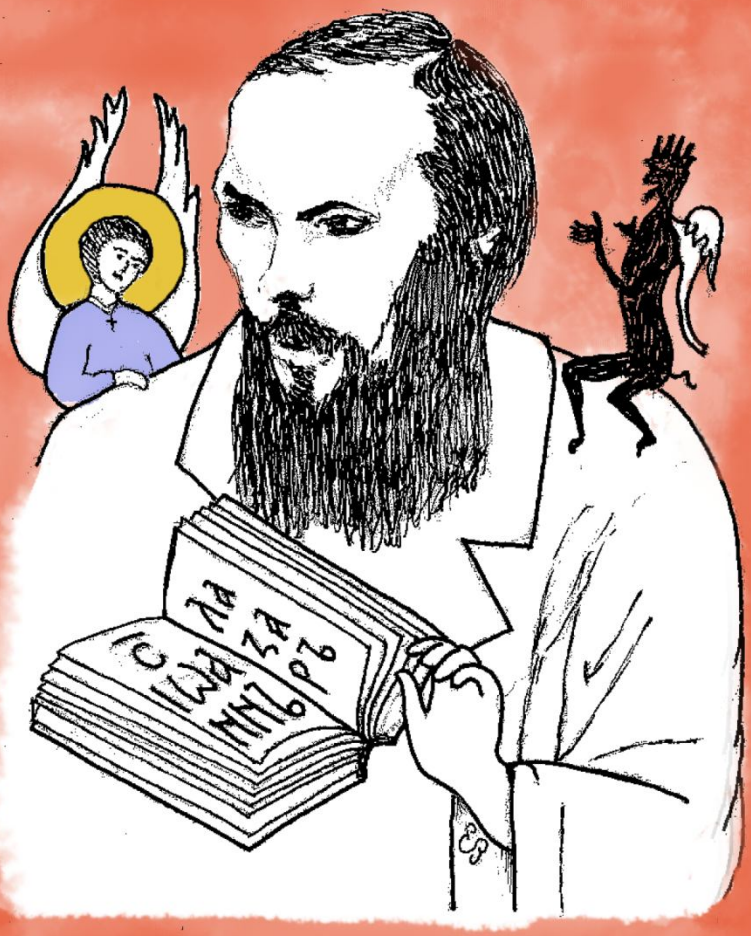
TWO THOUGHTS WITH BUT A SINGLE MIND



Crime and Punishment and the Writing of Fiction

P.T.Barber, Mary F. Zirin, Elizabeth W. Barber

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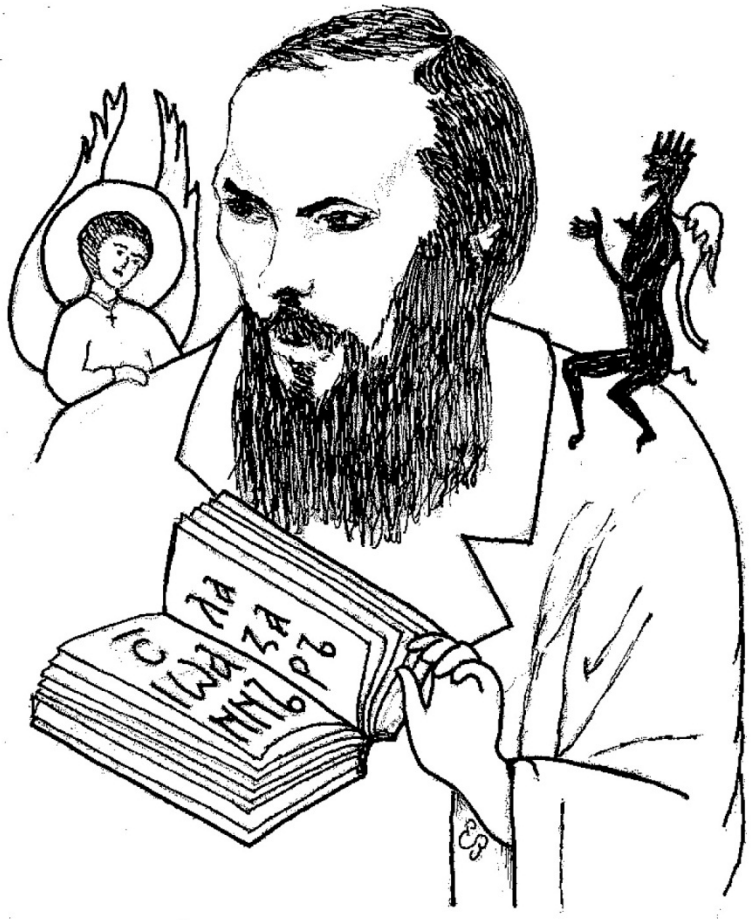

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Cover illustration based on portrait of Dostoevsky in 1872 by V.G. Perov, superimposed on 16th-century red satin religious embroidery (*pelmená*) of St. John the Evangelist (Moscovite; Kremlin); devil from 14th-century icon of St. Nicholas (Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow). (Design: E. Barber)

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Dedication

To Peter Demetz and Heinrich Henel

—PTB

To Hal Zirin

—MFZ

To Gil Alkire and Richard Burgi

—EJWB

Table of Contents

Midway this way of life we're bound upon,
I woke to find myself in a dark wood,
Where the right road was wholly lost and gone.
—Dante, *Inferno*, Canto 1: 1-3

Introduction

> "…one just takes your every word in a double sense,
> as if there were another sitting under it!"
>
> —Porfirii Petrovich, in *Crime and Punishment* (346/453)

Each generation of readers in Russia and abroad has found *Crime and Punishment* fascinating and has created its own reading of the novel. Dostoevsky's contemporaries focused on its depiction of their society and debated whether the portrait of the protagonist, Raskolnikov, caricatured university students. After Dostoevsky's death, in 1881, critics began to emphasize the "cruel" elements in his works, what they saw as the author's fascination with human beings' baser instincts.[A] In the late nineteenth century, thinkers like Viacheslav Ivanov and Dmitrii Merezhkovsky mined Dostoevsky's works for their religious and philosophical content, while Symbolist writers like Blok and Belyi portrayed Petersburg in terms that built on the cityscape of *Crime and Punishment*.

When Constance Garnett's translation brought the novel to readers of English in 1914, they most often viewed it in terms of a fascinating but flawed crime story, as rooted in mid-nineteenth-century psychological realism as the works of Tolstoy and Turgenev.[B] Furthermore, between the world wars, critics all too often ignored Dostoevsky's religious outlook in favor of lopping off bits of *Crime and Punishment* to fit the Procrustean beds of such shifting fashions as formalist, Freudian, and existentialist analysis.

The Soviets were more respectful toward *Crime and Punishment*, especially as a mirror of the turbulent first years of the reign of Alexander II (1855-1881), when a wide range of ideals and prognoses for changing Russian society clashed. Under the Soviets' official atheism, critics could

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A. See Chapter 8, footnote B, for a particularly egregious bit of posthumous gossip about Dostoevsky.

B. Carolyn Heilbrun says, "Constance Garnett's translation of Dostoyevsky's major works [beginning in 1912 with *Brothers Karamazov*] was, at least in its immediate effects, one of the most important literary events in modern English literature." (188) Her husband, David Garnett, a respected publishers' reader-editor, "was so convinced that the public would never take to translations of Dostoyevsky, that he advised Constance to take a flat payment for the novels…rather than do them on a royalty basis as she had Chekhov and Turgenev…. Constance lost a great deal of money." (Heilbrun, 74)

neither build on nor refute the religious-based scholarship of the Symbolist epoch. Scholars mainly confined themselves to exploring every possible connection of the novel to Dostoevsky's life, clarifying terms that Soviet readers might find obscure, pointing out symbolism (numbers, colors, etc.), and tirelessly tracing Raskolnikov's wanderings around Petersburg. This work culminated in 1973 in the *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (Complete Works), volumes VI (text of *Crime and Punishment*) and VII (notes and commentary, supplemented by Sergei Belov's *Kommentarii*, 1985).

Meanwhile, scholars who had fled the Soviet Union were continuing to produce works on *Crime and Punishment* in the tradition of Symbolist discourse. Since the onset of perestroika in the late 1980s, there has been renewed interest in Dostoevsky's metaphysics both in the West and in Russia.[C]

What none of them has done systematically is to follow the (deliberately) murky clues that Dostoevsky has sown through *Crime and Punishment* as to his intentions. We agree with Belov that "nothing is accidental" in this novel,[1] and this increasingly strong conviction has led us to a re-construction of *Crime and Punishment* that privileges the author over the critic. Many years ago, Anthony Powell made fun of a trend in literary criticism by creating a critic of whom his narrator said, "Shernmaker represented literary criticism in a more eminent form. Indeed, one of his goals was to establish that the Critic, not the Author, was paramount."[2] The Shernmaker Effect, in all its forms, makes it very hard to study a novelist such as Dostoevsky, and in this book we shall defer to the ancient notion that an author has some sort of authority in his own work. Dostoevsky himself wrote that, for *Crime and Punishment*, he had chosen "narration from point of view of author, a sort of invisible but omniscient being who does not leave his hero for a moment."[3]

❖

Understanding what Dostoevsky accomplished in *Crime and Punishment* depends on a close reading that takes into account intertwined

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C. For an overview of the reception of *Crime and Punishment*, see Cox, 13-22. Vladimir Seduro has produced valuable surveys of general trends and émigré figures in Dostoevsky criticism. Samples of the various approaches scholars have taken to the novel can be found in collections of articles edited by Bloom 1988, 2004a, and 2004b; Jackson 1973; and Wasiolek 1961. An extensive bibliography from 1970 to the present and yearly updates, by June Pachuta Farris, have appeared in *Dostoevsky Studies* (new series, beginning with vol. 1, no. 1, 1993). Our bibliography is mainly confined to works about *Crime and Punishment* and general surveys of Dostoevsky's life and works that are useful for understanding the novel itself.

threads: autobiography, events and details drawn from contemporary life, polemics against trends in Russian radical thought, religious convictions, and an overarching metaphorical structure.

To begin with, the life of his protagonist Raskolnikov mirrors many aspects of the author's wide experience.[D] Dostoevsky was born in 1821 into the family of a doctor at a Moscow hospital for the poor. When he was a boy, his father purchased two villages in Tula province that bordered on the Zaraisk district (in Riazan' province), which, in *Crime and Punishment*, is called home by both Raskolnikov and the painter Mikolka (a nickname for Nikolai). The district was known as a nest of Old Believers—schismatics (*raskol'niki*) who refused to accept the seventeenth-century Nikonian reforms to Russian Orthodoxy that aimed at reconciling its ritual with that of the Greek church. Furthermore, the town of Zaraisk had a cathedral dedicated to St. Nicholas the Miracle-Worker, much revered by the Old Believers (a fact relevant to Dostoevsky's use of the name Nikolai in *Crime and Punishment*).

Dostoevsky, like his characters Raskolnikov and Mikolka, came to Petersburg in youth—and all three were disoriented by the hectic life of the capital. In 1838, Dostoevsky's father enrolled him in the military engineering academy there, but contemporaries describe the boy as more absorbed in reading and writing than in his studies. As soon as possible after graduation, Dostoevsky abandoned the military for literature, where he experienced the ups and downs of the creative life. His first tale, *Bednye liudi* (*Poor Folk*, 1846), was hailed by leading critics of the time as worthy of Nikolai Gogol; but the shameless vanity of his reaction to this lionizing was mercilessly lampooned by fellow-writers, including Ivan Turgenev, and his succeeding works met with less enthusiasm. In 1847 he fell in with a group of utopian socialists known as the Petrashevsky Circle, and in consequence of Nicholas I's panicky reaction to the radical movements that swept Western Europe in 1848, Dostoevsky was arrested in April, 1849, along with other members of the circle. He spent eight months in a dungeon cell of the Peter and Paul Fortress, during which he read extensively in Dimitrii Rostovskii's *Minei chet'i* (Lives of the Saints). In a cruel farce orchestrated personally by the Tsar, Dostoevsky and his fellow "conspirators" were subjected to a mock execution. On December 22, they were led out to the Semionovskii Parade Ground. The three men just ahead

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D. Those who wish to know more about Dostoevsky's life than the bare minimum set out here should treat themselves to reading Joseph Frank's superb five-volume work on the subject. We are indebted to his work in many ways and places too subtle to identify.

of Dostoevsky were tied to posts and blindfolded, and the soldiers' rifles were raised, before the actual sentences were announced.[4] Dostoevsky was sentenced to four years of hard labor in a penal colony in Omsk, Siberia, followed by service in the army. These experiences had a profound and lasting effect on him. He was in his late twenties when these troubles began.

During his four years in prison he was able to do little reading. The only book he had was a New Testament that he treasured all his life. That copy is still extant, and the most marked-up chapter is the Gospel of John, which, as we shall see, has pride of place in *Crime and Punishment*. In the barracks, he had much time, whether he wished or no, to observe his fellow-convicts: their stories, their personalities, their patterns of behavior, their range of attitudes toward life, people, crime, religion, and so on. He also had to work at an "alabaster oven," or gypsum refinery, which gave him yet another experience to use as a symbol in *Crime and Punishment*. Indeed, a letter to his brother (October 9, 1859; see below) suggests that the kernel of the novel dates back to his penal servitude in Siberia.

Released from prison in 1854, Dostoevsky was assigned to an army regiment in Semipalatinsk.[5] There he met and fell in love with Mariia Dmitrievna Isaeva, then the wife (and soon widow) of an alcoholic schoolteacher, and after a stormy courtship he married her in 1857. In 1859, Dostoevsky was finally permitted to return to Petersburg. Increasingly plagued by attacks of epilepsy and accompanied by a surly step-son and a temperamental wife (already suffering from the tuberculosis that would kill her), he came back in late December to a city roiled by the turbulent intellectual currents marking the early years of Alexander II's reign (1855-1881). While Dostoevsky was rebuilding his literary career in Petersburg, Mariia Dmitrievna spent most of her remaining years in more healthful climates of Russia. Aspects of her difficult character and awful death are reflected in the depiction of Katerina Marmeladova in *Crime and Punishment*.

Dostoevsky, with his elder brother and close friend, Mikhail, immediately plunged into the cultural and political polemics of the time by founding their own magazine, *Vremia* (*Time*, 1861-1863) and, after it was banned by the government, a successor *Epokha* (*Epoch*, 1864-1865). As an ex-convict, Dostoevsky could not appear officially as editor, but his role was crucial. In 1862 and again the following year, he made whirlwind tours of western Europe and found the secular, industrializing culture of the West distasteful. In addition to extensive journalism for the magazines, he published a novel, *Unizhennye i oskorblennye* (*The Insulted and Injured*, 1861); a fictionalized account of his years in prison, *Zapiski iz mertvogo*

doma (*Notes from the House of the Dead*, 1851-1862); a memoir of his first trip to Europe, *Zimnie zametki o letnykh vpechatlenii* (*Winter Notes of Summer Impressions*, 1863); and a fierce rebuttal to Nikolai Chernyshevsky's vision of a socialist utopia (see below) in *Zapiski iz podpol'ia* (*Notes from the Underground*, 1864).

In *Crime and Punishment*, Dostoevsky creates some wonderfully vile characters to push those views of his contemporaries that he found most objectionable. Luzhin is a grasping, self-centered careerist, while Lebeziatnikov parrots the socialist preachings of radical critics, such as the "rational egoism" of Chernyshevsky's novel *Chto delat'?* (*What Is to Be Done?*, 1863) and a dizzyingly vapid concept of women's rights. These two characters express ideas that Dostoevsky felt were unhealthy foreign imports from the West and threatened to sever Russia from her native roots. To Dostoevsky, Petersburg, with its German name, large population of Germans, and venal officials and businessmen, was a barrier to Russia's salvation, which lay in a return to the culture and religion of her folk. The Dostoevsky brothers came to call this movement *pochvennichestvo* or "back-to-the-soil."[E]

Dostoevsky suffered major blows in 1864 with the deaths in quick succession of his beloved brother Mikhail Dostoevsky and his tubercular wife Mariia Dmitrievna. He was never good with finances, spending freely when he had money and running up gambling losses in West Europe; and he compounded the problem by taking on responsibility for his stepson, for his brother's widow and four children, and for the debts that accrued in trying vainly to keep *Epokha* going. He became quite familiar with money-lenders and pawnbrokers. (On gambling binges abroad, he even, like Raskolnikov, pawned his watch—at least twice![6]) Only an incredible cat-like resilience kept him going.

It was at this time that Dostoevsky began to write what would eventually become *Crime and Punishment*. In the letter of Oct. 9, 1859, mentioned above, he says:

> In December I will begin a novel…. Do you remember, I told you about a "Confession"—a novel that I wanted to write after all the rest, saying that I still had to get over it. The other day I resolved absolutely to write it right away. It was combined with that novel (the passion[ate] element) I told you about. It will be, in the first place, effective,

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E. Already on the third page of the novel, Dostoevsky establishes "German" as "foreign and decadent" when a random passing drunk screams "German hatter!" in reference to the dilapidated German-style top-hat Raskolnikov is wearing.

> passionate, and in the second, my whole heart and blood will be put into this novel. I conceived it in prison, lying on a plank-bed, in a painful minute of sorrow and demoralization.[7]

Knowing of the author's history, one might think that a book entitled *Crime and Punishment* could be an account of his experience in prison. But Dostoevsky was to write that book (*House of the Dead*) separately before tackling his great novel. This new work was to be written in the first person, as a "confession" novel, and he did in fact write it thus. But he came to realize that a first-person narrator would necessarily already understand the entire story, including the later consequences of early actions. And he wanted to show his central character, Raskolnikov, gradually coming to his senses, rather than looking back on his experience with understanding. So he burned the manuscript and wrote the entire novel over again, now in the third person.[8] In the course of doing so, he was able to compact and refine to an astonishing degree the many levels of story and meaning that he layered into the final version.

For, contrary to popular belief, the book is not just a sloppy (yet strangely gripping) melodrama. If one doggedly follows the evidence, one sees a whole world consistent with the issues that we know concerned Dostoevsky deeply, hidden far enough beneath the surface that the censors would not become incensed nor the readers impatient with being nudged too hard in the ribs. Such an analysis requires that we pay attention not just to the existence of metaphorical names but to the way their meaning relates to the events of the novel. Critics have long noted that Sonia's name is a Russian diminutive of the Greek word *Sophia*, meaning "wisdom," but they do not seem to notice that whenever Sonia shows up, someone gets wise to himself, and Sonia's final victory makes it clear that the subject of the novel is really the hero's journey of self-realization. Tracking *all* such leads with utter persistence revolutionizes one's view of both Dostoevsky and his masterpiece. Dostoevsky even took the trouble to let us know that there is more to the story than the surface meaning: for example, having the detective Porfirii say to Raskolnikov, "…one just takes your every word in a double sense, as if there were another sitting under it!" (346/453)[F]

F. References to the text of *Crime and Punishment* throughout this book are given double page numbers. The first refers to the Russian text of the novel in *PSS* 6 (1973), and the second to the English translation by Pevear and Volokhonsky (1993).

The words of the text give a steady stream of clues. To begin with, the English title of *Crime and Punishment* is misleading, for the Russian word translated as "crime" (пре-ступление) is literally "trans-gression, stepping over." It is clearly not the legal but the psychological implications of crime—crime as the overstepping of important limits—that occupy Dostoevsky. And the "punishment" of the title is a bit misleading too. The hero is punished for his crime, all right—indeed, he is sent to Siberia—but most of his actual sentence takes place after the end of the novel. He disappears into the maw of the criminal-justice system after confessing, and his experiences there are summed up briefly in the Epilogue. When he reappears, he has been in Siberia for nine months, which, given that the novel is about the rebirth of its main character, can only be taken as a metaphor for gestation. But "Siberia," oddly, is used in the novel as a symbol for something rather different from punishment, as we shall see.)

The "punishment" for overstepping is certainly a key topic of the book, but again it is the hero's *psychological* punishment—the emotional and spiritual consequences of his transgression—that concerns Dostoevsky. The criminal-justice system in the novel is eerie and unknowable in ways that make the Soviet KGB seem matter-of-fact and straightforward. There is an "investigator"—Porfirii— in the novel, but he does not get around much; indeed, until the very last section of the book it is Raskolnikov who seeks *him* out, rather than the other way around. And in that last section, Porfirii, after a lively and mysterious conversation, announces his intention to wait for Raskolnikov to show up at headquarters and confess. The district police do summon Raskolnikov once, but about another matter entirely, his debt to his landlady. And although he becomes suicidal, and the act of suicide is one of the culminating scenes in the novel, it is not *his* suicide at all. As we shall see, a stand-in somehow commits suicide for the hero.

So we have a detective novel with a spooky criminal-justice system, strange characters who stand in for the hero—but wait, there's more! Dostoevsky was deeply engaged in the issues of his day, so *Crime and Punishment* takes time out of its busy schedule to ridicule a political philosophy! In one of the major scenes in the book (in Part Five), a character with wrong-headed philosophical tendencies ends up being publicly humiliated. A little beside the point, you might think, in a book about murder.

Scholars have offered many criticisms of *Crime and Punishment*, and this is just one of them. More than one critic has remarked that the plot of the novel is thin. We would argue that they are measuring the novel on the wrong dimension: *Crime and Punishment* is built like a sorcerer's layer-

cake, with levels that come into focus only when you say the magic word, and to argue that its plot is thin is like deriding the Empire State Building for having a footprint smaller than your local mall. So let us reserve judgment in the matter of Dostoevsky's imperfections. In *Crime and Punishment*, nothing is as it first seems.

In a sense, Dostoevsky was perfectly situated to flood his novel with meanings. For example, the Russians chose names for their children from the calendar of Orthodox saints. Almost all of those names came from Greek, Latin, or Hebrew, but some calendars translated into Russian what the names were thought to signify, and those meanings had long ago been assimilated into the popular culture. This meant that Russian novelists had remarkable possibilities for attaching meaning to their fictional characters by giving them metaphorical names, since the readers could always figure out the meanings. We know that Dostoevsky had such a calendar [9] and chose names for his characters with the significance in mind.[G] In fact, he made far greater use of this technique than other novelists and, as we shall see, even found new ways of extending the metaphorical domain of his story. In other words, he did far more than just tag a character with a name that hinted at his or her qualities.

This book is not for the reader who is content to read *Crime and Punishment* as a suspenseful crime novel, nor for those who think authors are irrelevant to their own books. Dostoevsky had something difficult to say that was important to him, and he had to figure out how to convey it, despite the censors and other problems. Yet like any writer, he was subject to the limitations and basic principles of fiction-writing, so to uncover what he was up to, our analysis investigates the novel from the standpoint of the technical problems he faced and solved so brilliantly.

But before we get too deep into the details of the novel, we herewith provide a basic summary of the plot for the convenience of the reader who has not read *Crime and Punishment* recently. It is done according to Dostoevsky's section-numbers, for ease of finding things in the text:

G. See Appendix for a list of names in the novel and their probable meanings.

Synopsis

PART I: The Murder

1. Heat and drought in Petersburg. Raskolnikov "rehearses" his murder fantasy by visiting an old woman, the pawnbroker Aliona Ivanovna, who is his prospective victim.
2. He goes to a tavern, meets the drunken Marmeladov, hears about his daughter Sonia and how she was forced into prostitution; meets Marmeladov's wife, Katerina Ivanovna.
3. Raskolnikov receives a letter from his mother, Pulkheriia Aleksandrovna, concerning his sister Dunia's troubles with her employer Svidrigailov and Dunia's betrothal to Luzhin.
4. Outraged by the letter, he tries to save a young girl on the street from a lecher; attacks the lecher, calling him "Svidrigailov". Considers visiting his friend Razumikhin.
5. Considers the murder again; rejects going to Razumikhin. Falls asleep under a bush on Petrovsky Island; has a dream of a mare being beaten to death. Walks home through the Haymarket, overhears that Aliona's half-sister Lizaveta will not be at home at seven the next evening, which will leave the old pawnbroker home alone.
6. Prepares for the murder.
7. Murders Aliona, but has to murder Lizaveta too when she returns and sees him; escapes without further detection.

PART II: Immediate aftermath of the crime: Raskolnikov takes sick; Marmeladov dies; Raskolnikov meets Sonia.

1. Raskolnikov is sick; is summoned to the police station—but about a debt to his landlady; meets Ilia Petrovich ("Lt. Gunpowder") and the clerk Aleksandr Grigorevich (Zametov[H]); faints when the murders are brought up.
2. Takes the loot out to get rid of it; rejects throwing it into the water—hides it under a big stone. Visits Razumikhin, but stomps out into the street, where he gets lashed by a coachman. Feels estranged, goes home; dreams that his landlady is cruelly beaten.
3. Raskolnikov still sick; Razumikhin finds him, brings the doctor, Zosimov. Money arrives from his mother Pulkheriia; Razumikhin takes some to buy Raskolnikov fresh clothes and manages to change his shirt.

H. Zametov or Zamiotov (Zamyotov): see Appendix for the linguistics.

4. Raskolnikov better; Zosimov and Razumikhin discuss the murder case in Raskolnikov's presence.
5. Luzhin presents himself; says he's staying with his former ward Lebeziatnikov and has arranged lodgings for Dunia and Pulkheriia—at a house Razumikhin disapproves of. Raskolnikov insults Luzhin and throws him out.
6. Raskolnikov goes out to find newspapers; teasingly almost confesses to Zametov; bumps into Razumikhin, who invites him to a housewarming party. Sees a woman try to drown herself; returns to the scene of his crime, which is being redecorated.
7. Marmeladov is run over; Raskolnikov helps get him home to Katerina, where he dies in Sonia's arms. Raskolnikov meets Sonia and leaves the rest of the money from his mother for the funeral, then finds his mother and sister waiting for him at his room.

PART III: Raskolnikov's family; Porfirii Petrovich.
1. Raskolnikov tells his family he won't hear of Dunia marrying Luzhin. Razumikhin meets Dunia; brings Zosimov to Raskolnikov's bedside again.
2. Razumikhin falls for Dunia; escorts the ladies here and there. They read a letter from Luzhin demanding that Raskolnikov not be present when Luzhin visits.
3. The ladies, Razumikhin, and Zosimov visit Raskolnikov. Pulkheriia tells of Marfa Petrovna Svidrigailova's death. Raskolnikov and Dunia quarrel over her proposed marriage to Luzhin; Dunia gives Raskolnikov Luzhin's letter to read and asks him to be there when Luzhin comes; he agrees.
4. Sonia arrives to invite Raskolnikov to Marmeladov's funeral and "wake". Raskolnikov introduces her to his family; Dunia and Raskolnikov make up as Dunia leaves. Raskolnikov agrees with Razumikhin to visit Porfirii, introduces Razumikhin to Sonia, and gets her address, promising to visit Sonia soon. Svidrigailov, passing by, learns Raskolnikov's address and follows Sonia to her lodging—they turn out to be neighbors.
5. Interview with Porfirii at his apartment; they discuss the murder case and an article on criminality that Raskolnikov wrote.
6. Raskolnikov and Razumikhin argue about Porfirii. Raskolnikov leaves Razumikhin at Dunia's and rushes home to make sure no loot remains as evidence. On the street again, a tradesman mysteriously calls him murderer. He returns home, reconsiders his crime at length; dreams that

the tradesman turns into the old woman, the pawnbroker. Svidrigailov appears.

PART IV: Luzhin and Svidrigailov.

1. Interview with Svidrigailov, who eventually asks to see Dunia; Raskolnikov refuses.
2. Raskolnikov and Razumikhin go to meet Luzhin at Dunia's. Raskolnikov and then Dunia quarrel with Luzhin; they all throw him out.
3. Aftermath of Luzhin's discomfiture: for Luzhin, for the family, and for Razumikhin (who makes plans with Dunia for the future). Raskolnikov leaves with long-term farewells, to everyone's shock.
4. Raskolnikov visits Sonia: he badgers her, then has her read him the raising of Lazarus from the Gospel of John. Next door, Svidrigailov eavesdrops.
5. Raskolnikov visits Porfirii again, in his office at the detective bureau; the interview heats up.
6. The house-painter Nikolai Dementev (Mikolka), who has confessed to the murders and is being held by police in next room, barges in; Porfirii apologizes to Raskolnikov when he hears Mikolka's confession. The tradesman who had accused Raskolnikov to Porfirii also apologizes.

PART V: Luzhin evicted; Katerina dies.

1. Luzhin broods, decides to frame Sonia at the "wake" as revenge on Raskolnikov; argues with Lebeziatnikov, then sends him to fetch Sonia; gives Sonia a 10-ruble note.
2. Katerina holds the "wake" (which Raskolnikov attends); quarrels with her German landlady.
3. Luzhin accuses Sonia of stealing 100 rubles; Raskolnikov just watches the ensuing commotion, as the banknote is found in Sonia's pocket. Lebeziatnikov denounces Luzhin as having planted it on her; Raskolnikov reveals Luzhin's motive; the crowd turns on Luzhin and he is evicted by Lebeziatnikov. Katerina is evicted by her German landlady.
4. Raskolnikov follows Sonia to her room and confesses the murders. She tells him to confess to the world.
5. Katerina makes her children beg in the street; dies of consumption. Svidrigailov tells Raskolnikov he'll pay for the funeral and "place" the children; admits eavesdropping on Sonia and Raskolnikov.

PART VI: Svidrigailov dies; Raskolnikov confesses.

1. Raskolnikov broods; turns Dunia over to the care of Razumikhin;

learns more about the painter's confession; wishes he could kill either Porfirii or Svidrigailov. Porfirii turns up.
2. Interview with Porfirii, who gives reasons why the painter's confession is not valid and accuses Raskolnikov, saying he'll wait for Raskolnikov to come and confess.
3. Raskolnikov goes to find Svidrigailov; notices him sitting in a tavern. Svidrigailov first tries to hide, then invites Raskolnikov to join him. Interview with Svidrigailov.
4. Svidrigailov tells of his dead wife Marfa, of making passes at the servants (including Dunia), and of buying a new 15-year-old wife. Raskolnikov leaves in disgust.
5. Svidrigailov meets Dunia and takes her to his room while Sonia is out; tells Dunia of Raskolnikov's murders, tries to blackmail her into accepting his advances. Dunia grazes him with a bullet from Marfa's revolver, then gives up. He lets her go.
6. Rainstorm. Svidrigailov finds Sonia, gives her money; visits his 15-year-old fiancée, gives her money. Goes to sleazy hotel, dreams of a 14-year-old rape victim's funeral, then of a 5-year-old seductress. Goes out and shoots himself.
7. Raskolnikov says farewell to his mother, then to Dunia.
8. Raskolnikov visits Sonia; goes to the Haymarket, bows and kisses the earth, then goes to the police station to confess to "Lt. Gunpowder". When Gunpowder tells him of Svidrigailov's suicide, he leaves, but upon seeing Sonia's distress, he returns and confesses.

EPILOGUE: Siberia; Raskolnikov's epiphany.
1. Trial: Raskolnikov is sentenced to 8 years in Siberia; Sonia follows him there. Dunia and Razumikhin wed; Pulkheriia sickens and dies.
2. Raskolnikov is sick and unrepentant, disliked by his fellow convicts; Sonia, a frequent visitor, is loved by all. After he is taken ill, she falls sick also and stops visiting. Raskolnikov begins worrying about her, goes back to work at the gypsum refinery, and is sitting looking at the river when Sonia returns. At that moment, his world view changes entirely.

References:

1. Belov 2001: 147, 194.
2. Powell, 123.
3. Leatherbarrow, 73, quoting from *PSS* 7: 146.
4. Frank 1983: 58.
5. Frank 1983: 165.
6. Letter to his brother Mikhail, Sept. 8/20 1863: *PSS* 28.2: 44; letter to his second wife Anna Grigor'evna, May 9/21 1867: *PSS* 28.2: 190-91. (See also Dostoevsky 1987a [Frank and Goldstein]: 181 and 1987b [Lowe]: 236.)
7. *PSS* 28.1: 351 (translation M. Zirin).
8. *PSS* 28.2: 150; cf. *PSS* 7: 146.
9. Belov 2001: 189-80.

PART I

"Trivial fragments, but each thing with significance."

—Dostoevsky, noting how he should write
Crime and Punishment (*PSS* 7: 82)

Chapter One

In Author's Purgatory, or, Old Wine in New Bottles

> Praise the wine that is old,
> and the flowerings of the newest songs!
> —Pindar, *Olympian Ode* IX, 48-49

Writers of fiction learn early about the advantages of creating a story with a setting rich in highly differentiated characters. Army barracks have greater possibilities for constant drama than, say, an isolated lighthouse with a single occupant. No matter how exciting the lighthouse keeper, the author needs something more communicative than stone and water in the vicinity of the hero to create a lively story. In fact, it would take some kind of genius to write a lively story about stone and water—but we will get to him in due course.

The problem faced by novelists (and that includes Dostoevsky) is that readers make contradictory demands. Ideally, every scene in a novel would be laced with new characters, events, and circumstances, so that the reader would never be in danger of boredom. It is the new that is most contrastive, after all, and our brains are wired precisely to notice and react to contrast. But our brains are also wired to demand that a story "make sense," and it is all but impossible to create sense without sticking largely to the old as we tell our story. In other words, even if Conan Doyle decided that one of his heroes, Professor Challenger, was becoming a bit tedious, he still could not replace him with Sherlock Holmes halfway through one of his novels. Doyle, and the reader, are stuck with their original hero until the bitter end. Similarly, in a mystery, our neural circuitry simply will not allow the author to blame the crime on a villain unknown to the reader: this, too, violates our notions of coherence.

Coherence, in other words, is the enemy of the new, and it is the new that is vivid and non-boring. So plot results from the struggle between the demands for newness and those for coherence: the storyteller transforms the old into the new by shifting the way we look at it or causing an old character to react to an event with a new behavior or attitude, thereby creating ever-new events, characters, and problems. The word *novel* for a story, after all, is from the word for "new."

For the moment, let us stay with a simple example: imagine that a character in a novel kills and robs someone to solve his credit-card debt. As soon as he commits the crime, he acquires a new problem: how to escape the law. New is good, because it staves off the reader's boredom, but our character's new problem *derives* from his old problem. Technically, it is both new and old, which means that it satisfies both our need for the new and our demand that everything in a story be part of a whole, which forces the writer to stay with the old—the part we have already been presented with. This is a very simple version of how plot works, from the author's point of view.

Most writers make it easy to create such changes by putting a lot of characters into a lively environment: *Cheaper by the Dozen*, *Oliver Twist*, *Moby Dick*, *Catch-22*. When they deliberately write about isolation, as Mary Shelley did in *Frankenstein*, it usually turns out that their characters find each other easily even in the most desolate parts of the earth, simply because the exigencies of narration demand it. Thus, her first narrator, Robert Walton, actually runs into everyone he needs to keep the story going while on an ice-bound ship en route to the north pole. Both the daemon and his creator happen by. You might think, what are the odds? But the odds are actually quite good when the alternative is for the narrator to start talking to himself.

But what if the writer *wants* to write a story about an occurrence in which nothing very vivid happens? Here, sadly, it is difficult to give examples, since most writers who try this find it difficult to get published. Even good writers, though, if they try it, will keep such a story very short indeed and try to dazzle the reader with style. The issues can be most easily demonstrated by considering the differences between two novels about human beings coming into conflict with sharks: Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* and Peter Benchley's *Jaws*. In the first story, the antagonists—a man and some sharks—encounter each other directly and have limited means of interacting, so the author keeps the story fairly short. (You can't very well lengthen the story by having the protagonist keep whacking the sharks with an oar.) In the second, the shark creates the drama only indirectly, by threatening the economy of an entire beach resort. Here the possibilities for drama simply explode. The various members of the resort can form ranks on either side of a touchy question: do we let the public know that a great white shark is dining on tourists? Thus Benchley's novel can easily become far longer than Hemingway's without losing the reader's attention. As a general rule, even the greatest writers are reluctant to make a long story out of a single character set off from everyone else.

To see this argument more clearly, let us create a *real* challenge for an author: let us imagine that we are in charge of a little compartment of Authors' Purgatory and must submit a plan for a hellishly difficult novel to be written by the inmates. We might come up with something like this:

1. The novel must be at least four or five hundred pages long. (The longer the novel, the harder it is to hold the reader's attention all the way through.)

2. Its hero must be a self-isolating character who does terrible things in secret that he then can't talk about. (Now we have placed enormous limits on our hero's ability to interact with other characters.)

3. The hero goes not from poverty to wealth—which is easy, since both have obvious real-world correlatives—but from spiritual degradation to wholeness. (In other words, all the author is ever really talking about is the inside of a single character's head.)

4. The novel must hold our attention from one end to the other.

To get any competent novelist to agree to this, you might have to threaten him or her with vile torments—say, that they would be harassed for all eternity by a goon-squad of rule-bound copy editors, deaf to sentence rhythms, who swap actives and passives and move pronouns around aimlessly. Without a really powerful motive, no competent writer would take on such a project.

So our novel's hero commits a crime, then quietly goes crazy all by himself. He cannot speak freely to anyone and is losing all his connectedness to his fellow man. If we give this subject to a writer with a lively sense of coherence—we shall call him Hector Paleologus—he might cause the character to skulk about in his room, dwelling on his misery. The character is, after all, cut off from humanity. This might satisfy Hector's idea of what would be "logical" and "true to life" (both of which are acceptable forms of coherence) but he would be putting the character into boring, undramatic situations, and even a good writer can't get away with that for more than a few pages, let alone for hundreds of pages. After all, we do not need to pick up a novel to be bored: we can achieve that with less effort by watching glaciers plunge madly down valleys. So when Hector discovers that he has to prop up his eyelids just to read his own story, he asks a friend to read the story and tell him what's wrong with it.

The friend, Anna Coluthon, recognizes from her yawn pattern that Hector has nothing interesting going on in his novel. She offers a solution: "Have him wander around in the streets and get into arguments with people." Hector demurs: "Those arguments won't be relevant to his problem," he says. "You can't just have a bunch of disconnected

arguments." Hector senses that you need conflict *relevant to the central issue*, which is the alienation and redemption of the character. But remember, Hector's character can't speak about what is bothering him because he has done unspeakable things. So he will have to come into conflict with people who don't really know what is wrong with him but whose words and actions are relevant to his dilemma.

Hector has either terrific problems of contrast here, if he creates coherence, or terrific problems of coherence if he creates contrast. Anna's idea is a good one: we have to get the character out and about. But Hector is right that we must also somehow force relevance on all the encounters our character has with others. They must be made part of him; their actions must be his actions.

So if Hector and Anna are unusually perceptive, they will eventually decide to split the character's alienated mind into pieces, then incorporate these into separate characters. Now the hero can encounter his various selves in different places and even get into arguments with them, and the arguments are never irrelevant to the story because each of these characters is a piece of the hero. The hero can get into a bitter argument with his own evil side, and, if he feels the need, he can even punch him in the nose, thereby making the discourse between Good and Evil tangible and real, rather than abstract. Instantly our story has become contrastive—the character is encountering "differentness"—yet we have not sacrificed coherence because the differentness is all part of one person.

At this point Hector and Anna might discover that they have turned an intransigent problem into a grand opportunity, because now they can actually cause the characters to interact with one another on the literal level in one way, while interacting on the symbolic level in another way entirely. The possibilities for the novelist are truly stunning.

Let's imagine an example: say you make one of your characters into a representative of your hero's wisdom, another a representative of his egoism. Not only can you have them get into a quarrel, but you can make the contestants seemingly unequal. Perhaps the literal Wisdom is small and fragile, the literal Egoism big and strong. Their symbolic versions—what the actual characters represent—can be the reverse of this. On the symbolic level, then, it turns out that Wisdom is a giant with the strength of ten, and Egoism is a puny scaredy-cat. The battle is a first-round knock-out: Wisdom retains her title. And look at what we've achieved: we have sent two purely abstract entities into battle with each other, but in such a way that they have bodies, are vividly contrastive, and can fight it out on two levels of meaning at once. Two *contrasting* levels.

It is Dostoevsky who figured this out as he planned *Crime and Punishment*, and it is clear that, unlike Hector and Anna, he understood the problem down to its details, while coming up with astonishingly inventive and productive solutions.

One really does not get very far seeing *Crime and Punishment* as a detective story. For one thing, the narrator states the dilemma of Raskolnikov in a way that pretty much neglects the usual issues of such a story. Normally, if a character murders two people, his main problem has to do mostly with evading the authorities. But Raskolnikov sees his problem as one of being cut off from his fellow man: "[He] suddenly became confused and turned pale: again that terrible, recent feeling passed like a deathly chill over his soul; again it suddenly became perfectly plain and clear to him that he had just uttered a terrible lie, that not only would he never have the chance to talk all he wanted, but that it was no longer possible for him to talk at all, with anyone, about anything, ever." (176/229) While his surface-self is involved with his neighbors and the police, his shadow-self struggles for sanity.

Our would-be authors, Hector Paleologus and Anna Coluthon, are not geniuses like Dostoevsky, so they have a lot of trouble with the details of their scheme. Their struggles will be extremely instructive to us as we proceed, pointing up what Dostoevsky could—and could not—do to solve his problems:

"*How in heaven's name would you let the reader know that the character's mind was broken into pieces?" asks Hector.*

"I guess you'd use a metaphor," says Anna. "Maybe he says that he has a splitting headache. Or you give him a name that tips the reader off."

"'Tommy Twain'? 'Sammy A. Sunder'?"

Anna winces. "Dear me."

In fact this is pretty much the way Dostoevsky informs the reader of *Crime and Punishment* that he is creating two stories, the literal one and the symbolic one hiding in the shadows. He gives his main character a name implying that his mind is in pieces: "Raskolnikov" derives from a Russian word for "schism" (Rus. раскол *raskól*). Should we miss the hint, Raskolnikov has a friend whose name, Razumikhin, is derived from a word meaning "reason" (Rus. разум *rázum*). And if we miss even that hint, Razumikhin says about Raskolnikov that it is "as if there really were two opposite characters in him, changing places with each other." (165/215) And if *all* this gets by us, the heroine's name is "Sonia," which is a

diminutive of the Greek "Sophía," or "Wisdom" (from Greek *sophós* "wise"; Rus. Софъя, dim. Соня).

But then everything stops being easy, and Anna's "Dear me" hints at why. The problem with such a system is that it can become tiresome and predictable, which is perhaps why almost no one writes allegories any more. John Bunyan's novel, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, illustrates the problems of the form—it is preachy and obvious. One of the simpler ways Dostoevsky deals with this difficulty is by loading up the text with metaphorical in-jokes, as when Nastasia (Gk. *Anastasía*, Rus. Анастасия or Настасья), the servant girl, whose name denotes "resurrection" (from Gk. *ana-sta-* "stand up; raise") repeatedly wakes Raskolnikov up. Or when Porfirii "went off into such gales of laughter that he almost turned purple" (256/334). His name in fact is the Greek word for "purple" (*porphýreos*).

Once you see what Dostoevsky is doing, it can seem easy enough: whenever Sonia (Wisdom) appears, someone gets wise to himself. How hard is that?

But what are we to make of a name derived from a word that means "marmalade"? And what about the character whose name means "puddle"?

Fig. 1. Part of an icon (1870) showing the life of St. Elijah (Ilia). *Center*: Elijah in a cave in the wilderness, being fed by a raven. *Top left*: Elijah praying to the Lord to set fire to his offering and then bring rain to end the drought. *Top right*: Elijah taken to heaven in a fiery chariot by a whirlwind as he drops his cloak for Elisha to keep. (Museum of Russian Icons)

Chapter Two

Two Thoughts with but a Single Mind

> The people imagine that, when it thunders, the prophet Ilia's riding across the sky in his chariot.
>
> —Turgenev, *Fathers and Children* (Ch. 10: 57)

> For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind.
>
> —Hosea 8: 7

If the literal story of *Crime and Punishment* has a shadow-story hovering around it, we will want to know how to identify its elements. We have already mentioned the allegorical names, but they are merely one of several types of clues. Moreover, they will prove more useful as we see how the characters actually function. But even before we set forth our method of locating the shadow-story, it would be useful if we reminded ourselves what *Crime and Punishment* is actually about. And since it would be surprising if an author waited very long to explain what his or her story was about, let's see what we find at the beginning of the novel.

The first page of *Crime and Punishment* shows Raskolnikov leaving his apartment on a hot day in early July, terribly afraid of meeting his landlady. Here the story is already progressing on two levels—the literal and the metaphorical—but only later will the metaphorical version make sense. So let's go to the second page, where Raskolnikov is amusing himself thinking about murdering someone. He reasons that this fantasy is harmless entertainment. "Am I really capable of *that*? Is *that* something serious? No, not serious at all. I'm just toying with it, for the sake of fantasy. A plaything! Yes, a plaything, if you like!" (6/4)

Now, since Raskolnikov in fact soon acts on his fantasy, it would appear that Dostoevsky disagrees with him on whether fantasies are harmless. And since the consequence of Raskolnikov's thinking is two murders, we can probably take Dostoevsky's view as one of some importance, especially since he expresses it right at the beginning of the book. Even before this, in *House of the Dead*, the narrator had made a remark about fantasy that might seem ominous: "Everybody here [in prison] was a dreamer, and the fact was obvious."[1]

If the workings of fantasy form an important part of the story, we might suspect that one or more of the characters will turn out to incorporate aspects of this fantasy. And if the point of the novel is that Raskolnikov's error about the harmlessness of fantasy must be corrected, we can't expect those characters to have happy, fulfilled lives. In fact, they might have to die. Another way of stating this: if a character dies, we should not be surprised if he or she demonstrably represents an aspect of typical human fantasy. Dostoevsky has, after all, told us early on that this is a central concern of the novel. Two obvious examples are Pulkheriia Aleksandrovna, Raskolnikov's mother, and Katerina Ivanovna, Sonia's stepmother, both of whom live in their fantasies. It may seem odd, but for Raskolnikov to recover, his mother, the symbol of that part of his mind that lives in dreams of the future, has to be killed off. Otherwise there is nothing preventing Raskolnikov from simply acquiring another lovely but destructive fantasy, like the one that got him into trouble in the first place.[A]

But let's take a moment to consider Dostoevsky's actual theory: fantasy is dangerous. On this particular issue the views of Dostoevsky—a passionate Christian—are nicely aligned with some more modern theories, especially cognitive therapy. Studies of serial murderers/rapists have demonstrated that such offenders take a while to develop because early on they merely imagine their crimes. Over a period of years, the imagining becomes so powerful and compulsive that it eventually leads to crimes that, like Raskolnikov's, might once have seemed just harmless entertainment. By the time the criminal reaches the stage where he repeats the crime on a regular basis, he is usually well into his twenties and sometimes even his thirties. FBI profilers take this as a given in analyzing the crimes of serial murderers.[2] (We movie-going Americans, of course, would never suggest that indulging in bitter fantasies of killing all your enemies could ever be a bad thing, as Hollywood depends on people doing just that when it creates all those action movies.) Religions, too, warn against the dangers of starting to fantasize; in particular a famous Christian work, the *Philokalia* (which

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A. As we shall see one by one, the characters can have various metaphorical "meanings" expressed by their behavior, names, and even the life-history of the saint they are named after. It is possible to identify some of these meanings: Raskolnikov's mother dies because, on the metaphorical level, she represents one type of living in fantasy. Dostoevsky chose a mother living through her child to represent this, then caused Pulkheriia to become ill whenever Dunia or Raskolnikov would get into trouble. Her last illness begins with the court proceedings. Why the name "Pulkheriia," from the Latin for "beauty"? Surely because the chief recommendation of fantasies is that they are attractive, beautiful.

was being translated into Russian as Dostoevsky was writing his novel), states it thus: "Do not abuse thought, in order that you will not then necessarily abuse things; for if you do not sin in thought beforehand, you will never sin in deed."[3]

It is not our objective to decide whether Dostoevsky is right or wrong; we will be content if we can just figure out what he is getting at. Still, since he had spent years observing his fellow prisoners in a Siberian prison, he surely knew more about the psychology of crime than most of us.

❖

Meanwhile, Hector Paleologus and Anna Coluthon are still puzzling over their problem.

Anna: "It bothers me to put all this pointed allegory into the story. It seems as if it would become tedious. How about if you don't make all the characters allegorical, just some of them?"

But Hector recognizes that the reader would then have to be told *not* to look for meaning in the names of certain characters. This would violate the rule of coherence, which he is a particular expert on.

Hector: "If one character is allegorical, then all of those who interact with Raskolnikov have to be."

Anna: "But you've got to keep it light."

Hector: "So you make all the names allegorical but some of them a bit murky."

Anna: "How about if you make jokes with the names? Puns, maybe?"

Dostoevsky went through this analysis long before Hector and Anna. Let us look at a couple of the pieces of Raskolnikov's mind, just to get a sense of how Dostoevsky relates them to the action:

We shall start with two of the simpler pieces. One of these is Sonia, whose name, as we said, comes from the Greek word for "wisdom." In Christianity, the meaning of *sophia* ultimately evolved into "Divine Wisdom," which is why so many Orthodox churches bear the name "St. Sophia."[B] Sonia's "meaning" is usually easy enough to understand: whenever she appears, someone just made a good decision or got wise to himself. When her father, Marmeladov, has been run over by a carriage, he

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B. The name is actually *Hagia Sophia*, where Greek *hagía* means "divine, holy" and by extension "saint, holy person." So the term was gradually reinterpreted from "Divine/Holy Wisdom" to "Saint Sophia," and people came to believe that a person of that name had actually existed. The same happened with Holy/Good Friday (Hagia/St. Paraskeva) and Holy Resurrection (Hagia/St. Anastasia), close calendrical neighbors that both engendered "saints." Both names occur in the novel, as a servant and her mistress respectively. See below.

makes his confession to the priest. Only then does Sonia show up, and he asks her to forgive him, then dies in her arms. That is, the act of confessing brings Divine Wisdom. Because there is nothing out of the ordinary in the literal events, you couldn't prove from this scene that "Sophia" is metaphorical here. But as we shall see, further observations will strongly support this interpretation.

Another of those fragments of Raskolnikov's mind is his friend Razumikhin, whose name, as we have seen, derives from a word for "reason." At the beginning of the novel, Raskolnikov has not visited him—that is, interacted with "Reason"— for about four months. Indeed, Razumikhin does not even know where Raskolnikov lives—but now Raskolnikov suddenly decides he should go see him. But only *after* he has committed his crime. That is, Raskolnikov has been inaccessible to Reason and won't consult it until it is too late. "So, then, did I really mean to straighten things out with Razumikhin alone? To find the solution for everything in Razumikhin?" (44-45/52) Razumikhin is apparently intended to suggest something like "earthy good sense," which is adequate to solve most of life's problems but—from Dostoevsky's point of view—not the most important ones. This is surely why, when Sonia comes to Raskolnikov's room, we are told specifically that "Razumikhin, who had been sitting just by the door on one of Raskolnikov's three chairs, *rose to let her in*" (182/236; emphasis ours). On the metaphorical level, Razumikhin is acknowledging a higher wisdom. Dostoevsky, who has a penchant for punning on names, even has Razumikhin (in jubilation at finding Raskolnikov awake from the delirium through which he and Nastasia have nursed him for several days) pun on his own name by referring to himself as "Vrazumikhin" (that is, instiller of reason) and jokingly bestow a new patronymic on Nastasia, calling her "Nikiforovna" ("bearer of victory; taker of the prize") (93/118, 96/123).[C]

Note, too, that both Razumikhin and Sonia are not in very good shape when Raskolnikov first sees them—Razumikhin is tattered, disheveled, unshaven, and unwashed; Sonia is actually working as a prostitute. As Raskolnikov becomes more familiar with them, they will look less

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C. In what Viktor Shklovskii (1929/1990) has called "baring the device" (обнажение приёма), Dostoevsky is also giving us, with these puns, an open hint at the way he has chosen his characters' names. As Belov put it, "The writer followed the deep-seated Russian tradition by which, owing to the use at baptism of primarily Greek names, it was customary to seek their meaning in Orthodox church calendars. Dostoevsky's library included such a calendar, which gave a translation of the names of generally accepted saints into Russian and revealed their literal meaning." (Belov 2001: 189-90)

neglected: indeed, Sonia will go back to her old job as seamstress. Good Sense and Wisdom are spiffed up and brought home.

When Raskolnikov does seek out Razumikhin—but it is now too late to do him any good—his friend is "at home." In *Crime and Punishment*, a character being "at home" turns out always to be a metaphor for Raskolnikov being able to access that part of his mind. "Not at home" is the metaphor for his not being able to do so. Once we came to understand this, we could make sense out of scenes that were otherwise confusing. For example, when Svidrigailov succeeds in locking Dunia into his apartment, intending to have his way with her, the way he tells her that nothing can save her is by saying that Sofia Semionovna is not at home (375/488). On the literal level, the delicate Sonia could hardly prevent the large and vigorous Svidrigailov from doing whatever he wanted, but the presence of "Divine Wisdom" is certainly sufficient to prevent bad behavior. When Svidrigailov comes to his senses and releases Dunia, the narrator tells us of his access to wisdom by saying, "He went straight to Sonya. She was at home." (388/499)

But now we are ready to lay out a plan for determining when the metaphorical story becomes important in *Crime and Punishment*. We have consistently found that, in addition to the allegorical names, the following phenomena are strong hints that the pieces of the literal story we are looking at are actually *more* important to the metaphorical story:

1. *Characters make sudden, spooky appearances*.[D]

—Svidrigailov appears when Raskolnikov thinks about his crime. Sonia appears when someone makes a good decision.

2. *Events or remarks appear inexplicable in reference to the literal story*.

—One of Dunia's reactions to Svidrigailov's attempt to rape her seems completely inappropriate—specifically, she acts perplexed (382/496; discussed in Chapter 12). Raskolnikov wonders why he thought he could solve all his problems by going to see Razumikhin (see above).

3. *Strange coincidences occur*.

— Sonia (a penniless prostitute) and Svidrigailov (a wealthy landowner) "happen" to occupy adjacent rooms. After Raskolnikov commits his crime, the police call him in—but about another matter entirely. (Or is

D. Toporov (234-35) has counted a truly remarkable 560 appearances of the Russian word вдруг "suddenly" in *Crime and Punishment*.

it? On the allegorical level, "coincidences" are never actually coincidences, as we shall see.)

4. *The narrator introduces an event or scene by indicating that it might seem odd or unexpected.*

—Very often Dostoevsky introduces a remark with the word "strangely."[E] (When he does this, he is always drawing attention to the metaphorical story.)

5. *The organization of the novel doesn't make sense.*

—Part V, for example, has as its centerpiece a bizarre scene that seems completely sideways to the main story. (See Chapter 6.) And why is the novel divided up the way it is?

6. *Dostoevsky suddenly becomes an incompetent novelist—for example, the story becomes cheap melodrama.*

—The overblown scene in which Luzhin tries to frame Sonia makes no sense at all without the allegorical meaning. (As we shall see, the melodrama of *Crime and Punishment* always turns out to carry an underlying story that is gripping, powerful, and not melodramatic at all.)

With these principles in mind, let us look again at the beginning of the novel. The first page shows Raskolnikov leaving his room and having to pass by his landlady's kitchen, "the door of which almost always stood wide open to the stairs. And each time he passed by, the young man felt some painful and cowardly sensation, which made him wince with shame." (5/3) By the end of the page, Raskolnikov has begun to rationalize and deny his fear: "As a matter of fact, he was not afraid of any landlady, whatever she might be plotting against him." So we have a door that is wide open and a character who sneaks past it. Since he has a good reason—he owes his landlady money—it might seem as if there is nothing here to investigate, except perhaps that Raskolnikov's fear seems a bit out of proportion, even to him.

But let us apply our methods to the landlady, first considering her name. (Recall that Dostoevsky is generally using the church calendar to assign names—see Appendix.) As we learn later, her full name is Praskovia Pavlovna Zarnitsyna. The first name is from the saint Paraskeva, whose name is the Greek word for "preparation; Friday," Friday being so called because it is the preparation-day for the Sabbath—it also happens to be the day of the Passion, Good Friday. Extremely popular among Russian peasant

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E. Toporov (237) says the adjective странный "strange" and its derivatives —for instance, странно "strangely," странное дело "strange business"—are used about 150 times.

women, St. Paraskeva was viewed as a healer of spiritual and physical maladies (healing the latter being long connected with springs and wells) and a maintainer of domestic wellbeing and happiness. She is also closely associated with St. Anastasia—you can see them standing together on many icons—so the fact that the housemaid in Praskovia's rooms is named Nastasia (a colloquial Russian form of Anastasiia) strengthens even more the contention that the names of the characters were carefully selected. Note also that the narrator describes Praskovia (93/118), and Razumikhin praises the atmosphere she offers (160-61/209-10), in terms full of Russian folklore.[F] She seems, in fact, quintessentially Russian. But she is so insignificant and cowed in the great roiling mass of Petersburg, filled as it is with foreignness, that we never see more of her than her dark eyes peeking through the door. Her patronymic, Pavlovna, is from Latin *paulus* ("small"), which may be one of Dostoevsky's ways of complaining that the new capital of Russia, officially called by the German name "Sankt-Petersburg," is devoid of Russian spirit. But it surely also refers to St. Paul, who was martyred precisely in Rome (which Dostoevsky equates throughout with Petersburg and its foreign evils). Praskovia's last name, Zarnitsyna, is from a Russian word for "summer lightning" (зарница). Since the events take place in the summer, and since another major character has strong associations with lightning as well, we should keep this name in mind. For the moment, let us note that she implies multiple connections to religion and traditional Russian values.

Why should this matter? Because the novel shows Raskolnikov moving away from his Russianness and toward godless modern European values, then back again. The first evidence of his rejection of his Russianness is that Raskolnikov avoids his landlady. That is on the first page of the novel. It just might be important to the story.

Housing-issues far beyond the protagonist's difficulties with his landlady dominate *Crime and Punishment*, for reasons that will become clear later. When Razumikhin moves closer to Raskolnikov—that is, when Raskolnikov's Reason becomes more accessible—he moves into a building owned by a Russian. But when Luzhin, one of the villains, finds an apartment for Dunia and Pulkheriia, Raskolnikov's sister and mother, he

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F. Razumikhin's enthusiastic description of the comforts Praskovia offers is a poor student's dream of basic Russian creature-comforts that echoes the atmosphere in which Oblomov, of the well-off gentry class, ends his life in Agaf'ia Matveevna's *bourgeois* house on the Vyborg side of Petersburg. (See Goncharov, *Oblomov*, Part 4.9.) Oblomov's friend Stolz (whose name is the German word for "pride") works very hard trying to motivate him to get off the couch and do something positive.

chooses a sleazy tenement owned by a German. This is not mere racial prejudice but a *reification* of what Dostoevsky views as the differences between Russian and European values. Ultimately, the major choices in the novel are all associated with locations that express their meaning. Raskolnikov will finally have a choice of "staying in Petersburg" (that is, living with his crime), "going to America" (killing himself, America being the symbol for foreignness so distant and "other" that people never return) or "going to Siberia" (seeking redemption through suffering, but in an area untouched by European values). On the literal level, Siberia hardly seems an apt solution for the problem of having already isolated oneself from the rest of mankind. Here, the dominance of the metaphorical story over the literal is illustrated particularly well. The housing question similarly expresses a range of choices. In brief, then, Raskolnikov's landlady reflects traditional Russian values that Raskolnikov has rejected.

> And as they still went on and talked, behold, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.
> —Second Kings 2:11

> Neva has clothed herself in granite…
> —Pushkin, describing Petersburg, *The Bronze Horseman*, l. 35

> …a depravity that stupefies reason and petrifies the heart.
> —*Crime and Punishment*, 247/323

It is one thing to notice the allegorical characters, another to see how Dostoevsky uses them. And here is where we see early evidence of a narrative genius that is simply astonishing, even unparalleled. Let us follow the events far enough to see where the landlady comes up again. Along the way we will get some early clues as to the organization of the novel.

Raskolnikov commits his crime in Part One, which ends with his return to his quarters. Part Two clearly deals with the early consequences of his crime, so it begins with his being summoned to the district police station. This seems reasonable enough in a crime novel, except that it turns out he is being summoned for a reason that apparently has nothing to do with his

major crime (the two murders). He is being summoned for non-payment of his debt to his landlady.

It is difficult to excuse Dostoevsky for this apparently anomalous coincidence if we ignore the metaphorical story. The first consequence of the crime is that Raskolnikov's landlady sets out to collect her money from him?? But remember that we have come to the conclusion, from long experience, that apparent narrative incompetence in Dostoevsky generally means we are looking at the events wrong. So, tipped off by the landlady's name, we should become alert when Raskolnikov encounters a character who, like the landlady, is associated with lightning, of all things. This is Ilia Petrovich, nicknamed "Gunpowder," who explodes in anger at Raskolnikov, causing the chief of police, Nikodim Fomich, to come in and remark, "More blasts, more thunder and lightning, tornadoes, hurricanes!" (79/101)

So what is implied by Ilia Petrovich's name? His first name is derived from Elijah, whose defining experience (Second Kings II) involved being swept up into heaven by a whirlwind (**Fig. 1**). In Eastern Orthodox Christianity, this event caused Elijah to be viewed as the patron saint of storms, taking over this function from the Slavic storm-god Perun, whose name comes from a word meaning "to strike." (Perun is roughly the Slavic equivalent of the Norse god Thor.) Lest we miss this connection, the narrator actually applies Perun's name to Ilia Petrovich in II.1 (78/98; перуны *peruny* is listed by the Oxford Russian Dictionary, 1997, as an obsolete, poetic word for the "thunderbolts" of the translation). One of Perun's functions is the hounding of criminals, so it is hardly surprising that he shows up as soon as Raskolnikov becomes a criminal. And what is he hounding Raskolnikov for? On the literal level, for failing to honor his contract with his landlady; on the metaphorical level, for turning away from his inherited values. So on the metaphorical level, the action of the police department is a direct and pointed response to Raskolnikov's crime of murder, rather than a bizarre coincidence.

No wonder the name of Raskolnikov's landlady hints at summer lightning! The literal Raskolnikov has no idea what forces he is playing with. As in so much of *Crime and Punishment*, Dostoevsky amused himself and kept it light with obscure in-jokes on the metaphorical level. We shall see many of these. But it would be a shame if we got lost in trivial details of this sort and missed the way the metaphorical version takes all the coincidence out of the literal version and gives it force and direction. If you read these passages with their metaphorical aspects in mind, you find that the melodrama vanishes and the "coincidences" acquire graceful and powerful meaning.

But we are not through with Ilia's name. Like the detective, Porfirii Petrovich, he is given only a first name and a patronymic. Oddly, they have the same patronymic, Petrovich, which means "son of Peter." In fact, besides Ilia Petrovich, there is a flood of other Peters and children of Peter in *Crime and Punishment*: Porfirii Petrovich, Marfa Petrovna, Piotr Petrovich Luzhin, Anastasiia Petrovna, Petrovsky Island. At this point, it hardly seems a surprise that the city where the events take place is "Petersburg." Clearly something important is going on here.[G]

Now, there is an easy and obvious hypothesis at hand to explain the name. In a Christian novel, "Peter" would surely have something to do with the Biblical Peter, whose name, which means "rock" in Latin and Greek, comes up in a pun in Matthew 16:18: "And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church…" When we tried initially to understand how the rock on which the Church was founded fits into this book, we decided that Sisyphus and Procrustes together couldn't push that particular rock into the novel. The hypothesis seemed to lead nowhere. You might, however, think you are on to something by noting that a disproportionate number of criminalists in *Crime and Punishment* have "Peter" in their name as a patronymic, so that a possible interpretation is that they are somehow seen as agents of the church who will ultimately contribute to the effort to rescue Raskolnikov. But if this were so, what would we make of Peter Petrovich Luzhin, the vile careerist seeking to make a trophy-wife out of Raskolnikov's sister? And how does Marfa Petrovna, the wife of the doomed sensualist Svidrigailov, fit into this hypothesis?

It must be stressed that Dostoevsky works very hard to make it *possible* for us to understand the significance of the rock; he just doesn't want to make it painfully obvious. If a character on the first page of the novel hints at Good Friday, and the main character's recovery takes place just after Easter (419/547), you might feel justified in supposing that one of the main symbols of the novel, the rock in all those names, has something to do with the main event of Christianity, the Resurrection. So you could just look for a different rock in the scriptures.

Or you could grimly make a list of every mention of rocks, stones, and pea-gravel in the novel, which is what *we* did first. Very quickly we

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G. The only other important character with the first name Piotr in Dostoevsky's novels is the stony nihilist Piotr Verkhovenskii of *The Devils* (*Бесы*), and there are at most two Piotr-patronymics in each of Dostoevsky's later novels. For a list of names of major characters in Dostoevsky's fiction by individual work, see Karaulov, 417-29. In Prague in 1933 a group of scholars assembled 80 pages of proper names that Dostoevsky cited and/or referenced, even obliquely, in "artistic works" (Bem, appendix to vol. 2).

realized that *Crime and Punishment* is simply littered with stones. In places they melt into the landscape, they are set so naturally into the story. So it took us a while to notice the use of the first stone in the novel, the one Raskolnikov hides the stolen goods under (86/109). This stone hides the evidence of a crime. Then stones come up in the names of many of the characters and come up yet again in the name of the city itself, Petersburg, which is clearly presented as an unnatural environment for a healthy human being. Coincidentally, Petersburg really is a city built of stone, as Pushkin remarks in the epigraph above, whereas rural Russia depended on wood as a building material.

Later in the book, however, we encounter an expressly Biblical stone when Raskolnikov gets Sonia to read the story of Lazarus to him: "Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid." (251/328) Jesus calls to Lazarus and tells him to come forth. And Lazarus comes out of the tomb. This stone is the *barrier* between a man and his resurrection. For readers with a rock-hard insensitivity to metaphor, Dostoevsky causes Raskolnikov to think about how "depravity…stupefies reason and petrifies the heart" (247/323), a nudge in the ribs, with respect to the meaning of all those stones, that fairly knocks your breath out. And now we see why Dostoevsky makes such a point of how Raskolnikov failed in his attempt to throw away the evidence of the crime into the Neva, hiding it instead under a rock. When Raskolnikov confesses, the loot is uncovered: metaphorically, the stone between him and his salvation is removed. And finally we are positioned to see why "Peter" can turn up in the names of so many characters: they all relate to aspects of the crime.

It is important to pay attention to the use of "Peter" as a patronymic. One of the many metaphorical puns in the book comes up in the name of Praskovia's servant girl at Raskolnikov's lodgings: Nastasia Petrovna, "Resurrection, daughter of the stone," who, for a joke, is repeatedly shown waking Raskolnikov up. From Dostoevsky's point of view, the logic of the name is unassailable: you can't become resurrected until you've first died, so Raskolnikov's resurrection really is the child of the spiritual death connected with his crime. (Dostoevsky didn't have to look very far for this name, since, as we have mentioned, St. Anastasia is associated with St. Paraskeva, that is, Praskovia, in Russian saints' lore.)

We shall see many uses of the "stone = crime" symbolism. It is probably impossible to know for sure what first gave Dostoevsky the idea for the symbolism, but he could have started with the idea of writing a book about an epiphany, then built it on scripture, using the raising of Lazarus as a convenient allegory for the story. The obvious alternative—using the

resurrection of Jesus—would not work because it would inevitably make Raskolnikov into a Christ-figure. The reader might well doubt the scriptural foundations of a story about Jesus killing women to advance his career.

The Biblical Peter does make his way into *Crime and Punishment*, just not as directly as we might expect. Raskolnikov's full name is Rodion Romanovich Raskolnikov. St. Herodion, from whom his first name is derived, was a relative of St. Paul's who followed St. Peter to Rome and, along with another saint, is said to have been beheaded there the very day and hour that Peter was crucified. There is reason to believe that this event is intended as a metaphor for the way Raskolnikov goes to "Petersburg"—that is, the equivalent of Rome—and loses his faith. The death of his victim, the old woman, then, represents the spiritual death he himself experiences as St. Petersburg inexorably tears him away from his heritage. And this is why he says, "I killed myself, not the old crone!" (322/420)

But that is by no means all there is to Raskolnikov's name. His first name recalls the root *rod* (род) of a set of Russian words for "native." One might argue that a Russian etymology for a Greek name is irrelevant, but the Russian church calendar includes it as a gloss on the name "Rodion." Beyond any doubt, Dostoevsky is making a distinction between two aspects of his hero: the native-born and the foreign. And that is the root of the schism implied by Raskolnikov's surname. The stone makes a good symbol because Dostoevsky can use it to express the "deadness" of his spiritually bankrupt hero, and he refers to this more than once, as when he compares Raskolnikov's psychological deadness to the deadness of the stones in the pavement below him (135/174). Symbols have to be in some sense analogous to what they symbolize; otherwise, far from expressing a meaning, they may actually contradict what they are intended to represent. For this reason one would not choose something lively—a cat on a hot tin roof, say—to symbolize sluggishness. But Dostoevsky not only had to come up with a symbol that can seem to his reader analogous to the condition it represents, he also had to find a symbol for the force that defeats it.

As we shall see, the use of the symbolic stones makes some of Dostoevsky's subsequent choices all but inevitable.

References:

1. Dostoevsky 1956: 248.
2. See Schlesinger, 11; Hazelwood, 15-61.
3. Peace 2006, 168 n. 11.

Chapter Three

It was a Dark and Stormy Night

> It was a dark and stormy night; the rain fell in torrents—except at occasional intervals, when it was checked by a violent gust of wind which swept up the streets (for it is in London that our scene lies), rattling along the housetops, and fiercely agitating the scanty flame of the lamps that struggled against the darkness.
>
> —Edward George Bulwer-Lytton, *Paul Clifford* (1830)

> No human being ever spoke of scenery for above two minutes at a time, which makes me suspect that we hear too much of it in literature.
>
> —Robert Louis Stevenson[1]

When a novelist isolates his or her characters, the physical world acquires greater importance in the story: Objects leap into the void left by the departure of gossip and human interaction, which is why the romantics, who tend to write about loners, seem so fascinated by nature. This is easiest to see if you try to imagine Thoreau building a hut on Walden Pond, isolating himself, and then deciding to write a book about his experience without mentioning nature.

But those objects are then subject to Hector's requirement that all the elements in the story have to be related to each other. The simplest way of meeting this requirement is by making the objects express meaning—that is, making them symbolic. As always, it is the clichés that show this most clearly: in romantic fiction, lacking an abundance of human subjects, the narrator talks a lot about the weather, like the rest of us, but the weather can't very well be a disconnected part of the narrative. Thus the weather is used to mirror the events of the novel, which we might think of—with apologies to Bulwer-Lytton—as dark-and-stormy-night syndrome.

This does not mean either that fiction that isolates characters must be heavily symbolic (*Robinson Crusoe* is not) or that other kinds of fiction cannot be. As we shall see, more than one reason exists for using symbols. And symbolism is most likely to show up in fiction where the phenomenal world is otherwise a dead weight in the story. In *Robinson Crusoe* the phenomenal world provides all the relevance it needs merely by being the

source of Crusoe's difficulties and the focus of his struggles. But even there Defoe eventually introduces Friday into the story to give Robinson Crusoe something more expressive than a breadfruit tree to interact with.

Symbolism is an especially elegant means of forming connections between the material world and the story: then the material world, far from being irrelevant to the story, is actually expressive of it. You can define man's fate by reference to his lodgings: "We were lodged in an ancient religious house," says the narrator of Gide's *L'Immoraliste*, "which had been turned into a hotel."[2] Naturally, the demand for coherence requires that, once dwelling places have been made symbolic, the author not mislead the reader with casual references to housing issues. And in fact Gide consistently uses dwellings symbolically: the southern houses are open to nature—one is "almost nothing but a terrace."[3] And this symbolism inevitably connects to other symbolism associated with north and south: in the north, thought, abstractions; in the south, life, the sensual. Flowers become a kind of shorthand for the sensual, hence for the south: when the narrator brings them into the house, his wife Marceline bursts into tears because they smell too strong.[4] Marceline is a northerner; at the beginning of the novel she is stronger than her husband,[5] but she wastes away in the south and dies just after her husband betrays her with another woman—the sensual conquering the abstract. Geography becomes expressive: a trip from north to south has "all the dizzy sensations of a fall."[6] And imagery and symbolism work together: Switzerland is "a hardy rose-tree, without thorns or flowers."[7] Here again, if some flowers are symbolic, then all must be: the reader will inevitably read meaning into them.

Some things in the physical world are more likely to be used as symbols than other things. In theory, a safe-deposit box could be used to express something like "secrecy" or "being closed off from the world." (The rule of coherence might dissuade us from using it to express, say, "free-spiritedness.") But the author also has a problem of getting the symbol near the action of the story—unless the characters keep talking about their money, or the story keeps veering off toward any and all banks in the setting, or the setting *is* a bank. So writers tend to choose as symbols those objects that are both unobtrusive and already near the events of the story. If they are movable, or even ambulatory, all the better.

Moreover, writers have a clear preference for objects that can occur in a variety of forms: this allows them to use the symbol to show not just a condition but a change of condition. Flowers are heavily used as symbols in part because they can occur virtually anywhere; they can be either fresh or wilted, either real or artificial, and they can show up as pictures or as figures

in wallpaper or carpets. If a fresh rose symbolizes love, the death of love may be shown with a wilted one. In *Citizen Kane*, a sled is given the name "Rosebud" (that is, a young rose), and then Kane, as a child, is forced to give it up, with the implication that his childhood has been taken from him. When flowers occur on wallpaper or in carpets, they are often shown to be faded—a way of implying that the character's way of life or spiritual condition is at some remove from the natural and healthy. In du Maurier's *Jamaica Inn*, the narrator lets Mary Yellan's surroundings express something of her depressed condition: "...the draught from the door she had forgotten to close ruffled a long torn strip of paper on the wall. There had once been a rose pattern, but it was now faded and grey, and the walls themselves were stained deep brown where the damp had turned them."[8] We shall say more about wallpaper shortly.

Our immediate problem is to figure out what Dostoevsky could use as the countervailing symbol to the stone, one that denotes spiritual health. Let us consult our literary tacticians, Hector Paleologus and Anna Coluthon, who are trying to help Dostoevsky out with his problem:

Anna: "It has to be something that can bust up a stone."

Hector: "So—what?—you put the hero on a chain gang breaking up rocks? That places the confession after the conviction and sentencing. Anyway, you need something portable, something that can move from scene to scene."

Anna: "But Sonia can't be carrying a pickax around. And as you said before, the symbol should be unobtrusive and make some kind of sense. Okay, you create a character who removes the stone. Let's say he collects stones to build a church—building it from the sins of the people, so to speak—and he finds Raskolnikov's stone and uncovers the evidence of the crime, and…"

Hector: "I thought we agreed this had to make sense."

> On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive.
>
> —John 7: 37-9

Water wears away stone. —*Crime and Punishment* (402/520)

As often happens in the study of *Crime and Punishment*, the solution is stunningly obvious once you look at the problem from the author's point of view. If you went to the Gospel of John—which we know from much evidence (including the scene with the reading of Lazarus) is Dostoevsky's text—and looked for something with which to oppose stone, you would surely come up with the same symbol Dostoevsky came up with. Remembering that it has to be something that can be considered more powerful than stone, yet can represent the forces of salvation, you would find only one candidate, the Living Water, to which the Biblical text itself gives the appropriate meaning: spiritual health. Water fulfills nicely our requirements for a symbol: it can occur almost anywhere (in *Crime and Punishment* it shows up in rivers, canals, water-glasses, a dream of a desert-oasis, and finally a rain-storm that causes the Neva to rise). The Neva can be murky most of the time but "almost blue" when this is helpful to the symbolism (89/114). (We shall see this sort of transformation in a related symbol presently.) After committing his crime, Raskolnikov actually asks Nastasia—St. Anastasiia, or Resurrection—for water, but when he tries to drink it, he passes out (91/117), and later, when Porfirii offers him water, he doesn't accept it (264-65/343-44). He is still a long way away from being eligible for a glass of water.

There is much to be gained by understanding how Dostoevsky uses his symbols. The simplest gain is that this understanding makes sense of any number of passages that are otherwise confusing. Remember Raskolnikov's failed attempt to toss the loot into the Neva or a canal? It failed for purely symbolic reasons: the Living Water could hardly be expected to conceal the evidence of a crime. And why would a character think to himself, "Never in my life have I liked water, not even in landscapes"? (389/504) Considering that this is one of Svidrigailov's last thoughts—it occurs just before his suicide in a cold fog—we should assume that this could have significance, if only because it seems an odd thing for him to be dwelling on. Indeed, on the metaphorical level Svidrigailov represents something that is inaccessible to salvation, and the symbol for salvation in *Crime and Punishment* is water. As we shall see eventually, the metaphorical Svidrigailov has yet another reason, an especially ancient one, to dislike water.[A]

A. His suicide makes sense on the literal level as well: his life has closed in on him, he is "very bored" (217/284), and his boozing disgusts him even while wine is the only thing he has left (218/286).

The value of symbolism increases dizzyingly when the author can cause seemingly ordinary phenomena, told about matter-of-factly, to put meaning into the events of the story. Let's stay with water for a moment: if you don't understand its symbolic meaning, you still know that *Crime and Punishment* begins with a drought in a hot spell and ends with a flood in colder weather—you just don't know why. The drought is the absence of spiritual health; the flood is its arrival. Now Dostoevsky can tell you of Raskolnikov's recovery with nothing more complicated than a weather-report. Why is this an advantage? Besides the obvious fact that Dostoevsky is saying something in a new way, which is always to the advantage of the author, he has turned a private event into a cosmic one. It is not just the epiphany of an ex-law student, it is a global happening, the sort of thing that recalls the grandiose rhetoric of the Old Testament: "Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and all that fills it." (Psalms 96:11**)** And when we see the event becoming cosmic, what is lost? The principal loss, as we shall see again, is the notion that Dostoevsky is writing a "melodrama" with a lot of coincidences in it, an accusation that clings to *Crime and Punishment* quite unfairly and only because critics have not paid attention to the metaphorical story.

The symbolism of the water explains so much in *Crime and Punishment*. Remember, for example, Raskolnikov's landlady, Praskovia. The saint she is named after is the patroness of water.[9] (In Greece, for example, chapels dedicated to her are generally associated with springs; and water sources are connected throughout East European folklore with healing powers.) Raskolnikov's spiritual yearning is expressed early, just before he commits his crime, when he daydreams of an oasis with water flowing and bubbling, "And the air is so fresh, and the wonderful, wonderful water is so blue, cold, running over the many-colored stones and over such clean sand sparkling with gold…" This symbol is interrupted by another symbol: "All at once he clearly heard the clock strike." (56/67) Clocks are always portentous in *Crime and Punishment*, but their meaning is complicated by the rather difficult—even if solidly traditional—mystical beliefs of Dostoevsky, so we will have to defer an account of their meaning. Suffice to say that this particular clock reminds Raskolnikov that it is time to commit a heinous crime.

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Let's get back to Raskolnikov's hiding of the stolen goods. Besides his failed plan to throw them into a body of water, he came up with another plan as well: "Wouldn't it be better to go somewhere very far away, even to

the Islands again, and there somewhere, in some solitary place, in the woods, under a bush, to bury it all, and maybe also make note of the tree?" (85/108) Instead he hides it under a stone, near a stone shed.

Here we see how symbolism can be catching: Once Dostoevsky sets "living" and "dead" against one another, he systematically uses all the living things as symbols of the spiritually healthy. That is why Raskolnikov cannot carry out his plan to bury the spiritually tainted loot among living things.

But where did he originally hide the loot? He put it behind a torn piece of wallpaper. In *Crime and Punishment*, all wallpaper is symbolic, and the symbolism is always the same. Whenever the pattern is visible, the wallpaper always has flowers on it. Flowers are one of those living, hence spiritually healthy, things. (No accident that when Svidrigailov imagines flowers, late in the novel, the flower he thinks of is the narcissus. The meaning is clear enough: Narcissus, the figure in Greek mythology who became mesmerized by his reflection in a pool of water till he drowned, is a natural symbol for self-absorption; water is fatal for him and Svidrigailov both.) When the flower-pattern is obscured, it is always because Dostoevsky is making the point that the person who lives there is spiritually "faded" or unsound. In Raskolnikov's little room, the wallpaper has a barely visible pattern still, and at one point it occurs to Dostoevsky to nudge the reader in re wallpaper:

> "They killed Lisaveta, too!" Nastasya suddenly blurted out, addressing Raskolnikov….
>
> Raskolnikov turned to the wall where, from among the little flowers on the dirty yellow wallpaper, he picked out one clumsy white flower with little brown lines and began studying it: how many leaves it had, what sort of serrations the leaves had, and how many little lines. (105/134)

The behavior is odd only on the literal level: on the metaphorical level, it makes perfect sense, given that Lizaveta is a spiritually sound character, and Raskolnikov has murdered her. He is looking at his crime now, instead of denying it.

By the end of the novel, when Svidrigailov is preparing to commit suicide, he is in a room where "the shabby wallpaper was so dusty and tattered that, while it was still possible to guess its color (yellow), the pattern was no longer discernible." (388/503) Since Svidrigailov commits suicide, we can safely conclude that he represents a non-viable part of Raskolnikov's mind. But note that Dostoevsky has told us this in his symbolism long before we see Svidrigailov kill himself: he puts him into a room in which the flowers on the wallpaper aren't even visible any more.

But the symbolism is still spreading. Given that vegetation can turn yellow when dead, it does not seem a stretch for Dostoevsky to show paper flowers doing so as well. But the color yellow is everywhere in *Crime and Punishment*. Raskolnikov's first victim is wearing a jacket that is yellow with age (8/6), and living in a room with yellow wallpaper, furniture of yellow wood, and prints on the walls in yellow frames (8-9/7). A number of characters have a yellow tint to their faces: Marmeladov (12/12), Raskolnikov (120/155), Porfirii (192/250), Katerina (334/435). There is a yellow bank note (356/465), a yellow glass filled with yellow water (83/105), yellow wooden houses (394/510), and a yellow stone in a ring (287/374). But the key item of yellowness is surely the yellow pass that Sonia is forced to obtain when her stepmother, Katerina, sends her out to work as a prostitute, and this suggests that the yellowness is a specific aspect of the crime, the part connected to the abuse of women. And so Svidrigailov, the sensualist, who uses up women at a terrific rate, spends his last night in a room where the wallpaper is all yellow, with the pattern obscured.

But let us look at something beautiful for a moment. When Sonia acquires her yellow pass, the symbol of her plight, her landlady makes her leave the Marmeladovs' apartment. Not only is Sonia forced into prostitution but she is driven out of her home. Our first reaction is that this is *so* melodramatic—straight out of the Perils of Pauline. But only if you ignore the metaphorical story, for when Katerina makes a terrible decision—to prostitute her step-daughter—we see that Wisdom departs from her. As always, the comings and goings of Sonia are metaphors for good and bad decisions. And as always, when you read the scene with an eye to the metaphorical story, the melodrama vanishes.

References:

1. Winokur, 49.
2. Gide, 45.
3. Gide, 19.
4. Gide, 130.
5. Gide, 10.
6. Gide, 127.
7. Gide, 126.
8. Du Maurier, 81.
9. Barber, 119-22.

Chapter Four

The Poof! Perplex

I heard a Fly buzz - when I died -
The Stillness in the Room
Was like the Stillness in the Air -
Between the Heaves of Storm.
—Emily Dickinson

So far we have seen narrative methods that could have been used by virtually any great genius of nineteenth-century fiction. But what sets Dostoevsky apart is that at some point he came up with an astonishing idea: he realized that, by splitting Raskolnikov's mind into separate characters, he had freed himself from the usual constraints of time, space, and causation. On the metaphorical level, after all, the events are all taking place in the same location: the mind of the hero. This is one reason why Sonia says, "We're all one, we live as one." (244/318)[A] So if a character representing a piece of Raskolnikov's mind, located away in the country, many miles from Petersburg, has an unfortunate mishap and dies, it only makes sense that the rest of his mind—now missing a piece—will behave differently.

But it also makes sense that any of the hero's *thoughts* can be instantly made concrete—reified into actual events, just as the parts of his mind are reified into characters. In fiction, the normal process is that a character thinks of something, then does it, just as in real life. Thought leads to action. But in *Crime and Punishment*, it is just as common for the hero to think of something, then *see* it happen. Thought leads to vision. If you do not grasp what Dostoevsky is doing, then you call this a coincidence, a cheap trick of novelists.

Let us start with a really simple example. When Raskolnikov leaves Razumikhin in II.6, Razumikhin says, "almost aloud," "And what if…no, he shouldn't be allowed to go by himself now! He might drown himself…" (131/168) And then what happens? Raskolnikov goes to the canal and, as he stares at the water, contemplating suicide, a woman named Afrosiniushka

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A. But there is more to this remark, as we shall soon see. Also, we want to apologize to Frederick Crew for mangling the title of his book, *The Pooh Perplex.*

actually tries to drown herself—jumps into the canal. But she is rescued.[B] And Raskolnikov realizes that this is not a realistic solution to his problem. Nor is it metaphorically, because the water is, after all, a symbol of spiritual health. It cannot be used either to hide his loot or to end his life. You may be asking yourself, what are the odds of his seeing a suicide attempt just as he himself is contemplating suicide? In fact, in *Crime and Punishment* the odds are excellent, since the attempt is a *reification*, a sort of visualization, of the thought that emerges from the reasoning part of our hero's mind (that is, from Razumikhin).

It won't do to pretend that Dostoevsky really is not very clever at telling a story and has to shore it up with astounding coincidences. After all, in this scene it would have been easy to have Raskolnikov try suicide himself. Raskolnikov could then fail (in the interests of making it to the end of the novel). This is the way other novelists would deal with this and it would free the story of an awkward "coincidence." But the reification of Raskolnikov's thought is not a coincidence at all and indeed serves a much larger purpose.

Dostoevsky uses his technique to show Raskolnikov's alternatives. For example, early in the story he goes into a tavern, orders a beer, and "greedily [drinks] the first glass. He immediately felt all relieved, and his thoughts became clear." (10/10) A minor success. But at the same time he senses something "morbid" in the proceedings. Then he gets into conversation with a stranger who turns out to have a major part in the story, Marmeladov. All of this seems simple enough, except that Dostoevsky goes to some trouble to tell us that it is actually mysterious: the two of them seem magically drawn to one another, and Raskolnikov later remembers his first impression "and even ascribe[s] it to a presentiment." (12/12) In *Crime and Punishment*, whenever Dostoevsky gets mysterious it is because he is directing our attention to the metaphorical story.

So what is going on here? After all, Raskolnikov "had never gone into taverns before" (10/10). Why this time? What has happened is another reification: it occurs to Raskolnikov to try drinking his problems away, but while the immediate success is beguiling, the consequences of habitually washing away your troubles with booze pop up in front of him in the form of Marmeladov, an alcoholic who has turned away from his responsibilities, abandoned his wife and children, and is headed for an ignominious death. That is, Raskolnikov thinks of doing something and then sees its ultimate consequences spring into life right in front of him, in the form of a vision.

B. Her name is surely from Greek *a-phrosýnē* "thoughtlessness, witlessness, craziness."

Dostoevsky goes to some trouble to hint that he is actually showing Raskolnikov's mind at work here, as when he causes Marmeladov to respond to a question from the bartender—why Marmeladov doesn't work for a living—"as if it were [Raskolnikov] who had asked the question" (14/14).[C] And in his first words to Raskolnikov (12/12), Marmeladov says he recognizes him as someone "unaccustomed to drink," which appears to be the real point of causing Marmeladov to poof into existence: he is the future if Raskolnikov chooses this particular method of dealing with his problems.

This process explains events that otherwise seem strangely disconnected from Raskolnikov's life. On p. 38-39/45, he thinks about the crime he is planning, which involves taking advantage of an old woman. Instantly he notices—"reluctantly at first and as if with annoyance"—a young girl who has been taken advantage of (39/46). The thought involved is this: if you can take advantage of a nasty old woman, and that is okay, then why not a young woman? Svidrigailov, just before his suicide, has a dream in this format: If you could ruin a fourteen-year-old, then why not a five-year-old?

Raskolnikov is offered alcohol at least once more in the novel, when he goes to the Crystal Palace:

"Will you be having vodka, sir?" the waiter asked.

"Bring me tea […]"

"Right […] And some vodka, sir?" (124/159)

Raskolnikov does not order the vodka, and one suspects that the waiter's insistence is simply another of the metaphorical jokes so common in *Crime and Punishment,* since "vodka" is a diminutive of the word for "water" in Russian. Such a word-play may have been irresistible to Dostoevsky, given that elsewhere in Europe spirits distilled from potatoes (as vodka is) have acquired the name Aquavit ("aqua vitae," or "water of life"). So Raskolnikov rejects the vodka both because he has seen a vision of its consequences and because it hints at the Water of Life. The touch of humor is lost in the explanation, of course, but there it is.

C. Marmeladov's name, from the word "marmalade," is apparently intended to suggest the sweetness of self-indulgence: there is a remark in the *Notebooks* that "Marmeladov is such a sugary surname" (Dostoevsky 1967: 221). His patronymic, too, from the Biblical Zacharias, hints at more than one meaning, for it is so close to Russian сахар (*sakhar*) "sugar" (like English, ultimately from Arabic *sakkar*) as to suggest another of Dostoevsky's puns. Dostoevsky had done something similar in "A Nasty Tale," creating a weak, self-indulgent hero named "Pralinsky," from "praline" (see Frank 1986: 200).

How do we know he has rejected drinking himself into a stupor as a way out of his problems? In the usual way: the character who represents this choice dies. When Marmeladov dies from being run over by a carriage, Raskolnikov happens onto the scene of his fatal accident—again a reification rather than a coincidence—while he is on his way to the police station to give himself up. But his motive for going to the police is not adequate for Dostoevsky's purposes: at this point Raskolnikov has simply lost his will to live: "…everything was blank and dead, like the stones [!] he was walking on, dead for him, for him alone…" (135/174)

What has happened? Raskolnikov has now finally looked at his crime, a circumstance that is given symbolic form by his returning to the scene and studying it carefully. There he had a strange experience: he was "terribly displeased" by the new wallpaper (133/171), which was white with little purple flowers. In Chapter 5 we will return to the rather complicated question of the color- and flower-symbolism in *Crime and Punishment*, and in Chapter 11 we will show Dostoevsky's metaphorical use of renovations, but for now just take our word for it that the purple flowers denote the particular kind of crime that Raskolnikov has committed.

So Raskolnikov looks at his own crime, no longer fancifying it up in elaborate justifications. The first consequence of his new honesty is that he gives up on life, deciding to turn himself over to the police just to get it over with. When this happens, he is standing "in the middle of the street, at an intersection, and looking around as if he were waiting for the final word from someone." (135/174) Raskolnikov, in other words, has reached one of the crossroads of his life.

And what would you expect to happen when Raskolnikov gives up on life?

Poof! Marmeladov appears!

Marmeladov appears not because Dostoevsky is such a sloppy novelist that he brings a character in by the purest coincidence whenever he needs him. Marmeladov appears because he is the very symbol of "giving up on life." *Of course* he appears as Raskolnikov stands at the crossroads considering whether to give up on life.

And there is some good news: Marmeladov is dying. Looking closely at his own crime cures Raskolnikov of Marmeladov-syndrome, the tendency to deal with your problems by averting your eyes from them. What more obvious symbol for this than habitual drunkenness? After Marmeladov's death, Raskolnikov is mysteriously energized and resolves to continue to live. So he experiences two reifications of self-destruction (by drink and by drowning), but after he meets Sonia (see below) and resolves to live, the

reifications are of how he can live *with* his problems. From here on, he himself no longer thinks about suicide. "Pride and self-confidence were growing in him every moment; with each succeeding moment he was no longer the man he had been the moment before. What special thing was it, however, that had turned him around? He himself did not know…" (146/188)

Moreover, as his weakly self-indulgent side dies off, Raskolnikov is led straight to his first encounter with Sonia, Divine Wisdom, since he takes the trouble to help carry the injured Marmeladov home to the latter's family. Sonia appears right after, and because of, Marmeladov's dying confession. So Raskolnikov's decision to help someone else brings Wisdom into his life. She is the source of his revitalization. But remember that his problem is not how to escape justice but how to escape the terrible *isolation* he has cast himself into. So the direct consequence of his new behavior is that when he goes home—poof!—he gets company: his family appears at his apartment!

Dostoevsky shows signs of worrying a bit that the reader will not connect these two events—Raskolnikov's encounter with Wisdom and the reappearance of his family in his life. After all, both Raskolnikov and the reader knew that they were headed to Petersburg. So he makes his usual effort to hint that there is something unnatural in the event: "Why was it that he had expected them least of all, and had thought of them least of all, even in spite of the earlier repeated news that they had left, were on their way, would arrive any moment?" (150/192)

At the beginning of this chapter, we mentioned that, if he wanted, Dostoevsky could place a character representing a piece of Raskolnikov's mind many miles away from Petersburg, then kill that character and consequently alter Raskolnikov's mind. It is an idea that occurred to Dostoevsky before it occurred to us. One of these characters is Marfa Petrovna Svidrigailova, the wife of an otherwise nice fellow—a drunk who rapes young girls, beats his wife, cheats at cards, cadges off others, lies about everything he has done, and is ultimately responsible for three deaths. (But he denies everything.) We say "otherwise nice fellow" because Svidrigailov is so beguiling a character that many critics and scholars have actually believed his lies, even though Dostoevsky goes to some trouble to show that they *are* lies. Robert Louis Jackson, in his fine introduction to a collection of critical essays about *Crime and Punishment*, recognizes how "human" Svidrigailov strikes us and observes that Dostoevsky's "basic

characterization of him tends to lift him, as a type, into some new category of men who thrive 'beyond good and evil' and who seem to elude rectilinear evaluation as 'bad.'"[1] Here we see how the human mind redeems Svidrigailov merely for his humanness: "thrive" is an odd word to use for someone who is "very bored" (217/284) and finally commits suicide. Dostoevsky paints himself into a corner here: his objective is to reveal the true, incredibly corrupt and despicable Svidrigailov to Raskolnikov, who has of course rationalized his own evil side. But to make the moment of recognition especially shocking, Dostoevsky has to give Svidrigailov a good outer appearance at first, much as Oscar Wilde did with Dorian Grey (that is one reason why Svidrigailov looks young and healthy). Dostoevsky succeeded so well that readers grow rather to like Svidrigailov. Only when Raskolnikov sees Svidrigailov in his natural surroundings does he recognize him for what he is. And then Svidrigailov, right before our eyes, actually turns ugly and tries to hide from Raskolnikov. For this to work, Dostoevsky has to give two detailed descriptions of Svidrigailov (188/244, 357/468).

But who is Marfa Svidrigailova? Our first clue, as always, is her name, which in English would be Martha.[D] "Martha" is one of the easy allegorical names in *Crime and Punishment*, since to find her we need look no further than Dostoevsky's scriptural text, the Gospels. In fiction, a character named "Martha" is inevitably seen as a contrast to Mary, who in the Gospel of Luke (10:38-41) devotes herself to Jesus and his teachings, until Martha, her sister, finally complains to Jesus about having to do all the work. "Martha," then, appears in western literature as an allegorical name for a dutiful character, rather than an idealistic one: one who lives according to the role society assigns to women. As though for the convenience of Dostoevsky, Martha and Mary show up again in the Gospel of John (11), where Lazarus, who has died and is restored to life by Jesus, turns out to be their brother. Since she appears in the story of Lazarus anyway, Dostoevsky decides to use both her and something close to her traditional meaning of adherence to convention. Here again we see Dostoevsky taking whatever is right at hand for the metaphorical version of his story.

So what is Marfa's exact meaning? As usual, to locate the allegorical story, we need to look for any odd or overdone events in the literal story.

D. The sound *th*, occurring in Slavic only in words borrowed from Greek, had long ago become *f* in Russian, and in the spelling simplifications of 1918 the letter Ѳ, derived from Greek *theta* (which was now pronounced with an *f: fita*), was dumped as redundant. The change left Martha to be spelled as well as pronounced as *Marfa*, Thomas as *Foma*, and Theodore (as in Dostoevsky's name) as *Fiodor*.

Marfa Svidrigailova is a preposterously energetic tattle-tale in *Crime and Punishment*: when her husband beats her, she always jumps into a carriage, drives into town, and tells everyone. When she learns that it is her husband who tried to seduce Dunia, rather than the other way around, she actually sets up a series of readings of the letter that revealed the truth. But let Dostoevsky tell it, through the pen of Raskolnikov's mother:

> Moreover, she showed everyone the letter Dunechka had written with her own hand to Mr. Svidrigailov, read it aloud, and even let it be copied (which I think was really unnecessary). Thus she had to go around for several days in a row visiting everyone in town, because some were offended that others had been shown preference, and thus turns were arranged, so that she was expected at each house beforehand and everyone knew that on such-and-such a day Marfa Petrovna would read the letter in such-and-such a house, and for each reading people even gathered who had heard the letter several times already, in their own homes and in their friends' as well. It is my opinion that much, very much of this was unnecessary; but that is Marfa Petrovna's character. (30/34)

A little overdone? This is because Dostoevsky worries that we will not see Marfa Petrovna's function. And—as is usual in *Crime and Punishment*—he actually tells us what Marfa represents the very first time she appears. So that we won't miss the hint, we are told that "that is Marfa Petrovna's character." In other words, she represents the way bad behavior is punished by exposure: a reification of "what would people think?"

But—again as usual—the interesting part of Marfa Petrovna consists of the way Dostoevsky uses her once he has told us what she means. Like the other characters, she represents a piece of Raskolnikov's mind, in this case the part that curbs bad behavior out of fear of what people would think. We asked Hector Paleologus and Anna Coluthon to explain how they would use a character like Marfa Petrovna, if they were writing a novel like *Crime and Punishment*:

Hector: "First of all, you'd have to connect her to the other characters, especially the hero. After all, how could a piece of his mind in the metaphorical story not be related to him in the literal story?"

Anna: "You make her his cousin?"

*Hector (dubiously): "They **all** have to be related. That's not just a good idea, it's the law. But wouldn't it seem odd if everyone just happened to belong to a huge clan, including the police?"*

Anna: "You could use different relationships. One character is related to another by blood, another by marriage, another maybe by some

sort of internal harmony between them, a mysterious affinity that draws them together."

Hector: "That could work."

Dostoevsky, as it turns out, agreed with Hector and Anna on all counts. In Marfa Petrovna's case, Dostoevsky gave her multiple links to the other characters: she married Svidrigailov and hired Dunia, Raskolnikov's sister, as governess to her children. Marfa Petrovna is also a distant relative of Piotr Petrovich Luzhin, the vile careerist who seeks Dunia as a trophy wife (Marfa Petrovna and Luzhin are "relatives" because both are primarily motivated by what other people think). But this causes Svidrigailov and Luzhin to be distantly related on an in-law basis, which only makes sense, since they both want Dunia.

Anna: "Wait a minute—I'm not through. I feel that she has a tragic fate. She has married Svidrigailov for appearances, but finally she can't control him any more, he beats her one last time, and she dies."

Hector: "Of course she dies. If she represents Raskolnikov's inhibitions, then she has to die before he commits his crime."

Anna: "Oh, right. So is there a vivid scene where she dies just before Raskolnikov commits his crime?"

Hector: "Ouch! That would be ***so*** *obvious."*

Even Hector, the master of coherence, is put off by a move so direct. Dostoevsky, who hates to let his allegory become obvious, and with good reason, does not let us know of Marfa Petrovna's death and its relation to Raskolnikov's fate until fairly late (Part III.3):

> "You know, Rodya, Marfa Petrovna died." Pulcheria Alexandrovna suddenly popped up.
>
> "What Marfa Petrovna?"
>
> "Ah, my God—Marfa Petrovna—Svidrigailov! I wrote you so much about her."
>
> "A-a-ah, yes, I remember…So she died? Ah, did she?" He suddenly roused himself, as if waking up. "She really died? Of what?"
>
> "Just imagine, it was a sudden death!" Pulcheria Alexandrovna hurried on, encouraged by his curiosity. "And just at the same time as I sent you that letter, even the same day!" (175/228)

Another coincidence: Marfa Petrovna died the very day Pulkheriia Aleksandrovna sent the letter that "struck him like a thunderbolt" and caused him to decide "to do something without fail, at once, quickly." (39/45) That is, his inhibitions had to die before he could choose to commit a crime. Note that now Raskolnikov does not even remember that there *was* a Marfa Petrovna, an inhibitor, in his life—a mild metaphorical joke. And note the

usual hint that more is going on than the obvious: "He suddenly roused himself, as if waking up."

The real value of such techniques, though, consists in their ability to create graphic and memorable scenes. And here Dostoevsky is, quite simply, an unparalleled master. Consider the housefly in *Crime and Punishment*. In Part Three, Raskolnikov is followed by a tradesman who accuses him of murder. The tradesman is a reification of Raskolnikov's awareness of his own guilt, which is why he looks like an old woman and why Raskolnikov finally catches up with him and sees him clearly—at a crossroads. Raskolnikov, once home, lies down and worries: "One little thing in a hundred thousand overlooked—and here's evidence as big as an Egyptian pyramid! A fly flew by and saw it! Is it possible this way?" (210/273) A few pages later he has fallen asleep and the fly he had thought about takes form and becomes part of his dream: "An awakened fly suddenly swooped and struck against the window, buzzing plaintively." (213/277) Note that the fly awakened: we shall see this again.

Here we must point out that, by the Rule of Reification, when Raskolnikov dwells on his crime, an embodiment of his criminality shows up in the flesh. So on the next page—poof!—Svidrigailov appears to Raskolnikov. Unobtrusively, the fly shares the scene, gaining even more of a foothold in reality, having gone from Raskolnikov's imagination into his dream and then into his waking experience: "Only a big fly buzzed and struggled, striking with a swoop against the window." (214/278)

Dostoevsky is showing us a version of the theme of the entire novel here. Recall that, at the beginning of the novel, he shows Raskolnikov entertaining himself with thoughts of murder, while seeing them as mere entertainment. In fact, the point of the novel is that these seemingly harmless thoughts turn into a grim reality as they become first an obsession, then a crime. The version in this scene is that Raskolnikov thinks of a fly that then appears in his dream and finally takes form in reality.

You, the reader, may well think we are reading too much into the fly, but, before we proceed, ponder for a moment the implications of the characters all being distinct and separated parts of Raskolnikov's mind. As his mind becomes one, the characters will all become familiar with each other. (Two will eventually even get married.) And finally they will all necessarily learn the truth about his actions—merely because they are all part of the same mind. It is their mind too, after all: once they lose their tendency to look away, they get acquainted with each other. Their estrangement from one another is symptomatic of a soul in torment; their reunification—the *unio mystica*—is symptomatic of recovery. The fly

reifies the way the crime becomes known to Raskolnikov, in its real, gruesome form, without the rationalizations. Its appearance brings Svidrigailov *directly* into Raskolnikov's view—that is, he sees his criminality straight on.

… —and then it was
There interposed a Fly.
—Emily Dickinson

Now, since the fly appears first with the appearance of Svidrigailov, we can hardly be surprised if the two of them—except that now there are many flies—share a scene later:

> Flies woke up and swarmed all over the untouched portion of veal that lay there on the table. He watched them for a long time and finally with his free right hand began trying to catch one. He exhausted himself with the long effort, but still could not catch it. Finally, catching himself in this interesting occupation, he came to his senses, got up, and resolutely walked out of the room. (393-94/510)

The last thing that happens is simple enough: Svidrigailov comes to his senses and marches out into the streets to put an end to himself.

In *The Notebooks for Crime and Punishment*, Dostoevsky alludes to this scene (and the italics are Dostoevsky's): "Svidrigaylov. *Sat for a long time and tried to catch a fly."*[2] A character who tries to catch a fly as his last act before committing suicide? For the literal-minded reader, Dostoevsky must be a very strange author indeed. But these flies carry baggage; they are little winged couriers of the truth about Raskolnikov's evil side, reified out of a thought, and now they have multiplied and awakened, and his evil side cannot catch even one of them.[E] What chance is there now of Raskolnikov continuing to conceal his corruption from himself?

E. As is usual in *Crime and Punishment*, there is much more to these flies than is apparent here. Later we shall pursue the mystery of why, as is implied in the text, Svidrigailov's left hand is not free to catch flies with.

References:

1. Jackson 1973, 5.
2. Dostoevsky 1967: 239.

Chapter Five

Laughing Yourself Purple, or, The Whore of Babylon

"Well, sir, and what about his conscience?"
—Porfirii Petrovich (203/264)

"I am a man of heart and conscience."
—Porfirii Petrovich (345/451)

"A couple of lines, just two little lines, and
mention the stone; it will be more noble, sir."
—Porfirii Petrovich (353/462)

There are two ways Dostoevsky can make a point with an allegorical name: either by giving his character qualities of the saint whose name it is or by using the etymology of the saint's name. Dostoevsky figured out that most of the time the second method is by far the better choice. One problem with the first method is that there are often vast numbers of saints with the same name. In the saints' calendar as Dostoevsky knew it there were well over fifty separate saints named Ioann (John). Moreover, even if you locate the right saint, you are still stuck with figuring out what Dostoevsky intended to be the relevant information from the life of that particular saint.

This means that, because there are a number of saints named Filipp (Philip), we can be pretty sure that Dostoevsky is using the etymology of the name to characterize Svidrigailov's servant Filipp. So we turned to the classicist in our midst, who explained that Philip means "lover of horses."

Lover of Horses?

Surprisingly, even that seemingly unlikely etymology turns out to fit neatly into Dostoevsky's scheme (see Chapter 10 for the horses). In any case, Dostoevsky finds that using just the etymologies makes it much more difficult for a misunderstanding to take place. So leaving aside patron saints, let's reconsider just the implications of Raskolnikov's name: "Rodion," as we said in Chapter 2,, suggests a word for "native"; "Romanovich" suggests foreignness; and "Raskolnikov" implies the schism

between the first name and the patronymic.[A] The name alone suggests that Raskolnikov is a Russian who is worshipping false, and foreign, gods. As noted earlier, this is why, on the first page of the novel, he is shown avoiding his (archetypically Russian) landlady. But with the landlady Dostoevsky used both methods. This is possible with Praskovia/Paraskeva because the reader could hardly choose the wrong saint: although a couple of nuns, later sainted, chose this namesake, the primary St. Paraskeva ranked as the most popular female saint in all Eastern Orthodoxy, along with the Virgin Mary. Furthermore, Paraskeva had become the patron saint of water,[1] a central symbol in *Crime and Punishment*, and St. Paraskeva in iconography, like the fictional Praskovia, usually keeps company with (St.) Anastasia, whose name denotes "Resurrection."

Most of the time, as with Praskovia, the system works well. If there is no chance of confusion, Dostoevsky may use a saint for his or her qualities; otherwise he goes with the etymology of the saint's name.

When, however, Dostoevsky uses an allegorical name to identify a character's function within Raskolnikov's mind, he usually finds that he really wants to tell us more than a single word about the meaning of that character. In general he solves this problem by causing the characters to speak revealingly about each other. Often such passages are accompanied by the words "that is his [or her] character," to make sure the reader understands the importance of the qualities being discussed—as, for example, with Marfa Petrovna (see Chapter 4), Katerina Ivanovna (I.2; 17/18) and Dunia (I.3, 31/35).

But this is not his only method. Razumikhin denotes "Reason," but Dostoevsky is not satisfied with what he has conveyed to the reader with this definition. For example, he does not want us thinking of Razumikhin as, say, empty logic. So he puts little clues—more of his metaphorical jokes—into the text to set us straight on what aspect of Reason we are looking at.

Some of these clues are so seamlessly embedded into the text that you could not possibly notice them on a casual reading of the novel, as when Raskolnikov tells us that "The innocent dolt [Razumikhin] never imagines anything!" (195-96/254) That is, Reason's boundaries exclude pure imagination. Similarly, Razumikhin adds to his own definition by saying, "Sorry, wit[tiness] is what I happen to lack" (116/149).

A. Belov (2001: 192) goes so far as to suggest that the three apparent elements of Raskol'nikov's name—*rod* "native," *Romanov*, and *raskol* "schism"—are meant to suggest that the Romanov dynasty (to which Peter the Great belonged) separated the Russian land from its native roots.

In general, Razumikhin embodies those aspects of human reason that lead to truth and not to error-ridden speculation or even idle entertainment. Thus, in a truly masterful scene, he is shown figuring out precisely why it is that Mikolka could not have committed the crime (II.4). You might ask, if he's so smart, why doesn't he figure out who *did* commit the crime? Well, eventually he does. But early on, Raskolnikov is estranged from his own Reason; they do not really associate with each other—in fact, some two months before the crime, Raskolnikov had actually crossed the street to avoid Razumikhin (44/52). Dostoevsky shows this alienation by having Razumikhin do a flawless, rational analysis that leaves out the most important element: Raskolnikov's own guilt. Only much later will Raskolnikov's Reason see his guilt clearly. At this point the most he can see is that it will be obvious to anyone using his brain that Mikolka did *not* do it, and that the guilty party was inexperienced and clumsy (expert "criminal profiling" more than a century before that term existed!). The scene works on the literal level to put Raskolnikov on edge with the realization that Mikolka's confession will not keep Raskolnikov's guilt from being uncovered. But on the metaphorical level, it reveals that Raskolnikov can now see his actual crime straight on, without all the elaborate theory with which he had justified it.

(If this is so, shouldn't a character representing his actual motives appear to Raskolnikov? Poof! "…at that moment the door opened and a new person, unknown to anyone present, walked in." [111/142] Luzhin, the gussied-up version of Raskolnikov's rational egoism, now appears in all his sartorial splendor.)

Razumikhin's literal version has presented critics with some problems, but as usual, these are useful in figuring out the metaphorical story. The first thing that might puzzle us is that, while he is perhaps the most favorably viewed male character in the novel, he drinks a lot (which we will get back to) and has the distressing habit of going to houses of prostitution (124/160). This does not fit any of our templates for how the hero's best friend, and the eventual spouse of his splendid sister, should act. But once again, it is in the metaphorical story that we have to look for our answers. In his first appearance before Raskolnikov, Svidrigailov explains that "reason [разум] is the slave of passion" (215/282). But reason is the Russian *razum* from which Razumikhin's name came. So while it is true that, on the literal level, Svidrigailov's reason is dominated by his sexual impulses, on the metaphorical level it is Raskolnikov who has this problem, which is represented as an embellishment on the character who represents his Reason. Like Sonia, Razumikhin is a bit of a mess early on merely

because Dostoevsky is showing us how badly Raskolnikov has neglected his own Wisdom and Reason. In the Orthodox tradition, St. Sophia, or Wisdom, is the mother of Faith, Hope, and Love, but Raskolnikov actually distorts Wisdom—turns St. Sophia into St. Sophistry. Dostoevsky does the same thing with Zosimov, the doctor, whose name is derived from the Greek *zōós* "alive, living," but who, living in St. Petersburg, has acquired a rather distorted outlook. Still, the fact that he is a friend of Razumikhin's and, along with Porfirii, shows up at the wedding of Razumikhin and Dunia, gives us a clue that he is to be considered a "viable" part of Raskolnikov. And in fact Raskolnikov livens up whenever Zosimov shows up (e.g., 102/131, 148/189).

And remember that we can also identify the boundaries of a character's meaning by looking at his or her relatives. So when we learn that Razumikhin is related distantly to Porfirii Petrovich (104/133), the police investigator, we might suspect a similarity in how they represent pieces of Raskolnikov's mind. And when we see that Razumikhin actually takes Raskolnikov to visit Porfirii, we are sure of it. As usual, Dostoevsky gives little murky hints of the metaphorical significance of the scene:

> "This is nice, brother," [Razumikhin] repeated several times. "I'm glad, I'm so glad!"
>
> "What are you so glad about?" Raskolnikov thought to himself." (188/245)

If the truth-seeking Reason in Raskolnikov takes him to his relative Porfirii and is thrilled about introducing them to each other, we can surely count on Porfirii being a character who has Raskolnikov's best interests at heart. But Porfirii is also some representation of *the crime itself.* How do we know this? Because of his name. Porphyry is a very hard, purple rock; Porfirii Petrovich, then, is "Rock, son of Rock," another of Dostoevsky's in-jokes. It won't do to suppose that Dostoevsky didn't know the meaning of the name, because—punning again—he shows Porfirii laughing so hard "that he almost turned purple" (256/334). And Porfirii's patronymic makes it pretty clear that it is his lithic qualities that are at issue. Dostoevsky surely chose the name "Porfirii" because the saints' calendar did not offer him a lot of names denoting "stone," and he had already used "Peter." As noted, there is an abundance of saints, a dearth of good names. But what is the point of naming Porfirii after a rock sired by another rock?

Let's call Hector and Anna to our aid:

Hector: "First of all, the rule here is 'One for all and all for one.' Whatever Porfirii's meaning, it has to be related to the symbolism

throughout the novel. If he is associated with stones, then he ***must*** *represent some aspect of the crime."*

Anna: "Okay, so he's the crime manifesting as some of the consequences—the process of arresting and prosecuting the criminal."

Hector: "Porfirii Petrovich doesn't arrest and prosecute anyone. He doesn't act like a detective. And if he doesn't make good sense on the literal level, then we have to find his meaning on the metaphorical level."

Anna: "We need to consult the text."

Hector: "I think we already did."

And Hector has caught us here. Everything we need to know about Porfirii is contained in the epigraphs heading this chapter. In the first, as they discuss the criminal mind, Porfirii asks Raskolnikov, "Well, sir, and what about his conscience?" (203/264) Raskolnikov demands to know what business that is of Porfirii's. A naïve question, and another of Dostoevsky's jokes, since Porfirii is in fact Conscience, as he himself states in the second epigraph, and as becomes clear much later in the novel. And this is why, in the third quotation, he proposes that, should Raskolnikov commit suicide, it would be nice if he left a note. What should the note say? It should mention the stone. On the literal level, he is telling Raskolnikov to reveal where the loot is stashed; on the metaphorical level, he is telling Raskolnikov to confess. The metaphorical content precludes Dostoevsky from having Porfirii say, "And add something about where you hid the loot." Instead he just tells Raskolnikov to mention the stone, or crime. That is, confess. The scene becomes wonderfully efficient.

And why should Raskolnikov confess? According to Porfirii, because it "will be infinitely more advantageous for you, and more advantageous for me as well—since it will be taken off my back." (350/458) Here again the literal and the metaphorical work together flawlessly: confession is good for the soul, and Porfirii—Conscience—wants to be freed from Raskolnikov's crime. In short, Reason and Conscience are related, and the one takes him to the other—with alacrity.

As usual in *Crime and Punishment*, the normal complexities of metaphorical characters are not nearly enough for Dostoevsky. Porfirii is an aspect of Raskolnikov, and Dostoevsky is perfectly happy to let the two of them share other things in their life besides just the one issue of conscience. For example, when Razumikhin is explaining how odd Porfirii is, he remarks that he pretended one time that he was going to get married, then it all turned into nothing (198/257). But this is in the text because Raskolnikov himself was on the verge of marrying his landlady's daughter—that is, the offspring of St. Paraskeva, a representation of his

Russianness—then didn't when she died. Her death is an image for Raskolnikov's rejection, under the influence of Petersburg, of his inherited values.[B] But this event is, so to speak, "on his conscience."

From our point of view, the unraveling of the shadow-story would have little value if it did not transform the reader's experience with the novel. The pay-off for all Dostoevsky's trouble shows up late in the book. For reasons that will soon become clear (Chapter 6), in Part Five Raskolnikov undergoes a transformation, and then he is forced to choose between having a conscience and living a life of selfishness. As always, these two possibilities are reified into characters—Porfirii and Svidrigailov—and at one point "such hatred rose up from his weary heart that he might have killed either of them…." (342/448)

But a curious thing happens when he sets out to visit Svidrigailov.

He runs into Porfirii.

> And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, which was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns. The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet…
>
> —Revelation 17: 3-4

Let us take a moment to sort out more of the contagious symbolism in *Crime and Punishment*. Dostoevsky color-codes some of his characters. Throughout the text, purple/red is one of the obviously symbolic colors. It is associated only with a distinct group of characters, and in a way that goes well beyond the traditional association with blood. The German brothel-keeper seen at the police station, Louisa (Laviza) Ivanovna, has "reddish-purple blotches" (75/95). Marmeladov has red hands and eyes (13/13, 12/12). Svidrigailov, the sensualist, has scarlet lips (188/244). And in his dream, late in the novel, he sees a five-year-old whose face is first pale, but whose lips then turn scarlet right before his eyes (393/509).

Porfirii's name clearly does double-duty, for Dostoevsky decided to use the color implied by it as a sort of leitmotif for the predatory quality inherent in sexual self-indulgence—specifically, the way the women in the

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B. Soon after, Raskolnikov stops paying his landlady. Rakolnikov's mother, who lives in her fantasies for her children, resents the engagement because she dreams of her son becoming a "big" Petersburg man (see Chapter 9).

novel are taken advantage of. For someone versed in the New Testament, "scarlet" as a symbol of illicit sensuality or sexual predation is pretty much a natural, as Nathaniel Hawthorne understood when he wrote *The Scarlet Letter*. Here again Dostoevsky takes what is right at hand for his symbolism.

In the following quotation about the five-year-old, the word "strangely" tips us off to the metaphorical importance of the incident:

> He carefully lifted the blanket. The little girl was soundly and blissfully asleep. She had warmed up under the blanket, and color had already spread over her pale cheeks. But, strangely, this color appeared brighter and deeper than a child's red cheeks would ordinarily be. "It's the flush of fever," Svidrigailov thought; it was just like the flush from wine, as if she had been given a whole glass to drink. (393/509)

And then, right before his eyes, the child takes on the appearance of a prostitute—a French prostitute, in fact.

This passage is puzzling if you do not keep in mind that Svidrigailov can see women *only* as sex-objects, so when he uncovers the child, she transforms into a whore. Svidrigailov is stunned to discover that the natural progression of his obsessive sensuality is that even a child looks like someone you could use for sex. "'What! A five-year-old!' Svidrigailov whispered in genuine horror." This is his moment of realization: feeding the ego causes its demands to grow, which is why his first dream was of a fourteen-year-old he had driven to suicide (391/507) and the second was of a five-year-old whom he could not help but see as a potential victim. If A, why not B?

But if characters who abuse women are tagged with purple, then shouldn't this happen with Luzhin, who has designs on Dunia? Well, actually it does. But Luzhin views Dunia as a potential trophy wife, to be used for show: "The charm of a lovely, virtuous, and educated woman could do wonders to smooth his path, attract certain people, create an aura...." (235/308) So, in one of his mild jokes, when Dostoevsky gives a detailed description of Luzhin, at his first appearance, he shows him with an exquisite pair of new, lilac-colored Jouvain gloves, adding that "they were not worn but were merely carried around for display" (113-14/146). Here he not only gets in the purple color, again associating it with the French, but he even hints at Luzhin's view of women as fashion accessories.

We mentioned earlier that flowers are used to hint at a character's spiritual condition, and that Svidrigailov gets a narcissus (391/506). With Luzhin's introduction, Dostoevsky associates him with a flower—the lilac—that has the tint of sexual predation. He does something similar with the

five-year-old, who, in the Russian text, takes on the "brazen face of a French camellia for sale" right before Svidrigailov's eyes. (The association of camellias and prostitutes derives from the character Marguerite—not exactly a prostitute but at least a kept woman—in the 1848 play *La Dame aux camellias* by Alexandre Dumas fils. Translators sensibly substitute a word or phrase that carries the implied meaning of "camellia"; Pevear and Volokhonsky use "the face of a scarlet woman" [393/509].)

If sexual predation is "scarlet," then we can hardly be surprised to find that Innocence is by the rule of contrast pale. So before she is turned into an object of lust, the five-year-old is shown with pale cheeks, while the fourteen-year-old in the previous dream is shown with pale lips. Sonia, or Divine Wisdom, is also pale. This is one of the ways Dostoevsky disarms the implications of her profession—that is, she is a prostitute out of self-sacrifice, not out of corruption. It is clear that Dostoevsky worries what we will think of her, for he shows Raskolnikov with the following thought: "All this shame obviously touched her only mechanically; no true depravity, not even a drop of it, had yet penetrated her heart—he could see that…." (248/323) The Marmeladov children are also still pale. In places, of course, the conventional use of paleness as a response to shock, so common in nineteenth-century fiction, takes over from paleness as innocence: Luzhin turns pale after losing his epic battle with Sonia.

Epic battle? Doesn't Luzhin just try to frame Sonia to annoy Raskolnikov? And why would a puddle—for that is the meaning of Luzhin's name—try to frame *anyone*? Oddly, early in the book there was a foreshadowing of this event, and one that suggested that Luzhin had no idea who he was dealing with (see below).

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At this point we imagine a reader habituated to modern literary theory experiencing tremors of dismay at all these pregnant names. Soviet scholars were the most likely to deal with the allegorical meanings of the names in *Crime and Punishment* (for instance, Belov 2001, 189-93, 208-25); but even they have not pursued the topic past its start, systematically investigating Dostoevsky's choices of given names, patronymics, and family names. There is something in the modern theorist that hates allegory: nowadays literature is not supposed to mean anything, and apparently Dostoevsky, like someone who tries to ward off age by caulking his face, is assumed to be more attractive if you don't look at him closely.

But we are interested in what Dostoevsky was trying to do, based on the evidence, and in the internal engines driving the composition of fiction. Dostoevsky set himself a particularly difficult task, one that pushed

technique to the extreme. So once you tug at a thread in his symbolism, the entire novel wants to come with it.

We have already seen Luzhin's part in the color-symbolism and the flower-symbolism; and his name (clearly a mutation of the name of Lyzhin, the name of an attorney who tried to collect debts from Dostoevsky) acquires symbolic status very quickly.[C] This happens in a seemingly innocent remark by Sonia's father, Marmeladov, who gives an account of the things Sonia has to buy to keep up appearances, which includes "some shoes of a frippery sort to show off her foot when she steps over a puddle" (20/22). Luzhin will be that puddle. Note the offhand quality of the remark, which puts the focus on maintaining appearances—nothing to imply that it is actually difficult to step over that puddle. In fact, as we shall see, Sonia steps over puddles with sovereign grace.

C. See Appendix: *luzha* means "puddle." Dostoevsky also changed Lyzhin's first name, Pavel, into Piotr, with the patronymic Petrovich (Al'tman, 171-72), to make Luzhin into a representative of the crime.

Reference:

1. Warner, 21.

Chapter Six

The Battle of the Gods and the Giants

…and they met together with a great battle-cry.
—Hesiod, *Theogony*, 684-6

Back in Chapter 1, we said that, by making characters in a novel symbolic, an author could create two contrasting characters, one small and weak, the other big and strong, who represented qualities that had reversed values—that is, on the metaphorical level, it is the weak one who is strong, the strong one who is weak; and the possibilities for drama are supreme. Now that the reckoning is here, we feel a bit awkward about those remarks: we pretended that we came up with this clever idea, but it was actually Dostoevsky, and the characters are Luzhin and Sonia.

But let us begin our analysis by abusing Dostoevsky roundly, as so many have, for his ineptitude in storytelling. The case in point will be Part Five of *Crime and Punishment*. There, in a novel about a fellow who has committed two murders, Dostoevsky suddenly veers off and devotes half of an entire section of the novel to his hero's *former* future brother-in-law! Edward Wasiolek, who has done yeoman work in Dostoevsky scholarship, finds this a bit much: "In general, Luzhin's role in the novel strikes us as unessential, as a mere accessory in the plotting of the intrigue. The larger significance that Dostoevsky seemed at first to reserve for him disappeared as the narrative lines in which he is important faded away in the process of writing."[1]

Now, remember that when Luzhin attacks Sonia, he already has no hope of marrying Dunia. But somehow he remains so important that Dostoevsky devotes a major part of the book to showing how Luzhin tries to get back at Raskolnikov, whom he blames for this, by—by what, challenging him to a duel? Taking him to court? Ruining his sister? No: *by trying to frame a prostitute just because Raskolnikov is acquainted with her*. And then Luzhin is humiliated. Not by Raskolnikov, mind you, for he just stands there watching.

Not only is the story skittering sideways to no purpose, but this entire *section* of the book begins with Luzhin—a character already drummed out of the line-up, remember—licking his wounds over losing Dunia. This pride of place would make one think that Luzhin is indeed somehow important to

Dostoevsky's organization of the novel, and it is this sort of narrative quirk that causes scholars to tear their hair out when they try to figure out Dostoevsky's principle of organization. In fact, studies and libraries throughout the world are littered with the hair of scholars trying to work out what the devil possessed Dostoevsky to divide his story up the way he did.

But let us get away from reality for a moment. As usual, if the literal story disappoints us, we need to look at the metaphorical story. Fortunately for us, previous scholars have done a lot of the work necessary to sort this out. Pretty much everyone with a smattering of Greek notices the meaning of Sonia's name, which we have defined as "Divine Wisdom"; and Luzhin clearly represents the "rational egoism" associated with Chernyshevsky and other contemporaries of Dostoevsky.[2] Joseph Frank (1986) gives an excellent account of the historical background of Dostoevsky's disagreements with this group of political theorists.

But whereto from there? Once again it helps first to consider Luzhin's name: "Piotr Petrovich Luzhin" translates as "Rock, son of Rock, Puddle." So, like Porfirii Petrovich, he is clearly a representative of the crime. While he represents the crime as a form of selfishness, the particular form of selfishness at issue here is the abuse of women. Indeed, his name is hinted at when Raskolnikov goes back to the scene of the crime and says to the workers there, "That old woman and her sister were murdered here. There was a whole puddle of blood."[A]

Now, recall that Raskolnikov offered to hurl Luzhin down the stairs of his fifth-floor mansion if he so much as uttered the name of Raskolnikov's mother. At the Marmeladovs', where Luzhin accuses Sonia, there is a stairway right at hand, yet Raskolnikov not only does not hurl Luzhin down it, he does absolutely nothing. The following quotations give his part in the scene until the battle is effectively over:

> "[Raskolnikov] was standing by the wall, arms folded, looking at her with fiery eyes." (303/394)
>
> "Raskolnikov was silent, not taking his eyes off Sonya, but from time to time shifting them quickly to Luzhin." (304/396)

A. Quoted from Pevear and Volokhonsky (172, corresponding to the Russian of *PSS* 6: 134), except that they translate Russian лужа *lúzha* "puddle" as "pool." This is surely because "pool of blood" is more graceful in English than "puddle of blood." English idiom unfortunately obscures key Russian turns of phrase sometimes.

Note that Raskolnikov later discovers, looking at his sock, that he himself had stepped in the puddle of blood (72/91). So when, after Raskolnikov has helped carry smashed-up Marmeladov home to die, Nikodim Fomich notices drops of blood on him, Raskolnikov replies, "Soaked, yes…I've got blood all over me!" (145/186)

"'Why are you all standing there! Rodion Romanovich! Why don't you take her part?'" (305/397)

"Raskolnikov simply fastened his eyes on [Lebeziatnikov], as though catching and weighing every word." (305-6/398)

Raskolnikov looks for all the world like someone watching a tennis match, where his behavior would be entirely appropriate—the spectators are not supposed to jump out onto the court and grab the racket away from Roger Federer or Rafael Nadal. But if Raskolnikov acts like someone watching a contest, let's just humor Dostoevsky for the moment and pretend that Raskolnikov really *is* watching a contest. We already know that when Raskolnikov gives someone a piece of his mind, he really gives them a piece of his mind. The two pieces of his mind here are Divine Wisdom and Rational Egoism.

Why is it so hard to see that these two are in a battle? Because the main event takes place on the metaphorical level. Sonia and Luzhin both use their own methods, and they are the methods of the metaphorical characters, not the literal ones. Luzhin—Rational Egoism—is a reification of the part of Raskolnikov's mind that thinks about his life in terms of purpose and selfish goals. This being the case, "Luzhin" recognizes that "Sonia" will counsel Raskolnikov not to think only of himself.

So *of course* Rational Egoism sets out to smear Divine Wisdom: *she* is his true adversary. Raskolnikov's function is to decide between them: so he just stands there. It would make no sense for him to take sides before a winner emerged. When Sonia wins, Raskolnikov will be freed from his egoism. On the metaphorical level, the story is incredibly efficient, direct, and pointed. This is why we keep insisting that Dostoevsky is really interested not so much in the literal story as in the metaphorical one. That is where everything works flawlessly.

The hard part is seeing how Sonia defends herself, and for that we consulted Hector Paleologus:

Hector: "This is easy. Whenever Sonia appears, someone gets wise to himself. This has been the case throughout the novel—why wouldn't it be true in her big scene? For maximum contrast, Dostoevsky would want to cause the ***silliest*** *character in the novel to become wise all of a sudden. So all you really need to do is look for someone who is notably unwise but suddenly wises up. That will be the person who rescues Sonia, but of course it is Sonia who infuses him with the wisdom to act properly. She is the agent of her own salvation."*

Anna: "Easy for you, maybe. Sorry, I'm not getting it. Isn't it Lebeziatnikov who saves her?"

Hector (patiently): "The silliest character in the novel. Lebeziatnikov can hardly put a sentence together, and when he does, he has borrowed it from someone else."

Anna: "So his name must mean something like, 'Dumber than a bag of rocks?'"

But it's more fun than that. Lebeziatnikov's name is from a word meaning "to fawn," and he absorbs his opinions from his surroundings—he is a human chameleon. It is no accident that the human chameleon attained the position of dumbest character, since Dostoevsky's point is that his is a simple-minded way of acquiring ideas. Consider this passage: "He was one of that numerous and diverse legion of vulgarians, feeble miscreates, half-taught petty tyrants who make a point of instantly latching on to the most fashionable current idea, only to vulgarize it at once, to make an instant caricature of everything they themselves serve, sometimes quite sincerely." (279/365) But when the opportunity arrives, and he is in the presence of Sonia, he absorbs wisdom just as easily as, in the past, he had absorbed commonplace political views. Among other things, this scene is a marvelous spoof on intellectual preoccupations of the time, notably the argument over heredity versus environment. In the environment of Divine Wisdom, people become wise.[B]

Dostoevsky gives us clues to what he intends. The way he lets us know, beyond any doubt, that it is specifically Sonia who defeats Luzhin is by connecting a dead giveaway of a symbol to Lebeziatnikov. Lebeziatnikov's eyes, the narrator tells us, "were almost constantly ailing" (279/364). Dostoevsky is telling us his opinion of Lebeziatnikov's vision for mankind, namely, that it is myopic (more polemics against the "rational egoism" cult). Eyesight as a symbol for "vision" is standard stuff throughout history, which is why there is a gigantic eyeball on the American dollar bill. Here again Dostoevsky just uses a common symbol, one he could have lifted from, well, even the Bible, as in Ephesians I:18: "the eyes of your understanding being enlightened…" The Indo-European tradition, like the Semitic, shows ancient evidence of this conceit, since the chief verb

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B. This is not the only spoof of the nature vs. nurture argument in *Crime and Punishment.* Razumikhin is on the nature side of the argument (196-97/256), Lebeziatnikov on the other (283/369). But when Raskolnikov is suspected of the crime, Razumikhin instantly switches sides and defends Raskolnikov on the basis of his unfavorable environment and conditions! (206-7/268)

meaning "to know" came from the perfective of "to see." [C]

But how does Lebeziatnikov save Sonia? By seeing Luzhin sticking a hundred-ruble note into Sonia's pocket, a note Luzhin later claims she stole from him. We know that Dostoevsky has not forgotten what he told us about Lebeziatnikov's vision, because Luzhin defends himself by suggesting that Lebeziatnikov, with his poor eyesight, could never have seen what he claims to have. Poor, stupid, vulgar Lebeziatnikov, the man who had thrashed Katerina for defending Sonia's integrity (13/13, 18/19), turns into a seer and a savior—but only in the presence of Sonia.[D]

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Lebeziatnikov is the part of Raskolnikov that mindlessly absorbs ideas from his surroundings, losing connection to the eternal verities. Dostoevsky goes to some lengths to show us that Raskolnikov's original idea—to kill the old moneylender for the good of mankind—was proposed in his presence in a sleazy inn by two strangers playing billiards (53/63). This was after he had already been thinking of it. So his best thinking merely reflected commonplace ideas showing up in the local hangouts. As Joseph Frank has demonstrated convincingly, early in the novel Raskolnikov's idea is tricked out nicely in pompous justifications, but by the end Raskolnikov realizes that it was in fact a purely selfish act.[3] If readers miss this, then it is surely for the same reason they are taken in by Svidrigailov: Dostoevsky has a supreme talent for making characters plausible when they dissemble. (If one really feels the need to criticize one of the great geniuses of the ages, this would be a good place to start.)

C. Clearest in Greek *(w)eido* "see," cognate with Latin *video*, and Greek *(w)oida* "have seen, know," cognate with English *wit*, *wis-dom*, and even *witch* (one who has seen and knows about the Other World), which is Russian ведьма *ved'ma*, from the very same root of "knowing", ведать *vedat'* in Russian.

D. This scene presents Dostoevsky with an especially difficult problem. Luzhin has to plant the hundred-ruble note into Sonia's pocket, but this means that he has to be in Sonia's presence, and on the metaphorical level "Sonia's presence" always means that someone acted wisely. Dostoevsky clearly puzzled over this, because he shows Sonia repeatedly jumping up and trying to leave, and each time Luzhin orders her to sit down. Dostoevsky even causes their interview to begin with Luzhin putting on "an extremely imposing, even somewhat stern, expression, as if to say: 'Don't you think anything of the sort, miss.'" (286/373). Luzhin, in effect, blocks her out; it is only Lebeziatnikov, who went to fetch her, who absorbs wisdom from Sonia. If anyone doubts Dostoevsky's intent, the author makes it clear in a later scene when he causes Katerina to shove Sonia aside—at which point Luzhin walks in.

And now we can see why Luzhin takes on so much importance in *Crime and Punishment*—even takes over the first half of an entire section. On the literal level, he takes the story sideways, but on the metaphorical level, he really is the subject of Part Five of the novel, which is about the defeat of Rational Egoism and the triumph of Divine Wisdom.

Dostoevsky must have puzzled for a long time over how to create a battle between these two characters. His choices were limited: Luzhin, as an egoist, is terribly concerned with what people think, so the obvious way to have him attack Sonia is by causing the multitudes to think badly of her. The metaphorical story would be best served by causing Luzhin to try, say, to murder Sonia, because then he could be executed and thereby removed permanently from Raskolnikov's mind. But it is hard even to imagine the Byzantine convolutions of motivation that would make this possible. The literal story would be skittering sideways even worse than it already does. So Luzhin is not killed off, unlike several other diseased pieces of Raskolnikov's mind. The best Dostoevsky can do to assure us of Luzhin's permanent absence is to evict him: Lebeziatnikov tells him to move out, "and don't leave a trace of yourself behind in my room!" (310/404) And when Luzhin is evicted, what remains for Raskolnikov? He is left to make a good decision (311/405):

"And he set out for Sonia's place."

As always in *Crime and Punishment*, the metaphorical story here turns out to be vastly better than the literal one. The latter is about a petty squabble involving an attempt to get someone in trouble who hasn't even done anything to the trouble-maker. But the former is a contest between Divine Wisdom and Selfishness, with Divine Wisdom winning a decisive victory. This victory is hinted at by Raskolnikov actually *seeking out* Sonia at the end of the scene. Here Dostoevsky has transformed a trivial and inconsequential dispute into a cosmic battle. He even teases the reader by causing Sonia, the winner of the battle, to whimper a little about her weakness: "Sonia, timid by nature, had known even before that it was easier to ruin her than anyone else, and that whoever wanted to could offend her almost with impunity" (310/404). That is, Divine Wisdom is easily mistreated. But once Sonia is freed from her bonds, she disposes rather easily of Luzhin, with, it must be noted, overwhelming support from the other characters in the room. The battle ends in a rout, and the contrast between the literal (frail Sonia scurrying about fearfully, looking for a

defender) and the metaphorical (her resounding victory, supported by the crowd) is exquisite.[E] And now we understand why, at the beginning of the book, her father made his remark about how, working as a prostitute, Sonia needs "some shoes of a frippery sort to show off her foot when she steps over a puddle." (20/22) Luzhin is that puddle; indeed, that is what his last name means. Read with the metaphorical story in mind, this passage hints nicely at the sovereign grace with which Divine Wisdom deals with Rational Egoism.

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E. Note that one of the drunks flings a glass at the departing Luzhin and strikes—the German landlady! Here Dostoevsky, if not the drunk, shows unerring aim with respect to one of his targets. This is not mere buffoonery: recall that Raskolnikov's landlady, whom he had neglected, is Russian and represents Russian attributes. The German owners/landlords/hatters, etc., always symbolize foreign influences on Russian life that Dostoevsky considers reprehensible.

References:

1. Wasiolek 1964: 8.
2. Cf. *PSS* 7: 375.
3. Frank 1985: chap. 7.

PART II

Porfirii: “And…and do you believe in the raising of Lazarus?”

Raskolnikov: “I be-believe.” (201/261)

Chapter Seven

The Hungry She-Wolf

> Without stillness of the senses, peace of mind is not perceived. […] And without peace from thoughts, the mind is not moved by hidden mysteries.
>
> —Isaac of Nineveh[1]

> Sow a thought, reap an act;
> Sow an act, reap a habit;
> Sow a habit, reap a character;
> Sow a character, reap a destiny.
>
> —Anonymous

Among the reasons why Dostoevsky's writings are so complex is that his early experience—being sentenced to death, put up in front of a firing squad, then sent off to Siberia for ten years of prison and exile—transformed him into a deeply religious man of a sort that today might be called a mystic. And his example reminds us that religions are not all that simple even at the surface, while studying them at depth is like exploring a cave that matches your every step by extending deeper into the earth.

Dostoevsky explored the cave very far indeed. Finally he reached the point where many of his conclusions were, like those of other mystics, so far from common assumptions about the world that they baffle most readers. There is reason to believe that he studied the writings of St. Isaac of Nineveh (Isaak Sirin), whose work was translated into Russian a few years before Dostoevsky wrote *Crime and Punishment*.[A] Isaac's writings are still in

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A. One of the sins critics commit against Dostoevsky is to consider that the thinker who wrote *Crime and Punishment* was the same as the one who published *Brat'ia Karamazovy* (*The Brothers Karamazov*, 1879-1880). Dostoevsky.'s religion was always a work in progress: he never became a rigid adherent to O/orthodox Christianity in either the upper- or lower-case sense. According to the first chapter of Simonetta Salvestroni's *Bibleiskie i sviatootecheskie istochniki romanov Dostoevskogo* (*Biblical and Patristic Sources in Dostoevsky's Novels*: 27-50), the influence of Orthodox patristics and mysticism on Dostoevsky's thought appears for the first time in *Crime and Punishment*. In particular, Salvestroni cites passages from the Gospels (Luke 6: 35 and Matthew 20: 8-15) in seventh-century writings by Isaac of Nineveh that occur in the same order in Marmeladov's jeremiad in I.2 of *Crime and Punishment*.

print, more than thirteen hundred years after he wrote them—an enviable record to the modern author—but should our readers wish to follow Dostoevsky in his reading-plan, we need to advise them that Isaac is no easy read, and much less fun than Dostoevsky. Both come to conclusions that are not only startling, but may seem on the surface to be absurd. In the epigraph above, Isaac seems to be recommending that we free ourselves from thought. The modern intellectual might want to pick a bone with Isaac over this, but Dostoevsky, as we shall see, certainly would not. Indeed, once we explain what Dostoevsky is saying, the reader may still doubt that we have it right, and we will be obliged to heap coals of fiery evidence on his or her head (Romans 12: 20). But it is no accident that Raskolnikov's epiphany finally comes when "he was not thinking of anything" (421/549).

In this chapter we shall try to reduce Dostoevsky's mysticism to its essentials, in an attempt to show how profoundly it shaped his construction of *Crime and Punishment*. Aldous Huxley, borrowing from Leibniz, referred to mysticism as "the perennial philosophy," in a book by that name, since mysticism keeps popping up in different forms throughout history. At its core, mysticism is really a theory of psychology; it pursues the question of how the mind works and what can be done to alter its functioning. And this is certainly central to how Dostoevsky sees it. His objective, after all, is to repair Raskolnikov's shattered mind, an objective stated succinctly by one of the healthier (if neglected) pieces of that mind, namely Razumikhin: "…we have to make a human being out of you, after all." (101/129) So Razumikhin, introducing himself to a messenger, says, "I, you may be pleased to know, am Vrazumikhin, not Razumikhin, as everyone calls me, but Vrazumikhin, a student and a gentleman's son, and this is my friend." (93/118) The pun on his own name turns "Reason" into "Brings to Reason," which is what Razumikhin is doing to Raskolnikov.

Let us begin our analysis by supposing that we, as either God or Evolution, are engaged in creating a being that has to live in varied conditions on earth. The creature will have to get along with his fellows, and this is best done by remaining unhurried, in an equable temper, and capable of thinking about his companions' welfare. But our creature must also be prepared to defend himself, on a moment's notice, and then it might be best if he hurried and thought about his *own* welfare. If our being is too empathetic when confronted with a hungry lion and offers it a meal, he will surely not survive; if he is too selfish around his fellows, he will surely not procreate. What to do? Что делать?

Our solution will be to give our creature two operating systems, one for living among his fellows, the other for dealing with emergencies. The

first system—we shall call it Mind A, or Original Mind—will have no need for urgency and lack even a clock: indeed, it will not even differentiate between self and other. There is no need to do so, after all, if nothing is at stake, and a lack of such differentiation encourages social harmony and personal happiness. Here we must stress that our design would not be a romantic *theory* but would create the *actual experience* of a lack of difference between self and other, which is why it is called the *unio mystica* rather than the *multitudo mystica*.

We, however, are not in that state and will therefore continue to make distinctions. The second operating system—we shall call it Mind B, or Emergency Mode—would give its host a keen sense of time, a powerful ability to distinguish between self and other, strong purposefulness, and marked concern for its own needs. All these qualities might be helpful in recognizing danger and escaping from it.

If we were especially clever, at this point we would grasp the importance of creating an efficient switch to replace one operating system with the other when the need arises. If we didn't—well, think of the possibilities: your creature notices hunger pangs and goes into Emergency Mode to hunt down and kill a young, lissome doe, just starting out on a life full of hope and promise—but why would her killer care about her feelings? After all, he is purposeful, sees her as a source of protein, makes strong distinctions between self and other, and is hungry besides. So he kills her. But then he goes home and—lacking a switching device—remains in Emergency Mode and selfishly keeps all the food for himself. His poor children starve, his wife moves back in with her parents.

A tail behind, a trunk in front,
Complete the usual elephant.
The tail in front, the trunk behind,
Is what you very seldom find.

If you for specimens should hunt
With trunks behind and tails in front,
That hunt would occupy you long
The force of habit is so strong.

—A. E. Houseman

> And next a Wolf, gaunt with famished craving…
> Vicious her nature is, and framed for ill;
> When crammed she craves more fiercely than before;
> Her raging greed can never gorge its fill.
>
> —Dante, *Inferno*, Canto 1: 49, 97-99

Why wouldn't our hero, locked in ego-mode, simply satisfy himself and then share the remains? A mystic would say that the ego simply can't be satisfied: trying to satisfy its needs for power, money, sex, etc., is like trying to put out a fire by pouring gasoline on it. The fire may crave the gasoline, but its craving can't be satisfied by it; it always wants more. Dante, in an age without internal-combustion engines, characterized this quality of the ego with his image of a she-wolf that becomes hungrier the more it eats. To avoid it, according to his psychopomp, Virgil, you have to take "another road." We don't want to try to match imagery with either Dostoevsky or Dante, so we'll simply stick to our computers.

The traditional argument is roughly this: ego-mode is supposed to be software, and used for emergencies; when it gets hardwired into us, we can spend our lives pursuing ego-gratification and never really feel gratified. There is never enough money for someone who hungers for it.

It is an axiom of mysticism, even if it is seldom if ever expressed this way, that the switching mechanism in human beings is defective. If people live in an environment rich in emergencies, they tend to become locked in Mind B, "the force of habit is so strong." We have so much experience with people in this condition that we have common words to describe it: "egoism," "selfishness." It is selfishness, not selflessness, that we associate with criminality.

We have fewer ways—and scarcely any that everyone agrees on—of referring to Mind A, probably because Mind A doesn't cause nearly the problems of Mind B and hence doesn't get into the news as often. Few people have ever been arrested and imprisoned for being free of selfishness; excessive kindness is not tightly regulated. In referring to Mind A as Original Mind, we are borrowing from Buddhism, but in Christianity, it was characteristically seen as the experience of God. If we do not take sides, it is because we are interested here not in matters of faith but in human psychology as Dostoevsky saw it. If people can be shown to have particular characteristics, these will not change if we change the term we use for them. An egg-crate does not cease to exist or alter its qualities if you call it a container.

Dostoevsky definitely takes sides, and his version of this model is not only Christian but a version of Russian Orthodox. The *Philokalia* (a collection of writings by early Christian Fathers) will get you closer to the meaning of *Crime and Punishment* than a thousand Freudian analysts. Yet we cannot let ourselves get lost in the vast wasteland of circumstantial theory associated with the history of religion: Dostoevsky, beyond any doubt, believed he was composing a study of human experience. *Crime and Punishment* is a book about an epiphany—the phenomenon of a sudden deep insight into an essential part of life—experienced by the author. And it won't do to deny Dostoevsky's experience just because we disagree with the framework he puts it into. Dostoevsky, after all, must be accepted as something of an authority on his own experience. Moreover, his years in a prison in Siberia gave him qualifications for studying the human condition that few of us can match.

But let us get back to Emergency Mode for a moment. If it is intended only for emergencies, as we have suggested, we can hardly complain that a few files have been left out of it. You wouldn't expect an emergency program for booting up your computer to have a complete word processor in its files. So it should not come as a surprise, when we built our creature and installed his emergency operating-system, if we left out a file that gives meaning to his life. He wouldn't notice or need this in the *short* term, but if he tried to live in Emergency Mode permanently, he might discover its absence. The classic view is that a person who lives in Emergency Mode permanently, thinking only of his own needs, is apt to turn to brooding and wonder what is the point of it all. Certainly this happens with one of Raskolnikov's alter-egos, as we shall see. And Dostoevsky's record of his years in prison (*House of the Dead*) makes it appear as if he had studied this process at some depth while sojourning among people who provided rich opportunities for studying the criminal mind.

A student of the New Testament might question our use of a term such as "operating systems," but there *is* such a distinction in the New Testament. It is just stated very differently: "spirit" is distinguished from "flesh." Isaac of Nineveh elaborates on this distinction: "[though intermingled], the impulses of the soul are distinct from the impulses of the body, and the will of the soul is distinct from the will of the body, in other words, flesh from spirit."[2]

As the one thrives, the other does poorly.

Words!
The Way is beyond language,
for in it there is
no yesterday
no tomorrow
no today.
— Sosan Zenjii, Third Patriarch
of Zen, *Verses on the Faith Mind*[3]

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.
—Matthew 5:5

In a surprise announcement this morning, it was revealed that the Meek have inherited the Earth. The actual change of ownership itself happened three weeks ago, but the spokesperson for the Meek was too shy to contact the press.
—Adrian Barnett[4]

You will look in vain for a list of how-to books telling you how to avoid or escape from the *unio mystica*. The mystic would say that this would be like looking for books entitled *How to Free Yourself from Wealth*, or *Ten Foolproof Ways to Bring Misery into Your Life!* But books on mysticism, while common enough, seem to obfuscate more than they elucidate. The first two epigraphs above give us a hint at what is ahead of us. Oddly, both express commonplaces as far as our authorities on Mind A are concerned (including Dostoevsky) and neither introduces new material to our discussion. The Third Patriarch of Zen is alluding to the fact that Mind A simply has no time-keeper, no clock, and if you merge with eternity, you don't experience differentness with respect to time any more than you experience it with respect to things. (We will return to the symbolism of clocks and watches in Chapter 13.) And Jesus is making a similar point in the Beatitudes, which define who will experience the condition of blessedness (the Latin word *beatus* means "blessed"). Unfortunately, by the time this passage reached English, it looked very much as if Jesus was saying that possession of and title for the earth will one day be turned over to shy people, a version Adrian Barnett did such a wonderful parody of.

So what *is* being said here? The Greek word translated as "meek" is *prâos* ("gentle, mild"), and the passage would appear intended to suggest that—as we might express it—freedom from ego is a state of blessedness, in which one experiences an undifferentiated reality. The ego-free individual

does not experience separateness; he "inherits the earth." The latter expression is, of course, an image, but the image is oddly inferior to its referent, since the *unio mystica* does not involve one in probate and inheritance taxes. The comparison is a bit like an ad agency saying that driving the new Lexus is like riding a really nice bicycle.

But before we criticize Jesus—or Matthew—for his rhetoric, we must ask the reader how he or she would have said this. Perhaps Jesus should have said, "In this Emptiness the two are indistinguishable and each contains in itself the whole world," which is how the Third Patriarch of Zen expressed the same idea.[5] It is not at all clear that this version would have made more sense in Galilee than the original, and we may as well admit that the real problem is that—as noted in the epigraph above—the *unio mystica* is beyond language; it is the sort of thing for which the word "ineffable" was coined. But mystics always represent the *unio mystica* as a fact of experience—and the experience is that all distinctions disappear and one is truly "at one with" the universe. For this reason Sonia (the local rep of the *unio mystica*) says, "We're all one, we live as one." (244/318) It is not that the universe melts together, just that one's perception changes. And as your perception changes, you discover that you have been reading your own vision into the universe. It's as if you can't perceive except through lenses that you yourself fashion, so that they distort the world in a way unique to your mind. Thus Dostoevsky shows Svidrigailov imagining eternity as a little room with spiders in it: he projects his own vision into eternity (221/283).[B.]

For Dostoevsky, there are two obvious reasons for creating a main character whose name means, basically, Mr. Schism:

1. This allows him to make a story out of the thought-processes of a single character, merely by incorporating the parts of his mind into different figures. By doing this, he turns a single mind into multiple minds, which allows a lot of contrast—differentiated characters—while our notions of coherence are satisfied because the characters are all part of one person.

2. By causing all the destructive parts of Raskolnikov's mind to be evicted or die, Dostoevsky can actually render the *unio mystica* visible and tangible. Raskolnikov's mind becomes one. As we shall see, the last stage

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B. This image is, of course, taken from the Russian village bathhouse, described in folklore as full of both spiders and malevolent spirits; it was also a place in which pagan rituals long held out. One did not go to the bathhouse on Sunday. (See, for example, W.F. Ryan's *The Bathhouse at Midnight: Magic in Russia*.) All of this is consonant with Svidrigailov's nature.

of this process proves ridiculously difficult to concretize. Dostoevsky's solution to this problem, while apt and well prepared for, is simply too subtle for readers cognizant only of the literal story, which is why so many people have voiced their dislike of the Epilogue. It took us years to grasp what he is doing in the Epilogue (although we found it more than worth the wait), and there are still a few complications in the way of our explaining this.

For now, let us think for a moment about the word "epiphany." If access to wisdom were uncomplicated, we would need nothing more than encyclopedias for the advancement of wisdom. The very word "epiphany" reminds us that information and understanding work on different schedules: you can have all the facts at hand for years before they suddenly coalesce in a novel way and you understand something at greater depth than before. So "epiphany" hints at the difficulty of grasping complicated truths. And since Dostoevsky is writing about *his* epiphany, not the reader's, one may find unaccustomed difficulties in trying to understand *Crime and Punishment*. Once and for all, though, we must insist that, although it is easier to locate and study egoists than saints, mystics all over the world maintain that the experience of the *unio mystica* in fact causes the individual to perceive the world as undifferentiated, as a whole. This is not an image but an actual experience.

> He who wants to succeed must first of all abandon all desires of his own, and acquire constant mourning and uncovetousness.
>
> —Abba Philemon[6]

> God is every thing, and every thing is God.
>
> —Sri Ramana Maharshi[7]

We talked earlier about the need for a switch to change from Mind A to Mind B and back. In fact there *is* such a switch, but it tends to stick when one is trying to move out of ego-mode. The simplest way to define the switch is to say that you move into ego-mode when you want anything at all, and you move out of it when you want nothing. Ego-mode is designed to solve your problems, after all: no problems, no ego-mode. This is pretty much a universal definition of the switch, but it is stated in a variety of ways in different cultures.

Consider the epigraphs above: both express this same idea, although this is not immediately obvious. The first tells us to abandon all desires; the second says that God is everything. But "God is everything" is another way

of saying not to make distinctions—to view everything as One; and if you don't make distinctions, you can't possibly have desires, since desires necessarily posit some sort of distinction or differentness (that is, that you covet something different from what you think you have).

There are many ways of expressing this throughout the world, but it is not our objective to give a complete accounting of mysticism. For our purposes, it will be enough to point out that in Christian tradition, "trust" (in God, for example) is a common technique for getting out of ego-mode. This is simply because you can get out of ego-mode only by getting into Mind A, and you can do that only by not wanting anything. If you are afraid, worried, or in a state of desire, the Mind-Switch clicks over to ego-mode and tries to solve the problem. From the point of view of the mystics, then, even if you don't believe that there is an entity that watches over the lilies of the field and the odd sparrow, you should still act as if you do. The alternative is to activate your emergency operating system, with all its liabilities.

❖

Let us look at one of the main reasons for moving out of ego-mode. If the ego is designed for emergencies, then we can expect it to be outfitted with a problem-solving chip, and it is. But the chip can easily malfunction and see *everything* as a problem: relationships, the past, the future, work, child-rearing, people in general. This works well if the problem is one that the chip can solve, but badly if it isn't. And the problem-solving chip of the ego is notoriously inefficient if the problem is one brought into existence by the continued use of ego-mode—a problem like anxiety, for example, or boredom. For such problems, the ego may offer standard-issue solutions such as drinking, eating, or gambling, then mindlessly bring them up each time the boredom or anxiety returns, until finally the solutions themselves become problems. All of this, of course, describes Svidrigailov nicely.

And this leads us to a connection that will explain much that is confusing in *Crime and Punishment*. Mysticism recognizes that sensory gratification inevitably involves the ego, since sensory gratification requires and instills desire in a human being—and rationalizes it, to boot, in the most beguiling ways. You simply can't pursue sex, money, fame, etc., without experiencing desire, and you can't get out of the ego without *freeing* yourself from desire. So a mystic—and Dostoevsky for sure—would say that a sexual predator cannot free himself from egoism, any more than a man can pull himself up by his own bootstraps. Stated thus, this seems self-evident, but if it were really self-evident, readers would not be so easily taken in by one of Dostoevsky's most beguiling characters, namely Svidrigailov, who glosses over and rationalizes every one of his desires and

excesses (see Chapter 8).

But why can't you just have a good time, even if it means being in ego-mode? The answer is found in our remarks about the meaning-file left out of ego-mode. People who build their lives around pursuits that put them into ego-mode find their lives eventually lose meaning. This, in any case, is the standard model, and Dostoevsky doesn't diverge from this model. So if Svidrigailov stays permanently in ego-mode, the theory predicts that his life will come to have no meaning, and it should come as no surprise that he ends by killing himself. Raskolnikov himself goes back and forth from one mode to the other, or, as Razumikhin says, it is "as if there really were two opposite characters in him, changing places with each other." (165/215)

The matter is easier to understand if we go back to fine-tuning the being we were in the process of creating. We need to give him *some* desires—for food, for procreation, for a successful life—but we will have to place a governor on these desires. It is obvious that he cannot be allowed to get so much pleasure out of carnal desires that he devotes his entire life to them—ignoring everything else. There are people like this, of course, and we all depend on them to keep the news interesting. For most people, the governor on such desires is the phenomenon of cloying: any sensual pleasure eventually begins to cloy on us. This is one reason why most people don't try to engage in sex all day and all night, or eat and drink nonstop.

Unfortunately, to get out of ego-mode, you have to convince it that it needs to be replaced. Guess what? Ego-mode is programmed to tell you that there's nothing wrong with it, and Microsoft will punish you if you tamper with it, and it's got a bunch of neat stuff it wants to show you, and you're going to be overwhelmed with problems if you don't let it continue to solve them. A Hindu mystic, Swami Ramdas, says that, confronted with shifting to a different operating system, the ego casts a spell on us and creates doubt as to the existence of such a possibility.[8] It keeps quiet about how the problems it is coping with are often by-products of its own workings, such as anxiety. Thus Raskolnikov's selfishness, far from solving his problems, actually generates new and more severe ones. But most of us reject out of hand the notion that we should replace our operating-system with one that does not make distinctions. A ninth-century Chinese Buddhist text comments on this: "Men are afraid to forget their minds [i.e., ego-mind], fearing to fall through the Void with nothing to stay their fall. They do not know that the Void is not really void, but the realm of the real dharma [i.e., Original Mind]."[9] Here, as generally in mysticism, the argument is put forth that, however obvious it seems that all meaning would depart from your life if you stopped making distinctions, in fact the very opposite would happen.

It is hard to know if Dostoevsky followed the argument of mysticism all the way to this end. Even if he did, the theory comes into stark conflict with the realities of storytelling. It is surely impossible, in a novel, to create an interesting character who does not make distinctions. The closest Dostoevsky comes in *Crime and Punishment* is with Sonia—Divine Wisdom. Sonia never rejects anyone, even the prisoners in Siberia, and the point at which she tells Raskolnikov that he knows nothing (243/317) is when he asks her if she loves her stepmother, who has beaten her. That is, she defends her ability to love without making such distinctions. (In Chapter 10 we will see yet another layer in this scene.) She also clearly takes the view that, as Isaac of Nineveh expressed it, "There is no sin without forgiveness except that one which is without repentance."[10] (But a Sonia who was truly experiencing the *unio mystica* would not get upset over the behavior of others, and no novelist would expect his or her readers to accept such equanimity. Besides which, drama collapses if people don't disagree.)

Much of the argument of mysticism is complex, non-intuitive, and difficult, but some of its conclusions are familiar to most of us. An obvious corollary of the argument is that you are better off thinking of the needs of others than concentrating on your own needs. This is not just because doing so is nice but because focusing your attention elsewhere prevents you from enhancing ego-mode. Certainly Dostoevsky saw the issue this way: as soon as Raskolnikov concerns himself with the problems of someone else—when he attends the dying Marmeladov, for example—he is rejuvenated. And his recovery is made complete the last time he turns his attention to the needs of others, in the Epilogue, when Sonia becomes ill. The direct result of his concern with her illness is that his own comes to an end.

References:

1. Isaac of Nineveh, 87.
2. Isaac of Nineveh, 48.
3. Merzel, 131.
4. Barnett 1999: www.abarnett.demon.co.uk/atheism/meek.html.
5. Merzel, 129.
6. *Philokalia*, 413.
7. Narasimha, 118.
8. Ramdas, 141.
9. Huang Po, 41.
10. Isaac of Nineveh, 33.

Chapter Eight

When Sonia's Not at Home

> For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind.
> —Hosea 8: 7

> When I arrived, I was as if frozen. I saw the room, the furniture, 'Mama' herself, each thing separate, detached from the others, cold, implacable, inhuman, by dint of being without life.
> —Sechehaye (29)

The second epigraph above gives a remarkable description of what, for our purposes, we might define as the opposite of the *unio mystica*. Note its characteristics: everything is seen as separate, detached, cold, inhuman, and lifeless. Dostoevsky seems to have experienced some degree of this sort of alienation and, as a novelist, sought for objective correlatives to make the experience visible and tangible. He came up with his symbolic stones to denote the "deadness" and created the "separateness" by causing the aspects of his main character's mind to shatter into separate pieces, "detached from the others." Once he did this, he discovered that he had created wonderful opportunities for drama. Naturally, *Crime and Punishment* comes to an end when its hero becomes healthy, if only because the pieces of his mind merge back into one, thereby causing a dearth of characters to create drama out of.

For a novelist it is the characters beset with internal contradictions and conflicting desires who provide drama, so it is far easier and more fun to study Dostoevsky's view of estrangement than of blessedness. (Or Dante's likewise: everyone reads the *Inferno*, few the *Purgatorio* or *Paradiso*.) If we look for the worst sinner in *Crime and Punishment*, then, we might also find the most interesting character. This can hardly be Raskolnikov, a novice in crime, and while he killed two people, the second was merely a symbol for what the first murder did to his innocence (as he says, "I killed myself, not the old crone." [322/420]). Another candidate has left a trail of destruction from the provinces to Petersburg, but his public-relations staff does such a good job that, to get a close look at him, we will have to wend our way through much spin and many half-truths.

This character is Arkadii Ivanovich Svidrigailov, who is a bit of a puzzle to critics, largely because Dostoevsky gave him huge responsibilities

in *Crime and Punishment*, then made him work behind the scenes, so that much of his best work is not even apparent without a careful perusal of the evidence. As we shall see, Svidrigailov is more than just a villain; he is an arch-villain.

But his villainy is cloaked in lies and rationalizations of such genius that it is difficult to see past them. For example, in the matter of his wife's death, he uses one of the classics, where lying is concerned: he convicts himself of a lesser charge. All he had done, he says, was to strike her twice with a whip; the dying she did on her own (216/282-83). How bad can Svidrigailov be, after all, if the worst he's done is to take a whip to his wife?

Pretty bad, actually. It is Dostoevsky's intention to reveal Svidrigailov's true nature only gradually, which is why, when his physical appearance is first described, he looks "quite pleasant" (188/244), yet toward the end of the book he looks "terribly unpleasant" (357/468), and even later he causes innocent children to run away "in indescribable terror" (384/499). So it is only late that we get a second opinion in the matter of Marfa Petrovna's death. That opinion comes from Raskolnikov's sister Dunia, who says that Svidrigailov actually poisoned Marfa Petrovna. Svidrigailov defends himself winsomely: "Even if that were true, it was because of you…you would still be the cause of it." (381/495) The defense is brilliant and comes complete with an accusation of its own: Svidrigailov isn't ready to concede that what Dunia says is true, but even if it were, the murder would still actually be someone else's fault.

His lying is so refined and convincing that Western critics are often taken in by it, although one wants to grab and shake the commentator who writes that Svidrigailov "is always honest with himself and more than averagely honest about himself."[1] Honest Arkadii has this to say about self-deception: "…he has the happiest life who manages to hoodwink himself best of all" (370/481). In fact, Svidrigailov lies constantly, even to himself, but this is revealed only by cross-checking everything he says against the statements of others and what he himself says at other times. For example, on one page he thinks to himself that he "never got into a temper" (390/505). Here, as it turns out, his very *thoughts* are lies, for on another page, he tells Raskolnikov, "you can judge for yourself what a rage I was driven to when I discovered that Marfa Petrovna had procured that meanest of little clerks, Luzhin, and had almost put together a marriage…." (357/477) It was this rage that drove him to deliver two little love-taps to Marfa with a whip. As we shall see presently, Svidrigailov's trait of lying, like so much in the novel, is based solidly on a passage in the Gospel of John.

What is remarkable, though, is that, to go by the experience of Roy

Hazelwood, a former member of the FBI's Behavioral Science Unit, Dostoevsky's description of Svidrigailov's lying appears to be typical of precisely his type of criminal. "Offenders exaggerate, minimize, project, deny, rationalize, and lie, lie, lie. My rule is to accept nothing a sexual criminal tells me unless I can validate it with reliable witnesses, physical…evidence, or an analysis of his known behavior."[2] Hazelwood tells of how a plan to interview one group of sexual offenders came to a bad end: "We originally set out to conduct face-to-face interviews with the men. But after unproductive sessions with five of them, we realized we were wasting our time. Not one cared to discuss himself except to deny or rationalize his behavior or to project the blame for his situation onto someone else."[3] This should remind us once again that Dostoevsky spent four years in prison with a fine and representative assortment of criminals of various sorts, and he appears to have studied them well.

Certainly Svidrigailov's lying is effective. John Middleton Murry even calls Svidrigailov the real hero of the novel,[4] while Jacques Madaule says that "the causes of Svidrigailov's damnation remain obscure."[5] But these causes aren't at all obscure to Dostoevsky, and they are obscure to critics only because Svidrigailov's lying is so wonderfully plausible, even when his justifications are downright primitive. For example, he justifies beating his wife by telling Raskolnikov that women really like this kind of treatment (216/282-83), a common excuse among wife-beaters and one that Dostoevsky may well have heard from his fellow-prisoners in Siberia. Marfa Petrovna did not survive to offer her opinion on the matter, but it is odd in this day and age to see even a character in a novel not being called on such an excuse.[A]

Svidrigailov even discourses on the theory and practice of deception: "…with flattery, even if everything is false down to the last little note, it is still agreeable and is listened to not without pleasure…" (366/476) Again: women *want* to be lied to.

Let us consider just one of Svidrigailov's crimes: according to Luzhin, Svidrigailov "cruelly abused" a young girl "of about fifteen, or even fourteen" who committed suicide (228/298-99). This event is referred to more than once, and Svidrigailov downplays it as usual: "Do me a favor," he

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A. Svidrigailov invokes an ancient joke when he says, "I rarely lie" (220/288). The point is that this is itself an admission of lying, and we therefore have no way of knowing whether the statement is true. It is a version of what in logic is known as the "Epimenides paradox." Viktor Shklovskii, at least, sees through Svidrigailov, viewing him as embodying "freedom from the prohibitions of morality" and being a "villain who knows nothing but his desires and arrives at death" (1957: 220).

says to Raskolnikov, "leave all those trivialities alone" (364/474). Indeed, one critic actually refers to this particular triviality as "rumour."[6] But if we doubt its truth, we have proof from Svidrigailov's own consciousness, for just before he kills himself, he has a dream in which he sees a girl, fourteen years old, who has committed suicide. He then dreams of a five-year-old who, right before his eyes, takes on the characteristics of a French whore. The scene is clearly implying that if he can ruin a fourteen-year-old, why not a five-year-old? So either Svidrigailov actually committed this "rumored" atrocity or even his dreams are lies.[B] In Chapter 12 it will become clear why Dostoevsky made Svidrigailov into such a practiced and persuasive liar.[C]

For now, let us consider the scene in which Raskolnikov comes across a young girl who has obviously been got drunk and taken advantage of. A man is following her and clearly intends to take further advantage of her. Raskolnikov yells at him, calling him "Svidrigailov" as a term of abuse. Raskolnikov supposes that the girl will be further ruined from now on, and, as a metaphorical proof of his thought, she "walks back in the direction she had come from" (42/49).

Now, at the end of the novel, it turns out Svidrigailov is affianced to a girl of just the age of the one Raskolnikov had encountered on the street. What a coincidence! But of course it is not a coincidence at all: the two girls are one and the same. Dostoevsky clearly expects us to figure out that the coldly resolute mother has offered Svidrigailov the option of marrying her

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B. Ironically, shortly after Dostoevsky's death, gossip began to spread among Russian literati that the motif of child rape here and in *The Devils* reflected the dark side of his own psyche. On the rumor, see Gerstein, 70, fn 100. As Dostoevsky himself is reported to have said, and as Svidrigailov's dream makes clear, Dostoevsky considered that "The most horrible, the most dreadful sin is the rape of a child. To take away life is horrible... but to take away faith in the beauty of love is an even more dreadful crime." (Trubetskaia, 117)

C. Pevear and Volokhonsky use "to lie" without distinguishing between two Russian words: лгать *lgat'*, the sin of lying, and врать *vrat'*, talking rot or nonsense. Razumikhin uses the latter when speaking of his own and his friends' socio-political arguments. For instance, his dictum, which in the translation comes out as "Lying is what makes me a man" (155/202), Dostoevsky intended as a parody of the famous Cartesian postulate: "I talk rot, ergo I'm a man." And the translators create an unfortunate oxymoron when they have Razumikhin say "in the end we'll lie our way to the truth" (156/204) when what he means is that talking nonsense will get them there—that is, that by talking through a lot of half-baked ideas, they will eventually arrive at valid ones. The conflation is particularly unfortunate when Raskolnikov confesses to Sonia: on page 320/416 he tells her that he has been "lying"—actually *vru* "talking rot"—"for a long time"; and, as he repudiates his earlier justifications for the crime, he says, "I didn't want to lie [*lgat'*] about it even to myself" (322/419). Svidrigailov, however, is a constant sinful liar.

daughter instead of taking his chances with the courts. How do we know this? As usual, Dostoevsky has given us a few hints. When Svidrigailov has his dream of the five-year-old, he sees that her face is flushed: "it was just like the flush from wine, as if she had been given a whole glass to drink" (393/509). This is clearly part of Svidrigailov's method with young girls—why the girl on the street is drunk. And when Svidrigailov gives money to the girl—knowing that the mother will keep it—the mother tells the family that the main thing is "by no means ever say anything to that cunning old fox Resslich…"(388/502). Why not? Because Resslikh (or Riosslikh) is, as we have learned, Svidrigailov's procuress, and she might think that some of the money should be hers, in return for bringing Svidrigailov and the young daughter together.

When Dostoevsky causes Raskolnikov to address the man on the street as "Svidrigailov," the reader takes the name as a metaphor for a dirty old man. Only much later does it become clear that—as is common in *Crime and Punishment*—there is another dimension to the remark entirely: we are being given a hint as to who—and what part of the mind—is really involved in the ruination of the girl.

But why is a nice guy like Svidrigailov doomed? Let us look at his situation strictly from the traditional perspective we have outlined:

Svidrigailov almost never gets out of ego-mode, an operating system that, according to the psychology of mysticism, lacks a file that gives meaning to existence. And since ego-mode is in charge of desires, he has devoted his life to sensual pleasure, which eventually leads to satiation, so he has now discovered that he is not only repelled by his preoccupations but gets little pleasure out of them. Corrupting ever younger girls is only one example. "Drinking disgusts me," he says, "and wine is the only thing I have left" (218/286). (Elsewhere he says he "hardly drinks at all" [359/469], but this is in a scene in which he gets drunk right before our eyes; as always, nothing he says can be trusted.)

If we lose sight of Svidrigailov's dissembling, we can go very wrong in reading *Crime and Punishment*. For example, he says that his conscience is entirely at rest with respect to his wife's death (215/282), but this is merely because he deceives himself about his bad behavior, justifying everything he does. (It is from Dunia, an impeccable source, that we later learn that he really did murder Marfa, and quite deliberately.) Not once does Dostoevsky show him in the presence of Porfirii, the visible manifestation of Conscience. Indeed, toward the end, the narrator reveals that not only does Raskolnikov not think that Svidrigailov (who knows who the murderer is) has visited Porfirii, he thinks it unlikely that he will! (353/462) Dostoevsky

does what he can to imply that this is intended more for the metaphorical story than the literal: "He could not have explained this…"

Not that Svidrigailov can help himself at this point: if reason is the slave of passion, as he himself tells us (215/282), then his only recourse is to deceive himself about his behavior. It would take an act of God actually to *alter* his behavior.

Act of God? Ah, yes: among the many ways Svidrigailov becomes human to us is by his brief moments of moral clarity, even if these are not exactly the result of his own choices. After he has allowed his wife to blame Dunia for trying to seduce him, when it was actually the other way around, he eventually admits the truth and is held up to public ridicule—remember that Marfa Petrovna represents the way public opinion rides herd on our behavior. And why does Svidrigailov confess? It took an act of God: the downpour Dunia was forced to endure as she was hauled away in a peasant's cart.[D] The Living Waters flooded down, and Svidrigailov, however briefly, came to his senses. Hosea talks about retribution in terms of sowing the wind and reaping the whirlwind, but Svidrigailov sows to such effect that he reaps an entire storm-front. On the literal level, the scene shows Dunia undergoing an unpleasant, humiliating experience; on the metaphorical, Svidrigailov's own humiliation forces a brief spiritual enlightenment on him.

> When I thought of nothing but to end my days in these troubles…, I found myself changed all at once; and my soul, which till that time was in trouble, felt a profound inward peace, as if she were in her center and place of rest.
>
> —Brother Lawrence[7]

But what does humiliation have to do with spiritual enlightenment? In traditional psychology, it has everything to do with it; indeed, there are entire sets of spiritual exercises designed to eke out the small but dependable fund of humiliation normally provided by everyday life. Let us get back to our imaginary selfish fellow who, a few pages back, refused to share his food with his family, who all departed from him in one way or another. Suppose that he got away with his selfishness—indeed, he bullied all his

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D. In parts of rural Russia, if a bride was found not to be a virgin, she was typically sent home in disgrace to her family in an open cart with all her belongings. In other words, the point of this scene is to make Dunia's disgrace manifest to the entire community.

neighbors into providing for him. As long as his assertiveness was successful, it could be expected to flourish, so his ego would grow as it succeeded in gaining its ends. The ego is seen as elastic and subject to astonishing rates of growth, much like zucchini in the summer. So our hero makes ever greater demands on those around him, while all the time suffering the consequences of his selfishness. These are detailed nicely in *Crime and Punishment*: psychological isolation, anger, boredom, cruelty (cf. Raskolnikov's "cruel"—жестокий—behavior, e.g., 158/205, 165/215, 245/320, 247/323). The complete egoist, like Raskolnikov, loses touch with his Good Sense and Wisdom.

But if our bully is deposed—say, the neighbors gang up on him—then his ego, quite unlike those zucchinis, is apt to shrivel up and could even turn him over to Mind A. Earlier he had experienced the thrills of Mind B: the exhilaration of power, the joy of control. But now he discovers that Mind A has its own joys, including a delicious connectedness to the rest of the world. In the one state, excitement vitiated by isolation; in the other, a peace that passeth understanding. In the view of the mystics, no one "in his right mind" would wish to change over to Mind B. And keep in mind that, while we have presented a non-ideological model of the traditional argument just to stress how common it is throughout history and across the world, Dostoevsky clearly saw Original Mind (or Mind A) as the experience of God.

It is no surprise that people have come up with exercises designed to suppress the ego and supply tinder to the divine spark. Such exercises seek to identify those aspects of the human mind associated with the operations of the ego and to suppress them. Let us review some of these that are particularly relevant to *Crime and Punishment*:

"Self"-debasement: Sonia tells Raskolnikov that he must go to the crossroads and kiss the earth and admit his crime publicly. (We put "self" in quotation-marks because, oddly, the word "self" is commonly used both for the ego, as in the word "selfish," and for Original Mind, where it occurs in such expressions as "self-realization".) Raskolnikov goes so far as to kiss the earth at the crossroads but can't bring himself to confess. This is, as it happens, the second time we see him kissing the earth, but the other example occurred in his dream of his childhood, before he fell away from his faith (46/55).

Accepting suffering: Raskolnikov says he honors Sonia as one who has accepted suffering (246-47/321-22), then Mikolka the painter confesses to the murder (271/351) so as to "embrace suffering" (348/455). Acceptance of suffering as a spiritual exercise is easier to understand if you think of

suffering in contrast with "success," or "elation"—that is, experiences that lead to self-congratulation and therefore put one into ego-mode. The traditional view is that only by *not rejecting anything*, even suffering, can your mind can get out of ego-mode. The alternative to accepting suffering is to reject suffering. But if you reject it, you experience not only the suffering but the misery that comes from rejecting what is happening. Traditional theory argues that, once you accept the suffering, you discover that much of the pain it had caused you came directly from the experience of rejecting the suffering. Like some other aspects of the perennial philosophy, this view does not depend on a belief in gods and devils, is subject to experiment, and has been reaffirmed many times by religious thinkers (such as Brother Lawrence, quoted above).

In *Crime and Punishment*, not surprisingly, it is Porfirii who brings up the virtues of accepting suffering (348/455). On the metaphorical level, he is Raskolnikov's conscience, so his concern is always with the consequences of human behavior, which is why he appears to the reader less as a detective than as a psychologist.

Confession: Sharing one's secret fears and transgressions with another human being is viewed as a way of breaking down the barrier of pride—in effect, it punctures the swollen ego, which has been creating separateness from the rest of creation. The ego, of course, resists efforts to subdue it. In creating parallel stories—literal and metaphorical—Dostoevsky works his way into more than one paradox, as when Raskolnikov tells Sonia of his crime. Her response? She tells him that he must confess. Now this is what Raskolnikov just did: he confessed to Sonia. But because, on the metaphorical level, Sonia is actually the compartment of his mind that dispenses wisdom, neither Sonia nor Raskolnikov takes this for the necessary confession. She is merely the jolt of wisdom necessary to cause Raskolnikov to make the right choice.

You could argue that perhaps Sonia is not the proper confessor for him; he needs a priest. But Raskolnikov does not confess to a priest, he confesses to Ilia Petrovich—Elijah, son of Rock, the god of storms and of retribution. Why not a priest? Because Dostoevsky's symbolism derives from a book of the Bible that provides the Living Water rather than a priest as a symbol of salvation. So we must continue our storm-watch.

Dostoevsky provides a memorable literary treatment of confession in *Crime and Punishment*, when he has Raskolnikov go to the district police station, where he learns that Svidrigailov is dead, which has meaning both on the literal and on the metaphorical level: now Svidrigailov can't turn him

in; but more importantly, Raskolnikov's evil side is now disabled. So Raskolnikov begins to leave the police station:

> He went on down the stairs and came out into the courtyard. There in the courtyard, not far from the entrance, stood Sonia, pale, numb all over, and she gave him a wild, wild look. He stopped before her. Something pained and tormented, something desperate, showed in her face. She clasped her hands. A hideous, lost smile forced itself to his lips. He stood a while, grinned, and turned back upstairs to the office. (409/530)

You really have to feel for anyone who reads *Crime and Punishment* without attending to the allegory, for here the literal and allegorical events work together flawlessly, giving depth and richness to the scene. On the literal level, Raskolnikov sees his friend Sonia and realizes how disappointed she is that he has not confessed. On the allegorical level, Divine Wisdom—always present somewhere in Raskolnikov's divided mind, but not always heeded—rescues him from a terrible mistake. And here we get some sense of the wonderful possibilities of allegory and symbolism, for on the literal level alone, the scene is at best a tear-jerker; it is the allegory that rescues it from tacky melodrama. And that whirlwind we mentioned? It shows up in another of Dostoevsky's little jokes: the staircase in the district police station has now become a spiral staircase, hinting at the presence of Ilia (Elijah) Petrovich, the storm god whose Biblical antecedent was taken up to heaven in a whirlwind. Dostoevsky replicates Elijah's whirlwind in the structure of the building (which is metaphorical as well as real) where Raskolnikov confesses.[E] But the whirlwind was never very far away: in Part I, the narrator mentions the "whirlwind of thoughts spinning in [Raskolnikov's] head" (36/41), and in Part III, "Thoughts were spinning like a whirlwind in Raskolnikov's head." (195/254)

Repentance: Traditional theory suggests that it is not enough to admit to wrong-doing; you also have to know that it *is* wrong-doing. Raskolnikov fails to grasp this, so after his sentencing we learn that "he did not repent of his crime." (417/544) This causes him to suffer further, although now from wounded pride (416/543). But one scholar makes the claim that, "right to the end, Raskolnikov shows no sign of Christian repentance."[8] Two others agree.[9]

This is a truly astonishing claim, but since it is made by three distinguished scholars, we must give it serious consideration. Yet if Dostoevsky actually points out to his readers that Raskolnikov has not

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E. This was pointed out by Yuri Marmeladov (not to be confused with Dostoevsky's character), 11. In Part II the staircase is just described as "steep."

repented and is therefore still miserable, wouldn't you think he would remember to repair this problem by the end of the story, a mere seven pages later—especially since by then Raskolnikov is suddenly content? Did Dostoevsky forget? Did Homer nod?

Dostoevsky's problem isn't with remembering to show Raskolnikov's repentance, it is with figuring out how to do it. It may not be immediately apparent what a ridiculously difficult conundrum Dostoevsky has set before himself. To understand this, you need to try solving it. Go ahead: try to finish the story for Dostoevsky, help him out a little. In the meantime, we will give Hector and Anna a shot at the problem:

Anna: "Um, I know: it has to be big and loud, what with everything that has preceded it. You can't prepare people for fireworks and then pop a champagne cork. Maybe Raskolnikov meets a banjo-playing minstrel shouting out the gospel, and he sneaks out to a tent-revival, and there he is touched by the spirit and repents and gives praise unto the Lord! The multitudes gasp; they applaud."

Hector (dryly): "Your rhetoric is overheating. Wrong character, wrong religion. Dostoevsky has a problem that almost defies solution. Of course the solution has to derive from the preceding story, but the real problem is that an epiphany is internal, entirely within the mind. And you're right that after all that rhetoric and to-do—even storm gods now—what a letdown if Raskolnikov says, 'Hey, I just realized something!' I'm going to have to think about this."

That was less helpful than we expected. But while Hector considers the problem, let us consider other aspects of ego-mode/Mind B that have importance in *Crime and Punishment*:

Historically, hurrying is generally believed to rush you right into ego-mode—a notion you can test the next time you are late to work and in traffic—so some religious traditions stress slowing down and moving with conscious deliberation. In *Crime and Punishment*, Razumikhin describes Raskolnikov as "always in a hurry, always too busy, yet he lies there doing nothing." (165/215) The most appalling egoist in the novel, Luzhin, is shown hurrying and obsessed with time. He is in a hurry to get to St. Petersburg, in a hurry to marry, etc. Eventually Dostoevsky creates a wonderful joke out of this: Raskolnikov and Razumikhin try to get to Dunia and Pulkheriia's apartment before Luzhin, but of course Luzhin—Raskolnikov's egoism—rushes and gets there first (225/294, 226/296). Raskolnikov might as well try to outrun his feet as get somewhere ahead of his ego.

Eccentric and obsessive verbalization is an obvious way egoism can

manifest itself, and it is one prized by novelists. In *Crime and Punishment*, we see it with Lebeziatnikov, Katerina Ivanovna, Marfa Petrovna (a gossip), and to some extent with Pulkheriia Aleksandrovna. Yet because such characters are irresistible to novelists, how can we know that here also we are looking at an aspect of a religious issue? This could be a distinction without a difference.

But silence, besides being golden, is also voiceless, as a linguist pointed out to us. It has historically been viewed as a spiritual practice, notably among the Trappist monks. Speech is seen as one of the tools of the ego. And Dostoevsky's views become more obvious when we look at his careful distinctions between his spiritually sound character and the manic ones. Unlike Katerina Ivanovna, Sonia doesn't chatter; her speech is from the heart and unadorned—indeed, once she suggests politely that Raskolnikov unburden himself "straight out…without examples" (319/415). Her letters are without ornament—"all true facts" (415/541). Moreover, her landlord—housing issues again—is the family Kapernaumov, named after a town where Jesus performed a miracle, and they are all tongue-tied.[F] And finally, in Raskolnikov's dream (in Siberia) of a disintegrating civilization, the only people who can save the world are the "pure and chosen ones," but "no one had heard their words or voices" (420/548).

Yet it is not just vocal chatter that inhibits one's ability to suppress the ego; it is also mental chatter. Until the ego-mind settles down and stops its relentless thinking, Original Mind cannot be revealed and attain dominance. We bring this up because Dostoevsky did: when Nastasia asks Raskolnikov what he does, he says he works, and when she asks what kind of work he does, he replies, "I think." Nastasia simply dissolves in laughter (26/29).

But when Raskolnikov has his epiphany, "he [is] not thinking of anything" (421/549).

F. Dostoevsky's use of this name (from the Biblical city Capernaum) becomes clear only late in the novel. Capernaum is a town in the Gospel of John (4) where Jesus performed a miracle. The "tongue-tied" remark recalls the pure and chosen ones in Raskolnikov's vision (419-20/547-48), whose words and voices had not been heard. Dostoevsky could have formed a name from Bethany, where the story of Lazarus took place (much as the heroine in the movie *Dogma* is given this name), but "Capernaum" had the advantage that in nineteenth-century Petersburg it was a slang term for a tavern (кабак—symbolic of Marmeladov's drunkenness) or a brothel (весёлое "заведение"—symbolic of Sonia's debasement). (See Belov 1985: 72.) That is, the dwelling of Divine Wisdom had been turned into a brothel, much the way, as detailed in the second chapter of John, the moneylenders turned a temple into the Bank of Jerusalem.

> Once, towards evening, Raskolnikov, then almost recovered, fell asleep; waking again, he chanced to go to the window and suddenly saw Sonia far away, by the hospital gate. She stood as if she were waiting for something.
>
> —*Crime and Punishment*, Epilogue (420/548)

> Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent.
>
> —Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*

And here comes Hector Paleologus, who has been giving thought to Dostoevsky's problem:

Hector: "It should be obvious by now that Raskolnikov's repentance can't be turned into thought or conversation at all. And how can you criticize an author for saying nothing about the ineffable? When Dostoevsky solves this problem he will do it purely with symbolism; not a word will be spoken, not even the word 'repentance,' which is why your critics thought that Raskolnikov didn't repent."

Dostoevsky never shrank back from difficult problems, but here—if Hector is right—he is forced to signal the culminating event of his novel in a way that precludes his character from either thinking or talking! Is it any wonder that critics routinely assail the Epilogue of *Crime and Punishment*? As always, you get nowhere in analyzing Dostoevsky's methods until you give up and consider his *alternatives*. If you watch how he inexorably pastes the shattered pieces of his hero's mind back together, you can only conclude that the last piece is the linchpin of Raskolnikov's salvation. But the piece is ineffable and profoundly undramatic on the *outside*. Not a word is spoken. Dostoevsky does fling Raskolnikov to the ground, so that at least something is happening in the scene, but this hardly makes the culminating event in *Crime and Punishment* into great drama. The real event had happened before that, and it is fairly matter-of-fact if you haven't been paying attention to the metaphorical story; but if you have, then it is supremely beautiful:

"Suddenly Sonia was beside him."

References:

1. Seeley, in Bloom 2004b: 82.
2. Hazelwood, 68.
3. Hazelwood, 88.
4. Murry, 113.
5. Madaule, in Jackson 1973: 46.
6. Murry, 113.
7. Lawrence, 36.
8. Gibson, 90.
9. Murry, 108; Nuttall, in Bloom 2004a: 11.

Chapter Nine

The Ghost of Topers Future

> For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known.
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> —Luke 12: 2

Dostoevsky's basic metaphorical scheme of *Crime and Punishment* presents Raskolnikov's mind in a fragmented state, then methodically puts the useful and functional parts of his mind back together, while discarding the destructive ones. Generations of commentators have shown that it is easy to be misled by the literal story. For example, critics often feel that if Svidrigailov, realizing his iniquity, at least kills himself, then you have to give him points for honesty and self-sacrifice. Dostoevsky, we suspect, would be distressed by this notion. Svidrigailov is profoundly dishonest and shows little evidence of self-sacrifice throughout what we know of his life. He does occasionally offer money around, but even when he goes to Sonia's, *and finds her at home*, the money is rather severely discounted by its metaphorical baggage. In *Crime and Punishment*, whenever money is offered with impure motives, involves some sort of betrayal, or implies that the recipient is taking advantage of the giver, the quantity of money is always given as three, thirty, three hundred, three thousand, etc., to recall the thirty pieces of silver given Judas for betraying Jesus. (In Dostoevsky's age, few readers would miss this.) So the thirty thousand rubles that Svidrigailov offers Dunia have metaphorical significance attached, as do the thirty thousand rubles with which Marfa Petrovna bailed out Svidrigailov.

Here again, we need to ask what Dostoevsky's alternatives are. Since Svidrigailov is the narrowly self-interested part of Raskolnikov's mind, involved in sensual pursuits at all costs, and he has to be destroyed for Raskolnikov to thrive, why not simply have Raskolnikov kill him? We asked Hector Paleologus, whose talents are tailored to such questions:

Hector: "This would work only for the metaphorical story. On the literal level, Dostoevsky would have caused his hero, already burdened by two murders, to commit yet another murder."

Anna: "Why can't Dostoevsky have him suffer a grievous accident, like Marmeladov?"

Hector: "His fate has to derive from his behavior, like Marmeladov's; it can't really ***be*** *'accidental.'"*

In fiction and reality both, an accident, as Ambrose Bierce points out in *The Devil's Dictionary*, is an "inevitable occurrence due to the action of immutable natural laws." From Dostoevsky's point of view, Svidrigailov comes to see that he is non-viable and for this reason does himself in. It is not that he sacrifices himself; he simply can't stand his life. By our count, Svidrigailov mentions his own boredom five times. But on the metaphorical level, Raskolnikov comes to see that his selfishness is, well, a dead end.

Leaving Svidrigailov for now, let us get back to Marmeladov's fatal "accident" in the street. We have Ambrose Bierce's authority that accidents result from immutable natural laws, so let us consider how this notion applies to Marmeladov's.

Marmeladov's death is actually anticipated in the text when Raskolnikov stops paying attention to where he is going, wanders into traffic, and almost gets run over by a carriage, whose driver lashes him on the back with his whip (89/113). In other words, what almost happens to Raskolnikov is what kills Marmeladov. Here again, Marmeladov reifies what could become of Raskolnikov if he continues down the particular path that Marmeladov takes.

So for Raskolnikov not to end up as a Marmeladov, no matter how attractive it might seem just to plop himself down in a tavern and drink his cares away, he has to suppress that aspect of himself that tends toward this kind of behavior: Marmeladov must die. Not for nothing does Svidrigailov ask Raskolnikov if he believes in ghosts: *Crime and Punishment* is all about ghosts—spooky versions of possible fates of the hero.

In readings of *Crime and Punishment*, when a critic complains about all the coincidences, what this really means is that he or she doesn't understand the metaphorical story. On the metaphorical level, *Crime and Punishment* simply doesn't have *any* of those let-me-out-of-here tricks by which narrators slash their way through a thicket of inconvenient plot. Marmeladov's story is an excellent example of both ways of looking at *Crime and Punishment*. On the literal level, a major plot development comes about by chance when the hero wanders into a bar and meets the father of his eventual sweetheart. Face it: the merest Nurse Novel could do better than that. But on the metaphorical level, the hero makes a poor decision, and a reification of the consequences of that decision pops up in front of him (fathering, as a reaction, his first *good* decision). Here the logic of the events is inexorable and flawless. You may have the other Dostoevsky; we like this one.

But there are other important ways in which Marmeladov is not at all just a casual acquaintance. Dostoevsky gathers together in him the various

ways in which the original Raskolnikov—the innocent, devoted, and spiritually sound child represented in his mother's letter—would disintegrate if he chose to live by shunning his responsibilities, of which remaining sober and attentive enough to cross a street is one of the simpler ones. The short-term consequences of avoiding responsibility might be pleasant, which is surely why Dostoevsky created for Marmeladov a name implying sweetness (Marmalade, son of Sugar—see Chapter 4 note C—much like "Rock, son of Rock").[A] The sweetness hints at the delectable but sadly shortsighted life-choices of Marmeladov; his is a dessert-first sort of life.

Marmeladov's first name is "Semion," or Simeon, who is the saint shown in iconography holding the infant Jesus, another hint at the spiritual essence of Marmeladov's daughter Sonia (see Luke 2: 25 ff.). We puzzled for years over why the father of "Divine Wisdom" is an irresponsible drunk, but as usually happens in such cases, we were asking the question wrong. This problem becomes very simple when you finally accept the fact that Dostoevsky goes further with his metaphorical version than other novelists do: he doesn't just hint at a character's qualities with an allegorical name, he actually reifies the pieces of Raskolnikov's mind into characters with these qualities. And, not content with that, he then reifies Raskolnikov's thoughts as well. Imagine what life would be like if it resembled *Crime and Punishment*: you think of an old girlfriend with a grudge and—poof!—she appears in front of you waving a restraining order that you just violated.

Marmeladov is a drunk for much the same reason that Sonia is a prostitute: their condition is symbolic of the disintegration of Raskolnikov's faculties. Similarly, Marfa Petrovna is a deteriorated aspect of Raskolnikov's mind: while she clearly represents the effect on behavior of "what people would think," she has allowed herself to be corrupted by protecting Svidrigailov—Raskolnikov's evil side—from being "imprisoned" by the authorities (she bought Svidrigailov off with "30,000 pieces of silver" [218/285]).

But if Marfa Petrovna is dead, how is Raskolnikov to be kept on course during recovery? The answer is that he no longer needs to be kept on good behavior by "what would people think." He gradually attains a replacement for the crude policing of his behavior by Marfa Petrovna: a direct connection, through Sonia, to a higher wisdom.

Yet by showing the good pieces of Raskolnikov's mind in corroded

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A. We mentioned Dostoevsky's similarly self-deceiving character "Pralinskii," from "praline" (in Скверный анекдот "A Nasty Tale" [1862], *PSS* 5: 5-45). The word *hedonism* itself, in both English and occasionally Russian, is from Greek *hēdý* "sweet."

form, Dostoevsky causes serious problems in interpretation. Once you understand this, though, you find that Zosimov, whose name derives from the Greek word for "life," is actually one of the simple characters: when he shows up, Raskolnikov gets livelier. This is why Dostoevsky made him into a doctor, and why Razumikhin says he will be a good doctor. We know Zosimov is becoming soft and degenerate, because Razumikhin says so (160/208), but that is because he is in an unhealthy matrix, namely Petersburg. One fact tells us a lot: only he and Porfirii are reported to be at the wedding of Razumikhin and Dunia (414/540); the non-viable pieces of Raskolnikov's mind aren't invited.

❖

Marmeladov's distinguishing quality is his drunkenness, but this hardly makes him unique in *Crime and Punishment.* So what does he represent?

Dostoevsky clearly sees Marmeladov in terms of the original Raskolnikov, the child, who is portrayed as still spiritually intact, still a believer. This is how Raskolnikov's mother remembers him (34/39). In Marmeladov this devotion to the spirit has disintegrated into devotion to the flesh, to stay with Biblical terms; but the scriptural framework is still present: Marmeladov uses archaic, churchy-sounding language (words like коли, паче, внуте, лоно) and speaks of everything in scriptural terms, as when he says "everything hidden will be made manifest" (14/15), an allusion to Luke 12: 2.[B] In other words, Marmeladov embodies Raskolnikov's disintegration of religious values, while keeping the empty forms. So he tells of how Sonia returns from her first night of prostitution "at the ninth hour," which is the hour at which, according to Matthew 27: 46, Jesus cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" The biblical reference draws attention to the contrast between Marmeladov's lofty rhetoric and the tawdry event that took place before the ninth hour.

As with most of *Crime and Punishment*, Marmeladov's death scene is either an overdone melodrama or a cosmic event, depending on whether you read the literal or the metaphorical story. Let us recount the better of the two:

Raskolnikov asks for water (140/178), always a symbol of redemption, and he uses it to wash Marmeladov's bloodstained face. But now the washing causes Divine Wisdom to poof into the scene (for the

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B. Given Dostoevsky's propensity for double meanings, we find it hard to believe that this isn't also a hint to the reader that there is more in the text of *Crime and Punishment* than just the literal story.

literalists: Polia fetches her). But Sonia doesn't cross the threshold until Marmeladov undergoes confession, and then it takes him a moment to recognize her. The spiritual side of Raskolnikov, lost in self-indulgence and hedonism, is hard put to recognize Divine Wisdom! Marmeladov then asks Sonia for forgiveness—confession first, repentance second, as with Raskolnikov himself—and he dies in her arms.[C]

Once one sees the function of Marmeladov, it becomes easy to understand the time-line of events in *Crime and Punishment*. Like everything else in the novel, the time-line follows the metaphorical story, not the literal one. On the literal level, in fact, one can scarcely see any pattern at all in the events that take place before the beginning of the novel:

Timeline

1. *About three years ago*: Raskolnikov leaves home (33/38) to study law in Saint Petersburg, gets lodgings with a Russian landlady, Praskovia Pavlovna Zarnitsyna, and makes a verbal promise to marry her daughter Natalia (80/102). Razumikhin starts hearing the "rational egoism" argument among the Petersburg intelligentsia (116/149).
2. *One and a half years ago*: Raskolnikov meets Razumikhin (165/215) and informs his mother that he is engaged to the landlady's daughter (166/216).[D] The Marmeladovs move to St. Petersburg (16/17).
3. *One year ago*: The landlady's daughter, Raskolnikov's fiancée, dies (81/102).
4. *Nine months ago*: Raskolnikov gives his landlady a promissory note for 115 roubles (77/98).
5. *Half a year ago*: Raskolnikov drops out of the university and writes his article on crime (198/258); he begins to stay at home without seeing anyone (206/268). Zosimov thinks that the origin of Raskolnikov's disorder started about this time (171/223).

C. As we shall see, another character dies *rejecting* confession and repentance, and this very fact is deeply revealing of her place in the metaphorical story.

Thresholds and doors in *Crime and Punishment* are always symbols of the moment of access to consciousness. In other words, when Razumikhin appears at the threshold of Raskolnikov's room, it means that Raskolnikov's Reason is gaining access to him. Perhaps because of this, characters in *Crime and Punishment* often don't knock before opening the door to someone else's room, and if the door is open, they may hesitate at the threshold.

D. Pevear and Volokhonsky give this (полтора года "year and a half") as "a year" (216). Such details often seem unimportant in the overall hassle of making a readable translation; unfortunately, for constructs as tight as Dostoevsky's, changes can sometimes confuse or destroy the trail of evidence.

6. *Four months ago*: Raskolnikov's mother, Pulkheriia Aleksandrovna, sends him fifteen roubles (27/30-31), and, at the same time, he loses his lessons and stops paying his landlady for room and board (89/102). This is the last time he and Razumikhin visit each other (87/111).
7. *Just over two months ago*: Raskolnikov's mother last wrote to him (27/30).
8. *Two months ago*: Raskolnikov writes to his mother to say he has heard Dunia is suffering as a governess in Svidrigailov's house (28/31). Raskolnikov sees Razumikhin and crosses the street to avoid him (44/52). Porfirii reads Raskolnikov's article (198/258).
9. *Six weeks ago*: Raskolnikov remembers the pawnbroker Aliona Ivanovna's address and pawns a ring his sister Dunia had given him (53/63); on the way home, in a wretched inn, he hears two men talking about the idea of killing the pawnbroker (53-54/63-65). At this same time, Dunia is sent back to her mother in an open cart in pouring rain from the Svidrigailovs' (29/32).
10. *Five weeks to one month ago*: According to Marmeladov, Katerina Ivanovna forces Sonia into prostitution (18/18-19) and Marmeladov gets a job the next morning (19/20); Lebeziatnikov thrashes Katerina for defending "fallen" Sonia (13/13, 18/19). Raskolnikov counts the steps to the pawnbroker's (7/5) and starts thinking about Tsar' Gorokh (6/4).[E]
11. *Two weeks ago*: Marfa Petrovna learns from a letter the truth about Svidrigailov propositioning Dunia (29-30/33). The landlady stops sending Raskolnikov food (26/28). Raskolnikov gets the idea of a loop under his coat to hold the axe (56/68).
12. *Six days ago*: Marmeladov gets his first salary and goes on a five-day binge (20/21).
13. *Several days ago*: Pulkheriia sends her letter to Raskolnikov, and Marfa dies (175/228).
14. *The day after Marfa Petrovna's funeral*: Svidrigailov sets off for St. Petersburg (219/286), arriving there two days before his conversation with Raskolnikov and a day before the arrival of Dunia and Pulkheriia.
15. *Present time, at the start of the novel*: Raskolnikov makes another visit to the pawnbroker and pawns his father's watch (8/9).

E. Pevear and Volokhonsky translate this image as "cuckooland," Garnett more felicitously as "Jack the Giant-killer." Tsar' Gorokh—King Pea—is a figure from Russian folktale who has some interestingly close parallels to Raskolnikov and his grand scheme that James Rice (1981) explores at some length.

If you look at these events from the point of view of the metaphorical story, they make far better sense: Raskolnikov moves away from home, his spiritual base (see Chapter 11), and is eventually infected, in Petersburg, with Marmeladov-syndrome. In time, this causes him to stop working and quit school. He then cadges off his desperately poor mother and—no coincidence—stops visiting Razumikhin (i.e., his own Reason), and actually crosses the street to avoid him. And Razumikhin turns out to have been listening to radical chatter for as long as Raskolnikov has been in Petersburg. This would be another amazing coincidence if it weren't that Razumikhin is a piece of Raskolnikov's mind.

And look at the way the time-line connects events: Raskolnikov pawns the ring Dunia had given him at the same time Dunia is sent back to her mother's in disgrace. On the metaphorical level, the one event brings on the other.[F] In other words, with the pawning of the ring, Raskolnikov betrays "Dunia," the side of him that is self-sacrificing and free of ego, the side that has "right thought," as her name says.

But if Raskolnikov's first visit to the pawnbroker has metaphorical consequences, then shouldn't his counting the steps to her place as well? What happened at that time? What happened is that "Lebeziatnikov" thrashed "Katerina Ivanovna." On the literal level, this event has little connection to the story, so we will have to look to the metaphorical meanings of the characters for the explanation. And that is one of the subjects of the next chapter: stay tuned.

Only by studying the time-line carefully do you realize that it was precisely when Raskolnikov *received* money from his mother that he stopped paying his landlady. In other words, his decision to stop paying the landlady did not derive from his lacking the money to do so. He stopped paying her because, on the metaphorical level, he was moving away from his Russianness, even while continuing to cadge off it; and she quit feeding him, both literally and metaphorically. At the same time, Raskolnikov stops having anything to do with his own Reason. And there is certainly a connection between the events detailed in Item 13: It is the letter that convinces Raskolnikov to go ahead and commit the murder, so it is no accident that the creation of the letter and the death of Marfa Petrovna (the inhibiting force on "Svidrigailov") coincide.

But if this is what is going on, why couldn't it be made easier to follow? To understand that, it is useful to consider another example in

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F. A lovely use of this device occurs in the movie *Men in Black II*, when K points out to the princess that it rains *because* she is sad, not the other way around.

literature of a story with a strong message and multiple versions of reality: Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*. Dickens's novel is far simpler than Dostoevsky's, and the reader is left in no doubt as to the intentions of the author. But Dickens solved a lot of problems by keeping his novel short (about eighty pages). Imagine that Dickens had had the grand ambition of making his novel well over four hundred pages long, with a huge cast of characters, while still focusing on his nice little message that stinginess is inappropriate, especially at Christmas. Perhaps he adds a couple more Ghosts of Christmas: the Ghost of Christmas in the Recent Past and the Ghost of Christmas in the Foreseeable Future.

It is hard, and not especially pleasant, to imagine *A Christmas Carol* stretched out to the length of *Crime and Punishment*. The message is just too trivial to hold up all that narrative weight—a sumo wrestler balancing on a toothpick. Readers would become exasperated, and if they didn't stop reading, after a couple hundred pages they might begin to wonder if this fellow Scrooge didn't have a point. Another hundred pages and they might even long to see Scrooge drop-kick Tiny Tim down a flight of stairs. Too much self-righteous goodness from a lofty narrator and the story becomes sticky to the touch, which one can think of as the treacle-down theory. Dickens understood this very well.

But Dostoevsky didn't have Dickens's options; he *couldn't* keep it short. The message of *A Christmas Carol* is that it's unattractive and ultimately bad for you to be too stingy. Try stating the message of *Crime and Punishment* in a few words. It took us two chapters (Seven and Eight) just to give an accounting of it. And if he couldn't keep it short, and too much preaching is intolerable, then Dostoevsky's only options were a full set of footnotes or a very murky text. Otherwise—poof!—the fatal bookmark that closes the book forever is invoked.

Dostoevsky chose murkiness, and on balance it was surely the best choice available. People may not understand his message, but they still read his novel a hundred and forty years after its publication.[G]

G. When Saddam Hussein was located, "The books scattered about [at his hideout] included Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, some poetry and a volume on the interpretation of dreams." (*New York Times*, 12/18/03: D1)

Chapter Ten

Yet Here's a Spot

> Besides, she was proud, much too proud…
> —Marmeladov, speaking of Katerina (16/17)

> *Gentlewoman*: It is an accustomed action with her, to seem thus washing her hands: I have known her continue in this a quarter of an hour.
> *Lady Macbeth*: Yet here's a spot. […] Out, damned spot! out, I say! [...] What, will these hands ne'er be clean? Here's the smell of the blood still: all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand.
>
> — *MacBeth*, V, i

A while back we sneaked away from Part Five without acknowledging that we had left half of it untouched. It is only the first half of Part Five that deals with the eviction of Luzhin—Rational Egoism—from Raskolnikov's mind. What are we to make of the second half? In the second half, yet another character comes to a bad end, but here the relationship between the literal and the metaphorical stories is not so easily seen. The reader, watching the demolition of Luzhin, might think, Bravo, Fiodor! But why does poor Katerina Ivanovna have to be killed?

While Raskolnikov gets to know Marmeladov and his wife Katerina on the same day, Katerina dies much later than Marmeladov. This could suggest that she represents a more tenacious part of Raskolnikov's mind. But we think it is more to the point that it is only the death of the metaphorical Marmeladov that allows Raskolnikov to reckon with the metaphorical Katerina. This is because of what Marmeladov represents: Raskolnikov's tendency to turn away from reality instead of facing up to it. Until Raskolnikov kills off this metaphorical character, the others are safe from his scrutiny. How can he evict Luzhin and kill off Katerina—the metaphorical ones, that is—until he recognizes them for what they are? So the logic of the metaphorical story requires that Marmeladov die first.

If we have followed the metaphorical story, there is simply no doubt that Katerina is doomed. Indeed, she is doomed literally as well as metaphorically the instant Raskolnikov gets to know her—she has already

acquired tuberculosis. She is doomed because, just as Marmeladov is a symbol of the consequences of resolutely refusing to face your life, Katerina is a symbol of vanity, presumption, self-conceit, and unbelief. But how can we prove that this is what Katerina represents? Well, there are two ways we can do this. The dull, boring one is to recite the evidence we gathered by using the find-command on the Garnett translation of *Crime and Punishment* that the Gutenberg Project has graciously made available on the web. That leads us to quotations such as the one at the head of this chapter, where Marmeladov describes his wife as "much too proud." "Lack of faith" is simple: as she dies, Katerina rejects a priest, saying that there is no need—"There are no sins on me!" (333/434) This from the woman who sent Sonia into prostitution and beats her children.

But it is far more fun to show how Dostoevsky, in a remarkable *double entendre*, actually has Divine Wisdom give us the key to Katerina Ivanovna's character: the narrator reports that Sonia "knew, besides, [Raskolnikov's] vanity, his presumption, his self-conceit, and his unbelief." (402/521) This summation is clearly intended as a description of Katerina, and when Katerina beats Sonia, we see Vanity mistreating Wisdom. Sonia doesn't just know these qualities of Raskolnikov, she was actually forced into prostitution by their embodiment! The particular constellation of qualities makes sense as well, since it is Katerina's vanity, presumption, and self-conceit that cause her to believe that she is free of sin.

Katerina Ivanovna's ravings often have double meanings as well. She tells the tenants that Luzhin is "a most noble and magnanimous man, with the most vast connections and wealth, her first husband's old friend, received in her father's house, and that he had promised to use every means to obtain a considerable pension for her." (292/381) None of this is true of the literal Luzhin, but all of it makes sense as a manifestation of what he represents, namely Ego.[A]

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Once Raskolnikov sees the "Katerina Ivanovna" qualities clearly, he can recognize their destructiveness. Hence Katerina is already moribund the instant she appears in his consciousness.

A. The mention of her first husband reminds us that Katerina Ivanovna is clearly modeled on Dostoevsky's first wife, who also died of tuberculosis. Her first husband was an alcoholic who died well after Dostoevsky had got involved with the wife. On the metaphorical level, Katerina Ivanovna's remark that "Luzhin," or Ego, was a "good friend" of her first husband (292/381) is probably accurate enough, given the typical course of acute alcoholism (when eventually the alcoholic can think only about defending his/her access to alcohol).

On one level only, Katerina is a wonderfully simple character. While there are over fifty St. Johns (Ioann, Ivan) in the Russian Orthodox calendar and six Porfiriis, there is only one St. Katherine (Ekaterina), and the meaning ascribed to the name in the calendar is чистая "pure, clean."[B] If there were any doubt that this meaning is what Dostoevsky intended, he settles the matter with a bravura example of his narrative-punning: Katerina's motif is that she is always engaged in obsessively cleaning, washing, scrubbing up. But the cleaning is metaphorical as well as literal: she prostitutes Divine Wisdom but then keeps her looking good. She spiffs up her drunken husband. So she represents the way pride can tidy up even something ugly, pretending that it is not all that bad.

How does this relate to Raskolnikov's behavior? What ugly thing did he tidy up? Obviously the murder of the old money-lender. Early on, Raskolnikov had splendid justifications, heroic ones even, for killing an old woman. But as Joseph Frank has demonstrated in meticulous detail,[1] in the course of the novel these are stripped bare, and the act is revealed as merely selfish. For this revelation to take place, the part of Raskolnikov that gussies up ugly things in the interests of pride has to be killed off.

Her name implies more than just her compulsive cleaning, however; we are also intended to see her as pure as well. We have the most compelling evidence for this: Sonia herself—Divine Wisdom—tells Raskolnikov that Katerina is "pure" (243/318). In other words, it is Marmeladov all over again: like him, Katerina is a warped version of a healthy part of the mind. Just as Marmeladov is a warped version of Raskolnikov's religion, stunted and debased by his self-indulgence, Katerina is a warped version of pride—a metaphor for how Raskolnikov has misused his own pride. Katerina's patronymic—Ivanovna, daughter of John—presumably hints at the form of cleansing implied in the Gospel of John, the use of the Living Water. This is how she can be both corrupt and pure. It is of course Sonia who can see the original Katerina, the pure one. But *that* Katerina has been reduced to servitude in the interests of prettying up evil.

And now let's go back to a curious coincidence we mentioned in the last chapter: At the same time that Raskolnikov made his second trip to the pawnbroker, Lebeziatnikov thrashed Katerina Ivanovna, or, more accurately, "Lebeziatnikov" thrashed "Katerina Ivanovna." As usual, it wasn't a

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B. This is, as it happens, a false etymology. The Romans apparently made it up for the Greek name (which had *t*, not *th*), then put in the theta to make the name match better with their fanciful derivation from *katharós*. The Russian calendar perpetuated this, giving the definition чистая "pure, clean."

coincidence at all that the two events coincided, for Raskolnikov's Pride was being beaten up by the part of Raskolnikov that mindlessly absorbs ideas from his surroundings. In other words, Raskolnikov's pride lost out when he let himself absorb a really stupid idea from his environment.

How do we know that this is what Dostoevsky intended? In fact he tells us, in the scene in which an officer and a student have a conversation about how one could murder Aliona Ivanovna and take her money. You might think that this is where Raskolnikov gets the idea, but it isn't; he already has the idea. But if he already has the idea, what in heaven's name is the point of showing that someone else also has it, and at the same time? There are two answers to this question, and the first is that Dostoevsky is showing the "Lebeziatnikov" aspect of Raskolnikov's mind—demonstrating that his idea is nothing more than the sort of thing young people might talk about in a wretched tavern. The other answer is contained in a remarkable circumstance described in this scene. Raskolnikov finds it strange when he suddenly hears the two men talking about the elderly pawnbroker—"By chance, of course; but just then, when he could not rid himself of a quite extraordinary impression, it was as if someone had come to his service: the student suddenly began telling his friend various details about this Alyona Ivanovna." (53/63) Here we have a Mysterious Force pushing Raskolnikov's plan forward. Since you know that "Lebeziatnikov" is present in the scene, you might suppose that he is the Mysterious Force, but that simply makes no sense: Lebeziatnikov may be stupid, but he is certainly not evil. So from now on we might want to keep an eye out for evil forces that spook around in the novel, invisible but busy.

In the meantime, let's get back to Katerina. As always, the interesting part of her place in the novel is how Dostoevsky uses her death. As soon as Raskolnikov humbles himself before Sonia, and as a direct consequence of this, word comes through Lebeziatnikov that Katerina has gone crazy, and she soon dies. That is, Raskolnikov humbles himself, and his pride—namely that which had prostituted his wisdom—collapses. Now the part of Raskolnikov that had engaged in massive distortions of reality through pride and vanity is no longer present. So it comes as no surprise that the first consequence of her death is clearer vision on Raskolnikov's part: Svidrigailov walks up and reveals that he lives next to Sonia and has been eavesdropping. In other words, Raskolnikov discovers that his self-centered lower nature is uncomfortably close and familiar with his secrets. As he tells Raskolnikov this, Svidrigailov adds, "I told you we'd become close, I predicted it—well, and so we have." (335/436)

And now we need to attend to housing-issues again. Svidrigailov says, “But I’m staying here, just the other side of the wall, at Madame Resslich’s. Kapernaumov is here, and there—Madame Resslich, an ancient and most faithful friend. I’m a neighbor, sir.” (335/436)

“Ancient and most faithful” is good. Dostoevsky is giving us a quiet hint at the function of Madame Resslich (Resslikh, Riosslikh), who, being a procuress, represents the part of Raskolnikov’s mind that houses sensual excesses. That is indeed an ancient and most faithful “friend” of one’s lower self. Note that Svidrigailov distinguishes between Sonia’s housing and his own: Sonia lives with the Kapernaumovs, the tongue-tied people, whose name derives from a Biblical town, told of in the Gospel of John, where Jesus performed a miracle. The name is also a slang term in Russian for a brothel, suggesting how, as a part of Raskolnikov’s consciousness, Divine Wisdom has come down in the world.

But what are we to make of Gertrude Karlovna Resslikh/Riosslikh (188/245])? The suffix “-lich” is the German cognate of English “like,” yet the first part of her surname didn’t recall to us any of Dostoevsky’s symbolism, so we finally gave up and started to write a friend with imagination and much knowledge of German. After explaining “Resslich’s” metaphorical position in the story, we admitted we could make nothing of her name, other than that its second syllable in German would cause umlaut in the first, if the first had a vowel that could be umlauted, so it could be—

Rösslich! An adjective from one of the German words for “horse”! It is really closer in connotation to English “steed,” but the commoner German word, “Pferd,” may have simply been too obvious for Dostoevsky. [C]

C. Russian does not use front lip-rounded (“umlauted”) vowels like German *ö* and *ü*, so they inevitably get changed phonetically coming into Russian. Officially, German *ö* transliterates as Russian *ё* “io”, but the two dots are not usually printed (Ресслих is how it appears pre-spelling-reform), so the resulting *e* is then transliterated back into Roman as *e*, giving *Resslikh*, not *Riosslikh*. And since [ö] minus the lip-rounding is phonetically [e] and [ü] minus rounding is [i], [e] and [i] are the typical results of these vowels coming into spoken Russian (the same sound-change occurred in Old English). So when Pushkin renders “Goethe” as Гете “Gete” and “Göttingen” as Геттинген- “Gettingen-” in *Eugene Onegin* (2.ix, 2.vi), on the 2003 Медиа Книга digital recording these are pronounced as [e], although Russian reference works still give them as *Gёte* and *Gёttingen*. Soon we will see German *ü* coming into Russian as [i]: фри “fri” is not easily recognized as *früh*.

The rest of Riosslikh’s name is “Gertrude” and “Karlovna,” Gertrude being from two Germanic roots, *ger* “spear” and *þruþ* “strength,” while “Karlovna” is “daughter of Karl”; and “Karl,” also the given name of two other minor characters in this novel, is from a Germanic word meaning “man.” Indeed, a procuress is necessarily the progeny of men’s sexual impulses. As for “Gertrude,” since we don’t want to suggest that Dostoevsky →

As it happens, whole herds of horses thunder through *Crime and Punishment*; "horse," "mare," and "nag" occur over forty times in Garnett's translation. Their *fons et origo* is clearly Raskolnikov's dream of the killing of the mare (46-49/55-59), which is used as a symbol of mistreatment of women. Thus Katerina, as she dies, says, "The nag's been overdriven!" (334/435) No accident that the killing of the mare takes place in front of a tavern. (The horses get a little of their own back, of course, when Marmeladov—Katerina's ill-user—dies under horses' hooves.)

And now we can see why Svidrigailov's servant is named "Philip" (Greek *phil-ipp-*)—"lover of horses." Here we have not one but two layers of symbolism, for the horses that Filipp loves are symbolic horses: that is, representations of women as victims. Filipp is one of the two characters who come back to Svidrigailov as ghosts, the other being Marfa Petrovna, and we shall consider his meaning further in Chapter 12.

We now have the data necessary for an accounting of the housing-issues in *Crime and Punishment*:

A. *The facts*: Raskolnikov sublets from a Russian landlady from whom he is estranged, and we learn that when Razumikhin looks for him, he thinks that the building he is looking for is owned by someone named Kharlamov but finally realizes that it is actually owned by someone named Bukh (96/123). (In fact, both Raskolnikov and his landlady had moved to yet another building [135/173], making the search even more difficult.)

The metaphor: Raskolnikov has become estranged from his Russian roots, but Razumikhin, not knowing that, and wholeheartedly Russian himself, looks for him at a building owned by a Russian. (Bukh was an actual building-owner in Petersburg, but this still sounds like one of Dostoevsky's metaphorical jokes: the German word *Buch* "book" is from *Buche* "beech," because beech-wood was originally used for the letters in printing presses. Here it clearly suggests something like "foreign book-learning" and implies, again, a departure from traditional values.)

B. *The facts*: Razumikhin lives on Vasilievsky Island (43/50)—St.

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named his procuress in such a way as to make a naughty joke, we'll just move on.

One of the other German surnames, that of Amalia Lippevekhzel (Lippewechsel), whose patronymic is a subject of discord between Amalia and Katerina, means approximately "lip-switch" and presumably refers either to her moving back and forth between German and bad Russian or to being untrustworthy in verbal dealings.

Basil's Island—but then moves to Pochinkov's ("Mender's") apartments (130/168), close to Raskolnikov (103/132).

The metaphor: Raskolnikov is acquiring better access to his Reason, which has put itself in charge of mending him. Joseph Frank makes the point that Dostoevsky wishes "to link the employment of this faculty not only with the cold calculations of Utilitarianism but also with spontaneous human warmth and generosity."[2] Razumikhin is shabby, always drinking, and gets into questionable sexual adventures with Zametov at Laviza's, but this is again merely a reflection of Raskolnikov's neglect of his faculties. (In one of Dostoevsky's jokes, Razumikhin makes a remark about what dreadful people frequent the apartments where Luzhin has placed Dunia and Pulkheriia, and moments later he says, "I know this corridor, I was here once" [150/204].)

Dostoevsky worries a bit that the reader will fail to see that Razumikhin will shape up, which is why he shows Razumikhin, when he is about to go on a bender (339/443), changing his mind on learning he has a chance with Dunia (340/445). Here we need to untangle the metaphorical story a bit: Razumikhin (Raskolnikov's Reason) is unhappy specifically because Raskolnikov has rejected his sister and mother (he doesn't visit them and feels "panic" when he thinks of them [337/442]; see Chapter 12). When Raskolnikov plays match-maker on the literal level, on the metaphorical level he is bringing his Reason together with his non-egoistic side (that is, Self-Sacrifice), represented by Dunia. This means that an essential part of Raskolnikov's mind will from now on be free of egoism. And that is why, as of this moment, Raskolnikov's Reason can be fully trusted. Indeed, even Svidrigailov—who on the literal level doesn't even know Razumikhin—recommends to Sonia that she entrust her money to him! (385/500)

As one would expect, Razumikhin's accessibility grows throughout the novel, sometimes with dizzying speed. As soon as Marmeladov is killed off, Razumikhin's new abode at "Pochinkov's house is just two steps away" (103/132) and Raskolnikov has "no trouble finding Razumikhin" (148/188). Indeed, that night Razumikhin actually declares he will spend the night in the entryway of Raskolnikov's lodgings (154/201).

C. *The facts*: The Marmeladovs, Sonia, Lebeziatnikov, and Luzhin all live in the same building. Sonia is evicted, Marmeladov dies, then Luzhin is evicted and Katerina dies.

The metaphor: These are all diseased or prostituted parts of Raskolnikov's mind. Sonia can't be killed off, of course, if Raskolnikov is to come to his senses, so she will recover. Her eviction is a metaphor for the

lack of wisdom in Katerina's decision to force Sonia into prostitution—that is, "Divine Wisdom" departs when "Pride" causes a bad decision. The other characters have to be either made wise (Lebeziatnikov, which means that Sonia has to return briefly), evicted (Luzhin), or killed off (both Marmeladovs) for Raskolnikov to be able to see clearly and stop thinking only of himself.

D. *The facts*: Sonia and Svidrigailov live next to each other, renting, respectively, from the Kapernaumovs and Mrs. Riosslikh.

The metaphor: Sonia and Svidrigailov are—in Razumikhin's words—the "two opposite characters in [Raskolnikov], changing places with each other." (165/215) That is why we so often see Raskolnikov change attitudes instantly, as when he first tries to help the girl on the street who is under threat from a passerby, then suddenly tells the policeman to let the man have his fun (42/49). As she had with Luzhin, Sonia engages on the metaphorical level in a battle with Svidrigailov for Raskolnikov's soul, a battle in which frail little Sonia sends Svidrigailov back where he came from—but more on that later.

We haven't even touched on one of the major ways Dostoevsky uses his buildings as metaphors. But we did set our writing consultants, Hector Paleologus and Anna Coluthon, to cogitating on what you could do with a metaphorical building, besides live in it:

Anna: "You could move out of it."

Hector: "And of course into it."

Anna: "You could burn it down. But me personally, I'd redecorate. I'd do it up in mauve."

Hector: "So you're talking about Riosslikh's apartment?"

Anna: "Oh, right, that would imply crimes-against-women. That is so limiting. How about green?"

Hector: "The reader would seek meaning in any color. After all, once the reader knows the building is metaphorical, he or she has to interpret anything that happens to the building in terms of the metaphorical story."

Anna: "Can't Dostoevsky just say and do what he likes? It's his story, after all."

Hector: "No, he can't. All symbolism is subject to the rule of coherence, and Dostoevsky knows that. This is why his symbols connect to each other: Gospel of John > stone > water > Petersburg > buildings in Petersburg > geographic contrasts with Petersburg (Siberia) > weather fronts involving water > flowers > living things > colors, etc. You could go on and on."

*Anna: "**You** could. You just did. "*

Hector: "But I'd redecorate too, now that you mention it."

And Dostoevsky agreed with virtually everything here. Clearly he asked himself: What all can you do with a metaphorical building? Early on, as becomes clear from the evidence in the notebooks, he decided to use Anna's idea to burn a building down—she has a flair for the dramatic—but by the time he wrote the final version of *Crime and Punishment*, he had characteristically made the imagery of fire much subtler. We shall consider it in detail in Chapter 12.

In particular, Dostoevsky agreed with both Hector and Anna on redecorating. All three of them liked the idea of a symbol that could change shape to imply a new reality.

References:

1. Frank 1995: chap. 7.
2. Frank 1995: 99.

Chapter Eleven

Renovations in the House of Mirrors

> They say he can tell stories so that people
> come from all over to hear him.
> —*Crime and Punishment*, 454

> Ich halte ihr die Augen zu
> und küß sie auf den Mund;
> nun läßt sie mich nicht mehr in Ruh,
> sie fragt mich um den Grund.
> —Heine, "Ich halte ihr die Augen zu"

At this point we have to ask the reader's indulgence. Dostoevsky's text is very dense indeed, and while he is courteous enough to scatter substantial proof of his symbolism throughout it, it is simply impossible to give an account of it except by laboriously analyzing the pieces. Once it makes sense, it often dazzles you with its simplicity and elegance. But sometimes, as with the renovations-theme, it is by no means immediately obvious what Dostoevsky has in mind. The obviousness comes later, so hang in there.

For now, we will just let a seemingly wild hypothesis take flight: repainting a room, where the room is a metaphor for an idea, means that you make an idea look different. If this is so, we should be able to prove it from the text, where some serious whitewashing takes place. As soon as Raskolnikov commits his crime, he hides in a room that is being repainted. At this point, one suspects that even Dostoevsky's severest critics would admit that the literal story is incredibly gripping. But Dostoevsky took time out of his busy narrative-schedule to show Raskolnikov revising his motivations as quickly as he commits his crime.

This is the point of the repainting. The crime turned out very different from what he had expected—even down to the number of people he had to kill. So Raskolnikov immediately changes his justifications to adapt them to the scattered awfulness of the crime, which, when it was merely an idea, was rather neat and tidy.

How do we know this is what is meant by the repainting? Let us count the ways. This newly-painted room becomes the focal point of suspicions and theories in the course of the novel. In fact, one of the main

suspects in the crime, a painter, runs out of it just before Raskolnikov slips into it. Moreover, someone yells at the painter to stop, calling him a devil (69/84). Note how Raskolnikov's flight suddenly morphs into the *painter's* flight.

This painter is Mikolai/Mikolka/Nikolashka, all of which are diminutives of Nikolai, named after Nicholas, a saint whom we still worship every year at Christmas. In a moment, we will get back to how we know that it is that particular St. Nicholas, even though, as usual, there are bunches of suspect saints.

In the meantime, we should note that there are also four "Nikolais" in the novel, including Katerina's little son (Kolia), the fellow who beat the mare to death in Raskolnikov's dream (Mikolka), and the name of the bridge where Raskolnikov himself was whipped (Nikolaevskii). Two whippings associated with the same name, Nikolai, should alert us that Dostoevsky is up to something.

But what do the various Nikolais have in common with each other? To understand this, we have to remind ourselves that the characters in *Crime and Punishment* are aspects of Raskolnikov's shattered mind. So the various Nikolais can only be different manifestations of some way that Raskolnikov looks at the world, or some aspect of his mind.

"Nicholas" is from two Greek words meaning "victory of the people" (*níkē* and *laós*), and the St. Nicholas we call Santa Claus was believed to have saved some children from a life of prostitution. We know this is the saint at issue, because Raskolnikov also saved two children, although what he saved them from was a fire. A fire that burned Raskolnikov himself.

And here is another of what we think of as Dostoevsky's exploding motifs: touch them and pieces fly everywhere. In *Crime and Punishment*, "saved from prostitution" is the same as "saved from a fire"—fire as a symbol for illicit passion is one of the clichés of European literature. In Theodor Fontane's *Unwiederbringlich*, two of the characters, one of them married, have a tryst in a chateau and, when the building goes up in flames, have to climb out of the window before an admiring public. In the next chapter, we will go into how the fires in *Crime and Punishment* are quenched. The novel *is* aflame, by the way, although even a reader familiar with it might have trouble remembering the fires and their quenching. Not for nothing does Svidrigailov's big scene take place with a fireman in attendance.

But the motifs do not only explode, they also self-replicate; each metaphorical building is really a house of mirrors. Raskolnikov does save two metaphorical women from a life of prostitution: Sonia and Dunia

(remember that we are repeatedly told that Dunia, in giving herself to Luzhin, is doing the same thing as Sonia). And Raskolnikov's actions ultimately do save two children—the Marmeladov daughters—from a life of prostitution. Before he comes to his senses and saves them, he tells Sonia that they too will end up as prostitutes. In the real world Sonia might be expected to stick around and take care of the children, but on the metaphorical level she did—by another means. Aided by Divine Wisdom, Svidrigailov provided for them, then sensibly removed himself from the scene by suicide. The children are no longer in danger. But how do we know that Sonia worked her magic on Svidrigailov? Dostoevsky *tells* us: "He went straight to Sonia. She was at home" (384/499). Now, the money Svidrigailov supplies for the children had strings attached: it was three thousand rubles, and in *Crime and Punishment* any amount of money with a three in it is a version of the thirty pieces of silver provided to Judas for the betrayal of Jesus. But Svidrigailov never has a chance to take advantage of any more children, for his exposure to Divine Wisdom is like daylight to a vampire, and he dies the same night.[A]

Once a metaphor, always a metaphor, as Hector has pointed out. If renovations are a metaphor for a new rationalization, then they should come up at Porfirii's office in the central detective bureau, and they do: "They've been doing a bit of renovating here," says Porfirii (256/333), just before Raskolnikov comes up with an excellent new reason for his crime (for which, see below). And the district police station, too, smells of paint, precisely because it is where people go to refine their alibis and

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A. The literal story of *Crime and Punishment* requires a supply of money to care for the various characters at the end. As Shklovskii says (1957: 187), "A good deed is needed..." But this money, for the sake of coherence, must come from someone in the story. Just as a mystery can't choose its villain from characters outside the story, the money for the orphaned children can't come from a rich and generous patron uninvolved in the plot.

We have to look at this from Dostoevsky's point of view. Svidrigailov is the only character who has an abundance of money. And after all, he can't take it with him where he's going. So he becomes the obvious choice as a donor to needy children.

But Dostoevsky also clearly realized that the reader knows Svidrigailov as someone who takes money, not someone who gives it away. What to do? His solution was to cause Svidrigailov to undergo the celestial rinsing that brings Raskolnikov to his senses, then *go to Sonia*—that is, acquire a modicum of wisdom—and only then do something of benefit to mankind. Finally, on the chance that we will miss the point and go "Awwww!" when Svidrigailov gives money for a good cause, Dostoevsky causes him to give Sonia 3,000 rubles—another of version of the thirty pieces of silver from the Gospels. Probably the main point of this is to remind us that Svidrigailov always has a hidden agenda. (His hidden agenda for taking her little step-sisters under his wing is easy to surmise.)

justifications. This is a very fine and subtle joke on Dostoevsky's part, but like all jokes, it suffers when you explain it. It comes up again later when Raskolnikov explains his collapse in the police station by saying he was sick from the paint-fumes (149/190). And then, when Raskolnikov goes to the police station to confess: poof!—the paint-fumes have disappeared.

Here again Dostoevsky shows a wonderful efficiency in his imagery: for obvious reasons, he has to involve the authorities in the crime, so he gives them a function on the metaphorical level by turning the investigator into Conscience (Porfirii), the district police station into a kind of Bureau of Rationalizations, indicated by the new paint, and one of the staff into an avenging weather-god (Ilia Petrovich), prepared to take Raskolnikov's confession. Remember that we are still on storm-watch. (There is more to the police station than this, but we will get back to it soon.)

And watch how the mirrors work: a peasant named Mikolka (Nikolai) cruelly kills a mare in Raskolnikov's dream of childhood, but as we shall see in the next chapter, the mare is a symbol of Raskolnikov's crime against women. Who, then, is Mikolka? Well, if he "killed the mare," he can only be an aspect of Raskolnikov himself, which we already know from the story of St. Nicholas, for whose name "Mikolka" is a diminutive. Raskolnikov, then, is watching the cruel streak in his own nature as a child. And the cruelty then wends its way, intact, through time and eventually manifests as the murders Raskolnikov commits. But note that we're also seeing the pre-Petersburg version of Raskolnikov, the innocent child immersed in his religion, who rejects and is horrified by the cruelty of his alter-ego. Both versions make it into the present-time story: the Killer and the Innocent. The latter version of Mikolka (Nikolai again: Nikolai Dementev) is engaged in repainting a room where Raskolnikov hides, and, ending up with one of the stolen articles, he falls under suspicion. He then bursts into Porfirii's interrogation of Raskolnikov and confesses to having committed the crime, explaining that he did it to take suffering on himself.[B]

But because Nikolai is actually a version of Raskolnikov, what is happening here is that Raskolnikov is offering his conscience a new version of his motivation for the crime, now that the crime has gone badly awry.

B. Richard Peace (1971: 45) points out that Mikolka "is obviously to be taken as a shadowy *double* for Raskolnikov himself. Thus not only is he arrested instead of Raskolnikov on suspicion of the murder, but the psychological evidence which would seem to vindicate him (i.e., his laughter and high-spirits immediately after the murder) is used by Raskolnikov as a means of throwing suspicion away from himself: on the occasion of his first visit to Porfirii, Raskolnikov teases Razumikhin so that he may enter Porfirii's apartment laughing and in obvious high spirits."

Anyone who doubts this has some serious explaining to do—starting with the following scene, which takes place as Raskolnikov is leaving Porfirii's office:

> "I would wish you greater success, but, you see, your job is so comical!"
>
> "How is it comical, sir?" Porfiry, who had also turned to go, instantly pricked up his ears.
>
> "Well, just take this poor Mikolka, whom you must have tortured and tormented psychologically, the way you do, until he confessed; you must have been proving it to him day and night: 'You are the murderer, you are the murderer…'—well, and now that he's confessed, you're going to pick him apart bone by bone: 'You're lying, you're not the murderer! You couldn't have been! You're not using your own words!' How can it not be a comical job after that?"
>
> "Heh, heh, heh! So you noticed I just told Nikolai that he wasn't 'using his own words'?" (273/354).

This passage is simply gibberish if you view Porfirii as a detective seeking a murderer. Raskolnikov is saying that Porfirii tormented Mikolka (Nikolai Dementev) until he confessed, but now will reject his confession! If he knows Mikolka did not do it, why would he torment him into confessing? And what would be gained by then denying his confession? These questions assume that, for Porfirii, the real issue is to find and prosecute the murderer. But that is simply *not* what Porfirii is trying to do.

On the metaphorical level, the scene makes perfect sense. Raskolnikov has been tortured and tormented psychologically—that is, by his conscience, Porfirii—until he admits to himself that he did commit the crime, but with the stipulation that he had a pretty good motive, to take suffering upon himself. Not a great motive, like his original one, which was to be a benefactor to mankind. But a modest little motive with a touch of heroic self-sacrifice. This doesn't wash with Porfirii, who will not be content—and disappear—until late in the novel, when Raskolnikov stops justifying his brutality and selfishness. And that is when the smell of paint disappears from the district police station.

To grasp the magnitude of Dostoevsky's achievement here, we need to remember that there is a standard way of writing this scene, as we all know from movies and television programs. You stick with just the literal level of reality and put Porfirii and Raskolnikov into a little room together, where they try to outsmart each other. This allows for some good drama. By now it is a bit threadbare, of course; it was not new even in Dostoevsky's time. But what if you could give the murderer's alibi flesh and blood, turn it

into a completely different and strikingly distinctive character—a new face to the audience—then have him barge in and interrupt the proceedings!

Dostoevsky does just this. The result is a version of an ancient motif that is new, dynamic, startling, funny, and incredibly gripping.

While we were writing this, a delightful coincidence took place. One of our early readers called up and began to rave about the very scene between Porfirii and Raskolnikov and Mikolka that we have been picking apart. What was amazing was that he loved this scene even though he was still reading the literal story. Our own taste has been spoiled by the metaphorical story, which is where Dostoevsky put most of his attention. But what a storytelling tour de force, when a writer can keep three versions of a story going at once, and people rave about the least of them!

Did we say three?

Naturally, if Nikolai Dementev is a version of Raskolnikov, he should reflect Raskolnikov's life-experience in some recognizable way.[C] And in fact Porfirii, who should know, gives an in-depth analysis of Mikolka, making it abundantly clear that he is the pre-Petersburg version of Raskolnikov, an innocent corrupted by the big city. And suddenly everything is happening at once. We have tried to hold back the floodwaters, but here they are pouring in at such a rate as to threaten the structural integrity of our chapter. We shall let Dostoevsky tell his own story, and see if you recognize who "Porfirii" is talking about:

> First of all, he's still immature, a child, and not so much a coward as something like a sort of artist. Really, sir, don't laugh that I interpret him this way. He's innocent and susceptible to everything. He has heart; he's fanciful. He sings, he dances, and they say he can tell stories so that people come from all over to hear him. And he goes to school, and he

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C. We have found two derivations for Mikolka's family name, Dement'ev. What in our opinion was the seemingly obvious derivation, from the Latin word that gave us "demented," leads nowhere. Two sources (Oleinikova and Fedosiuk), however, insist that the name comes from a Latin word for *ukrotitel'* "tamer," while Moroshkin (1867: 69; 1885) derives it from St. Dometii, etymologically from *domito/domitus* "to tame". We decided that the text should prove whether or not this is true—and indeed it offered persuasive backing for the idea. There are many images involving wild animals, but the most telling refer to Svidrigailov, who says to Raskolnikov, "I'm really not such a bear as you think," but then, when he is contemplating suicide, compares his preparations with "the way an animal makes sure to choose a place for itself…on a similar occasion" (389/505). The other characters who are compared with animals (or compare themselves with animals) either die, like Marmeladov, or shape up, like Razumikhin. In other words, Raskolnikov's Original Mind, represented by Mikolka, tames them.

> laughs his head off if somebody just shows him a finger, and he gets dead drunk, not really from depravity, but in spells, when he's given drink, again like a child. He stole that time, for instance, and he does not realize it—he "just picked it up from the ground; what kind of stealing is that?" And do you know he's a schismatic? Or not really a schismatic, but a sectarian; there were Runners in his family, and he himself recently spent two whole years in a village, under the spiritual direction of a certain elder. I learned all this from Mikolka and from his Zaraisk friends. What's more, all he wanted was to flee to the desert! He was zealous, prayed to God at night, and read, just couldn't stop reading—the old books, the "true" ones. Petersburg had a strong effect on him, especially the female sex, yes, and wine, too. He's susceptible, sir, he forgot the elder and all the rest. It's known to me that a certain artist took a liking to him, used to go and see him, and then this incident came along! (347/454-55)

Let us consider the easy and obvious details first:

1. "All he wanted was to flee to the desert." We refer you to Raskolnikov's dream of the oasis (56/67).

2. He was a schismatic, but not really. "Schismatic" is *raskol'nik*, from which Dostoevsky created his hero's name. If you wondered whether Mikolka is in fact a version of Raskolnikov, here is a nudge to the reader that would knock an ocean liner loose from its moorings.

3. He had sexual issues. So does Raskolnikov; this is why he has to kill off Svidrigailov.

4. He is an on-and-off drunk. This is why Marmeladov has to be killed—the aspect of Raskolnikov that was tempted by boozing.

5. He is from Zaraisk. The patron saint of Zaraisk is—St. Nicholas the Miracle-Worker, come up all the way from the eastern Mediterranean. *The* St. Nicholas.[D]

6. Like Raskolnikov, Mikolka has a friend named Dmitrii (also Razumikhin's first name).

D. Recall that Raskolnikov asks himself, "What does she [Sonia] expect, a miracle?" (248/323) But of course Sonia does expect a miracle, and she gets it. Dostoevsky left it to the reader to recall that St. Nicholas's *epitheton ornans* is "the miracle-worker." Much later, another novelist, William Goldman, did something similar in *The Princess Bride* (1973), where a character is given the name "Miracle Max." When Miracle Max brings the hero back to life, the reader (or movie-viewer) can hardly argue that the narrator is taking liberties with his ability to suspend his disbelief. He told us, after all, that Max was associated with miracles.

All this is easy enough, but it has been our experience that in *Crime and Punishment* it is always the details that do not make immediate sense that reveal what Dostoevsky is really getting at. So let's make a list of these and see how they relate to Raskolnikov:

1. He is an artist. Nope, there is nothing in the novel about Raskolnikov being an artist.

2. He is a great storyteller. This is the first we have heard of people coming from all around to hear Raskolnikov tell stories.

3. A certain artist took a liking to him. Not in our copy of *Crime and Punishment*.

4. He stole something, not realizing that it was stealing. For all his excuses, Raskolnikov definitely knew he was stealing.

The reason we are not finding anything in the novel is that we are looking in the wrong place. We have suggested delicately here and there that Dostoevsky was writing a novel about his own epiphany—a life-altering mental event that he underwent—, which is supported by the fact that he has Raskolnikov live at the same intersection in Petersburg where he himself once lived.[1] Understandably, if he was going to go to all this trouble, he would put in a few details to hint at what he was doing. Just as understandably, he did not want to speak openly about his own obsessions and sexual issues, and it must be stressed that in Marmeladov and Svidrigailov he is presenting drinking and sexual issues in their extremes, for the purpose of showing why they can be dangerous. Dostoevsky certainly was not confessing to raping children. There is much reason to believe that he was just as offended by such behavior as Raskolnikov is in the novel (see Chapter 8 note B), but he creates such magic with his writing that he makes obvious lies seem wonderful possibilities. If this were not so, critics would not have such trouble grasping what Dostoevsky intended with Svidrigailov.

But if it is Dostoevsky's epiphany that is at issue, then, when we find that we cannot match these details up with Raskolnikov, we might want to see if we can match them up with Dostoevsky himself:

1. He is an artist. This is certainly a metaphor—that is, we are not intended to suppose that Mikolka did landscapes in oils. We feel we can safely say that, yes, Dostoevsky is an artist. But as we will see from the next item, "artist" is transposed to:

2. He is a great storyteller. Well, not if you believe Vladimir Nabokov. But like so many other critics, Nabokov—brilliant though he was—read only the literal version of *Crime and Punishment*, and his reading

of it is so shallow that if it were the Red Sea, the Israelites could have crossed it in wading boots.

3. A certain artist took a liking to him. This could well be an allusion to Dostoevsky's early success when *Poor Folk* was published and he was lionized by the literary establishment. This was the high point of the early part of Dostoevsky's life, and then, for some years, everything went downhill, taking his literary reputation with it.

4. He is from Zaraisk. Dostoevsky's family had two properties in that vicinity, where he spent time as a boy.

5. He stole something, not realizing that it was stealing. This is surely a reference to the accusations of plagiarism made after the publication of *The Double* in 1846. Dostoevsky was held to have used Gogol rather too freely. Frank quotes a critic who said that, "*The Double* recalls a patchwork quilt stitched together from the subjects, gestures, and verbal procedures of Gogol."[2] Years later—Siberia intervened—Dostoevsky unraveled the quilt and removed most of the Gogolian motifs, hinting at how hard he had taken the accusation of plagiarism.[E]

❖

E. Details in *Crime and Punishment* hint that Nikolai Gogol was still on Dostoevsky's conscience. In their last confrontation (VI.2), Porfirii, Raskolnikov's conscience, refers to or (mis)quotes Gogol at least four times. He says articles such as the one Raskolnikov wrote remind him of "smoke, fog, a string twanging in the fog" (345/452), an inexact citation from Gogol's *Diary of a Madman* (Записки сумасшедшего: Gogol' 3: 171-72). Porfirii also says that Mikolka guffaws until he drops if someone "shows him a finger" (347/454) and later predicts that Raskolnikov won't run away by saying: "A peasant would run away, a fashionable sectarian would run away—the lackey of another man's thoughts—because it's enough to show him the tip of a finger, and, like Midshipman Dyrka, he'll believe anything for the rest of his life." (352/461) The finger comes from Gogol's *The Wedding* (Женитьба), although it is pointed at Petukhov (Rooster) rather than at Dyrka (Little Hole; Gogol 4: 112 for Dyrka, 130 for the finger). Furthermore, just after Nikolai's confession and Porfirii's remarks about his "not using his own words" quoted above, he compares Raskolnikov's quick wit to Gogol's (273/354).

Earlier, when Raskolnikov decides to confront Porfirii at home and comes in teasing Razumikhin about Dunia (III.5), so that in the confusion he bumps into a table, Porfirii quotes (accurately) from Gogol's play *Inspector-General* (Ревизор: Gogol' 4: 14)): "But why go breaking chairs, gentlemen! It's a loss to the exchequer!" (191/248) Dostoevsky treats the meeting like a script for a play—"The scene presented itself as follows…" (191/248) In his heart Raskolnikov knows his play-acting is not fooling his conscience, and in their final meeting Porfirii tells him so: "And that laughter, that laughter of yours as you walked in then, remember? I saw through it all at once, like a pane of glass…" (346/453). As Gogol himself put it at the end of *Inspector-General* (Gogol' 4: 88): "What are you laughing at? You are laughing at yourself…"

But what are we to make of Mikolka's friend Mitka, whose name is a diminutive for "Dmitrii"? We turned to Hector and Anna for help:

Hector: "He can only be a version of Razumikhin, or Reason."

Anna: "Wait a minute, they aren't even similar. One's a house-painter, the other's a student."

Hector: "Dmitrii has only one name, and that name is identical with Razumikhin's given name. In a novel where all the names are metaphorical, the same name means the same meaning. Otherwise the reader could never be sure what a name meant if it occurred twice. Hence, when a second Filipp appears, and he bears the same relation to Svidrigailov that the original one did, we know that we are intended to see him as the equivalent of the original Filipp. Same with Dmitrii."

As Hector said before, that's not just a good idea, it's the law. Incidentally, Mikolka says that Mitka is not guilty (271/352). Mitka, in fact, had left before the "theft" took place. But as Hector points out, Dostoevsky's metaphorical scheme would turn to nonsense if this Dmitrii does not have the same meaning/function as the other one in the novel, namely Razumikhin, or Reason; so the joke here is that Mikolka's Reason was absent when he committed his unintentional crime, just as Dostoevesky's was when he used Gogol too freely. In other words, when Mikolka tells Porfirii that Mitka is not "privy to any of it," he is actually making a plea of temporary insanity. In addition, when we are told that Dmitrii was painting with Mikolka, we are being given to understand that Reason was being used to help whitewash a crime.

So Mikolka/Nikolai not only represents part of Raskolnikov, the young, innocent part,[F] but he also embodies the second rationalization for Raskolnikov's crime: he did it to take suffering on himself. And then, as if Mikolka weren't busy enough, he anchors the story firmly in Dostoevsky's own experience! So at this point the story really is pointing in three directions at once. It will become clear that there is actually more to the Mikolka-story than we have shown, but in the interests of a happy digestion we will save some for later.

For a puzzling, murky novel, *Crime and Punishment* sometimes becomes remarkably straightforward when you look at it as Dostoevsky

F. Hence, it seems, Dostoevsky's calling Katerina's little boy—still very young and innocent—Kolia and Kolka (both childish nicknames for Nikolai).

intended. This is largely because of his truly obsessive concern with coherence, which is his way of making sure that, should you take the trouble, you can usually figure out what he was getting at. Let us illustrate this with an example from the Mikolka-scene:

When Porfirii is telling Raskolnikov that Mikolka had nothing to do with the crime, he quotes two German words, "morgen früh" (VI.2: морген фри [347/454]). Most of the translators do not include this phrase, since it doesn't seem to make any sense in the context, although Constance Garnett did. But if it didn't make any sense, then we wanted to know what it meant. Because of Dostoevsky's obsessive trail-blazing, it took us only ten minutes from start to finish to locate this phrase in the vast welter of nineteenth-century German, and that includes the time it took to study the Russian passage.

We started by assuming that it was from a poem, since that seemed most likely for a quotation. Then we asked ourselves, what German poet has Dostoevsky quoted? The answer is Heine ("Du hast Diamanten und Perlen" in V.5, 333/434), a few pages earlier. So we theorized that "morgen früh" was probably a phrase in a Heine poem, and thus we found "Ich halte ihr die Augen zu," which is about someone kissing a lover on the mouth while covering her eyes. Here is the complete poem:

Ich halte ihr die Augen zu
und küß sie auf den Mund;
nun läßt sie mich nicht mehr in Ruh,
sie fragt mich um den Grund.

Von Abend spät bis Morgen früh,
sie fragt zu jeder Stund:
Was hältst du mir die Augen zu,
wenn du mir küßt den Mund?

Ich sag ihr nicht, weshalb ich´s tu,
weiß selber nicht den Grund.
Ich halte ihr die Augen zu
und küß sie auf den Mund.

If you were writing the Mikolka-scene and happened to know this poem, you could not resist alluding to it either. Here is the literal translation: "I hold her eyes shut and kiss her on the mouth. Now she won't let me alone: she asks me for the reason. From late evening to early

morning, she asks at every hour, why do you hold my eyes shut when you kiss my mouth? I don't tell her why I do it—I don't know the reason myself. I hold her eyes shut and kiss her on the mouth."

Dostoevsky uses this as a wonderful metaphor for Raskolnikov kissing up to his conscience while trying to blind it to the facts. Porfirii keeps asking the reason for the crime; Raskolnikov keeps covering up, while not really understanding his behavior himself. But Porfirii, true to his function, will not let Raskolnikov alone. And by alluding to the poem, he reveals that he knows what Raskolnikov is up to. We strongly suspect that Dostoevsky put the allusion to this poem in first, then found an excuse to put in the other Heine poem in a previous scene, so that a persistent reader could locate the source of "morgen früh" and enjoy its aptness.[G]

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We have seen how Dostoevsky uses different methods to rid Raskolnikov of the diseased parts of his mind. Marmeladov dies in a traffic accident; Luzhin is evicted; Marfa Petrovna dies in a wonderful variety of ways, depending on whom you believe; Raskolnikov's betrothed and Katerina each die of a wasting disease; and Svidrigailov commits suicide.

So what terrible disaster awaits Mikolka? None, actually. Remember that Mikolka is the pre-Petersburg version of Raskolnikov; he is not the guilty one. So both literally and metaphorically, he is released. Not surprisingly, after Mikolka is released, Raskolnikov's mother says, "…you're the same now as when you were little…" (398/515). That is, Raskolnikov does *not* manage to do away with his innocent side, though Mikolka comes close to committing suicide and many other parts of Raskolnikov fall. And both Mikolka and Raskolnikov, as we know now, became a famous novelist.

G. Dostoevsky was known to have heard the ballad "Du hast Diamanten und Perlen," as part of a song cycle by the composer G. Stigel, in the summer of 1866 just as he was working on Part V of *Crime and Punishment* (*PSS* 7: 393).

References:

1. Gibian in Dostoevsky 1989a: 468-69 (map and notes); Lindenmeyr, 38.
2. Frank 1976: 308.

Fig. 2. Detail of oil painting, ***Bacchanal before a Statue of Pan***, by Nicholas Poussin (1633). (National Gallery, London)

Chapter Twelve

Hellfire in Arcadia

> During the night a "Panic" [*pan-ikós*] fear fell on them; for terrors from no cause at all are said to come from him [the god Pan].
>
> —Pausanias 10.23.7

> Folk belief stipulates that it is dangerous to mention the devil by name, lest he appear immediately, to the detriment of the speaker.
>
> —Felix Oinas, "The Devil in Russian Folklore" (98)

Once you begin to study Dostoevsky's symbolism and allegory, you are struck by how obvious his choices are. He chooses an investigator, an inevitable part of a criminal process, as his symbol of conscience. He virtually drains his Biblical text, the Gospel of John, of useful material: a symbolic stone, symbolic water, a character named Martha, the city of Capernaum, a whole passel of patronymics (Ivanovna and Ivanovich; daughter and son of John, respectively [A]), and a revivified character, Lazarus, on whom to model the metaphorical rebirth of his hero. He uses buildings with multiple sub-let rooms as a natural (and obvious) metaphor for the parts of his hero's mind, a metaphor that may also have been inspired by the Gospel of John: "In my Father's house are many mansions" (John 14:2). And then, having chosen this metaphor, he expands it by using house-painting and related redecorations as symbols for Raskolnikov's altering of the appearance of his crime.

Knowing this, we should have found it an easy matter to locate his metaphorical model for Svidrigailov.[B] In theory, all you should have to do

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A. Eight of them. Dostoevsky, in fact, seems to have exhausted the possibilities of the Gospel of John in this novel, for he uses the Ivan-patronymic sparingly in his later novels.

B. Dostoevsky's literal model was clearly a fellow-inmate named Aristov, as Joseph Frank points out (1983: 108-9). (Cormac McCarthy's treatment of the devil-figure called "the judge" in *Blood Meridian* makes for interesting comparisons.)

is ask yourself what would be the most obvious figure in western culture to represent uncontrolled sexuality.

It isn't as if Dostoevsky didn't tell us. Svidrigailov's first name, Arkadii, comes from "Arcadia," a province in ancient Greece. But when we thought about Arcadia, what came to mind were amorous shepherds, and the words *ET IN ARCADIA EGO,* from the tombstone in Poussin's two paintings known as *The Arcadian Shepherds* (in both of which, three shepherds and a shepherdess examine the inscription). This text is a much-discussed memento mori, somewhat unclear because the subject of the sentence could be interpreted as either the person in the grave or Death, but most scholars now take it to mean, "I [Death] am present even in paradise." Either way, the quotation has a certain consistency with Svidrigailov as a doomed pleasure-seeker, but at first we had found nothing in Dostoevsky's text to prove that he had this in mind. And because even death and taxes are not so certain as it is that Dostoevsky will provide his readers with such proof, we were forced to look further.

Finally we gave up and decided to engage in a thorough study of every possible piece of information about ancient Arcadia, how it was viewed, and who lived there.

And here our story becomes slightly embarrassing. Virtually the only figure that anyone remembers now from Arcadia is Pan, the satyr-like pastoral god of fertility whose most famous exploit was his failed attempt to rape the nymph Syrinx. Dostoevsky takes most of his symbols and allegory from Christian sources, but for Svidrigailov, a pagan source makes all the sense in the world, especially because this particular pagan figure, half-man, half-goat, strongly influenced notions of what the Christian devil looks like, with horns and cloven hooves. We noted, but gave no particular thought to, the fact that Pan's name has come into both Russian and English in the form of "panic." But so far all this was just a guess.

And then everything changed. Part Five of *Crime and Punishment* disposes of the last two types of distortion in Raskolnikov's perception of reality, symbolized by Luzhin and Katerina Ivanovna. When they are done away with, the last section of the book begins, dealing with the last piece of Raskolnikov that has to be got rid of, the selfish hedonism represented by Svidrigailov. Here we must remind the reader that Dostoevsky causes the destructive parts of Raskolnikov's mind to fight their battles with their own particular weapons, so Luzhin, obsessed with appearances and money, fights Sonia by trying to make it appear as if she had stolen money from him, while Sonia—Divine Wisdom—defends herself by introducing wisdom into the bystanders.

But how does Svidrigailov fight his battles? Given that he represents unbridled sexuality, an obvious way would be with rape, so we can hardly be surprised that he battles with Dunia by attempting to rape her. Dunia represents Raskolnikov's self-sacrificing side, so after she first defends herself by grazing Svidrigailov with a bullet from the revolver of Marfa (the "what will people think?" monitor), she throws down the gun in perplexity. After all, force is *his* type of weapon, not hers, and the wrong way to go about it: she goes back to defending herself with self-sacrifice. And her weapons turn out to be stronger than his. He turns over the key to the apartment not because he's really a nice guy at heart, but because he lost the battle (381-83/495-97). If Dostoevsky formed Svidrigailov on the model of Pan, one of whose most famous exploits was the failed rape of a nymph, we can hardly be surprised at the outcome.

How do we know that we were watching a battle? As usual, Dostoevsky tells us. In the contest for Dunia, when Svidrigailov loses, Razumikhin wins, and this is why Svidrigailov says to Sonia, "Incidentally…tell Mr. Razumikhin that I bow to him. Tell him just that: Arkady Ivanovich Svidrigailov bows to you. Do it without fail" (385/500). That is, Reason won out over Hedonism, and Hedonism concedes. (This is one of numerous references to Raskolnikov's ordeals as battles. For example, after the tradesman who had accused him of murder apologizes and leaves, Raskolnikov says to himself, "The struggle's not over yet" [276/358]; or again, after sitting in a chop-house listening to songs for an hour, he suddenly thinks, "[B]ut is this what I ought to be doing? …No, better some kind of fight! Better Porfiry again…or Svidrigailov…" [337/442])

This particular battle, however, takes place late in Part Six, and given that the whole point of Part Six is to get rid of the last obstacle to Raskolnikov's epiphany, it might seem odd that it takes so long for the battle to be joined. But remember that Pan has another weapon in his arsenal. In reality the battle began on the *first page* of Part Six: "At times he was overcome by a morbidly painful anxiety, which would even turn into panic fear" (335/439); among other things, "the thought of Dunya and his mother for some reason seemed to fill him with panic fear." (337/442) And we learn that "he was especially anxious about Svidrigailov." So we have a character named "Arkadii" who inspires panic terror and whose property consists primarily of "forests and water-meadows" (217/285), all of which hints at his connection to Pan. Remarkably, there is some reason to believe that Dostoevsky actually knew the quotation from Pausanias we used as an epigraph, for in that passage Pausanias describes an army at war with itself

that can only make the reader think of Raskolnikov's vision, in the Epilogue, where whole armies "suddenly begin destroying themselves" (420/547).

But there is more evidence that it is Razumikhin who is actively engaged in defending Raskolnikov from Svidrigailov.

A few pages after that scene, Raskolnikov feels better: "His head was fresher, and he himself was calmer, than during those last three days. He even marveled, fleetingly, at his earlier influxes of panic fear."

Poof!

"The door opened and Razumikhin came in." (338/442)

What we found embarrassing is that when we finally took Svidrigailov's first name seriously, the evidence for Arkadii = Arcadia = Pan became obvious and undeniable. When Svidrigailov is first mentioned, in Pulkheriia Aleksandrovna's letter to Raskolnikov, she refers to Svidrigailov's drinking with an uncharacteristically classical reference: by saying that he was under the influence of Bacchus (28/32), another figure who has much in common with Pan and his satyrs. And the Marmeladovs live in a house owned by a German with the name Koziol (136/176), which means "billy goat" in Russian, recalling at least parts of Pan.

One of the main events of Part Six consists of Raskolnikov going to see Svidrigailov in his actual haunts, which turn out to be filthy and sleazy. And now Svidrigailov tries to avoid being seen. In their first encounter, Raskolnikov saw Svidrigailov as "a man completely unknown to him" (214/278). The process of getting to know himself leads directly to his observing his own hedonism close up, and when he does this, Svidrigailov turns out to have a very strange and off-putting appearance indeed:

> For a minute or so he studied his face, which had always struck him before as well. It was somehow a strange face, more like a mask: white, ruddy, with ruddy, scarlet lips, a light blond beard, and still quite thick blond hair. The eyes were somehow too blue, and their look was somehow too heavy and immobile. There was something terribly unpleasant in this handsome and, considering the man's age, extremely youthful face. (357/468)

We of course immediately wanted to know what Pan looked like in western art, and that is how we found out that two of the major works of art featuring Pan were done by Poussin—who also did the paintings with the inscription *ET IN ARCADIA EGO*. Immediately we noticed the "Bacchanal before a Statue of Pan" (**Fig. 2**) partly because of Pulkheriia Aleksandrovna's use of the term "under the influence of Bacchus." Still, it is by no means certain that the Poussin painting was Dostoevsky's model. The most we can say is that the painting was located in a museum in a city (London) that he had

visited several years before and that Dostoevsky did sometimes refer to specific paintings in his fiction (the Sistine Madonna, for example, in the same scene with Svidrigailov [369/480]). And once we saw the painting, it was hard not to see a resemblance between Poussin's Pan and Dostoevsky's description of Svidrigailov. Moreover, if he did use a model from the visual arts, it is highly unlikely that he would use any source but a French one.

This is because he resolutely associates his sensual motifs with the French. Again, this isn't necessarily anti-French bias (although Dostoevsky certainly expressed such bias); rather, it comes out of his understanding that the metaphorical story will quickly become a blur if he doesn't make all his categories clear. "French" always means "illicit sexuality" in *Crime and Punishment*; "German" never does. "German" means "foreign intellectual flim-flam"; "French" never does. When a building is "German," it hints at inappropriate foreign influences in a portion of Raskolnikov's mind; the "French" simply aren't allowed to own buildings in the St. Petersburg of *Crime and Punishment*. Only the "Russians" and the "Germans" can do that.

One interesting clash occurs between "German" and "French": there is one building ("German") that houses a procuress ("French"), who sub-lets to Svidrigailov. Here Dostoevsky has to choose between nationalities, and he chooses "German": Gertrude Karlovna Riosslikh. That is, he goes with the housing (and does likewise with the "German" proprietress of the brothel, Laviza Ivanovna). But he makes it up to the "French" by giving the other procuress in the novel the patronymic "Frantsevna," which he surely intended as "daughter of France." [C]

Because "French" has this meaning, Dostoevsky can't allow most of the characters in the novel to speak French, even though its use was standard in the European novel of the time (as well as in upper-class Russian society) and Dostoevsky was fluent in French. Those who do use it always have a sinister aspect, even if it isn't immediately obvious—Svidrigailov, for example. There is more than meets the eye in his offer to finance "French language and dancing lessons" for a young girl (371/482). Since Katerina forces Sonia into prostitution, we can hardly be surprised that she turns out

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C. As usual, things are even more complex than this. The "Germans" are also generally characterized as businesslike, always ready to turn a penny, even without scruples: so Laviza runs a brothel and Riosslikh procures girls (including her own relative) for Svidrigailov, while Daria (Persian "strong, rich") Frantsevna roams the streets actively seeking girls (17/18) and has a wonderfully ambiguous patronymic, since Frantsevna could be either "daughter of France" ("French"—in the sex industry) or "daughter of Franz" ("German"—in a lucrative unscrupulous business).

to know French songs (which she makes her three children sing on the streets as she is dying [330/430]), and there is an ominous undertone to her wanting to teach French to her daughter Polia, whose full name (Polina) is from the French "Pauline" (147/187). That is, her daughters will suffer the same fate as Sonia unless St. Nicholas saves them. And when the mother of the teenager betrothed to Svidrigailov starts her stories in a very roundabout way, beginning by asking how things are in Paris, we are intended to notice that this woman is turning her child over to a dirty old man for money.

"…I came in and saw that you were lying there
with your eyes closed, pretending…"
—Svidridailov to Raskolnikov (219/287)

The reader will have noticed by now that the important issues in *Crime and Punishment* often come up much earlier than the characters that represent them. This is especially true of Svidrigailov's metaphorical meaning. His name first comes up in I.3, but his influence is arguably present in the very first sentence of the novel. To understand this, we need to go back to our list (in Chapter 10) of everything you could do with a metaphorical building.

There Hector and Anna proposed that a metaphorical building could go up in metaphorical flames. It is not surprising, then, that—as becomes clear from Dostoevsky's notebooks—the novel originally had a fire as one of its main events. The fire may have got out of control, because by the final version of the novel, the only specific building-fire mentioned is the one at which Raskolnikov turns out to have saved two children, and that had happened before the beginning of the novel. As noted, the fire is a metaphor for illicit passion, and the two children are the ones saved from prostitution. We should also note that Raskolnikov himself was burned in the fire (412/537)—that is, he experienced the consequences of illicit passion.

But if heat is associated with illicit passion, shouldn't it be somehow connected to Svidrigailov? How are they connected? Let us count the ways. Svidrigailov comes to St. Petersburg during a period of very hot weather.[D] The notes to the Russian edition point out that the weather really was exceptionally hot in the summer of 1865, when the action in the novel takes

D. Once again, as with the weeping of the princess in *Men in Black II* causing the rain, the presence of the devil in Petersburg *causes* the heat.

place, but this of course doesn't mean that the heat is not used as a symbol. In late June of that year, there was also a cloudburst,[E] but for the novel, Dostoevsky moved it to coincide with Svidrigailov's suicide in the second half of July, so that the Living Water could pour down on St. Petersburg, signaling Raskolnikov's release from his evil nature. Dostoevsky surely knew that Russian peasants expected a thunderstorm each year on Elijah's Feast Day (July 20th, old calendar),[1] which is why Ilia Petrovich (Elijah, son of Peter), is given a prominent role in the novel. Indeed, Svidrigailov is shown actually shivering at the end of the novel, during the rain: he is out of his element. When Dostoevsky wanted a symbol, he didn't run down the street to Author's Supply; he simply used what was within reach and adjusted it as necessary. Similarly, when Raskolnikov finds that the newspapers are filled with stories of fires (124/160), this too is based on fact: there really were a lot of fires in Petersburg in 1865.[F] In the novel these become symbolic fires, expressive of Svidrigailov's being. When Svidrigailov is around, there really is a hot time in the old town.

Often the heat is hinted at with symbols: when we first see her, Sonia wears a hat with a flame-colored feather (огненнего цвета; 143/183), as does a young prostitute Raskolnikov sees on the street (121/155); and Sonia's father, Marmeladov, is run down by "fiery" (горячих) symbolic horses (136/175). Dostoevsky actually gives Svidrigailov—and some other characters—little portable fires to carry around, expressive of self-destructive behaviors, namely cigarettes, cigars, and pipes. Their metaphorical content is simply undeniable if you patiently look at each of their manifestations in the book. Remember the "cigarette-case" Raskolnikov pretended to pawn to the pawnbroker? From the point of view of the metaphorical story, it would have been better for him if he *had* pawned his cigarette case, and the cigarettes too. The metaphorical meaning of cigarettes explains why Porfirii remarks that they are bad for him, a hundred years before the Surgeon General figured this out (343/448). That is, Raskolnikov's Conscience has a few choice remarks to make to him about bad sexual behavior. In fact, he offers Raskolnikov a cigarette when the latter comes to him with a new justification for the crime (256/333).

E. For the hot weather, see *PSS* 7: 363, Belov 1985: 40-41; for the rainstorm on 29-30 June 1865, see *PSS* 7: 397, Belov 1985: 217.

F. From mid-1862 on, there had been frequent fires in Petersburg, particularly in outlying areas where houses were commonly made of wood. What portion of the fires was due to arson has never been established, but hot weather exacerbated the situation. "Newspapers were full of reports of fires also in 1865" (*PSS* 7: 378).

(One part of Raskolnikov that "smokes" is Razumikhin: recall his trips to houses of ill repute; recall that "reason is the slave of passion." This is why Porfirii shows concern for *his* smoking too [194/252].)[G]

And remember that Filipp ("Lover of Horses") comes back as a ghost when Svidrigailov absentmindedly calls to him for his pipe. "Horses" are the symbol for abused women. The "lover of horses," then, is the part of Raskolnikov's mind that is intended to care for women, not take advantage of them. But Raskolnikov has put this part of mind into the service of his lower self. And if Svidrigailov calls to Filipp for his "pipe," the symbol of deviant sexuality, we can only conclude that Filipp, much against his will, was forced to serve as a procurer for Svidrigailov.

Svidrigailov gets progressively out of control as he does away with the two characters who control his lust: Filipp, or "Lover of Horses," and Marfa Petrovna, who represented the forces of public opinion. We counted 24 examples of cigarettes, cigars, and pipes, but by Part VI, except for Porfirii's double-edged remark, there is only one mention of smoking-materials, and that is when Raskolnikov comes to brace Svidrigailov in his den and he sees Svidrigailov "sitting at a tea table just by the window, a pipe in his teeth." For purely symbolic reasons, "[t]his struck [Raskolnikov] terribly, to the point of horror." (355/464) Svidrigailov takes the pipe from his mouth and tries to hide. Later, when Svidrigailov spies on his curly-headed neighbor at the seedy hotel (see below), there aren't even any cigarette-butts on the table he sees, just a candle burning down. Shortly thereafter, he sees (when he blows his own out) that even this candle-flame has burned out. But well before that, in a scene reminiscent of the one where Raskolnikov refuses vodka, Svidrigailov has rejected the ragamuffin servant's repeated offer of "something else"—clearly an offer of a prostitute (388-89/503-5). In one of his dreams, Svidrigailov *relights* the candle (his lust) and wanders around the corridors until he comes upon the five-year-old girl, who (as a consequence of the relighting) suddenly looks like a prostitute. But when he wakes up the next morning, he discovers that, in actuality, "the candle had not been lighted." (392-93/508-10)

The fire really has burned down, which is why Svidrigailov says, "Well, Marfa Petrovna, why don't you come now, if you like. It's dark, and

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G. The reader may well question why Porfirii himself is shown smoking. Here we have another example of how Dostoevsky created much muddle by showing even the good parts of Raskolnikov's mind indulging in bad behaviors—it is Divine Wisdom-as-prostitute all over again. Note that Porfirii thinks he needs to quit cigarettes—but then offers Raskolnikov a cigarette just after a new alibi has come up.

the place is suitable,[H] and the moment is an original one. But it's precisely now that you won't come…" (390/505) The ghost of Marfa Petrovna has lost her calling now that the fire is out.

Svidrigailov himself uses fire as a metaphor for destructive passions: "In this depravity there's at least something permanent, even based on nature, and not subject to fantasy,[I] something that abides in the blood like a perpetually burning coal, eternally inflaming, which for a long time, even with age, one may not be able to extinguish so easily. Wouldn't you agree that it's an occupation of sorts?" (359/470)

Illicit sexuality as an "occupation"? Eternal flames based on nature? The devil you say! You don't need to be a classical scholar to know that Dostoevsky has expanded Pan's horizons here. In fact, he has let Pan morph into the Christian devil, just as the pagan god's image had in western history. That is why it turns hot when Svidrigailov comes to town, cold when he leaves. Dostoevsky gives us a bit of a hint here: in the scene at the Crystal Palace, before Zametov's arrival, Raskolnikov is reading off a series of newspaper stories when he grows impatient and says, "pah, the devil!"—whereupon he suddenly sees a bunch of stories about fires (124/159). Speak of the devil and he comes running. And this explains something that had puzzled us for years: Why is it that Svidrigailov doesn't have something in his name to suggest the stone, or crime, the way so many of the other characters do? Why isn't he a Piotr also, or at least a Petrovich? But Svidrigailov doesn't represent the crime; he represents the *source* of the crime. He is the inspiration for evil-doing, not the result of the inspiration. This is why Raskolnikov holds his eyes shut, pretending not to be aware of Svidrigailov when the latter first walks in (214/278), and why Raskolnikov says that Svidrigailov "had some hidden power over him" (353/462). As we shall see, he has power over Raskolnikov right from the beginning of the novel, but it takes a bit of effort to un-hide it.

As for his patronymic, "Ivanovich," "Son of John," we suspect Dostoevsky was directing the reader to a passage in the Gospel of John (8:44): "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." Here the devil is shown as lustful, a murderer, and a liar, which pretty much describes Svidrigailov's portfolio.

H. Since it is a house of prostitution. It is possible that this is one of many places where the novel became murkier as a result of the influence of the censors.

I. Fantasy being the other most destructive "sin"—the one that began the novel.

This may explain why Dostoevsky causes Svidrigailov to lie about so very many things, and with such flair, causing endless chaos in interpretations of *Crime and Punishment*. At one time we thought seriously of counting Svidrigailov's provable lies, but we decided it would be easier just to go to the beach and count the grains of sand instead.

The question remains, though: why did Dostoevsky bring *Pan* into the story? If he needed to pick up a devil, why not simply go straight to hell? Originally we thought it was because Pan had two valuable motifs the Devil lacked: first, he was a specialist, and his specialty was sexual aggression; second, he had the failed rape of Syrinx in *his* portfolio, a nice analogy to the battle between Svidrigailov and Dunia. And Pan also allowed for the unobtrusive use of "panic" as a hint at devilish activities—perhaps too unobtrusive, since one scholar has argued that Svidrigailov "plays an important role only in the last, sixth, part" of the novel.[2] In reality, Svidrigailov is present and active, as a piece of Raskolnikov, all along; he even does his best work early in the story. When Svidrigailov kills Marfa Petrovna, the symbol of how public opinion subdues one's misbehavior, Raskolnikov is freed to commit his crimes. That is, her death releases Raskolnikov's devilish side—Svidrigailov—and allows him to show up in St. Petersburg. Their connection is the point of all Svidrigailov's remarks about how much he and Raskolnikov have in common with one another. "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. …For he is a liar, and the father of it." (John 8:44)

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But to see the other important reason for the use of Pan we must leave the Pan/Devil issue for a moment and get back to Dunia's battle. Dunia turns out to have stashed Marfa Petrovna's revolver on her person—a symbol of Marfa's policing function—and when she is threatened with rape, she points it at Svidrigailov. Oddly, he says, "You're making it much easier for me, Avdotya Romanovna!" (381/495). You might think she has just made it more difficult. But on the metaphorical level, Dunia is losing her self-sacrificing character right before our eyes. She is acquiring some of Svidrigailov's characteristics instead. Indeed, moments later, "The fire that flashed from her eyes as she raised the revolver seemed to burn him…" And then: "Dunia lowered the revolver and looked at Svidrigailov not really in fear but in some wild perplexity. It was as if she herself did not understand what she had done or what was happening." (381-82/495-96)

If you are reading the literal story, you might want to interject: "Lady, he's a rapist. That's what he does. Shoot him now!" But on the

metaphorical level this is another version of the battle with Luzhin. So Dunia comes to her senses after her unsuccessful shot at Svidrigailov, fights back with self-sacrifice (that is, non-egoism), and wins the battle. If you doubt that a battle has been fought, consider that, after his encounters late in the novel with first Dunia, then Sonia, Svidrigailov retreats to a seedy hotel named "The Adrianople" that he hadn't been to before. Now, as we have seen repeatedly, once Dostoevsky makes something such as a building metaphorical, he has to make *all* its versions metaphorical. Adrianople (modern Turkish Edirne) was the location of the battle that represented the beginning of the end of the Roman Empire. (The emperor himself, Flavius Julius Valens, actually died in that battle.) "'Must be a nice place,' Svidrigailov thought, 'why didn't I know about it?'" (388/503) The first remark is Dostoevsky's irony: the hotel is actually dreadful, but both Svidrigailov and Raskolnikov at his lowest actually like sleaze. Svidrigailov's question, however, is another metaphorical joke: he hadn't known about the Hotel Adrianople because he hadn't suffered a grievous defeat until now. (The name denotes "City of Hadrian," the Roman emperor during whose reign a temple to Aphrodite, the goddess of love, was built over the holy sites on Golgotha. St. Helena, the mother of Emperor Constantine, restored those sites and, in Orthodox tradition, recovered the cross on which Jesus was crucified.)

And here we see that St. Peter was not really left out of the metaphorical story at all. The city that executed St. Peter, namely Rome, is equated with the city whose name is taken to hint at that very crime, St. Petersburg. Both cities are capitals of great nations, and both (from Dostoevsky's point of view) are riddled with corruption. Rodion Romanovich Raskolnikov suffers a spiritual death in St. Petersburg just as his namesake, St. Herodion, a follower of St. Peter and relative of St. Paul, suffered a literal death in ancient Rome, being executed, according to church lore, on the very day and hour that St. Peter was crucified. "Romanovich," then, another of Dostoevsky's exploding motifs, could remind the reader of "Rome," "foreign," and "decadent," as well as the (westernizing) Romanov dynasty. The author yokes Rome and Petersburg as co-conspirators in an ancient crime for which the literal meaning of the name "Peter," namely "stone," becomes a symbol. The stone—or death of a spiritual force—looms as the barrier between a man and his resurrection; it must be removed for Lazarus and Raskolnikov to come to life again. Both cities serve as playgrounds for evil, which in the novel manifests as Svidrigailov. The remark that Svidrigailov looks young for his age (357/468) hides a joke about his metaphorical version, who is very old indeed.

But if Dostoevsky was portraying Petersburg as a modern version of Rome, then it only makes sense for him to connect his villain, Svidrigailov, with both pre-Christian and Christian figures representing uncontrolled desire, in the manner of Dante. This is perhaps the real reason why Dostoevsky brought Pan as well as the Devil into the story.

For those who doubt the equation of Svidrigailov with both Pan and the Devil, we would like to help them stumble over the same great chunks of evidence that finally got our attention. A number of little mysteries resolve themselves when one accepts this, such as why the Kapernaumov children flee "in indescribable terror" when Svidrigailov shows up at Sonia's (384/499). Svidrigailov worked behind the scenes at the beginning; then he appeared with a face looking "quite pleasant" (188/244); but by the time Raskolnikov confronts him in his natural surroundings, his face is "terribly unpleasant," "like a mask" (357/468); and finally he has been, well, unmasked to such an extent that innocent children flee from him on sight (384/499).

And think about Raskolnikov setting out for Svidrigailov's place, taking a wrong turn, then mysteriously encountering Svidrigailov after all:

> "I was on my way to your place, I was looking for you," Raskolnikov began, "but why did I suddenly turn down –sky[J] Prospect just now from the Haymarket! I never turn or come this way. I turn right from the Haymarket. And this isn't the way to your place. I just turned and here you are! It's strange!" (356/466)

Svidrigailov then tells Raskolnikov that he himself had given him the directions, and he had given them twice. Yet there are problems with this story: nothing in the text supports it, and Raskolnikov does not remember any such thing. Moreover, the story doesn't even make sense as a lie.

But whenever something does not make sense in *Crime and Punishment*, its meaning lies on the metaphorical level, not the literal one.

J. Whenever place-names don't fit into the metaphorical story, Dostoevsky simply abbreviates them. So he puts in the name of the Ekaterininskii Canal, where Raskolnikov seeks to throw away the loot from his crime, on the grounds that the name is reminiscent of Katerina and her cleansing issues. But he abbreviates the name of the street Raskolnikov lives on. Since the names are usually easy to figure out from a map of Petersburg, translators sometimes put them in, but this leads to endless confusion in the metaphorical story. For example, some English editions restore the name of the street where Raskolnikov lives (С— переулок, simply "S— Lane") to Stoliarnyi Lane (for Столярный переулок) or even translate this to "Carpenter's Lane." But in a Christian novel laden with metaphorical names, this would inevitably cause the reader to try to identify Raskolnikov with Joseph, the father of Jesus.

Our objective, then, is to find out if there is any evidence of Svidrigailov giving Raskolnikov information on another plane of reality than the literal. And since Dostoevsky wrote another scene that is clearly parallel to this one, we may as well begin with it:

Just as in this scene, Raskolnikov wanders away from his accustomed route also in Part I.5. There Raskolnikov, "tired and worn out as he was," somehow is led to go home via the Haymarket, "where he had no need at all to go." (50/60) Only because of this detour does he learn that Aliona Ivanovna will be alone the next day, which causes him to go ahead with the murder. He says of this encounter that "it was as if it had been waiting for him there on purpose." So a mysterious force leads him into temptation and supplies him with information making it easier to commit the murder, but—oddly—this is *immediately* after another mysterious force has caused him to *renounce* this very temptation.

Here is Mysterious Force #1:

> Walking across the bridge, he looked calmly and quietly at the Neva, at the bright setting of the bright, red sun. In spite of his weakness, he was not even aware of any fatigue in himself. It was as if an abscess in his heart, which had been forming all that month, had suddenly burst. Freedom, Freedom! He was now free of that spell, magic, sorcery, obsession! (50/60)

So Mysterious Force #1 is associated with the Living Waters, the symbol of salvation. But in the next moment, Mysterious Force #2 causes him to go home the long way, where he has an encounter that seems to have been waiting for him on purpose, and he is obliged to commit two murders.

Now, we already know, on Razumikhin's word, that it is "as if there really were two opposite characters in [Raskolnikov], changing places with each other." (165/215) These two can only be the metaphorical versions of Sonia and Svidrigailov, like the angel- and devil-figures sitting on either shoulder of a character in a cartoon. Throughout the novel, Raskolnikov alternates, often very abruptly, from the one pole to the other. In this scene, Mysterious Force #1, flowing over him as he looks at the Neva—the Living Waters—can only come from Sonia's side of the battle. But if this is so, then Mysterious Force #2 has to come from Svidrigailov's side. This should be obvious enough. But how can Svidrigailov lead Raskolnikov into temptation if he isn't present in the scene and has never even met Raskolnikov? The answer is that, on the metaphorical level, Svidrigailov represents the devil, whose very calling it is to lead people into temptation while working behind the scenes. Recall that, early on, when Raskolnikov sat in an inn listening to two men discuss the very murder he himself was

planning and they suddenly began to give him useful information about Aliona Ivanovna's circumstances, "it was as if someone had come to his service" (53/63). That someone was Svidrigailov's metaphorical component, the devil. And consider the following remark: "[Raskolnikov] sometimes thought: Svidrigailov kept hovering around him, and was doing so even now…." (354/463) The devil has twice whispered to Raskolnikov details on how to commit his crime and, therefore, how to go to the devil. As Raskolnikov starts to open his eyes and become more self-aware, the devil is first forced out into the open, shape-shifted into an imposing gentleman, young-looking for his years; then he is revealed in his true character, so abhorrent that little children run from him on sight; and finally he is defeated completely, the symbol for which is Svidrigailov's suicide. Only with his death is Raskolnikov freed to confess.

By the end of his first encounter with Mysterious Force #2, Raskolnikov feels as if he has no freedom of mind or will (52/62), which might make the reader think that Dostoevsky is arguing for a deterministic theory of human behavior. Dostoevsky certainly did not intend this at all. From his point of view, what has really happened is that, as Sonia says, Raskolnikov has turned away from God and given himself over to the Devil (321/418). In other words, he was allowed the freedom to make a bad choice that would commit him to evil. Sonia, as always, sees through the literal story to the metaphorical one: she knows that the devil is an active force in *Crime and Punishment* long before either Raskolnikov or the reader.

To find the Devil in the early part of the book, it is useful to recall that the use of his name will summon him. So when we see his name invoked three times on a single page (68-69/84), we can hardly be surprised if the Devil suddenly takes an active part in the story. On the next page, just as Raskolnikov is about to be trapped and held responsible for his crime, the two painters, Dmitrii and Mikolka, leave the apartment they're working in "as if by design" (как нарочно: 69/85), allowing Raskolnikov to hide in the apartment. Since "Sonia" would not be helping Raskolnikov sidestep the consequences of his own actions, we are surely looking at the work of the Devil. But why would the Devil save him from the clutches of the law? In reality, that is not Dostoevsky's point. What is happening can be understood only from the metaphorical story:

"Dmitrii" (Raskolnikov's good sense) and "Mikolka" (Raskolnikov's original nature, prior to his corruption) have both abandoned their functions in Raskolnikov's mind and are redecorating (that is, making his excuses look nice). Raskolnikov reaches the repainted room, a symbol of his latest

justification for the crime, just in time to avoid having to face up to his accusers.

References:

1. A. N. Afanasiev, *Poeticheskie vozzreniia*, vol. 1, pp. 469-83, 628, 630, 640, 698, 737, 762, cited in Marmeladov, 1 and 105.
2. Chulkov, 496.

Chapter 13

Lord of the Flies

> The devil has only entered [*Crime and Punishment*] episodically, but, apparently, he holds a central, and in any case, significant place. That is beyond doubt.
>
> —I. F. Annensky[1]

Once you are the Devil's familiar,[A] as Raskolnikov learns, the Devil turns up often. Svidrigailov makes a remark about how he has occupied himself going to all the low dives in St. Petersburg, and then you remember the odd detail in the scene out in front of the building where Razumikhin is having his party, at which everyone gets drunk and argues:

> "What about your guests? Who's that curly one who just peeked out here?"
>
> "Him? Devil knows!" Then: "…But devil take them all anyway!" (148/189).

And the devil apparently does take the curly-headed fellow! He too, or someone like him, shows up at Hotel Adrianople, in a room adjoining Svidrigailov's, and Svidrigailov watches through a crack as he berates another man. The People of the Curly Hair—all of them—have been evicted from Raskolnikov's consciousness, and that includes Luzhin (whose hair had been "combed and curled by the hairdresser" [114/146]) and Zametov (who has "black, curly, and pomaded hair" [124/159]). On some level they appear to be in league with the devil, presumably because of their bad behavior toward women. Recall the puddle (*luzha*) of blood at the murder scene. But why the curly hair? Dostoevsky may have felt they needed some sort of motif to keep them together, and he may have chosen curls merely because he saw a picture or statue of Pan with curls. But he also represents hair-curling as a non-Russian phenomenon: the narrator remarks that curled

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A. This is not our pun but Dostoevsky's: "Svidrigailov had not spent even a week in Petersburg, but everything around him was already on some sort of patriarchal footing. The tavern lackey, Filipp, was also by now a 'familiar' [«знакомый»] and quite obsequious" (356/466, the quotation marks are Dostoevsky's). This is another version of the Filipp whom Svidrigailov is accused of murdering and who appeared to him as a ghost.

hair "inevitably [makes] one resemble a German on his way to the altar" (114/146).

What is easier to explain is the function of Zametov in the novel. Just as you would expect, the "police department" is that aspect of Raskolnikov's mind that exercises control over his behavior. Zametov is an essential element in the police department, and we need look no further than his name to determine what his function is: "Aleksandr Grigorevich Zametov" means, roughly, "Protector of man," "Son of Watchman," "Noticer." In other words, he protects one by paying attention to behavior and policing it. He is the mind's watchdog. Dostoevsky leaves nothing to chance here, giving Zametov three names that reveal his function, in case we weren't paying attention. But Zametov—and we've seen this many times—is an aspect of Raskolnikov's mind that has become corrupted, so now he takes bribes instead of doing his job, which is to notice bad behavior and protect Raskolnikov by avoiding it. This is why Raskolnikov is so uneasy when he discovers Zametov at Porfirii's: he was counting on no one being there to notice anything wrong (192/249).[B]

Dostoevsky uses Zametov with astonishing efficiency. Early on, the "police department" can't locate Raskolnikov's criminality because its noticer is defective, so Raskolnikov goes in and out of the police station, after committing two murders, without being investigated, even though he is acting suspiciously.

B. That is, Dostoevsky is clearly associating Zametov's name with the verb *zametit'* "to notice" (and so probably intended the pronunciation with *e*, as Constance Garnett seems to have fathomed, rather than with *io*). Not only do this character's first name and patronymic reinforce the idea that he is the noticer, the watchdog, but passage after strange passage emphasizes the function of "noticing" as watch-dogging bad behavior, a function taken on by Porfirii (Conscience) since the proper "noticer" is out accepting bribes (124/160) not to notice (83/106—see below). For example, when Porfirii mentions exactly how the police knew what articles (from his family) Raskolnikov had pawned, Raskolnikov breaks in:

> "How is it you're so observant [*zamet-livyi*]? …" Raskolnikov grinned awkwardly, making a special effort to look him straight in the eye; but he could not help himself and suddenly added, "I just made that observation [*zamet-il*] because there were probably many pawners…" (194/252)

And then again, just after Mikolka "confesses," Porfirii says to Raskolnikov:

> "Heh, heh, heh! So you noticed [*zamet-ili*] I just told Nikolai that he wasn't 'using his own words'?"
>
> "How could I not notice [*zamet-it'*]?"
>
> "Heh, heh! Sharp-witted, you're sharp-witted, sir. You notice [*zamech-aete*] everything!" (273/354)

The key to understanding the scene, oddly, is Laviza Ivanovna, the madam that Ilia Petrovich yells at. She is in the scene to show us how Zametov interferes when Ilia Petrovich tries to do his policing job, which Zametov interrupts. Without her contribution, we would have no hope of understanding the following passage:

> Nikodim Fomich [the chief of police] was about to add something, but, having glanced at the clerk [Zametov], who was also looking very intently at him, he fell silent. Everyone suddenly fell silent. It was strange. (83/106)

Here again Zametov interferes with the investigative process. Dostoevsky clearly saw that he had to limit the corruption of the police department to a single, essential character. If he didn't, then he would have had to evict the entire department from Raskolnikov's mind—there would be no one there when Raskolnikov showed up to confess. So he created a character to embody just the corrupted, bribe-taking Noticer of Bad Behavior, and that character disappears from the department staff near the end of the novel (407/528).

So what happens when Raskolnikov shows up to confess? Well, nothing. He walks into the district police station without anyone noticing that a criminal has wandered in. The "Noticer," after all, has departed. It is only when Raskolnikov leaves, having chickened out (to borrow one of Dostoevsky's metaphors), that he encounters "Sofia Semionovna" and returns to confess. His behavior-control mechanism is now operated by a higher wisdom.

And here is an interesting question: How early in the novel are "Razumikhin" and "Svidrigailov" contesting for "Dunia"? As usual, way earlier than you would expect—indeed, they are contesting for "Dunia" even before Razumikhin has *met* Dunia! Let us go far back in the action, back to where "Raskolnikov" intends to take an ax from his landlady's kitchen to kill the old pawnbroker. Now a reader could reasonably take the providing of the ax as a kind of metaphorical aiding and abetting; so Dostoevsky has St. Anastasia interfere with Raskolnikov's attempt to steal this ax—that is, Nastasia is in the kitchen and stares at him—but, just as he is about to give up on the murder, he spots an ax under the bench in the caretaker's cubbyhole and takes that one (59-60/71-72). The aiding and abetting moves outside the domain of St. Paraskeva.

All this sounds as if we have been thinking too much, except for one thing: when he does come up with an ax, he says—and we're translating literally—"Not reason, so the devil!" («Не рассудок, так бес!» —I.6: 60/72) Constance Garnett renders this as, "When reason fails, the devil

helps." What is at issue is clearly that the Devil (to appear as Svidrigailov) has just outmaneuvered Reason (to appear as Razumikhin).[C] The Devil, in other words, wins Round One.

But then the reader may well ask when Razumikhin will win a round. After all, we like to watch fights, not beatings. We don't have to wait long: at the end of II.3, Razumikhin tells Raskolnikov that he wants him to change his linen, because he feels that Raskolnikov will throw off his illness with his shirt. And then in II.6, Raskolnikov gets up and puts fresh clothes on, the ones "that Razumikhin had brought earlier": "Strangely, he seemed suddenly to become perfectly calm; there was none of the earlier half-crazed delirium, nor the panicky fear of that whole recent time." (120/154) So here we have another allusion to Svidrigailov's effect (that is, panic), but it goes away as soon as Raskolnikov puts on the clothes that Razumikhin had brought. Here the metaphorical content of the clothing—analogous to the repainting of the room—is so obvious that we will not be surprised to find that Kapernaumov, who sublets to Sonia, is a tailor, and Sonia changes professions from seamstress to prostitute and back to seamstress in the course of events.[D] Lizaveta, Sonia's alter-ego, also deals in clothing. Marmeladov, reverting to his drunkenness, replaces his new clothes with rags. And Zosimov ("Life") appears as soon as Razumikhin succeeds in changing Raskolnikov's shirt (102/131). Note that Razumikhin brings Raskolnikov not new but used garments—purchased from a dealer who makes the strange guarantee that he will replace the clothing for free as it wears out. The clothing can only be a metaphor for attitudes, and Razumikhin provides those that are traditional and good for a lifetime (101-2/129-30). They are not subject to the vagaries of fashion.

Now it becomes easier to see why Svidrigailov is associated with timepieces. The distinction here is between the temporal and the eternal, as expressed in Second Corinthians 4:18: "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." (Recall that Original Mind by all accounts lacks a sense of time, as we saw in

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C. The first noun that Dostoevsky chose in this quotation, *rassudok* "reason, intelligence," is echoed ("strangely"?) when Luzhin later fumbles for Razumikhin's name, referring to him as "Rassudkin" (239/312).

D. Sonia's day-job is clearly also a jab at the radicals who proposed solving the problem of illicit sex by setting prostitutes to sewing, as Vera Pavlovna does in Chernyshevsky's *Chto Delat'?* As a seamstress, according to Marmeladov, Sonia could barely make fifteen kopeks a day, but as a prostitute, she made thirty rubles the first night (17/18)—yet another version of the thirty pieces of silver of Judas.

Chapters 7-8.) Fortunately for Sonia, she just naturally drifts toward anyone making a good decision, so she doesn't need a wristwatch for her appointments; Dostoevsky wouldn't let her have one anyway. It is Svidrigailov's job, in his household, to wind the clock (219/287).

But then the question comes to mind, why are we told that Marfa reminds him? And why is Dunia's watch a present from Marfa? And why is it large, like a man's watch (177/230)?

To understand this, we need to go back to the original Martha, who, in Luke 10:40-42, complains to Jesus that Mary is selfishly worshiping at his feet, instead of tending to business like Martha. It is this passage that caused Dostoevsky to associate Marfa Petrovna with the temporal, as any number of other novelists have done with characters named "Martha." The watch Marfa Petrovna gives Dunia is a symbol of another of her presents to Dunia: her distant relative Luzhin, who is by all odds the character in *Crime and Punishment* most closely associated with the temporal. He is obsessed with success and appearances, even to the point of seeking a wife who will be a fashion-accessory. It is another of Dostoevsky's little metaphorical jokes that the watch is of a size more appropriate to a man and that Dunia stubbornly insists that she likes it that way. On the literal level, Razumikhin is pleased that the watch was not given to Dunia by Luzhin; on the metaphorical level, the watch actually represents Luzhin (the temporal in symbolic form), and Dunia isn't quite ready to give him up yet. Here the literal and the metaphorical are in a bit of a tussle. A symbol for the temporal, of course, has no future in the story, so later Razumikhin eagerly assures Dunia that he will go pawn her watch for her (239/312). There is no record of her protesting the loss of either Luzhin or the "watch" given her by Marfa Petrovna.

The symbolic meaning of timepieces explains why, when Luzhin, the very embodiment of temporal values, erupts into Raskolnikov's room, Zosimov reacts the way he does: he "yawned, opening his mouth extraordinarily widely as he did so, and keeping it that way for an extraordinarily long time. Then he slowly drew his hand up to his waistcoat pocket, took out an enormous, convex, gold-lidded watch, opened it, looked, and as slowly and sluggishly put it back into his pocket" (111-12/143). Luzhin is "temporal" writ large.

Now it is easier to see how the wooing of Dunia is related to Raskolnikov's move away from vile motives and toward wisdom. Her first suitor is Svidrigailov; that is, Raskolnikov sees a woman merely as a sex-object on a short-term lease. Her second is Luzhin; that is, Raskolnikov sees a woman as a kind of fashion-accessory, useful to one's career. Ultimately,

Raskolnikov is repelled by both stances and turns his view of womankind over to his Reason, Razumikhin, who doesn't just adore Dunia but makes her both his bride and his companion. The sequence is "affair" > "marriage for bad reasons" > "marriage for good reasons."

For Dunia represents self-sacrifice, that is, non-egoism. It is Raskolnikov's egoism that is at issue—how he has to turn away from low motives to acquire wisdom. So Dunia has to be brought to reject even the compromise solution: the marriage-of-convenience.

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But back to Svidrigailov, who doesn't have long to live. Throughout the novel, characters routinely invoke the devil in curses whenever anything untoward happens, as when Koch, the man who temporarily prevents Raskolnikov's escape from the scene of the crime, says, "And where the devil she [Aliona] can have taken herself is beyond me." (67-68/83) There are endless references to the devil in oaths, but you can't easily count them in Garnett's translation, using the search-command, because she often euphemizes the words for "devil," despite what is in the Russian text. Also, in a parody of utilitarianism, Raskolnikov himself says, "Every year, they say, a certain percentage [of girls] has to go…somewhere…to the devil, it must be, so as to freshen up the rest and not interfere with them." (43/50) Here the devil is busy finding work for idle hands; he has a tight schedule and gets a lot done.

Remember how the smell of paint disappears from the police station once Raskolnikov stops making up excuses? A similar thing happens to these references to the devil. Once Katerina dies, taking with her the last obstacle to Raskolnikov's vision, he goes straight to Sonia, where the devil finally comes into an actual conversation, instead of just oaths. Raskolnikov offers Sonia one last excuse: "It suddenly came to me as bright as the sun: how is it that no man before now has dared or dares yet, while passing by all this absurdity, quite simply to take the whole thing by the tail and whisk it off to the devil! I…I wanted *to dare,* and I killed…I just wanted to dare, Sonia, that's the whole reason!" Now remember, he's saying this to Divine Wisdom, so her reaction should tell us whether his reason is valid or not: "Oh, be still, be still!" cried Sonia, clasping her hands. "You deserted God, and God has stricken you, and given you over to the devil!..." (321/418)[E]

E. With rare exceptions (like "Ne rassudok, tak bes!" quoted above; 60/72), characters in *Crime and Punishment* generally use the word for "devil" found in most common oaths—чёрт *chiort*. But Sonia here uses the solemn Church term дъявол *d'iavol* (from Greek *diábolos* "slanderer, enemy; the Devil"). *She* is not misled as to who he really is.

And now Raskolnikov inches further toward self-knowledge, going so far as to say, "And it was the devil killed the old crone, not me." (322/420)

This is still in Part V. In Part VI, where Svidrigailov is fighting for his life, the references to the devil, in oaths, disappear suddenly (except for the ones Svidrigailov himself uses) when Raskolnikov tells Razumikhin that he is entrusting his mother and his sister to him. Razumikhin has been using "the devil" in oaths throughout the book, and his last use of the expression is instructive: "Ah, the devil! And where do you plan on going?" (339/444) This is another of Dostoevsky's jokes, because Razumikhin has already answered his own question: Raskolnikov intends to go to Svidrigailov, who on the metaphorical level is the devil.

And now the devil suddenly doesn't have any convenient opportunities to raise hell. Early on he had provided Raskolnikov with an ax and some splendid fantasies, arranged murders and tormented souls, but even by Part III he reports that he is in a state of ennui. "But I'll tell you frankly: I'm very bored! These last three days especially, so that I was even glad to see you…" (217/284)

Why the last three days? What has been happening?

What has happened is this:

1. Razumikhin has taken over. He has moved closer to Raskolnikov, into a house owned by Pochinkov ("Mender") and sees Raskolnikov a lot.

2. Raskolnikov has taken a good look at himself. He has now gone back and looked at the scene of the crime, where—surprise!—workmen are busy redecorating. That is, he can now see how he has been whitewashing his own motives. In that scene, by the way, Dostoevsky brings up the metaphorical clothing as well, when the older of the two workmen explains "journal" (журнал, a "French" word) to the younger as a magazine that comes from abroad every week with pictures showing the good people of Petersburg how to dress, a reference to the vast complex of foreign influences Dostoevsky disapproves of (133/171).

3. His new clarity of vision has caused in him the death of "Marmeladov," his tendency to avert his eyes from his responsibilities.

4. Losing "Marmeladov" has brought Sonia—Divine Wisdom—directly into his life, so the devil has another force to reckon with, and this one tougher than a rawhide buggy whip, to stay within Dostoevsky's imagery. Sonia's weak helplessness is a wonderful joke, for on the metaphorical level she has the strength of ten, and at the end of the novel she still has an undefeated record.

So of course Svidrigailov is especially delighted to see Raskolnikov! He had been rather severely pummeled the last three days, and now he is

invoked right into Raskolnikov's very parlor by the dream of the murder. Life is looking up for him, and he immediately tries to involve Raskolnikov in his scheme to ruin Dunia, returning repeatedly, during their first long interview, to his offer to give her "free money" (IV.1). After Raskolnikov has blocked his suggestions repeatedly, Svidrigailov finally complains that, if he cannot give Dunia money, then one must conclude that "man can only do evil to men in this world," with "no right to do even a drop of good… That is absurd. If I died, for example, and left this sum to your dear sister in my will, is it possible that even then she would refuse it?" (223/292) But being occasionally good is not adequate: Right cannot so easily undo Wrong, as Dostoevsky tells us in another vivid and peculiar scene.

> A wise man's heart is at his right hand;
> but a fool's heart at his left.
>
> —Ecclesiastes 10:2

The last thing Svidrigailov does, just before he walks out into the streets of St. Petersburg to kill himself, is to try to catch flies with his free right hand (394/510). Earlier we showed how the flies are reified out of a thought, then appear in a dream, and finally take actual, living form. To understand their final peculiar appearance in the novel, we need to consider two facts: flies, in Russian folklore, were regarded as one of the forms in which devils manifested themselves;[2] and one of the names of the Devil, Beelzebub, has traditionally been interpreted as "Lord of the Flies." Dostoevsky is clearly incorporating this etymology into the scene, having associated Svidrigailov, at least on the metaphorical level, with the Devil or at least a devil.

But there remains a mystery: the text makes it absolutely clear that, even though we are not told what Svidrigailov's left hand is occupied with, it is not available for fly-catching. To understand this, we must recall the historical distinction between left and right: left-handers are "sinister," "gauche," and "maladroit," whereas right-handers are, well, "right" (Russian правый *pravyi* has the same double significance as English). "Sinister" is the Latin word for "left," and the left side has traditionally been viewed as the wrong, dangerous, and/or evil side.[3] This has caused "right" to have as its opposite both "left" and "wrong," leading directly to the wonderful notion that someone in a bad mood must have got out of the "wrong side of the bed." As usual with Dostoevsky, there is Scripture behind this

concept—not just the distinction quoted above from Ecclesiastes but also the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats in Matthew 25, where the "righteous" are put on the right side of the Lord and the sinners on the left side, prior to being flung into everlasting fire. In Russia the left is specifically the devil's side; indeed, one of the synonyms for "devil" in Russian is левый *levyi* "the left one."[4] In Russian folklore, in fact, each child was thought to be provided with its own angel on the right and devil on the left (which is why peasants, in cursing something, spit to the left, never to the right[5]). Dostoevsky has used this motif as a convenient format for the conflicts bedeviling Raskolnikov: Sonia as angel, Svidrigailov as devil.

Svidrigailov as the Devil devotes his career to answering one of the great questions of mysticism, which we brought up in Chapter 7: Why can't you just live to have fun? The traditional answer is that this puts you into a selfish mode in which you ultimately create misery round about you. In *Crime and Punishment* the objective correlative of this misery is the little winged demons released into the world by Svidrigailov's behavior. It is his (metaphorical) left hand, his evil side, that released them—that is what makes it unavailable for fly-catching—and he now discovers that he can't catch even one of them with his right, or righteous, hand. That is the dilemma that causes him suddenly to stand up and walk out into the streets to end it all.

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We have already given the ending away, so nothing will be lost if we visit it briefly in search of motifs. Throughout the novel, locks and keys are made symbolic—not surprisingly, since the buildings containing them are too. At one point, for example, "Svidrigailov" (Raskolnikov's lower self) locks "Dunia" (Raskolnikov's ego-free side) into his room in order to compromise her. He himself is inaccessible to salvation, a fact signaled by his saying to her, in a notable double-entendre, "I've lost the key; I can't find it." (380/494) Svidrigailov's defeat is then indicated by his giving her the key to the door—that is, Raskolnikov's lower self sets free his non-egoistic side (383/497). But the further relevance of this key is suggested by some details of Russian folklore, for which, as we have seen, Dostoevsky finds many uses in *Crime and Punishment*. The peasants viewed the heavens as a sort of vault or treasure-house opened and closed with great golden keys. Dew and rain were among the items held in this locked vault (along with the souls of the good, let in by St. Peter); when there was too much rain, the farmers prayed to the Saint Peter-Paul (a single entity!) to shut the clouds up in the heavens, and when too little rain, for St. Ilia to let it out.[6] Svidrigailov hands over the missing key, visits Sonia, and…

The heavens pour down onto Svidrigailov, in the form of the Living Water—just as they had after his first attempt on Dunia—and, like an animal (389/505), he chooses a place to die (394-95/511). He "almost grins" when he finds an appropriate place: a fire station. The joke that he almost grins at is that the proper place for the devil's fires to be snuffed out, awash in the Living Water, is of course a fire station. This is why, when the fireman standing outside tells him that "this is not the place," just as if Petersburg has a wealth of places set aside for such purposes, Svidrigailov says, "It's a good place."

And then:

"Svidrigailov pulled the trigger." [F]

F. Note also the valuable essay on the devil in *Crime and Punishment* by V. E. Vetlovskaia (1997), translated in 2006 in Richard Peace's excellent anthology of scholarship on this novel.

References:

1. Annensky, "Vtoraia kniga otrazhenii," (Moscow, 1979) 198, cited by Vetlovskaia in Peace 2006: 168 n. 7.
2. Leatherbarrow, 7.
3. Barber and Barber, chap. 15.
4. Ryan, 54.
5. Ryan, 55.
6. Haase, 61, 107, 109, 382 n. 3.

Epilogue

Seeing Double

> At the very moment you become content in affliction,
> the door of paradise will open.
>
> —Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, Sufi poet[1]

> But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall
> stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire…
>
> —Malachi 3:2

In the course of researching and writing this book, our opinion of Dostoevsky skyrocketed upward, and more like Voyager than like a bottle rocket. The story we had originally puzzled over, many years past, was not the story that Dostoevsky had put all his work into. He had actually written a kind of psychological odyssey disguised as a melodrama, and the effort he had put into it left us breathless.

We got some experience with the complexities of his effort when his playfulness infected us and we decided to try out one of his methods: incorporate a couple of ideas into characters, then consult them when we needed help. A simple project, you might think.

Hah!

Our characters would be reifications of Coherence and Contrast, who are generally at odds with each other, since the one always returns the reader to the old while the other demands the new, because it is the new that is most contrastive. For Contrast we came up with "anacoluthon," the Greek equivalent for the Latin "non sequitur," the rationale being that, because it is the new that is most vivid, maximum contrast is created by introducing something that has no connection with the preceding. This is why Anna sometimes comes up with ideas that are dramatic and colorful but far-fetched.

Originally we contrasted her with "Fred Folge," whose last name is the imperative for the German verb meaning "to follow"—that is, a close equivalent to "sequitur." This was a craven violation of coherence, as Dostoevsky would have pointed out, because not only was Fred's first name there only for alliteration, not for meaning, but we had not even stayed with

a single language for the two names. We had given "Coherence" an incoherent name.

So we went back to Greek, studied countless names, and eventually came up with "Hector," or "holding fast," and "Paleologus," an actual surname, which means "old word," the rationale being that coherence always ties the story to what has already been said. We even considered printing his contributions in the font called "Bookman Old Style." The whole process took a little less than forever, but not much.

Dostoevsky did this for all the characters in a long novel. Now you know why he had to cobble together so many names out of words denoting concepts and images he needed for the metaphorical story: "Raskolnikov," "Katerina," "Luzhin," and so on. We did the same with "Anna Coluthon." Dostoevsky could find many relevant names in his native language, but we had to resort to Greek. Common surnames in English are extraordinarily impoverished in meaning, unless you want to reveal a character's occupation—Farmer, Forester, Webster, Fisher, Fletcher, Taylor, etc.

In using our two characters, we also accidentally learned more about why *Crime and Punishment* reaps so much criticism. While Hector was a lamb, we simply could not make Anna stay in character for more than a few words, try as we liked. Anna was impossible: no matter what we did, we could not keep her from making sense—she would jump in and explain something in terms of coherence. It was as if she had been hearing this stuff from Hector so long that she just naturally used his words and concepts.

What to do? We made a different choice from Dostoevsky—hoped that the reader would not notice that Anna, as a contrasting figure to Hector, really was not supposed to make sense, yet if she didn't make sense, then she couldn't be of any help. And if we got rid of her, then we lost the contrast between the two characters, and Hector became an impossible know-it-all. If you look at *Crime and Punishment* from this perspective, you find that Dostoevsky, encountering such dilemmas, overwhelmingly resolved contradictions by choosing the metaphorical rather than the literal. His typical solution was to introduce such passages with "strangely" or some other indication that the reader is encountering a meta-reality underneath the merely fictional one. At such points the demands of the "fiction" get short shrift. This, we concluded, is inevitable. The more you try this, even in a simple story, the greater will be your admiration for Dostoevsky's achievement.

This is why most novels are not built like layer-cakes, with meanings piled on meanings. It is too hard to do, too confusing for the reader, and you have to be seven kinds of genius to make it work well enough on the literal

level that readers will keep reading and critics will continue to write articles about how badly you tell a story. But Dostoevsky does some truly amazing things with his method, such as creating one kind of drama on the literal level, quite another on the metaphorical level, as when Luzhin bullies weak little Sonia until Divine Wisdom flings Rational Egoism out on his ear with such force that he completely disappears from the story and is probably still sailing off toward distant galaxies, much like Voyager.

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Oddly, that is among the simpler things Dostoevsky does. As you study how he uses the metaphorical story, you realize finally that the entire novel is actually a reification of a complicated thought-process, showing someone going crazy, giving in to his lower self, and then finally—tortured by his own remorseless egoism in all its manifestations—finding his way back into equilibrium. In fact, the metaphorical version looks for all the world as if it were conceived of as a mind thinking about the possibilities of the world—a vast day-dream or reverie, if you will. "What if I killed somebody to jump-start my career? What if this cut me off from everyone?" Suicide pops up as a possibility, Mind Central explores it in cold detail, and then rejects it. And now we see that what we have called "the poof-perplex" makes perfect sense for *Crime and Punishment*. Mind Central considers whether to block out the pain of living by just getting drunk, but the next thought is of the worst-case scenario: Poof!—Marmeladov! Everything is presented as an imaginary exploration of possible outcomes of different forms of behavior. Raskolnikov himself is a reification of thoughts—the agent of a mind thinking about the possibilities of life. And this means that Dostoevsky found the ultimate solution to the dilemma of the romantic novel: If the possibilities of drama erode when you isolate characters, but you insist on writing about just a single character, then the solution is to create characters who are merely pieces of the hero, so that he never really has to talk to anyone but himself. The result is a novel full of melodrama that—on the metaphorical level—is nonetheless about just one person, in some sense the author. We waited until the end to point this out bluntly, intending to duck and run if angry critics gather in the night, bearing pitchforks and torches. Yet the data are hard to argue with.

The most compelling piece of data comes from Svidrigailov. We have seen how Dostoevsky uses various motifs to connect Svidrigailov with the Devil, then creates a wide variety of metaphorical jokes and allusions that derive from this connection: Svidrigailov "looks younger than his age," for example, and he explains how *he* would fashion eternity. It is

Svidrigailov who gives us the clue to Dostoevsky's technique in *Crime and Punishment*, when he says:

> "Ghosts are, so to speak, bits and pieces of other worlds, their beginnings. The healthy man, naturally, has no call to see them, because the healthy man is the most earthly of men, and therefore he ought to live according to life here, for the sake of completeness and order. Well, but as soon as a man gets sick, as soon as the normal earthly order of his organism is disrupted, the possibility of another world at once begins to make itself known, and the sicker one is, the greater the contact with this other world, so that when a man dies altogether, he goes to the other world directly." (221/289)

How does this apply to the novel? Well, Raskolnikov loses his health and encounters bits and pieces of another world, including even a version of the Devil, who first manifests only as a Mysterious Presence, egging Raskolnikov on, then eventually takes physical form, first looking rather nice, then eventually showing his true aspect and frightening little children (384/499). And when Raskolnikov regains his health, Svidrigailov removes himself from the scene.

But these are treacherous waters. Even the simple aspects of *Crime and Punishment* can get very complicated. You might think that you have something to hold on to when Dostoevsky creates one character (Katerina) representing Pride and another (Dunia) representing Self-Sacrifice or Non-Egoism. But not only are these two merely aspects of Raskolnikov, who is manifestly a version of Dostoevsky himself, but the narrator goes out of his way to make the point that the two women are not altogether separate from each other! Both of them are shown with a habit of pacing the floor, for example. If that is not intended to show their relationship, then, what?—Dostoevsky simply ran out of ideas on how to let his characters fill up their spare time? Katerina's metaphorical meaning is "Pride," but as a "possible fate," she is a version of what could happen if Dunia chooses badly. And on yet another level, Katerina is also manifestly a version of Dostoevsky's first wife, complete with the tuberculosis that his first wife died of.[2] So if you include her relationship to Raskolnikov and to Dostoevsky, you could argue that this one character has "meanings" that point in five directions.

Throughout the novel, Dostoevsky hides his actual story behind a melodrama, so that whenever we encounter melodrama, we can be pretty sure that it contains a double meaning. But if this is so, what are we to make of the remark, at the end of the novel, that "Sonia lived just by his [Raskolnikov's] life alone"? If this sentence is one-dimensional, then it is a rarity in the novel. But if it is not, then what? Presumably Dostoevsky is

redirecting our attention to "Sonia" as not just the literal character but the metaphorical one: she is Wisdom, Inc., now permanently ensconced in the mind of someone who has tried the alternative. Sonia continues to live as a character, but "Sonia" is reintegrated into Raskolnikov's mind, thereby ending the metaphorical schism that had tormented him.

Moreover, just as the metaphorical story has precedence everywhere else, it completely dominates the organization of the novel. As near as we can tell, the only times the *literal* story is reflected in the organization is when it is possible for Dostoevsky to break both stories at the same places. This is easier at the beginning than toward the end. For example, Part One is devoted to the literal murders and the metaphorical "murders." But by Part Five it is much harder to understand why the literal Luzhin is even still present, let alone dominates the first half of the section, than it is to see why Rational Egoism has to be evicted before Raskolnikov can have his epiphany. Similarly, within the literal story it is hard to make sense of the death of Katerina Ivanovna—the other major event in Part Five. How does it move the story forward in a "detective novel" to knock off the heroine's annoying stepmother?

But of course when critics refer to *Crime and Punishment* as a "detective novel," they make nonsense of the concept. This is about as accurate as calling *Moby-Dick* a story about a bass-tournament gone terribly wrong. In Dostoevsky's "detective novel" it is the murderer, not the detective, who is the hero, while the detective contents himself with making the murderer feel really bad about what he has done. The whole point is the *salvation* of the murderer, not his capture.

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Some details of the novel have never lost their murkiness for us; others have done so only recently and reluctantly. If you read *Crime and Punishment* a couple dozen times and listen to an audio-tape of the novel repeatedly for a significant portion of your life, and if you search a digital version of it endlessly for the details of the characters and repetitions of motifs, then you will probably conclude that there are still great empty spaces in your understanding, vast like the Egyptian desert. For us, one of these murky images actually *was* the Egyptian desert, which comes up six times in *Crime and Punishment*.

Much of the difficulty here arises because of what we have described as Dostoevsky's exploding motifs. Those who plunge into the jungle that is Dostoevsky inevitably find their way into impenetrable thickets of meaning. They usually back up and go around them. We ourselves unexpectedly encountered an actual Egyptian desert while searching the literature for

origins of the bizarre scene in which we learn that Porfirii told his friends that he was going to become a monk, and then that he was getting married. "He even had a new suit made." (198/257)

At the outset, only Porfirii's "new suit" seemed simple: new clothing is always a metaphor for a change of outlook in *Crime and Punishment*. This is why Raskolnikov's ego, Luzhin, when he journeys to St. Petersburg, shows up adorned with not just a new suit but also the set of clichéd views on political and social subjects that the new suit represents. The suits should thus reflect Raskolnikov's altered views once he had moved to St. Petersburg, since Porfirii, too, is a piece of Raskolnikov.

The "monk" motif pointed in at least two directions: at the landlady's daughter (another aspect of Raskolnikov), who not only got engaged to be married but also wanted to go into a cloister, and at the life-story of St. Porfirii, Bishop of Gaza. According to Dimitrii Rostovskii's account,[3] this saint went off into the Egyptian desert and became a hermit-monk; when he fell very ill he journeyed to Jerusalem. Eventually the Savior cured him there of his illness and made him custodian of part of the True Cross—another part had already been carried to Tsar'grad (Constantinople) by the "sainted tsaritsa Elena" (mother of Constantine, who converted the Roman Empire to Christianity). Presently Jesus, in a dream, set St. Porfirii the new task of marrying "a bride, in truth wretched and outcast by people, but well-behaved…for although she is poor, she is no stranger to Me, My true sister." (The Greek word for church being feminine, *ekklēsía*, the early church was often represented allegorically as a pure virgin, the Bride of Christ.) Specifically, Porfirii was to try to convert Gaza, which Dimitrii describes as a city "filled with idol-worshipping heathens" (not so far from Dostoevsky's view of Petersburg and Rome). Soon Gaza was plagued by a drought, which God ended in answer to St. Porfirii's prayers: "He raised a wind from mid-day as once in the presence of Il'ia the prophet, and covered the sky with rain clouds and there were lightning and thunder, and when the sun set a great rain fell." The miracle caused many to convert. During his later life, St. Porfirii's work was supported by the Byzantine emperor Arcadius (A.D. 395-408), prodded by the empress Eudoksia.

Note that the miraculous deluge begins at nightfall, just like the one that engulfs Petersburg the night Svidrigailov dies. And given that, in addition to all the above, the emperor's name is "Arkadii," which is Svidrigailov's first name, his daughter is named "Pulcheria" (in the novel the name of Raskolnikov's mother), and the hermit who acts as a wise counselor to Bishop Porfirii is named Prokopii (Razumikhin's father's name), we are either in the presence of coincidences of such magnitude that

we would need a gifted mathematician and two or three astronomers just to calculate their odds, or Dostoevsky found inspiration for many details of *Crime and Punishment* in this passage. At any rate, as we shall see shortly, there is yet one more "coincidence" in this passage that will prove revealing.

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But let us consider afresh why Dostoevsky's method is so difficult to unravel. Most novelists, like Dickens, use a single meaning of, say, an allegorical name, or at least stick with a homogeneous group of meanings. This is not at all what Dostoevsky does. Instead, he sees the name as an opportunity to go into a frenzy of implication and suck the name dry of all possible meanings. The simplest way to understand Raskolnikov's first name, Rodion, as we saw, is also the most direct way: look in the hagiography. There you find that St. Rodion (originally *Hērōdíōn*) was principally distinguished by having been executed in Rome at the same time as his kinsman St. Peter. The etymological meaning of the name is "Song of the Hero," but then too, the apparent word-stem of Rodion, *rod-*, suggests in Russian a word for "native." This would seem irrelevant, given that the name comes from Greek, not Russian, but scholars find it hard to ignore, since the split (*raskol*) between the native and the foreign is a major theme of *Crime and Punishment*, and Raskolnikov's patronymic (Romanovich) suggests foreignness. Moreover, the girl he had been engaged to, the daughter of his very Russian landlady, is named Natalia, which also means "native," but in Latin. She dies when he turns definitively away from his Russianness.

Nor does the matter end here: some church calendars, apparently associating the (by-then truncated) name Rodion with Greek *ródon* "rose," define it as "one buying roses," or, as if formed like Latin *roseus*, as "rosy" (розовый).[4] So even if one ignores the symbolism involved with the color red in the novel, one still has to contend with the roses in the novel: Raskolnikov compares Razumikhin to "a rose in springtime" (190/247), and the dead girl in Svidrigailov's dream has a wreath of roses on her head. Since roses have traditionally been considered an apotropaic against evil, in Russia as well as in Greece and Germany, it may be that Dostoevsky was in fact using what he saw as an etymological meaning of "Rodion" for further symbolism. Razumikhin does, after all, have the function of protecting Raskolnikov (as Faust is protected from the devil, at the end of his ordeal, by a shower of roses).

If you ask which is the correct meaning of the name, you are probably asking the wrong question. In no way is Dostoevsky trying to isolate a single meaning for the reader.

This is what makes him so ridiculously difficult. He worked very hard to make it possible to track his metaphorical story, yet he could never resist adding further meanings. We mentioned his extensive use of smoking materials as metaphors for the fires of passion, which causes him to have Svidrigailov light up a cigar after the funeral of Marfa Petrovna, who had functioned as a governor on Svidrigailov's lust (219/287). The cigar, not surprisingly, immediately causes her ghost to appear to Svidrigailov. This aspect of "fire" is potentially destructive, as is implicit in one of Porfirii's remarks to Raskolnikov: "You're like a child: Just let me touch the fire!" (268/348)

But fire gives light as well as heat, and in *Crime and Punishment* its meaning shifts according to its use. Raskolnikov and Sonia read from the Gospel of John by the flickering light of a candle. With the death of Svidrigailov, fire-as-illicit-passion comes to an end, and the symbol undergoes yet another transformation. When Raskolnikov goes to the crossroads to kiss the earth, we are told that "he simply threw himself into the possibility of this wholesome, new, full sensation. It came to him suddenly in a sort of fit, caught fire in his soul from a single spark, and suddenly, like a flame, engulfed him." (405/525) Moreover, Dostoevsky clearly realized that one of his own experiences in Siberia—working at a kiln that turned gypsum into plaster of Paris—provided him with an ancient image for spiritual improvement: the process of refining by fire. In the King James Bible, by our count, "refine" is used eight times, four times literally and four times as a metaphor for spiritual improvement, and this does not even include a well-known passage from I Corinthians 3:13 (where refining is referred to without using the word): "Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." So Dostoevsky extends the meaning of fire, and the fires that "burned" Raskolnikov (412/537) ultimately refine him, which is surely why he is shown having his epiphany at the gypsum-kiln.[A]

Dostoevsky clearly intended this final image already from the beginning of the novel, because in the scene at the district police station, Nikodim Fomich says of Ilia Petrovich, "He flares up, he boils up, he burns up—and that's it! All gone! And what's left is his heart of gold!" (80/101)

A. Gypsum ($CaSO_4 \cdot 2\ H_2O$), if it is crushed and its water-molecules are removed by heating, can then, as needed, be wetted, shaped, and dried, whereupon it acquires its original hardness *in its new shape*. This makes it invaluable for making a cast, cementing bricks, or creating a metaphor for the reshaping of a character in a novel.

Dostoevsky may have been thinking of the famous passage in Malachi (3:1-3) that has been taken to predict the coming not only of Jesus but of his messenger, John the Baptist, one of the central figures in the Gospel of John: "He is like a refiner's fire…" Ilia Petrovich, who had disliked Raskolnikov on sight early on, suddenly takes to him, late in the novel, and announces that he sees Raskolnikov as an "ascetic, monk, hermit" (407/528). What has happened? The avenging Perun-figure has encountered a "refined" Raskolnikov, now that Svidrigailov is dead. The embodiments of Raskolnikov's bad qualities have been deleted, whereas the embodiments of his positive qualities—his friend Razumikhin (Reason) and his sister Dunia (Self-sacrifice)—are planning to make a "new life together" with him and Sonia in Siberia after he is released from prison (413/539).[B]

But let's get to something *really* complex.

Did you notice in the text that Raskolnikov's first victim, Aliona, is a witch? Her business client Kokh calls her that three times (67-68/82-83), and Raskolnikov uses this term for her twice (190/247, 196/255). We filed this away, knowing that, however common "witch" is as a term of reproach, in *Crime and Punishment* it had to be more than just a nasty way of referring to a woman. And then one of us began to wonder why Dostoevsky made a point of representing Aliona as bare-headed and asked another—versed in Russian folklore—what this would mean. "She's either a loose woman, a *vila* [willy], or a witch," was the reply. This set off a regular witch-hunt.

B. Ilia Petrovich has also begun noticing "crop-haired wenches" who "force their way into the Academy, [and] study anatomy" (408/529)—that is, girls are seemingly no longer merely the targets of abuse that they have been throughout the novel.

At the beginning of this little scene (406-7/527), two amusing metaphorical events occur. As Raskolnikov arrives at the police office, Ilia Petrovich—alias Lt. Gunpowder—enters from the inner office crying out, "Fee, fi, fo, fum, I smell the blood of a Russian man…or how does the tale go…I forget! Gr-r-reetings!" But he is using one of the standard Russian fairytale salutations of witches and wizards to a young *Russian* hero on a quest (Barber, 210-18); that is, Raskolnikov is recognized now by the supernatural native spirits as having returned to his native *Russianness*.

Gunpowder continues: "Come to see us? What's the occasion? ... If it's on business, you've come too early." Whereupon Constance Garnett (378) complains in a footnote that "Dostoevsky appears to have forgotten that it is after sunset, and that the last time Raskolnikov visited the police office at two in the afternoon he was reproached for coming too late." No: Raskolnikov came "too late" the first time because he had already committed the crime, and this time he's "too early" because he hasn't yet admitted it.

The ultimate witch of Russian folktales is Baba Yaga, a hag who has bad legs (as Aliona Ivanovna does: 68/83) and lives in the woods in a hut raised up on a chicken leg. This is presumably why Aliona's neck is compared to a chicken leg (8/6) and why Katerina Ivanovna calls Amalia Ivanovna a "Prussian chicken-leg in a crinoline," one of the more distinctive terms of abuse in world literature.

Arguably, the connection with Baba Yaga and chickens is also the reason for the remark that a "strange idea was hatching in [Rakolnikov's] head, like a chicken from an egg, and occupied him, very, very much." (53/63) Later, Razumikhin, when he tells Raskolnikov to "go to the devil," says that "Some little suffering comes along, and you brood over it like a hen over an egg!" (130/167) Pieces of this bird motif fly in all directions: Katerina Ivanovna calls Amalia Ivanovna a "cuckoo-bird"—a bird that lays its egg in another bird's nest is an apt image for how Dostoevsky views the German influence in Russia. You may still doubt that these motifs are related (we will see more connections in a moment), but in fact it is the purest Dostoevsky to move from one motif to another that is closely related on any level at all to the first. We have seen countless examples of this. The shells of the eggs even make it to the end of the novel. We see them littering the stairs in the disordered vision Raskolnikov has in III.6 (210/273), and when Raskolnikov goes to confess to St. Elijah/Ilia, climbing up a spiral staircase that hints at Elijah's whirlwind, the narrator mentions that the trash on it includes those same eggshells (406/526). These are metaphorical eggshells, the debris of Raskolnikov's great idea.

Aliona's name, "Ellen" and "Helen" in English, first made us ponder Helen of Troy (who hatched from Leda's swan-egg). Her name means "sun-daughter, planet Venus; radiant," although Dostoevsky could have accepted the false derivation from *hel-* "take, grasp; select," intending "selected one." But none of this got us very far, and we also had her patronymic, Ivanovna, to contend with.

The offspring-of-Ivan patronymics—of which there are eight if our count is right—generally refer the reader to the Gospel of John, rather than to somebody named Ivan. This must be why Lizaveta is an Ivanovna: the Elizabeth in the Gospel of John was the long-barren mother of John the Baptist, which (just in case you wondered) may account for Lizaveta being "constantly pregnant" (54/64) yet apparently without issue. (Lizaveta is also a child of John the gospel-writer, a purveyor of the Christian faith, in that she sells the sort of "old clothes" with which Razumikhin re-dresses Raskolnikov.) Among the reasons Svidrigailov is an Ivanovich is that in the Gospel of John, the Devil puts it into the heart of Judas Iscariot to betray

Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. But where does all this leave Aliona Ivanovna?

Hector and Anna?

Hector: "She's part of Raskolnikov."

*Anna: "Of course **you'd** say that."*

Hector: "She has to be. If the other characters are all part of Raskolnikov, then she is too. 'One for all and all for one.' It's not as if she alone lives outside the metaphorical story."

Anna: "He killed the witch in himself?"

*Hector: "The clue to what she represents is that, unlike Marmeladov, Aliona Ivanovna is clearly a part of Raskolnikov that he **shouldn't** have killed off. When he kills off 'Marmeladov,' he gets better; when he kills off 'Aliona Ivanovna,' he gets worse."*

Here we are back to a problem we have encountered several times already. Although readers have had trouble accepting a heroine who is a prostitute, Sonia's condition is a metaphor for how Raskolnikov has debased Divine Wisdom. The second time he meets her, which is only the day after their first meeting, she has already changed so much that he does not recognize her at first. She has changed because he is ceasing to debase Divine Wisdom. Aliona Ivanovna, for her part, is a piece of Raskolnikov that has shriveled up and turned selfish, acquiring the aspect of a witch. Even if we don't take Hector's word for it that she is a good part of Raskolnikov's mind, it is hard to believe that an evil part would be given the name "Aliona," which was the name of Dostoevsky's beloved nurse.[5]

If we start by admitting that Hector is right—that Dostoevsky cannot make everyone *but* Aliona Ivanovna into a piece of Raskolnikov—then it becomes easier to track down what she represents. What changes in him after she dies? Raskolnikov now feels completely cut off from his fellow man, instead of just mostly. In other words, his connection to humanity (perhaps specifically a Christian version of humanity) has shriveled and disappeared, just as the versions of his selfishness—Svidrigailov and Luzhin—have become big and strong. Aliona's narrow selfishness, her mistreatment of her relative Lizaveta, her cruelty: all mirror Raskolnikov's own behavior towards others. Like Aliona Ivanovna, he is letting his relatives do all the work; his sister and his mother support him. So the metaphorical Raskolnikov reasons that he could come out ahead by killing off the part of him that connects him to the rest of mankind.

It is not as if Dostoevsky doesn't give us a few hints. "I killed myself, not the old crone," says Raskolnikov (322/420). But as usual, there is more to it than this. The reason he kills her is to transgress his own humanity, to

remove the shackles of kinship and connectedness to his fellow-man. So he also says, "it wasn't a human being I killed, it was a principle!" (211/274) Certainly one principle that he kills is his pet idea that it is given to some, like Napoleon, to rise above the law and kill for a higher purpose. Already in *Eugene Onegin* (2.14) Pushkin had encapsulated in two snappy quatrains this Napoleonic theme of superiority and isolation—of setting oneself above one's fellow man:

> Но дружбы нет и той меж нами.
> Все предрассудки истребя,
> Мы почитаем всех нулями,
> А единицами—себя.
> Мы все глядим в Наполеоны;
> Двуногих тварей миллионы
> Для нас орудие одно;
> Нам чуство дико и смешно.
>
> But friendship is not like that, among us.
> Having destroyed all prejudice,
> We consider everyone else to be a zero—
> Ourselves alone to be a "one".
> We all look to Napoleon:
> The millions of two-legged creatures
> For us are simply tools;
> To have "feelings" is alien and absurd.[6]

This is the notion that Raskolnikov brooded over in the egg-metaphor, and it is smashed, littering the landscape with eggshells, when the murder-victims die. And Aliona Ivanovna, Raskolnikov's connectedness to humanity, has morphed into a witch purely for the metaphorical story. A once-healthy part of Raskolnikov's mind now bewitches him into cutting himself off from mankind. That it really is a bewitching we learn when Raskolnikov briefly renounces his plan, and the narrator says, "He was now free of that spell, magic, sorcery, obsession!" (50/60) Because Raskolnikov is killing part of himself, he cannot even conceal his intentions from his victim: when he goes to Aliona Ivanovna's apartment, "he even thought he saw something like mockery in her eyes, as if she had already guessed everything." (62/75) Here, as happens so often in the novel, information seeps through from one piece of Raskolnikov's mind to another.

Information-seepage of this sort occurs in many ways throughout the novel, most notably in the first scene between Raskolnikov and Svidrigailov: Svidrigailov tells of how Marfa Petrovna had appeared to him as a ghost two hours earlier (219/287). What had actually happened at that time? That was when Raskolnikov encountered the tradesman who accused him of murder (209/271-72). Now, the tradesman is a reification of Raskolnikov's new understanding that he is a murderer rather than a potential benefactor of mankind (hence the tradesman looks like an old woman—an image of Aliona Ivanovna come back to haunt Raskolnikov). And at the moment Raskolnikov realizes this—that is, the tradesman accuses him, in effect telling him how the world will view his crime—Svidrigailov, Raskolnikov's evil side, has an encounter with the ghost of Marfa Petrovna, the figure who harasses him with the constant reminder of "what would people think?" Raskolnikov's evil side does not actually respond to Conscience, only to Social Pressure—and, like a modern serial killer, only for a while.

And remember how Raskolnikov fell asleep in the bushes on Petrovsky Island (I.5) and had the dream of the beaten mare? This comes up again at the end of the novel: "In imagination he could see the water of the Little Neva as it had risen high overnight, Petrovsky Island, wet paths, wet grass, wet trees and bushes, and finally that very bush…" (394/510) There is only one problem: it is Svidrigailov, not Raskolnikov, who experiences this memory.[7] So either Dostoevsky was not paying attention or he deliberately showed the reader information seeping from one piece of Raskolnikov's mind to the other. The scene is altered now, though, and in a profoundly meaningful way: there is water everywhere.

Such details simply make no sense if you lose sight of the fact that the two characters are part of the same mind. But Dostoevsky realizes how much he is asking of the reader and makes an attempt to ensure that no one, not even a literary critic, can miss the point that Svidrigailov and Raskolnikov are connected at the hip. He does this with the following dialogue, when Svidrigailov is describing Marfa Petrovna's ghostly visits:

> "Why did I think that something like that must be going on with you?" Raskolnikov said suddenly, and was at once surprised that he had said it. He was greatly excited.
>
> "So-o-o? You thought that?" Svidrigailov asked in surprise. "Can it be? Now, didn't I tell you there was a common point between us, eh?"
>
> "You never said that!" Raskolnikov replied sharply and with passion.
>
> "Didn't I?"
>
> "No!"

"I thought I did. Earlier, when I came in and saw that you were lying there with your eyes closed, pretending, I said to myself at once: 'This is the very man!'"

"What do you mean, the very man? What is this about?" Raskolnikov cried out.

"What is it about? I really don't know what…" Svidrigailov muttered frankly, becoming somehow confused. (219/287)

Dostoevsky was not entirely successful in this attempt. One critic even concluded that "There is no innate relationship between the two [Raskolnikov and Svidrigailov], no affinity of the mystical order such as is posited in so many Dostoevsky studies."[8]

In fact, their lives connect at many points: Svidrigailov, after seven years in the country, beats his wife—the symbol of Social Pressure as it controls behavior—and brings about her death, and immediately thereafter Raskolnikov is freed to commit his murders. Each has a female money-lender in his life (228/298 for Svidrigailov's), and each money-lender has a simple-minded female relative whom she abuses. Each finally kills his money-lender's relative (and Raskolnikov kills his money-lender as well). Svidrigailov appears magically whenever Raskolnikov's eyes are opened to his own bad behavior and he suddenly sees himself as he is. And while Raskolnikov is wandering around in the rain making his decision to confess, Svidrigailov—in that self-same metaphorical downpour—makes his decision to commit suicide, using the pistol, moreover, that he had taken from Dunia, who had got it from Marfa, the original brake on Svidrigailov's behavior. When he dies, Raskolnikov is freed to confess and spends seven years expiating his crime in Siberia. This is a clearly deliberate parallel to Svidrigailov's seven years in the country after murdering his money-lender's niece. And Svidrigailov actually *remembers* things that happened to Raskolnikov when the latter was all alone! The "innate relationship" is that Svidrigailov is Raskolnikov's evil side, lost in selfish pursuits of sensual pleasure, and when he dies, Raskolnikov recovers.

> Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.
>
> —Matthew 18:3

But let us get back to the "principle" that Raskolnikov killed. The whitewashing of his deed commences immediately after the murders because, once the principle that Raskolnikov can transgress with impunity is dead, his justifications for the murder are instantly rendered inadequate. Aliona's connection to the Gospel of John, then, implied by her patronymic, "Ivanovna," may simply be shorthand for a major theme of the Gospel of John, the betrayal of Jesus by Judas Iscariot. Raskolnikov's betrayal of his humanity is put into a Christian context.

Certainly it is undeniable that the ghost of Judas Iscariot lives and has his being in *Crime and Punishment*. In a novel based on the Gospel of John, there are multiple versions of the thirty pieces of silver paid out to Judas for betraying Jesus, and there is a dinner where a character plainly identified with temporal values betrays Sofia, or Divine Wisdom, whose patronymic is "Semionovna," making her the child of Saint Simeon (Luke 2:28), shown in iconography holding the Christ-child. Exploding motifs again. It very much looks as if the scene was originally conceived as a sort of rough parallel to the Last Supper, but with certain alterations. Luzhin, who represents Raskolnikov's egoism, plays the part of Judas Iscariot and is found out and punished on the spot, but it is the inspiration for evil, Svidrigailov—identified repeatedly with the Devil—who commits suicide, as Judas is thought by many to have done.[C] And the events lead directly not to the death of Jesus but to the strengthening of Divine Wisdom and, ultimately, to the resurrection of Raskolnikov, the Lazarus-figure.

But if that is how Dostoevsky conceived the scene, he took care to bury its pieces deep in the metaphorical story, and we are all the better for it. Made obvious, a version of the Last Supper would have seemed presumptuous to his fellow-believers and painfully tendentious to the rest of us.

It should be obvious by now that, far from eking out his story with coincidences, Dostoevsky actually went to amazing lengths to avoid doing so. Everything is set up with great care. Consider just the murder scene. Throughout the novel, the standard metaphor for a character using bad judgment is the remark that "Sonia [read: Divine Wisdom] was not at home."[D] But this leads Dostoevsky into a serious problem. For

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C. If Judas hanged himself (Matthew 27: 5), then he died twice, because he is also reported dying after the Resurrection (Acts 1: 18). It has been argued that the Greek word for "hanged" could mean "choked up" (as with emotion). The second account of his death says nothing to suggest suicide.

D. Nastasia is another character who "significantly" may or may not be at home, and sometimes *is* at home when she's not "supposed" to be.

consistency, he needs to cause Sonia also "not to be present" when Aliona Ivanovna is murdered. Yet to insert Sonia into the story here as Aliona's roommate would require narrative-contortions that are all but unimaginable. Besides which, he certainly can't allow Sonia to be killed off. It was surely to avoid this difficulty that he created an obvious double for Sonia, namely Lizaveta Ivanovna, so that the metaphor could be maintained and he would not have to invent some far-fetched reason why Aliona Ivanovna lived with Sonia. The murder now can take place only because a mysterious presence has led Raskolnikov to people who reveal, as he passes them, that Lizaveta, a stand-in for Sonia, will not be at home.[E] It is not because Lizaveta is, say, skilled in the martial arts that Raskolnikov can't risk her being home when he commits the robbery; it is because she, like Sonia, is an agent of Divine Wisdom, which cannot be present when Raskolnikov is acting badly. She returns just as Raskolnikov has disturbed some old clothes (a symbol for past views) and a gold watch (a symbol for the temporal) has slipped out from under a coat (64/78), and then he has to kill her too. Wisdom turns up just a moment too late.

By this point the reader may have realized that, in a novel filled with doubles for the hero, some of the doubles themselves have doubles! We have just seen this with Sonia: she represents Raskolnikov's Divine Wisdom, but she herself clearly has a double in Lizaveta (as Richard Peace also points out[9]).

To understand Dostoevsky's need for these doubles, we need to look at the story from his point of view as writer. It is all very well for him to kill off the bad parts of Raskolnikov's consciousness—Svidrigailov, for example—but he can't kill off Raskolnikov's Divine Wisdom if he intends to show Raskolnikov wising up. What to do? If he kills off Sonia, then he has to bring her back to life again. Writers do this sort of thing occasionally, but it is easier in a comic novel than in a serious one. So Dostoevsky gives Sonia a double who can be killed off, thus saving Sonia for the rest of the novel. He establishes the relationship between Sonia and Lizaveta by

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E. Recall that Raskolnikov notices with surprise Sonia's "mysterious get-togethers with Lizaveta—two holy fools"—to read the Bible (249/325); that Sonia and Lizaveta had exchanged crosses (324/422); and that when Raskolnikov is trying to confess to Sonia, "in her face he seemed to see the face of Lizaveta" (315/410). Furthermore, when Razumikhin addresses Sonia as Sofia Ivanovna instead of Sofia Semionovna, this also is surely to point up her (metaphorical) relationship to Lizaveta Ivanovna (186/242). (Elsewhere, too, Razumikhin puns on patronymics or gets them wrong. This is always done for the sake of the metaphorical story.)

causing them to engage in the traditional Slavic folk-ritual of *kumstvo* (god-father, or god-sister, relationship), in which young women kiss and exchange rings or crosses as tokens of sworn kinship to each other (324/422).[10]

There are other obvious examples of this problem, and Dostoevsky solves it in more than one way. He kills off Filipp, also a piece of Raskolnikov, but then brings him back as a ghost. And Marfa Petrovna is obliged to come back, also as a ghost, when Dostoevsky needs her to function once again as a kind of social monitor, giving a whole new meaning to the view that women's work is never done.

But the most striking example of this doubling is also the most subtle. We have argued that, in killing Aliona Ivanovna, Raskolnikov is certainly killing off an aspect of his consciousness that is essential for his mental health. This is why the murders cut him off from his fellow man. But if this is so, then somehow Aliona has to be brought back to life for Raskolnikov to recover. Moreover, Dostoevsky gives us a strong hint that "Aliona" could not actually be killed: Raskolnikov has a dream in which he again smashes the ax down on her head, but this time it doesn't even hurt her (213/277). If our theory is correct, then, there must necessarily be a second Aliona somewhere in the story.

We found her before we had any inkling of her significance. In fact, when we found her, we first wondered if Dostoevsky had indeed nodded—forgotten her name and accidentally renamed her. With no better hypothesis at hand, we made a mental note of the fact that one of the minor characters, the youngest daughter of Katerina Ivanovna, is first called Lida but later in the novel is suddenly given the name Леня: Lenia. (Constance Garnett corrected Dostoevsky's "mistake" and retained the name "Lida" throughout.)

One day we began to puzzle over another curious "mistake" in the story. In a conversation with Raskolnikov, Porfirii Petrovich says, "So, now you're off to the name-day party, sir?"

Raskolnikov corrects him: "To the funeral, sir!" (272/354)

But as it happens, when Raskolnikov goes to visit Sonia for the first time (IV.4), soon after Marmeladov dies, little sickly Lida (Marmeladov's favorite stepchild: 146/187) now has the new name Lenia (244/319)—apparently, like Aliona, a version of *Elena*—which is used for her from then on. So the funeral feast really is a name-day party, and Aliona Ivanovna, Raskolnikov's victim, is reincarnated and given prospects for a happy future. We know her prospects are good because Svidrigailov has turned over his financial assets to this child and her siblings (384/499), thereby ensuring

their well-being (both literal and metaphorical) after his death. In a novel about a rebirth, Dostoevsky has even incorporated the name-day ceremony.[F]

Note that Aliona is not the only character who "returns" as a child. Lida/Lenia's brother Kolia, whose name is a diminutive of "Nikolai," by Hector's principle must also be a double—for Raskolnikov's innocent pre-Petersburg persona, also doubled by the painter Nikolai/Mikolka. (Dostoevsky chose to show the corrosion of the early Raskolnikov's purity by causing Nikolai/Mikolka to remove his cross—"He'd gone in, taken off his cross, a silver one, and asked for a drink in exchange" [107/137]—and then attempt suicide.) That "Lenia" and "Kolia" are now provided for is a metaphorical statement that the healthy aspects of Raskolnikov's mind are now whole and ready to grow stronger: the future of these "good" aspects of him is assured. They have "become as little children" again.

But who, then, is Aliona/Elena? What does she represent? We had tried many hypotheses: Helen of Troy, Goethe's Helena, and every possible etymological version of the name. But the one that made everything fit came from that same passage in Dimitrii Rostovskii that explained so much about the details of Porfirii's life: the sainted Tsaritsa Elena, who brought part of the True Cross to Constantinople. It is no accident that Raskolnikov, looking for Aliona's money, first finds crosses—one bronze, one of cypress wood—on a string around her neck (64/78). His victim is seen to be literally as well as metaphorically the bearer of the cross, and the True Cross at that, which was said to be made partly of cypress. Surely this champion of the core symbol of Christian faith and humility, from Dostoevsky's point of view, is too important to remain dead. And all the more so if the core attributes of that Christian life are, to use the words of Ilia Petrovich, "the feeling of humaneness and love for the Almighty." (408/528) When

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F. There is a persistent belief in East Europe, as in many other parts of the world, that when a child is named, the spirit—or some of the spiritual quality—of the dead person(s) for whom he or she was named (whether saint or ancestor or both) is incorporated into the child. Thus, where we celebrate a person's natal birthday, they celebrate the name-day as the key to that person's existence.

The child's original name, Lida, is surely from the woman in Acts 16:14 who, before she was converted by St. Paul, was a seller of "porphyry," purple dye. (The "Paul" of Raskolnikov's landlady's patronymic "Pavlovna" may be intended to recall St. Paul, as may the name of Polia/Polina, the oldest of Katerina's daughters.) The new name, Lenia, unobtrusive by alliterating with Lida, is linguistically a puzzle even to native speakers, who comment that it is extremely uncommon and hazard *Elena* or *Leonida* or *Leontiia* as sources. (The alternative reading for Леня, Lionia, they agree would have to be a boy's name, from *Leonid*.) But, short of clouting his reader over the head by calling the child "Aliona," how else could Dostoevsky solve his re-incorporation problem?

Raskolnikov's humaneness shriveled up and died a violent death, he found himself hopelessly cut off from—well, from humanity.[G]

Agamemnon: "We've come too far, Prince Hector."
—*Troy* (2004)

And we have now reached the truly murky parts of *Crime and Punishment*. We have actually collected lists of motifs and scenes for which the shock of recognition has not yet occurred in us. Our favorite is the brief scene in VI.6, where Svidrigailov arbitrates a dispute between two "clerklets" over who stole a spoon (383-84/498). The "little clerks" make it sound as if Dostoevsky is making fun of a couple of fellow-writers in Petersburg—perhaps on opposite ends of the political spectrum, since their noses are bent, respectively, to the right and to the left—and he considers it appropriate for the devil to arbitrate their dispute. Elsewhere in the novel, though, "right" and "left" are used as in the folk tradition, for the good and the demonic. The spoon remains a mystery except that it trivializes their differences and reminds us that Katerina Ivanovna made a sarcastic remark about the resident Poles possibly stealing Amalia Ivanovna's silver spoons (294/383). But all we have to offer in explanation are guesses.

We have sworn a solemn oath never to let ourselves get too curious about Dostoevsky's later novels. Someone else can have that pleasure and that agony. A good way to train for the project would be to practice catching hyperactive eels in a vat of olive oil. Don't enter this literary jungle without a digital version of the book to search endlessly, even if you have to make the digital copy yourself, and never imagine that you can make sense of a little piece of one of Dostoevsky's novels without reference to the entire novel, the world, and the universe.

"It might make the subject of a new story—but our present story is ended."

G. Characteristically, Dostoevsky has just planted a big hint that Ilia Petrovich is a key part of Raskolnikov's mind that is pushing toward confession and wholeness, by having Ilia say to Raskolnikov, "You can be frank with me, don't be embarrassed, *just as if you were alone with yourself!*" (Italics ours.)

References:

1. Chittick, 294.
2. Frank 1995: 65.
3. *Zhitiia sviatych* 6 (1905/1970): 455-77; translations M.F. Zirin.
4. *Ukazatel' imen*, 45; Oleinikova.
5. Frank 1976: 49.
6. Translation E.W. Barber.
7. Shklovskii 1957: 219.
8. Rahv, 554.
9. Peace 1971: 40-41.
10. Haase, 201; Barber, 57-60.

APPENDIX:

Names of Characters in the Novel and their Meanings

I. The principal families:

A. The Raskolnikovs

Raskól'nikov, Rodión Románovich.

Raskol'nikov: from Russian *raskol'nik* "adherent to a schism," from *raskol* "schism, split." The term *raskol'nik* has been used primarily for the Old Believer sects that split off from the Russian Orthodox Church in the late 17th century. (See also Chapter 5 note A.)

Rodion (Rodenka, Rodia, Rodka): taken by the 1885 church calendar (*Ukazatel' imen*) as "one who buys roses," as if from Greek *ródos* "rose"; thus also "pink." In fact, St. Rodion's name was originally St. Herodion, and he was said to have been martyred in Rome the same day as his kinsman St. Peter (see Chapters 2, 12). Greek *hērōdíōn* means "song of/to the hero" (from *hērōs* "hero" and *ōdē* "song"). Additionally, *Rodion* immediately connotes to a Russian-speaker the common Russian/Slavic root *rod* "kin, natal family, birth, genus", which is also found in *rodina* "native land" and *rodit'* "give birth".

Roman-ovich (Romanych): from *roman* "of Rome," hence "son of Rome"; also taken as being from Greek *rōmē* "strength," hence "son of strength." Romanov was also the family name of the ruling tsars; see Chapter 5 note A. (Buchanan [63], however, by reinterpreting or ignoring the religious symbolism, argues that Raskolnikov's redemption is purely aesthetic, and he interprets "Romanovich" as "son of the novel"—that is, as coming from роман, the Russian adaptation of French *roman* "novel.")

Pul'khériia Aleksándrovna (Raskol'nikova)—Rodion's mother.

Pul'kheriia: from Latin *pulcher* "beautiful" (note that in Russian "beautiful" and "red" are denoted by the same word).

Aleksandr-ovna: from Greek *alex-andros* "protector of men".

Avdót'ia Románovna (Raskol'nikova)—Rodion's sister.

Avdot'ia (Dunia, Dunechka): from *Evdokiia*, Greek *eu-dokia* "contentedness; good will, kindness."

Roman-ovna (feminine form): see *Romanovich* under Raskolnikov.

B. The Marmeladovs

Marmeládov, Semión Zakhárovich—Sonia's father.
Marmeladov: from Russian *marmelad* "marmalade, sweet fruit preserves."
Semion: from (St.) *Simeon*/Simon (Hebrew "hearing (God)"), shown in Christian iconography cradling the Christ-child.
Zakhar-ovich (Zakharych): "son of Zakhar." Although the name comes from the biblical Zakhariah (Hebrew "remembering"), Dostoevsky apparently chose it for its close resemblance to Russian *sakhar* "sugar," to go with the name *Marmeladov*. See Chapter 4 note C.

Sóf'ia Semiónovna (Marmeladova)—Marmeladov's daughter by his first wife.
Sof'ia (Sónia, Sónechka): from Greek *sophía* "wisdom, divine wisdom." See Chapter 1.
Semion-ovna: "daughter of Simeon": see *Semion* under Marmeladov. Razumikhin once calls her *Ivanovna* "daughter of John" (186/242): see *Ivanovna* under Katerina Ivanovna.

Katerína Ivánovna (Marmeladova)—Sonia's stepmother, Marmeladov's second wife.
Katerina: taken by the Church (even quite early) as coming from Greek *katharós* "clean, pure" (Ru. *chistaia*).
Ivan-ovna: "daughter of John" (*Ioann*, Russian *Ivan*; Hebrew "God's grace"). The gospel according to St. John was Dostoevsky's favorite—most thumbed—gospel (see Introduction) and the direct source of a large share of the biblical imagery in *Crime and Punishment*.

Katerina Ivanovna's three children by her first husband:
1. Polína Mikháilovna—the eldest, 10 years old.
Polina (Polia, Polechka, Polen'ka): from French *Pauline*, diminutive of Lat. *paulus* "small".
Mikhail-ovna : "daughter of *Michael*" (Hebrew "like God").
2. Kólia (Kolka): from *Nikolai* (Greek "victory of the people").
3. Lída (Lidochka): diminutive from *Lidiia* (Lydia): in the Bible, Lydia was a woman who sold purple (*porphýra*) and whom the apostle Paul converted (Acts 16: 14-15). But from IV.4 onward, the narrator begins to call this littlest child **Lenia** (295/384, 325/423 ff), probably from Greek *Helena*, for which see Aliona Ivanovna and Epilogue. (Note that some translators, like Garnett, chose to "normalize" Dostoevsky's text by *not* changing her name!)

C. The Svidrigailov "extended family"

Svidrigáilov, Arkádii Ivánovich.
Svidrigailov: Švitrigaila was a Grand Duke of Lithuania (c. 1370-1452) of ill repute. Belov (1985, 80) notes that the name *Svidrigailov* was used in a satirical article in the journal *Iskra* in 1861 (28) for a man of low character. He also suggests a connection to the German adjective *geil* "lecherous."
Arkadii: from the name of the ancient rural/pastoral Greek province Arcadia; hence "native of Arcadia." The most famous denizen of Arcadia was Pan. See Chapter 12.
Ivan-ovich: "son of John/Ivan." See *Ivanovna* under Katerina Ivanovna Marmeladova.

Márfa Petróvna (Svidrigailova)—Svidrigailov's recently murdered wife.
Marfa: from the biblical *Martha* (from Aramaic "mistress, owner"), sister of Mary and of Lazarus; a name and character commonly used in Western literature to represent dutifulness and adherence to convention. See Chapter 4 (and note D for the phonetics).
Petr-ovna: "daughter of Peter," from Greek *pétros* "stone, rock." See also *Petrovich* under Porfirii Petrovich.

Lúzhin, Piótr Petróvich—a distant relation of Marfa Petrovna, a lawyer and Dunia's fiancé.
Luzhin: from Russian *luzha* "puddle." The name seems also to be a mutation of the name of an attorney named Lyzhin that Dostoevsky didn't like (Al'tman, 171-72). See Chapter 5 note C, and Chapter 6 (including note A).
Piotr Petr-ovich: "Peter, son of Peter," from Greek *pétros* "stone, rock." See also *Petrovich* under Porfirii Petrovich.

Lebeziátnikov, Andréi Semiónovich—a minor official, Luzhin's former ward, with whom Luzhin is staying in Petersburg.
Lebeziatnikov: from Russian *lebezit'* "to fawn, cringe, be obsequious."
Andrei: from Greek *andr-* "man; manly, brave."
Semion-ovich: "son of Simon." See *Semion* under Marmeladov.

Filípp—Svidrigailov's murdered manservant.
Filipp (Fil'ka): from Greek *phil-ippos* "lover of horses." See Chapters 10, 12.

D.

Razumíkhin, Dmítrii Prokóf'ich (Prokof'evich)—a student, and Raskolnikov's best friend.

Razumikhin: from Russian *razum* "reason, intellect, common sense." Dostoevsky twice puns on the meaning of this name, having Luzhin mis-name him as *Rassudkin* (231/302; cf. Russian *rassudok* "reason, intellect"), and having Razumikhin call himself *Vrazumikhin* (93/118; from Russian *vrazumit'* "to bring to reason, teach, make understand").

Dmitrii: from Demeter, the Greek goddess of the earth and its fruits. Although with a little mental effort one could relate this to Raskolnikov's first name, Rodion (in the sense of "native land"), the earth-goddess has to contend for the honor of providing Razumikhin's first name with six or seven medieval D(i)mitriis in the Russian church calendar.. The most likely candidate is Dimitrii Rostovskii (St. Demetrius of Rostov, 1651-1709), whose massive *Minei chet'i* (Lives of the Saints) is still the standard reference work on the subject in Russia. This made up most of Dostoevsky's reading when he spent well over half a year in solitary confinement after his arrest in 1849; and giving the name Dmitrii to Razumikhin may be Dostoevsky's way of footnoting one of his sources for allegorical names.

Prokof'-ich : "son of Prokofii". *Prokofii*, given by the calendars as "drawn from the sheath; successful," is from Greek *Prokopios* (Procopius), itself from Greek *prokopē* "progress, success." This name occurs three times in the Orthodox calendar, but its point is probably its etymological meaning, "progress (literal or spiritual); improvement." These definitions fit in nicely with Razumikhin's stated purpose: "…we have to make a human being out of [Raskolnikov], after all" (101/129). The name as a whole, then, defines Razumikhin's function in the novel as the embodiment of Raskolnikov's down-to-earth (Dmitrii) common sense (Razumikhin) that manages to succeed in whatever rational reasoning can accomplish (Prokof'ich). See also the Epilogue.

Porfírii Petróvich (no family name given)—chief detective, and a distant relation of Razumikhin.

Porfirii: from Greek *porphyreos* "purple" (which, until analine dyes, meant any color from dark red through purply-blue). There is a type of purple stone called *porphyry* (порфир). St. Porphyrius, Bishop of Gaza, was said by some to have brought, through prayer, a rainstorm that ended a terrible drought, when he was sent to convert the heathen of Gaza (see Epilogue for further parallels).

Petr-ovich: "son of *Peter*," from Greek *pétros* "stone, rock." Throughout the novel, the stone at issue is the one that must be rolled away from the tomb of Lazarus before resurrection can occur, in the passage from the Gospel of John that Raskolnikov has Sonia read aloud in Part IV.4. See Chapter 2; and see Chapter 12 for connection with St. *Peter*sburg.

E. The Zarnitsyn household

Zarnítsyna, Praskóv'ia Pávlovna—Raskolnikov's landlady.
Zarnitsyna: from Russian *zarnitsa* "summer lightning." See Chapter 2.
Praskov'ia (Pashenka): from Greek *paraskeuē/paraskeví* "preparation; Friday." St. Paraskeva/Paraskevi, like St. Anastasia, was especially popular among Russian (and Greek) peasant women. See Chapter 2. Interestingly, the "original" St. Paraskeva never existed, being a misinterpretation of the Greek phrase *Hagía Paraskeví* "Holy Friday" (our "Good Friday"), which could also mean "Saint Paraskeví/Friday" (just as *Hagía Sophía* technically could mean either "Holy Wisdom" or "Saint Sophia" and *Santa Lucia* could mean either "Holy Light" or "St. Lucia/Lucy"). In the eighth century, a typical martyr's life-story—with details too general to trace—was cobbled up for this presumed saint by zealous Greek hagiographers, appearing along with a life of St. Anastasia (with whom she remained associated) and a homily on the resurrection of Lazarus (Halkin, 226). The new saint became extremely popular, drawing to herself many of the ancient folk beliefs connected with women's rituals (especially the healing rituals, themselves often associated with springs and water [Haase, 139-43 et passim]) and with the day Friday, sacred throughout pagan Europe to a fertility goddess. St. Paraskeva also became a protectress of marriage (Haase 184). (In the late ninth century, a holy woman from Epivata, in the Greek district of Kallikrateia, took the saint's name Paraskeva as her church name, coming to be known variously as St. Paraskeva the Junior, St. Paraskeva of Epivata or Kallikrateia, and St. Paraskeva of Trnovo—since Trnovo was where her bones ended up after many removals to keep ahead of the Turks [Kałużniacki].) See Barber, 116-24.
Pavl-ovna: "daughter of *Paul*," from Latin *paulus* "small."

Natál'ia Egórevna (Zarnitsyna)—the landlady's daughter, now deceased, once Raskolnikov's fiancée.
Natal'ia: from Latin *natalis* "natal, relating to one's birth, native, natural."
Egor-evna: "daughter of *Egor*" (Igor, Georgii), from Greek *ge-ōrgós* "earth-worker, farmer."

Nastás'ia Petróvna (no family name given)—Praskov'ia Pavlovna's servant.
Nastas'ia (Nastenka, Nastasiushka): from *Anastasiia*, Greek (St.) Anastasia, from Greek *ana-stas-* "rising up; resurrection." See Chapter 1.
Petr-ovna: "daughter of Peter" (see *Petrovich* under Porfirii Petrovich)—but Razumikhin teasingly calls her ***Nikíforovna*** (96/123), "daughter of *Nikifor*," from Greek *nikē-phor-* "bearing victory."

F.

Alióna Ivánovna (no family name given)—an old moneylender and pawnbroker, Raskolnikov's intended victim.
Aliona: from Gk. *Helena/Elena*, etymologically "daughter of the sun" (that is, the planet Venus), from the same root as *hēlios* "sun," although taken by the church calendars variously as "radiant, sunny" or "torch," or even as "chosen one" (as if from Greek *hel-* "take, choose"). The referent is apparently to the empress Helena/Elena (mother of Constantine), who was said to have brought a piece of the True Cross to Constantinople. See Epilogue.
Ivan-ovna: "daughter of John". See *Ivanovna* under Katerina Ivanovna Marmeladova.

Lizavéta Ivánovna (no family name given)—Aliona Ivanovna's half-sister, who buys and sells old clothes.
Lizaveta: from Hebrew *Elizabeth* "consecrated to the house of God, revering God." The biblical Elizabeth, originally barren, became the mother of John the Baptist.
Ivan-ovna: "daughter of John." See *Ivanovna* under Katerina Ivanovna Marmeladova.

II. Some other characters, alphabetically:

Afrosín'iushka—woman who tries to drown herself.
Presumably from Greek *a-phrosýne* "witlessness, thoughtlessness, craziness," rather than from Gk. *eu-phrosýne* "mirth, joy, cheerfulness." See Chapter 4.

Demént'ev, Nikolái (Mikólka) (no patronymic given)—painter who falsely confesses.
Dement'ev: from (St.) *Dometii* (Moroshkin 1867: 69; "Ukazatel'" 1885), itself from Latin *domito/domitus* "to tame."

Nikolai (Mikolai, Mikolka, Nikolka, Nikolashka): from (St.) *Nicholas*, from Greek *niko-laas* "victory by the people." St. Nicholas, among other things, saved three young girls from prostitution. See Chapter 11.

Il'iá Petróvich (Lt. Gunpowder) (no family name given)—police lieutenant.
Il'ia: from biblical *Elijah* (Hebrew "Lord's strength"), the prophet who was carried to heaven in a whirlwind. Because of this connection, the figure of Elijah attracted to itself a large number of beliefs and rituals that in pagan times had to do with storms, especially thunderstorms. St. Il'ia's Day is July 20, when the peasants expected Il'ia to produce a thunderstorm; the time frame of the novel is set to make the culminating deluge occur in late July.
Petr-ovich: "son of Peter". See *Petrovich* under Porfirii Petrovich.

Kapernaumov—lame tailor, Sonia's landlord.
From Capernaum, a biblical city. (In the 19th century, *kapernaumov* was a slang term for a rowdy tavern or brothel [Belov 1985: 72].) See Chapter 10.

Lavíza Ivánovna—madam of a brothel.
Laviza: Russified pronunciation of German *Luise* (Louisa), feminine of German *Lud-wig* "famous warrior."
Ivan-ovna: "daughter of John." See *Ivanovna* under Katerina Ivanovna Marmeladova.

Lippevékhzel', Amáliia Ivánovna—landlady to the Marmeladovs and Lebeziatnikov (and hence to Luzhin).
Lippevekhzel': from German *Lippe* "lip" and *wechseln* "to change," clearly a spoof on her Germanized Russian.
Amaliia: this name (for a German woman) is *not* found in the orthodox church calendars; in Germanic it meant "worker."
Ivan-ovna: "daughter of John." See *Ivanovna* under Katerina Ivanovna Marmeladova. Characters repeatedly get her patronymic wrong, whether intentionally or through forgetfulness: Katerina uses ***Liúdvig-ovna*** "daughter of Ludwig" (141/180, 292/380) to annoy her (see *Laviza* under Laviza Ivanovna), while Marmeladov uses ***Fiódor-ovna*** "daughter of Fiodor" (16/17; *Fiodor* from Greek *Theo-doros* "gift of God"—see Chapter 4 note D for the phonetics).

Mikólka: see **Dement'ev, Nikolai**

Mítka (Mitrei)—painter.
Nickname for Dmitrii: see *Dmitrii* under Razumikhin.

Nastás'ia: see under **Zarnitsyn household.**

Nikodím Fómich (no family name given)—police superintendent.
Nikodim: the Orthodox calendar derives this both from Greek *nik-*" victory" and *dēmos* "people" and from Hebrew for "innocent blood."
Fom-ich: "son of Thomas". Thomas (Hebrew "twin"; *Foma* in Russian: see Chapter 4 note D) and Nikodim were two figures in the Bible who doubted but came to believe.

Riósslikh/Résslikh, Gertruda Kárlovna—procuress.
Riosslikh: German *röss-lich,* from *Ross* "steed, horse" and *-lich* "like." See Chapter 10 note C.
Gertruda: from Germanic *ger* (Old English *gar*) "spear" and *þruþ* "strength." See Chapter 10 note C.
Kárl-ovna: "son of Karl," where *karl* is a Germanic word for "man." See Chapter 10 note C.

Zamétov/Zamiótov, Aleksándr Grigór'evich—clerk in the district police office.
Zametov: Treated by Dostoevsky as if from Russian *zametit'* "to notice, observe"—so apparently he intended it to be pronounced with *e* (as Constance Garnett has it) rather than with *io*. (It is not possible to tell from the spelling; but we can find no word in modern Russian from the "notice" stem that uses *io*, and a derivation from *zamiotyvat'* "to tack, baste" seems unlikely.) See Chapter 13, especially note B.
Aleksandr: from Greek *aléx-andros* "protector of men."
Grigor'-evich: "son of Grigorii," Grigorii being from Greek *grēgor-* "awake, watchful, vigilant."

Zosímov—doctor.
From Greek *zōós* "life." See Chapter 5.

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