ending as this, because unlike Dostoevsky, she was not sincerely religious.<sup>78</sup> Her resolution had to be of a

different sort. And yet, despite Woolf's critiques of organized religion and Christianity, she does present Septimus as a Christ figure, a sacrificial person. The novel, while it does not offer a distinctly religious message, is concerned with spirituality, and critics have noted that religious and spiritual tropes pervade the novel.<sup>79</sup> Woolf clearly offers some sort of spiritual resolution through Septimus, which contrasts sharply with the anti-religious sentiment expressed in her negative representation of Mrs. Kilman. Perhaps even more importantly, Woolf uses the religious term "soul" frequently in the novel, as critics have noted.<sup>80</sup> This is important, because it is a term Woolf wrote about and often associated with the Russian novelists. This concept of the "soul," however, was an idea Woolf approached with particular ambivalence, because it represented both what made the Russian novels so distinctive and profound and yet at the same time what made it impossible for the English novelists to follow their example.<sup>81</sup>

In "The Russian View" (1925) Woolf wrote that the Russian belief in the soul enabled Russian authors to express ideas about brotherhood that the English could not express without seeming contrived: "The truth is that if you say 'brother' you must say it with conviction, and it is not easy to say it with conviction. The Russians themselves produce this sense of conviction not because they acquiesce or tolerate indiscriminately or despair, but because they believe so passionately in the existence of the soul" (343). The implication here seems to be that the English writers either do not or cannot believe in the existence of the soul. In "On Re-Reading Meredith" (1918), she wrote similarly about the profoundness of Russian novels, asking, "Could any English novel survive in the furnace of that overpowering sincerity?" (273) In "Modern Novels" (1919), Woolf argued that English novelists must recognize Russian literary achievements, but she

claimed that English authors do not have access to the same spiritual beliefs and therefore cannot write the same kind of novel:

The most inconclusive remarks upon modern English fiction can hardly avoid some mention of the Russian influence, and if the Russians are mentioned one runs the risk of feeling that to write of any fiction save theirs is a waste of time. If we want understanding of the soul and heart, where else shall we find it of comparable profundity? If we are sick of our own materialism the least considerable of their novelists has by right of birth a natural reverence for the human spirit. 'Learn to make yourself akin to people . . . but let this sympathy be not with the mind—for it is easy with the mind—but with the heart, with love towards them.' In every great Russian writer we seem to discern the features of a saint, if sympathy for the sufferings of others, love towards them, endeavour to reach some goal worthy of the most exacting demands of the spirit constitute saintliness. It is the saint in them which confounds us with a feeling of our own irreligious triviality, and turns so many of our famous novels to tinsel and trickery. (35-6)

Woolf acknowledges here, perhaps somewhat hyperbolically, that the Russian influence is a profoundly religious one, that Russian novels emphasize spiritual truths, that more than anything else they reveal “the soul and heart.” But is it, as she poses, a “waste of time” to write anything else or to reveal any other message? She concludes that the English have something different but equally important to contribute to fiction:

They are right perhaps; unquestionably they see farther than we do and without our gross impediments of vision. But perhaps we see something that escapes them, or why should this voice of protest mix itself with our gloom? The voice of protest is the voice of another and an ancient civilization which seems to have bred in us the instinct to enjoy and fight rather than to suffer and understand. English fiction from Sterne to Meredith bears witness to our natural delight in humour and comedy, in the beauty of earth, in the activities of the intellect, and in the splendor of the body. (36)

What Woolf suggests here is that English novelists should recognize that they cannot offer the same spiritual resolutions that Russian novels offer and instead embrace the strengths particular to English temperament and history.

Woolf's attempts in these essays to distinguish English writing from Russian novels find a voice in *Mrs. Dalloway* through the figure of Miss Kilman. Woolf suggests that simply imitating the Russian emphasis on the religious soul will not succeed in bringing meaning to the modern English novel. Instead, through the character of Septimus as a spiritual (but not particularly religious) "Christ figure," Woolf articulates a distinct spiritual message about the meaningfulness of life that is not associated with institutionalized religion at all.

Miss Kilman, a Christian, functions as the novel's religious character, and interestingly she is associated almost immediately with Russia. When Clarissa thinks about Miss Kilman, she resents everything about her, including her love for the suffering in other countries. Clarissa thinks spitefully, "Miss Kilman would do anything for the Russian, starved herself for the Austrians, but in private inflicted positive torture, so insensitive was she" (12). Miss Kilman here symbolizes for Clarissa an unnatural brotherhood with what is non-English, including the passive acceptance of suffering and religion, and Clarissa is repulsed by Miss Kilman's lower class status which (in addition to her German heritage) prevents her from fully participating in English society. Later in the novel, to take her mind off Clarissa Dalloway's and her attractiveness, wealth and status, Miss Kilman decides to "think of Russia" (129). But why is Russia comforting to Miss Kilman? Certainly Russia, with its political turmoil, would have been much in the public consciousness, struggling with the same class divisions that Miss Kilman feels so painfully. But it seems also to be that Miss Kilman feels an affinity with what Woolf defines as the Russian sentiment, the willingness to suffer, because that also is a religious sentiment.<sup>82</sup> The idea of passive suffering becomes central to *Crime and Punishment*, as

explained by the detective Porfiry Petrovich to Raskolnikov: “Do you, Rodion Romanovich, know what some of these people [religious believers] mean by ‘suffering’? It is not suffering for somebody’s sake, but simply ‘suffering is necessary’” (384). Porfiry encourages Raskolnikov to accept his own suffering (that is, to confess his crime and accept punishment) because suffering “is a great thing” (390). Miss Kilman embraces a similar philosophy, espoused by the minister Mr. Whittaker, who tells her, “Knowledge comes through suffering” (129).

While Raskolnikov’s acceptance of suffering in *Crime and Punishment* leads to his religious regeneration, all of Miss Kilman’s suffering (and she has indeed suffered) does not help her to attain the purity of soul that she believes should come with suffering in a religious sense. Miss Kilman emphasis on the religious soul instead leads to jealousy, aggression, and a loss of self. Miss Kilman awakens not the best but the worst feelings in Clarissa, who feels her hatred for Miss Kilman stirring in “the depths of that leaf-encumbered forest, the soul” (12). Miss Kilman feels a similar hatred for Clarissa—she reacts to her with aggression and wishes to overpower not Clarissa’s body but her soul:

“And there rose in her an overmastering desire to overcome her; to unmask her. If she could have felled her it would have eased her. But it was not the body; it was the soul and its mockery that she wished to subdue; make feel her mastery” (125). This passage about subduing the soul links Miss Kilman to the other “villain” of the novel—the doctor Bradshaw, whom Clarissa thinks later is “capable of some indescribable outrage—forcing your soul” (184). Miss Kilman’s institutional religion is described in similarly scathing terms as Bradshaw’s institutional medicine—both seem to crave only superiority and power instead of attempting to provide relief or meaning. Miss Kilman’s religion,

then, offers no help to others in the novel, certainly not to Clarissa, but it also seems to deprive her of her selfhood. A minor character, Mr. Fletcher, recalls “Miss Kilman at the end of the row, praying, praying, and being still on the threshold of the their underworld, thought of her sympathetically as a soul haunting the same territory; a soul cut out of immaterial substance; not a woman, a soul” (134). When Miss Kilman observes the rituals of her religion, she ceases to be a gendered, physical being and becomes a disembodied “soul” instead of a self.

Clarissa’s hatred of Miss Kilman can be difficult to account for fully, because it may reflect a range of issues, from a problematic distaste for the lower classes to national discrimination in the wake of World War I. But at least part of Clarissa repulsion stems from Miss Kilman’s association with the institutionalized religion and Christian spirituality that Woolf rejected. Clarissa herself acknowledges that she hates what Miss Kilman represents more than she hates Miss Kilman herself: “It was not her one hated but the idea of her, which undoubtedly had gathered in to itself a great deal that was not Miss Kilman (12). As we have seen, part of the “idea” of Miss Kilman is the religious spirituality found in Russian novels, the emphasis on suffering and on the soul. Miss Kilman, with her close identification both with Russia and with the religious soul, indicates that the religious spirituality found in Russian novels cannot offer meaning in the novel or provide a resolution either to Septimus’ madness or Clarissa’s purposelessness.

So what is the alternative to Miss Kilman’s institutionalized religion, which Clarissa detests and is threatened by? The answer seems to be Septimus’ more personal sacrifice of himself. Clarissa scoffs at Miss Kilman’s sacrifices for others, but Woolf

depicts Septimus as a Christ figure, who sacrifices himself for Clarissa and her friends, those who would go on living. Clarissa feels that his sacrifice has value because he preserves his selfhood and he enables her own life to continue. In constructing Septimus' sacrifice of himself, Woolf relies partially on devices that Dostoevsky also used (the possibility of suicide and a Christ-like sacrificial figure), but she makes important departures from Dostoevsky in order to provide a different spiritual message.

Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* emphasizes the meaningfulness and value of life as one of the novel's key spiritual messages. Raskolnikov comes to this realization early in the novel, and it prevents him from committing suicide:

‘Where was it,’ Raskolnikov thought, as he walked on, ‘where was it that I read of how a condemned man, just before he died, said, or thought, that if he had to live on some high crag, on a ledge so small that there was no more than room for his two feet, with all about him the abyss, the ocean, eternal night, eternal solitude, eternal storm, and there he must remain, on a hand's-breadth of ground, all his life, a thousand years, through all eternity—it would be better to live so, than die within the hour? Only to life, to live! No matter how—only to live! (135)

Raskolnikov comes to this realization while walking the streets after his crime. Faced with the alternatives of death or punishment, he realizes that it is infinitely better to be alive, despite the situation. This is, obliquely, a reference to Dostoevsky's near-death experience in his mock-execution, an event which set in motion his own religious conversion, just as Raskolnikov's crime sets in motion his own conversion and regeneration.<sup>83</sup> Though Raskolnikov does not commit suicide, he often considers it, and his alter-ego Svidrigailov does commit suicide, so that it runs through the novel as a theme, a viable alternative to both life and punishment.

Like Raskolnikov, Septimus ponders suicide, but when faced with it, he too embraces life. Woolf depicts Septimus as forced into suicide, forced out onto the window ledge—very visually similar to Raskolnikov’s meditation about embracing life on a “narrow ledge”:

There remained only the window, the tiresome, the troublesome, and rather melodramatic business of opening the window and throwing himself out. It was their idea of tragedy, not his or Rezia’s (for she was with him). Holmes and Bradshaw like that sort of thing. (He sat on the sill.) But he would wait till the very last moment. He did not want to die. Life was good. The sun hot. (149)

Though Septimus commits suicide, his death is not a rejection of life, for he ends his life by embracing the goodness of being alive. Woolf seems to want to portray here the same meaning that Dostoevsky emphasizes—that life is worthwhile, that it is always better than the alternative of death and non-existence. This realization may have come to Woolf as it came to Dostoevsky—first-hand—for we know from biographers that Woolf had attempted suicide during a period of severe depression in 1914, well before this novel was written.<sup>84</sup> Septimus’ death becomes a validation of life for Clarissa as well as for himself. Clarissa, hearing of his death at her party, sees Septimus as a foil to herself, someone who sacrificed himself to enable her existence, and the existence of those like her:

But he had flung it away. They went on living . . . they would grow old. A thing there was that mattered; a thing, wreathed about with chatter, defaced, obscured in her own life, let drop every day in corruption, lies, chatter. This he had preserved. Death was defiance. Death was an attempt to communicate; people feeling the impossibility of reaching the centre which, mystically, evaded them; closeness drew apart; rapture faded, one was alone. There was an embrace in death (184).

Clarissa sees Septimus’ death as “an attempt to communicate”—and indeed it does communicate to her the meaning of her own life and the horror of his own. She is able to

visualize what must have terrified Septimus, the idea of human nature epitomized in Bradshaw which is capable of what she calls “forcing your soul” (184). Clarissa here meditates upon the mystical revelation that Septimus’ death creates—it at once confirms the closeness of humanity and paradoxically their loneliness. Clarissa sees humanity as striving to come together and yet unable to—but in death there is a union that defies this.

In this way, Clarissa, like Septimus, is also parallel to Raskolnikov, because her life, like Raskolnikov’s, is made possible by the sacrifice of the double character, a sacrifice that profoundly changes her view of herself. The suicide of Raskolnikov’s double Svidrigailov makes possible his climatic decision to confess his crime, because Svidrigailov’s suicide emphasizes that the logical end to life, one devoid of all meaning, is death and destruction. Raskolnikov considers suicide and walks beside the Neva often before deciding to confess, but he finds he cannot kill himself (437). The suicide of Svidrigailov, a malicious and destructive character, implies that suicide is a defective solution to mental suffering and hopelessness, and Raskolnikov turns instead to an acceptance of punishment, suffering, and eventually religion. Though Clarissa admires Septimus’ suicide, the event functions for her in a similar way because it enables her to embrace her own life and act differently from Septimus. Donna Orwin has pointed out that in Dostoevsky’s novels doubles *need* each other because they can never see things in the same way on their own—they are only parts to a whole (48). Septimus and Clarissa operate as doubles in the same way—Clarissa only understands the significance of her life after Septimus’ sacrifice of his own.

This link between human beings that Clarissa feels in the wake of Septimus’ death becomes the spiritual truth of the novel. It was a link Woolf intuited in Russian

literature, but which she makes her own by disassociating it from the distinctively Christian element that it has in Dostoevsky's work. In "The Russian View," Woolf articulates the belief that the Russian concept of "soul" can be pared down to a "living core" within all of us. She explains, "that living core which suffers and toils is what we all have in common. We tend to disguise or to decorate it; but the Russians believe in it, seek it out, interpret it, and, following its agonies and intricacies, have produced not only the most spiritual of modern books but also the most profound."<sup>85</sup> In this definition of the soul, Woolf eclipses the spiritual element of the soul (which is present in her other descriptions of the soul) and defines the soul as a human element common to us all, a "core" that encapsulates the most basic of human experiences, work and suffering. Through Septimus' death and Clarissa's life, Woolf attempt to get at this "living core," this basic human experience, and it leads her to confirm the meaningfulness of life and emphasize the connections between human beings. In this way, Woolf conveys a message that departs from the Russian example. Instead of looking outside the novel for resolution, to religion or a divine presence, Woolf insists that human beings have only each other and spiritual meaning is enabled by the bonds between them.

The "voice of protest" against the conclusions of Russian literature that Woolf mentioned in "Modern Novels," is therefore present in *Mrs. Dalloway*, alongside its many connections to Dostoevsky. Woolf suggests here that the religious redemption offered in *Crime and Punishment* does not have to happen—the novel can affirm life and portray spiritual meaning through its connections between characters themselves. In suggesting that the religious salvation of one double is unnecessary, Woolf also seems to suggest that perhaps the sacrifice of the other double is *also* unnecessary—even though she

includes it. Dostoevsky's sacrifice of the double seems necessary and even cathartic, but Woolf's sacrifice of Septimus seems deeply troubling, because at the moment of his death, it seems he need not die. At that moment, he realizes the value of his life, and his revelation on the window ledge seems as if it should lead to the realization Raskolnikov comes to at a similar moment—that it is better to live than to die—but it does not, and he kills himself. It seems as if at that moment, left to himself and to his wife, the only meaningful, still-living personal connection in his life, he might be capable of coping with his mental illness. And then, tragically, that life ends. Woolf seems to want readers to question the necessity of this sacrifice and ask whether it is possible to write a novel—and create a society—in which such sacrifice would not be necessary. Woolf's novel suggests that instead of passively accepting suffering or looking outside the novel for resolution, to religion or a divine presence, readers must struggle to create the kind of world that seeks to accommodate, through personal relationships, marginalized figures like Septimus rather than sacrificing them. There is no “gradual renewal” for Septimus as there is for Raskolnikov—but Woolf's novel insists that there *should* be.

## **Conclusion:**

### **The “Post-Dostoevsky Argument”:**

#### **English Literature in the Wake of Dostoevsky**

“People like Arnold Bennett, say I cant create . . . characters that survive,” an irritated Woolf wrote in her diary (June 19, 1923), in the midst of her writing of *Mrs. Dalloway*.<sup>86</sup> Bennett had written earlier that year that the novelists of his day were moving away from realistic portrayals of character, that they were “so busy with states of society as to half forget that any society consists of individuals, and they attach too much weight to cleverness, which is perhaps the lowest of artistic qualities.” His dismissal of cleverness made the following appraisal of Woolf’s novel somewhat of an insult: “I have seldom read a cleverer book than Virginia Woolf’s *Jacob’s Room*. . . . But the characters do not vitally survive in the mind because the author has been obsessed by details of originality and cleverness.”<sup>87</sup> Reflecting upon Bennett’s criticism, Woolf continued in her diary, “its only the old argument that character is dissipated into shreds now: the old post-Dostoevsky argument.” The frustration Woolf displays here is in no way indicative of irritation with Dostoevsky’s literature or a desire to diminish his accomplishments. Her phrasing itself, the very fact that it is possible to speak of such thing as a “post-Dostoevsky argument,” acknowledges the important impact Dostoevsky’s novels had on changing perceptions of character and dismantling old ideas about the novel form. Rather, her frustration stems from being compared to Dostoevsky and found lacking, as if

she were required to imitate his vivid characters rather than create her own depiction of the individual. Woolf seems to sense in this passage from her diary that an exaggerated appreciation for Dostoevsky could lead to a premature dismissal of new innovations, her own included.<sup>88</sup> Woolf's fear of such overwhelming appreciation proved to be well-founded, for only a few years later, in 1927, Arnold Bennett, whom Woolf takes issue with here, generated a list of what he believed to be the twelve greatest novels. They were all Russian novels; four were novels by Dostoevsky.<sup>89</sup>

Clinging to the past could stultify any developments in character and in the novel form that might be made in the present time, and Woolf took Bennett to task in her essay "Mrs. Bennett and Mrs. Brown" (1923) for clinging to Edwardian conventions. In that essay, she affirmed Dostoevsky's characters over those of Victorian novelists:

After reading *Crime and Punishment* and *The Idiot*, how could any young novelist believe in 'characters' as the Victorians had painted them? For the undeniable vividness of so many of them is the result of their crudity. . . What keyword could be applied to Raskolnikov, Mishkin, Stavrogin, or Alyosha? These are characters without any features at all. We go down into them as we descend into some enormous cavern. (386)<sup>90</sup>

Here Woolf acknowledged that Dostoevsky's characters were so strikingly different that they could topple Victorian ideas—they were vivid and yet featureless; they had to be perceived by experience and not by description. Her frustration when speaking of "the old post-Dostoevsky argument" in her diary that same year, however, shows that she perceived even the Russian influence as something that could become suffocating if it became merely a literary convention.

Dostoevsky's novels could not become the literary ideal, because as Forster also wrote, there was something about them that rang decidedly false within the modern

English novels. The English could not do what Dostoevsky had accomplished—at least not by the same means. In a 1919 review of Garnett’s translation of *An Honest Thief*, Forster cautioned, “[Dostoevsky] has penetrated—more deeply, perhaps than any English writer—into the darkness and the goodness of the human soul, but he has penetrated by a way we cannot follow. He has his own psychological method, and marvelous it is. But it is not ours.” Like Woolf, Forster maintains here that it is unproductive to think about Dostoevsky as a model for imitation. Instead, the English writers must think about how they could achieve the same depth of character, the same penetration of the “soul,” in a way that harmonized with their own goals and beliefs.

I have suggested that Woolf’s and Forster’s novels are examples of this sort of experimentation—they show the signs of having been influenced by Dostoevsky and yet they also resist elements of him. I have argued that Dostoevsky influenced both Woolf and Forster in two major ways—in the representation of character and in the spiritual significance that both sought to bring to their novels. Dostoevsky’s characters are not individuals: they are divided into doubles, permeable to the environment, and connected to other selves or “souls.”<sup>91</sup> *The Brothers Karamazov* is less about an individual than the connections between selves, and *Crime and Punishment* is about an individual as he is represented through his doubles. For Forster and Woolf, Dostoevsky served as an alternative to the novel focused on developing one individual. Following Dostoevsky’s example, *A Passage to India* emphasizes the connections between characters to explore philosophical questions of collective guilt, and *Mrs. Dalloway* portrays the permeability of the self and suggests that the connections between individuals provide meaning for existence.

In order to portray character as interconnected or permeable, both Forster and Woolf make significant innovations to the formal elements of their novel. Forster challenges the conventions of plot by neglecting to answer the novel's mystery—who, if anyone, assaulted Adela? He challenges as well the traditional use of time and sequence in his novel by expressing ideas about eternity within his temporal narration (in such moments as Mrs. Moore's vision in the cave), and he refers reflexively to moments in the novel which symbolically connect to other moments (in such moments as the temple scene, when phrases and symbols from earlier in the novel repeat and acquire more meaning).<sup>92</sup> These innovations subordinate plot and sequence to Forster's primary focus, a new concept of the self and its relation to others. Woolf also radically altered conventions of time and sequence, seamlessly weaving in flashbacks of the past to create her distinct stream-of-consciousness narration. By pairing disparate thoughts, different characters, and even radically different actions and occurrences (a party and a suicide), Woolf conveys her own message of the interconnectedness of selves.

Dostoevsky's experimentations with character seem to have been translatable, and Woolf and Forster made use of his methods, but the spiritual aspect of his novels proved much harder to translate into modern English fiction. Both Woolf and Forster wrote repeatedly of Dostoevsky's prophetic, religious, or spiritual element, yet as writers independent of any institutionalized religion, they recognized that they could not effectively convey the same spiritual message his novels proclaimed. But Dostoevsky's novels proved that the novel could offer spiritual significance even in a decidedly secular world, and even without access to the religious "Russian soul," there was no need to write either trite or pessimistic novels.

Forster's novel presents a spiritual message through the Hindu belief in interconnectedness which counters both the nihilism of Mrs. Moore and the racial abuse of Aziz. The novel also insists that the meaning of life is not to be sought in the afterlife—which as Mrs. Moore realizes is unknowable and even horrifying—but to be sought in this life, in relationships and connectedness. Mrs. Moore's relationship with Aziz constitutes one of the novel's most meaningful relationships and clearest (even if limited) answer to combating the daunting issues of racism and colonialism present in novel. Forster's novel, like many Russian novels, including Dostoevsky's, is extremely socially conscious, but its social question—the colonization of India—is particular to England.<sup>93</sup> While Dostoevsky's major novels offer Christian orthodoxy as an alternative to the social problems investigated in his novels (the philosophical uncertainty of *The Brothers Karamazov* or the poverty and lack of social mobility of *Crime and Punishment*), Forster's novels resist the ideas of passive suffering, sacrifice, and submission so often associated (especially in the minds of English readers) with Russian orthodoxy. Forster's novel resists the idea that Aziz, the cultural outsider, should be sacrificed to further colonial society and depicts the death of Mrs. Moore not as passive but as hopeless and embittered. Instead Forster advocates a mystical, spiritual meaningfulness that is distinct from institutional religion and is instead found in the transcendent relationships between the self and other "souls." If this connectedness must come with a struggle—as it does when Fielding tries to save Aziz—then so much the better.

Woolf herself acknowledged that the English had "the instinct to enjoy and fight rather than to suffer and understand" ("Modern Novels" 36). She, like Forster, realized

that the English novel could not convincingly or honestly assert the same kind of spirituality present in Dostoevsky's novels, but her novels *do* suggest that a spiritually meaningful existence is possible. Like Forster's novel, Woolf's novel examines the problem of those who are excluded from society, though her characters are not cultural outsiders but mental and social outsiders. Like Dostoevsky, Woolf structured her novel around the sacrifice of the double, but Woolf actively resists the spiritual message conveyed by this sacrifice. While the sacrifice of the double is necessary in Dostoevsky's novel for redemption and resolution to occur (as in Smerdyakov's death in *The Brothers Karamazov* or Svidrigailov's death in *Crime and Punishment*), Woolf's novel suggests that the sacrifice of the double is *not* necessary. Septimus dies, but nothing is really gained. Clarissa Dalloway benefits from Septimus' death, because it reaffirms the meaningfulness of her life, but Septimus himself is sacrificed and the reader is left asking what exactly is achieved. He is not the "evil" double but the "insane" double, and his sacrifice only epitomizes the failure of his society to address his problems of guilt, trauma, and mental illness. Woolf's departure from Dostoevsky's model here emphasizes the way in which her spiritual message is different from his. Instead of depicting man's progress to religious redemption through sacrifice, Woolf's novel suggests that it might be possible to have a society in which sacrifice was not necessary. If there were no aggressive forces in the novel—if, say, the war, or the sexual threat of Hugh Walpole, or the scientific and medical intrusions of Septimus' doctors did not exist—then Septimus' suicide might not have occurred, and left to those who do care for him (his wife), he might, Woolf suggests, have been able to cope with his suffering. This is why he seems most sane, most happy just before he commits suicide, and he affirms the goodness of life

even just before his death—because away from problematic elements of his society, he can still find meaning in his life. When faced with these forces, Septimus chooses suicide as a way to preserve his self, which in turn becomes a preservation of Clarissa’s self and her revelation of interconnectedness.

Woolf’s engagement with Dostoevsky’s form in *Mrs. Dalloway* indicates what she had spoken about critically in her essays—his (and really all Russian novels’) inability to speak fully to the modern, secular, English view of the world. Forster seems to have agreed, writing in his review of *An Honest Thief* that Dostoevsky was “a dangerous model for those who would write in England.” The ambivalence that Woolf and Forster show towards Dostoevsky at various points in their careers indicates their complex relationships with his literary works—he was a model but he could not be *too* much of a model. Both Woolf’s and Forster’s novels, as I have suggested here, bear the marks of Dostoevsky’s influence in their treatment of character and spirituality, but the messages that Woolf and Forster articulate in their novels are ultimately very different from Dostoevsky’s message—they spoke from their own convictions, not his, to the concerns of their own time period and nation.

Woolf concluded her essay “Modern Novels” by suggesting that all that could really be gained by comparing Russian literature to English literature was an appreciation for the vast array of possibilities within novels:

But any deductions that we may draw from the comparison of one fiction with another are futile, save as they flood us with a view of infinite possibilities, assure us that there is no bound to the horizon, and nothing forbidden but falsity and pretence. ‘The proper stuff of fiction’ does not exist; everything is the proper stuff of fiction; whatever one honestly thinks, whatever one honestly feels. (36)

Woolf's suggestion here about "infinite possibilities" is inspiring, though it is perhaps overstated to say that comparisons between literatures are "futile." Comparing both Woolf and Forster to Dostoevsky reveals several important things: it indicates the impact of Dostoevsky on modernist thought and literature, it reveals a great deal about both Woolf's and Forster's development as writers, and it highlights the ways in which Woolf and Forster used Dostoevsky to develop new ideas about the form of the novel and its message. But Woolf is right as well—such a comparison between fictions inspires us to think about the limitlessness of fiction, its ability to draw not only on a variety of topics but from a variety of influences and cultures and beliefs. Seen in this way, the achievements of both Woolf and Forster become even more significant, because they reflect an ability to draw from the work of another author and yet at the same time create what was distinctly a literature of their own and an expression of what they honestly thought and felt.

## Notes

---

<sup>1</sup> Woolf, Virginia, "Modern Novels," in *The Essays of Virginia Woolf. Volume III: 1919-1924*, ed. Andrew McNeillie (San Diego: Harcourt, 1988), 35. Translations of Dostoevsky's name are spelled in a variety of ways, including Dostoevskii or Dostoevski. I have used the Dostoevsky spelling here, and it is the spelling which occurs in Woolf's essays.

<sup>2</sup> For more on the translation and reception of Turgenev, Tolstoy, and Dostoevsky in England see Rachel May's *The Translator in the Text* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1994), pp. 22-30. According to May, Turgenev was translated into English in the late 1860's, though critical acclaim and attention for Turgenev greatly increased when Garnett translated him in the 1890's (pp. 22-5). Tolstoy's reputation was also established in England before the turn of the century, and the 1890's became what May calls "the decade of Tolstoy" (p. 29).

<sup>3</sup> According to Charles Moser's "The Achievement of Constance Garnett," *American Scholar* 57.3 (1988), 431-438, German translations of Dostoevsky began in the 1850's, and by 1890, his entire works existed in French and German translations (p. 435).

<sup>4</sup> Maurice Baring, *Landmarks in Russian Literature* (London: 1910), 130.

<sup>5</sup> Rachel May uses the term "Russian craze" for this roughly fifteen year period of English interest in Russian culture and literature between 1910 and 1925 (pp. 30-1), while Roberta Rubenstein, *Virginia Woolf and the Russian Point of View* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009) uses the term "Russophilia" to describe the time period that she places between 1912-1922 (p. 2). Helen Muchnic's study, *Dostoevsky's English Reputation (1881-1936)* (Northampton: Smith College, Departments of Modern Languages of Smith College, 1939), calls the admiration following Constance Garnett's 1912 translation of *The Brothers Karamazov* a "cult" (p. 73). Gilbert Phelp's *The Russian Novel in English Fiction* (London: Hutchinson's University Library, 1956) admits that "the climax of the fever" of English enthusiasm for Russian literature was what he calls "the Dostoevsky cult," though he emphasizes Turgenev's position in this enthusiasm (p. 15). Muchnic defines this Dostoevsky cult as a combination of several cultural and artistic elements: "It was a complex intellectual phenomenon, composed partly of war-time sympathies, partly of mysticism, partly of a new interest in abnormal psychology and in the revelations of psychoanalysis, partly of an absorbed concern with artistic experimentation" (pp. 5-6).

<sup>6</sup> Moser, p. 435.

<sup>7</sup> Muchnic, p. 73.

<sup>8</sup> Dostoevsky's appeal to "modern" readers is often mentioned by his critics. The introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to Dostoevsky*, Ed. by W.J. Leatherbarrow (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), for instance, emphasizes the ability of modern readers to relate to Dostoevsky's work: "The world depicted in, say, *Crime and Punishment* or *The Devils*, despite its chronological and social remoteness, looks so much more like the world we live in than any described by Tolstoy or Turgenev" (p. 1). Such claims are by no means unique and seem to essentially suggest that Dostoevsky has always appealed to modern audience because he *seems* modern (even if he is not). The introduction quoted above goes on to state, "it is Dostoevsky's enduring ability to keep his finger on the pulse of modernity that we find the most compelling explanation of the on-going popularity of his art" (pp. 3-4).

<sup>9</sup> John Galsworthy, *Letters from John Galsworthy, 1900-1932*. Ed. by Edward Garnett. (New York: Scribners, 1934), p. 217. Galsworthy wrote this letter to Edward Garnett in 1914.

<sup>10</sup> In addition to Woolf, Forster, Conrad, and Lawrence, Peter Kaye's study, *Dostoevsky and English Modernism, 1900-1930*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) discusses John Galsworthy,

---

Henry James, and Arnold Bennett as writers and thinkers whom Dostoevsky's novels impacted so forcefully that they wrote critically about his works and techniques (even if they expressed dislike for his fiction, as James did).

<sup>11</sup> Muchnic, p. 1.

<sup>12</sup> Natalya Reinhold, "Virginia Woolf's Russian Voyage Out," *Woolf Studies Annual*, 9 (2003), 1-27, documents the many forms of Woolf's interest in Russian literature and claims that "Russian literature has a status of its own in the work of Virginia Woolf" (p. 1) and (with the exception of D. H. Lawrence) there is virtually no English writer "so creatively and professionally involved in working with Russian literature" (p. 2). According to Reinhold, there are seventeen published essays by Woolf about Russian literature (p. 3).

<sup>13</sup> *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*. Vol. II (1920-1924), edited by Anne Olivier Bell and Andrew McNeillie (New York: Harcourt, 1978), p. 278.

<sup>14</sup> See, for example, Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Chatto, 1993), p. 214, Benita Parry, "Materiality and Mystification in A Passage to India," *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 31.2 (1998), 174-194 (p. 176), and Lidan Lin, "The Irony of Colonial Humanism: A Passage to India and the Politics of Posthumanism." *ARIEL* 28.4 (October 1997), 133-53 (pp. 146-7). Said, Parry, and Lin all offer influential readings of the novel as having a problematic portrayal of "otherness," depicting Indians or India itself as exotic and mystical. The simple answer to the question of whether Forster's portrayal of others is problematic is "yes." The more interesting and complex question would be why, and my argument, which deals with the mystical element of the novel, suggests that this mysticism (though problematic) is part of Forster's attempt to give the novel a new form that is consistent with the spiritual theme of connectedness.

<sup>15</sup> See Peter Kaye's *Dostoevsky and English Modernism, 1900-1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Roberta Rubenstein's *Virginia Woolf and the Russian Point of View*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Natalya Reinhold, "Virginia Woolf's Russian Voyage Out," *Woolf Studies Annual*, 9 (2003), 1-27; Lucia Aiello, "Fedor Dostoevskii in Britain: 'The Tale of an Untalented Genius'", *MLR*, 98 (2003), 659-77.

<sup>16</sup> The one study which does treat both Woolf's and Forster's engagement with Dostoevsky is Peter Kaye's *Dostoevsky and English Modernism, 1900-1930*. Kaye argues that Woolf expressed a modernist ambivalence for Dostoevsky that began emphatically but eventually cooled (pp. 66-7). For the most substantial studies of Woolf's relationship to Russian authors see Roberta Rubenstein's *Virginia Woolf and The Russian Point of View* and Natalya Reinhold's "Virginia Woolf's Russian Voyage Out."

<sup>17</sup> Peter Kaye's comparison of Virginia Woolf's party scene in *Mrs. Dalloway* and Dostoevsky's party scene in *The Idiot* is one exception (pp. 90-5). The other exception would be Yelena Furman's discussion of similarities between *Mrs. Dalloway* and Dostoevsky's "Stavrogin's Confession" (the chapter of *The Possessed* published by the Woolfs). See Furman, "Translating Dostoevskii, Writing a Novel of One's Own: The Place of 'Stavrogin's Confession' in the Creation of *Mrs. Dalloway*" *Modern Language Review*, 104.4 (2009), 1081-97. Roberta Rubenstein's book also includes comparisons of passages, though she uses several novels from Dostoevsky and Woolf to show more overall connections rather than an intertextual relationship between two specific works.

<sup>18</sup> Susan Bassnett, "Influence and Intertextuality: A Reappraisal," *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 43(2007): 134-146, (p. 138). Bassnett claims that influence is very difficult to prove conclusively, but intertextuality is much more readily apparent, because it refers to "parallels, connections, affinities" (p. 138) between texts, "the idea of all writing coexisting in some kind of network of relationships" (p. 143). This sort of relationship can certainly be established between Woolf and Dostoevsky—and Forster and Dostoevsky—but my own suggestion goes somewhat further than Bassnett's and suggests that Dostoevsky's fiction *is* influential for these authors, even if they did not always draw from him consciously or deliberately.

---

<sup>19</sup> Rene Wellek, "The Name and Nature of Comparative Literature," *Discriminations: Further Concepts of Criticism*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), phrases the difference between causality and influence in this way: "Nobody has ever been able to show that a work of art was 'caused' by another work of art, even though parallels and similarities can be accumulated. A later work of art may not have been possible without a preceding one, but it cannot have been caused by it" (p. 35). Even though Woolf's and Forster's novels are written as responses to many complex influences, it does make sense to talk about these novels as having been made "possible" by Dostoevsky's influence, given the parallels between his work and their own, as well as his personal significance to each writer.

<sup>20</sup> Jeffrey M. Heath, *The Creator as Critic and Other Writings by E.M. Forster* (Toronto: Dundurn, 2008), p. 256.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. The episode Forster paraphrases occurs in Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, book VII, chapter 3. It is a story told to Alyosha Karamazov by Grushenka, who says, "I know it by heart, because I am that wicked woman myself" (p. 339). Grushenka claims that as corrupt as she is, she has still done one good deed: "though I am bad, I did give away an onion" (p. 339). Grushenka's version is slightly different than Forster's retelling, so I have included the Constance Garnett translation of this episode:

Once upon a time there was a peasant woman and a very wicked woman she was. And she died and did not leave a single good deed behind. The devils caught her and plunged her into a lake of fire. So her guardian angel stood and wondered what good deed of hers he could remember to tell to God. "She once pulled up an onion in her garden," said he, "and gave it to a beggar woman." And God answered: "You take that onion, then, hold it out to her in the lake, and let her take hold of it and be pulled out. And if you can pull her out of the lake, let her come to Paradise, but if the onion breaks, then the woman must stay where she is." The angel ran to the woman and held out the onion to her. "Come," said he, "catch hold and I'll pull you out." And he began cautiously pulling her out. He had just about pulled her out, when the other sinners in the lake, seeing how she was being drawn out, caught hold of her so as to be pulled out with her. But she was a very wicked woman and she began kicking them off. "I'm to be pulled out, not you. It's my onion, not yours." As soon as she said that, the onion broke. And she fell back into the lake and she is burning there to this day. So her guardian angel wept and went away. (339)

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. According to Heath, the meeting of the literary society (called "The Dewas Literary Society") in which Forster told this episode occurred in 1921, and Forster first read *The Brothers Karamazov* in 1910 (p. 660).

<sup>24</sup> Even though Forster's radio broadcast occurs well after the 1924 publication of *A Passage to India*, the actual incident he is describing occurred before he wrote at least part of the novel, so it is possible to suggest some connection between this event and the novel itself. In his introduction to *The Manuscripts of A Passage to India* (London: Edward Arnold, 1978), Oliver Stallybrass explains that parts of the novel were written in 1913-14 while other parts were written in 1922-24 (xii).

<sup>25</sup> Critics have often noted that the Indian others of the novel and even India itself are portrayed mystically. Edward Said explains in *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Chatto, 1993) that one of the most striking things about the novel is its mystical, symbolic portrayal of India, which seems "to represent material that according to the canons of the novel form cannot in fact be represented—vastness, incomprehensible creeds, secret motions, histories and social forms" (214). Benita Parry, "Materiality and Mystification in *A Passage to India*," *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 31.2 (1998): 174-194, argues that the novel at times possesses a mystical element, describing it as a text which "moves between the mundane and the arcane, gives voice to the contingency of the material world, and is haunted by the transcendent" (176).

---

<sup>26</sup> Kaye, p. 157.

<sup>27</sup> See Kaye, p. 167.

<sup>28</sup> E.M. Forster, *Aspects of the Novel* (New York: Harcourt, 1954), p. 154. All subsequent passages from *Aspects of the Novel* are taken from this edition and are cited in-text.

<sup>29</sup> Forster identified authors like Virginia Woolf, James Joyce and Jonathan Swift as writers for whom the fantastic element is essential (p. 158).

<sup>30</sup> Heath, p. 256.

<sup>31</sup> E.M. Forster, *A Passage to India* (New York: Harcourt, 1952) p. 77. All subsequent references to *A Passage to India* are from this edition and are cited in-text.

<sup>32</sup> Molly A. Daniels, *The Prophetic Novel* (New York: Lang, 1991), notes that what makes the prophetic element so hard to detect and define is that it is essentially silent and invisible: "Prophecy, it would seem, is the unparaphrasable in fiction. It is not actually visible on the page. It requires special gifts in a superior reader in order to enter the prophetic song in a text. It requires concentration to discover it" (p. 16). Michael Orange's essay "Language and Silence in *A Passage to India*" *Modern Critical Interpretations: E.M. Forster's A Passage to India*, Ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea, 1987), 57-74, notes that rational language cannot express the mystical or prophetic experience: "In this novel the language of cognition . . . is avowedly insufficient as a means of incarnating mystical experience which exists outside time and is subversive of hierarchical order. . . . where language encounters the silence beyond 'liberal humanism' or conceptualisation itself, it must settle for being signpost rather than analogue" (p. 58). The silence that occurs in Godbole's discussion of the caves signals that this is a prophetic element in the novel—the caves symbolize an experience that language can hint at but not express.

<sup>33</sup> At the close, Fielding laments that he and Aziz really cannot be friends, even if they desire it. Forster explains that all the elements of their colonial setting resist any real bond between them, saying "No, not yet," and "No, not there" (362).

<sup>34</sup> It could, of course, be argued that Mrs. Moore's theology, while it holds to a divine presence, is not necessarily "Christian," but she does proceed to quote from the New Testament "Though I speak with the tongues of . . . (p. 53). Her emphasis on God's "omnipresence" and mankind's duty to "love our neighbors" also suggests Christian theology (p. 53), and either Ronny or the narrator reflects that "the conversation had become unreal since Christianity entered it" (p. 54).

<sup>35</sup> For more on the caves and their echo, see Wilfred Stone's "The Caves of *A Passage to India*," *A Passage to India: Essays in Interpretation*, Ed. John Beer (London: Macmillan, 1985), 16-26. Stone argues that the caves and their echoes are a representation of the unconscious, "the survivals in modern man of the pre-historic and the pre-human" (p. 22). Stone argues that the caves and what occurred in them are mysteries which are not solved and in fact perhaps can't be solved. He also notes that Godbole is the only character able to enter the cave without problems or fear (p. 18)—an important point because Godbole seems to be the prophetic mouthpiece of the novel. Stone's interpretation of the caves and their echoes connects this prophetic moment in the novel to Godbole's song, because both of these references hearken back to a much earlier form of civilization, that is pre-literate or even pre-rational.

<sup>36</sup> Stone, p. 20.

<sup>37</sup> "Modern Novels," p. 36.

<sup>38</sup> Woolf's answer to the Russian novel is very different than Forster's. While I argue that Forster attempts to write a prophetic novel and even borrows thematically and formally from Dostoevsky to do so, Woolf

---

argues in this essay (“Modern Novels,” 1919) that the English need to capitalize on their own strengths, saying, “perhaps we see something that escapes them, or why should this voice of protest mix itself with our gloom? The voice of protest is the voice of another and an ancient civilization which seems to have bred in us the instinct to enjoy and fight rather than to suffer and understand. English fiction . . . bears witness to our natural delight in humour and comedy, in the beauty of earth, in the activities of the intellect, and in the splendour of the body” (p. 36).

<sup>39</sup> Fielding’s frustration here can be seen as an expression of the inability of the novel form to express this idea of collective action and responsibility. Fielding’s name itself, suggestive of Henry Fielding, may reference the idea of the traditional English novel. In a novel in which many of the characters have suggestive names (Professor Godbole’s name, for instance, evokes the idea of interconnectedness by uniting the extremes of the divine presence and an insect, while Adela Quested’s name evokes the idea of the heroic figure and the quest narrative), this suggestion seems entirely plausible and would support the idea that *Passage* critiques the English novel form through its sometimes ironic portrayal of the very rational Fielding.

<sup>40</sup> Heath, p. 661.

<sup>41</sup> In fact, readers of Forster’s day seem to have been confounded by the ideas of guilt expressed in *The Brothers Karamazov*. In 1916, Middleton Murry’s analysis of the novel in *Fyodor Dostoevsky, A Critical Study* (London: 1916) went so far as to hypothesize that “there really is no Smerdyakov as there really was no Devil . . . they both had their abode in Ivan’s soul. But then who did the murder? Then, of course, it may have been Ivan himself, or, on the other hand, there may have been no murder at all. . . . Smerdyakov murdered Fyodor Pavlovitch; Ivan murdered him; and he was not actually murdered at all” (228).

<sup>42</sup> Dostoevsky’s other major novels also deal with the question of guilt. Raskolnikov in *Crime and Punishment* struggles with the notion of culpability and justification, and Prince Myshkin explains in *The Idiot* that religious spirituality is not really about traditional concepts of good and evil at all: “the essence of religious feeling doesn’t depend on reasoning, and it has nothing to do with wrongdoing or crime or with atheism. . . . It’s one of the main convictions I have received from our Russia” (231).

<sup>43</sup> Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, Trans. Andrew R. MacAndrew (New York: Bantam, 1999), p. 196. All subsequent references to *The Brothers Karamazov*, unless otherwise noted, are from this edition and are cited in-text.

<sup>44</sup> Lynn Franken, “Poor Terrestrial Justice: Bakhtin and Criminal Trial in the Novel,” *Comparative Literature* 49.2 (1997), 113-127 (p. 115).

<sup>45</sup> Gail Fincham, “Space and Place in the Novels of E.M. Forster.” *Literary Landscapes: From Modernism to Postcolonialism*. Eds. Attie de Lange, Gail Fincham, Jeremy Hawthorn, and Jakob Lothe (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 38-57, has argued that the temple scene in this section is of central importance to the modernist (or even post-modernist) message of the novel, because it provides a “magical realist” space in which the characters can escape the constraints of their colonial world (pp. 52-3). Though Forster, as Fincham points out, predates our current ideas about magical realism, her explanation of the way in which magical realism works—by providing different models for space and even for language—is particularly relevant when considering the prophetic elements of the novel, because it highlights the mystical or supernatural elements of the temple scene (p. 52).

<sup>46</sup> This scene occurs in book VII, chapter IV.

<sup>47</sup> Kaye, p. 167. In making this claim, Kaye points to two of Forster’s novels, *The Longest Journey* and *Howards End*, suggesting that “The ending of the two novels aimed for a mystic closure that would unite the natural, human, and supernatural realms. Such transcendence, however, eluded Forster, perhaps because he never fully believed it was possible in the first place, perhaps because he hoped to achieve it without losing anything of the world that was familiar to him” (p. 167). In arguing this point, I think Kaye is

---

interpreting the concept of “prophetic fiction” as a more modern sense of mysticism, instead of Forster’s own complex (and hard to define) term of “prophetic novels.” This claim, I think, is limited in two ways: it focuses only on the ending of the novel (a focus that Forster does not use in *Aspects of the Novel*), and it does not consider *Passage* as a potentially prophetic novel (a consideration that I argue Forster deserves).

<sup>48</sup> Garnett translated Dostoevsky’s *The Brothers Karamazov* into English in 1912 and *Crime and Punishment* in 1914. She went on to translate all of Dostoevsky’s major works.

<sup>49</sup> See Rubenstein, chapter 1 (entitled “Russophilia”), pp. 1-5.

<sup>50</sup> “More Dostoevsky” in *The Essays of Virginia Woolf, Volume II (1912-1918)*, edited by Andrew McNeillie (New York: Harcourt, 1987), p. 83.

<sup>51</sup> For a list of Woolf’s essays on Russian literature, see Natalya Reinhold, “Virginia Woolf’s Russian Voyage Out,” *Woolf Studies Annual* 9 (2003): 1-27, p. 3. For more on Woolf’s translation work on *The Possessed*, see Yelena Furman, “Translating Dostoevskii, Writing a Novel of One’s Own: The Place of ‘Stavrogin’s Confession’ in the Creation of *Mrs. Dalloway*,” *Modern Language Review*, 104.4 (2009): 1081-97, pp. 1083-4.

<sup>52</sup> “More Dostoevsky,” p. 85.

<sup>53</sup> For an examination of connections between Dostoevsky’s novels and Woolf’s own, see Rubenstein, pp. 19-57. Rubenstein argues that a mixture of “Affinity, admiration, and unconscious influence may collectively account for the Dostoevskian echoes in [Woolf’s] work” (33). Rubenstein highlights Woolf’s fragmented rendering of time, her use of double characters and internal monologues, her creation of an urban novel, and her interest in suicide and insanity as elements which show “traces of Woolf’s earlier immersion in Dostoevsky’s fiction” (45). For a study focused particularly on connections between *Mrs. Dalloway* and Dostoevsky’s *The Possessed*, see Yelena Furman’s “Translating Dostoevskii, Writing a Novel of One’s Own: The Place of ‘Stavrogin’s Confession’ in the Creation of *Mrs. Dalloway*” *Modern Language Review*, 104.4 (2009): 1081-97. Like Rubenstein, Furman sees insanity and suicide as major thematic connections between Dostoevsky’s novel and Woolf’s own. For a comparison of Woolf’s party scene in *Mrs. Dalloway* and Dostoevsky’s party scene in *The Idiot*, see Peter Kaye’s *Dostoevsky and English Modernism, 1900-1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 90-5. Unlike Rubenstein and Furman, Kaye highlights the difference between Woolf’s and Dostoevsky’s technique, suggesting that meaning within Woolf’s party narrative occurs within the private, internalized self whereas meaning in Dostoevsky’s narrative occurs within the public space and shared consciousness.

<sup>54</sup> See Bill Handley, “Virginia Woolf and Fyodor Dostoevsky: Can Modernism Have ‘Soul?’” *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 31 (1988): 3-4, p. 3

<sup>55</sup> Reinhold, p. 5.

<sup>56</sup> Both Peter Kaye and Lucia Aiello note Woolf’s ambivalence toward Dostoevsky and find Woolf to be representative of the larger English readership’s response to Dostoevsky. Lucia Aiello, “Feodor Dostoevskii in Britain: The Tale of an Untalented Genius,” *The Modern Language Review* 98.3 (2003): 659-677, for example, maintains that “Virginia Woolf’s appreciation of Dostoevskii’s novels was characterized by a fundamental reluctance to acknowledge their innovative import both for her generation of writers and for future generations” (p. 666). Aiello is rather unique in maintaining that Woolf looked upon Dostoevsky only as “leverage against traditional novel-writing”—not as an influential model (pp. 666-7). Peter Kaye does not go quite so far as Aiello, but he does find Woolf to be moving in a different direction than Dostoevsky. Kaye explains that Woolf may have found Dostoevsky’s new forms useful for beginning her own modernist style but eventually found him too disconcerting of a writer (pp. 66-7). Kaye interprets Woolf’s ambivalence to Dostoevsky as a “cooling” of enthusiasm, and he suggests that this is at least partly because Dostoevsky valued what she did not—religious spirituality, intensely emotional characters, and collective experience—and his texts thus struck her as too didactic (pp. 82-4).

---

<sup>57</sup> “More Dostoevsky,” p. 83.

<sup>58</sup> “English Prose” (1920) in *The Essays of Virginia Woolf, Volume III (1919-1924)*, ed. Andrew McNeillie (New York: Harcourt, 1988), p. 174.

<sup>59</sup> *The Diary of Virginia Woolf, Volume II*, p. 172.

<sup>60</sup> “A Minor Dostoevsky” (1917), *The Essays of Virginia Woolf, Volume II (1912-1918)*, ed. Andrew McNeillie (New York: Harcourt, 1987), p. 166.

<sup>61</sup> “The Russian View” (1918), *The Essays of Virginia Woolf, Volume II (1912-1918)*, Ed. Andrew McNeillie (New York: Harcourt, 1987), p. 343.

<sup>62</sup> “The Russian View,” p. 342.

<sup>63</sup> “Modern Novels,” pp. 35-6.

<sup>64</sup> *The Diary of Virginia Woolf, Volume II*, p. 248.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> When writing about her method in *Mrs. Dalloway*, Woolf wrote in her diary, “I adumbrate here a study of insanity & suicide: the world seen by the sane & the insane side by side” (2: pp. 207-8).

<sup>67</sup> In Benjamin’s analysis, drawn from reading Baudelaire, a streetwalker is a part of the modern urban setting, a part of the “crowd” and yet not, a consumer of commercial bourgeoisie culture. For Benjamin’s concept of the “flaneur” see *The Arcades Project*, Ed Rolf Tiedemann, Trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin, Cambridge: Belknap, 1999.

<sup>68</sup> Hanna Wirth-Nesher, *City Codes: Reading the Modern Urban Novel* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 21.

<sup>69</sup> See, for example, Vara S. Neverow, “Virginia Woolf and City Aesthetics,” *The Edinburgh Companion to Virginia Woolf and the Arts*. Ed. Maggie Humm (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 88-103. Neverow reads the novel as both a celebration of Woolf’s love for London and an acknowledgment of its grim side, just as some of the novel’s characters find London enchanting (Peter Walsh) and others find it repulsive (Lucrezia Warren Smith) (p. 91). Nadine Attewell, “Risky Business: Going Out in the Fiction of Virginia Woolf and Dorothy Richardson,” *The Swarming Streets: Twentieth Century Representations of London*, Ed. Lawrence Phillips (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2004), 7-18, argues that the street-walking in Woolf’s novel implies an ability to transcend or find release from social constraints, including gender (p. 13).

<sup>70</sup> Attewell, p. 13.

<sup>71</sup> For more on the extent to which Dostoevsky’s novel is tied to the literal space of Petersburg, see Richard Pevear’s foreword to his and Larissa Volokhonsky’s translation of *Crime and Punishment* (New York: Vintage, 1992), p. xx.

<sup>72</sup> Pevear, p. xv.

<sup>73</sup> *Crime and Punishment*, p. 2. All passages from *Crime and Punishment* are taken from Jessie Coulson’s translation, edited by George Gibian (New York: Norton, 1989), and page numbers are given in-text.

<sup>74</sup> *Mrs. Dalloway*, p. 4. All passages from Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway* are taken from the 1981 Harcourt edition and page numbers are given in-text.

---

<sup>75</sup> Wirth-Nesher, p. 193.

<sup>76</sup> Rubenstein notes that mental illness was a very personal issue for both Woolf (who suffered from what we now characterize as bipolar mood disorder or manic depression) and Dostoevsky (whom Rubenstein describes as having suffered from depression and hallucinations), and she claims, “What distinguishes Woolf and Dostoevsky from a multitude of others who have suffered from epilepsy, depression, or bipolar disorder is their success in creating unique artistic forms and a language through which to express extreme and disturbing psychological processes that reveal the self to be multifaceted” (28).

<sup>77</sup> Ernest J. Simmons, *Dostoevsky: The Making of a Novelist* (New York: Vintage, 1962), for example, maintains that “The Epilogue is manifestly the weakest section of the novel, and the regeneration of Raskolnikov under the influence of the Christian humility and love of Sonia is neither artistically palatable nor psychologically sound” (153).

<sup>78</sup> One possible factor for Woolf’s difference from Dostoevsky here may also be that Dostoevsky was writing his novel in an atmosphere of censorship, and thus his novel may to some extent reflect popular and/or institutional demands. Konstantin Mochulsky, *Dostoevsky: His Life and Work*, Trans. Michael A. Minihan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), for instance, reads the novel as confirming Raskolnikov’s philosophy of extraordinary men, and goes on to say, “But how could the author present this bold truth about the new man to the readers of Katkov’s well-meaning journal in the 1860’s? He had to cover it by throwing an innocent veil over it. . . . We know Raskolnikov too well to believe this ‘pious lie’” (312).

<sup>79</sup> Molly Hoff, “Woolf’s *Mrs Dalloway*,” *The Explicator* 61.1 (2002): 37-9, for example, notes the parallels between the canonical hours of Christian liturgy and the hours which run as a literary device through the novel. Hoff notes that Septimus’ death and Christ’s death are associated with the same hours, the period of None, or late afternoon. Hoff concludes that parallels between Christ and Septimus indicate a spiritual message of sacrifice and redemption: “Sacrifice is the focal point at which all phases of the liturgy and the novel converge. The pattern shaped between the sacrifice of Christ and the immolation of Alcestis further implies for both Septimus and Clarissa that there might be a resurrection for one and a redemption for the other” (p. 39).

<sup>80</sup> See Bill Handley, who notes Woolf’s use of the “soul” in *Mrs. Dalloway* and says that “One of her major aesthetic concerns is to create characters whose souls are at once given expression and understanding but are not finalized” (p. 3).

<sup>81</sup> Woolf’s understanding of the Russian “soul” is perhaps due in part to her understanding of Russian orthodoxy, which values passive suffering. English readers were introduced to the concept of the Russian soul even before Dostoevsky attained widespread popularity through the critical writing of Maurice Baring, whose book *The Russian People* (1911) linked Dostoevsky’s novels with the idea of the Russian soul.

<sup>82</sup> Miss Kilman’s name (literally “kill man”) could also be read as a reference to this idea of the Russian soul, because Russian orthodoxy emphasizes a diminishing of self, a “death” of the self and the flesh.

<sup>83</sup> For more on Dostoevsky’s mock-execution, his prison experience and his religious faith, see Malcom Jones, *Dostoevsky and the Dynamics of Religious Experience* (London: Anthem, 2005), pp. 5-8. In addition to this oblique reference in *Crime and Punishment*, Dostoevsky also made references to his experience of being condemned to death in *The Idiot* and *The Brothers Karamazov*.

<sup>84</sup> Hermione Lee, *Virginia Woolf* (New York: Vintage, 1990), p. 171.

<sup>85</sup> “The Russian View,” p. 343.

<sup>86</sup> *The Diary of Virginia Woolf Volume II*, p. 248. The criticism Woolf is responding to is Bennett’s article “Is the Novel Decaying?” which appeared March 28, 1923 in *Cassell’s Weekly*. See Robin Majumdar and Allen McLaurin, *Virginia Woolf: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge, 1975), 112-114. Bennett here

---

outlines character as the most important element of a novel, saying “If the characters are real the novel will have a chance; if they are not oblivion will be its portion” (p. 112).

<sup>87</sup> See Arnold Bennett’s essay “Is the Novel Decaying” in Robin Majumdar and Allen McLaurin’s *Virginia Woolf. The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge, 1975) 112-114, p. 113.

<sup>88</sup> In fact, part of Bennett’s failure to appreciate Woolf’s novel form is his emphasis on characters as “individuals”—Woolf’s novel suggests that characters are *not* individuals in this traditional sense but are instead fragmented into doubles and varying states of consciousness.

<sup>89</sup> See Arnold Bennett, “The Twelve Finest Novels” *The Evening Standard* [March 17, 1927]. Bennett’s top novels by Dostoevsky were *The Brothers Karamazov*, *The Idiot*, *The House of the Dead*, and *Crime and Punishment*. The other novelists on Bennett’s list were the Russian novelists Tolstoy, Turgenev, and Gogol.

<sup>90</sup> Woolf here describes the same sort of physical participation readers have in Dostoevsky’s characters that Forster describes in *Aspects of the Novel* when he says “Dostoevsky’s characters . . . convey to us a sensation that is partly physical—the sensation of sinking into a translucent globe” (pp. 194-5).

<sup>91</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin’s concept of the polyphonic novel in *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, ed. and trans. Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984) has been instrumental in critical understanding of Dostoevsky’s characters and narrative technique. Bakhtin argues that there is no *unifying* vision in Dostoevsky’s novels—all of his characters are allowed to speak: “A plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses, a genuine polyphony of fully valid voices, is in fact the chief characteristic of Dostoevsky’s novels” (p. 6).

<sup>92</sup> According to Joseph Frank’s now classic essay, “Spatial Form in Modern Literature, Part I” *The Sewanee Review* 53.2 (1945): 221-240, “the principle of reflexive reference” is “the link connecting the esthetic development of modern poetry with similar experiments in the novel” (p. 230). Frank explains that the principle of reflexive reference is the means by which poets and novels establish overarching meaning in their work through patterns of internal references. These references demand that readers “suspend the process of individual reference temporarily until the entire pattern of internal references can be apprehended as a unity” (p. 230). This is, in my opinion, precisely what Forster achieves with the network of repeated symbols and phrases in his novel—such as the echo itself. The meaningfulness of these repeated symbols only becomes apparent when we consider the work as a whole

<sup>93</sup> The social consciousness of much of 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian literature is due in large part to the influence of Russian literary critic Vissarion Belinskii, who advocated that it was the duty of literature to challenge and critique society. Belinskii’s work had an enormous impact on many Russian novelists, including Turgenev, who dedicated *Fathers and Sons* to him. For more on Belinskii, see W. Gareth Jones, “Politics,” *The Cambridge Companion to the Classic Russian Novel*, Eds. Malcolm V. Jones and Robin Feuer Miller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 63-85, (pp.67-70).

## Bibliography

- Aiello, Lucia. "Feodor Dostoevskii in Britain: The Tale of an Untalented Genius," *The Modern Language Review* 98.3 (2003): 659-677.
- Attewell, Nadine. "Risky Business: Going Out in the Fiction of Virginia Woolf and Dorothy Richardson," *The Swarming Streets: Twentieth Century Representations of London*. Edited by Lawrence Phillips. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2004. 7-18.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Edited and Translated by Caryl Emerson. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.
- Baring, Maurice. *Landmarks in Russian Literature*. London: 1910.
- Benjamin, Walter. *The Arcades Project*. Edited by Rolf Tiedemann. Translated by Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin, Cambridge: Belknap, 1999.
- Bennett, Arnold. "Is the Novel Decaying?" in *Virginia Woolf. The Critical Heritage*. Edited by Robin Majumdar and Allen McLaurin. London: Routledge, 1975. 112-114.
- . "The Twelve Finest Novels." *The Evening Standard*. March 17, 1927.
- Daniels, Molly A. *The Prophetic Novel*. New York: Lang, 1991.
- Dostoevsky, Fyodor. *Crime and Punishment*. Trans. Jessie Coulson. Ed. George Gibian. New York: Norton, 1999.
- . *The Brothers Karamazov*. Trans. Constance Garnett. Ed. Manuel Komroff. New York: Signet, 1999.
- . *The Brothers Karamazov*. Trans. Andrew R. MacAndrew. New York: Bantam, 1999.
- . *The Idiot*. Trans. Henry and Olga Carlisle. New York: Signet, 2002.
- Forster, E.M. *A Passage to India*. New York: Harcourt, 1952.
- . *Aspects of the Novel*. New York: Harcourt, 1954.
- Fincham, Gail. "Space and Place in the Novels of E.M. Forster." *Literary Landscapes:*

- From Modernism to Postcolonialism*. Edited by. Attie de Lange, Gail Fincham, Jeremy Hawthorn, and Jakob Lothe. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. 38-57.
- Frank, Joseph. "Spatial Form in Modern Literature, Part I." *The Sewanee Review* 53.2 (1945): 221-240.
- Franken, Lynn. "Poor Terrestrial Justice: Bakhtin and Criminal Trial in the Novel." *Comparative Literature* 49.2 (1997): 113-127.
- Froula, Christine. *Virginia Woolf and the Bloomsbury Avant-Garde: War, Civilization, Modernity*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.
- Furman, Yelena. "Translating Dosotevskii, Writing a Novel of One's Own: The Place of 'Stavrogin's Confession' in the Creation of *Mrs. Dalloway*." *Modern Language Review* 104.4 (2009): 1081-97.
- Galsworthy, John. *Letters from John Galsworthy, 1900-1932*. Ed. by Edward Garnett. New York: Scribners, 1934.
- Handley, Bill. "Virginia Woolf and Fyodor Dostoevsky: Can Modernism Have 'Soul'?" *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 31 (1988): 3-4.
- Heath, Jeffrey M., ed. *The Creator as Critic and Other Writings by E.M. Forster*. Toronto: Dundurn, 2008.
- Hellerstein, Marjorie H. *Virginia Woolf's Experiments with Consciousness, Time, and Social Values*. Studies in British Literature Vol. 59. New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 2001.
- Hoff, Molly. "Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*." *The Explicator* 61.1 (2002): 37-9.
- Jones, Malcom. *Dostoevsky and the Dynamics of Religious Experience*. London: Anthem, 2005.

- Jones, W. Gareth. "Politics," *The Cambridge Companion to the Classic Russian Novel*. Edited by Malcolm V. Jones and Robin Feuer Miller. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. 63-85.
- Kaye, Peter. *Dostoevsky and English Modernism, 1900-1930*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Leatherbarrow, W. J. Introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to Dostoevsky*. Edited by W. J. Leatherbarrow. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Lee, Hermione. *Virginia Woolf*. New York: Vintage, 1990.
- Lin, Lidan. "The Irony of Colonial Humanism: *A Passage to India* and the Politics of Posthumanism." *ARIEL* 28.4 (October 1997): 133-53.
- May, Rachel. *The Translator in the Text: On Reading Russian Literature in English*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1994.
- Mochulsky, Konstantin. *Dostoevsky: His Life and Work*. Translated by Michael A. Minihan. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967.
- Moser, Charles. "The Achievement of Constance Garnett." *American Scholar* 57.3 (1988): 431-8.
- Muchnic, Helen. *Dostoevsky's English Reputation (1881-1936)*. Northampton: Departments of Modern Languages of Smith College, 1939.
- Murry, Middleton. *Fyodor Dostoevsky, A Critical Study*. London: 1916.
- Neverow, Vara S. "Virginia Woolf and City Aesthetics." *The Edinburgh Companion to Virginia Woolf and the Arts*. Edited by Maggie Humm. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010. 88-103.
- Orange, Michael. "Language and Silence in *A Passage to India*." *Modern Critical Interpretations: E.M. Forster's A Passage to India*. Edited by Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea, 1987. 57-74.

- Orwin, Donna Tussing. *Consequences of Consciousness: Turgenev, Dostoevsky, and Tolstoy*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007.
- Parry, Benita. "Materiality and Mystification in A Passage to India." *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 31.2 (1998): 174-194.
- Pevear, Richard. Foreward to *Crime and Punishment* by Fyodor Dostoevsky. Translated by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky. New York: Vintage, 1992. Vii-xvii.
- Phelps, Gilbert. *The Russian Novel in English Fiction*. London: Hutchinson's University Library, 1956.
- Reinhold, Natalya. "Virginia Woolf's Russian Voyage Out." *Woolf Studies Annual* 9 (2003): 1-27.
- Rubenstein, Roberta. *Virginia Woolf and the Russian Point of View*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.
- Said, Edward. *Culture and Imperialism*. London: Chatto, 1993.
- Simmons, Ernest J. *Dostoevsky: The Making of a Novelist*. New York: Vintage, 1962.
- Stallybrass, Oliver, ed. *The Manuscripts of A Passage to India*. Vol. 6a. London: Edward Arnold, 1978.
- Stone, Wilfred. "The Caves of A Passage to India." *A Passage to India: Essays in Interpretation*. Edited by John Beer. London: Macmillan, 1986.
- Wellek, Rene. "The Name and Nature of Comparative Literature." *Discriminations: Further Concepts of Criticism*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970.
- Wirth-Nesher, Hana. *City Codes: Reading the Modern Urban Novel*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Woolf, Virginia. "A Minor Dostoevsky" in *The Essays of Virginia Woolf. Volume II (1912-1918)*. Edited by Andrew McNeillie. New York: Harcourt, 1987. 165-167.

- . "English Prose" in *The Essays of Virginia Woolf. Volume III: 1919-1924*. Edited by Andrew McNeillie. San Diego: Harcourt, 1988. 171-6.
- . "Modern Novels" in *The Essays of Virginia Woolf. Volume III: 1919-1924*. Edited by Andrew McNeillie. San Diego: Harcourt, 1988. 30-37.
- . "More Dostoevsky" in *The Essays of Virginia Woolf. Volume II (1912-1918)*. Edited by Andrew McNeillie. New York: Harcourt, 1987. 83-7.
- . *Mrs. Dalloway*. New York: Harcourt, 1981.
- . *The Diary of Virginia Woolf. Volume II (1920-1924)*. Edited by Anne Olivier Bell and Andrew McNeillie. New York: Harcourt, 1978.
- . "The Russian View" in *The Essays of Virginia Woolf. Volume II (1912-1918)*. Edited by Andrew McNeillie. New York: Harcourt, 1987. 341-4.