Anxious to the End

CHAPTER 6

I

THE BROTHERS KARAMAZOV

The foreword to *The Brothers Karamazov*, titled "From the Author" ("Ot avtora") is sometimes mentioned by critics of the novel, but most often only as an aside. For example, we have Avrahm Yarmolinsky's striking judgment: "It appears from the brief and lame foreword to *The Brothers Karamazov* that Dostoevsky intended to follow it up with a sequel."[1] There are others who consider the introduction more misleading than merely ineffective or blessedly short: ". . . Although Dostoevsky himself in the introduction 'From the Author' underscores that, by his design, the most important thing is the hagiography of Alexei Fyodorovich and that specifically Alyosha is the most 'noteworthy' hero of the novel, still it is not he, but—objectively speaking, that is, in aesthetic terms— Ivan who turns out to be the more convincing hero."[2]

In these and similar instances, the only information to be gleaned from the foreword is apparently the "author's" three announcements

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[1] Avrahm Yarmolinsky, *Dostoevsky: His Life and Art* (New York: Grove Press, 1957), 391.

[2] A. A. Belkin, "*Brat'iia Karamazovy* (sotsial'no-filosofskaia problematika)," in *Tvorchestvo F. M. Dostoevskogo*, ed. N. L. Stepanov, D. D. Blagoi, U. A. Gural'nik, B. S. Riurikov (Moscow: AN SSSR, 1959), 274. The translation is mine. In the remainder of this chapter, translations come, with an occasional modification, from Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, trans. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1990). For the original, see Dostoevskii, *PSS*, XIV–XV.

that: (1) Alyosha is the hero of the novel, (2) the projected two novels represent Alyosha's biography or hagiography (*zhizneopisanie*), and (3) *The Brothers Karamazov* is merely preparatory to this second novel where Alyosha was to have figured as the unequivocal hero.[3] The relative value of the introduction ceases for the critic at this point, its remaining portions considered mere flotsam and jetsam on a sea of superfluous verbiage. But it is just such material that makes the foreword what it is.[4] Remove the details of event and character from a narrative text and what is left: abstractions, outlines, and little else. Something similar can be said of the introduction to *The Brothers Karamazov.* Attend only to the major announcements and it appears lame and hardly brief enough.[5]

The discourse of the foreword, however, has not been subjected to critical analysis. An exception comes from Maximilian Braun who has studied it in relation to the novel's type. Because the text is "preparatory" (the narrator-chronicler's word is *vstupitel'nyi*) and presents "just one moment from my hero's early youth," Braun labels *The Brothers Karamazov* an expository novel.[6] Importantly, Braun's evidence for the claim does not come alone "from the author" in the introduction, but also from Part 1, Book 1, Chapter 2, where the quasi-personalized narrator-chronicler of the fiction announces a second novel: "This very circumstance [Dmitry's ill treatment by his father] led to the catastrophe, *an account of which forms the subject of my first introductory novel, or, better, the external side of it*."[7]

Although Braun's focus is on genre rather than on the rhetoric of the foreword, his analysis is quite helpful. But by glossing over the coincidence of the "author's" claims about the novel in the introduction and the narrator-chronicler's similar claims in the body of the

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3 Dostoevsky, *Brothers Karamazov*, 3–4; 5–6.

4 Dostoevsky twice calls it a foreword (*predislovie*).

5 Genette would label Dostoevsky's approach to this preface a "dodge" (*esquive*) in the form of an apology for the preface's length, dullness, irrelevance, uselessness, or presumptuousness (*Paratexts*, 230–231).

6 Maximilian Braun, "*The Brothers Karamazov* as Expository Novel," *Canadian-American Slavic Studies* 6, no. 2 (1972): 199.

7 Dostoevsky, *Brothers Karamazov*, 12; 12 (my emphasis). Note that the narrator identifies the novel as his—i.e., he is its author—which suggests he may have authored the text's introduction as well, thus making what appears to be an authentic authorial preface into a fictional authorial one.

text, it misses an opportunity to penetrate the introduction's narrative technique. It is precisely in the coincidence of foreword and text that Dostoevsky suggests how we might read the preface—or re-read it.[8] There are additional hints. Given that the voice speaking to us "from the author" is self-conscious, even defensive—he worries that the first volume may not provide adequate evidence to support his assertion that Alyosha is its hero—it calls attention to itself as a marked form of discourse. That Dostoevsky would engage in tortured arguments on behalf of his narrative, especially at this stage in a now illustrious career (1879), should strike us as sufficiently odd as to draw our attention. Furthermore, since Alyosha cannot be verified as the hero of the novel without evidence provided by a sequel (Dostoevsky died before he could write it), the design of *The Brothers Karamazov*, from the claims of the foreword in any case, is left in an unfinished state. The announcement of the novel's sequel has led to speculation about what Dostoevsky had in mind for its continuation.[9] Interesting as these clues may be, in no instance of which I am aware has the introduction been analyzed as a discrete form of discourse that stands at rhetorical levels quite distinct from those that follow in the novel proper.

Stating that the foreword stands at a different discursive level from the fictional text's is not to imply that it holds fast to the author's position either. It may well be that its rhetorical situation does not coincide with that of its implied author, whose voice, by virtue of the "Ot avtora" title affixed to the introduction, we are enticed to assume is that of Dostoevsky's literary or authorial persona. It may well be the case that it is not a conventional authorial preface of the type we have seen in Lermontov's *A Hero of Our Time*, but one in which an implied author

[8] V. E. Vetlovskaia has posited the value of retrospection in regard to any interpretation of the novel in her "Razviazka v *Brat'iakh Karamazovykh*," in *Poetika i stilistika russkoi literatury* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1971), 195–203; retrospection belongs to memory, which is Diane Thompson's approach in her *The Poetics of Memory in "The Brothers Karamazov"* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

[9] See, in particular, the treatment of such speculation in Grossman, *Dostoevsky*, 586–588; Thompson, *Poetics of Memory*, 338 n. 20; Joseph Frank, *The Mantle of the Prophet, 1871–1881* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 484; and Igor Volgin, "Alyosha's Destiny," in *The New Russian Dostoevsky: Readings for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Carol Apollonio (Bloomington: Slavica Publishers, 2010), 271–286.

addresses implied readers directly. On the other hand, it may well be the case that it cannot be taken as a conventional figural form of speech (where a character as narrator delivers up an introduction in his or her own voice), that is, as a feature of the author's imagined world rather than as his direct address. We again recall as examples of figural prefaces the fictional editor's introduction to Pushkin's *Tales of the Late Ivan Petrovich Belkin* and Gogol's Rudy Panko in *Evenings on a Farm Near Dikanka*. Between these distinct modes of provenance there is yet another option for identifying the voice which speaks to us "Ot avtora" in *The Brothers Karamazov*, one familiar to us thanks to Bakhtin's study of Dostoevsky's poetics—double voicing. It is to such speech, I believe, that Dostoevsky directs our attention through the odd discourse of the introduction.

II

FREE INDIRECT SPEECH

Before attending to the occurrence of double voicing (or a variant of it), let us first refresh our memory of the foreword itself. Dostoevsky published his novel in serial form from January 1879 to November 1880. Significantly, when the first entry appeared, very little of the novel had been composed—only Book 1, Chapters 1 and 2 of Part I.[10] It is unusual for authors to write an introduction before the novel is thoroughly fleshed out or even completed, and this is because a preface would then require authors to possess great foresight and a strong willingness to take risks. If daring authors require foresight, readers of those risky prefaces are in need of a strong memory. When the novel's epilogue would finally be published (as *The Brothers Karamazov* was at the end of 1880), who of the original reading public would have

[10] As William Mills Todd III has put it, *The Brothers Karamazov* was "the novel that [Dostoevsky] had least drafted as he began serialization"; Dostoevsky "had only written several books of the novel" at the time he began to publish it ("*The Brothers Karamazov* and the Poetics of Serialization," *Dostoevsky Studies* 7 [1986]: 87–88). It is clear, however, that he had long planned the novel and had thought out a great deal of it, at least in general outline (Frank, *The Mantle*, 390–391).

remembered the foreword of two years earlier? A readily predictable failure in any real reader's memory did not deter Dostoevsky in the least from including an introduction to the first published entry, one that envisioned not only the whole arc of *The Brothers Karamazov*, but a sequel as well. Here are the kernels from the foreword commented upon most often in the critical literature:

From the Author

> Starting out on the biography of my hero, Alexei Fyodorovich Karamazov, I find myself in some perplexity. Namely, that while I do call Alexei Fyodorovich my hero, still, I myself know that he is by no means a great man, so that I can foresee the inevitable questions, such as: What is notable about your Alexei Fyodorovich that you should choose him for your hero? What has he really done? To whom is he known, and for what? Why should I, the reader, spend my time studying the facts of his life? . . . .
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> . . . . the trouble is that while I have one biography, I have two novels. The main novel is the second one—about the activities of my hero in our time, that is, in our present, current moment. As for the first novel, it already took place thirteen years ago and is even almost not a novel at all but just one moment from my hero's early youth. . . .[11]

This citation consists of less than a quarter of the entire foreword. But key temporal elements, in terms of the overall design, are made clear here. It contains crucial information for interpreting the narrative, not the least of which is the setting of Alyosha's "hagiography" in historical terms. The introduction appears in 1879—"the present, current moment" (most likely this moment coincides with the date of the publication of the first installment)—by which we calibrate the action of the novel "thirteen years ago" as 1866. We learn, thus, that *The Brothers Karamazov* is set in the decade in which *Crime and Punishment* and *Notes from the Underground* were published. Their actions nearly overlap. Gérard Genette states that "it is indisputable that historical awareness of the period in which a work was written is rarely immaterial to one's reading of that work."[12] Thus, if not for the foreword, we might not have been able to deduce readily the novel's temporal frame

[11] Dostoevsky, *Brothers Karamazov*, 3–4; 5–6 (ellipses added).
[12] Genette, *Paratexts*, 7.

with any accuracy, so crucial as it is to the novel's interpretation within Dostoevsky's oeuvre.

Furthermore, were we *not* to have the "author's" testimony that Alyosha is the hero of a two-volume biography, for which *The Brothers Karamazov* is just "one moment" in his life, we might perhaps be inclined to conclude, as many have, that Ivan and Dmitry are in fact the central dramatis personae of this first volume. Knowing the trajectory of the novel in advance (if not in detail, then in overall design),[13] the "author" asserts Alyosha's centrality but feels this notion will encounter reader resistance as the novel unfolds serially. The foreword, therefore, steers us in a direction that we as readers might not otherwise take. This is odd, for it pits "the author's" claims about Alyosha against his own narrative's dramatic focus on the other brothers. Furthermore, if the "author" of the introduction's title does not represent either the implied author "Dostoevsky" or the historical Dostoevsky himself, but the narrator-chronicler instead, then the matter becomes even more vexed.[14]

The largest portion of the foreword runs an altered vocal course. The "authorial" remarks elsewhere in the introduction sound a strained note when compared with the declarative sentences and rhetorical questions of the entries already cited. This suggests that their provenance changes as well. Yet the shift from direct address to something more figural is not abrupt. The questions "the author" puts into the reader's mouth in the first paragraph of the introduction signal a modulation

[13] After Dostoevsky published an installment, he conducted a good deal of research prior to composing the next. The details pertaining to the multitude of characters and their settings (e.g., Zosima and the monastery) were worked out progressively. His research slowed the novel's composition, which took roughly two years to complete rather than the one year he had anticipated. This delay caused problems for Dostoevsky and the publisher; the December 1879 entry contained an apology "Ot avtora" ("From the Author") for extending the novel into another subscription year, something that would normally have been considered a breach of contract. It is clear that this apology comes from the historical Dostoevsky and not from either his authorial persona or from the text's narrator.

[14] Genette cites many examples where the preface attempts to justify or explain the title of the work (*Paratexts*, 156–170). Perhaps, since he could foresee that Dmitry and Ivan, among others, were to be central to this novel's argument, Dostoevsky felt the need at the earliest moment to explain the novel's title—Volume One is about Ivan and Dmitry (and Smerdyakov?); Volume Two is about Alyosha. Cf. Ia. Golosovker's argument that Ivan and Zosima are the central characters (*Dostoevskii i Kant* [Moscow: Akademiia nauk, 1963], 35–45).

in tone ("What is notable about your Alexei Fyodorovich . . . ? What has he really done?" etc.). For the simple reason that these questions may be superfluous—they can be raised by most any reader in regard to most any standard narrative—we are cued to read with a wary eye. Under normal conditions, we readers give the benefit of the doubt to the implied author, whose creator knows that such questions will be answered in due course. For reasons of convention having to do with an unstated or assumed author-reader contract, these questions, in fact, need not have been raised by Dostoevsky at all. This being the case, why would Dostoevsky have his authorial persona advance so clumsily? Never in his post-exile years did he feel compelled to do so. Why now?

As Dorrit Cohn explains, the direct and indirect speech of a character in the guise of the narrator's discourse, i.e., without punctuation marks or inquit verbs ("s/he said" verbs used in reported speech), requires the provision of clues in order for it to be apprehended by readers.[15] Such hints put the reader on the lookout for a special form of speech that has been variously labeled, usually in reference to the literature of a specific language group and/or author, as free indirect style (*style indirect libre*), *erlebte Rede*, quasi-indirect discourse, double-voicing, and, in Cohn's terminology, narrated monologue.[16] The rhetorical questions in the foreword's first paragraph give us a sense that another voice is intruding almost immediately into "the author's" direct address. Alerted by those questions to a shift in voice, we turn with a more keen attentiveness to the odd utterances that immediately follow them:

> The last question [i.e., Why should *I*, the reader, spend my time studying the facts of his life?] is the most fateful one, for I can only reply: "Perhaps *you* will see [*uvidite sami*] from the novel." But suppose *they* read [*prochtut*] the novel and do not see [*ne uvidiat*], do not agree [*ne soglasiatsia*] with the noteworthiness of my Alexei Fyodorovich? I say this because, to my sorrow, I foresee it. To me he is noteworthy,

[15] Dorrit Cohn, *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 106.

[16] Cohn, *Transparent Minds*, 99–140. For *erlebte Rede*, quasi-indirect discourse, double-voicing, see respectively, Roy Pascal, *The Dual Voice*, 8–12; N. Voloshinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Langauge*, trans. L. Matejka and Irwin Titunik (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), 109–160; and Bakhtin, *Problems*, 181–269.

> but I decidedly doubt that I shall succeed in proving it to the reader. The thing is that he does, perhaps, make a figure, but a figure of an indefinite, indeterminate sort. Though it would be strange to demand clarity from people in a time like *ours*. One thing, perhaps, is rather doubtless: he is a strange man, even an odd one. But strangeness and oddity will sooner harm than justify any claim to attention, especially when everyone is striving to unite particulars and find at least some general sense in the general senselessness. Whereas an odd man is most often a particular and isolated case. Is that not so?[17]

This is a complex discourse hardly in keeping with the first declarative sentence "from the author" that initiates the foreword. The self-consciousness here is one thing, the opaque logic another. More remarkable still are its temporal jumps, the marked alternation of nominal and possessive pronouns in reference to the same imagined readers/persons, impersonal second- and third-person verbal forms, and an apparently unmotivated mixture of direct and reported speech. Given these clues, the near-audibility of inexplicit queries and responses ring in the background of this passage and seem to impel each successive non-sequitur-like response. The density of these marked features constitutes a set of authorial signals that guide us to double-voiced speech.

As Pascal claims in his study of dual discourse, ". . . free indirect speech is never purely and simply the evocation of a character's thought and perception, but always bears, in its vocabulary, its intonation, its syntactical composition and other stylistic features, in its content, or its context, or in some combination of these, the mark of the narrator."[18] But it is a voice through which we hear another, grounding voice in the wings, the one that delivers judgment or perspective or moral suasion. The two voices merge, interact, play with and against each other, supplant the partner here, conjoin there, alternate with each other, then fuse again. Pascal notes that free indirect speech occurs in Dostoevsky at dramatic moments in the lives of his characters: "Dostoyevsky . . . uses very fully the older methods of reproducing the inner motions of the mind—narratorial report, direct speech, and the soliloquy in inverted commas—as well as free indirect speech. The latter usually occurs at times of great inward tension, struggle, and anxiety—in

[17] Dostoevsky, *Brothers Karamazov*, 3; 5 (my emphases).
[18] Pascal, *The Dual Voice*, 43.

Crime and Punishment, for instance, when Raskolnikov arrives outside the old usurer's, just before he commits the murder, or when in part VI he is on his way to Svidrigailov's."[19] Raskolnikov stands at a threshold. So, too, our narrator/author. In the foreword to *The Brothers Karamazov*, the "author" seems to be under stress in that he foresees his novel will not be appreciated and his hero consigned to secondary status. Yet, it would seem unlikely that Dostoevsky himself would suffer such anxieties about his text. As an experienced writer he would hardly have been so overcome as to have committed such a strange piece of discourse to the public without some purpose.[20]

It is plausible, however, that it is not the implied author who speaks here (or who speaks solely). Apropos, the worries about the work and its reception seem more likely to belong to a novice. In fact, the narrator-chronicler of the text claims to be the one who distills the information for the presentation of his work about the Karamazov brothers during a brief if tragic period in their lives in 1866. He works from memory and other unidentified means to present his tale. In the first installment of January 1879, it is he who claims, as Braun indicates, that the work is preparatory to a second novel. Thus, it appears, we have two authors claiming provenance over *The Brothers Karamazov*—the implied author and his narrator-chronicler (unnamed and without biography, but apparently a coeval of Alyosha's). Although at different discursive levels, together they produce the discourse that follows the foreword. "From the Author," therefore, rings with a triple referent. First, it is in truth of fact the real author, Dostoevsky, who pens it. Second, it is presented through the mediacy of his author-persona, who shares the verbal field with, third, the narrator-chronicler, Alyosha's "biographer." The first is the historical person; the second an artifact of the narrative situation; and the third the intentional creation of the first. Authorial persona and narrator appear together in the foreword with their own distinct voices and experiential positions.[21]

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[19] Pascal, *The Dual Voice*, 124.

[20] In his letters, Dostoevsky occasionally expresses concerns over individual parts of the novel. See in particular his letters to Pobedonostsev (Dostoevskii, *PSS*, XXX/1: 66–156).

[21] For a description of narrator/author layers, see Jan M. Meijer, "The Author of *Bratija Karamazovy*," in *Dutch Studies in Russian Literature* 2, no. 2 (1971): 7–15.

This triple effect is not meant to nullify the independence of character voice for which Dostoevsky is hailed (albeit not without contention among critics). Rather, we find in the introduction an elegant distribution of responsibilities that represent distinct rhetorical levels of the text and its paratext. First, the historical Dostoevsky's position can be ascertained—or rather, argued over—from materials both paratextual (title, epigraph, preface, intertitles, etc.) and epitextual (Dostoevsky's letters, comments to others, speeches, readings, apologies, published articles).[22] Second, the implied author remains wholly a byproduct of the narratological situation. We infer his position, beliefs, moral values, and attitudes toward specific characters, through the agency of the novel's discourse, its architectonics, its characters' voices, perhaps even the epigraph (although this is debatable), as well as the privileged position belonging to the epilogue. Third, the semi-personalized narrator-chronicler's image remains opaque throughout the text. But, given the conventions of the realist third-person personalized narrator, he is to be viewed as the first and primary filter of all elements of the work—he is the teller of the tale. We listen to him, even when his voice disappears into the background and the narrative takes on the effect of omniscience. Technically, it is still his voice, even though we sense the intrusion of the implied author's superior perspective (relative to the narrator's). Most critical to us in the foreword is the interaction of the two—the implied author's and the narrator-chronicler's.

The implied author initiates the preface. His tone is neutral, matter-of-fact, learned, and worldly. His utterances lay claim to some level of order, logic, reason, and are rooted in his (inferred) literary professional experience. In the foreword, the kernel of his message can also be sensed or intuited behind the utterances of the perturbed narrator-chronicler. This latter is very little known to us—no sooner does he present himself in the first installment of the serialized novel then he disappears from the reader's view. As Pascal notes: "Authors often try to profit from the authenticity that the invention of a personalized narrator gives, without observing the limitations it imposes. *Madame Bovary* and *The Brothers Karamazov*, for instance, both begin as narratives of a specific narrator-person, who is soon utterly discarded by Flaubert and only occasionally resuscitated by Dostoyevsky, for

[22] See Genette for a discussion of the epitext: *Paratexts*, 344–403.

essential aspects of both novels contradict the character of a personal narrative."[23] But we learn something about Dostoevsky's narrator in the foreword through the agency of that narrator's own discourse.[24] He engages in free association, expresses a panicked illogic, produces red herrings, delivers a confused description of his readers' abilities and his critics' potential responses, and waxes and wanes in his willingness to stand his ground about the merits of his narrative. He gains confidence only by means of the support of his worldly mentor, who is active in the role of implied author. As Pascal points out, ". . . sentences and epithets which, if narratorial, would seem vague or clumsy are precise and subtle when we understand them as the thought of the character [i.e., the narrator-chronicler]; precise and subtle, that is, in delineating his thought and interpretation of experience."[25] Pascal's analysis describes effectively the relationship of the two vocal acts in the novel's foreword and prescribes how we might differentiate them.

The text comes to us through the intermediacy of the narrator-chronicler; yet we are not given an account of his person (as we might, strictly speaking, in an editor's or fictional editor's preface).[26] Were it not for the introduction, we would have been left in doubt about the narrator's qualities. It is my contention that the foreword introduces the narrator to us, not directly by any means, but by laying out the flow of his (or some of his) thoughts and emotions, his consciousness, and particularly his anxieties. In other words, free indirect speech in the foreword encapsulates some portion of the narrator's character. That portion is important to our reading of the novel. If this is the case, then the opacity of the foreword can provide greater clarity for the reader, if not completely, at least to a significant degree. Here we encounter the historical Dostoevsky's intent (intentional fallacy aside) and discover an answer to the self-doubting, perhaps even comic, questions posed in the foreword about this "preparatory" novel's utility.

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[23] Pascal, *The Dual Voice*, 68.

[24] For an examination of the narrator-chronicler's speech characteristics, see V. E. Vetlovskaia, *Poetika romana "Brat'ia Karamazovy"* (Moscow: Nauka, 1977), 13–51.

[25] Pascal, *The Dual Voice*, 129.

[26] As we have seen, Pushkin and Gogol parody this convention.

III

AUTHORS IN DIALOGUE

A re-presentation of the foreword's opening two paragraphs allows us to see how both figural and direct ("authorial") speech interact, that is, the speech of the narrator-chronicler and that of the implied author, respectively. Odd as this may sound, it is as though the two voices are engaged in a dialogue about the text they are about to produce together.[27] The nominal pronouns that appear at the outset of the introduction provide a key to this re-presentation. They are divided between "author" and narrator in a way that suggests the two are interlocutors, the addressees of each other's alternating utterances. We can imagine a division of vocal labor along the following lines (with some modifications as well as stage directions added to the original text for purposes of clarification):

> **Narrator-chronicler to the implied author (construed as his mentor):** Starting out on the biography of my hero, Alexei Fyodorovich Karamazov, I find myself in some perplexity. Namely, that while I do call Alexei Fyodorovich my hero, still, I myself know that he is by no means a great man, so that I can foresee the inevitable questions, such as: What is notable about your Alexei Fyodorovich that you should choose him for your hero? What has he really done? To whom is he known, and for what? Why should I, the reader, spend my time studying the facts of his life?
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> **Implied author to the narrator-novice:** The last question is the most fateful one [for you]; I can only reply [to your readers and on your behalf]: "Perhaps you will see from the novel."
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> **Narrator-chronicler (anxiously):** But suppose they read the novel and do not see, do not agree with the noteworthiness of my Alexei Fyodorovich? I say this because, to my sorrow, I foresee it. To me he is noteworthy, but I decidedly doubt that I shall succeed in proving it to the reader. One thing, perhaps, is rather doubtless: he is a strange man, even an odd one.

[27] Dramatized introductions are attested in Dostoevsky's time and some of his most cherished texts used them, e.g., Victor Hugo's *The Last Day of a Condemned Man*.

Implied author: But strangeness and oddity will sooner harm than justify any claim to attention, especially when everyone is striving to unite particulars and find at least some general sense in the general senselessness.

Narrator-chronicler: [Yes, but] an odd man is most often a particular and isolated case. Is that not so?

Implied author: [I] do not agree with this last point and reply: "Not so" or "Not always so."

Narrator-chronicler (temporarily relieved): Then perhaps I shall take heart concerning the significance of my hero, Alexei Fyodorovich.

Implied author: For not only is an odd man "not always" a particular and isolated case, but, on the contrary, it sometimes happens that it is precisely he, perhaps, who bears within himself the heart of the whole.

Narrator-chronicler: [Yes, true,] while the other people of his epoch have all for some reason been torn away from it . . .

Implied author (interrupting): [. . . indeed,] by "some kind of flooding wind."

By the conclusion of the first three paragraphs of the foreword, we readers are, or might now be, sufficiently prepared to identify the narrator-chronicler's voice and to follow it through its most twisted and anxious logic, which suffuses the fourth paragraph. It presents his free indirect speech in a series of steps by which interference from, or interaction with, the implied author's voice flickers on and off. We cement our understanding of the narrator here more thoroughly than elsewhere in the text.

The transition from double-voiced speech to the narrator-chronicler's momentary solo act occurs gradually. It begins with a continuation of the implied author's and narrator-chronicler's monophonic harmony: "I would not, in fact, venture into these rather vague and uninteresting explanations but would simply begin without any foreword—if they like it, they'll read it as it is—but the trouble is that while I have just one biography [*zhizneopisanie*], I have two novels." Remembering that *The Brothers Karamazov* comes hot on the heels of Dostoevsky's tour de force performance of direct (implied) authorial address in *The Diary of a Writer*, and that he ceased writing *The Diary* in order to begin writing what was to prove to be his final work of

fiction, perhaps it is not an implausible conjecture to hold that, at this moment in the foreword "From the Author," Dostoevsky himself stands before his readers, at least as much as he does in *The Diary*. For it is not the implied author who plans two novels. It is Dostoevsky himself. Nor is it the narrator who has two novels, for he is contained wholly within the first novel as a product of Dostoevsky's imagination. It appears, rather suddenly, that a third voice emerges in the introduction, one that emanates directly "From the Implied Author, Fyodor Dostoevsky" (to rewrite the preface's title).

Next we are informed that "the main novel is the second one—about the activities of my hero in our time, that is, in our present, current moment. As for the first novel, it already took place thirteen years ago and is even almost not a novel at all but just one moment from my hero's early youth."[28] Dostoevsky's biography appears to spill into this description as well. 1879 was a period of great instability, of social disorientation, of political violence—a godless time, Dostoevsky would call it. He believes he understands just how things have reached such a calamitous state and he wishes to explicate the reasons for it in his novel. (We are only two years from Dostoevsky's death and the assassination of Tsar Alexander II.) The "our time" is indeed 1879. The second novel—whether the chronicler-narrator's or Dostoevsky's—is to be entirely topical, which is not unusual for Dostoevsky. Much of his fiction is cast in the present or works quickly from the past into the present. What this means, as a consequence, is that *The Brothers Karamazov* is something of an anomaly, for it depicts, from the text's beginning to its end, the past.[29]

The dislocation of time, the "then" of *The Brothers Karamazov* and the "now" of the never-written second novel, may lie at the heart of the double-voicing of the novel's foreword. The destabilization of voices in the novel's first words replicates the dislocation of temporal schemes in the two novels planned. Together they point directly

[28] Dostoevsky, *Brothers Karamazov*, 3–4; 6.

[29] Dostoevsky's fiction is often retrospective, but not historical in a conventional sense. In the texts we have examined up to *The Brothers Karamazov*, the time of narration occurs almost immediately following the action. The same holds true for *Crime and Punishment*, *The Idiot*, and *The Adolescent*—texts that lack properly labeled forewords. But in *The Brothers*, more than a decade separates narrative from narrated time.

toward the chaotic forces at work from the 1860s to the late 1870s in social, political, spiritual, and economic spheres. The aesthetic unity that can be derived from all manner of chaos is clear to our narrators: "It is impossible for me to do without this first novel, or much in the second novel will be incomprehensible."[30] The two texts bear a cause and effect relationship. If the narrator-chronicler's hagiography succeeds in delivering up the tale adequately, then Dostoevsky's novel does, too. The insecurities that the narrator-chronicler confesses in the first paragraphs, and the aggressive response to foreseen negativity in response to *The Brothers Karamazov*, reveal the author's anxieties to us as well. Ecce homo.

At this point, however, the author, momentarily unmasked, slips out of sight, disguised again by the discourse with which the foreword began: "Thus my original difficulty becomes even more complicated, for if I, that is, the biographer [*biograf*] himself, think that even one novel may, perhaps, be unwarranted for such a humble and indefinite hero, then how will it look if I appear with two; and what can explain such presumption on my part?"[31] Here we return to the insecurity-based quandary of the narrator-chronicler whom the implied author alone seems able to embolden. We note that the utterance identifies the vocalist as "biographer." The implied author is just that—a fragment of an authentic personage represented in dramatic, fictional form in the foreword as the narrator's interlocutor and mentor. Dostoevsky himself is a novelist, something more than a biographer. The worry expressed at this moment in the text belongs to the narrator-chronicler.

In the fifth paragraph the implied author's voice begins to intrude again, moving our focus in stages from the consciousness of the narrator-chronicler (and of the sudden presence of Fyodor Dostoevsky) to his own perspective. It is worthwhile examining the process by which we are led back to the dual voices of the introduction's first three paragraphs. The first step in the process occurs with the first sentence: "Being at a loss to resolve these questions [about the sequel and reader response to the first volume], I am resolved to leave them

[30] Dostoevsky, *Brothers Karamazov*, 4; 6.
[31] Dostoevsky, *Brothers Karamazov*, 4; 6.

without any resolution."[32] Who delivers this utterance? It might be the implied author speaking on his own behalf. But it represents the voice of the narrator-chronicler equally well. Such binary thinking, however, is not apropos. It is more likely that the grammatical first person singular pronoun represents both voices. It is as though they are singing in unison—two vocalists, the same notes, and the same lyrics (thus, both appropriately use the pronoun "I"). Were the moment to be staged, we would have the narrator-chronicler and the implied author speaking this line together in unison.

But, we must not confuse this unity of one script and two voices with a merger of their functions. In this sense their intonations differ even as their lyrics are word-for-word alike. On the one hand, the narrator-chronicler (whose voice dominates in that it was the most recently heard in solo performance) continues his confused discourse, becoming more emotional, defensive, even belligerent. On the other hand, the implied author steps in again to lend the novice a hand. In a matter-of-fact way the implied author begins to wrest his portion of the discourse from his partner. We can imagine the background message just audible behind the surface utterance: "I have let my callow friend wander [in paragraph four]; there's no making sense of his formulations, so let us simply forget about it and move on."

In the second step of the process of voice merger—which functions as an act of clarification that is not available to the narrator-chronicler—the ruse of the introduction is laid bare. The exchange continues in a tag-team manner with the narrator picking up the implied author's cue:

> **In unison:** To be sure, the insightful reader will already have guessed long ago that that is what I've been getting at from the very beginning . . .
>
> **Narrator-chronicler (self-consciously quoting a dissatisfied reader):** . . . and will only be annoyed with me for "wasting fruitless words and precious time."
>
> **Implied author (quoting his interlocutor's hypothetical quote):** To this I have a ready answer: I have been "wasting fruitless words and

[32] Dostoevsky, *Brothers Karamazov*, 4; 6.

precious time," first, out of politeness, and, second, out of cunning. At least I have given some warning beforehand.

Narrator-chronicler (quoting his interlocutor's earlier formulation): In fact, I am even glad that my novel broke itself into two stories "while preserving the essential unity of the whole . . ."

Implied narrator: . . . [Yes,] having acquainted himself with the first story, the reader can decide for himself whether it is worth his while to begin the second.

Narrator-chronicler (magnanimously): Of course, no one is bound by anything: he can also drop the book after two pages of the first story and never pick it up again.

Implied narrator (sardonically): But still there are readers of such delicacy that they will certainly want to read to the very end so as to make no mistake in their impartial judgment. Such, for instance, are all Russian critics.

Narrator-chronicler (picking up the same intonation): Faced with these people, I feel easier in my heart: for, in spite of their care and conscientiousness, I am nonetheless providing them with the most valid pretext for dropping the story at the first episode of the novel.

In unison: Well, that is the end of my foreword [*predislovie*]. I quite agree that it is superfluous, but since it is already written, let it stand. And now to business.[33]

One might divide the discourse differently than I have here. For example, it might be more appropriate to join the two where I have made them appear distinct, or to crisscross voices and content at different moments, or to dispense with the hierarchical relationship in which I have cast their parts. The point, however, is that at least two voices operate at the surface level in the foreword. And a second is that it serves the real author's purposes (disavowals aside) to embed these voices into the discourse at the outset of a sustained effort of serial publication on his part. But this begs important questions. What is the utility of the introduction? Does it serve the text in any useful manner, or does it remain merely superfluous—even with its vocal identities fleshed out? It is difficult, if not impossible (thank God), to answer

[33] Dostoevsky, *Brothers Karamazov*, 4; 6 (my ellipses).

these queries definitively, but some useful concluding remarks can be made.

Paraphrasing Genette, reading a text with an introduction (epigraph, dedication or other paratextual material) and reading the same text without one must necessarily represent quite different experiences.[34] Paratexts influence how we apprehend texts, and texts cast a large backshadow over their paratexts. Each in some measure influences the other, if disproportionately. In our example, the foreword serves to influence our first reading of the text in one direction, and on the occasion of subsequent readings, in quite another. A January 1879 reading is influenced by the claims initially discussed—Alyosha, hero, sequel. The introduction serves to highlight the design of the imminent text by clarifying the work's title—it is about the Karamazov brothers, true, but it anticipates an expansive treatment of only one of them, Alyosha, in the future. *The Brothers Karamazov* focuses most on the other brothers, Dmitry, Ivan, and in important thematic ways, Smerdyakov (if, indeed, he is a half brother) and, of course, Alyosha's spiritual father, Zosima. The foreword, on first reading, attempts to make this much clear. Or does it? Under the impress of dual speech (or the dramatized dialogue I've laid out), alternative renderings are also made possible.

The preface provides us with a fine example of double voicing in Dostoevsky as it replicates the key features of free indirect speech—third person narrative providing an impressionistic sample of the voice of a first person who has been stripped of both indirect and direct speech signs, i.e., inquit verbs or quotation marks. It may very well be that both perspectives and speech types given to us by the implied author and the narrator-chronicler represent the real Dostoevsky's deep-seated anxieties about the novel and represent simultaneously his enthusiasm for the massive themes he plans on developing in the course of the novel's serialization. The epitext certainly suggests these contrary emotions, especially Dostoevsky's letters written over the course of the novel's composition and publication month by month—with occasional lapses.[35] Free indirect speech gains Dostoevsky some distance from the

[34] Genette, *Paratexts*, 10–12.
[35] Todd, "Poetics of Serialization," 97.

responsibility that direct authorial address assumes in the author-reader contract that we have witnessed already in *The Diary of a Writer*.[36]

The quirks that arise from the narrator-chronicler's utterances must give us pause when considering the manner of mind that produces both *The Brothers Karamazov* and its foreword, wherein claims of a sequel can be questioned. The novel is justifiably famous, its depths unfathomable, its questions eternal, its problems intractable, and its impact unforgettable. Miracle it is, then, that the novice narrator is capable of transmitting "his" Volume One to us in the final form we have in hand. It goes without saying that the narrator's success has everything to do with the author himself. He frames his novel within the limitations of his narrator-chronicler, then explodes those limitations with his own virtuosity. Dostoevsky achieves this aesthetic effect, as many critics have noted, by dispensing with the pretense of a semi-personalized narrator after the first pages of the novel have been composed; I say "semi-" because most of what we have of the narrator-chronicler, his mind and emotions, is what we are presented in the introduction.[37] The narrator's occasional remarks within the text, either foreshadowing Volume Two (e.g., statements of the type "Alyosha would remember this for the rest of his life") or reflecting upon his inability to remember scenes and events exactly as they occurred, destabilize our reading. In Gogolian fashion, they both give to us and take away from us any confidence we might wish to have in him as mediator of first note. At a minimum, the introduction supplies a hint about the quality of his character. And with that small crust proffered, we consume the whole loaf.

But can this crust really nourish us? Are we left merely with the caution that we must be wary of narrators and their claims, especially Dostoevsky's? Or the truism that texts are always mediated? Are we forced to agree with the implied author's and narrator's joint summary judgment: "I quite agree that [the foreword] is superfluous . . ."? Enter the author. His irony drips.

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[36] Free indirect speech may also mask Dostoevsky's desires, one of which may have been to replicate Balzac, Hugo, and Zola in their multivolume projects. Genette argues that either modesty or its opposite can motivate complex fictional prefaces of the type encountered in *The Brothers Karamazov* (*Paratexts*, 207). In Dostoevsky's case, we find both anxiety and bravado.

[37] Vetlovskaia deduces some of the narrator's character from his speech genres (*Poetika romana "Brat'ia Karamazovy"* [Leningrad: Nauka, 1977], 13–51).

To appreciate just how unusual Dostoevsky's introduction is—not only for his own body of work, but for literature in general—we appeal again to Genette, who provides perspective on the matter. He produces an informal two-fold typology of prefaces in his *Paratexts*. We reviewed them at the outset of this study: authorial, allographic, and actorial; plus authentic, fictional, and apocryphal forms of these three types.[38] Dostoevsky almost exclusively uses the fictional varieties of authorial introduction. Once, in *Dead House*, we find an allographic foreword in his work, and the actorial form is activated surreptitiously in many of his works where the narrator also plays some indeterminate role in the plot. Despite Genette's scouring the literature, in no instance does he locate a preface that engages in a combination of these types simultaneously. Remarkably, Dostoevsky's does. His is a foreword that delivers readers a combination of a disavowing authorial prologue, a fictive allographic preface, and even a fictive actorial introduction. As Genette notes, all the subtypes normally represent distinct prefatorial subgenres that do not overlap.[39] Dostoevsky developed an introduction to *The Brothers Karamazov* by inviting his literary persona and fictional narrator-chronicler to perform the speech acts together in dialogic form, that is, as dramatized free indirect speech. As prefaces go, it is unique in the dramatic way it presents dual, even triple voicing.

It is not sufficient, however, to leave Dostoevsky's foreword to *The Brothers Karamazov* on a mere formal note. There is more to it than the virtuoso performance of several voices. The substance of the preface "From the Author" calls for something more than a depiction of its covert dialogue between authorial types—the master and the novice. It is of great import that the implied author's (the master's) mask slips in the introduction. We get a sneaking suspicion that the poor novice's insecurities are no more and no less than Dostoevsky's own. Authors run great risks when they subject their work to the judgment of diverse and independent audiences. It appears that great authors, too, can suffer such anxiety even in their very final "first words."

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[38] "Fictional actorial," Genette claims, is a redundancy (*Paratexts*, 178–179). Rather than using "fictional authorial," however, I think that "fictional actorial" is also apropos in describing the narrator-chronicler of *The Brothers Karamazov*. In this he is similar to Anton Lavrentievich in *Demons*.

[39] Genette, *Paratexts*, 184–188.