

READING BACKWARDS

An Advance Retrospective
on Russian Literature



EDITED BY MUIREANN MAGUIRE
AND TIMOTHY LANGEN



<https://www.openbookpublishers.com>

© 2021 Muireann Maguire and Timothy Langen. Copyright of individual chapters is maintained by the chapter's author.



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC BY 4.0). This license allows you to share, copy, distribute and transmit the work; to adapt the work and to make commercial use of the work providing attribution is made to the authors (but not in any way that suggests that they endorse you or your use of the work). Attribution should include the following information:

Muireann Maguire and Timothy Langen (eds), *Reading Backwards: An Advance Retrospective on Russian Literature*. Cambridge, UK: Open Book Publishers, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0241>

Copyright and permissions for the reuse of many of the images included in this publication differ from the above. This information is provided in the captions and in the list of illustrations.

In order to access detailed and updated information on the license, please visit <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0241#copyright>. Further details about CC BY licenses are available at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

All external links were active at the time of publication unless otherwise stated and have been archived via the Internet Archive Wayback Machine at <https://archive.org/web>

Digital material and resources associated with this volume are available at <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0241#resources>

Every effort has been made to identify and contact copyright holders and any omission or error will be corrected if notification is made to the publisher.

ISBN Paperback: 9781800641198

ISBN Hardback: 9781800641204

ISBN Digital (PDF): 9781800641211

ISBN Digital ebook (epub): 9781800641228

ISBN Digital ebook (mobi): 9781800641235

ISBN Digital (XML): 9781800641242

DOI: 10.11647/OBP.0241

Cover image: Nadezhda Udaltsova, *Mashinistka* (1910s). Wikimedia, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:N._Udaltsova_-_Typewriter_girl,_1910s.jpg, Public Domain.

Cover Design by Anna Gatti.

3. The Voice of Ivan: Ethical Plagiarism in Dostoevsky and Coetzee

Michael Bowden

Rosewater said an interesting thing to Billy one time [...]. He said that everything there was to be known about life was in *The Brothers Karamazov*, by Feodor Dostoevsky. 'But that isn't *enough* any more,' said Rosewater.

Kurt Vonnegut, *Slaughterhouse-Five, or The Children's Crusade*¹

The lines above, from Kurt Vonnegut Jr's *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969), illustrate the chronological tension inherent in the concept of anticipatory plagiarism. Rosewater, portrayed in the novel as an enlightened sage and authority on life, establishes Dostoevsky as a progenitor of that portrayal. In doing so, he allows readers to identify Vonnegut as one of the many authors influenced by Dostoevsky; or, in the parlance of the current collection, as one of the innumerable victims of Dostoevsky's considerable literary theft. By mentioning *The Brothers Karamazov* (*Brat'ia Karamazovy*, 1881), Vonnegut reinforces the chronological continuity between his literary forbear and the publication of his own novel in 1969. Anticipatory plagiarism inverts linear chronology without abandoning it: the shock of reading 'backwards' is found in its perversion of the convention of forward reading. Acknowledging Dostoevsky's influence on *Slaughterhouse-Five* allows the reader to interrogate Dostoevsky's anticipation, and subsequent plagiarism, of Vonnegut. It is an allowance likewise offered by J. M. Coetzee's *Diary of a Bad Year* (2007), which the main part of this paper will explore.

However, I turn first to the temporal convolutions of *Slaughterhouse Five* and their extreme illustration of Bayard's theme. Rosewater's remarks on *The Brothers Karamazov* establish a chronological break between Dostoevsky's and Vonnegut's respective contexts by calling attention to the transformation of axiological frameworks that correspond with the linear chronology that anticipatory plagiarism claims to subvert. Vonnegut's lines are axiological in nature: the implication is that 'everything to be known about life' refers to the values and principles by and through which an individual and/or a society can focalize its existence—values and principles that a society, as a prerequisite for further cultural discourse, accepts as incontestable. That *Slaughterhouse-Five*, underneath the complexity of its plot, is a denunciation of the 1945 firebombing of Dresden thus frames the axiological rupture in terms that are both chronological and ethical. By suggesting that the wisdom of *The Brothers Karamazov* 'isn't enough any more', Rosewater is claiming that the values and principles of 'life' in Dostoevsky's last novel are not only outdated but alien to a world that can destroy a city as a gesture against the threat of evil. Rosewater's words, and the context of their utterance, place Dostoevsky within an ethical tradition and then claim that the tradition has since collapsed. If Dostoevsky, as noted by Daphna Erdinast-Vulcan, wrote at an historical moment coinciding with 'the awakening of the modernist consciousness, the consciousness of an essentially secular world [...] without recourse to some metaphysical foundational premises', then this now-collapsed ethical tradition is readily identifiable as based within religious or philosophical absolutes, premised on either divine providence or the universalist claim of a moral tradition that reached its apotheosis in Kantian deontology.²

Anticipatory plagiarism's inherent tension evolves from this contrast between the chronological continuity necessary for its premise and the axiological permutations contained within that chronology. This essay will attempt to work through such tension by contending that Dostoevsky's own historical context stimulated his plagiarism of Coetzee, thereby consolidating Coetzee's invocation of Dostoevsky as an ethical authority with his recognition, in the manner of Rosewater, that the concept of an ethical authority is no longer 'enough' for a twenty-first-century context which has eschewed monologic authority in general. This consolidation thus allows for an interrogation of Dostoevsky's

plagiarism of Coetzee, exploring the ways in which Dostoevsky 'answers' the ethical crises portrayed in *Diary of a Bad Year*. Setting the Bayardian notion of anticipatory plagiarism in dynamic tension with the principle of historical specificity, I argue that Dostoevsky foresaw in his own era the dissolution of religious and philosophical absolutes that offered universalizing ethical edicts. His recognition of this trend, and his anticipation of its consequences, prompted his innovation of the 'polyphonic' novel (as later defined by Mikhail Bakhtin), a form which addresses the requirement for an ethics not dependent upon totalizing absolutes. Building upon the correlation between Bakhtin's study of Dostoevsky and his early ethical writings, I will argue that the polyphonic novel epitomizes the practice of 'answerability'. It thus exemplifies the intersubjective ethics called for by Bakhtin in response to the collapse of absolutist values. Dostoevsky anticipated the twenty-first century's demand for a dialogical understanding of ethics and addressed it through the polyphonic structure of his novels. Thus, Dostoevsky's plagiarism of Coetzee is contingent upon Coetzee's own historically immanent reading of Dostoevsky.

Literary Ahistory

Rosewater's brief reference to Dostoevsky serves as a paradigm for *Slaughterhouse-Five's* treatment of the interchange between chronological history and ethics. The novel abandons any semblance of linear progression, revealing its last line at the end of its first chapter (*Slaughterhouse*, p. 16). Instead, it conducts a dissection of the concept of linear time by using the horrors of Dresden as its axiological anchor. Its protagonist, Billy Pilgrim, is himself a time-traveller: it is suggested he has become 'unstuck in time' (*Slaughterhouse*, p. 17) as a result of psychosis brought about by his participation in the Dresden firebombing. As part of his pilgrimage between history and science fiction, Billy encounters an alien race, the Tralfamadorians, who perceive time as a static entity rather than a sequence of moments: for the Tralfamadorians, 'all moments, past, present, and future, always have existed, always will exist' (*Slaughterhouse*, p. 19).

The effect is to isolate and contrast a sense of temporal development with the stagnation of human development, particularly with regards

to the continued permittance and acceptance of atrocity on both an individual and global scale. Smaller moments of human vengeance and violence permeating the book function as microcosms of Dresden, and to each, as to Dresden, Billy offers the same absentminded aphorism: 'So it goes' (*Slaughterhouse*, p. 16). It is a statement shorn of ethical scrutiny, emphasized by the fact that Billy learns it from the Tralfamadarians, whose view of human life as 'bugs in amber' (*Slaughterhouse*, p. 62) means that they cannot mark the axiological shift engendered by an event such as Dresden.

As a counterweight to the Tralfamadorian perspective, *Slaughterhouse-Five* offers the biblical parable of Lot's wife, punished for refusing to obey a divine injunction not to look back on the destruction of Sodom. Yet for the unnamed narrator of the novel's opening chapter, which poses as a kind of author's introduction, it was precisely her need to look back that made her 'so human' (*Slaughterhouse*, p. 16). Vonnegut thus characterizes the ability to contain within oneself the simultaneous commitment to an ideology of progress and the refusal for ethical retrospection as archetypically inhuman. One would have to be an alien, or live in a fiction far removed from reality, to be so unable to look back. Yet *Slaughterhouse-Five* goes further than the condemnation of an incontestable ideal of progress. Its meandering plot, fantastical elements and frequent cartoonish illustrations signify not merely a shift of ethical perspective but the dead end of all axiological judgements in a manner akin to Adorno's infamous dictum on the barbarity of poetry after Auschwitz.³ *Slaughterhouse-Five*, displaying a typically postmodern 'incredulity towards metanarratives', suggests that traditional, pre-Dresden novel forms and the axiological contexts they consummated are incompatible with a post-Dresden reality.⁴ The 'introduction' itself admits that the novel is 'jumbled and jangled' because 'there is nothing intelligent to say about a massacre [...]. Everything is supposed to be very quiet after a massacre' (*Slaughterhouse*, p. 14). The criteria for ethical judgement have not been relocated but abolished.

The cumulative effect of *Slaughterhouse-Five's* treatment of time is to destabilize the opposition between chronological progression and atemporal values. Typified by Rosewater's authoritative denunciation of axiological authority, the novel works to disorient the applicability of a set of values and principles, ethical or otherwise, divorced from

their historical context. And the reference to *The Brothers Karamazov* in particular strips Dostoevsky's final novel of its axiological weight. Whether it be the universally applicable ethical precepts threatened by the relativism of 'everything is permitted', or the faith that the Elder Zosima and Alesha offer as a counterweight to Ivan's Grand Inquisitor, *Slaughterhouse-Five* uses Dostoevsky to query the validity of any ethical standard independent of its history. If the passage of time from pre- to post-Dresden changes Dostoevsky from an emblem of absolute plenitude to an inadequate partiality, the question is raised as to which other values, if any, can resist similar erosion.

In this respect, Rosewater's renunciation of *The Brothers Karamazov* as an absolute ethical measure stands in contrast with Bayard's investigation of the plagiarism of 'aesthetic territories'.⁵ Bayard, taking his cue from earlier Oulipo theorists who see literature in terms of its mathematical potential, expands upon their initial analyses of formal and structural plagiarism by proposing that authors can reach forward in time to plagiarize cultural relevance. In doing so, he confronts the temporal aporia of anticipatory plagiarism, the simultaneous reliance on and subversion of linear chronology, more directly than his predecessors. He offers Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* (429 BC) as an example of the plagiarism of an aesthetic territory: both the investigative structure and the psychoanalytic implications of the plot, rarely found in contemporaneous Greek theatre, serve as Bayard's evidence that Sophocles intuited both Freud and the modern detective novel. The 'twofold modernity' of *Oedipus Rex* can only mean 'that it is also posterior' to psychoanalysis and detective fiction. The creative force of the play suggests that Sophocles 'was already aware of both and knew how to take adroit advantage of each of them'.⁶

To overcome this tension, Bayard proposes two concurrent understandings of history, one chronological and the other literary. Literary history, where writers are based on formal, cultural or thematic similarities, disregards the linearity of chronological history and so allows for anticipatory plagiarism by displacing the 'overly rigid conception of time' that dominates literary studies.⁷ This subsequently situates authors 'at the crux of a dual temporality'.⁸ Yet Bayard, with the provocativeness characteristic of his Oulipo antecedents, calls for the abandonment of the chronological in favour of the literary. He even

alleges that 'situating a writer historically' is 'fundamentally useless' for literary understanding.⁹ Literary understanding need touch 'only lightly on historical reality'.¹⁰ The extreme implication of this theory, as Bayard admits, is that an author's true place in literary history can never be comprehensively known because the necessarily uncharted chronological future does not impinge upon the atemporality of literary history.¹¹

It is this atemporality which marks Bayard's literary time as distinctly Tralfamadorian and so in conflict with Rosewater's disinheritance of Dostoevsky as an axiological forbear. Literary time rendered (and isolated) thus would be unable to reflect upon the axiological shifts that run concurrent with the overt rigidity of chronological time, and so Rosewater's comments would impede Dostoevsky's capacity to 'respond' to post-Dresden writers such as Vonnegut and, even later, Coetzee. This difficulty plays into the significant flaw in Bayard's proposal: the fact that literary history is necessarily maintained by the chronological history it seeks to replace. This flaw is most evident when reading the influence of one author on another over an historical period in which momentous shifts in socio-cultural values occur. To claim, as Bayard does, that Sophocles plagiarized Freud is to identify implicitly the vast socio-cultural differences between Greece in BCE 400 and Vienna at the turn of the nineteenth century. The theory of anticipatory plagiarism implies the plagiarist has an extraordinary ability to reach across not only time but also over the socio-cultural values of different eras. To define chronological history as fundamentally useless to literary studies, as in the most provocative formulation of anticipatory plagiarism, robs this feat of important context. A fuller appreciation of anticipatory plagiarism takes into account the ways in which an author's place in an era outside of his or her own biographical history depends on its contrast with the era in which they actually lived. This element of contrast is vital to understanding Dostoevsky's plagiarism of Coetzee because it demands that Coetzee's historically immanent reading of Dostoevsky be recognized. Coetzee's explicit acknowledgement of Dostoevsky's influence over *Diary of a Bad Year* must be set against the novel's portrayal of a political and ethical crisis deeply rooted in the particularities of the early twenty-first century.

Learn to Speak Without Authority

Coetzee's most notable homage to Dostoevsky is his 1994 novel *The Master of Petersburg*, which uses a fictional version of the Russian writer as its protagonist to intensify the ideological conflict of *Demons* (*Besy*, 1872) (Coetzee's 'Dostoevsky' encounters and debates with Sergei Nechaev, the real-life prototype for Petr Verkhovenski), and then uses this conflict as a metaphor for the transgressive role of authors and artists. Though perhaps less known than *The Master of Petersburg*, *Diary of a Bad Year*, published thirteen years later, is an equally nuanced (albeit more subtle) tribute to Dostoevsky. Set in the early twenty-first century, like *Slaughterhouse-Five* it depicts a world suffering from a moral crisis following the collapse of absolute metaphysical/ethical foundations. Yet unlike Rosewater, *Diary's* protagonist, an elderly writer named 'C' who shares many biographical details with Coetzee, claims that Dostoevsky remains a source of ethical erudition for the present day: reading Dostoevsky, asserts C, makes him 'a better artist; and by better I do not mean more skilful but ethically better'.¹² As such, Coetzee's novella offers a staging ground for the investigation into Dostoevsky's anticipatory response to twenty-first-century ethics.

Diary combines a fictional plotline containing two narrative voices with a series of short essays on a range of topics such as politics, religion, art and language. Each page is split into two or three sections. The top section of the pages contains the essays, while the fictional narratives run underneath. For the first five essays there is only the first underlying narrative; from essay six onwards the pages are (for the most part) split into three. Moreover, the book as a whole is split into two parts: the dated 'Strong Opinions' and the undated 'Second Diary'.

The plot unfolds as an intertwining of the second and third narrative: it is revealed that C is the author of the second narrative, and that the third is voiced by Anya, a Filipina resident of C's building whom he hires as a typist in a covert attempt to seduce her. Anya is *Diary's* first, indirect allusion to Dostoevsky. Though uncommon in the Philippines, 'Anya' is a common Russian diminutive of 'Anna', the forename of Dostoevsky's second wife, who was originally his stenographer. In this respect, C's depiction as a writer in search of a stenographer suggests the historical

Dostoevsky even as the initial C evokes Coetzee, and this suggestion is reinforced by the final essay of the novella, 'On Dostoevsky', in which C discusses Book V, Chapter IV of *The Brothers Karamazov*.

C's essays offer *Diary's* most direct depiction of the political/ethical crises that afflict the twenty-first century. His opening essay, 'On the origins of the state', sets their dominant tone, premising that a democratic state, by imposing the necessity of political choice, at the outset undermines the very freedom it champions. Through similar lines of enquiry, C establishes a narrative role as a social diagnostician, lamenting the absence of a 'moral nobility' (*Diary*, p. 131) in the world as he sees it. Yet his inability to remedy societal ignobleness generates a sense of exasperated ire that extends through later essays such as 'On national shame', 'On Guantanamo Bay' and 'On the slaughter of animals'. These essays are direct criticisms of Western politics, principally of the Bush/Cheney administration and its allies in the Afghanistan and Iraq wars, although less overtly political essays still maintain the overarching tirade against twenty-first-century Western civilization. Even the more personal Second Diary maintains the 'pessimistic anarchistic quietism' of C's 'brand of political thought' (*Diary*, p. 203).

While establishing the tone of socio-political disparagement that characterizes the novel, 'On the origins of the state' also introduces another of *Diary's* significant themes: the recognition that striving for a 'supra-political discourse about politics' is 'futile' (*Diary*, p. 9). C's political despondency is augmented by the unfeasibility of a definitive political condemnation that is not in itself political, to such an extent that an embittered withdrawal from politics, his 'pessimistic quietism', becomes the only viable solution to his incapacity to critique the system without being complicit in its functioning. This discrepancy runs parallel with the political critique of the essays: throughout, C's desire to write on any subject is tempered by a scepticism that his writings can effect change, or that his position can be anything but hypocritical. He fears his '*lofty judgements*' will always be 'spurned as idealistic' and '*unrealistic*' [*italics in the original*] (*Diary*, p. 126) by those whom he judges, and he often expresses doubts in the validity of his own essays, even admitting that he was only seduced to publish by the 'opportunity to grumble in public' (*Diary*, p. 23).

Diary's consistent tension, therefore, is between C's desire, as an author, for his words to effect meaningful socio-political change,

and his scepticism about the possibility of such change. This tension is most clearly manifested as suspicion of authoritative narratives. Several critical responses to *Diary* have noted its uncertain stance with regards to an authoritative narrative voice: David Atwell's essay on *Diary* goes as far as to claim that the 'practice of authorship' is the novel's 'overriding subject'.¹³ Johan Geertsema highlights the subtle biographical heterogeneity between C and Coetzee to claim that *Diary* deliberately undercuts any political position it attempts to take, forging for itself 'an ironic nonposition' that would allow it to be politically critical without being political.¹⁴ Along similar lines, Peter McDonald characterizes the essays, in particular the more distinctly critical 'Strong Opinions' that form the first half of the novel, as 'semiparodic' and full of 'relentless equivocations'. Like Geertsema, McDonald builds upon the metafictional effect of Coetzee's avatar C to suggest that *Diary* distances itself from its own socio-political perspective, undermining its own narrative authority. McDonald concludes that *Diary* is 'Coetzee's most elaborate working out of his own discomfort with the expectations and anachronistic forms of authority thrust on him as a writer'.¹⁵

McDonald's use of 'anachronistic' illuminates Coetzee's literary influences because it reiterates the chronological tension of anticipatory plagiarism. The penultimate 'Strong Opinions' essay, 'On authority in fiction', discusses Tolstoy, thus counterpointing the final essay in the *Second Diary* on Dostoevsky. It contrasts Tolstoy's 'exemplary' skill 'at building authority' with a Barthesian/Foucauldian discussion 'of the death of the author and of authorship' (*Diary*, p. 149). Paraphrasing post-structuralist literary theory as 'the claim that the authority of the author has never amounted to anything more than a bagful of rhetorical tricks' (ibid.), C expresses the specific challenge faced by twenty-first-century writers with a maxim cited from Kierkegaard, '*Learn to speak without authority*' (*Diary*, p. 151). Tolstoy is offered as an example of a 'great author' whose rhetorical ability was powerful enough to engender a sense that he was 'an authority on life, a wise man, a sage'; whereas the post-structural interrogation of rhetorically manufactured authority exposed great authors as 'otherwise ordinary men with ordinary, fallible opinions' (ibid.). In the manner of Rosewater's reading of *The Brothers Karamazov*, the sense of an historical transition between a bygone era and the present day is framed in terms of declining trust in authoritative narratives.

C's remarks on Tolstoy echo an interview with Atwell that Coetzee made over fifteen years earlier. Looking back on his 1985 study 'Confession and Double Thoughts', Coetzee said that the essay 'came out of a rereading of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, two novelists for whom my admiration remains undimmed'.¹⁶ Coetzee's acclaim for both writers in a 1990 interview and C's reverence for 'the master Tolstoy on the one hand and [...] the master Dostoevsky on the other' (*Diary*, p. 227) make a notable parallel, especially when examined in the light of Coetzee's further clarification:

I read them on what I take to be their own terms, that is, in terms of their power to tell the truth as well as to subvert secular skepticism about truth [...]. If there is a sense in which my reading of them 'on their own terms' is not simply a repeat of the reading they were accorded in the West during their own day [...] it lies in treating them as men who not only *lived through* the philosophical debates of their day [...], but also were heirs of a Christian tradition more vital, in some respects, than Western Christianity.¹⁷

Coetzee expresses concern that reading Dostoevsky and Tolstoy in order to subvert scepticism about 'truth' is merely to revert to a late nineteenth-century context, one in which such scepticism is a distinct, but not dominant, ideological position. This concern implies that the 'terms' of authors like Tolstoy and Dostoevsky are not necessarily applicable outside of their contextual value system. Contrary to the divorce of text and context implicit in Bayard's 'literary time', Coetzee's concern is centred upon the distinct socio-cultural diversities at play during the period in which Dostoevsky and Tolstoy wrote and were read. If their power to 'tell the truth' were somehow diminished, or alternatively if they were simply unable to subvert cynical attitudes towards 'truth', particularly religious truth, the 'terms' of Dostoevsky or Tolstoy would be drained of semantic value. Coetzee's response thus reiterates Rosewater's claim that Dostoevsky, post-Dresden, is not 'enough any more'.

It is precisely this sense of scepticism towards the 'truth' of a bygone era that drives both C's ire, his so-called 'Strong Opinions' offered from the perspective of 'old people' who recognize that the 'animating principles' of the nineteenth century are 'dead and cannot be revived' (*Diary*, p. 134), and the textual relationship between C, Anya and

Anya's partner, a neoliberal investment consultant named Alan. The most prominent example of this ethical-temporal linkage appears in the essay 'On Machiavelli' (*Diary*, pp. 17–18), which most clearly delineates an historical transition between an 'old, pre-Machiavellian position' and 'the modern state' in moral/ethical terms. C asserts that the pre-Machiavellian position is the supremacy of moral absolutes, something he conflates with 'the absolute claims of the Christian ethic'. The Machiavellian position, whilst not denying moral absolutes, simultaneously upholds moral relativism. It is analogous (both chronologically and ideologically) to the moral dualism of the Grand Inquisitor. When C claims, therefore, that 'the quintessence of the Machiavellian' is now the quintessence of the modern state, he depicts a world in which Dostoevsky's ideological opposition to the Grand Inquisitor's moral casuistry has lost its capacity to influence 'the man on the street'. 'If you wish to counter the man on the street', writes C, 'it cannot be by appeal to moral principles' (*Diary*, p. 18).

Anya and Alan thus come to represent the people 'on the street' at odds with C's outdated worldviews and cynical of his despair for the decline of his authorial authority. The contrast is developed through Anya's role as C's typist and eventual confidante: it is through her persuasion that he reflects upon how 'alien and antiquated' his views appear to 'thoroughly modern' (*Diary*, p. 137) readers and so begins his Second Diary. Yet the more significant antagonism is established between C and Alan. Alan's neoliberal outlook sees the world as consisting of 'two dimensions': an 'individual dimension' and an 'economic dimension' (*Diary*, p. 79) that transcends the individual. He believes in a type of '[n]atural justice', in which the individual must 'balance the pluses against the minuses and decide' (*Diary*, p. 91) on a course of action.¹⁸ Reinforcing the sense of historical distance between C and himself, he ridicules C's world view as a 'morality play', with the battle of 'good versus evil' at the centre. The market, however, 'transcends individual motives, transcends good and evil' (*Diary*, p. 97). C's moral understanding thus 'comes from another world, another era. The modern world is beyond him'. Even if in the individual dimension maliciousness is the primary catalyst for action, individual motives are just 'vectors of the matrix' that are 'evened out in the long run'. The market Alan believes in 'is beyond good and evil, like Nietzsche said' (*Diary*, p. 98).

At the Crux of a Dual Temporality

Alan's allusion to Nietzsche thus reinforces the sense of an historical transition between adherence to the authority of absolute principles and the collapse of such principles that epitomizes the modern world. It effectively establishes a timeline from the 1880s, when both *The Brothers Karamazov* (1881) and *Beyond Good and Evil* (*Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, 1886) were published, to the novel's present day, which includes the disintegration of C's 'old world' (*Diary*, p. 20) and the amoral egoism typified by Alan's neoliberal convictions. Nietzsche's critique of both religion and Kantian deontology in *Beyond Good and Evil* represents for Alan the divorce from, or overcoming of, both the 'absolute claims of a Christian ethic' and the universality of rational moral law.¹⁹ Towards the end of the novel, Alan mockingly compares C with 'sages with white beards' (*Diary*, p. 207), reminding readers of C's earlier description of Tolstoy. It also resembles remarks Coetzee made in an interview just after winning the 2003 Nobel Prize in Literature. Coetzee expressed his unease perceiving writers as people 'who could offer an authoritative word on our times as well as on our moral life'. It was, claimed Coetzee, perhaps appropriate when the Nobel Prize for Literature was first inaugurated to perceive the writer as 'a sage', but the idea is 'pretty much dead today'.²⁰ In dismissing the authoritative sage as 'pretty much dead today' (just as the animating principles of the nineteenth century are dead), Coetzee aligns himself with Alan even whilst presenting a fictional variant of himself as Alan's ideological opponent.

The interplay between C's literary influences and his condemnation of the amorality of the twenty-first century positions the novel at the crux of a dual temporality, whereby chronological history cannot be abandoned in favour of literary history. On the one hand, C is employed as an authoritative narrative voice, in the manner of the 'great authors' of a prior generation, who upholds 'the argument that the past was better than the present' (*Diary*, p. 77). On the other, the present that C condemns is characterized by a cynicism towards authoritative narrative voices. C both is and is not part of *Diary's* present day. He denounces the specificities of the twenty-first century, yet the axiological framework upon which his denunciation is built has grown redundant. He tries and fails to apply pre-Nietzschean judgements to a post-Dresden world: his

worldview represents everything that used to be known about life. Even as the novel reaches backwards towards the masters Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, even as transhistorical literary time is invoked, the phenomenon of declining or redundant values and principles suggests that a unidirectional temporality is a fundamental aspect of the novel.

An analysis of the ways in which Dostoevsky can be said to respond to Coetzee must be filtered through ways in which chronological time and literary time affect each other. It must, like *Slaughterhouse-Five*, contain within itself both the Tralfamadorian and generational experiences of time, must hold itself at the crux of a dual temporality in which looking back and looking forward are equivalent. A Tralfamadorian perspective on time would see both *The Brothers Karamazov* and *Diary of a Bad Year* as equally capable of responding to the crisis of valuation presented by *Slaughterhouse-Five*, and thus could seek to read the ways in which Dostoevsky and Coetzee react to the denunciation of authority mentioned by Rosewater and embodied by C. And if *Diary* portrays Tolstoy as the epitome of authorial authority, the way that *Diary* works to distinguish Tolstoy and Dostoevsky offers an avenue for reading Dostoevsky's plagiarism of Coetzee.

The Voice of Ivan

Though Dostoevsky and Tolstoy are both hailed by C as 'masters', a term which evokes authoritative sages preaching now-redundant moral absolutes, the phrasing of C's commendation, separating Tolstoy 'on the one hand' from Dostoevsky 'on the other', suggests that C understands them to be diametrically opposite even whilst identifying both as literary authorities. The suggestion is further reinforced by the way the respective essays on them are counterposed: if Tolstoy is the master at building 'authority in fiction', Dostoevsky's mastery implicitly refers to something other than the rhetorical authoritativeness eschewed by the modern world. The biographical overlap between Dostoevsky and C, combined with the prominent positioning of 'On Dostoevsky', puts significant focus on Dostoevsky in relation to *Diary's* impasse between literary influence and the historically effected axiological irrelevance of the influencers.

'On Dostoevsky' confirms that *Diary's* juxtaposition of Dostoevsky and Tolstoy is framed in terms of rhetorical authoritativeness. C relates how a rereading of the 'Pro and Contra' book of *The Brothers Karamazov*, specifically Ivan's rejection of theodicy in Chapter IV, leaves him 'sobbing uncontrollably' (*Diary*, p. 223).²¹ Although C disagrees with 'Ivan's rather vengeful views', arguing instead that the Sermon on the Mount's entreaty to turn the other cheek is 'the greatest of all contributions to political ethics', he is nevertheless reduced to tears by Ivan's argument 'in spite of myself' (*Diary*, p. 224). The reason, C writes, is 'nothing to do with ethics or politics, everything to do with rhetoric' (*Diary*, p. 225).

Though C's argument echoes his praise for Tolstoy's rhetorical tricks, 'On Dostoevsky' indicates an evolution in *Diary's* use of the term 'rhetoric'. The authority Tolstoy was so adept at building was embedded in the seemingly 'natural' quality of his prose, in the way it 'concealed its rhetorical artistry so well' (*Diary*, p. 150). Dostoevsky lacks such artistry: C derides Ivan for the way he 'shamelessly uses sentiment (martyred children) and caricature (cruel landowners) to advance his ends' (*Diary*, p. 225). Dostoevsky's literary mastery is not based upon the effectiveness of his rhetorical artistry, the kind of artistry characterized by Tolstoy's authorial authority. Dostoevsky's skill lies in, for example, the effectiveness of Ivan's rhetorical passion. The tendency of Ivan's 'Euclidean mind' (*BK*, p. 235) towards rationalization (prompting his notion of the Grand Inquisitor) is in many ways a chronological precursor to Alan's market-driven amorality.²² That C focuses his essay on Ivan thus exemplifies how Dostoevsky's mastery is diametrically opposed to the narrative authority of Tolstoy: C's ethical position is antithetical to the specious arguments of the Grand Inquisitor. Indeed, it is not Ivan's 'reasoning' that moves C: the 'substance of his argument [...] is not strong'. It is instead the 'accents of anguish' in Ivan's argument that affect C. It is 'the voice of Ivan, as realized by Dostoevsky [...], that sweeps me along' (*Diary*, p. 225).

'Reasoning' in this respect can be said to represent the authoritativeness of a solitary ideological truth. It is tantamount to the 'absolute claims' of divine providence or Kantian deontology. The juxtaposition of 'reasoning' and 'voice' suggests that Dostoevsky's value to *Diary's* historically immanent ethical position, the focal point of his ethical influence, is located in his renunciation of absolute narrative authority.

In his interview with Atwell, Coetzee offered a twofold methodology to avoid repeating the reading Dostoevsky was afforded in his own day: to treat him as an author who lived through the philosophical debates of his day, and as an heir to a vital Christian tradition. Both 'lived through' and 'vital' insinuate that the tradition, as Coetzee understands it, is not based upon a rigorous adherence to absolute dictates. It is instead one that engages in debate, that allows itself to influence and be influenced by the context of its practice. C expresses his 'shock' that 'Dostoevsky, a follower of Christ, could allow Ivan such powerful words' (*Diary*, p. 226). The vitality of the Dostoevskian tradition that impresses upon *Diary's* ethics, then, is one that shows responsibility for its antagonists. It allows for the articulation of antagonistic voices.

The use of the word 'voice' recalls Bakhtin's theorization of the polyphonic (i.e. 'many-voiced') structure of Dostoevsky's novels. C effectively reiterates Bakhtin's seminal explication of Dostoevskian polyphony as '*a plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses*' that are '*not only objects of authorial discourse but also subjects of their own directly signifying discourse*'.²³ Ivan's atheism typifies him as one of Dostoevsky's '*free people, capable of standing alongside their creator, capable of not agreeing with him*'. Conversely, the 'monologic' novel articulates only '*a single authorial consciousness*', wherein characters serve '*as a vehicle for the author's own ideological position*'.²⁴

The polyphonic novel, then, is neither an exertion nor imposition of an authorial voice, but a renunciation of absolute narrative authority to allow for a multiplicity of co-existing and competing discourses. It exists as an event through the co-existence of heterogenous voices. Narrative authority can be equated with monologism: *Diary* lends weight to this equation by contrasting Dostoevsky with Tolstoy, the novelist most frequently offered by Bakhtin as the epitome of monologism.²⁵ And Bakhtin likewise perceives the most precise expression of monologism to be 'idealistic philosophy', specifically the absolutism of German idealism directly influenced by Kantian deontology. Referencing the 'absolute *I*' or 'normative consciousness' of Hegelian philosophy, Bakhtin critiques the 'monistic principle' of idealism that, by converting the 'monism of existence into the monologism of consciousness', inevitably transforms existence '*into the unity of a single consciousness*'.²⁶

Russia's Crisis of Modernization

In Bakhtin's view, philosophical or religious edicts based in universal absolutes are isolated by the 'ethical solipsism' of monologic authority.²⁷ The polyphony of Dostoevsky's later novels overcomes monologic solipsism by basing its ethics in the event of being that can only ever be an event of co-being (Bakhtin's *sobytie*).²⁸ This is what makes C an 'ethically better' artist by reading Dostoevsky: the polyphonic novel offers a prototype for overcoming the incompatibility of universally applicable ethical absolutes in a twenty-first-century context. Moreover, the disposition to understand polyphony in ethical terms is a consequence of Dostoevsky's own particular historical era, something Coetzee elaborates on in a 1995 review of Joseph Frank's *Dostoevsky: The Miraculous Years*. This review offers evidence for the conflation of a dual temporality when reading for ways in which Dostoevsky responds to Coetzee, in that it identifies how Dostoevskian ethics were formed in reaction to his historical context. In it, Coetzee diagnoses a common theme of Dostoevsky's late novels: they conduct 'a searching interrogation of Reason – the Reason of the Enlightenment – as the basis for a good society'. Coetzee claims the reason for the intensity of this interrogation was Dostoevsky's unique position 'at the very center of an historical crisis, Russia's crisis of modernization', and the consequence of this crisis was the emergence of the 'amoral egoism and proto-Nietzschean self-deification' of Russian nihilism.²⁹

Although Coetzee borrows 'proto-Nietzschean' from Frank's biography, the association he makes between the historical crisis of Dostoevsky's era and, through Alan, the amoral egoism of the 'modern state' (*Diary*, p. 99) seems too methodical to be mere coincidence.³⁰ Coetzee's accusation is that Alan's renunciation of individual morality (tantamount to 'self-deification', the belief that one may with impunity benefit one's own interests to the detriment of others) has its roots in the axiological shift typified by Nietzsche's critique of Enlightenment Reason: it was this shift, coterminous with Dostoevsky's later writing, that allowed for the amalgamation of Machiavellian and modern quintessence.

Dostoevsky's anticipation of the post-Nietzschean amorality of the modern world, as Coetzee relates it, came from his engagement

with the ideological conflicts of his own era. He perceived traditional ethical absolutes as constraints on moral egoism, and his 'eschatological imagination' foresaw that declining belief in both divine providence and Enlightenment Reason would lead to Nietzschean self-aggrandizement (and its correlate forsaking of others) that 'would culminate in the Bolshevik takeover of 1917'.³¹ A section of Coetzee's review laments Frank's sparse discussion of Bakhtin because it 'loses an opportunity' to compare the polyphonic structure with Dostoevsky's 'most radical intellectual and even spiritual courage'.³² It is precisely such courage that shocks C: the courage to give 'fully valid voices' to his ideological antagonists.³³ 'Dostoevskian dialogism', writes Coetzee, 'grows out of Dostoevsky's own moral character'.³⁴ Dostoevsky's development of the polyphonic novel structure can therefore be seen as an ethical response to the amoral egoism emerging from the decline of monistic ethical principles.³⁵ Coetzee's subsequent claim that Bakhtin 'leaves out' the ethical implications of the polyphonic structure must accordingly be modified through a comparison of *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (*Problemi poetiki Dostoevskogo*, 1963) with Bakhtin's ethical writings, in particular, the notion of 'answerability' proposed in the early fragments known collectively as *Towards a Philosophy of the Act*.³⁶ The compatibility of Bakhtinian answerability and the multivocality of Dostoevsky's novels elucidates the ethical dynamic of the polyphonic narrative structure.³⁷

Bakhtin's ethics in *Philosophy of the Act*, like his theorization of narrative polyphony, was established in opposition to 'formal ethics of Kant and the Kantians': as such, it proposes the kind of ethical response to the historical crisis of modernization that is missing from proto-Nietzschean amorality.³⁸ Stating that Kantian formal ethical principles offered 'no approach to a living act performed in the real world', his aim was to reconcile an ethical 'ought' with what he termed the 'once occurrent-moment in Being-as-event', the actuality of a subject in an isolated moment of space and time.³⁹ The ethical ought of Kantian deontology abstracts individuals into 'autonomous laws', thus negating them 'as individually and answerably active human beings'.⁴⁰

Answerability is, then, a fundamental component of co-being. It is inherent in the 'central emotional-volitional moments' that constitute the subject's once-occurrent moment of Being: 'I, the other, and I-for-the-other'.⁴¹ In the event of co-being, answerability arises as a faculty

of the subject's capacity to answer. The cognitive function of language thus presupposes its discursive function. Subjectivity originates from discursive interaction with others. As a consequence, therefore, of their directly signifying subjectivity, characters in a polyphonic novel are imbued with an answerability to others.

Bakhtin's theorization of deontological ethics as an abstraction of the individual's once-occurrent moment of Being, and his resultant venture to source such ethics in the once-occurrent moment of Being (which can only ever be an event of co-being), has its parallel in the ethics of Dostoevsky's late novels, if such ethics can be divorced from their affiliation with a metaphysical presence. In *The Brothers Karamazov*, for example, the distinction between Madame Khokhlakov's theoretical love for 'mankind in general' (*BK*, p. 57) and the 'active love' (*BK*, p. 56) of intersubjective relations advocated by Zosima testifies precisely to the capacity of a speaking subject to breach ethical abstraction. Khokhlakov's fantasy of renouncing her possessions and becoming a sister of mercy is sustained only by the promise of 'a return of love for my love' (*BK*, p. 57). It is sustained only within the confines of her cognition. The possibility of ingratitude on behalf of those she helps would breach the security of a subjective position that constitutes universal, ethical abstractions. The active answerability of 'people in particular' maintains the capacity to breach formal ethical principles applicable to 'mankind in general' (*BK*, p. 57). The speaking subject, as theorized by Bakhtin, is presupposed by the cognition of the words it speaks. It is never final, never complete. Its subjectivity is contingent on the emotional-volitional moments of its once-occurrent moment in Being (reconceiving 'Being' as a process of becoming rather than a cognized state). The character in a polyphonic novel that reveals '*that internally unfinalizable something in man*' thus corresponds with the Bakhtinian theorization of subjectivity.⁴²

The ethical dynamic of such subjectivity is contingent on its being subject to the call of the other. Bakhtin found in the very existence of the dialogic relation the ethical transcendence of monologic absolutism. He saw religious/philosophical edicts as impositions on the 'unfinalizability' of a subject in its once-occurrent moment of Being/becoming. Consequently, he theorized an ethical relation consisting of once-occurrent answerability *for* the other, founded on the capacity to answer *to* the other. And this is an ethical theory made manifest by the

polyphonic novel structure. Any particular character in a polyphonic novel is presupposed by the event of co-being that comprises the novel form. For a 'genuine polyphony of fully valid voices' to emerge, an individual voice must always-already be in answer to other voices.⁴³ Therefore, each individual character is answerable for the existence of the polyphonic novel form (and thus the other characters within it), by virtue of its capacity to answer.

Ethically Better

The polyphonic novel form, in this sense, becomes an archetype for the ethical foundations of subjectivity: as subjects are constituted by and through language, so the polyphonic character transpires by and through dialogic relations with other polyphonic characters. This is the elemental trait of Dostoevskian polyphony. In *The Brothers Karamazov*, for instance, Alesha Karamazov's dialogic interaction with his brother during the 'Rebellion' chapter plays out during a later scene with the cynical seminarian Rakitin, who torments Alesha following Zosima's death and bodily corruption. Rakitin tells Alesha he has rebelled against God in his anger at his master's death. Alesha responds, 'I do not rebel against my God, I simply "do not accept his world"' (*BK*, p. 341).

His repetition of words previously said by Ivan (*BK*, p. 253) disrupts any attempt to monologize his character as the finalized articulation of an idea-consciousness. Rakitin himself cannot comprehend Ivan's words in Alesha's mouth. He claims them to be 'gibberish' (*BK*, p. 341) because his cognition of the world, with its resultant understanding of Alesha as a distinct and finalized being, is at this moment breached. Alesha here is in a period of transition, and that transition is wrought through dialogic encounters with others. Alesha's words are on the threshold between his consciousness and Ivan's. Each encounters the other in a once-occurrent event of Being, and so neither character's thought is finalized, nor is their relationship reduced to one of dialectical opposition.

The dialogic interaction between *Diary's* characters mirrors this type of relationship. It is through C's dialogic interactions with Anya that he comes to write the Second Diary, and his underlying narrative even ends with a letter from her. Likewise, Anya is constituted by and through her interactions with C. As the novel progresses, she passes from feeling

'crushed between [Alan] and Señor C, between hard certainties [...] and hard opinions' (*Diary*, p. 109) to a rejection of Alan's egoism and a sense of responsibility for C's wellbeing. Though Anya initially rejects dialogic engagement with either C or Alan, preferring instead to 'withdraw and go off by myself' (*ibid.*), by the end of the novel she has decidedly parted from Alan and plans to care for C during his final days. Her sense of responsibility for him grows from her initial commitment to respond to him.

Furthermore, the fragmented structure of *Diary of a Bad Year* can be understood both as a challenge to a unifying, authorial authority, and, from a perspective based in chronological history, as a structural identification with (perhaps even homage to) the polyphonic novel form. C, who recognizes the death of the animating principles of monologic authority, also recognizes Dostoevsky as an 'ethically better' author because polyphony renounces such authority, precisely because the author of the polyphonic novel speaks as one voice amongst a plurality of independent and unmerged voices. The way *Diary* works to undercut C's own narrative authority becomes testament to the way that the polyphonic structure befits the ethics of the modern age. This is further evidenced by the fact that the final essay of the 'Strong Opinions' series, following that on Tolstoy's rhetorical mastery, is the sole essay in the entire novel unmatched by a counter-narrative. It is titled 'On the afterlife'. While not announcing the 'death of the author', *Diary* does pronounce here the death of monologic authority, at least as an interrelationship of ideas that gravitate towards a single consciousness. Dostoevsky masters his ethical 'authority' only by renouncing his monologic authority, only by allowing Ivan such powerful words.

This renunciation of authorial authority in Dostoevskian polyphony forms the basis for an analysis of the interaction between Dostoevsky and Coetzee that occurs in literary time, and consequently offers evidence of Dostoevsky's anticipatory plagiarism. Yet it is contingent upon Dostoevsky's anticipation of an axiological deviation from stable metaphysical/ethical foundations that very much takes place in chronological history: both Dostoevsky and Coetzee are responding to the historical circumstances that led Rosewater to proclaim Dostoevsky not enough anymore. To make that claim is to invalidate Dostoevsky's putative plagiarism: if Dostoevskian ethics are incompatible with the

world after Dresden, post-Dresden ethics are necessarily incompatible with a Dostoevskian context. One possible extension of the Oulipo theory of potential literature, on which Bayard's anticipatory plagiarism is based, is that every text has already been written, and this potential would ultimately nullify the lament of chronological rupture made by Vonnegut's *Rosewater*. It would be nonsensical to claim that *The Brothers Karamazov* is not enough anymore. It either will always be 'enough', or else it never has been.

Any theory of anticipatory plagiarism, in order to allow for axiological variations, must hold itself at the crux of Bayard's dual temporality, accounting for both the chronological time of Lot's wife and the simultaneity of the Tralfamadorians. Anticipating a future where universalizing moral edicts would no longer be enough, Dostoevsky plagiarized Vonnegut, Coetzee, and Bakhtin in prose that foreshadowed the significance of ethical dialogism to the early twenty-first century. That act of plagiarism was dependent on Dostoevsky's historical position: in the white heat of Russia's crisis of modernization, he chose to relinquish monistic narrative authority for the ethical dynamic of narrative polyphony. He relinquished 'reasoning' for 'voice'. Coetzee's reception of Dostoevsky is likewise contingent on Coetzee's own historical position. The ethical dynamic of the polyphonic narrative structure anticipates the specific moral issues of Western society at the beginning of the twenty-first century, as they are presented and addressed by Coetzee. It is the distinctiveness in chronological history between Dostoevsky and Coetzee that allows for each one's plagiarism of the other in literary history.

Notes

- 1 Kurt Vonnegut, *Slaughterhouse-Five, or The Children's Crusade* (London: Vintage, 2000), p. 73. Hereafter cited parenthetically in-text.
- 2 Daphna Erdinast-Vulcan, *Between Philosophy and Literature: Bakhtin and the Question of the Subject* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013), p. 36, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780804788397>. For more on Dostoevsky's relation to the historical moment of modernism, see Joseph Frank's abridged biography, *Dostoevsky: A Writer in His Time* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2010), particularly chapter 25, 'Portrait of a Nihilist' (pp. 341–57), <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400833412>. For a comparative essay on Dostoevsky's novels and Kantian deontology, see R. Maurice Barineau, 'The Triumph of Ethics over Doubt: Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*', *Christianity and Literature*, 43:3–4 (1994), 375–92, <https://doi.org/10.1177/014833319404300311>. For an overview of the modernist turn from religious/ethical absolutes, see Zygmunt Bauman's 'Introduction', in his *Postmodern Ethics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), pp. 1–15.
- 3 Theodore Adorno, 'Cultural Criticism and Society', in *Prisms*, trans. by Samuel and Shierry Weber (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1983), pp. 17–34 (p. 34), <https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/5570.003.0004>.
- 4 Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. by Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), p. xxiv.
- 5 I have cited Jeffrey Mehlman's translation of excerpts from Pierre Bayard's *Le Plagiat par anticipation*, as 'Anticipatory Plagiarism' in *New Literary History*, 44:2 (2013), 231–50 (p. 249). The original may be found in Pierre Bayard, *Le Plagiat par anticipation* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 2009), p. 148.
- 6 Bayard, 'Anticipatory Plagiarism', p. 233; *Le Plagiat*, p. 108. Other examples offered by Bayard include the characteristically postmodern formal playfulness of Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* (1767) and the bureaucratic depersonalization, common to genocide literature, that pervades Kafka's writings.
- 7 Bayard, 'Anticipatory Plagiarism', p. 231; *Le Plagiat*, p. 105.
- 8 Bayard, 'Anticipatory Plagiarism', p. 244; *Le Plagiat*, p. 136.
- 9 Bayard, 'Anticipatory Plagiarism', p. 233; *Le Plagiat*, p. 109.
- 10 Bayard, 'Anticipatory Plagiarism', p. 241; *Le Plagiat*, p. 122.

- 11 For example, Bayard writes 'it is never possible to be absolutely certain in identifying future writers'. See 'Anticipatory Plagiarism', p. 248; *Le Plagiat*, p. 148.
- 12 J. M. Coetzee, *Diary of a Bad Year* (London: Vintage, 2008), p. 227. Hereafter cited parenthetically in-text. Though this essay will focus primarily on *Diary's* relation to *The Brothers Karamazov*, it is worth noting that interplay between political critique and fictional narrative features in both *Diary of a Writer* and *Notes from Underground*.
- 13 David Atwell, 'Mastering authority: J. M. Coetzee's *Diary of a Bad Year*', *Social Dynamics*, 36:1 (2010), 214–21 (p. 217), <https://doi.org/10.1080/02533950903562575>.
- 14 Johan Geertsema, 'Coetzee's *Diary of a Bad Year*, Politics, and the Problem of Position', *Twentieth Century Literature*, 57:1 (2011), 70–85 (p. 80), <https://doi.org/10.1215/0041462x-2011-2006>.
- 15 Peter D. McDonald, 'The Ethics of Reading and the Question of the Novel: The Challenge of J. M. Coetzee's *Diary of a Bad Year*', *NOVEL: A Forum of Fiction*, 43:3 (2010), 483–99 (p. 496), <https://doi.org/10.1215/00295132-2010-026>.
- 16 J. M. Coetzee, *Doubling the Point: Essays and Interviews*, ed. by David Atwell (London: Harvard University Press, 1992), p. 243.
- 17 *Ibid.*, pp. 243–44.
- 18 The ideological antagonism between Cand and Alan, in this regard, is reminiscent of that between the Underground Man and the Chernyshevskian ideals he decries. Alan is almost a paradigm of the formulaic 'two times two is four' principles that the Underground Man fears are 'no longer life [...] but the beginning of death.' See Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*, trans. by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (London: Everyman, 2004), p. 32.
- 19 Erdinast-Vulcan indeed correlates the awakening of a modernist consciousness with a 'post-Nietzschean world'. *Between Philosophy and Literature*, p. 36.
- 20 Coetzee's words are quoted in McDonald's 'The Ethics of Reading', p. 496.
- 21 Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, trans. by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (London: Vintage, 2004). Hereafter cited parenthetically in-text (as *BK*). Pevear and Volokhonsky translate the title of this chapter 'Rebellion'.

- 22 The theoretical overlap between Ivan and Nietzsche, especially between their respective iterations of 'everything is permitted', is reviewed and commented upon by Paolo Stellino in his *Nietzsche and Dostoevsky: On the Verge of Nihilism* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2015), pp. 143–230, <https://doi.org/10.3726/978-3-0351-0860-6>.
- 23 Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, ed. and trans. by Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), pp. 6–7 [Italics in the original], <https://doi.org/10.5749/j.ctt22727z1>.
- 24 Ibid., p. 6 and p. 7.
- 25 Bakhtin writes: 'A second, autonomous voice (alongside the author's voice) does not appear in Tolstoy's world.' Ibid., p. 56.
- 26 Ibid., pp. 80–81.
- 27 Ibid., p. 10.
- 28 See Caryl Emerson's discussion of this term in a footnote to *ibid.*, p. 7.
- 29 Coetzee, 'The Artist at High Tide: Review of Joseph Frank's *Dostoevsky: The Miraculous Years, 1865–1871*', *New York Review of Books*, 2 March 1995, p. 14.
- 30 See Joseph Frank, *Dostoevsky: The Miraculous Years, 1865–1871* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), p. 101, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780691209371>.
- 31 Coetzee, 'The Artist at High Tide', p. 14. Again, 'eschatological imagination' seems to have been borrowed from Frank.
- 32 Ibid., p. 15.
- 33 Bakhtin, *Dostoevsky's Poetics*, p. 6.
- 34 Coetzee, 'The Artist at High Tide', p. 16.
- 35 Though Bakhtin calls Dostoevsky 'the creator of the polyphonic novel' (*Dostoevsky's Poetics*, p. 6), he acknowledges polyphony's debt to the carnival elements of Menippean satire.
- 36 Coetzee, 'The Artist at High Tide', p. 16.
- 37 Sarah Young has explored the possibility of narrative ethics in Dostoevsky in her study of *The Idiot*. However, Young's focus on how Dostoevskian characters 'script' their own plots differs from my approach. My concern is with the ethical dynamic of the polyphonic narrative structure itself,

rather than the scripting impulse of characters within a polyphonic novel. See Young, *Dostoevsky's The Idiot and the Ethical Foundations of Narrative* (London: Anthem Press, 2004), <https://doi.org/10.7135/UPO9781843313748>.

- 38 Bakhtin, *Toward a Philosophy of the Act*, trans. by Vadim Liapunov (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1999), p. 27. In his translator's notes, Liapunov even claims that Dostoevsky's novels were 'not only an object, but also a source' for Bakhtin's ethics, especially for his theories on a perceived silence on the problem of 'responsibility' in Husserlian phenomenology. Cf. p. 83 (fn. 16).
- 39 Ibid., pp. 27, 18.
- 40 Ibid., p. 7.
- 41 Ibid., p. 54.
- 42 Bakhtin, *Dostoevsky's Poetics*, p. 58.
- 43 Ibid., p. 6.

