

Title: Sudden Suicidal Convulsions in *Notes from the House of the Dead*

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Abstract:

After Nicholas I commuted Dostoevsky's death sentence to a term of hard labor and exile in Siberia, Dostoevsky served his time and eventually returned to St. Petersburg. In the aftermath, he published *Notes from the House of the Dead*, his account of prison life. Although Dostoevsky created a fictional narrator, Aleksandr Petrovich Goryanchikov, to depict life (or rather non-life) in Omsk prison, the novel is not just autobiographical and psychological, but also prophetically sociological. This paper aims to show how incarceration shaped not just Dostoevsky's acuity into the psyches of those who transgress against others, but also his insights into those who self-offend, ones which prefigure Emile Durkheim's etiology in *Suicide*. Taking the next step, this paper explores the renunciation of existence in *Dead House* as the *primum mobile* of Dostoevsky's trajectory as artist and visionary.