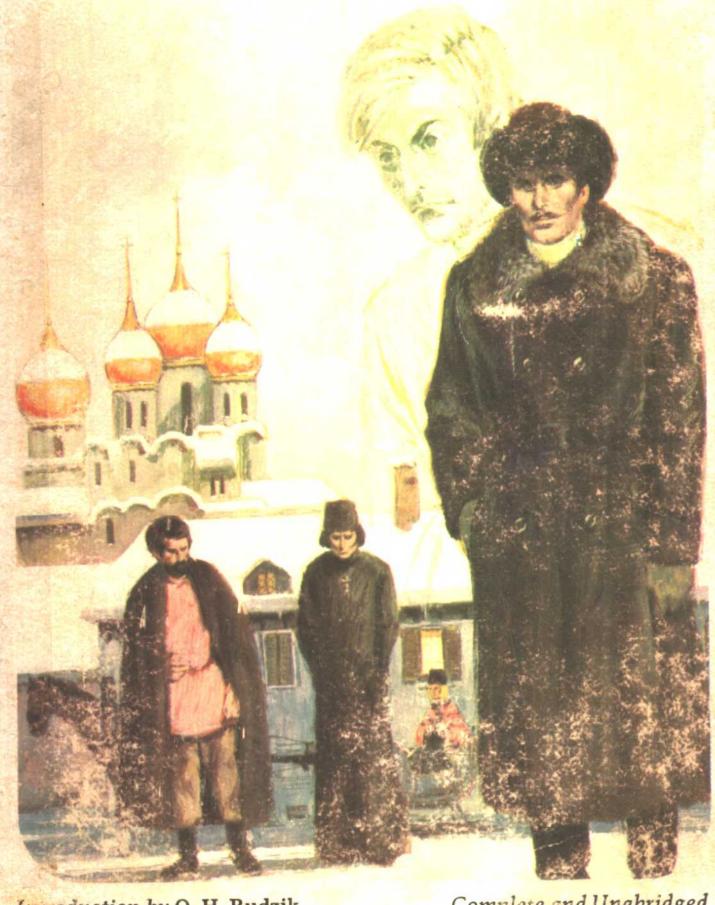


FYODOR DOSTOYEVSKY

THE BROTHERS KARAMAZOU



Invoduction by O. H. Rudzik

Complete and Unabridged

AND CONTRACTOR OF THE PARTY OF

THE BROTHERS KARAMAZOV

FYODOR DOSTOYEVSKY



AIRMONT PUBLISHING COMPANY, INC. 22 EAST 60TH STREET · NEW YORK 10922

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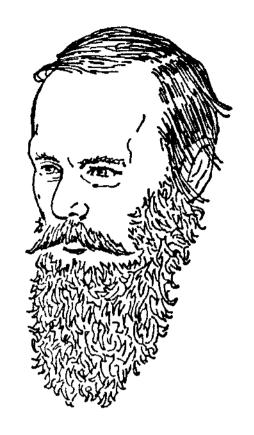
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THE BROTHERS KARAMAZOV



FYODOR DOSTOYEVSKY

Introduction

Dostoyevsky's last, monumental novel has a simple story for its narrative. An old profligate, Fyodor Karamazov, is murdered and his eldest son is tried and convicted for the crime. All the sons of the Karamazov family, however, each in his own way, feel complicity and the need to atone for their part in the death of the old man. We have a murder, all the more terrible in that it is parricide, with the events that inexorably lead to it and cause it; we see the inescapable consequences of guilt and retribution. But behind these events is also the author's final and most massive presentation of the beliefs and experiences he had developed all through his work, particularly in his five major novels which began with Crime and Punishment in 1866 and ended with The Brothers Karamazov, completed in November, 1880, just three months before his death.

As a young man of twenty-three, Dostoyevsky had given up his government post of military engineer to write, and had achieved immediate critical acclaim with his first book, an epistolary novel. Poor Folk was praised for its concern over the socially and spiritually dispossessed. Such initial enthusiasm began to wane as the next stories started to disappoint because of their elements of fantasy and the macabre. But all this suddenly stopped mattering. Dostoyevsky was arrested on April 23, 1849, as a "conspirator" against the regime and imprisoned to stand trial that autumn with the other "liberals" of the Petrashevsky group, young men who had met to throw about socialist opinions and slogans. On December 22, he was led out to his execu-

tion.

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In a letter to his brother, Dostoyevsky recounts the frightful charade. The prisoners were driven to Semenovsky Square:

"There the death-sentence was read to us, we were given the Cross to kiss, the dagger was broken over our heads... three of us were put standing before the palisades... I was sixth in the row... and had not more than a minute to live... Finally, retreat was sounded... and it was read to us that His Imperial Majesty granted us our lives."

And so, on Christmas Eve, Dostoyevsky was put into chains and transported to do hard labor in a Siberian prison; after four years of this, he had a further four years of military service as a private in a Siberian Regiment of the Line. When Dostoyevsky returned to the West, it was from The House of the Dead, as he himself titled the semi-novel he made of his prison memories.

Whatever beliefs Dostoyevsky may have had, political enthusiasms, religious opinions, or even personal preferences, all had to survive this tempering of exile and suffering. And even after his return home, the testing of them and of him continued. Such work as Dostoyevsky carried out—and his ambitions and projects were constantly outrunning even his high achievements was performed in the face of harassment, misunderstanding, poverty, and obsession. The wife he had brought back from his army posting became a source of bitterness to him; his dead brother's family held him to be responsible for them. Hounded by creditors, he fled with the aid of his second wife, to wander as an exile through Europe—and its spas. There his mania for recovering everything and more at the gaming tables grew to the dimensions of a disease as crippling as the epileptic attacks he found to be increasing in frequency and intensity. The government police watched his every move; the liberals of the time attacked what seemed his deepening reaction, his increasing morbidity of opinion and belief.

These odds against Dostoyevsky's accomplishing anything at all make the novels he wrote—all to schedule and even desperately racing to meet deadlines—the more astonishing. His work and its insight of experience and thought was literally carved out of the personal and social chaos to which he was condemned, partly of his own doing, to his very last days. This immediately accounts for both the passion and its frequent darkness that all the characters of his novels carry with them. In their depths and in their hope of escape we can recognize their creator. To recognize human passion so totally and unflinchingly and then to embody it dramatically and narratively demanded remarkable psychological insight and formidable technical skill. In both these respects, Dostoyevsky ranks highly at a time and in a country where the novel and its vast canvas had become the dominant literary form. That he can form a triumvirate with Tolstoy and Turgenev on the grounds of novelistic distinction places him in the foremost rank.

But both the psychology and the literary artistry were means to an end that Dostoyevsky considered of greater ultimate importance. Crime exists in all these five novels not merely to allow the clinical analysis of a pathological human condition or to provide just strong narrative and dramatic emotion. These are present, the pathology and the sensation, but the direction is always beyond just the story and its overt values. Dostoyevsky directs the reader, and himself no less, through the characters and their essential motives and correspondent actions to final confrontation with truth. And this truth to be ultimate has to lead from fact through its motives and genesis to the ground of all truth for Dostoyevsky. It leads to a theodicy.

A crime is committed in each of Dostoyevsky's novels, and it stands out clearly, first as an act against man. Emerging as the murderer and victim both do out of a given environment, the act has a broad social significance. An ethical meaning emerges, privately and politically. But crime is not simply unjust and illegal—it is sin, now an offense not of man or the State but of God. The criminal, for Dostoyevsky, offers a challenge to the meaning of the universe and the ground of its being, to that truth of things neither social nor personal but total and final. His punishment cannot be legal or even a question of justice in its broadest sense. The "punishment" that comes to each of the brothers involved in the crime against their father is self-realization. And out of this self-awareness may come the promise of a realized truth or the despair of blankness. The meaning of the novel must be apocalyptic—of essential good as having overcome the self-annihilation of evil—for the story to achieve its full scope.

Each of Fyodor Karamazov's sons has to come to terms with his father, each in his characteristic way, thus to recognize himself more truly; each is his father's son. The impulsive Dmitry rivals his father for the costly charms of Grushenka; the contest is money and flesh, the lechery and greed of the father as against the sensuality and prodigality of his eldest son. Alyosha must admit the presence of his father, both into the monastery where he seeks holiness and into his thoughts where he looks for God. This presence is to him the breath of corruption but necessary for the soul's habitation. And corruption provides the bitterest test of his faith and his purity.

Both Dmitry and Alyosha are instinctive beings, one in the flesh, the other in his soul, and to each the act and the thought are spontaneous commitments. In Ivan, we find both the flesh and the spirit, but at the distance of idea, the mind reduced from impulse and free expression to desperate brooding. Ivan opposes Alyosha's spiritual ambitions with the parable of the earth's demand for justice and the wisdom of the mind as against the liberties of body and soul. The Grand Inquisitor, the intellectual divine, presents through Ivan's legend an unanswerable challenge to man's freedom. God may grant man freedom

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but to make man just is to impose on humanity an order and a resultant contentment that indict God's offered freedom. Christ—and Alyosha—can give only one response: the love that transcends the legal and rational demands of justice. Ivan's failure is the greatest and most tragic of the three, and it is a failure of love. The finely spun structure of intellect he constructs leads to its own parody in the ugly and murderous self-interest of Smerdyakov. The Grand Inquisitor is replaced by the shabby devil who refuses to be anything more than Ivan's hallucination.

Dmitry's self-indulgence both in passion and in repenting its folly and grossness, Alyosha's bewildered quest for holiness, Ivan's demand for the just and the perfectly certain—all lead to the mind's agony, as it breaks under the accumulated burden of realized guilt, in Ivan's cry at the trial. But in this agony there occurs illumination and final awareness. Sigmund Freud * connected this understanding to the one reached after by Oedipus and Hamlet: the emergence into light of the hurtful hostility felt by all sons to all fathers, by all men to all imposed authority. But the crisis seems to demand even more than this form of therapeutic self-discovery. What Ivan seeks to know. what Dmitry has fitfully acknowledged, what Alyosha teaches to the children at the very close of the book is that all men are sons both of man and God. When they will murder it is equally to both man and God. The cleansing of this will is love, the recognition of fatherhood, and salvation.

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*Freud's provocative (and in some ways provoking) study "Doctoevsky and Parricide" occurs in Vol. xxi, pp. 177-94, of the Standard Edition of the Collected Psychological Works (London, 1961). Similarly, D. H. Lawrence's "Preface to The Grand Inquisitor," in Selected Literary Criticism (New York, 1961), pp. 233-41, introduces an interesting, if not an ultimately acceptable, perspective on this crucial passage in the novel. For an admirable study of Dostoyevsky's major novels, their craftsmanship and their "vision and grasp of the human situation," there is Edward Wasiolek, Dostoevsky: the Major Fiction (Cambridge, Mass., 1964).

PART ONE

Book One The History of a Family

Chapter I FYODOR PAVLOVITCH KARAMAZOV

Alexey Fyodorovitch Karamazov was the third son of Fyodor Pavlovitch Karamazov, a landowner well known in our district in his own day, and still remembered among us owing to his gloomy and tragic death, which happened thirteen years ago, and which I shall describe in its proper place. For the present I will only say that this "landowner"—for so we used to call him, although he hardly spent a day of his life on his own estate was a strange type, yet one pretty frequently to be met with, a type abject and vicious and at the same time senseless. But he was one of those senseless persons who are very well capable of looking after their worldly affairs, and, apparently, after nothing else. Fyodor Pavlovitch, for instance, began with next to nothing; his estate was of the smallest; he ran to dine at other men's tables, and fastened on them as a toady, yet at his death it appeared that he had a hundred thousand roubles in hard cash. At the same time, he was all his life one of the most senseless, fantastical fellows in the whole district. I repeat it, it was not stupidity—the majority of these fantastical fellows are shrewd and intelligent enough—but just senselessness, and a peculiar national form of it.

He was married twice, and had three sons, the eldest, Dmitri, by his first wife, and two, Ivan and Alexey, by his second. Fyodor Pavlovitch's first wife, Adelaïda Ivanovna, belonged to a fairly rich and distinguished noble family, also landowners in our district, the Miüsovs. How it came to pass that an heiress, who was also a beauty, and moreover one of those vigorous, intelligent girls, so common in this generation, but sometimes also to be found in the last, could have married such a worthless puny weakling, as we all called him, I won't attempt to explain. I knew a young lady of the last "romantic" generation who after some years of an enigmatic passion for a gentleman, whom she might quite easily have married at any moment, invented insuperable obstacles to their union, and ended by throwing herself one stormy night into a rather deep and rapid river from a high bank, almost a precipice, and so perished, entirely to satisfy her own caprice, and to be like Shakespeare's Ophelia. Indeed, if this precipice, a chosen and favourite spot of hers, had been

less picturesque, if there had been a prosaic flat bank in its place, most likely the suicide would never have taken place. This is a fact, and probably there have been not a few similar instances in the last two or three generations. Adelaïda Ivanovna Miüsov's action was similarly, no doubt, an echo of other people's ideas, and was due to the irritation caused by lack of mental freedom. She wanted, perhaps, to show her feminine independence, to override class distinctions and the despotism of her family. And a pliable imagination persuaded her, we must suppose, for a brief moment, that Fyodor Pavlovitch, in spite of his parasitic position, was one of the bold and ironical spirits of that progressive epoch, though he was, in fact, an illnatured buffoon and nothing more. What gave the marriage pi-quancy was that it was preceded by an elopement, and this greatly captivated Adelaida Ivanovna's fancy. Fyodor Paviovitch's position at the time made him specially eager for any such enterprise, for he was passionately anxious to make a career in one way or another. To attach himself to a good family and obtain a dowry was an alluring prospect. As for mutal love it did not exist apparently, either in the bride or in him, in spite of Adelaïda Ivanovna's beauty. This was, perhaps, a unique case of the kind in the life of Fyodor Pavlovitch, who was always of a voluptuous temper, and ready to run after any petticoat on the slightest encouragement. She seems to have been the only woman who made no particular appeal to his senses.

Immediately after the elopement Adelaïda Ivanovna discerned in a flash that she had no feeling for her husband but contempt. The marriage accordingly showed itself in its true colours with extraordinary rapidity. Although the family accepted the event pretty quickly and apportioned the runaway bride her dowry, the husband and wife began to lead a most disorderly life, and there were everlasting scenes between them. It was said that the young wife showed incomparably more generosity and dignity than Fyodor Pavlovitch, who, as is now known, got hold of all her money up to twenty-five thousand roubles as soon as she received it, so that those thousands were lost to her for ever. The little village and the rather fine town house which formed part of her dowry he did his utmost for a long time to transfer to his name, by means of some deed of conveyance. He would probably have succeeded, merely from her moral fatigue and desire to get rid of him, and from the contempt and loathing he aroused by his persistent and shameless importunity. But, fortunately, Adelaïda Ivanovna's family intervened and circumvented his greediness. It is known for a fact that frequent fights took place between the husband and wife, but rumour had it that Fyodor Pavlovitch did not beat his wife but was beaten by her, for she was a hot-tempered, bold, dark-browed, impatient woman, possessed of remarkable physical strength. Finally, she left the house and ran away from Fyodor Pavlovitch with a destitute divinity student, leaving Mitya, a child of three years old, in her husband's hands. Immediately

Fyodor Pavlovitch introduced a regular harem into the house, and abandoned himself to orgies of drunkenness. In the intervals he used to drive all over the province, complaining tearfully to each and all of Adelaïda Ivanovna's having left him, going into details too disgraceful for a husband to mention in regard to his own married life. What seemed to gratify him and flatter his self-love most was to play the ridiculous part of the injured hus-

band, and to parade his woes with embellishments.

"One would think that you'd got a promotion, Fyodor Pavlovitch, you seem so pleased in spite of your sorrow," scoffers said to him. Many even added that he was glad of a new comic part in which to play the buffoon, and that it was simply to make it funnier that he pretended to be unaware of his ludicrous position. But, who knows, it may have been simplicity. At last he succeeded in getting on the track of his runaway wife. The poor woman turned out to be in Petersburg, where she had gone with her divinity student, and where she had thrown herself into a life of complete emancipation. Fyodor Pavlovitch at once began bustling about, making preparations to go to Petersburg, with what object he could not himself have said. He would perhaps have really gone; but having determined to do so he felt at once entitled to fortify himself for the journey by another bout of reckless drinking. And just at that time his wife's family received the news of her death in Petersburg. She had died quite suddenly in a garret, according to one story, of typhus, or as another version had it, of starvation. Fyodor Pavlovitch was drunk when he heard of his wife's death, and the story is that he ran out into the street and began shouting with joy, raising his hands to Heaven: "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace," but others say he wept without restraint like a little child, so much so that people were sorry for him, in spite of the repulsion he inspired. It is quite possible that both versions were true, that he rejoiced at his release, and at the same time wept for her who released him. As a general rule, people, even the wicked, are much more naïve and sim-ple-hearted than we suppose. And we ourselves are, too.

Chapter 2 HE GETS RID OF HIS ELDEST SON

You can easily imagine what a father such a man could be and how he would bring up his children. His behaviour as a father was exactly what might be expected. He completely abandoned the child of his marriage with Adelaida Ivanovna, not from malice, nor because of his matrimonial grievances, but simply because he forgot him. While he was wearying every one with his tears and complaints, and turning his house into a sink of debauchery, a faithful servant of the family, Grigory, took the

three-year-old Mitya into his care. If he hadn't looked after him there would have been no one even to change the baby's little shirt.

It happened moreover that the child's relations on his mother's side forgot him too at first. His grandfather was no longer living, his widow, Mitya's grandmother, had moved to Moscow, and was seriously ill, while his daughters were married, so that Mitya remained for almost a whole year in old Grigory's charge and lived with him in the servant's cottage. But if his father had remembered him (he could not, indeed, have been altogether unaware of his existence) he would have sent him back to the cottage, as the child would only have been in the way of his debaucheries. But a cousin of Mitya's mother, Pyotr Alexandrovitch Miüsov, happened to return from Paris. He lived for many years afterwards abroad, but was at that time quite s young man, and distinguished among the Miüsovs as a man of enlightened ideas and of European culture, who had been in the capitals and abroad. Towards the end of his life he became a Liberal of the type common in the forties and fifties. In the course of his career he had come into contact with many of the most Liberal men of his epoch, both in Russia and abroad. He had known Proudhon and Bakunin personally, and in his declining years was very fond of describing the three days of the Paris Revolution of February, 1848, hinting that he himself had almost taken part in the fighting on the barricades. This was one of the most grateful recollections of his youth. He had an independent property of about a thousand souls, to reckon in the old style. His splendid estate lay on the outskirts of our little town and bordered on the lands of our famous monastery, with which Pyotr Alexandrovitch began an endless lawsuit, almost as soon as he came into the estate, concerning the rights of fishing in the river or wood-cutting in the forest, I don't know exactly which. He regarded it as his duty as a citizen and a man of culture to open an attack upon the "clericals." Hearing all about Adelaïda Ivanovna, whom he, of course, remembered, and in whom he had at one time been interested, and learning of the existence of Mitya, he intervened, in spite of all his youthful indignation and contempt for Fyodor Pavlovitch. He made the latter's acquaintance for the first time, and told him directly that he wished to undertake the child's education. He used long afterwards to tell as a characteristic touch, that when he began to speak of Mitya, Fyodor Pavlovitch looked for some time as though he did not understand what child he was talking about, and even as though he was surprised to hear that he had a little son in the house. The story may have been exaggerated, yet it must have been something like the truth.

Fyodor Pavlovitch was all his life fond of acting, of suddenly playing an unexpected part, sometimes without any motive for doing so, and even to his own direct disadvantage, as, for instance, in the present case. This habit, however, is characteristic of a very great number of people, some of them very clever.

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ones, not like Fyodor Pavlovitch. Pyotr Alexandrovitch carried the business through vigorously, and was appointed, with Fyodor Pavlovitch, joint guardian of the child, who had a small property, a house and land, left him by his mother. Mitya did, in fact, pass into this cousin's keeping, but as the latter had no family of his own, and after securing the revenues of his estates was in haste to return at once to Paris, he left the boy in charge of one of his cousins, a lady living in Moscow. It came to pass that, settling permanently in Paris he, too, forgot the child, especially when the revolution of February broke out making an impression on his mind that he remembered all the rest of his life. The Moscow lady died, and Mitya passed into the care of one of her married daughters. I believe he changed his home a fourth time later on. I won't enlarge upon that now, as I shall have much to tell later of Fyodor Pavlovitch's firstborn, and must confine myself now to the most essential facts about

him, without which I could not begin my story.

In the first place, this Mitya, or rather Dmitri Fyodorovitch, was the only one of Fyodor Pavlovitch's three sons who grew up in the belief that he had property, and that he would be independent on coming of age. He spent an irregular boyhood and youth. He did not finish his studies at the gymnasium, he got into a military school, then went to the Caucasus, was promoted, fought a duel, and was degraded to the ranks, earned promotion again, led a wild life, and spent a good deal of money. He did not begin to receive any income from Fyodor Pavlovitch until he came of age, and until then got into debt. He saw and knew his father, Fyodor Pavlovitch, for the first time on coming of age, when he visited our neighbourhood on purpose to settle with him about his property. He seems not to have liked his father. He did not stay long with him, and made haste to get away, having only succeeded in obtaining a sum of money, and entering into an agreement for future payments from the estate, of the revenues and value of which he was unable (a fact worthy of note) upon this occasion, to get a statement from his father. Fyodor Pavlovitch remarked for the first time then (this, too, should be noted) that Mitya had a vague and exaggerated idea of his property. Fyodor Pavlovitch was very well satisfied with this, as it fell in with his own designs. He gathered only that the young man was frivolous, unruly, of violent passions, impatient, and dissipated, and that if he could only obtain ready money he would be satisfied, although only, of course, for a short time. So Fyodor Pavlovitch began to take advantage of this fact, sending him from time to time small doles, instalments. In the end, when four years later, Mitya, losing patience, came a second time to our little town to settle up once for all with his father, it turned out to his amazement that he had nothing, that it was difficult to get an account even, that he had received the whole value of his property in sums of money from Fyodor Pavlovitch, and was perhaps even in debt to him, that by various agreements into which he had, of his

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own desire, entered at various previous dates, he had no right to expect anything more, and so on, and so on. The young man was overwhelmed, suspected deceit and cheating, and was almost beside himself. And, indeed, this circumstance led to the catastrophe, the account of which forms the subject of my first introductory story, or rather the external side of it. But before I pass to that story I must say a little of Fyodor Pavlovitch's other two sons, and of their origin.

Chapter 3 THE SECOND MARRIAGE AND THE SECOND FAMILY

Very shortly after getting his four-year-old Mitya off his hands Fyodor Pavlovitch married a second time. His second marriage lasted eight years. He took this second wife, Sofya Ivanovna, also a very young girl, from another province, where he had gone upon some small piece of business in company with a Jew. Though Fyodor Pavlovitch was a drunkard and a vicious debauchee he never neglected investing his capital, and managed his business affairs very successfully, though, no doubt, not over scrupulously. Sofya Ivanovna was the daughter of an obscure deacon, and was left from childhood an orphan without relations. She grew up in the house of a general's widow, a wealthy old lady of good position, who was at once her benefactress and tormentor. I do not know the details, but I have only heard that the orphan girl, a meek and gentle creature, was once cut down from a halter in which she was hanging from a nail in the loft, so terrible were her sufferings from the caprice and everlasting nagging of this old woman, who was apparently not bad-hearted but had become an insufferable tyrant through idleness.

Fyodor Pavlovitch made her an offer; inquiries were made about him and he was refused. But again, as in his first marriage, he proposed an elopement to the orphan girl. There is very little doubt that she would not on any account have married him if she had known a little more about him in time. But she lived in another province; besides what could a little girl of sixteen know about it, except that she would be better at the bottom of the river than remaining with her benefactress. So the poor child exchanged a benefactress for a benefactor. Fyodor Pavlovitch did not get a penny this time, for the general's widow was furious. She gave them nothing and cursed them both. But he had not reckoned on a dowry; what allured him was the remarkable beauty of the innocent girl, above all her innocent appearance, which had a peculiar attraction for a vicious profligate, who had hitherto admired only the coarser types of feminine beauty.

"Those innocent eyes slit my soul up like a razor," he used