



# FYODOR MIKAHAILOVICH DOSTOEVSKY

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1821-1881





**DOSTOEVSKAYA METRO STATION, MOSCOW**

**EASY CHOICES**

$$\textcircled{3} |A - \lambda I| = \begin{vmatrix} 5-\lambda & 1 \\ 1 & 5-\lambda \end{vmatrix} = (5-\lambda)^2 - 1 = \lambda^2 - 10\lambda + 25 - 1$$

$$= \lambda^2 - 10\lambda + 24 = 0$$

$$(\lambda - 4)(\lambda - 6) = 0 \Rightarrow \lambda_1 = 4 \text{ or } \lambda_2 = 6$$

$$\text{For } \lambda_1 = 4: (A - \lambda_1 I)v = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 \\ 1 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} v_1 \\ v_2 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}$$

$\Rightarrow v_2 = -v_1$ , a corresponding eigenvector is thus  $\begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ -1 \end{pmatrix} = v_0$

$$\text{For } \lambda_2 = 6: (A - \lambda_2 I)v = \begin{pmatrix} -1 & 1 \\ 1 & -1 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} v_1 \\ v_2 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}$$

$\Rightarrow v_2 = v_1$ , a corresponding eigenvector is thus  $\begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 1 \end{pmatrix} = v$

$\textcircled{4}$  If  $V$  is the matrix whose columns are the eigenvectors of  $A$ , then  $AV = VD$ , where  $D$  is the diagonal matrix whose diagonal elements are corresponding eigenvalues.

We have then  $A = VDV^{-1}$ , where  $V = \begin{pmatrix} -1 & 1 \\ 1 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$  and

$$D = \begin{pmatrix} 4 & 0 \\ 0 & 6 \end{pmatrix}. \text{ Thus, } A^4 = V D^4 V^{-1}$$

$$D^4 = \begin{pmatrix} 256 & 0 \\ 0 & 1296 \end{pmatrix} \text{ We compute } .$$

$$\left( \begin{array}{cc|cc} -1 & 1 & 1 & 0 \\ 1 & 1 & 0 & 1 \end{array} \right) \sim \left( \begin{array}{cc|cc} -1 & 1 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 2 & 1 & 1 \end{array} \right) \sim \left( \begin{array}{cc|cc} -1 & 1 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & \frac{1}{2} & \frac{1}{2} \end{array} \right) \sim \left( \begin{array}{cc|cc} 1 & 0 & \frac{3}{2} & -\frac{1}{2} \\ 0 & 1 & \frac{1}{2} & \frac{1}{2} \end{array} \right)$$

$$\text{Thus } V^{-1} = \begin{pmatrix} -\frac{1}{2} & \frac{1}{2} \\ \frac{1}{2} & \frac{1}{2} \end{pmatrix}, \text{ so } A^4 = \begin{pmatrix} -1 & 1 \\ 1 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} 256 & 0 \\ 0 & 1296 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} -\frac{1}{2} & \frac{1}{2} \\ \frac{1}{2} & \frac{1}{2} \end{pmatrix}$$

$$= \begin{pmatrix} -1 & 1 \\ 1 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} -128 & 128 \\ 648 & 648 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 776 & 520 \\ 520 & 776 \end{pmatrix}$$

ooo







CAKE

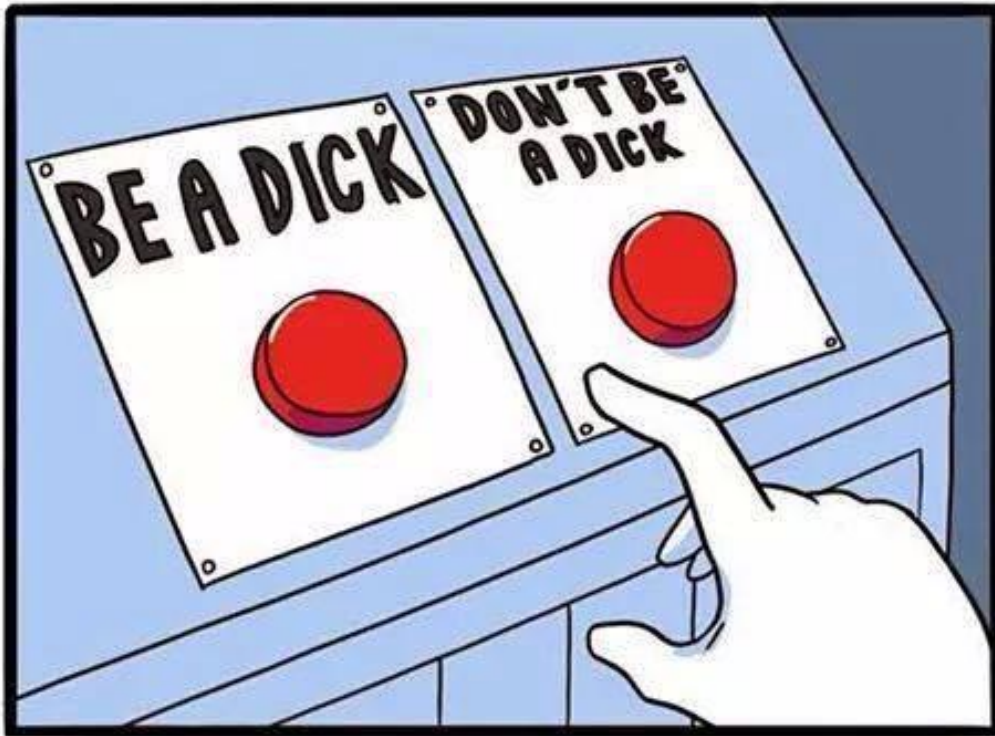
OR

DEATH

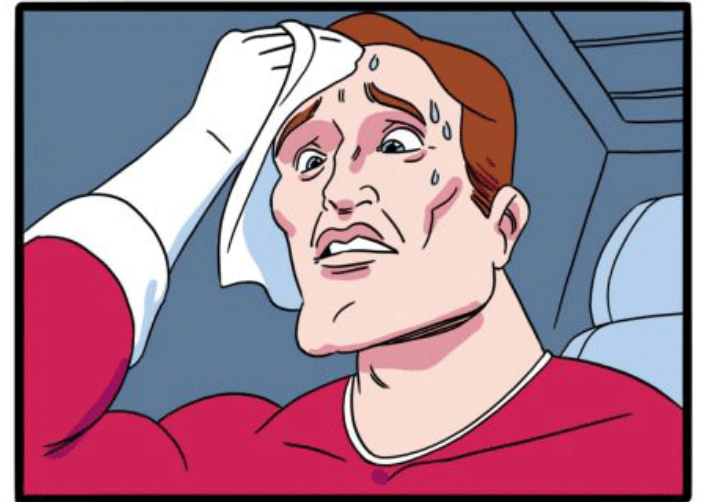
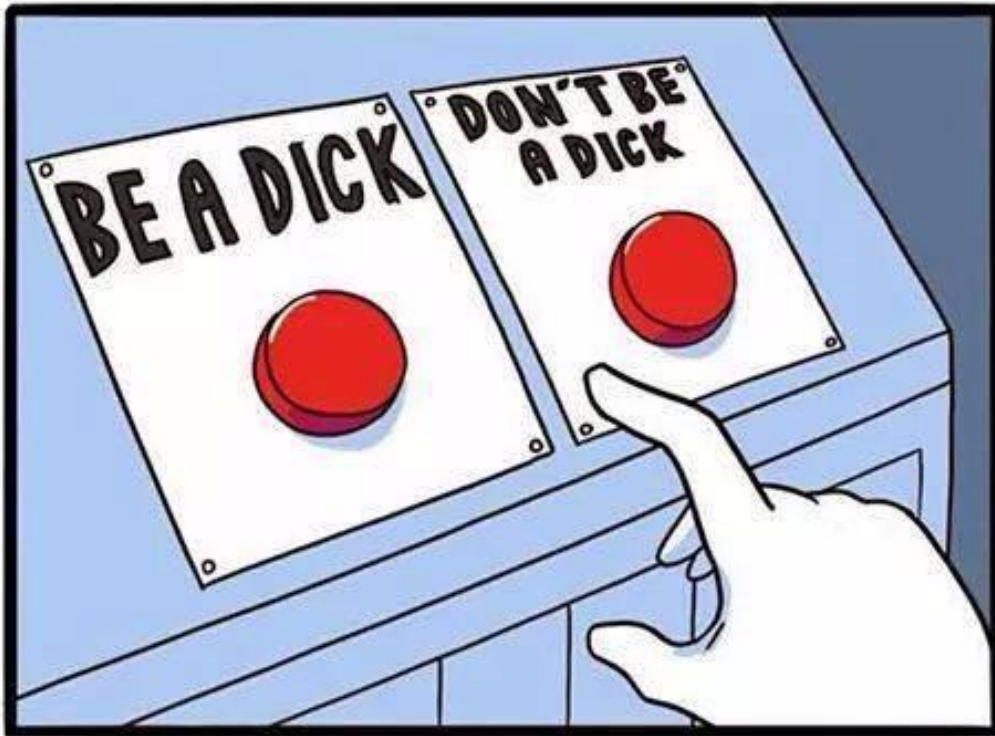




**SHOULD BE EASY  
CHOICES**







**HARDER CHOICES**





A hard choice?

Peeta or Gale?



A hard choice: Victor or Rick?



# IMPOSSIBLE CHOICES



Impossible choices

Your son's life —  
or your daughter's?

# THREE KINDS OF CHOICE

**EASY**



*Not really a choice: one is hugely better, so you are expressing rationality, not free will*

**HARD**



*Only a choice because the two options are equally attractive and/or unattractive. You can express your free will, but only because it doesn't really matter*

**IMPOSSIBLE**



*Not really a choice: you are not expressing your free will, but someone else's domination of you*



**YOUR MONEY OR YOUR LIFE!**





## THE FORCED CHOICE

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- Your money or your life? An “offer you can’t refuse...” (the “...or death” option offered by Izzard)
- Your money or your life: the *form* of choice, without the “optative” character
- Degrades the meaning and ethical value of choice
- In this regard, it is no different from our “easy choices”—*they were also forced*
- How can we express free will, if all our choices that matter are effectively forced?



# THREE KINDS OF CHOICE

**BELT**



*This will hurt, but honestly, my dad used to hit me with a belt and that was just normal in the 1970s.*

**STICK**



*Uh, that's gonna hurt. Why the f\*\*\* would you choose to be hit by a stick when you could pick a belt?*

**WRENCH**



*Are you F\*\*\*ing insane? A wrench? Why would you — oh. Oh. I see. Because f\*\*\* him.*



# DOSTOEVSKY

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## ► Life

- Violent, abusive father
- OCD, gambling
- saved by a woman
- seen as a prophet

## ► Major works

- *The Double*, 1846
- *Crime & Punishment*, 1865
- *The Idiot*, 1868
- *The Brothers Karamazov*, 1880

## ► Themes

- Split subject, madness
- Redemption through woman
- Pure soul in corrupt body
- Crime, scandal
- Polyphonic text



16 Декабря / 809  
Константи́нъ Шапиро  
Невскій просп.  
в Казанскаго моста домъ №30.

Акобу Достоевскому  
Шапиро  
Person de Novak  
au pont de Casan maison №30





## NOTES FROM THE UNDERGROUND

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- Unreliable narrator; but self-contradiction as a *commitment to truth* (1-2; 25-26)
- Scandalous (23, 4, 13)
- The perverse anti-hero (1)
- Radically split: Part I vs. Part II. Nothing to admire.
- Theory vs. practice
- Regret and obsessive compulsive behavior.

## UNRELIABLE NARRATOR

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I am a sick man... a spiteful man.

I used to be in government service, but I'm not anymore. I was a nasty official. I was rude and enjoyed being rude.

When petitioners came up to my desk for information, I snarled at them and felt indescribably happy whenever I managed to make one of them feel miserable.

I was lying just now when I said I used to be a nasty official. And I lied out of spite.

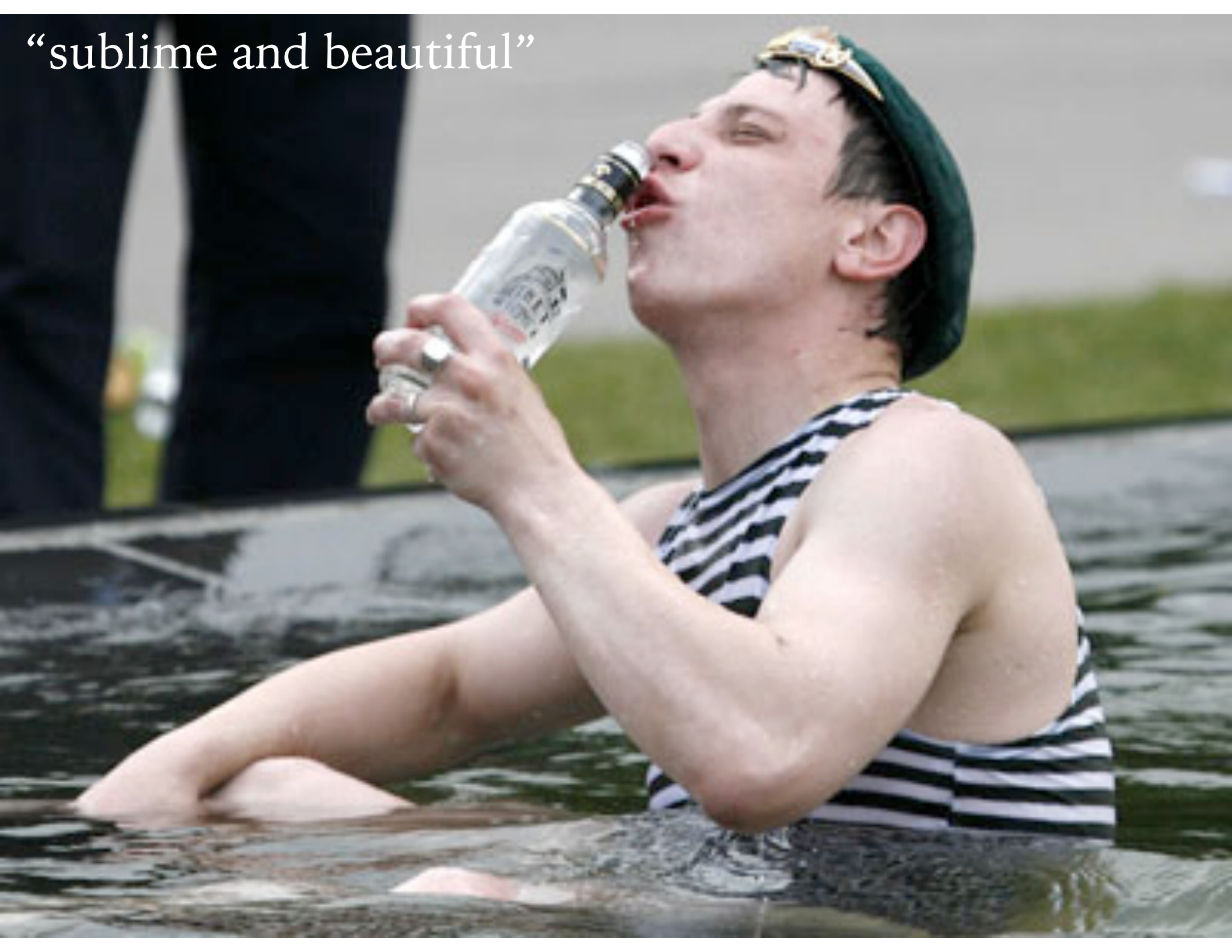


## UNRELIABLE & SCANDALOUS

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That “sublime and beautiful” weighs heavily on my mind. I should have found for myself a form of activity in keeping with it: drinking to the health of everything “sublime and beautiful.” I should have snatched at every opportunity to drop a tear into my glass and then to drain it to all that is “sublime and beautiful.” I should then have turned everything into the sublime and the beautiful; in the nastiest, unquestionable trash, I should have sought out the sublime and the beautiful.

“sublime and beautiful”





“sublime and beautiful”





“sublime and beautiful”



Hurrah for underground! Anyway, the underground life is more advantageous. Oh, but even now I am lying! I am lying because I know myself that it is not underground that is better, but something different... Damn underground!

I will tell you another thing that would be better, and that is, if I myself believed in anything of what I have just written. I swear to you, there is not one thing, not one word of what I have written that I really believe. That is, I believe it, perhaps, but at the same time I feel and suspect that I am lying.

# THE ANTI-HERO

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I am a sick man... a spiteful man. I am an unattractive man. I think there's something wrong with my liver.

I'm not under treatment and never have been... I refuse medical help simply out of contrariness. I know very well that I'm harming myself and no one else. So my liver hurts? Good, let it hurt even more!



## ON CHOICES...

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Oh, tell me, who was it first proclaimed that man only does nasty things because he does not know his own interests; and that if he were enlightened, if his eyes were opened to his real interests, man would at once cease to do nasty things, would at once become good and noble because, being enlightened and understanding his real advantage, he would see his own advantage in the good and nothing else, and we all know that not one man can, consciously, act against his own interests, consequently, so to say, through necessity, he would begin doing good?

# DOSTOEVSKY & PLATO

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- Plato in the *Meno* (14)
  - Crime makes world worse, hurts everyone who lives in it
  - No one intentionally hurts themselves
  - Therefore, criminals *only* commit crime because they do not understand its consequences
- The problem?
  - Criminals don't stop when it's explained
  - Morality motivated by benefit, not by *rightness*? Outrage!
- Dostoevsky's perversion
  - I commit the not good *because* it hurts me
  - Because you forced my choice

# DOSTOEVSKY & FREUD

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- “There is a pleasure in having no pleasure.”
- We “find enjoyment in the very feeling of [our] own degradation” (11)
  - Your imaginary funeral
  - Your self-destruction
- Freud and the death drive (19)
  - Traumatic repetition
  - Fort/da game



# THE IRRATIONAL

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A man who attempts to find enjoyment in the very feeling of his own degradation... But I repeat for the hundredth time, there is one case when man may consciously, purposely, desire what is injurious to himself, what is stupid, very stupid—simply in order to have the right to desire for himself even what is very stupid and not to be bound by an obligation to desire only what is sensible.

# DOSTOEVSKY & SARTRE

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- ▶ Romanticism (irrationality is to be celebrated);  
Dostoevsky (irrationality is compulsory, embarrassing);  
Freud (irrationality is human, amoral)
- ▶ “...this advantage breaks down all classifications, and continually shatters every system constructed by lovers of mankind” (15, 17)
- ▶ Choice and free will (17, 19):  
you may crawl to the east on a ship going west