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**The Hidden
Determinant: Three
Novels of Remizov**

Alexei Remizov, while a second year student at Moscow University, had intended to spend the evening of November 18, 1896, studying. He was a solitary student and did not take active part in student life. When a friend asked him to attend a student demonstration that day he demurred: he preferred working and besides he was against student demonstrations, considering them to be a "bourgeois phenomenon." The friend persisted and finally persuaded Remizov to just take a look at the demonstration. Though only an onlooker, Remizov was arrested as an agitator and was jailed and then exiled from Moscow and Petersburg for eight years.¹

The shock and bewilderment Remizov experienced following this event became perhaps the prime motivation behind his life-long obsessive search for some rationale, for some meaning behind human suffering. All the misfortunes of his childhood were to be measured against this event and when the past as well as the ill luck that was to plague him in the future were examined, Remizov was overwhelmed by a feeling of the senselessness of human existence. A large part of his fictional world is a search for meaning and value in a universe of chance, a confrontation with the irrational in human life. One of the central literary devices used in this quest is the dream. Remizov himself from earliest childhood until his death dreamt incessantly and recorded countless dreams.

He was fascinated, among other things, with the irrational character of dreams and this element, with its obvious affinity to his own experience of life, is used to shape the view of reality that emerges in his fiction. For example, his arrest—an incident of pure chance—had in it the bizarre, fantastic quality characteristic of dreams; and when the young hero of his first novel is arrested in similar circumstances, the incident is described not as it actually happened but in a nightmare.

There are approximately 340 different dreams in Remizov's published works, which include novels, short stories, plays, legends, criticism and memoirs as well as dream cycles which present the dream as an independent structure celebrating moments of subconscious experience. Remizov's career as a writer began after his arrest in 1896 and in a large number of the short stories and in the novels written during his exile as well as those that were completed by 1918, the main characters suffer from a rising level of anxiety due to some unresolved conflict or traumatic situation. This anxiety leads to a build-up of tension which produces a dream whose main function is an attempt to cope with real-life problems.

In 1899 Freud published his epoch-making *Interpretation of Dreams* in which he claimed that a dream is principally the expression of the disguised fulfillment of a wish of an erotic nature. Remizov's artistic intuition has proven keener, for wish-fulfillment is no longer considered central to the nature of the dream² and there is a growing consensus that the dream serves as a means of coping with conflict,³ a view found already enunciated in the dream theories of two of Freud's famous disciples, Alfred Adler and Carl Jung.

Despite this cleavage between the central focus of Remizov's actual dream usage and Freud's theoretical evaluation of real-life dreams, two important considerations should be kept in mind. First, Freud's extended work on dreams has revealed some insights into dream characteristics and into dream-work as a revelation of the workings of the subconscious mind that have never been challenged, and these findings are echoed in Remizov's dreams. Second, neither the problem-solving theory nor Freud's detailed work can adequately account for the function and characteristics of Remizov's fictional dreams. Remizov's dream usage cannot be reduced to a single function nor do past dream theories sufficiently describe the dreams. Many of Remizov's dreams could well serve as examples for current laboratory research findings on the psychological nature of dreams, a field of study which is still open to new discoveries.

The principal functions of the dream are threefold and all dream theory falls within these categories. The dream can be a purely physiological manifestation, the result of internal or external stimuli and without any psychic significance. Dreams can reveal the workings of the subconscious mind and as such express the endless variety of thoughts and impulses accessible to the human mind. And finally, dreams can be of

metaphysical import and not only be revelatory or prophetic, but also serve as a point of contact with supernatural powers. Remizov's dream usage touches upon all these categories. However, the central focus in the novels is psychological and the most interesting characteristic of the dream remains its dramatization of emotional and intellectual conflict outside the confines of space, time and causality.

Intimately connected with the central problem-solving aspect of the dreams is the striking dream-theme relationship that emerges when the novels are viewed in slightly rearranged order from that of their original writing.⁴ Whereas all the main characters of *The Pond (Prud)*, *The Clock (Chasy)*, and *Sisters in the Cross (Krestovye sestry)* are unable to manage their lives successfully and thus dream incessantly, in *The Tale of Ivan Semyonovich Stratilatov (Povest' o Ivane Semyonoviche Stratilatove)*, *The Fifth Pestilence (Piataia iazva)*, and *The Whimpering Ditch (Plachuzhnaia kanava)*, the main characters achieve some equilibrium in their lives and dream much less.⁵ In the first three novels the protagonists have to contend with what appears to them to be a misery-ridden existence. Their impotence is dramatized by the fact that almost all their actions are worked out through the bizarre medium of the dream. Their lack of conscious control over their dream world symbolizes their predicament in waking reality. The subconscious mind seems to work in the same mysterious way as Fate.

The use of dreams in these three novels has further thematic significance in structural terms. *The Pond* is divided into two parts of almost equal length: the life of the chief protagonist before and after his political arrest and exile. It is as though the young hero has two chances to deal with the arbitrary events controlling his life, first on a predominantly conscious level (he dreams only once) and then on a predominantly subconscious level (he has eleven dreams). In sharp contrast to this structural bifurcation, dreams appear continuously from beginning to end in *The Clock* and *Sisters in the Cross*. In *The Clock* this pattern emphasizes the obsession of all the chief characters with time, which in turn is symbolized and thematically developed by means of the time characteristics of dreams. In *Sisters in the Cross* the structural pattern is echoed in repeated dream imagery which dramatizes the chief protagonist's inability to cope with a newly acquired knowledge of evil.

*The Pond*⁶ is the story of the childhood and youth of the Finogenov brothers, Alexander, Pyotr, Evgeny, and Nikolai, the chief protagonist. The background of the story, which establishes the tone of the work, is the lives of the boys' maternal relatives, the Ogorelyshevs. The oldest son of the family, Arseny, has taken over his father's business and, being very capable and enterprising, becomes a great success as a merchant. His obsessive involvement with his work and his passion for efficiency make him a severe, uncompromising taskmaster and earn him the nickname of Antichrist among his factory workers and, later, the intense dislike of his

nephews, the Finogenovs. At the end of the novel he emerges as an important symbol in Nikolai's dreams.

Arseny's only sister, Varenka, becomes acquainted with revolutionary circles through one of her tutors. In order to put an end to her possible activities, Arseny tells her that he is going to marry her off to a merchant, Elisei Finogenov, a widower twenty years her senior. Varenka is suicidally disconsolate, but finally accepts the marriage as her fate. Elisei proves to be a devoted and doting husband but does not share Varenka's cultural interests and after five years of marriage—and four sons—Varenka returns to her family home to live with her children in an outbuilding near the main house, living off a small allowance from her dowry. Varenka was in a state of depression during her married life and the depression continues to haunt her after the separation. She remains for the most part isolated in her own room, leaves the children to the care of nurses and gradually becomes addicted to alcohol. Her destiny also is to take on symbolic significance in Nikolai's dreams at the end of the novel.

Five years after the separation Elisei Finogenov, who had dutifully visited his children every Sunday, dies and, due to the mismanagement of his estate, leaves nothing to his children. Thus on two counts the Finogenov boys are to grow up disadvantaged. Their mother's depression creates in their immediate environment a mood of quiet despair which is to become dominant in their own lives when they become young adults. Without any inheritance they are to grow up in poverty in the midst of the well-to-do merchant class, constantly feeling the sting of humiliation and painfully limited in their ability to direct their own lives. The world that surrounds them is no less grim. The factory workers who live next door to them and whose children are their first playmates rise before dawn to begin their thankless work; distraught and frenzied crowds always surround Father Gleb in the near-by Bogoliubov monastery; indeed, a refrain which is repeated six times during the course of the novel pictures the Devil smiling maliciously while looking upon the human scene in which he alone takes pleasure.

The three older Finogenov brothers, Alexander, Pyotr and Evgeny are dealt with intermittently and infrequently dominate the story. It is the youngest brother, Nikolai, who holds the center of attention throughout the novel and it is his character, his experiences and especially his dreams which are of central importance. Nikolai is depicted as a sensitive boy who already as a child is cognizant of the suffering that surrounds him and though he cannot understand it, he feels pity in his heart. As an imaginative child he dreams of being a *bogaty*r when Russian fairy tales are read to him; a Peter who does not betray Christ when the Gospel is read to him; and so on, with each new experience through books and life inspiring in him new aspirations. Recent research indicates that the extent of waking imagination influences the fancifulness of dreams.⁷ The correlation in Nikolai's case will be seen shortly in a discussion of his dreams.

What figures most importantly in the lives of the four brothers as they grow to young adulthood are their secular education, their religious education and the pastimes they devise to amuse themselves. Although all the brothers are educated initially in the gymnasium, Nikolai has to endure the misfortune of being transferred to a technical school, not from any desire on his part, not because he is doing poorly, but simply because of a family decision that he keep company his brother Evgeny, who cannot meet the gymnasium standards.⁸ It is with a number of details of this nature that Remizov emphasizes many times the helplessness of the individual before his inexorable fate which is determined in part by his environment. The problem that is to arise later for Nikolai is that the technical school does not prepare him for the university which he wants to attend.

The boys receive a strict religious education. They not only attend Saturday night services regularly but also attend services for all the major and minor church holidays and frequently visit the monks of the Bogoliubov monastery with whom they develop a warm relationship. It is through Father Gleb, the Elder of the monastery, that the religious theme of the novel emerges and through whom the religious challenge confronts the brothers. His story is told at length, because his experiences and his attitude toward life provide an option for the brothers. Father Gleb was born Andrei Alabyshev, son of a wealthy nobleman, and his life was characterized by a series of fortuities. His father, who had ruined his fortune, died when Gleb was fifteen, leaving nothing to his wife and son who then had to live in an almshouse. Gleb felt humiliated by their poverty and thrived on the hope that after finishing the university a new life would open up for them. However, during his final exams, the pressure of the moment led him to say something crude to the director and he was expelled.⁹ Gleb, nevertheless, joined the celebration of his more successful classmates and returned home drunk only to be thrown out of the almshouse. His aimless existence reached a climax when his mother, crushed by the burdens of a poverty-stricken existence, died, thus breaking his last close link with life. Crushed and suicidal, Gleb was suddenly thrust into great wealth by the death of a distant relative. Making up for lost time, he enjoyed for several years all the pleasures that money could buy. His happiness culminated in an engagement which was, however, to lead to a new disaster. Fearful of spoiling his fiancée's happiness, Gleb decided not to tell her of his past amatory involvements until after their marriage¹⁰ and even denied rumors that she had already heard. The night before their wedding she received a letter describing an intrigue in which he had been involved. Dismayed, not so much by the contents of the letter, as by the realization that he had been lying to her, she committed suicide. Overwhelmed by the absurdity of his life—the sudden arbitrary shifts back and forth from happiness to despair—he in turn took poison but was saved from death. With life unexpectedly returned to him, Gleb began to analyze

his past and came to the conclusion that his miseries were due to the fact that he had been continually absorbed with himself. But when he followed a resolution to live for others, everything became even worse, for he found that others were equally cursed by fate. Gleb disappeared from sight for several years and later returned and joined the monastery. In prayer and in meditation he had come to the point of view that one must accept all fate, freely and meekly, and bless it, for misfortunes come to man not as punishment but as a test of his willingness to accept God's unfathomable will.

Initially, religion and especially their friendship with Father Gleb (Nikolai dreams of being like him when he grows up) is a source of joy for the Finogenov boys, a warm bright spot of hope that contrasts with the gloom of their home environment. It is only as they grow to young adulthood that they begin to fall away from the church, finding it an inadequate source both of comfort and of rationale for their progressive disillusionment with life. The most dramatic rejection of Father Gleb's philosophy takes place in one of Nikolai's dreams after the turning point of the novel.

As for the brothers' diversions, they range from the most harmless and typical games to downright outrageous pranks, and all reflect the various influences on the lives of these city urchins. Several incidents have far-reaching negative consequences. Nikolai and Pyotr, indulging once in a favorite pastime of children—imitating adult work—play with a machine that mangles clothes. Nikolai zealously turns the machine as quickly as he can and Pyotr's fingers get caught and he passes out after his fingers turn black and blue. Though Nikolai stoically holds back his tears when he is thrashed and accused of malicious intent, he is so overwhelmed with a sense of guilt that he wishes he were struck dead by lightning.¹¹ The traumatic incident is followed by an abstract refrain. That evening Nikolai awakens to a finger knocking on his door. "Is it the devil or an angel of God?" asks the author. That is, is even the most unintentional mishap the work and pleasure of the devil or is there truly such a thing as an innocent accident which inspires divine compassion. This question is never answered in the novel. The dilemma of guilt remains to haunt Nikolai and becomes an important theme in his adult dreams.

One of the boys' more creative enterprises when they are in their late teens is to built an outdoor theater to which many of their neighbors come to watch their first presentation of skits. Their uncle Arseny, a stuffed-shirt, suddenly appears and puts a stop to their production for no other apparent reason than his dislike of frivolity on his premises. The boys flee, but not before the enraged Nikolai yells pathetically that even Dostoevsky in exile took part in theater productions. This earns Nikolai a slap on the face and the humiliation and emotional frustration he feels awaken in him both a desire for revenge (he thinks of setting fire to the property) and a desire for death as an escape. These feelings are thematically developed at

length only in Nikolai's dreams and form the greater part of the motivation of the final action of the novel.

The incident which marks the turning point of the brothers' lives from childhood to young adulthood is the suicide of Varenka on Easter Eve precisely at the moment when her sons are at the monastery listening to the bells proclaiming the Resurrection of Christ. Preceding the suicide Nikolai, who takes a nap before attending midnight services, dreams that an old beggar comes into the nursery and stares at him as though intending to do him some irreparable harm. Nikolai is frozen motionless, his thoughts are confused and suddenly he is walking in a village with a chapel and black huts (this sudden shift of place without any time lapse—characteristic of real dreams—is used repeatedly by Remizov to signify illusory escapes from impending disaster). An old woman, chased by some peasants, runs past Nikolai and a sharp kitchen knife hovers glowingly over her head. Nikolai enters one of the huts, lamenting the fact that it is Easter and that he is alone in the black hut. The entry of the same old beggar into the hut is hardly Nikolai's desired solution. He tries to jump out of the window but is stopped by the threatening appearance of the sharp kitchen knife and abruptly awakens.

Some of the chief dream characteristics include Nikolai's instantaneous movement from nursery to village which is possible because the law of gravity does not operate nor does the category of time exist. These elements clearly differentiate dreams from waking reality and the problem-solving potential of dreams is operative as long as these distinctions remain. The dream also fits in with Freud's contention that some recent, emotionally significant event, the "day's residue," triggers off a dream. (This is true of the majority of the dreams in the novels.) Within the dream itself there are elements from the present and past woven together to create a new prognostic pattern. The image of the beggar, with its attendant suggestion of poverty, which is thematically developed in later dreams, is important here in terms of ambience. Nikolai has always been generous to beggars. That the old beggar should appear in an inimical guise suggests that the dream serves as a warning of unexpected dangers ahead, both in Nikolai's private, intimate world as symbolized by the nursery (and foreshadowing his mother's suicide) and in the outside world as symbolized by the village (and presaging his arrest and exile).

The repeated image of the sharp kitchen knife functions in terms of conventional Freudian symbolism foreshadowing Nikolai's coming to sexual maturity after leaving the nursery. Appearing first with an old woman it links love with death, a theme that is developed further in an adult dream; and appearing next as an instrument thwarting escape from imminent disaster, it foreshadows Nikolai's inability to find solace in love.

The day's residue, the religious holiday itself, provokes subconscious fears of death. Although Nikolai consciously looks forward to Easter with joyous anticipation, his dream prepares us for all the violent deaths in the

novel which take place at Eastertime and thus challenge the hope symbolized by the Resurrection.

Varenka's suicide is presented as the merging of nightmarish reality with realistic nightmare that precludes any escape but self-annihilation. Varenka's story for the most part remains in the background of the novel and it is only in this half-vision, half-dream that accompanies her suicide that her emotional state is fully dramatized. She dreams that a monk with blood oozing out of his forehead chases her around the room until he pins her down on her bed with a dark wooden cross. She realizes that this is the cross she took on the night she agreed to an arranged marriage and decided not to end her life. The weight of the cross is now unbearable, so she crawls out from under the cross and hangs herself. The monk symbolizes the religious life and its commitment to God's will, and the blood suggests the sacrificial acceptance of fate by Christ on the cross. This confrontation hyperbolizes Varenka's predicament. Her unconscious motivation is illustrated rather than stated, dramatized rather than discussed. The religious significance is clear and figures in the same way later in the story in the suicides of two minor figures. Not everyone can bear the burden of fate; not everyone can follow in the steps of Father Gleb's humble religious acquiescence after the example of Christ.

With the suicide of their mother blackening their youths forever, the Finogenov brothers turn to a future which looms as bleak. The oldest brother, Alexander, openly rejects Father Gleb's religious view of life, because he cannot passively accept and bless the misfortunes of others.¹² He becomes friends with a group of revolutionaries only to find that they require the subordination of his will to that of the party or a leader thus rendering him powerless to control his personal destiny and in this requiring the same blind acceptance as does religion. Being unable either to accept life as it is or to change it through political action, he tries unsuccessfully to commit suicide and is jailed.

Nikolai fares no better. When he finishes school, his relatives refuse to send him to the university on the grounds that he is not worth it. Profoundly humiliated by such condescending treatment, he half-heartedly begins to give lessons and starts to study Greek and Latin in hopes of entering the university on his own. At this point a new calamity strikes. Nikolai reluctantly agrees to go with an acquaintance to *watch* a student demonstration. While there, he gets into a crowd of students who are arrested. He alone is not in a student uniform and is taken for a spy. He is imprisoned and a few months later is sent into exile.¹³

Nikolai is appalled by the absurdity of his fate. His waking hours are spent in a futile attempt to find some rationale in life. He cannot understand why his family has endured so much senseless suffering and he is tormented by the question of what kind of a God could have created such a world and if perhaps God has not abandoned man. As he searches his

own past, he is overwhelmed by a sense of guilt for the cruel pranks he played. But as he probes into the question of guilt as the source of human suffering, he comes to another dead end. If his mother was guilty of wrongdoing in committing suicide, who, he asks, was guilty of the fact that she was born without the strength to bear her lot in life?

Asleep or semi-conscious, Nikolai is continually plagued by nightmares which express his sense of utter humiliation as a mere plaything of fate, his fear of and desire for death as an escape, and a dim, fatalistic desire for some kind of revenge.¹⁴ The first is directly related to Nikolai's arrest, but the ensuing ones become more and more abstract and fantastic as if Nikolai's isolation and idleness were being compensated for by the activity of dream work. (In the dream theory of Alfred Adler, the subconscious mind compensates for conscious inadequacies.) He sees the square where the demonstration was held crowded with howling children and terrified women. A sudden, fearful silence sweeps the crowd. Nikolai meekly bends his head waiting for the blows and again wishes he were dead (this seems the only possible escape from human anguish). He hears Tanya (a young girl whom he loves) crying for help as a whip lashes her, and he sees Father Gleb standing next to her, drunk, smiling a stony smile with blood-smearred lips, and beating a toy drum.

Nikolai has relived his nightmarish experience in terms of the meaning it holds for him. His death wish and his bowed head are an indication of his conception of himself as totally helpless before a symbol of authority. He cannot even run to escape what appears to him to be his destiny. He sees himself as impotent before the image of authority, be it Cossack troops or an abstraction called Fate, and in his self-defined impotence lies his inability to come to viable terms with life. His inability to aid Tanya suggests that he sees himself as incapable of even building an intimate private world beyond the reach of external control. The grotesque stance of Father Gleb cheering on flagrant brutality is Nikolai's subconscious rejection of his mentor's dictum that one should accept and bless one's fate. The chapter following this dream opens and closes with Nikolai walking around his cell looking at an icon of Jesus and hearing the words, "Come to me all ye who toil and are burdened, and I shall comfort thee." There is no overt intellectual response at this point, but Nikolai is in no way comforted and at the end of the novel, he openly confesses to Father Gleb that the religious view of life is inadequate for him.

This is one of the more interesting dreams in the novel in terms of dream characteristics. The day's residue is obvious and the students that must have participated in the actual demonstration are displaced by women and children in the dream to heighten the sense of wronged innocence that Nikolai feels. And Father Gleb is a composite figure in that his stony smile is the identifying physical characteristic of the despised Ogorelyshevs. What remains, however, the central characteristic of this and of most of Remizov's dreams to be discussed is the use predominately

of visual images which symbolize abstract ideas. (Recent scientific tests show that muscular inhibition during dreaming may account for the relative infrequency of overt speech in dreams.)¹⁵ The logical connections of these ideas is shown by the synchronous appearance of the elements representing them. It should also be noted at this point that the subconscious mind does not only express irrational impulses as stressed by Freud but also highly creative thoughts and emotions as pointed out in a more recent Symposium on dreams.¹⁶ Unfortunately, Nikolai, like most of Remizov's heroes, neither heeds nor profits from the insights his mind works out on a subconscious level.

The three dreams which follow show how Nikolai's self-image suffers. He feels dehumanized, deprived of his dignity, and spiritually crushed. He dreams once that he is in the coach of a train darting around "like a scalded rat in a mouse trap" trying to escape. The sounds of an obscene song fill the air, and suddenly an iron fist strikes him on the head and bags, filled apparently with moving mice, fall off the shelves onto him. The sound imagery conveys a sense of degradation as does the animal imagery through the transformation of a member of a comparison into the thing itself. The iron fist (the first echo of the humiliating slap from Arseny) and the falling bags displace the Cossack whips and the crush of the crowd at the abortive demonstration where Nikolai was first trapped. This time, however, Nikolai makes an effort to escape. Though he is thwarted, this dream shows that he is capable of self-assertion, that he is at least trying to work out some form of active response to his situation even though he feels consciously helpless.

In a recurring dream which first appears at this point a stranger walks into Nikolai's room, completely undresses him, and begins carrying away his clothes, piece by piece. Nikolai lies naked on the floor, watching passively. He knows he will be able to get up when the stranger finishes but that time never comes in the dream. This dream is not the typical one described by Freud as the wish fulfillment of a repressed infantile exhibitionist tendency, though it does include the typical stranger before whom the dreamer is ashamed. There is no incident in Nikolai's childhood to support such an interpretation, although a childhood incident does play a part in this dream. The feelings of shame associated with nakedness echo the painful moment in Nikolai's childhood when he lowered his pants to be spanked for crushing his brother's fingertips on a machine. Thus the dream is in part a punishment dream which shows that Nikolai cannot put out of his mind the possibility of some hidden guilt which is the real source of all his troubles. The stranger who has disrobed him is the thief in the night (an actual robbery once took place in the Finogenov home) who has robbed him of his dignity, as arbitrary and unmotivated an act, from a victim's point of view, as was Nikolai's loss of personal freedom. The disrobing itself is symbolic, the removal of layers of consciousness as Nikolai explores his predicament from every conceivable angle, making his dreams

in exile a thematically interrelated cycle.

All the oppressive thoughts tormenting Nikolai are symbolized by swarming insects in another nightmare in which animal imagery predominates. Small, nimble insects fill Nikolai's cell. They crawl all over him, pierce, and gnaw him until only his skeleton is left. Not only is the sense of degradation manifested again, but also that of a spiritual void within. Nikolai sees himself as a discarded frame. This dramatizes Nikolai's conscious awareness of his limited inner resources to withstand the external forces which dominate his life as well as the beginning of his psychological disintegration.

The dream which immediately follows continues to develop this theme. A cuirassier (the Cossack in a new guise) approaches Nikolai and after staring at him, squeezes his heart until he collapses on the floor. (The oft-repeated image of Nikolai lying prostrate attests both to his sense of debasement and his feeling of helplessness.) Lying on the floor, Nikolai imagines that he breaks the grating on the casement window, escapes onto the eaves and, after walking along it for a while, slides off and dangles in the air at a frightening height. In essence, Nikolai has experimentally thrust himself back into the world with a "squeezed heart," a crushed inner being, only to find a spiritual void without.

Two other dreams probe further into the possibility of self-transcendence. In one Nikolai imagines crowds of people surrounding him and asking him to understand them. It is a grotesque scene. Some of the people are chattering nonsense, some are dancing indefatigably, some simply keep frowning, some just laugh, and some even shake as though terrified. Nikolai watches and gradually all the faces appear to him to be masks behind which these people are hiding their true feelings: their perplexity and defenselessness before the misfortunes of life. Although Nikolai knows of the committed paths of religious acquiescence (Father Gleb), of revolutionary activity (Alexander), and of self-aggrandizement (Arseny), this dream suggests that behind all these views of life he sees the same intellectual impasse concerning the imponderables of human destiny. He has found no model.

In a later dream a downtrodden, homeless, old beggar woman enters Nikolai's room and extends her hand for alms. Nikolai takes some money out of his purse, but then he does not give her anything. Perplexed, the old woman drops her empty hand. A minute later she extends it again. The dream ends without a further gesture. The image of the old beggar woman, echoing that of several earlier dreams, symbolizes human impoverishment on earth: Nikolai has found that no one has anything to offer him, and now he himself has lost the spontaneous charitable impulses of his youth.

There is also a subtle relation between these last two dreams which can be traced back to Father Gleb's life. As stated above, Father Gleb had come to the conclusion that the real source of his unhappiness was not the very real torments he had lived through but his own self-centeredness. As

Nikolai did in his dream, so Father Gleb had done in real life. He had turned outward only to find misery everywhere. In the end Father Gleb decided that fate must be accepted as an expression of God's will. In the first of the two dreams just presented, it is clear that when Nikolai dwells on the fate of others, he comes to no succoring insight. In the second dream we see a qualitative difference in the fatalism of Nikolai and Father Gleb. For though Father Gleb fatalistically accepts man's miserable lot on earth as unchangeable, he is buoyed by the hope and faith that all will be resolved justly in an afterlife. For Nikolai, who sustains no such hope, change on earth is all the more imperative. And hence the blacker despair. Nikolai, through his own experiences, is so convinced of human impotence before the mysterious power of fate, that in his dream the possible—the simple, kind gesture of almsgiving—becomes impossible.

During the approximately sixteen months of Nikolai's imprisonment in Moscow and exile in Veliky Vesnebolg only one joy lights his life, his love for Tanya. But here too fate seems to be against him. Tanya visits him once and, complaining that he had concealed an earlier love affair from her, tells him that she is to marry his brother Alexander (who has unexpectedly become Arseny's secretary and right-hand man). Nikolai meekly accepts her decision, hoping that it will bring her happiness, but that same night "possessed by a force . . . as though in a dream" he rapes her, falls asleep as though crushed by the weight of his guilt and has a dream full of feverish activity which suggests his last desperate attempt to escape the complete void which now characterizes not only his dream world, his subconscious vision of reality, but also his external life. This dream is striking in its use of the bizarre features typical of real dreams. Nikolai appears in nine different places without any indication of movement through space or of the passage of time. The dream begins with Nikolai running into an enormous house full of ragged people sitting on trunks. This is a mock ceremony of the Russian custom of sitting down for a minute before a trip for good luck, and the trip in this case is symbolic: Nikolai returns to his past to find an anchor which can sustain him into the future (there is frequent repetition here of previous dream material).

Suddenly the lights go on and Nikolai is in a closet with a group of wanderers with knapsacks who crowd around him while the walls contract and the ceiling starts coming down. All the elements in this scene displace the hostile forces in the dream of the demonstration, now seen as a mere way station in a journey. The next instant Nikolai is alone in his old nursery where he hears the voice of a deceased old woman acquaintance from the almshouse saying that he has died. This repeated dream imagery of poverty again symbolizes the death of Nikolai's generosity as well as the loss of his youth and the values it nourished. There is no beginning to which he can return to start anew.

The remaining externally unconnected sequence of events in the dream is primarily a series of confrontations with death. Nikolai walks

along a black steppe where he has to dig a grave for himself and does so meekly (the most typical stance in his dreams); he is flying above the earth as though on wings (a similar escape was tried in the dream of the cuirassier); he sees a church burn down; he is back in the nursery, this time with Tanya, and a storm buries the whole house (this scene not only foreshadows the actualization of the romantic theme of death found in love but also the actual demolition of the house); Nikolai is then dragged down a slope with a noose around his neck to a tower where he knows he is to die; and finally he is dragged (these last two events are allusions to Nikolai's dream of the demonstration) out of his cell onto a scaffold where an executioner strikes him with his fist and Nikolai's head falls on his chest. (This is the second dream reference to the humiliating slap from Arseny.) Death is the obsessive idea in Nikolai's mind at this point, but his predominantly passive role in the dream suggests that though he may in part desire death as an escape, he sees it more persistently as the ultimate confrontation of the ever powerless victim with fate which through some external agent will deal the final blow. (A characteristic of execution dreams is that it is never made clear to the dreamer for what he is to be punished.)¹⁷

The term "sequence of events" was used to describe the happenings in this rich extended dream. A much more apt phrase was used by Remizov in *Martyn Zadeka*¹⁸ to describe such dreams: "a series of accumulations" ("riady nagromozhdenii"). This suggests a subtle connection between the events which should, therefore, be examined nonsequentially as Freud himself insisted was valid and useful in dream interpretation. The inner logic behind this outwardly unconnected "series of accumulations" can best be shown by rearranging the order of events. The most important image is that of flying which symbolizes Nikolai's attempt to free himself from the negative forces he sees acting upon his life and to gain a new perspective. Metaphorically speaking, Nikolai from his vantage in the air views his past—the religious life as symbolized by the church, love as a value in life as symbolized by the nursery—as one in which he has experienced only loss and disappointment. Since Nikolai's early ambitions are associated with the nursery where he first heard of inspiring heroic acts, the loss of the nursery also suggests the loss of all directed ambition. Thus the remaining events in the dream present death as the only option left to Nikolai. This dream not only accords with Freudian dream theory that the past is of central importance in dreams but also with Jungian theory that suggests that dreams point toward the future, thus anticipating future acts. The mixture of past and future, of known and unknown settings, of friends and strangers produces an abstract tapestry-like texture which epitomizes the new emotional crisis in Nikolai's life.

Tanya leaves abruptly the next day without a word and Nikolai is obsessed by visions of her. He is now consciously tormented by the thought that there is nothing for him to do in the world and is haunted by a

premonition that he will die like a stray dog. Though he never analyzes his dreams, it is clear that in part they do become accessible to his conscious mind. Of the last two dreams which Nikolai has while still in exile, one precedes his decision to escape (which he does without complications) and the other follows on his last night in Vesneolog. The first dream begins with his turning like a top in darkness and smoke until he is warm. Then he sees himself as a child wrapped in a blanket in his bed and looking out his window at wolves moving across the pond.¹⁹ (Command of forgotten childhood memories was considered by Freud to be an "archaic" or "regressive" characteristic of dreams.) Suddenly he realizes that it is not wolves but his uncle Arseny moving across the pond slowly and looking as shaggy as a wolf. The image of the spinning top presages the circular structure of this dream which is realized through two transformations. The sensation of warmth the adult Nikolai feels while twirling, which in conscious thought could have been simply associated with his childhood, becomes his childhood. The wolf, in turn, a fearsome creature for a youngster, is Arseny, the chief authority figure with whom Nikolai had had to contend from childhood to adulthood. This transformation brings to a climax a central thematic element developed in Nikolai's dreams. The Cossack troops, reflecting waking reality, appear first as an unconquerable scourge and are soon displaced by various individual, threatening strangers until finally Arseny, an identifiable hostile presence, becomes a symbol as a possible agent for the vicissitudes of fate against whom Nikolai can rebel. (Nikolai never consciously thinks of his arrest and exile in terms of a responsible human agent.) Although Nikolai could control his conscious hatred of Arseny, he is now driven by complex subconscious impulses of which he is not cognizant.

In the last dream King Solomon and Martyn Zadeka come to Nikolai; Zadeka starts to give him a wax reel (*katushek*) which he is to throw over some numbered circles to decipher his fate, but Solomon takes the reel that turns into a small pink ball when he begins throwing it. The ball takes on the appearance of something living (not identified exactly) belonging to Tanya, and as Solomon continues to throw the object, his fingers stick together with blood. The appearance of Zadeka, himself the reputed author of dream books, as a fortune-teller creates the effect of a dream within a dream, whereas that of the biblical man of wisdom, Solomon,²⁰ in the same role is ironic as is his association with Tanya whose bloody round object is a symbolic projection of Nikolai's fear of pregnancy as well as a second foreshadowing of downfall stemming from illicit love, this time darkened by the image of the similar fall of the house of David. Furthermore Nikolai now sees himself not merely acted upon by fate but a puppet whose actions are controlled and directed by fate which has no more identity than the gesture of a throw of the dice. Together, these last two dreams foreshadow the last meeting between Arseny and Nikolai as actors playing out their fated roles.

Shortly after his arrival home, Nikolai dreams of his mother crying for forgiveness as she floats along the pond with white wings stuck together with clots of bloody dirt.²¹ Since Nikolai considered his mother's suicide a desperate act of weakness deserving of compassion rather than a sin that should be punished, the image of the bloody white wings suggests the innocent lamb sacrificed to the unfathomable demands of unrecognizable powers. Nikolai, like his mother, lacks the stoicism to accept life as it is with religious humility; he too does not know how to control his life according to his own choices; and now he cannot choose death as an escape for it appears to him as a limbo filled only with continued meaningless suffering. Given such a dilemma, only impotent rage against life itself seems possible.

Nikolai's return home is inauspicious. Evgeny's young wife has died, Pyotr is an unemployed actor, Arseny is suffering from asthma, which, Pyotr tells Nikolai, will probably choke him to death; and Tanya has committed suicide (twice foreshadowed in Nikolai's dreams.) When Nikolai visits Father Gleb who repeats his dictum of the acceptance of life and reiterates his faith in the Resurrection, Nikolai, disconsolate over Tanya's death, states that she will not rise again, thus openly acknowledging his lack of faith in the Christian vision. He leaves and wanders about visiting old haunts in a distraught state. The entire action appears to be a quasi-hallucinatory episode in which Nikolai's thoughts (including dream fragments) and actions are motivated in such a way that dream logic seems to be operating in waking reality. At one point Nikolai is flying along a street "as if on wings" (a dream fragment) and then suddenly recalls his brother's words, "they are tearing down [our] home," goes to the old homestead, and "exactly as if through a dream" hears the sounds of the actual demolition. (Thought and action are identical in dreams.) "Without thinking" he goes to see Arseny who had ordered the dismantling. (Movement from one place to another without a connective link is a dream characteristic.) The hallway to Arseny's study is filled with fresh flowers "as if there were a deceased in the house" (a typical dream transformation in which a member of a comparison becomes the thing itself). The aroma of the flowers "dulls" Nikolai's senses, creating in him a somnambulistic, dream-like state so that when Arseny greets him uncivilly, "his hands by themselves entwined [Arseny's] neck... and began to choke [him]." Pyotr's recently uttered words (in clearly defined waking reality) function as the day's residue which stimulated the "dream." This scene also functions as a dream coming true within a dream within the context of all of Nikolai's dreams. The "day's residue" is Nikolai's initial desire to become an executioner to revenge the wrongs done him; this is tested out in the dream in which an executioner knocks off Nikolai's head, and finally realized when Nikolai becomes Arseny's executioner. But this act of despair is just a manifestation of futile, blind rage. Nikolai reads in the eyes of the dying Arseny: "Of what am I guilty?" The symbol of the power of wealth has

suddenly turned into another helpless victim of fate which remains that mysterious abstraction against which there can be no vengeance or redress, and Nikolai himself has become its unwitting agent, fulfilling once again a dream portent.

Bewildered, terrified and suicidal, Nikolai flees, imagining at one point that he is again a child, this time hiding under a sofa (a dream fragment), and finally, running along the street, he is hit by a carriage and dies of a broken skull, fulfilling his conscious premonition that he would die like a stray dog²² and his dream portent that someone else would deal the final blow. But this simulation of a dream coming true within a dream has all been waking reality. The entire episode, replete with dream characteristics, not only delineates the disintegration of Nikolai's mind but also, and more centrally, depicts a totally nonrational world in which motivation and control is as impossible as in dreams. Throughout the novel the sole discernible power is that of fate and the only human condition is that of suffering. The recurrent death theme in Nikolai's dreams dramatizes the fact that he can envision only escape from and not solution to the dilemma of an existence devoid of any ultimate meaning and value.

In the novel *The Clock*²³ time is the symbol of the tyranny of fate. (The image of ominously ticking clocks appears about forty times.) Each protagonist wants time to stand still at whatever moment brings joy into his or her life. Thus some wish that a happier past would continue into the present, and others, those who survive wholly on the hope that a better tomorrow will come, would bring the future immediately into the present. But everyone must live in today and thus each is caught in a trap which is dramatized by the ever present "now" of dreams which haunt each major figure in the novel. This human predicament is the central concern of the novel and the emphasis is on the endless, meaningless suffering each is fated to endure despite pathetic attempts to escape the inevitable.

Kostya Klochkov, a teen-ager who represents the inherent injustice of nature, is an ugly demented boy who, with no past of beautiful memories to escape to from today's miseries, seeks to become part of a better future. He is the constant object of mockery and teasing because of his ugly face (a crooked nose which he believes is a curse on him, a hunched back, one bulging and one squinting eye) and he has one obsessive thought: to wake up one morning and see in the mirror a face that would be found in a portrait. On one occasion when Kostya is headed for the cathedral to wind the clock in the tower (his regular job), he is knocked down by an avalanche of snow-balls (one of which includes a stone) thrown by some local boys. Kostya, terrified at first that he has died, quickly recovers his senses and jumps up and runs away howling "like a dog with a fractured leg." When he reaches the cathedral, he suddenly feels that the whole world is divided into two camps. He exists in isolation and the rest of the world stands united as his enemy. In a state of "drunken half-sleep" he conceives

of a mad plan to overthrow the world. He takes the key to the tower clock and not only does he then wind the clock, but he also sets it ahead an hour: "with his goose-like neck bent way out and his bony palms resting against the stone window-ledge, he looked down at the city, astir by his trickery. He just couldn't hold back the surging feeling of his unlimited power; he couldn't close his distorted, laughing lips. Tears of laughter were gushing and being split by Kostya's snorting laughter. . . . The clock could not stop its appointed hour of striking. Ten strokes, one after another, resounded: nine designated by God, the tenth by Kostya." (21)

The town itself succumbs to feverish activity to catch up on the hour it has lost, and Kostya, in his unbalanced state of mind, now thinks that he rules time and therefore has complete power over the lives of others. When he arrives home and hears the shop manager, Semyon Mitrofanovich, say that his brother, Sergei (who has just fled town to escape from his creditors and possible imprisonment), will end up in solitary confinement with nothing to do but count cockroach skins, he immediately seizes up the image and imagines his revenge against all who have mocked him in terms of solitary confinement. But Kostya is still half aware that his power is imaginary. His thoughts hover between a desire for power and a fear that it is not to be had. He has four visions, two in dreams and two in hallucinatory episodes, which show the gradual, complete deterioration of his mind. In the first dream Kostya sees a hole which expands into an abyss. He is terrified and tries desperately and unsuccessfully to get away from the hole.²⁴ As he falls through he hears the voice of Semyon Mitrofanovich saying with merriment, "It's solitary confinement, brother." The immediate stimulus for the dream is the day's residue—Semyon's frightening statement about Sergei. (According to Freud, and identifiable and applicable here, speech in dreams always originates from speech heard or spoken in waking life.) Two ideas—that of death and that of isolation—have merged in Kostya's mind. Death looms as an isolation more frightening than that of his real life and he cannot accept it as a solution to his problems, as a welcome escape. The image of falling, of hurtling through the abyss symbolizes the rapid movement of time over which Kostya has no control. His dim awareness of this while conscious has become a central insight of his subconscious mind²⁵ and is the basis of the heightened anxiety he feels. The fall also suggests a lack of equilibrium which in turn again indicates a vague awareness on Kostya's part, this time that he is losing his mind.

A few weeks after this dream Kostya has a fit. The dividing line between his thoughts before and during the fit is blurred. At some point between his wondering why on earth he should go on living and his looking for something with which to kill himself he has the fit. When Kostya cannot find anything with which to end his life, he is suddenly overwhelmed with the belief that he has overcome death and is immortal. His

“feeling grows into wings” (“Chuvstvo... vyrastalo v kryl'ia”) and he flies in the air. (The transformations in this hyperbolized epileptic fit are similar to those in dreams and fairytales.) A painfully green light (symbolizing life-everlasting) pierces his body, and then turns into an enormous reptile which in turn pierces Kostya with its claws, eats his wings, begins to crush him and finally swallows him; and he is lost turning and turning within the cold, slippery innards of the reptile.²⁶ This vision of immortality shows death not as an escape from unbearable reality but a nightmare of more terrifying order in its quality of the eternal now.

Freud has noted that dreams are hallucinatory experiences while asleep and that the transformation of ideas into visual images does not occur only in dreams but also in waking hallucinations and visions. In this work, despite the similarities between waking and sleeping hallucinatory experience—the transformation of thoughts and feelings into visual images and the creation of new meanings—waking visions lead to insanity whereas dreams do not. It would seem that waking hallucinations are eruptions of the subconscious mind into the conscious which destroy the problem-solving mechanism of dreams.

Concurrently Kostya's older sister Katya, a gymnasium student, has taken seriously ill. Though no one discusses the very likely possibility of her dying (the narrator states it explicitly), the idea haunts the subconscious of those around her as becomes apparent from some of their dreams. Katya herself comes to believe in and accept her approaching death through her dreams which function successfully in this instance as a problem-solving device. In her first dream she imagines that someone keeps coming and opening her door. Death is the stranger beckoning her and she is frightened and tries to awaken.²⁷ But her dream continues, and this time her deceased mother, with a bandaged head, appears to her and reproaches her for her faintheartedness. The association of approaching death with the image of her deceased mother prepares Katya for accepting death in that associating death with her mother makes it seem less terrifying. This dream is unusual in its two-part construction, and Freud has pointed out that in dream-logic a subordinate and main idea may be indicated by means of a prefatory and a main dream. The dream thought in Katya's dream could thus be translated by the use of a subordinate clause construction: If death is frightening to you, think of it in terms of your mother.

At this point Katya is torn between a desire to escape suffering through death and a desire to live once again, like her baby niece Irinushka, unconscious of life's sorrows. But by her next dream she comes to accept death with resignation. In this dream another stranger comes to her, with a bandaged head (thus displacing her mother), and tells her it is time to go to the warm country (Katya is actually sent to a warmer clime in hopes that she will recover) where everything is unbelievably good. The stranger takes Katya's clock from her night table and throws it to the

ground, saying that in the warm country there is no time. Katya is awakened by her sister-in-law Khristina (who herself is burdened with caring for both the Klochkov family and business since her husband's flight), who says that if Katya wishes she herself will take her to a warm clime. But Katya believes that her dream applies only to herself and tells Khristina that her time has not yet arrived. After Khristina leaves, Katya notices that her clock has stopped and dream and reality have merged for her in that she interprets it as a symbol of her own death. When she is actually sent south, she meekly accepts it as her rendezvous with death. For her time is a tyrant which controls human lives. Only the limited consciousness of a child, which is no longer possible for her, and death, as it appeared in her dreams, offer an escape.

As for Kostya, his mad desire to conquer time obviates death as an immediate solution. The night after Katya's departure he is afraid to go into her room because he feels the presence of someone (the “someone” of Katya's dream was the messenger of death), and that very night he is haunted in his dreams by the idea of death. He dreams that Katya asks him to go to a shop to buy her a coffin. He visits several stores but is unable to find a suitable one. When he returns home he sees Katya standing next to a coffin, and she asks him why he bought her such a narrow and crowded one. Then they are lying on a sloping bed, Katya comfortably at the top and Kostya uncomfortably near the floor. He wonders why she is comfortable and he is not and why he has a crooked nose.

In his dream Kostya is not only unable to see death, symbolized by the coffin, as peace and release from the suffering of life, he also cannot understand how Katya can accept it that way and thus he can neither accept her death nor help her in her confrontation with it. Although Kostya consciously thinks that there is no point to life if one is inevitably to die, and no point in life if it is as wretched as his is, he is still unable to accept death as a viable alternative. The hope of changing life makes the desire to live predominate in him especially given his terrible visions of death. The mention of the nose at the end of the dream suggests that one's attitude toward death may also be fated.

As Kostya's mind steadily deteriorates to a point of complete insanity he forgets the futility of his attempt to control time and his own fate. The cathedral clock becomes for him an iron monster on which his fate depends. For him it is neither man nor beast that rules life but accursed time so he once again sets the cathedral clock ahead an hour. Having accomplished his feat, he laughs at the top of his lungs a wild, insane laugh convinced that there is no more time. As he makes his way home, he has delusions of grandeur, and as he proclaims the new freedom from time to his slaves—passersby—in his imagination he is transformed into various symbols of power in an obvious need to compensate for the lack of power he has over his own life. At one point Kostya stops a group of beggars: “and pulling the key to the clock out of his pocket, he threw it to the

beggars: 'take this planetary meat and distribute it to the hungry; I don't want anyone to complain; henceforth everything is possible, and there is no such thing as the impossible!'" (133) Then he addresses another crowd with the following: " 'Listen you rag-a-muffins and thieves, I have taken time upon myself, I have killed time with its hours—henceforth there is no time! Listen you scoundrels, I have taken the sin of the world upon myself, I have killed sin with its anguish and repentance,—henceforth there is no sin! Listen you cowards and deceivers, I have taken death upon myself, I have killed death with its horror,—henceforth there is no death! . . . I am the Lord your God!' " (134-35)

Imagining himself as the ruler of the world in control of fate, Kostya's mind works in images of power at first related to Christian symbols. He offers up the key to the clock as his flesh to feed the hungry; he has taken on the sins of the world in imitation of Christ's sacrifice and promises immortality through his Christ-like power over death. However, Kostya's hysterical enthusiasm turns into gloomy despair by the time he has reached home. He suddenly blacks out and the devil as a "slender, quiet, transparent" apparition appears to him and addresses him: " 'Kostya, Kostya the Great, saviour of mankind, who has freed the world from its iron yoke,'—trembled Nosey,—'you are a god, you are a tsar, you are tsar of tsars, you have subdued time, you have given freedom to mankind; all lands, everything sublunar, the whole world is under your power. . . . Should you want, the very stars would fall from the sky; should you want, the sun would go out; and all the same, Kostya, dear Kostya dearest, unfortunate Kostya, you have a crooked nose.' " (139-40) After this ironic eloquence the devil takes Kostya up into the heavens into his new palace: "And in the starry heavens Kostya saw clearly three black pillars on which sat three green priests who, all straightened up, were reading three red books." (140) Kostya neither opposes Nosey, the devil (whose neck and hands, elsewhere, are also likened to Kostya's), nor is amazed at what is going on. He simply smiles and keeps wondering what he should do first: create new worlds or turn angels into devils. And, finally, Kostya calls himself a crow as the hallucination ends as does his sanity.

Awake or asleep, sane or insane, Kostya is harried by his nose, the symbol of incomprehensible human suffering and of human impotence. It is in the devil's appearance to Kostya that there lies the suggestion that perhaps human misery on earth is more closely tied to the presence of the devil than any other power. In Kostya's disordered mind the devil easily replaces Christ, for it is difficult to associate the power which rules human life with a benign supernatural force. Kostya's own vision of usurped power, however, is a mixture of the divine and the demonic; divine in its vision of doing good and demonic in its prideful usurpation of powers attributed to God. This curious impasse between the sacred and the profane is repeated in the scene where the three priests read red (symbol of

the sacred) books while sitting on black (symbol of evil²⁸) pillars.

In the end Kostya, unable to work out a solution to his conflicts as Katya did, is master only of his own kingdom of madness, and the final scene of the story (not including the closing image of the laughing devil) ends that same night with a horrifying portrait of Kostya's insanity and the continuing relentless march of unconquered time:

Late at night in the store-room, between the doors, Kostya, who had taken refuge in the store-room, was sitting in long black stockings on a slop-pail as though he were on a tsar's throne, not Kostya Klochkov, but Kostya Sabaoth, not Kostya Sabaoth, but a crow, and he was sitting beyond time, happy and satisfied; he was laying goose and duck eggs, and he was counting cockroach skins, so that henceforth no one would count the damned skins; he was picking his crooked, disfigured nose and was picking with ardor and enthusiasm.

But time was passing, the clock chopped off minute after minute into an abyss without return, repeating always one and the same thing, one and the same thing, as it did yesterday, and so too today. (146)

Man stands alone in an indifferent universe and nothing in life gives him succor. Death is a meaningless void welcome to some as an escape from the conscious senselessness and suffering of life but to others a potentially more terrifying blackness. (It should be noted that this theme is developed in the novel only through its dramatization in dreams.) As for insanity, it too is only another intolerable escape. Given these conditions, man within the limits of his power can only create his own finite, transitory meanings and cannot find eternal universal values. But here too fate, especially in its power over life and death, raises a problem which is examined through the figure of Nelidov, a friend of the Klochkov family.

Nelidov also feels trapped by time. He lives in a meaningless present and is obsessed by the debacle of his past. He yearns for the spontaneous joy of life found in childhood with its lack of consciousness of time:²⁹ "If you do not turn into children and be like them, life will not change, it will be on earth as it always was, struggle and torment and death." (51) The religious overtone is clear: "Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein." (Luke xviii.17.) But the irony is that Nelidov has lived and suffered and can no longer accept or feel the kind of naive joy that a child does. He is haunted by the question of the meaning of life and the answer is an imperative necessity for him. He feels that if man is fated to suffer and die, then he must find some eternal value to balance the scales and make life tolerable. Nelidov himself had at first thrived on the belief that he could build with others an indestructible temple ("nesokrushimyi xram"), an earthly paradise for man. But reality did not measure up to his dreams, for deceptions brought that temple down. Soon after this he lost all hope in effective action when a close friend of his was executed, and he could only stand by and watch helplessly.

When Nelidov meditates on his past two dreams keep haunting him, dreams which become as real to him as actual events of the past. The first dream followed the death of his friend and a parade in which Nelidov saw a dog maimed by a streetcar. The sound of the whining dog rings in Nelidov's ears during his entire dream and is a symbol of man's unheeded suffering on earth.³⁰ In his dream Nelidov finds himself in the gallery of a cathedral leaning on a railing and looking down at a coffin on a catafalque. Though the service has ended the crowd remains in the cathedral as though expecting something. Suddenly the cathedral bell starts ringing as though it were Easter ("kak na Paskhu"), and the crowd kneels down. The coffin opens and the ugly mug of an ape ("obez'ian'ia morda") peers out and then its paws reach out to suffering humanity. The railing on which Nelidov was leaning collapses and Nelidov goes flying down head first.

While Nelidov has consciously sought to create values in his life, it is clear only from this dream that religious values have been found wanting. Nelidov's posture in the gallery is one of contemplation. He looks at the coffin, which symbolizes the death of his friend (the day's residue), and considers, as it were, the full significance of death. The collapse of the railing after the appearance of the ape and Nelidov's fall symbolize the collapse of Nelidov's faith in the promise of the Resurrection. The loss of equilibrium that stemmed from Nelidov's loss of faith in a secular paradise has undermined his faith in a religious paradise. He has been deceived and now sees man as deceived. Man appears as a deserted wanderer on earth as the earth is in space: "The stars which had become visible began to swarm in the clear sky as if they were going to break loose and fly away without looking at wanderer-earth, a tormented captive roaming in space." (53)

With life seen as terminal, it becomes all the more imperative for Nelidov to find compensatory value on earth to give his existence the semblance of meaning. He builds another "indestructible temple"; life becomes both tolerable and meaningful through love. But death again intervenes, fate still has the upper hand. His fiancée dies. The first night after her death, Nelidov dreams that he is in a crowd of people, all of whom have had their "indestructible temple" destroyed. They crowd around a place of execution in a state of numbness waiting for Death. Death arrives, a small bent, old woman who smiles and tells them to go home as their hour has not yet arrived.

Despite Nelidov's suicidal despair, he cannot, as it were, condemn himself to death at this point in his life. He needs a reason to kill himself even while he searches for a reason to live. He cannot act wholly on the basis of emotion. (There is also a suggestion here that even suicide is preordained.) The dream itself suggests that while life without ascertainable purpose and meaning is insufferable for many people, the quiet misery that ensues is not sufficient motivation for suicide.

Nelidov meets his destiny when Khristina turns to him for moral support after her husband's precipitous departure. Nelidov is himself

destitute and cannot help financially, and knowing nothing about business he cannot help run the Klochkov clock shop. But when Khristina asks why misfortune has suddenly descended upon her, he expresses his own understanding of life to her by describing a dream he has just had. (Nelidov is the only major figure in the novels who is aware of the psychological import of dreams.) He dreamt that he was walking endlessly in a field passing one carriage after another. There were peasants in one carriage, squatting on their knees and being cudgeled on their bare backs with cylinders. As Nelidov passed from carriage to carriage he saw other peasants awaiting their turn. For Nelidov no man can escape from suffering. Those who are still happy, simply have not yet had their turn, which will inevitably come. Fate and time again are seen as masters and punishment as man's due (though the question of guilt is not raised). Though this hardly assuages Khristina's own distress, she finds comfort in Nelidov's sympathy and soon her dependence on him turns into love.

It is at this point that a split which proves to be fatal develops between Nelidov's thoughts and feelings. On one occasion he tells himself that he loves Khristina—and in her presence he believes in his spontaneous feelings for her—and that this love is the answer to the howling dog, the defense against the ugly mug of the ape; it is his resurrected indestructible temple, his *raison d'être*. Indeed, when their love is consummated, it is presented in terms of religious symbolism: "And then in one moment the divisible became for them indivisible and the impossible was changed into the possible, as blood is changed into wine and bread into flesh." (116) At times he even feels that Khristina is his deceased fiancée and at such times he does not hear the ticking of the clocks. He has transcended the tyranny of time in partaking of a transcendent value. But such moments do not last. The sound of minutes ticking away steals into his ears and his faith is shaken. Rationality takes precedence over spontaneous feeling. Nelidov convinces himself that having loved once, he can never love again.³¹ The conflict (whether or not he loves Khristina) in his mind continues until finally his thoughts take the form of a monster, his conscience and double, accusing him of deceiving himself and Khristina and warning that Khristina herself will soon realize the deception.³²

Harrassed by his monster, Nelidov imagines that someone in the adjacent room hangs himself. His awakened, dormant desire for death (expressed initially in a dream) and the irrevocable split between his feelings and his thoughts as symbolized by the monster merge in his hallucination. The monster pronounces sentence: "Guilty of death" ("povinen smerti"). Nelidov has found the strength to kill himself by finding himself guilty of deceiving Khristina, that is, deserving of punishment. The structure of his mind is such that he must have an intellectual reason either to live or to die. He finally kills himself by leaping in front of a moving train, thus reliving the leap from the gallery in his dream of the ugly ape and symbolizing, as in his dream, the complete

collapse of his faith in life.

The suicide is also indirectly foreshadowed in a dream that Khristina has at the beginning of her love affair with Nelidov. Khristina dreams that she is in a crowded railroad station waiting for a train. A crowd of small girls in white dresses forms a circle around her and when she hears the train whistle blow three times she tries unsuccessfully to break through to catch the train. The little girls appear again on the roadbed, this time surrounding a bride whose face is not discernible because it is covered with a veil. The train whistle blows three times again and Khristina suddenly realizes that she herself is the bride and awakens. She senses that someone is sitting in her room crying like one suffering from unrequited love and again it is she who is crying. (This projection of repressed intuitive feelings onto an alter ego when awake is similar to dream displacement.)

This dream merges into a single present moment the past, the present and the future. Khristina's initial anxiety stemmed from Sergei's flight from town (she had accompanied him to the railroad station). This she is consciously aware of, but what remains hidden from her conscious thoughts is the guilt she feels in deceiving him and the presentiment she has that Nelidov may also leave her (the first train whistles suggest the departure and loss of Sergei and the second, that of Nelidov).³³ After Nelidov does commit suicide she is in the same state of shock that Nelidov experienced when his fiancée died. Thus the round of misery that Nelidov understood through his dream of the peasants being beaten has completed another circle. Structurally speaking the pattern of the novel could be viewed as a closed circle of suffering with an entry and exit point. One enters into the human condition of misery out of the non-verbal consciousness of a child, and one becomes conscious of this condition as soon as the first inevitable misfortune strikes. The only path of exit is death. Every other level of human consciousness—the waking, the dreaming, the hallucinatory state as well as the state of insanity—is threaded with despair of one kind or another. The blackness of such a world has cast over it the shadow of the devil, and the devil's appearance in recurring images leaves a haunting suggestion that perhaps evil does reign on earth where the only value to be found is transitory love.

In *Sisters in the Cross*³⁴ the chief protagonist is Pyotr Alexeevich Marakulin, a thirty-year-old clerk who works in a merchant's office as an accountant.³⁵ What specifically characterizes Marakulin when the novel opens is his child-like naiveté about life. He never questions the meaning of life (it never even occurs to him that he should); he trusts in human benevolence and is known for his gaiety of spirit. His curious lack of knowledge of evil is presented in terms similar to the utopian vision of the lion and lamb lying side by side at peace with each other: "Sometimes one would think, while listening to Marakulin and watching him approach people, by his smile and glance, that's the kind of a person who is always

ready, unblinkingly, to enter a raging beast's cage and, without reflecting a moment, extend his hand to stroke the beast on its reared raging hair, and the beast won't bite." (12)

Marakulin's fall from grace is the main theme of the novel as well as the central image of his dreams. After having worked for five years with a methodicalness that earned for him the nickname of the German, Marakulin makes an error in his accounting, is dismissed from his job and barely manages to survive by means of occasional odd jobs. He sees himself as an innocent victim of blind chance ("slepaia sluchainost'")³⁶ and for the first time in his life is forced to think about human travail.³⁷ Since no one helps him out (the image of hostile strangers is to appear frequently in his dreams), he begins to feel that man is a log to man ("chelovek cheloveku brevno"). He sees not savagery as central in human relations but cold, cruel indifference. Though his past now seems to him to have been an illusion, he finds no answer to the "why" of his present situation and decides that he must simply wait for good fortune to return as arbitrarily as it had left.

In his new straitened circumstances Marakulin has to leave his second-floor apartment in the fashionable Fontanka section of Petersburg for a mere corner in a fifth-floor back-entry apartment in Burkov House. His last day in his own apartment is marked by two important incidents. At one point a cat, Murka, begins to howl in the courtyard because it has fallen from a fifth-floor apartment (an ominous repetition) or because of some other mishap.³⁸ Marakulin listens with horrified fascination until he suddenly realizes that unbeknownst to him there has always been some cat howling somewhere. The howling cat, a symbol of incomprehensible suffering, opens his eyes to the irony that only through personal misfortune has he recognized that the human condition is rent with misery. Scarcely does he come to this insight when an old beggar comes to his quarters. Not only does Marakulin give the old man his last five-copeck coin, he also listens with compassion to his tales of woe.

On Marakulin's first night in his new quarters he has a dream which is closely tied to the central theme and image of the novel. He dreams that he is sitting at a table in a country garden and a group of whispering strangers begin to crowd around him, pointing at him. When he realizes that they intend to kill him, he tries to get away but falls face first on some stones (the people disappear), and suddenly a kite sits on his back, squeezes him with its claws, and begins to peck at his back as though saying with its beak: "Thief, thief, thief." Marakulin's heart is broken into pieces, and he knows that he shall never rise again. The dream ends with his feeling completely anxiety ridden.

The divine Akumovna, as she is known in Burkov House, interprets Marakulin's dream as signifying approaching illness. And Marakulin actually does take ill for two weeks during which time Akumovna generously and solicitously tends to his needs.³⁹ When Marakulin goes out

for the first time after his illness, he feels a new sensitivity to all that surrounds him and feels spiritually reborn: "One person has to betray in order to discover his soul through his betrayal and thus be himself in the world; another has to kill to discover his soul through his murder and, at least, to die himself; and he, probably, had to write a receipt once to the wrong person in order to discover his soul and thus to be in the world not simply some Marakulin or other but Marakulin, Pyotr Alexeevich: to see, to hear, and to feel!" (27)

Marakulin's dismissal, his dream and his spiritual rebirth as a responsive observer of life are closely interrelated in the meaning they hold for him. When he loses his job, he awakens for the first time to human suffering in the guise of need and man's indifference to man. In his dream his violent death is a symbolic initiation into membership in the human circle of unwarranted suffering and persecution. His isolation before his dismissal is echoed in the dream by his sitting alone at a table in a country garden. The peace and calm of the setting is deceptive. Almost immediately there is a threat from strangers who symbolize Marakulin's prefall indifference. In the dream as in real life Marakulin survives this indifference until he too falls heir to trauma. His suffering through the kite is inevitable because the kite is the symbol of the power of nature, the mysterious and unavoidable, the merciless and savage force of fate. The new element in the dream is an ill-defined sense of guilt which is to continue to haunt him throughout the novel.

The main function of the dream is regenerative. Marakulin relives a traumatic situation in his dream not as a duplication of the workaday world but in terms of symbolic images characteristic of dreams. The image of Marakulin sitting in the country garden is paradisiacal in meaning and symbolizes his innocence before his dismissal. The strangers represent the unknown, the ambiguous and the uncertain in life and thus the accusatory gesture they make towards Marakulin is symbolic of human guilt which is unfathomable as to cause. Before such puzzling guilt, punishment too becomes incomprehensible and only fate, symbolized by the kite, is seen as the possible agent.

When Marakulin awakens to the knowledge of his fall, he sees his naive self destroyed; he feels he is a new man who has escaped from his illusions about life to a new awareness of reality. This fall and resurrection are closely related to Christ's words: "Verily, verily I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." (John xii.24.) But the paradox in the novel is in the bitter harvest that Marakulin is to reap after his rebirth. Awakened to human suffering and curious to see the new reality which will be revealed to him, Marakulin, nevertheless, does not know himself why he wants to live when he sees no purpose in life (the demand he now makes on life). He does not know whether he has simply accepted suffering as some kind of higher justice because of original sin, whether his previous inner gaiety of spirit

compensates adequately for the negative aspects of life, or whether the will to survive is simply an inexplicable human whim. The plot of the novel revolves around Marakulin's unsuccessful attempt to answer these questions as he becomes more intimately aware of the suffering of others.

The Burkov apartment into which Marakulin has moved is situated between a factory and a hospital, between a place of joyless toil and one of suffering and death. Biographical sketches of many of the tenants, given by the author, are interspersed with occasional bits of dialogue between Marakulin and the tenant in question. This introduction of many minor characters with life histories of suffering gives Marakulin's experience broader scope and meaning, that is, a sense of the human lot on earth.

The most important dweller of Burkov House whom Marakulin meets is the divine Akumovna who serves as a foil both to Marakulin's character and to his experience. Akumovna's story is typical of several other female characters in the novel all of whom have been violated as young girls and all of whom belong to the sisterhood of fated suffering which is symbolized by the novel's title. Not only does Akumovna know suffering in this life, she also has a vision of eternal suffering in a dream referred to as her journey through hell ("Khozhdenie po mukam"). In this dream she arrives near an endlessly long, wide house which is under construction (suggesting endless new inhabitants to arrive) and on the crowded floors of which lie dead people, rotten fish, skulls, dead animals and carrion, all amidst rotten garbage. As Akumovna is led through the house by unidentified inhabitants of hell, she keeps uttering prayers to God to rescue her from all this vileness. At one point she wishes that she could receive the Eucharist and the next moment she is taken out of the house and led up a hill where three unidentified figures are celebrating the Eucharist with a slop-basin. Akumovna wants to make the sign of the cross (a gesture which according to folk belief can incapacitate devils) but is prevented from doing so. She is given a dry wafer as part of the service, but she chokes on it and cannot swallow it. Again she beseeches God to end her torture as her guides laugh at her. Then she is led down the hill to a lake where, so she is told, she will meet her end. The whole lake is covered with doves, and as Akumovna walks knee-deep into the water, her last guide disappears and her dream ends without further mishap.

Akumovna's journey through the house symbolizes her life on earth in all its confrontations both with evil and corruption and with endless suffering. Repelled and frightened by this knowledge and experience of evil and suffering, Akumovna seeks escape and protection through the safeguards of formal religion. But the grotesque celebration of the Eucharist which is available to her symbolizes the inefficacy and inadequacy of religion to remove the burden of suffering which falls to the lot of each individual. When Akumovna goes up the hill, the symbolic road to Calvary, she must bear her own cross, her own torments, supported only by faith. After she is led down the hill to the lake where she is supposed to

die, her tormentors disappear for she is spiritually reborn (water is a symbol of birth in both Christian symbolism and in Freudian theory) through her stoic acceptance of her own cross without complaint. Akumovna finds no escape from suffering and realizes that it may even be eternal, but unlike Marakulin she has the emotional stamina to accept it on faith and feels that no one is to blame for it. Her religious view of life gives her a sense of spiritual freedom and in striking contrast to the oft-repeated image of the fall in Marakulin's dreams, Akumovna's other dreams are characterized by the image of soaring over the earth (Jung saw in flying dreams the tendency to overcome the difficulties of life.) Marakulin's inability to accept fate as an inexplicable given, as Akumovna does, is the root of his anguish as was that of Nikolai in *The Pond*. (No other option is made available.)

After Marakulin hears about Akumovna's dream, he himself has a dream of judgment day in which there are some striking parallels to Akumovna's dream. Marakulin dreams that Burkov Court is filled with garbage. Though not dead, he is lying in the courtyard and sees all the inhabitants of Burkov House lying there too. A catalogue of names that grows from the inhabitants of the apartment to the inhabitants of all Petersburg and finally to all "Holy Russia" creates a nightmarish mood; indeed the courtyard is described as a field of death covered by fog with lanterns hanging overhead like fallen stars. Suddenly a voice rings out: "The times have ripened, the cup of sin is full, punishment is at hand." An inordinately large fireman appears and walks up to Marakulin who is terrified by this moment of confrontation. Marakulin wants to be magnanimous and ask about the well-being of all those who are lying in terror with him in Burkov Court, but he can only manage to say: "Will I be all right?"

The assemblage in Burkov Court is a symbol of the gathering of the multitudes at the Last Judgment and echoes the opening scene in Akumovna's dream. The disembodied, unidentified voice identifies the transgression (the words were actually spoken earlier by a tenant and are thus the day's residue) and is transformed into the agent of retribution, the fireman, symbol of hell's fiery holocaust. Marakulin acknowledges that he bears some guilt by asking what his lot will be, and his inability to be magnanimous, as he wants, when threatened suggests that man's instinct for survival is the root of his self-centeredness. The dream also reflects the confusion that reigns in Marakulin's mind. While he cannot rise to religious acceptance of life as an expression of God's will, neither can he rebel. The indefinable guilt that lurks in his subconscious leads to a fear of eternal damnation. Although he finds it extremely difficult to believe that all human suffering is due to original sin, without an alternate, more plausible explanation, it remains a terrifying possibility for him. And given life on earth as he sees it, it is easier for him to believe in the reality of hell than that of heaven.

Although Marakulin cannot accept life on the terms that Akumovna does, neither can he return to his former indifference towards human suffering. He does not have the iron heart ("zheleznoe serdtse") which characterizes the wealthy widowed tenant, Kholmogorovna, who becomes for him a symbol of human indifference. He thinks that if one were to kill the healthy, satiated and satisfied louse ("vosh"), one would be a benefactor of mankind.⁴¹ But just as blind chance knocked Marakulin out of the rut of naive joy and satisfaction with life, so too does blind chance strike Kholmogorovna—a police confrontation with a revolutionary results in shots, one of which strikes and kills her accidentally. Marakulin had had a premonition of Kholmogorovna's vulnerability, because in his dream of judgment day she too appeared as defenceless as every one else. In this instance Marakulin accepts Akumovna's motto—"it is impossible to blame anyone"—for everyone is at some point the victim of fate.

The first ray of hope that enters temporarily into Marakulin's dismal life during his two years in Burkov House is his meeting with Verochka. Just before Marakulin actually meets her, he has reached a point where he no longer is satisfied with being a responsive observer of life; he wants his life to have a tangible purpose. Since the heroic is not part of his temperament, he cannot dedicate himself to a revolutionary cause as does Marya Alexandrovna. Nor can he live solely for an after-life as does Lizaveta Ivanovna. Verochka on the other hand, who is herself an aspiring young actress, reawakens in Marakulin a sense of the joy of being alive. Love looms in his imagination as a positive reason for which to live, a value which compensates for or at least makes tolerable the negative aspects of life. But Verochka is destitute and falls into prostitution as the only means of furthering her career. When Marakulin is confronted with the accomplished fact, he is filled with both rage and despair. He knows that he is powerless to protect Verochka, and he feels that she too is but another helpless victim of circumstance. With his last positive hope dashed, Marakulin falls victim to a series of illusions culminating in his death. (It is interesting to note that whereas Marakulin's anxieties find expression in his dreams, his happy moments are never reflected. This supports the theory that dreams function primarily as a problem-solving mechanism. It has also been suggested that one's accomplishments and joys do not create enough tension to produce dreams.⁴²)

Shortly after the Verochka episode, Marakulin receives an urgent request to go to Moscow to see his friend Pavel Plotnikov. Plotnikov is the unruly, obstreperous scion of a wealthy family who had repaid Marakulin's own solicitous friendship to him when he was a younger classmate by getting him out of several scrapes. Plotnikov represents the power of money and his inability to live successfully emphasizes the fact that though most of the characters discussed at length who live in Burkov House suffer because of monetary problems, this is not the central issue in the novel. Poverty merely compounds one's miseries and creates the illusion that if

one had money it would solve all one's problems.

Marakulin has a premonition of this in a dream he has while he is traveling to Moscow by train. He dreams that Plotnikov comes up to him and timidly tells him that the most rational thing he could do would be to cut off his head. When Marakulin protests that it would be terrifying for him to be without a head, Plotnikov answers that there is nothing else to do and adds that it would not be painful at all, but simply "wondrous and strange." Marakulin finally agrees and Plotnikov cuts off his head with a razor. Marakulin sees his head fall on the floor and sees streams of blood jettison up to the ceiling and cover his body as well as the floor. Marakulin walks up to a mirror and sees his headless bloody body; and as he stands there wondering how he will get along without a head, he awakens.

The most striking characteristic of this dream is its absurdity. According to Freud dreams express contradiction by means of the absurd. This insight is applicable here and contradiction is expressed by two other aspects of the dream-work. First, we have through the mirror image the archetype of the double which symbolizes inner division. Second, we have a projection of part of Marakulin's ego onto Plotnikov. This dream is the first indication of the suicidal trend developing in Marakulin's mind. This impulse is so removed from and abhorrent to his conscious thoughts that in the dream he displaces the action from his own hand to that of Plotnikov. (This is a rare example of a disguised wish fulfillment dream. It should be remembered, however, that the subconscious offers options for action which are no longer considered to be "truer" than those of the conscious mind.) Also, since Marakulin's despair is intellectual, that is, a demand for an acceptable rational answer to the why of human suffering, one solution to his dilemma would be to stop thinking, hence the symbolic gesture of giving up his head. However, Marakulin can neither unlearn the existence of evil nor stop seeing human suffering even if his own material condition were to be improved. That is why in the dream he continues to "see," without his head, the streams of blood, a symbol of human pain; and why he continues in the dream to reject rejecting a rationale for life. Thus this second image of a fall suggests another defeat which in turn foreshadows Plotnikov's lack of meaningful personal interest in Marakulin. This dilemma in turn exacerbates Marakulin's suicidal despair.

When Marakulin arrives in Moscow he finds that Plotnikov has lost contact with reality and for some time has been in a drunken delirium through which no one has been able to penetrate. Marakulin, apparently, was called because one of the few comprehensible words that Plotnikov had uttered in a month was Marakulin's name. When Marakulin is taken to Plotnikov, the latter is sitting silently between a picture of Holy Russia and two cages of monkeys, and his servant repeats to Marakulin what Plotnikov has said of himself: that he has no head, his mouth is on his back and his eyes on his shoulders, that during the Christmas holidays he ate so much honey that he became a bee-hive full of bees and that people were

trying to eat him up and destroy his bees. But in the summer when the first fly appears, he will take up the "exploitation of the fly" as a motive force which will conquer steam and electricity. With the aid of Russia's Arctic fleet he will crush Europe, take over unknown lands and autocratically rule the world according to his own will.

When Plotnikov suddenly recognizes Marakulin, who was standing before him stupefied, he lets out a savage howl and falls unconscious on a divan. After a sleep of forty-eight hours, Plotnikov awakens and takes Marakulin to visit some mutual friends, apparently unconscious of what had transpired during his drunken stupor. But Plotnikov's behavior when sober is as incomprehensible to Marakulin as was his drunken posture. Plotnikov tells Marakulin that he believes in him as he does in God and that he knows that Marakulin could solve any problem for him. Although Plotnikov seems to be in Marakulin's debt, he never once inquires as to how Marakulin is getting along. Plotnikov's strange faith in Marakulin's superhuman powers and his indifference to Marakulin's real life leave Marakulin in a state of confusion and depression.

The whole episode of Plotnikov's drunken and sober actions is presented from the points of view of Plotnikov and Marakulin and can be understood only in symbolic terms as a dream within a dream with the curious logic of dreams. (It should be noted that Plotnikov speaks in terms of visual images characteristic of dreams, visions, and hallucinations.) In the first "dream" Plotnikov describes himself as headless but still able to see, thus echoing the themes in Marakulin's dream. His sitting between a picture of Holy Russia—the Russia of voluntary suffering and faith—and the two cages of monkeys—the reign of the beast or the oppressor⁴³ suggests another choice to that of Akumovna's (Marakulin is caught in between) in the confrontation with the power of fate. Plotnikov eats honey, symbol of the earth's bounty, and is transformed into a beehive, but when exploited by people—transformed into a symbol of the power of fate—he is determined to exploit, in terror, the fly to fulfill his fantasies of power. He does not accept nor can he be reconciled to the idea of man's impotence. Whereas Marakulin had dreamt of the powerful kite controlling his destiny, Plotnikov dreams of controlling destiny through the weakest image of the power of nature—the fly—which suggests the futility of his fantasy. Plotnikov awakens into his second "dream" and sees Marakulin as a god, as the creation of his superhuman power which he then begins to show off to his other acquaintances. It is no wonder that the whole episode appears to Marakulin, in retrospect, to have been a dream as "wondrous and strange" as his own. He returns to Petersburg completely bewildered.

The following spring an occasion arises which gives Marakulin an opportunity to test Plotnikov's protestations of friendship. One of Marakulin's friends in Burkov House, Sergei Damaskin, an artist, has been assigned to go to Paris and suggests to Marakulin and a few other

friends that they all join him as a solution to their problems. They actually believe that a change of locale will fundamentally alter their miserable lives.⁴⁴ Marakulin is sufficiently carried away to believe implicitly that he can get the money necessary for their trip from Plotnikov. He writes to Plotnikov requesting a thousand rubles and after a long wait he receives twenty-five.

With this last dashed illusion added to his disappointments, Marakulin is so conclusively convinced of man's impotence to direct his own life that his gesture of generosity in giving the twenty-five rubles Plotnikov had sent him to a poor, one-legged girl singing in the streets has no significant meaning for him.⁴⁵ He feels spiritually crushed and for all practical purposes a dead man "like a headless rooster swaggering around aimlessly," an echo of his last dream that is re-echoed in his next dream which again begins with strangers crowding around him as he sits at a table in a room in which everything is gathered as if ready for a trip. One of the strangers standing close to Marakulin is a repulsive looking naked woman with a bare skull. Marakulin aims a glass at the woman's skull, but does not throw it. The woman goes to the door and in passing tells Marakulin that on Saturday his mother will appear in white and that he must give Akumovna a pound. Marakulin asks belligerently what kind of a pound he is to give, but the strange woman wordlessly goes down the stairs into Burkov Court which is filled, as it was in Marakulin's nightmare of Judgment Day, at first with all the inhabitants of Burkov House and then with all of Petersburg.

The people in Burkov Court look up to Marakulin who stands in the window and ask in unison what the stranger said. Marakulin answers that one of them will die and again in unison the inhabitants ask, "Is it me?" The scene shifts without any logical connective and Marakulin is walking home. He enters the kitchen and sees a woman who resembles Akumovna all dressed in white. He recalls the words of the stranger about his mother being in white and in fright runs into his own room which looks the same as in the beginning of the dream except that the strangers have disappeared and only his deceased mother is seated there. (In this part of the dream we have a rare example of a dream coming true within a dream.) His mother tells him of the arrival of the woman in white whom he had just seen and then begins to cry. Marakulin gets down on his knees, bows his head "as though under an ax" and once again he feels "despair and anguish" which he continues to feel the very next moment when he awakens. (The level of consciousness in a dream just before waking is so close to that of the waking state that they can easily be confused.)

The most striking characteristic of this dream is the way it reworks previous dream material. It has been found in the psychotherapeutic analysis of dreams that an individual dreamer's dreams over a period of time are significantly interrelated. This was found to be true of Nikolai's dreams in *The Pond* and this is also true of Marakulin's dreams. The image of the

strangers in this dream creates the same mood of uncertainty, the same feeling of some unresolved tension as it did in Marakulin's first dream. This uncertainty is symbolic of the ambiguity that is now clearly dominant in Marakulin's subconscious. The stranger with the naked skull, clearly a symbol of death, is repulsive to Marakulin, and yet he cannot throw his glass at her (in the first he tried to run away from the strangers). Though he speaks to her wrathfully, he seems to accept her commands without question for now she has been transformed into a symbol of fate before whom he sees himself as impotent.

The theme of punishment in Marakulin's first dream and the image of the crowd awaiting Judgment Day in his second dream also reappear. When Marakulin interprets the stranger's words to the crowd as a message of death, they respond with the same concern that Marakulin expressed in his dream confrontation with the fireman. At this point a curious bit of dream-logic takes place. Marakulin is suddenly walking home (where he has actually been, thus far, in the dream) to test, as it were, the prophetic words of the stranger within the very dream itself. When the first portent appears to be coming true, Marakulin awakens in terror.

Once awake, Marakulin realizes that it is Friday and believes that there remains but one day before his destined hour of death: "He did not want to believe his dream but he did, and in doing so he was sentencing himself to death." This refrain is repeated twice in the last chapter and is followed by another that appears three times: "A person is born into the world already sentenced. All are sentenced from birth and forget that they live under a sentence because they do not know the hour; but when the day is told, the time measured off, and the Saturday is specified, oh no, that is beyond the strength given by God to humans whom He endowed with life and then sentenced, but from whom He hid the hour of death." (160) The seeming contradiction in these two citations is resolved by Marakulin's suicide which is depicted in a way that is typical in Remizov's fiction: waking reality takes on dream characteristics. Marakulin is completely unnerved by his dream, because he is overwhelmed by superstitious fear in a world that does not hold up to rational logic. His desire for death as an escape and his fear of death as eternal punishment make it impossible for him to choose suicide consciously even though he repeatedly says that he cannot go on living without a purpose in life. His death wish is transformed in his subconscious into an externally fated decree from which there can be no escape. Marakulin identifies the woman with the bare skull as a messenger of death and his mother has the same function.⁴⁶ His antagonism toward the stranger and then the humble lowering of his head (echoing the fall of his head in his previous dream) before his mother emphasize the ambivalence of his feelings toward death. By believing his dream Marakulin yields to the illusion that fate is discernible as well as inevitable. However, the repeated refrain—"all are sentenced from birth and . . . do not know the hour"—prepares the reader for fate to strike its

final blow in an unexpected way for fate is precisely the name given to the unknowable in human experience.

From the moment of his awakening on Friday morning until midnight Saturday, that is, to the end of his supposed appointed hour, Marakulin wanders all over Petersburg trying to escape his final confrontation with death. His despair had led him to consider death as an escape, but when he considers the real possibility, he is overwhelmed by an inexplicable yearning to live, to continue to strive to recapture the feeling of the joy of human existence which he had known before his fall from innocence. The description of Marakulin's wanderings are given a dream-like quality⁴⁷ which is an externalization of his inner terror. At one point he helps an old woman across the street only to miss by seconds a rapidly approaching streetcar. Dream-logic appears to dominate as a series of rapid incidents follow one after the other without any causal connections which in Remizov's fictional world is a clear sign that the conscious mind is disintegrating. For example when Marakulin pauses at the famed equestrian statue of Peter the Great, he addresses the statue with the cryptic words: "Your Imperial Majesty, the Russian people drink brandy infused in horse manure and subdue the heart of Europe for one and a half rubles plus cucumbers. I have nothing more to say!" (164) Peter the Great as a symbol of the creator-destroyer stemming from Pushkin's *Mednyi vsadnik* takes on here the added dimension of mute, blind fate from which there is no escape.

By nightfall Marakulin reaches Nevsky Prospekt and there he wanders back and forth until dawn searching for Verochka among the streetwalkers, hoping, in his distraught state of mind to protect her and, still awaiting his death, to say farewell to her. At sunrise he goes to the railroad station to catch a train to Tur-Kilia where some of his friends from Burkov House are staying for the summer: "They will help him out, they will give him some milk, he felt like eating,—after all, he was only twelve!—they would give him some milk." (167) With reality turning into a nightmare as terrifying as his dream, Marakulin can see no escape from his destiny, come when it may, except to regress to the state of naiveté that had characterized his life before his fall. (The recall of childhood memories is often found in dreams and is considered a regressive feature.) When told to wait for the next train, he goes off the side of the road and falls into a deep sleep awakening only at night, Saturday night. Trying not to believe but still fearing his prophetic dream, he wends his way home only to have a new nightmarish experience. When he arrives at Burkov House he rings and knocks to no avail. Then he goes to the rear entrance, walks up to the fifth floor and finds the kitchen door open. He enters and sees Akumovna with a white kerchief on her head, and he immediately recalls the portent in his dream: "Your mother will be in white." Then he notices that Akumovna has a plate with two eggs and that she is eating a third. Again Marakulin recalls the portent in the dream: "A pound." The pattern of associations

(functioning as a dream coming true within a dream) terrifies him, and he now sees Akumovna as a stranger who merely resembles Akumovna as in the second part of his dream. (Akumovna's appearance as a composite figure is typical of dreams.) He begins to moan, and suddenly Akumovna, the real Akumovna, rises from her chair and tries to comfort him. She tells him of a strange misadventure she had had that day which explains her not hearing the doorbell and the strange expression in her eyes that had frightened the already apprehensive Marakulin.

While Marakulin and Akumovna talk and drink tea, the kitchen clock strikes midnight and both of them are elated that Marakulin has escaped the portents of his dream. Akumovna goes to bed but Marakulin is too manic to consider sleeping. In his elation he goes to his room, puts his pillow on his windowsill and lies on it (a custom of the dwellers of Burkov House on a hot, stuffy night). In the courtyard he sees strewn from end to end young, green birch trees ready for Trinity Sunday, and looking at the birches, he feels the lost joy of his naiveté, his pre-fall innocence. Everything in his vision merges into the birch trees, the symbol of life in their greenness, and in this greenness he sees an apparition of Verochka. He stretches his hands to meet her (in his hallucination the laws of gravity do not operate) and falls from his fifth-floor room to his death on the stones of Burkov Court. As he falls he hears the words uttered in his first dream of Judgment Day: "The times have ripened, the cup of sin has been filled, punishment is close." The novel thus ends on an ambiguous note—Marakulin believes illusorily that he has escaped his fated destiny at the very moment when he actually falls to his death, reenacting the prophetic fall onto some stones in his first dream of the kite. His whole life after his dismissal has been a conscious attempt to understand a reality that defies logical explanation while his subconscious, revealed through his dreams, elaborately develops only negative aspects and offers death as the sole alternative to his unresolved dilemma. *Sisters of the Cross*, together with *The Pond* and *The Clock*, bear witness to Remizov's darkest visions of life, a desperate, fatalistic pessimism in which the unthinkable, self-annihilation, is expressed in dreams which can command realization making the subconscious, ironically, the source of will, the actual, ultimate arbiter of individual destiny.

NOTES

1. This is Remizov's account of the incident as recorded in N. Kodrianskaia, *Aleksei Remizov* (Paris, 1959), 79, but with the date of arrest corrected.
2. David Foulkes, *The Psychology of Sleep* (New York, 1966), 76.
3. See for example Calvin S. Hall, *The Meaning of Dreams* (New York, 1959), 24-25; Edward T. Adelson, "Facts and Theories of the Psychology of Dreams," *Dreams in Contemporary Psychoanalysis* (New York, 1963), 27; Angel Garma, *The Psychoanalysis of Dreams* (Chicago, 1966), 208; Leopold Caligor and Rollo May, *Dreams and Symbols: Man's Unconscious Language* (New York and London, 1968), v.

4. *The Pond* 1902-03; *The Clock* 1903-04; *The Tale of Ivan Semenovich Stratilatov* 1909; *Sisters in the Cross* 1910; *The Fifth Pestilence* 1911-12; *The Whimpering Ditch* 1914-18.
5. For a discussion of dreams in the three last-named novels see my dissertation (Yale, 1971), "The Dream as a Literary Device in the Novels and Short Stories of Aleksej Remizov."
6. First serialized in 1905 in *Voprosy zhizni* with some deletions; first complete edition appeared in 1907 in Petersburg; second revised edition appeared in volume IV of *Sochineniia* (Petersburg 1910-12) (All references are to this edition.) A third revised edition remains unpublished.
7. Foulkes, 76.
8. This actually happened to Remizov himself. There are numerous other autobiographical details in this work.
9. A petty trifle such as this is often calamitous in Remizov's fictional world and suggests a view of life as absurd.
10. A curious reversal of Levin's decision in *Anna Karenina*.
11. This is another autobiographical incident linking Remizov with Nikolai, except for the thrashing. Remizov's own feeling of guilt was expressed in a dream as late as 1949. See Aronian, "The Dream as a Literary Device....," 12.
12. Alexander applies to all people Ivan's contention in *The Brothers Karamazov* that no one has the right to forgive injustices against children.
13. This autobiographical element is an oft-repeated theme in Remizov's work until about 1910.
14. There is no elaborate preparation for the dreams. For the most part Nikolai simply falls asleep and awakes both during the day and night.
15. Foulkes, 37.
16. See Frederick A. Weiss, "The Dream—A Door to the Larger Self," in *Dreams in Contemporary Psychoanalysis* (New York, 1963), 236.
17. George H. Green, "The Execution-Dream," quoted in Ralph L. Woods, *The World of Dreams* (New York, 1947), 624.
18. Paris, 1954.
19. The image of the pond appears sixty-five times in the novel. The pond reflects the darkness in the lives of those who live around it. For example, at Eastertime, the time of hope for some and despair for others, it is black. Also, a minor character, Prometei, commits suicide by drowning in it.
20. In *Martyn Zadeka* Remizov presents a collection of his own dreams as well as commentary which notes that he often dreamt of biblical figures.
21. The first appearance of the dead in dreams in European literature is in the *Iliad*. Patroclus appears to Achilles also as a restless spirit seeking peace. See William S. Messer, *The Dream in Homer and Greek Tragedy* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1918), 12.
22. A similar image of human degradation in death appears in Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago*.
23. First published in 1908 in Petersburg; all citations are to *Sochineniia*, vol. II (Petersburg, 1910-12).
24. There is a striking resemblance between this dream and Ivan Ilyich's dream of afterlife in Tolstoy's *Death of Ivan Ilyich*.
25. M. O. Gershenzon in an analysis of Pushkin's dream usage cites as central the fact that subtle conscious perceptions become deep insights of the subconscious mind. See his chapter "Sny Pushkina" in *Stat'i o Pushkine* (Leningrad, 1926).
26. This vision of immortality is very similar to that of Svidrigailov in *Crime and Punishment*.
27. Similar details are found in Prince Andrei's dream of death in *War and Peace*.
28. Black ("chernyi") is often used in reference to the devil in Russian.
29. Khristina's baby, Irinushka, is a symbol to several characters of the non-self-conscious joy of life.

30. The image of a howling, helpless animal as a symbol of man, deserted on earth, and suffering endlessly and meaninglessly is also used in *Sisters in the Cross*.

31. Part of Nelidov's love experience is paradoxical, too. He believes that one cannot love without desiring complete possession of the love object—all thought, all feeling etc.—and yet at the same time he believes that such possession eradicates the individuality of the beloved object and thus negates the possibility of real possession.

32. Transformations which are characteristic of dreams are used in waking reality to portray a disordered mind. The use of the double to probe into the question of guilt is similar to the episode of Ivan and his double in *The Brothers Karamazov*.

33. The presentiment of disaster associated with the railroad station is reminiscent of Anna's dream in *Anna Karenina*.

34. First published in Petersburg in 1910; all citations are to the 1923 edition published in Berlin.

35. Marakulin follows in the "petty clerk" tradition in that he is unable to cope with misfortune when it does strike, and the external basis of the misfortune is poverty.

36. Marakulin shows some resemblance to the pathetic hero of seventeenth-century literature as described by William Harkins, "The Pathetic Hero in Russian Seventeenth-Century Literature," *American Slavic and East European Review*, XIV (1955), 512-27. The monastery is not an option, however, which Marakulin considers.

37. Suffering as the source of thinking has been identified as an "underground" characteristic which links Marakulin with Dostoevsky's Underground Man. See Robert Louis Jackson, *Dostoevsky's Underground Man in Russian Literature* (S-Gravenhage, 1958), 117-19. Also, the root of Marakulin's name is found in the verb "marakovat'" which means "to think a little."

38. Remizov's reluctance to give a specific cause reflects his belief that since ultimate causes cannot be known, several probable causes must be accepted as possible.

39. The superstitious interpretation of the dream is realized in this instance, but in other cases it is not, suggesting that such interpretations when actualized are merely coincidental. What seems likely is that Marakulin, much like Dostoevsky's heroes, goes through emotional trauma which is followed by physical illness. The psychosomatic nature of such illnesses is clear. Remizov himself did not believe in set symbols for dream interpretation.

40. An allusion to the apocryphal legend of Mary's "Journey Through Torments."

41. An allusion to *Crime and Punishment*.

42. Hall, 240.

43. R. V. Ivanov-Razumnik, *Tvorchestvo i kritika* (Petersburg, [1912]), 89.

44. An allusion to *The Three Sisters*.

45. Unlike the protagonist in Dostoevsky's *Dream of a Ridiculous Man* who finds meaning in life in his expression of affection for a little girl, Marakulin cannot take satisfaction in this when he cannot answer the question of why his fellow humans and he himself should have suffered in the first place.

46. The image of the deceased as harbingers of death appears also in *The Pond* and *The Clock*. Remizov himself always wondered whether or not the appearance of the deceased in dreams was not actually a confrontation with real spirits. But this view was never held strongly for he also thought it possible that such dreams were simply the products of one's own vivid imagination.

47. Ivanov-Razumnik, 87.