Meaning and Symbolism in the Names of Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* and *The Idiot*

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THE FASCINATION OF READERS with the onomastic technique of Dostoevsky is not new. It is generally accepted that onomatology—in Dostoevsky's case his *redende Namen*—is an almost indispensable tool in a psychological study of his heroes because the way he uses names reveals his characteristic method of organizing experience and gives us a clue to the nature of his artistic sensibility. There are several scattered papers, in which the meaning and symbolism of some of the names in the works of Dostoevsky are briefly pointed out, and, in his recent book on the novelist, Richard Peace devotes considerable space to the subject.[1] Yet, to the best knowledge of this writer, with the exception of A. Bem's article, "Personal Names in Dostoevsky,"[2] no essay emphasizing this particular aspect of Dostoevsky's art has ever been published.[3]

Dostoevsky's nomenclature is a definite part of his literary technique. It is a purposeful device to come close to man's mystery by providing a sophisticated chain of guide-posts for identification. Names help Dostoevsky achieve an organic relationship of form and meaning, and intensify an emotional impact of the novels whose construction they reinforce. A sensitive reader may perceive an image, a story, perhaps even a small work of art, hiding in the names of several of his characters, since Dostoevsky uses his names as an instrument for communicating ideas "in a nutshell." An indication which predicts his

[1] Richard Peace, *Dostoyevsky,* Cambridge, 1971.

[2] A. Bem, "Lichnye imena u Dostoevskogo," *Sbornik v chest na Prof. L. Miletich* (Sofia, 1933), pp. 409-434.

[3] A rather extensive Dostoevsky bibliography containing 3738 items in *F. M. Dostoevsky: Bibliografiya proizvedeny F. M. Dostoevskogo i literatury o nem 1917-1965* (Moskva, 1968) does not list a single item concerning his use of names.

future development stems from the belief of the young writer that many of the important heroes of world literature were modeled on real people. In a letter to Karepin, his brother-in-law, Dostoevsky wrote in 1844: "The study of life being my primary aim and hobby, I have now become convinced of the existence, for example, of Famusov [a ridiculous bureaucrat and careerist in Griboydeov's drama *Woe From Wit*], Chichikov [the manipulating hero in Gogol's *Dead Souls*] and Falstaff."[4]

In Dostoevsky's novels names appear as symbols most of the time, illuminating the momentous, tragic, but more often the ludicrous events in the life of his protagonists. The names of the Russian novelist frequently indicate the activities and characteristics of his heroes as if to say that there is a harmony—and in some cases even disharmony—between people's lives and their names. They contain, at times, obvious references, while at others oblique allusions and hints concerning some important or grotesquely trivial traits of their bearers. Often they communicate no more than nuances, imply mere shades, veil jokes and puns, yield no immediately discernible information, yet in general they succeed in broadening and extending the charisma of the characters. The names help their owners come more tangibly alive and accomplish, through a shock of recognition, the difficult task of compressing the vitality of several pages of description into a fitting epithet as part of the inescapable stuff of life.

Dostoevsky's names frequently surround the characters with a proper psychological background, combining concrete meaning and abstract allusiveness, and thereby add color, heat, atmosphere, and mystery to the protagonists.[5] Some aspects of the hero's existential situation are highlighted, others are ignored, or not fully discriminated. Elements of speech, verbal texture, assonance, alliteration, and association are freely used, permitting the reader to compare and to judge whether the final product—the fully developed character stepping forth in flesh and blood from the pages of the novel—has been drawn imaginatively, vividly, and convincingly. To the delight of the irreverent Dostoevsky, names may, at times, function as masks so that he may

[4]Quoted by David Magarshack, *Dostoevsky* (New York, 1961), p. 62.

[5]The psychiatrist in *The Double* (Dvoinik) is called Krestyan Ivanovich Rutenspitz. The German word *Rute* "birch-rod" used for punishment carries the implication of a threat, since mental patients of the time were often regarded as criminals and birched. See Gogol, *Notes of a Madman* (Zapiski sumashedsego).

tease the reader by half-obscuring and half-revealing—sometimes even reversing—the character traits of his personalities.

At times Dostoevsky deliberately chose names as a result of some fleeting impressions to describe a mood or a character in broad terms, while at others he had real models, specific people with concrete traits, for his compassion, scorn, and irony. In the first instance his inventive power resulted in some kind of linguistic mystification, leaving much to the reader's imagination in his decoding operation; in the second, he aimed at direct confrontation and communication. Occasionally the novelist amused himself by creating names through an interplay of associations and specific combinations to suggest the fundamental kinship of their bearers. Consequently, the owners of such names are made to appear together in the same episode, are friends, or enemies, belong to the same ethnic group, have similar professions, etc. Through this internal rhyme in a *déjà-vu* atmosphere, the novelist seems to have categorized experience, and his people gain thereby some kind of synthetic universality.

Even namelessness can become an instrument for identification, a common denominator Dostoevsky often used in the description of his mass scenes. When individuals are not particularized in his novels, when they receive no names, their status and relationship become questionable and doubtful. This implies further an intellectual and spiritual rootlessness, alienation and loneliness of the individual, doubt in the validity of the action undertaken by the anonymous person, and failure to put any meaning in life. The reader encounters this device in Dostoevsky's famous scandal scenes—in the funeral feast of Marmeladov in *Crime and Punishment* and Myshkin's introduction to high society in *The Idiot.* Significantly, some of these nameless people—especially Germans and Poles—do not seem to understand what is happening around them, and, through this negative framework, the novelist stresses the cultural and emotional separation of this group of ethnic minorities in Russia. It is especially in these scenes that Dostoevsky shows his striking gifts for caricature and sardonic psychological observation. For the novelist, these scandal scenes with their small people and faceless characters represent a frightening picture of the decaying Russian society.[6]

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[6]Sometimes Dostoevsky does not name a person, but implies some of his attributes in an obvious satire. In *Notes from the Underground* (Zapiski iz podpolya), the novelist speaks of the "sublime and beautiful" in a satirical aside at Schiller. He also ridicules Schiller's idealism in his *The Injured*

Can a system be found for the classification of Dostoevsky's names? Can we discover that little back staircase—so typical of his Petersburg novels—which would serve as the hidden passage to this delightful game of name-giving? The creative art of Dostoevsky in inventing people and names, his unpredictable and nervous method, and his versatility make it difficult, if not impossible, to force the technique of his nomenclature into any kind of intellectual strait jacket. The only constant quality in his onomastic device appears to be a reflection of his violent dislike of nihilists, socialists, capitalists, liberals, Jesuits, Jews, Turks, Germans, Poles, French, and English, as well as his contempt for middle-class values. All the names which belong to members of the above group almost invariably carry some mischievous allusions and at times even vitriolic attacks. Here a few generalizations must suffice. With a few exceptions his incompetent physicians and bungling governors carry German names. Poles, mostly unamed, are shown as tricky and cringing, often deaf and dirty, and sometimes as card-sharps. Pseudo-scientists with their ludicrous names are usually French. It is his overdressed German women with their thick accent and impossible Russian grammar who usually run houses of prostitution. In the names of his Jesuits dishonesty and secretiveness are implied.

Obviously not all of Dostoevsky's names carry a meaning. If the reader finds himself unable to plumb the genesis of some of the novelist's names and to decode the message that may lie hidden as some *versunkenes Kultursgut* awaiting discovery, he must stop, meditate, and reread the novels for fresh inspiration before sliding along a rather slippery course of uncertainties and taking risks in this linguistic labyrinth. In encountering unanswerable problems of this nature, we shall have to remember that Dostoevsky might have chosen some of his figures from his more ephemeral contemporaries, to whom the non-native reader may not find easy access. Thus, Dostoevsky may never yield up all his secrets. Yet we may assume that his language-conscious nineteenth century readers, familiar with current events, literary and social gossip, people in the news, streets and dives, depraved capitalists and gross military types, may have had no difficulty in recognizing and chuckling over the suggestive effects of some of the provocative names the novelist used. It is quite possible that Dostoevsky chose certain

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and Oppressed (Unizhenniye i oskorbleniye) by making Schillerean figures appear as sentimental fools, characterizing his hero as a "little brother of Schiller" and giving him the utterly ridiculous name Pfefferkuchen (gingerbread-cake).

definite names because the *Zeitgeist* connoted their essential significance to his contemporaries.

Crime and Punishment

The name of the hero of the novel—Raskolnikov—is derived from *raskol* "schism, dissidence, heresy," and it thus means "schismatic, dissident, heretic." Dostoevsky might have first thought of the name while writing a polemical article "Schism Among the Nihilists" in 1864. For the understanding of the implication which the novelist wished to convey with this name, it is necessary to look into the root of the word. *Raskol* is a compound noun consisting of the prefix *ras-* (originally *raz-*) and the root of the verb *kolot'* "to break, to split." It is the full form of the verb—although appearing truncated, frozen, and passive in the noun—which supplies Raskolnikov with his burst of physical energy and assigns his action a symbolic significance. This modern Prometheus breaks the eternal law of morality by breaking the head of the old pawnbroker and her sister in a dubious attempt to become a benefactor to mankind.

In this alliteration of the hero's full name—Rodion Romanovich Raskolnikov—the novelist relied on sound effects. Although the consonant "r" is a liquid and usually has a flowing, sonorous quality, it is also used as the second element of such clusters—"gr" and "br"—which imply threatening and unpleasant attributes such as *groza* "thunderstorm, terror," *grozit'* "to threaten," *pogrom* "massacre," etc. Dogs threateningly growl with a "gr" sound as they get ready to bite, and people usually emit a "br" sound to indicate a severe cold. The presence of a great number of back vowels in the name should be noted, which, in the opinion of Albert Wellek suggests, among others, "dark" thus sinister, objects.[7]

In creating this name, Dostoevsky may also have had in mind Rastignac, the hero of Balzac's novel *Father Goriot,* whose name is somewhat similar to Raskolnikov. It is also their concept of the temptation to an extraordinary man to transgress the moral law which brings Rastignac and Raskolnikov together.[8] The Russian novelist knew

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[7]Albert Wellek, "Der Sprachgeist als Doppelempfinder," *Zeitschrift für Aesthetick,* XXV (1931), pp. 226-62. The French and Russian symbolist poets loved to play with the extraliterary meanings of sounds, and to liberate "the latent energy" of words from the strait jacket of their conventional lexical meaning (Andrey Bely).

[8]George Lukács mentioned first the anecdote of the Chinese mandarin in Balzac's novel and

Balzac well and his first literary venture was a translation of Balzac's *Eugenie Grandet* in 1844. Some of his qualities—his Napoleonic pride, his great lust for power—clearly derive from Hermann, the hero of Pushkin's *The Queen of Spades.*

Although not directly reflected in the name, the Western spirit of the "abstract city" of Petersburg indicates its separation from the genuine Russian world, and links it to its founder Peter the Great, who, at the price of huge human sacrifices, built the city in 1721. Thus, behind Raskolnikov's mad idea to benefit mankind at the cost of human lives, lurks the larger figure of Tsar Peter with his ambition "to break a window to the West" without regard to its immediate consequences. The great influence of Pushkin's *The Bronze Horseman,* which deals with the philosophical and moral implications of this theme, on Dostoevsky is obvious.[9]

In the name of the tragicomical small government clerk Marmeladov —from *marmelad* "candied fruit jelly"—the novelist implied a fundamental weakness, lack of character, and inability of action. The name sounds bizarre and contrived, and, indeed, in introducing himself to Raskolnikov, Marmeladov himself comments on the fact that his name is rather unusual. The name also suggests the absence of stability and cohesion. This clerk is a man always on the go to nowhere—in the streets, on a river-barge, and in-and out of taverns—in a vague speech of some fixity which he cannot find. This explains his pathetic cry about the fact that he "has nowhere to go, yet a man must have some place to go to."[10]

Marmeladov behaves like a man who cannot resist his compulsive vice—to drink. Originally, Dostoevsky wanted to write a novel about the vices of alcoholism, *The Drunkard,* but put it aside for *Crime and Punishment,* in which he incorporated the Marmeladov episode as a subplot. This small clerk would like to become a respectable citizen, own a clean uniform, and lead a decent life, but, as his name indicates, he has no will-power. He loses his job, becomes penniless, disgraces himself, permits his daughter to become a prostitute, and finally causes the ruin of his whole family.

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pointed to the relationship of Rastignac and Raskolnikov. *Der rassische Realismus in der Weltliteratur* (Berlin, 1949), p. 178.

[9]For a contemporary account on Pushkin's influence on Dostoevsky see D. Blagoy, "Dostoevsky i Pushkin," *Ot Kantemira do nashikh dnei* (Moskva, 1972), Vol. I, pp. 417-501.

[10]Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment,* trans. Magarshack (Penguin, 1967), p. 33.

His name clashes with the environment—with the solid, impersonal governmental buildings in the capital, and with its indifferent, even hostile denizens. Yet with his name the novelist also wanted to suggest the clerk's softness, sentimentality, and kindness of heart. Speaking in his defense, Mrs. Marmeladov mentions that, although he was completely drunk when a carriage crushed him to death, a gingerbread cookie for the children was found in his pocket.

His sudden disappearance—which is somewhat embodied in his name—may even reflect the fragility and vulnerability of the entire city which may abruptly vanish without any trace, an idea that Dostoevsky put later in the mouth of Arkady, the hero of *The Raw Youth.*

The comic aspect of the disturbed and neurotic Mrs. Marmeladov is obliquely reinforced by the names she uses in a half-true and half-invented story about her youth. At a ball, Princess Bezzemelny ("landless") saw her and Prince Shchegolskoy ("dandy, fop") danced with her and later proposed marriage. These strange names are employed to discount her veracity and to suggest that these events at the ball probably existed only in her imagination, and finally to indicate that she is gradually losing distinction between reality and illusion.

Razumikhin, Raskolnikov's friend, derives his name from *razum* "reason, intelligence," *razumno* "reasonable, sensible," and *razumeniye* "understanding." His name reveals his whole outlook on life. In the nightmarish atmosphere of the novel he represents common sense and a practical—almost comically so—point of view. Interrupting the feverish tempo of narration, the novelist, in the person of Razumikhin, offers the reader a welcome relaxation and even provides a few light moments. He is a pleasantly domestic figure, an accessible focal point in the novel, indeed an intellectual shock absorber, against whom the reader can measure the depth of Raskolnikov's crime and the spread of nihilism.[11]

The detective Porfiry's name comes from *porphyra,* Greek for the purple cloak which was the attribute of Byzantine emperors. There are in his portrayal, as Peace points out, "strong elements of some sort of secular priest which can only be explained in terms of the symbolism of the novel."[12] The reader is told, at one point, that Porfiry has

[11] In his notebook, Dostoevsky once called him Rakhmetov, a figure of extraordinary will-power in Chernyshevsky's novel *What Is to Be Done?* (Chto d'elat'?). This may indicate the gradual development of his character in the novelist's mind, but it is also possible that Dostoevsky simply confused the two, who, in their final portrait, are quite different from each other.

[12] Peace, p. 44.

contemplated becoming a monk. His is a composite portrait of a psychological detective. Dostoevsky seems to have effected a synthesis of past and present, myth and form.

Yet the explanation may also be much simpler. It is also possible that the novelist simply borrowed the name from Gogol, in whose *Dead Souls* Porfiry appears as Nozdryov's servant. This may be all the more possible because Dostoevsky did use several names from the same episode—Nozdryov, Maximov, Kuvshinnikov, and Fenardi in a scene of *The Brothers Karamazov.*

The name of Luzhin, the insensitive lawyer-capitalist, derives from *lug* "meadow" and its diminutive, affectionate form *luzhin* which may be translated as "a little grass plot," although it is obvious that the novelist wanted to show someone artificially prettified. Luzhin visits Raskolnikov all dressed up "to kill" and to make the greatest possible impression on the latter. "All his clothes had just come from the tailor's and everything was perfect, except that it was too new and revealed rather too plainly the reason for it all. Even his brand-new stylish hat proclaimed it. . . . Even the delightful pair of lavender gloves . . . established the same fact, if only because he did not wear them, but merely carried them about in his hand for show. As for Mr. Luzhin's clothes, light and youthful colors predominated in them. He wore a most becoming summer jacket of a light brown shade, light summer trousers, the same kind of waistcoat, a fine linen shirt straight from the shop, the lightest possible cambric cravat with pink stripes, and, needless to say, it all suited him perfectly."[13] His name, as his clothes, expresses precisely how he looks: an artificially overdressed dandy.

Amalia Ivanovna—or Ludwigowna—Lippewechsel is Marmeladov's German landlady, although she would like to hide her German origin, and that is why she prefers to be called Ivanovna. If a translation is hazarded, this absurd name would mean something like "changer of lips" in German, or, more colloquially, a jabbermouth. While she keeps talking all the time, she cannot express herself correctly and mixes Russian and foreign words indiscriminately.

Mrs. Marmeladov remarks that Mrs. Lippewechsel did not understand a word of the story she had just told her. Later, Mrs. Marmeladov attempts to translate for Raskolnikov an utterly incongruous anecdote which Mrs. Lippewechsel tried to tell. It seems that, while this German landlady wished to say that her *Vater aus Berlin* used to walk with his

[13] *Crime...*, p. 164.

hands in his pockets, what she did actually say was that he went about picking other men's pockets. Is this à Freudian slip? The novelist may have used this anecdote to indicate that she cannot be trusted since she cannot tell the truth.

The Assistant Police Superintendent, to whom Raskolnikov confesses his murders, is nicknamed *Poruchik Porokh,* i.e., Lieutenant Gunpowder. This name characterizes him so well that the novelist never feels it necessary to acquaint the reader with his real name.

He enters the room "noisily," has a "quick temper" and shouts "at the top of his voice." Seeing him in this "towering passion" and "boiling over" the trivial incident at the police station, his Superintendent rebukes him for having created again ". . . a thunder and lightning, a tornado, a hurricane," and apologizes to Raskolnikov for the unnecessary inconvenience.[14] In his name, Dostoevsky invented the essential gesture of a situation and a multiple climactic nuance which acts like a camera's click.

The name of the "seedy . . . little nihilist" Lebezyatnikov may stem from *lebezyat'* "to fawn, to cringe," and Dostoevsky shows in him a toady, and uncritical flatterer. He attaches himself to the new progressive movement and praises its bold non-conformists. That the novelist had a flatterer in mind can be proved indirectly by reference to another of his short stories, *Bobok,* in which a character called Lebezyatnikov also appears. This man is depicted as a "hated, flattering court-councilor" who asks favors from others.[15]

Kapernaumov is the tailor in whose apartment Sonya reads the story about the resurrection of Lazarus and prepares the way for the gradual spiritual resurrection of Raskolnikov. The tailor is described as a poor cripple; he stutters and limps, and all the members of his large family, who live in one room, stutter too. However, in a later episode, only the tailor and his eldest son are shown as stutterers. The tailor's wife does not really stutter; she just cannot pronounce the words properly, while the rest of the family—six children—have overcome this defect by this time. In a conversation with Raskolnikov, Sonya mentions several times how kind and nice the Kapernaumovs are and the children often come to see her.

[14] *Ibid.*, pp. 114-119.

[15] Dostoevsky, *The Diary of a Writer* (Dnevnik pisatelya), trans. Boris Brasol (New York, 1954), p. 51. One wonders why the names of so many nihilists begin with the consonant "l." In addition to Lebezyatnikov, Lebedev in *The Idiot,* Liputin and Lebyatkin in *The Possessed.* Did this consonant have an unpleasant sound for Dostoevsky? Later Kafka used this technique with his anonymous heroes simply called Herr K....

The tailor's name reminds the reader of Capharnaum or Capernaum, a town in Galilee, at the site of the modern Tell Hūm. The name comes from the Aramaic or late Hebrew *kᵒpar-nāhûm* which means the village of Nahum.

There are many references in the New Testament to Jesus' presence, teaching activities, and miracles in Capernaum, the city which He used as headquarters for His ministry. Jesus "made His home in Capernaum" (Matthew 4, 13), He called Capernaum "His home town" (Matthew 9, 1) and in that town "He went into the syngogue and began to teach" (Mark 1, 21). When He came down from the mountain "great crowds followed Him" (Matthew 8, 1) and at Capernaum He healed a servant boy from paralysis (Matthew 8, 13). He also chose his disciples from that city.

Such elements in the novel as the reading of the Bible, the resurrection of Lazarus, and the close phonetic proximity of the tailor's name with the town of Jesus' activities obviously require an allegorical interpretation of this episode. Sonya makes her residence at the Kapernaumov's where she teaches the stutterers, that is the sinful pagans, physically and spiritually afflicted, and unable to pray. The reference to the large family of the tailor suggests the whole community at Capernaum in the Holy Land in need of religious enlightenment.

The second part of the episode indicates that, as a result of Sonya's presence and teaching,[16] most of the Kapernaumovs have already given up their pagan customs, overcome their symbolic sin of stuttering, and learned to pray. Even the mother is now getting ready to recite God's message. Especially important is the role of the children—who often come to see Sonya with the intention of listening to her teaching and instruction—since this is a clear reference to Jesus' words to let the children come to Him. It is possible to assume that some of these children have become her disciples. The reference to the one room in which all the Kapernaumovs live suggests a school or synagogue, in which all the members of the community at Capernaum congregate. It is worth while to point out that the Hebrew word for room, *heder,* also means a school.

At the end of the episode only the tailor and his eldest son remain in spiritual darkness. This may be an allusion to the fact that not all the people have immediately abandoned their pagan past and accepted the new religion. Matthew mentions that Jesus "began to censure the

[16]It is noteworthy to recall that Mrs. Marmeladov "planned" a teaching career for Sonya.

cities, in which His many wonderworks had been done, because they did not repent," (11, 20) and cites Jesus' words of anger "And you, Capernaum, are you to be exalted to heaven? No, you belong to the regions of the dead" (11, 23).[17]

This episode, in which Sonya successfully elevates the tailor's family—i.e., the sinful pagans—from their spiritual obscurity predicts the positive outcome of her efforts with Raskolnikov. This allegory may be extended to Petersburg and indeed to the entire Russian country. They need a spiritual teacher to overcome their new paganism.

Towards the end of the novel, Svidrigailov kills himself in front of a little man wrapped in a grey soldier's overcoat whom Dostoevsky calls Achilles because of the helmet he wears. The incongruous name for this insignificant man in his ill-fitting garment with his semitic face, "everlastingly peevish and woe-begone look" and atrocious use of Russian clearly reveals the novelist's antisemitic bias.[18]

The two men who came to visit the old pawnbroker immediately after Raskolnikov's double murder were originally called Bergshtolz and Kopilin in the first draft of the novel.[19] Kopilin reminds one of *kopilka* "money-box," an image which fits in with the idea of money-lending or borrowing. Dostoevsky then changed Bergshtolz to Pavalishchev and, in the final edition, the two visitors were called Koch and Pestryakov. What could have been the reason for this triple change? One conjecture is that, perhaps, the novelist was trying to find more suitable names for the psychological reason of creating a contrapuntal effect and to inject a momentary lighter note after the macabre scene in which the double murder had been committed. Thus, the final choice was the somewhat ludicrous "big, fat" Koch—German for cook—and the "light, quick, and hurried" Pestryakov, which may have come from *pestret'* "to be gay" or *pestrit'* "to make gaudy."

However, it is also perfectly possible that, in writing the final version, the novelist simply forgot the names he had used in the first version, or did not care enough to check as they may not have been important for him.

Most of the guests at the Marmeladovs' funeral party remain nameless—an indication of the novelist's dislike of the group. The roll-call

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[17] In *The Possessed,* Dostoevsky makes Kirillov, the heretic, stutter in order to discredit his claim for a new way of life.

[18] *Crime...*, p. 522.

[19] *The Notebooks...*, p. 93.

of the guests includes "a little Polish gentleman, a shabby, pimply little clerk who never opened his mouth. . .; a deaf and almost blind old man who had once been a post-office clerk. . .; a retired second lieutenant who came in drunk. . .; another man who came without even exchanging greetings with Mrs. Marmeladov. Lastly one individual who apparently had no clothes to wear and came in his dressing gown. . . . The Pole brought with himself two other Poles who had never even lived at Mrs. Lippewechsel's. . . ."[20] Dostoevsky's contempt for the Poles, who would go to any party merely to eat, is obvious. After reviewing this strange company, the reader will agree with Richard Curle's comment that this party looks "as if the street had emptied its dregs into the house."[21]

The Idiot

The obvious derivation of the name of Myshkin, the hero of this novel, is from *mysh'* "mouse," and *myshkin* is a regular surname formation in Russian. The affectionate and emotion-charged *myshka*[22] "little mouse" should also be mentioned as a possible source.

Scholars seem to have overlooked the obvious importance of Prince Myshkin's Christian name. The Russian *Lev* means lion and hints at strength and high nobility, qualities not immediately noticeable in Myshkin. Thus, he is a paradoxical figure—a mixture of humility and power.

In his article, "The Earliest Conversion of Rus' to Christianity," K. Ericson points out that "the majority of Russian names were taken over in their Greek form . . . but three names have survived in their translated form from Greek to Russian. . ."[23] among then Lev from Leo V or Leo the Armenian, Byzantine Emperor (813-820). A former general (he was crowned after the dethronement of Michael I), Leo took a public stand against icons and, as a result of his activities, the worship

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[20] *Crime...*, p. 395.

[21] Richard Curle, *Characters of Dostoevsky* (New York, 1966), p. 17.

[22] Mochulsky refers to the fact that Dostoevsky read in the *Moscow Gazette* of November 5, 1867, about the case of a peasant Balabanov who had killed an artisan to rob the latter's watch. This peasant came from Yaroslav province, Myshkin district. Consequently, Mochulsky believes that this is the origin of Myshkin's surname. *Dostoevsky,* pp. 342-343.

[23] K. Ericson, "The Earlist Conversion of Rus' to Christianity," *Slavonic and East European Review,* XLIV, No. 102 (January, 1966), pp. 98-99.

of images of saints was officially prohibited.

Dostoevsky knew Byzantine history well and may have had Leo V in mind when he gave this name to Myshkin because of the Byzantine Emperor's strong moral character and religious purity. Myshkin's symbolic gesture at the Yepanchin's reception of breaking the expensive Chinese vase—emblem of a materialistic society—may have been suggested to Dostoevsky by the iconoclastic policy of Leo V. One must recall that Myshkin breaks the vase after his spirited defense of the Greek Orthodox Church and his emotional appeal for the regeneration of mankind by "Russian thought alone, by the Russian God and Christ." It is also possible that, when Myshkin was referring to himself as "a prince of ancient lineage," he may have been thinking of this Byzantine Emperor, his spiritual ancestor. As a paradoxical figure he also teaches a paradoxical idea about humility coupled with strength: "Let us become servants in order to be superiors."

Dostoevsky captured a moment in the early youth of Nastasya Filippovna, the heroine of the novel, when he gave her the surname Barashkov, deriving from *barashek* "lamb." She was left an orphan at the age of seven, and later seduced by the wolf Totski. Thus, the novel must be read with its symbolic implication as Nastasya Filippovna becomes the sacrificial lamb of society.

If Myshkin is, as it is often claimed, a Christ figure, she must then be regarded as the biblical Maria Magdalene, the fallen woman, whom Myshkin tries to resurrect. Indeed, Aglaya Yepanchina remarks that Myshkin's role is to save Nastasya Filippovna: ". . . You are committed to resurrect her. . . ." Her name suggests resurrection because Anastasiya (Nastasya) means "the resurrected woman."

Rogozhin, Nastasya's suitor, has his name from *rog* "horn." The novelist may have thought of a horned animal with horn as an emblem of violence. In his elemental urge of lust and highly charged emotions Rogozhin represents a raving force and wild passion, and, unable to restrain himself, commits a senseless, brutal murder. The horn also hints at his fear of being a cuckold and his morbid jealousy is evident in his relationship with Myshkin whom he regards as his rival.

In the triangle of Myshkin, Nastasya Filippovna and Rogozhin the reader may notice a certain animal-symbolism: the relationship between mouse, lamb, and beast. Yet there is another way of interpreting Rogozhin. His Christian name, Parfen, derives from the Greek *parthenos* meaning virgin. Indeed, as Peace suggests, in his relations with Nastasya Filippovna, we do not observe the usual sexual passion,

for the only actual physical contact between them is that Rogozhin beats her and she snubs him for days. In a conversation with Aglaya, Nastasya denies any sexual relationship with Rogozhin. "Am I a loose woman? Ask Rogozhin, he will tell you." The English scholar calls Rogozhin's attachment for her a "fanatical," not a "sensual" love.[24]

To expose the double-standard of Totsky who poses as Nastasya Filippovna's kind guardian, but, in reality, takes advantage of her, Dostoevsky surrounds him with people whose names contradict their social position and ridicule their appearance. The reader is informed that, on a given occasion, Totsky stayed at the house of a certain Platon Ordyntsev, who was just elected marshal of nobility. However, this high office-holder has a trivial name from *ordinarny* "ordinary" which clashes with his Christian name of Greek origin with its obvious implication of intelligence. One of his neighbors has the ridiculous name—Mrs. Zubkov—from *zub* "tooth." A lady is expected to come to a ball which the Ordyntsevs are attending, with a bouquet of camellias, but the reader is left wondering as to how the lady will hold the flowers since her family name—Bespalov—stems from *bespaly* "fingerless." Yet her Christian name—Sophia—means wisdom; consequently she should know what she is doing. In the cases of Platon Ordyntsev and Sophia Bespalov the novelist created a sort of onomastic contradiction which is similar to oxymoron in rhetoric.

It should also be mentioned that a certain Countess Sotsky from Petersburg appears as well in this story, apparently for no other good reason than to produce a rhyme pattern with Totsky. Here the novelist may have followed Gogol who created a number of such pairs as, for example, Bobchinsky and Dobchinsky in *The Inspector General.*

The name of Lebedev—the low-grade civil servant who fawns upon everybody from whom he can possibly expect some favors—is obviously derived from *lebed'* "swan." It is possible that Dostoevsky used reverse psychology by giving the name of a graceful bird to this egoist, drunkard and liar. Of course, it is also possible that this contradiction was meant to imply the double-standard in Lebedev's behavior, since this man is both a religious maniac and an admirer of the nihilists. On the one hand he can compassionately pray for the soul of Madame Dubarry, and on the other he can also edit the slander sheet of the nihilists to extort money from Myshkin. This is again an interesting example of how a name can furnish a key for the accomodation of

[24]Peace, p. 86.

contraries in a person.

Dostoevsky also permits us to conjecture that this is not the real name of Lebedev because of the latter's indifference to his first name and patronymic—names which he seems to change at will. When caught in a lie, he offers the strange explanation that he changed his first name and patronymic from "self-abasement" as if he were ashamed of his real self and wanted to become someone else.

The meaning of the name Ferdyshchenko, a sponger and do-nothing, lies in its apparent meaninglessness or rather commonplaceness. With this device, Dostoevsky hints at his insignificance and Ferdyshchenko himself admits that he is not remarkable in any way and even his social rank is the lowest imaginable. What can a person with such a name do, he asks, but play the role of the ass in Krylov's fable *The Lion and the Ass*? He knows that he does not belong to Nastasya Filippovna's party and can only come as a court-jester. "Do you really think," he asks, "that it is possible to receive a person like me?" "The only possible explanation is," he continues, "that I am permitted to come because it is impossible to imagine such a thing."[25] He tells the guests a story, in which he refers to a certain Ishchenko whose name is so similar to his own. This is another example of the consonance Dostoevsky created with the Totsky-Sotsky pair.

The noisy nihilists who try to blackmail Myshkin are led by Doktorenko, nephew of Lebedev. He is proud of his name which is symptomatic of the nihilists' preoccupation with science. Yet he becomes a parody of the name he wears. Instead of posing, as he claims, as the representative of "common sense and the voice of conscience," he gambles away his money and presses the attack against Myshkin, although he knows that the nihilists have no legal claim. Dostoevsky may have used this name—in his own private warfare against the nihilists—to reveal their obsession with the veneer of mechanical knowledge and their lack of conscience.

The name of Keller, the pugilist and author of the slanderous article, comes from the German *Keller* "cellar." The German name and his addiction to boxing may have been used to indicate his Western orientation and rootlessness in Russian society. The name may also point to his underground activities with the nihilists.

The nihilist medical student who examines Ippolit and predicts his early death is called Kislorod which means oxygen. This chemical

[25] *The Idiot*, pp. 169-170.

element—colorless, tasteless, odorless—is used as a symbol of the inhuman matter-of-factness and scientific aloofness of the nihilists.

It is revealing that when the dying Ippolit asks the student to tell him the "naked truth" about his grave condition, Kislorod does so "not only willingly . . . but also with obvious pleasure . . . even with a certain relish as though he were particularly proud of his lack of feeling and his casualness. . . ." Even Ippolit, who is a nihilist himself, thinks that Kislorod "was going a bit too far" in his antiseptic, impersonal examination.[26]

Ptitsyn, one of the few moneylenders whom Dostoevsky does not dislike, is a possible derivation from *ptitsa* "bird." The name may point to Ptitsyn's ability of building up his nest. As the reader learns, Ptitsyn was very poor, used to sleep in the streets, and sell pen-knives but gradually saved money and now hopes to buy a house or two.

In an episode narrated by Totsky two people are introduced: Peter Verokhovskoy and his brother Stefan. They are secondary characters and their role is limited. Their importance lies in that, changing slightly their names, Dostoevsky used them to create Stefan and Peter Verkhovensky, two important personalities in his next novel, *The Possessed.*

For a delightfully zany journey in onomastic adventure we now turn to General Ivolgin, perhaps the most comic character in Dostoevsky's *oeuvre.* His name may stem from *ivolga* "oriole," a brightly colored passerine bird with a special vocal apparatus. This general has a flair for inventing absurd tales and filling them with queer people, weird details, and sheer nonsense.

Ivolgin recalls the case of a Private Kolpakov who apparently died, was buried with full military honors, yet six months later turned up in the same brigade as if nothing had happened. The name may have been suggested to Dostoevsky by the phrase *duratsky kolpak* "a fool's cap" which would imply that Ivolgin is fooling his audience.

The Gogolian element in Ivolgin is "literally" introduced by Dostoevsky's adaption of Pirogov, Gogol's hero in the latter's short story *Nevsky Prospect.* In *The Idiot* Pirogov appears as a comrade of Ivolgin and participates with him in the defense of Sebastopol in the Crimean War. Ivolgin fights the enemy with such heroism and abandon that he "collects" 13 bullets in his chest during this fierce battle. It is Pirogov who telegraphs the news of this remarkable phenomenon to

[26] *Ibid.*, pp. 426-427.

the scientific world in Paris and even leaves Sebastopol for a time, presumably to bring a scientist to see the famous Ivolgin. Indeed, the celebrated court physician in Paris, Nelaton, obtains a safe conduct in the name of science and comes to the besieged city to examine this miraculous case.

The key to this utterly absurd story with its doctor of pseudo Greek-French name lies in the use of Pirogov's name. In Gogol's story Pirogov, a conceited army lieutenant, is beaten up by a German craftsman for kissing his wife. Pirogov is outraged and decides to complain to his general about this scandal, but on his way he drops into a pastry shop, and, after eating a few pastries—hence his name from *pirog* "pie"—he forgets all about the insult as if nothing had happened, and goes to a dance. In the first chapter of part four of *The Idiot,* Dostoevsky talks about "the arrogance of the simple-minded man" and "the total absence of doubt in his abilities by a stupid man" which are so wonderfully shown by Gogol in his excellent portrait of Pirogov. "Pirogov never doubts that he is a genius or, indeed, that he is superior to any genius. He is so certain of it that it never occurs to him to question it. . . . The great writer was in the end forced to give him a thrashing to satisfy the outraged feelings of his readers. . . ." The only thing that Dostoevsky could not understand was why Gogol gave his Pirogov such a low rank "since nothing could have been easier for him than to imagine himself, as his epaulettes grew thicker . . . a great soldier, or rather not imagine it, but to have no doubts whatever about it; he had been made a general, so he must therefore be a great soldier! And how many Pirogovs there have been . . . and still are among us."[27] The reader can easily understand how Dostoevsky "borrowed" Pirogov from Gogol, hyperbolized his trivial adventure, and gave him a general's rank. It goes without saying that, after this identification with Gogol's Pirogov, Ivolgin is not to be believed in anything he says.[28]

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[27] *Ibid.*, p. 501.

[28] There is an interesting coincidence concerning the name of Sokolovich in *The Idiot* and Sobakevich in Gogol's *Dead Souls.* Ivolgin invites Myshkin to an old comrade Sokolovich. Since this Sokolovich is introduced immediately after the incident in which the Gogolian Pirogov played a prominent part, one wonders whether there is another ghost of Gogol hiding behind Sokolovich's portrait. One thinks of Sobakevich, Gogol's landowner, whose name is somewhat similar to Sokolovich. As Ivolgin is dragging the reluctant prince upstairs in a certain house where Sokolovich is supposed to live, Myshkin notices that the name on the door, where they stop, indicates a certain Kulakov and not Sokolovich. Kulakov is derived from *kulak* "fist," and also "tight-wad." In an episode of *Dead Souls,* in which Sobakovich plays the central role, Gogol mentions the word *kulak* five times in rapid succession. See N. Gogol, *Mertvie dushi,* Poema, Izdatelstvo "Pravda," 1954, pp. 110-111.

In another episode Ivolgin invents other ghosts in the persons of Sokolovich and Yeropegov, but, alas, he is no longer believed. Undismayed, his fertile imagination creates another linguistic mask in the person of Retired Lieutenant Colonel Kapiton, slightly changing the word *kapitan* "captain" to produce a new name with a high military rank. Even when the reality of this new figure is also denied and Ivolgin is further accused of simply confusing names, he still has enough resources to summon more imps to come to his assistance. The reader now hears that Kapiton married a certain Maria Petrovna Su. . .Su. . . —at this point Ivolgin stutters and interpolates a few descriptive phrases in order to gain enough time for the completion of the new name which finally materializes as Sutugov. Yet he is not sure of this name either, because by the time there is another reference to her, she has already metamorphosed into Sutugin.[29]

In still another episode, Ivolgin relates to Myshkin the highlights of his experiences connected with Napoleon's campaign in Russia. When he watched Napoleon's entry in Moscow at the age of ten, the Emperor noticed him in the crowd and, at the death of his page, Baron de Basencour, a boy of 12, remembered Ivolgin and appointed him to be his new page.

In history books dealing with Napoleon's campaign in Russia there is no reference to a Basencour. Dostoevsky probably invented this name for the purpose of denying authenticity to Ivolgin's story, and, at the same time, ridiculing his superficial knowledge of French. The word *cour* means court and the phrase *mal en cour* means to be put out of favor. The substitution of *bas* "low, inferior, trivial," for *mal* "evil, ill, wrong" in Basencour's name creates a nonsensical word, but still retains enough verbal "tease" to indicate what the intended phrase ought to have been. Therefore, it is not surprising that this young page, as his name indicates, out of favor with Napoleon conveniently dies and that this creates a welcome opening for the always alert Ivolgin in the personal staff of the Emperor.

Ivolgin further relates that, in his new role as Napoleon's page, he used to accompany the Emperor in his morning rides together with Davout and the Mameluke Roustant. Myshkin, who knows the history of Napoleon's campaign in Russia, corrects the name of Roustant to Constant, but the unperturbed Ivolgin, not the one to be caught in a lie, immediately replies that "Constant was no longer there because he had

[29] *The Idiot,* pp. 544-545.

already been sent with a letter to—to the Empress Josephine."[30]

The relationship between Napoleon and Ivolgin, his new page, could not have been more cordial, and the Emperor asks for Ivolgin's advice in the most crucial decisions of his political life. Thus, Napoleon consults his ten-year-old page whether, if he adopts the Greek Orthodox faith, the Russians will come over to his side. It was, indeed, upon Ivolgin's advice that Napoleon decided to abandon Moscow and to retreat from Russia.

The separation between Napoleon and Ivolgin is sad. "I don't want to take you away from your mother," said Napoleon, "but I should like to do something for you." Ivolgin then asks him to write something as a souvenir for him in the album of his sister who is three years old, and Napoleon complies with the following fitting lines: "Ne mentez jamais. Napoleon, votre ami sincère." (Don't you ever lie. Your sincere friend — Napoleon.)[31]

Since the confrontation of Myshkin with the corrupt society is the basic theme of the novel, it is rewarding to observe Dostoevsky's onomastic technique in the description of the Yepanchin reception party.

Most of the participants remain without names which, as indicated before, is a sure sign of Dostoevsky's disapproval. When the anonymity of the participants is coupled with German nationality, the novelist's hostility and sarcasm correspondingly intensify.

One of the guests is a very staid army general with a German name who in five years made one comment "remarkable in its profundity." Another is "the well-known and charming Prince N . . . who, from force of habit, spent most of his life abroad." Still another is "a poet of German origin" perfectly "respectable" and "irreproachably dressed." Although these descriptive phrases seem, at first reading, to sound flattering, later they turn out to have negative connotations.

In one episode Myshkin pays homage to the members of the high society by praising one after another for their apparent philanthropic activities. He mentions that an old statesman "saved the student Podkumov and the civil servant Shvabrin from exile to Siberia. . . ."[32] However, if the names and circumstances connected with the event are examined, it becomes evident that the good deed was not so good at all,

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[30] *Ibid.*, p. 540.
[31] *Ibid.*, p. 542.
[32] *Ibid.*, p. 591.

and the episode reflects not Dostoevsky's praise, but his criticism of the society.

The name of one of the men whom the elderly statesman allegedly saved—Podkumov—may be related to *kumovstvo* "favoritism, nepotism," which is hardly a flattering term in connection with the behavior of a politician. Thus, it is understandable that, when the innocent Myshkin naively praises him, the statesman feels guilty and blushes.

The case of the civil servant Shvabrin is arresting in its literary allusion. The source for this name is without any doubt Pushkin, in whose story *The Captain's Daughter,*[33] describing the Pugachev's uprising, Shvabrin appears as a liar and villain. Shvabrin later becomes a traitor to Empress Catherine by joining Pugachev's rebel army, and, by his false denunciation, almost causes the death of Grinev, the hero of the story. However, at the end it is not Shvabrin but Grinev who is saved from disgrace. Unless Dostoevsky simply confused the names of the two protagonists in Pushkin's story, which is a possibility, the assumption is that he changed the names of the hero and villain on purpose to portray in an unfavorable light the statesman who, instead of saving the hero, saves the villain. The indication that Pushkin is the source gains further credence when, shortly after the Shvabrin episode, Myshkin relates that he and Rogozhin "read Pushkin together—all his works."[34]

There is another reference to a Pushkinian character in the course of this party. A member of the society shows unmistakable English mannerism and taste, and speaks with the affectation of one who lived abroad for a long time. He also complains of his losses because of the new agrarian reform. His name is given only as Ivan Petrovich without his surname.

In Pushkin's tale *The Gentlewoman and the Peasant Girl,*[35] one of the protagonists is a certain Ivan Berestov. The other protagonist is Grigory Ivanovich Muromsky, a real Anglophile who has an English garden, stable-boys dressed like English jockeys, and even an English governess for his daughter. In introducing him, Pushkin also speaks of his losses.

Dostoevsky was an enthusiastic admirer of Pushkin, knew his works well, and unquestionably remembered the eccentric Anglophile. But,

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[33] *Kapitanskaya dochka*

[34] *The Idiot,* p. 594.

[35] *Baryshnya krestyanka*

as in the Shvabrin incident, he may have forgotten the name of the Anglophile or confused it with that of the other protagonist, of whom he only retained the Christian name and patronymic.

In the conversation between Myshkin and Ivan Petrovich, the name of the Jesuit Abbe Goureau, who converted Pavlishchev, Myshkin's benefactor to Catholicism, is mentioned. Goureau means *une variété de grosse figue* in French, the literal translation of which would be "a variety of bulky fig." With the adjective *grosse*—which also means "thick, coarse, swollen"—Dostoevsky may have wished to imply his adverse opinion of the Jesuits. As the reader further learns this Goureau—"the cunning old fox"—tried to gain possession of Pavlishchev's fortune by filing a claim and Ivan Petrovich had "to resort to . . . the strongest measures" to prevent him from accomplishing his fraudulous plan.[36]

As we have seen, Dostoevsky's naming technique closely parallels his art of character painting. We have also noted that, without their names as they stand, Dostoevsky's characters would lose immeasurably from their enormous suggestiveness. In a constant interplay between language and experience, the recurrence of the clash of opposites—as, for example, the three harsh "r's" followed by hard vowels in order to increase their "bite" in Raskolnikov's name and the gentle "wisdom" in the name of Sonya (Sophia), the saintly prostitute, to teach and to lead the former out of his unbearable *cul-de-sac*—represents the very essence of the novelist's polyphonic art: his fears, vacillations, and hopes. These multi-faceted names are often as revealing of the character of their protean creator as of their owners since they relate the people they describe to the author's sensibility, society, and epoch. Thus, the names may often convey an intriguing aspect of Dostoevsky's own personality, philosophy, and pattern of mind.

An inquiry into the meaning of Dostoevsky's names must rely, as implied before, to a smaller extent, on linguistic investigation, and, to a

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[36] *The Idiot,* pp. 583-584. The introduction of this Jesuit with his suggestive name indirectly implies Dostoevsky's disapproval of Ivan Petrovich who brought him into the conversation. Although this Anglophile thwarts the Jesuit from robbing Pavlishchev, he, nevertheless, admires the Jesuits in general: "Won-der-fully clever rogues!" Later he defends the representatives of the Catholic Church who are "worthy of all respect and ex-tremely virtuous . . ." but, at the same time, he seems to be "rather ashamed of something." The reader wonders whether Ivan Pavlovich, who speaks about a Catholic convent abroad which the Russian Countess K. entered, emphasizes the fact of how difficult it is for a Russian to get out of the clutches of these "cunning old rascals—especially abroad," and praises some members of the Catholic Church, has not himself secretly converted to Catholicism during his long stay abroad. *Ibid.,* pp. 584-585.

larger extent, on allegorical interpretation. The presence of a great number of conditional phrases in this essay indicates a certain tentativeness and hesitation on this writer's part, and points to the fact that illustration and subjective impression more than scientific analysis were used. To cite just one example of many, linguistic tools do not seem to be sharp enough to penetrate into the absurd world of General Ivolgin in which names and characters are expressed in bizarre and grotesque images. A strict scientific approach would be helpless for the explanation of Dostoevsky's haphazard borrowings of characters from Gogol and Pushkin.

A fascinating aspect of Dostoevsky's onomastic craft may be found in that the names of the main heroes succeed in a subtle way to express the *leitmotif* of, or some deeper central meaning in, his novels. Thus, a name may stand for the whole intellectual, emotional, and social atmosphere of an entire novel. In *Crime and Punishment* Raskolnikov's name is tightly interwoven with his crime and the history of Petersburg because of the way it aptly summarizes the cultural currents and anarchistic mood accumulating from the age of Peter the Great to the 1860s. In *The Idiot,* the timid Myshkin, who feels that beauty will save the world, is regarded as a scatterbrain by a society interested only in money, speculations, and business deals, but the modern reader, who must live in a world of air-pollution, eroding ecology, and crime waves in big cities, considers this Russian Don Quixote as representing more important aesthetic and moral values than the society which judges him.

Implied in Dostoevsky's names may be a set of unconscious assumptions about a unique way of looking at the world and its phenomena. The sensitive reader will soon perceive and vicariously experience Dostoevsky's great adventures in a certain way because the names of the novelist's characters predispose definite modes of interpretation. Thus, the reader will come to realize that, in accordance with Dostoevsky's strategy, these names lead him in a certain direction in which things are about to happen and literary fireworks to go off. The names, then, direct the reader's attention into predetermined channels and influence the way in which he thinks and affect the world of his reality.

In discussing "Hamlet and Hamletism" in his book *Shakespeare: Time and Conscience,* Grigory Kozintsev, director of the prize-winning Soviet film "Hamlet" indicates that, although people have not believed that even the most timid bridegroom would jump out of a window on his

wedding day because of his fear of marriage, after Gogol wrote his comedy *Marriage,* in which the hero does jump out of a window, people began to recognize Podkolyosin [the protagonist of the comedy] as the very unlikely bridegroom in one another. The Soviet film-director continues:

> Shyness, uncertainty, fear of any change whatsoever—these common human traits now had a single name. Everything that in the real world, according to Dostoevsky, existed in a diluted form was suddenly condensed into clarity: it was invested with a more expressive form and became an appellative. Art has succeeded in stating the very essence of a living phenomenon.
>
> The world has a new tenant: the figure who has become a literary type. It is "the nickname for many objects, expressed, however, by a proper noun." (Belinsky) This tenant proved much longer-lived than an ordinary mortal. In him were not only the qualities of a man who lives in a specific place at a specific time, but also those human characteristics that have a particular stability and a tenacity to life. These characteristics survive the centuries and cross national boundaries. They change form, but keep the family name.
>
> Everyone is familiar with these figures from youth. These are Don Quixote, Tartuffe, Oblomov, Khlestakov, and other such hero-types. They accompany men's lives for many generations.[37]

This is precisely what Dostoevsky created with many of his strange heroes. In a Pushkinian "Exegi monumentum" he made his literary protagonists unforgettable and gave them a passport for eternity. This is why in his analysis of Camus' Meursault [the hero of *The Stranger*] Sartre can call him Myshkin since he correctly assumes that the reader will recall the attributes of this Dostoevskian hero.[38] This is also the reason that in his novel *Point Counter Point,* Aldous Huxley calls Spandrell, one of the protagonists, who smiles "like all the tragic characters of fiction rolled into one"—Stavrogin.[39] And when the world mourned the senseless killing of Robert Kennedy, the Soviet poet Yevtushenko could speak of a Raskolnikov stalking the streets of America. No further identification was necessary, since these "names"

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[37] Grigori Kozintsev, *Shakespeare: Time and Conscience,* trans. Joyce Vining (New York, 1966), pp. 105-106.

[38] Jean-Paul Sartre, *Situations I* (Paris, 1947), p. 104.

[39] Aldous Huxley, *Point Counter Point* (New York, 1928), p. 481.

had already joined Don Quixote, Hamlet, and Faust in the immortal pantheon of world literature, and were immediately recognized.

In the belief that there is more to a name than its outer garb, Dostoevsky invented a kind of poetic shorthand to convey with one bold stroke his beliefs and convictions, his violent xenophobia and tender affection, his greatness and pettiness concerning man. The novelist's names appear as a testimony of his dramatic brevity to crowd into a few syllables all the energy of his restless mind. The names are Dostoevsky himself, intensified.

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