For those wanting to get a better idea of the interests and methodologies of some of the younger generation of Dostoevskii scholars, this fine collection of well-researched articles is a good place to start.

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Dostoevsky as Suicidologist: Self-Destruction and the Creative Process. By Amy D. Ronner. Crosscurrents: Russia's Literature in Context. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2020. xii, 341 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. $120.00, hard bound.
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In the opening pages of her study, Amy Ronner lists fourteen characters in Fedor Dostoevskii's fiction who attempt suicide, a reminder of the centrality of self-murder in Dostoevskii's works and its prevalence in Russian society of the 1860s and 1870s. Often asked to explain its pervasiveness by readers of his Writer's Diary, Dostoevskii wrote in his December 1876 edition that he was "completely convinced that the majority of these suicides, on the whole, directly or indirectly, arose from one and the same spiritual illness: from the absence of any higher ideal of existence in the souls of these people" (1:737, Kenneth Lantz translation). Ronner's study suggests a different reason, one tied not to religious belief but to society. Suicide, she argues following the father of modern sociology Émile Durkheim in his monograph *Suicide* (1897), is a social fact, not a religious one.

Durkheim identified four types of suicides: egoistic, altruistic (self-sacrifice), anomic (arising out of social disruptions), and fatalistic (occurring in contexts of excessive regulation and regimentation), with hybrids of these types also possible (ego-anomic, fatalistic-altruistic, and so on). In all instances, Durkheim viewed suicide as "an act of rupture with the social structure" (23). The antidote to suicide is "a cohesive and animated society" (69) such as can be found in groups of people bound by strong familial, national, or religious ties.

Following a brief history of religious and cultural attitudes towards suicide from ancient times to the present, Ronner turns to Dostoevskii's *House of the Dead*, a veritable "incubator" of self-murder (49). She compiles a long list of inmates whose suicidal outbursts against the highly regimented life in prison are classic examples of fatalistic suicide, which thrives in the absence of a genuine "surrogate collective" (75) capable of taking the place of the "forced community" of prison, which only "breeds hatred, enmity and. . . violence" (57). Chapter 3 highlights egoistic suicide in *Crime and Punishment* and *The Idiot*. Svidrigailov is the supreme example, characterized as he is by boredom and apathy in the face of a meaningless existence (108). Svidrigailov represents self-extinction in the novel, the choice that Raskolnikov does not make. This theme of "the human suicidogenic propensities in a postlapsarian world where everyone is born irrevocably sentenced to death" (121) finds its ultimate embodiment in Dostoevskii's next novel, *The Idiot*, at the center of which is the "egoistic-anomic death by proxy" of Nastasya Filippovna (133). In neither novel can belief in God—whether embodied by Sonya's faith or Myshkin's Christ-like actions and qualities—bind the disintegrating social structures of Russian society or provide a meaningful alternative to the self-destruction that haunts both narratives.

Suicides feature prominently in *Demons* as well, the subject of Chapter 5, which features four characters who take their own lives, most prominently Kirillov ("the anomic-egoistic-altruistic Man-God," 200) and Stavrogin. Stavrogin's "anomy" consists in the fact that he has nothing—"neither enthusiasm, religious, moral or political faith, nor

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any of the military values" (185) in Durkheim's classification—to lend his life meaning: an outcome of the nihilism, atheism, immorality, and ennui at the heart of Dostoevskii's inquiry. Anomic suicide haunts *Brothers Karamazov* as well, where three of the four brothers either plan, contemplate or commit suicide. Anomy in Dostoevskii's final novel, however, is countered by the ideal of active love, passed on by Zosima to Alyosha, who "attracts love and fosters robust collectivity" (251)—potent antidotes to suicide in Durkheim's etiology and the answer to the "ruptured families, atheism, and disbelief in immortality" that breed "polymorphic, anomic and egoistic pathologies" (253).

Irina Paperno's *Suicide as Cultural Institution in Dostoevskii's Russia* (1997) looks at suicide as a changing cultural metaphor. Ronner's focus is less broad but equally useful. In showing how Dostoevskii anticipates Durkheim's etiology, she underscores the importance of the sociological questions raised by the author about the importance of family, religion and communality (*sobornost'*) to the individual's well-being. Egoism and nihilism were evil not only because they aligned themselves with the new materialism, but also because they frayed the ties that bind the individual to kith, kin, and country, leading to social atomization, isolation and, increasingly, to suicide. Though more descriptive than analytical, Ronner's detailed Durkheimian typology of suicides in Dostoevskii will serve as a valuable resource for future studies of the writer's treatment of this phenomenon.

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Stsenarii peremen: Uvarovskaia nagrada i evolutsiia russkoi dramaturgii v epokhu Alesksandra II. By Kirill Zubkov. Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2021. 608 pp. Appendixes. Notes. Bibliography. Index. ₽660, hard bound.
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In *Stsenarii peremen* (Scripts of Change), Kirill Zubkov has produced a fascinating study on the evolution of drama during the second half of the nineteenth century through the lens of the Uvarovsky prize, which included an award for plays from 1856 to 1876. Given the context of Aleksandr II's sweeping reforms during that period (the abolition of serfdom, the establishment of self-government at the regional level, the institution of a jury system in the courts and more), together with the growth of Russia's intelligentsia and revolutionary movements, Zubkov's study logically concentrates on drama as a reflection of societal and political tensions within the country. The archeologist and historian, Aleksei Uvarov, established the prize to honor his father as the former president of the Academy of Sciences. Initially, awards were available in two categories, drama and historical research, with the inclusion of plays making the Uvarovsky the first literary award in Russia.

The judges represented a governmental and civil coalition, comprised of Academy members and experts from among the editors and critics at the leading so-called "thick" journals. Their overall goals included the promotion of high art within the theatrical arena and drama as an educative force in society. However, they were "frankly perplexed" (137) by the multiplicity of dramatic forms and the wide range of content submitted annually by dramatists for their consideration, leading them to exclude works that they considered to be low forms of art, such as farces with no purpose other than entertainment, and politically provocative plays, such as those about nihilism. The judges also dismissed women playwrights and works from the diverse cultures of the far-flung empire, preferring plays by and for Russians. Thus, despite the high number and rich artistry of submissions (as detailed in Appendix 1), only four plays were

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