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**Behind The Father Figure: A Closer Look at Fyodor M. Dostoevsky's
The Adolescent and Natsume Soseki's Sanshirō**

Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821-1881) and Natsume Soseki (1867-1916), being among the most celebrated contemporary writers from the mid XIXth and the early XXth centuries, lived through and bore witness to the turbulent age of modernization in their respective countries of Russia and Japan in their bid to join the highly industrialized Western powers. Both Dostoevsky and Soseki display in their works keen psychological insight into the fundamental changes on both individual and social levels which the rapid modernization process brought about, and the questions raised in their literary work continue to be just as relevant (or even more so) as they were more than a century ago.

In this paper I will mainly look at two coming-of-age novels, Dostoevsky's *The Adolescent* (1875) and Soseki's *Sanshirō* (1908), and discuss the relations between the main characters Arkady and Sanshirō respectively and the father figures in their lives, the role they partake in the young boys' tumultuous rite of passage from adolescence to adulthood in the big city and the symbolism behind it.

I will argue that the similarities, evident in the two works, in terms of the father figure representing not only the older generation but the past itself, as well as the complexities of coming of age on one's own terms while building on those two aspects, reflect the authors' multifaceted perspective on the modernization process in Russia and Japan, its influence on society, and the dangers of erasing history in exchange for progress.