

Fyodor Dostoevsky's Netochka Nezvanova

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ABSTRACT

The complex nature of Netochka Nezvanova, one of Fyodor Dostoevsky's early pieces, makes this work an interesting and revealing point from which to study the evolution of the writer's craftsmanship. Written under the influence of major Russian, French, and German prose works of the period, it reflects Dostoevsky's process of creative emulation of the achievement of European realist writing and a process of reworking of Russian Romanticism into what would later be called "psychological realism." The unfinished nature of Netochka Nezvanova testifies to Dostoevsky's struggle with the previous literary tradition and to his search for a new literary form. The character types, themes, and stylistic devices with which Dostoevsky experimented in this work would come to play a central role in the creation of his later masterpieces.

RÉSUMÉ

La nature complexe d'une des premières œuvres de Fedor Dostoïevski, Netotchka Nezvanova, fait de celle-ci un point de départ intéressant et révélateur dans l'étude de l'évolution technique de l'écrivain. Écrite sous l'influence de la prose des plus grands auteurs russes, français et allemands, la nouvelle reflète le processus dostoïevskien d'émulation créatrice des succès du réalisme européen et révèle sa façon de remanier le romantisme russe en ce qui s'appellera le «réalisme psychologique». La nature inachevée de Netotchka Nezvanova témoigne de la lutte menée par Dostoïevski contre l'ancienne tradition littéraire et de sa quête d'une nouvelle forme littéraire. Les personnages-types, les thèmes et les procédés stylistiques auxquels Dostoïevski fait recours dans ce premier écrit joueront un rôle fondamental dans la création de ses futurs chefs-d'œuvre.

INTRODUCTION

Dostoevsky has achieved fame in world literature mainly through his masterpieces Crime and Punishment, Brothers Karamazov, and "Notes from the Underground," while his lesser-known works have been left underappreciated or altogether neglected. Many of these other works, however, are masterpieces in their own right, or, at the very least, serve to shed some light on Dostoevsky's creative mind and unique perspective on life. He used many of his shorter works to test new ground, experimenting with various themes and character types. Some of these tests failed and were immediately discarded, while others were re-worked and expanded upon in later works. Despite the impressive quantity of his literary output, there are common threads running through nearly all of his works, with the same themes often re-appearing countless times. Examining this evolution and process of maturation provides the reader with a deeper understanding of this complex writer, and leaves him with a profound appreciation for Dostoevsky's accomplishments. It is with this view in mind--understanding the role of the less popular, perhaps less successful, works in the context of their contribution to the writer's entire literary *corpus*--that I propose to examine one of Dostoevsky's early works, Netochka Nezvanova. Written between 1846 and 1849 (after the publication of "Poor Folk" and The Double), Netochka provided Dostoevsky with ripe testing ground for his literary ideas. Some of these ideas he seriously modified in his later works (the artist, for example) but the themes of both the child and the

female, used experimentally here by Dostoevsky, were to play important roles in later works. Although the novel has many shortcomings and is certainly no masterpiece, it is perhaps one of Dostoevsky's most important early works. The novel clearly reveals the young writer's efforts to synthesize all he had learned from both Russian and Western European Romantics and early Realists, while decidedly contributing something entirely new. Furthermore, as already mentioned, it allowed him to experiment with many of the themes that he would return to and elaborate upon in later works.

In order to fully understand the importance of Netochka Nezvanova and its place not only in Dostoevsky's *œuvre*, but in Russian literature in general, it is necessary to briefly discuss the literary tradition that existed in Russia immediately preceding Dostoevsky's publication of this work. I wish to most strenuously avoid a discussion of literary movements and the assignation of ambiguous, over-used terms such as "Romanticism" and "Realism." Certainly, Romanticism was not defined in the same terms in Germany, France, and Russia, nor did it occur at exactly the same time in each of these countries. Moreover, the classification of a literary work as belonging to a specific literary movement is a dangerous enterprise, there is far too much overlap between movements to make the classification clear-cut, and often the author's intent is unwittingly disregarded. Having said this, I must add that a general understanding of Romanticism and Realism as they existed in Russia are fundamental to grasping the importance and novelty of Dostoevsky's work.¹ I will therefore attempt to define

¹ While other movements such as the Natural School played an active part in the literary atmosphere of the day, I have chosen these two major movements both

Dostoevsky's work in terms of these two movements as a very crude beginning to a much deeper study of his art

In its absolute terms, Romanticism reflects more the uniqueness of the individual, the extraordinary, heroic aspects of life. Realism, on the other hand, is more concerned with man as an integral part of a larger society, with the typical and mundane. In many respects Realism appeared as a reaction against Romanticism, in an attempt to moderate its idealized outlook on life. As I hope to show, the works of Dostoevsky possess elements of both Romanticism and Realism, while at the same time adding a new element that leaves him in a class by himself. First, though, it is necessary to take a brief look at both the Romantic and Realistic tendencies of both Pushkin and Gogol in order to understand the importance and novelty of Dostoevsky's works in relation to his immediate predecessors.

The works of Alexander Pushkin, while still possessing definite characteristics of Romanticism, aided Russian literature in its movement towards Realism. Especially in his early writings, Pushkin was influenced by the great Romantic poet, Byron. His thematic material relies largely on Romantic tradition: exotic settings, magic, the supernatural, love, death, passion added little that departed from Western European literature. His elements of mystery ("The Queen of Spades") and the supernatural ("The Undertaker" from the Tales of Belkin) are reminiscent of Hoffmann's Tales. Pushkin's later writings, however, show a more pronounced departure from Romantic tradition. The dramatic narrative poem "The Gypsies" (1824) is the first of

for the sake of simplification, and also because they are more readily comparable to Romantic and Realistic trends in Western European literature.

Pushkin's works to reveal the transition from Romanticism to Realism
 A D P Briggs remarks on the Romantic aspect of Pushkin's works "The Caucasian Captive," "The Robber Brothers," "The Fountain of Bakhchisaray" and "The Gypsies"

Vagueness of motivation and characterisation, emphasis on local colour, stereotyped speech, cliché-ridden ideas of the corruption of civilisation as opposed to the purity of nature and those who live close to her--these, and other habitual romantic mannerisms, hover ominously in the air ²

Even the subject of "The Gypsies" is a typically Romantic one Aleko renounces his life to join a band of gypsies and later kills his sweetheart for her infidelity Despite these Romantic features, however, elements of Realism are already present Most importantly, there is a more pronounced attention given to details of setting and action than in any of Pushkin's previous works The Realist tendencies of Pushkin culminate in his prose work, the Tales of Belkin (1830) The new narrative method used here is unlike anything Russian literature had seen before Ernest J Simmons sums up the importance of this narrative method on the development of Russian Realism "The stories are told in an extremely simple, direct style, with a paucity of description, dialogue, and authorial reflection or analysis" ³ The Tales of Belkin, however, combine these Realist tendencies with a still decidedly Romantic vision and display a Byronic use of Romantic irony throughout

²A.D.P. Briggs, "Fallibility and Perfection in the Works of Alexander Pushkin." Problems of Russian Romanticism. Ed. Robert Reid (Hants, Eng: Gower, 1986) 41

³Ernest J. Simmons, Introduction to Russian Realism (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana UP, 1965) 38.

Nikolai Gogol's classification as either a Romanticist or a Realist is still cause for much contention. Donald Fanger terms him (along with Dostoevsky, Balzac, and Dickens) a "romantic realist"⁴. The argument becomes simply one of degree, as his works undeniably possess elements of both literary movements. The Romantic vein seems ever-present: his plots are often absurd and exaggerated, much of the action seems to be more dream-like than real, and the author's narrative voice is too intrusive to allow for realistic detachment. Gogol, even more than Pushkin, directly follows the tradition of Hoffmann (his skill in the Hoffmannesque use of the grotesque culminated in "A Terrible Vengeance"). Despite this, however, his works show definite traits of Realism. His portrayal of the common man, usually a petty civil servant, as but one, small, insignificant part of a larger, social (urban) whole had not at that time been embarked upon in depth by any other Russian writer. Gogol largely uses the fantastic and absurd as a means of satirizing the evils of contemporary society, and it is this aspect of his writing that shows his departure from Romanticism (see any of Gogol's Petersburg Tales). This is most evident in his story "The Nose," where the importance of Gogol's view of reality becomes secondary to the absurd (i.e. one must first wade through the ridiculous story in order to see how Gogol really viewed the world). Unlike Pushkin, Gogol saw a more accurate reflection of reality in an urban setting--a view that was shared by Dostoevsky.

⁴Fanger discusses the choice of this terminology and the relationships between these four writers at great length in his critical work Dostoevsky and Romantic Realism: A Study of Dostoevsky in Relation to Balzac, Dickens, and Gogol (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1965).

Dostoevsky may have been heavily influenced by the Romantic writers, both Russian and Western European, but he was equally affected by the trend of Realism that was sweeping the literary world. The novelty of his realism lies mainly in the way he chose to express his vision of the world. Rather than seeking to describe the external world surrounding a given character, Dostoevsky instead saw one of the main components of realism as the portrayal of the internal processes in that character's psyche. (For example, the prevalence of internal versus external action in Crime and Punishment) Unlike the Romantic tendency to portray every man as unique, Dostoevsky followed the Realists in their view that every man is an integral part of society, at the same time, however, he stressed the uniqueness of man's psyche. He used several means to expose the psyche of his characters, which I will be examining in detail in the chapters that follow. It is the ingenuity with which Dostoevsky portrays man's psyche that has deemed him the creator of "psychological realism." While this was such a novel approach for a writer of the nineteenth century, the remarkable precision of his psychological insight has made his work timeless. Even modern psychologists such as Paul Squires, Joseph Collins, and Giovanni Verrienti credit him with being far ahead of his contemporaries in understanding man's psyche.⁵

Netochka Nezvanova provides an interesting and revealing point from which to begin a study of Dostoevsky's realism. Because it is such an early work, it contains only the seeds of his psychological realism.

⁵ For a discussion of various psychologists' opinions on Dostoevsky and his portrayal of the human psyche, see Chapter 6: "Dostoevsky as a Psychologist by the Psychologists" of Maria Kravchenko's book Dostoevsky and the Psychologists (Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1978) 136-163.

which culminate in his masterpiece Brothers Karamazov. At the same time it uses more elements borrowed from Romantic writers than perhaps any of his other works. This makes it very difficult, therefore, to comfortably classify it as belonging solely to one literary movement. In this respect, Donald Fanger is correct in his usage of the term "romantic realism" when referring to Dostoevsky's works (the term is especially appropriate in its application to Netochka). But, to take this one step further, Dostoevsky adds something to these two major literary movements which sets him distinctly apart from other writers--namely, "psychological realism." I believe the main interest in Dostoevsky lies in the novelty of his approach. He is able to portray his character's psyche with such success that the reader is given a completely new point of view and understanding of the hero.

Netochka was strongly influenced by Pushkin, Gogol, and Druzhinin, as well as numerous Western European writers, such as Hoffmann, Balzac, George Sand, and Eugène Sue. Dostoevsky re-worked and appropriated those already existent elements in Russian and Western European literary tradition which best enabled him to portray man's psyche. While most critics refer to this as parody, I prefer to use the broader term "re-working" in order to avoid the negative connotations of "parody." Too often parody is associated with the mockery of a specific work, which I find to be almost completely absent in Netochka. Rather, I think that Dostoevsky shows great admiration for the various writers I shall be discussing (with the possible exception of Gogol). In an attempt to avoid vague terminology or the polemical differentiation between parody, stylization, or imitation, I prefer to term it "re-working" and subsequently distinguish between the nature of each

particular author's influence with specific examples from the texts. Linda Hutcheon has attempted to dispense with the traditional definition of parody by emphasizing its possible range of intended ethos, from admiration to mockery. Her definition, therefore, is broader than most:

Parody . . . is a form of imitation, but imitation characterized by ironic inversion, not always at the expense of the parodied text. Parody is . . . repetition with critical distance, which marks difference rather than similarity.⁵

Hutcheon's definition can be broadened as well if we consider the definition of another scholar, especially relevant in a discussion of Dostoevsky: "parody is an imitation of another literary work or of elements which are peculiarly literary, such as style, theme, type, convention, manner or even genre."⁶ I wish to stress the importance of the second part of this definition, as too many critics have limited their study of parody to specific plot occurrences in the given texts. This definition negates the need to pinpoint a single literary work as the text being parodied when, for example, something much more intangible is concerned (style, for instance). This is especially true of George Sand's influence on Dostoevsky, where the ties between Netochka and any single work of Sand's are negligible.

My thesis is concerned mainly with this re-working of previous literary tradition by Dostoevsky, culminating in his own highly original literary creations. Netochka Nezvanova is a well-suited focal point for the examination of this re-working. As an early work, it reveals its

⁵Linda Hutcheon, A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms (New York: Methuen, 1985) 6.

⁶Tuvia Shlonsky, "Literary Parody: Remarks on its Method and Function." Proceedings of the IVth Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association. Ed. Francois Jost (The Hague: Mouton, 1966) 797.

Western European influences more readily than the author's later works, showing the infancy of many of Dostoevsky's themes and stylistic devices which would become more fully formulated in his later works. The first chapter of my thesis will examine the theme of the artist, and how Dostoevsky's re-working of the similar thematic material of Gogol, Balzac and Hoffmann enabled him to present a psychological portrait of his artist, Efimov. In the second chapter of my thesis I will focus on Dostoevsky's portrayal of the child and the maturation of the female psyche. Again, Dostoevsky re-worked much of the pre-existing literary tradition of Balzac, Sand, and Sue in order to fit his needs. He found the child a suitable character in which to trace human psychological development. None of Dostoevsky's earlier works examined the artist or the child, so this work provided the author with novel material for experimentation with the psychology of his characters. The third chapter of my thesis is concerned with the thematic material of Netochka Nezvanova as the framework from which many of his later characters, themes, and stylistic devices evolved.

While an enormous amount of critical attention has been devoted to the works of Dostoevsky, this attention revolves mainly around his masterpieces, completely overshadowing his smaller, lesser-known works. I have found that Netochka often escapes mention or is relegated to a position of less importance than it deserves, belittling the impact it had on the shaping of Dostoevsky's later works. Often, too, the mention of influences upon this work is limited to the works of one or two other writers (as, for example, in the case of Charles Passage's studies on Dostoevsky and Hoffmann, a seriously limiting, in-depth study). I wish to show that it is not necessary, and indeed undesirable, to limit the

idea of influence to one specific work by one specific author. By understanding the multiple influences upon a literary work, it is possible to discover both the similarities and differences of Russian literature to Western European literature, and more importantly, to appreciate its refreshing uniqueness. More specifically, the significance of Netochka among Russian literature is, in my opinion, two-fold: first, it demonstrates the large degree to which nineteenth-century Russia was absorbing and appropriating Western European literatures, while continuing to learn from her own literary tradition, and secondly, it serves as a model and foundation for those future characters (and their complex psychological natures) which awarded Dostoevsky such high praise.

CHAPTER I

EFIMOV: THE PSYCHOLOGY OF AN ARTIST

After the negative public reception of The Double, Dostoevsky quickly realized that he needed to create a new type of character in order to explore the depths of the human psyche. The petty official, who had been used numerous times by Gogol, proved to be insufficient for Dostoevsky's needs; the world of the petty official was too limiting and sterile to provide the crisis situations that would expose his hero's psyche. In Netochka, Dostoevsky created two new types of characters: the child heroine and the artist. I will be discussing Netochka and her origins as a female character type in the following chapter, but here I wish to focus on her stepfather, Efimov. He is affectively the main character of the story, as his biography occupies over one-third of the entire unfinished novel.⁸ He is also Dostoevsky's first and only attempt at the portrayal of the artist. Charles Passage suggests that Dostoevsky quickly abandoned the artist, as Dostoevsky had no first-hand knowledge of the musical world upon which to base his character.⁹ While this lack of knowledge of the musical world on Dostoevsky's part

⁸Although the novel is divided into seven chapters, I will be referring throughout my thesis to the three distinct sections of the book. The first part, covering approximately seventy pages, recounts Netochka's life with her parents. This section is dominated by Efimov, and ends with his desertion of Netochka and death. The second section relates Netochka's upbringing in the house of Prince X. In the final and incomplete third section, the twelve-year-old Netochka goes to live at the home of Prince X's step-daughter, Alexandra Mikhailovna.

⁹Charles E. Passage, The Russian Hoffmannists (The Hague: Mouton, 1963) 229.

makes Efimov a failed character, he is also a successful character in his complex psychological make-up

Efimov does not conform to the typical Romantic notions of the artist. He does not live in a harmonious world of creative freedom and fame, living and breathing the joys of oneness with his music (as a Romantic artist would), but instead is stifled by his own delusions of grandeur. Even those Romantic heroes who display a similar megalomania, such as Herman in "The Queen of Spades," do not possess the same sado-masochistic behaviour that makes Efimov's character so multi-dimensional and provides a deeper psychological insight. Efimov is an artist with an *idée fixe* (his own greatness) who in reality has misused and destroyed any musical talent he may have had. The passion of the artist is in Efimov a misguided, self-destructive obsession with his own fame. This leads to his insanity and death (Efimov's obsession with his own success goes so far as to preclude any concern for the effect of his actions on others. He sees his wife simply as a hindrance to achieving success, and Netochka as the one who can be convinced to steal money from her mother to support his drinking habit in exchange for sweets. Efimov leads Netochka to believe all throughout her childhood that it was her mother who prevented him from becoming famous and leading a life of comfort. This inevitably leads to Netochka's hatred of her mother. Only later, as a mature narrator, does Netochka realize how Efimov had manipulated and then abandoned her, and feels true guilt and remorse for her attitude towards her mother.) Karl Fyodorovitch, Efimov's friend and a would-be dancer, bears many of Efimov's traits as an artist. The scene where the two men commiserate about their undiscovered talent

provides a tragi-comical parody (with a noticeable mocking tone) of the great Romantic artist. In this scene Dostoevsky parodies the artist in a play by Nestor Kukolnik, described by Netochka

The drama concerned the misfortunes of a certain great painter called Gennaro or Giaccobi, who cried out on one page, "No one recognized me!" or on another, "I am famous!" or "I have no talent!" and a few lines later "I am talented!" It all ended most pathetically. The play was, naturally, a very poor one but it affected the two readers in the most naive and tragic way because they found in the leading characters a strong resemblance to themselves.¹⁰

The plight of these pathetic men is contrasted to the accomplishments of Efimov's friend B. and the great violinist S, whose perseverance and true artistic gifts are deservedly rewarded. The jealousy Efimov feels for these men (and all successful musicians) only causes him to become more obsessed with his own talent, while at the same time leaving him to teeter on the brink of insanity. B. tries repeatedly to help his friend, but Efimov refuses to heed his advice. The generosity and selflessness of both B. and S. stand in complete opposition to Efimov's egotism. The arrival of S. forces Efimov to confront his own shortcomings, his inability to accept what he sees leads to his total psychological breakdown and death. Living in his own world of fantasy, he is a dreamer to such a degree that a confrontation with reality kills him. In this respect Efimov has gone one step beyond being a Realistic hero. The attempt at reconciliation of dreams with reality that is one of the features of Realism

¹⁰Fyodor Dostoevsky, Netochka Nezvanova (Harmondsworth, Eng.: Penguin, 1985) 42. All of the passages I will be quoting from Netochka are from Jane Kentish's translation. The original Russian quotes appear in the appendix of this thesis.

has gone awry in this hero, the result is not only insanity, but the exposure of his psyche to the reader

Dostoevsky's choice of the artist as musician--and not as writer--reflects an element of distinctly Romantic tradition. He departs from this Romantic tradition, however, by the use of irony; his "Romantic" hero behaves in the decidedly un-Romantic way which reveals his psyche to the reader. There are at least three identifiable literary sources for Efimov's character, all of which Dostoevsky knew well. The artists of Gogol, Balzac, and Hoffmann are all recognizable in Efimov, yet Dostoevsky still managed to create something entirely his own. I first wish to examine Efimov's literary predecessors, and then to examine the novelty with which Dostoevsky is able to portray his artist.

Gogol's experimentation with art is limited almost exclusively to his short story "The Portrait," in which the artist Chertkov renounces his life of patience and hard work (and whatever talent he may have possessed) for the quick profit and fame made from painting second-rate portraits.¹¹ Gogol's description of his egotistical painter could easily refer to Efimov: "and he suffered that dreadful torture which sometimes appears as a rare exception in nature when a man of small talent tries to fill a space too big for him and fails miserably . . ." ¹² Dostoevsky actually makes direct reference to "The Portrait" in the third

¹¹The two other works by Gogol which deal with art in a very general and superficial way are the Arabesques and Selected Passages from Correspondence with Friends. In these works, Gogol was more concerned with examining the spiritual side of sculpture, painting, music, and the theatre, but his message got lost along the way by extensive moral preaching. Perhaps the only statement in these works that is relevant to Dostoevsky's artist is Gogol's conviction that the poet should be true to his own artistic and spiritual ideals and should under no circumstances give up his integrity.

¹²Nikolai Gogol, "The Portrait." The Overcoat and Other Tales of Good and Evil. Trans. David Magarshack (New York: Norton, 1957) 134.

section of the novel, when Netochka examines a painting of Pyotr Alexandrovich, she is taken in most of all by his eyes, which in "The Portrait" give the subject of the painting away as the Devil. Like Efimov, Chertkov is destroyed by his *idée fixe*. Gogol, however, relies upon the use of the grotesque in order to portray the artist's diseased mind, the devil appears incarnate in order to tempt Chertkov into renouncing art for money, and indeed, plays a major role in the story. The theme of the story revolves much more around this temptation of man by the devil than an actual exploration of art or the artist. Gogol's heroes do not stand out as individual personalities, they represent a class of mankind rather than possess separate identities of their own. As Fanger observes, "Gogol's characters all incline toward facelessness, toward an identity only nominal."¹³ Dostoevsky, on the other hand, was more concerned not just with the portrayal of a realistic artist, but with the individuality of that artist. The main artists in Netochka--Efimov, B., and S.,--are all very distinct personalities, though the latter two are not fully developed. Furthermore, Gogol's artist is much more imbued with a Romantic spirit, continuing the Hoffmannesque tradition as set forth in such works as "Der Artushof," for instance.

I conclude, then, that Dostoevsky learned from Gogol the ability to synthesize his knowledge of foreign literatures and subsequently fit them into the framework of Russian literary tradition, while still maintaining a distinctly personal style. Rather than imitating the specific characteristics of Chertkov, Dostoevsky chose to re-work the portrayal of the artist (dispensing with as many Romantic features as possible), and

¹³Fanger, Dostoevsky and Romantic Realism 116.

the mode of his expression in general. Few critics have pinpointed the nature of Gogol's influence on Dostoevsky as precisely as Fanger:

Gogol was not, of course, the only formative influence on the young Dostoevsky, but he was a crucial one exactly because his work represented such a successful and original adaptation of disparate foreign trends to the Russian scene and the Russian language.¹³

Dostoevsky also re-works Balzac's portrayal of the artist in "Gambara." Like Efimov, Gambara is a poor, starving artist (a composer) whose belief in his divine inspiration places him on the borders of insanity. He is able to compose only under the influence of alcohol, and is constantly obsessed by music (Gambara, however, possesses more talent than Efimov, and is not in this respect as tragi-comical a character). While the thematic material of the two stories might be viewed as a form of plagiarism on Dostoevsky's part, he did add a novel element to it. Dostoevsky's artist is a much more multi-dimensional character than Balzac's, possessing that psychological/realistic element which Gambara lacks. The reader is shown a close-up view of the workings of Efimov's tortured mind by his words, actions, and interactions with other characters--particularly Netochka--and his reactions to the public recognition of other artists. Here again we see an example of Dostoevsky's "psychological realism," which was one of his most distinguishing trademarks in the realm of Russian literature.

While Dostoevsky's Efimov bears traits that make him uncomfortably similar to Chertkov and Gambara, Hoffmann's artists had no less of an impact on the shaping of both Dostoevsky's hero and subject matter. Hoffmann himself explored the musical theme numerous

¹³Fanger, Dostoevsky and Romantic Realism 125.

times, as his own musical talent allowed him to write from experience. He wrote two stories about violinists--"Rat Krespel" and "Der Baron von B"--which, although no doubt familiar to Dostoevsky, do not seem to have any ties with Dostoevsky's story apart from the actual instrument the hero plays. Rather, Dostoevsky adapted the Romantic painter into the slightly more original violinist, by means of whom he could attempt to permeate the story with music, and more easily show Efimov's relations to the musicians around him. Passage maintains that Efimov has three literary ancestors, all of whom are painters: Gogol's Chertkov, and Hoffmann's Berthold of "Die Jesuiterkirche in G." and Franzesco in Die Elixiere des Teufels.¹⁵ "Die Jesuiterkirche in G." and Hoffmann's closely related tale "Der Artushof" examine whether or not it is possible for an artist to marry and truly remain an artist. Berthold mistreated his wife for destroying his creative genius in much the same way that Efimov did. In terms of actual plot, though, Netochka bears a much more striking resemblance to Hoffmann's novel Die Elixiere des Teufels. Here, the woman with whom Franzesco lived dies, and he runs away with their child. After he abandons the child, the little boy is adopted by Count Filippo, who raises him as his own. The same thing occurs in Netochka: the girl's mother dies, her father runs away with her and then abandons her. She is then taken in by Prince X and raised with his own daughter. In all of these tales, however, Hoffmann is much more concerned with the depiction of art and the creation of a plot than with character portrayal. While Dostoevsky's plot is admittedly weak in this novel, displaying a complete lack of continuity between each of the three

¹⁵Passage, The Russian Hoffmannists 87.

sections, his characters are infinitely more complex and realistic than Hoffmann's. Passage also suggests an intimate link between Netochka and Hoffmann's unfinished novel Kater Murr, paralleling Efimov with the musician Kreisler.¹⁶ He goes to great pains to establish links between the two, going so far as to speculate the intended ending of Netochka based on the plot of Kater Murr. According to him, Efimov did not really die in the lunatic asylum after all, but was to have made a re-appearance later in the novel! This seems absurd to me to say the least, as I hardly think Dostoevsky was limited by the influence of one specific work of any writer, nor was he so narrow-minded and unoriginal as to borrow and re-write an entire novel: characters, plot and ending *in toto* as Passage seems to suggest. Rather, I believe that Dostoevsky borrowed and re-worked whatever elements of another writer proved to be useful to him in his psychological portrayal of a character.

There are several devices used in order to expose Efimov's psyche to the reader. Unlike many of Dostoevsky's future heroes, Efimov does not experience any crisis dream or hallucination that results in a deeper self-understanding and spiritual rebirth.¹⁷ First of all, that was a device used by the more mature Dostoevsky, reflecting his own, deeper self-awareness. Secondly, salvation for Efimov is a hopeless case, as there is nothing to show his own desire for change or even his own sanity. Efimov's friend B tries repeatedly to help him, but to no avail. When B goes so far as to get Efimov a job in the theatre

¹⁶Charles E. Passage, Dostoevski the Adapter: A Study in Dostoevski's Use of the Tales of Hoffmann (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1954) 98.

¹⁷Cf. the crisis dreams of Raskolnikov in Crime and Punishment.

orchestra, Efimov uses his new position and friends to spread vicious gossip about B. Even this does not deter B's desire to help his friend

B stumbled across him a couple of times but in such a pitiful plight that again his compassion prevailed over repugnance. He called out his name, but my stepfather felt so mortified that he pretended not to hear, pulled his battered hat down over his eyes and passed by.¹⁸

Efimov will not allow himself to be helped because of his own egotism, and more importantly because of his sado-masochistic need for suffering. This probably stems from his own insecurities as a violinist, he may be a failure as an artist, but at least he has the power over others to make their lives unhappy as well. This suffering reveals his psyche to the reader. I wish to quote here in full the novel's most indicative passage regarding Efimov's character, for it displays his feelings towards both Netochka's mother and his own life. It further reveals that Netochka's mother also possessed the spirit of the dreamer, and it is this that probably enabled her to tolerate life with Efimov for an entire eight years.

He did not seem capable of accepting the fact that he had long ago irreversibly lost his chance of becoming an artist. He struggled convulsively with this terrible conviction, as with a deadly nightmare, and when at last reality overwhelmed him, when his eyes were opened for just a minute, he almost went crazy with fear. It was not easy for him to forget everything that had for so long given a meaning to his life and until the final moment he believed that all hope was not yet lost. In times of doubt he gave himself up to drunkenness, which drove away his grief, drowning his sorrows with intoxicating

¹⁸Dostoevsky, Netochka Nezvanova 28-29.

fumes I do not think he ever realized how necessary his wife was to him at that time. She was a living pretext and, in truth, my stepfather never moved from his conviction that once he had buried his wife, *who had ruined him*, everything would be put right. My poor mother did not understand him. Like the true dreamer, she broke down at the first contact with reality. She became hot-tempered, irritable and shrewish, and was always quarrelling with her husband, who in his turn delighted in tormenting her, and she was continually badgering him to work. But my stepfather's blind obsession, his irrationality and his mental wanderings made him almost inhuman and unfeeling. He used to laugh and swear that he would not touch his violin again until his wife was dead, and he even told her this with a cruel frankness.¹⁹

It is evident, then, that Efimov denies responsibility for his failure and places the blame upon his wife, making her suffer for it. Not only does he speak to her with cruel words, but he uses Netochka as a pawn to exacerbate his wife's suffering. Efimov also displays the need to be in control over other people, to compensate for the lack of control he feels in his artistic life. He does this by surrounding himself with people as weak as he is.

He mostly mixed with theatre people: attendants, chorus singers and extras--in other words with those among whom he felt superior and not with people of any talent. He succeeded in inspiring them with a special kind of respect for himself; he immediately impressed upon them that he was a neglected man, that he had enormous talent but that his wife had destroyed it, and, finally, that their conductor knew absolutely nothing about music.²⁰

¹⁹Dostoevsky, Netochka Nezvanova 24-25.

²⁰Dostoevsky, Netochka Nezvanova 27.

In Efimov, we can see that Dostoevsky was exploring the depth of man's psyche and fundamental nature by depicting a character who had transgressed the accepted moral and social limits. Man's needs and insecurities are revealed in Efimov to such an obvious degree that they cannot be missed. We are, like B, torn between compassion and repugnance for Efimov, for he is a character to whom we can truly relate.

One of the main incidents in the novel which exposes Efimov's psyche is the "terrible catastrophe" (sic) at the end of part one, the violinist S's concert. In a scene where B and Prince X are discussing Efimov, Prince X remarks that it will be interesting to see Efimov's reaction upon hearing S. B replies that "he'll recover at once. His madness is stronger than the truth and he'll quickly invent some counter-argument."²¹ Unfortunately, B has sorely underestimated the extent of Efimov's insanity. After hearing S, Efimov returns home late at night and sits motionlessly with his head bowed. Then, devoid of any reaction, he notices and covers the body of his dead wife, pours himself a drink, and begins to play his violin. As an afterthought he remembers that a terrified Netochka is there ("Oh, so there's still you!"²²). In previous scenes where Efimov was confronted with the talents of other musicians, he constantly sought to point out their weaknesses or to inflate his own abilities. His reaction to S's performance, though, is completely different. His behaviour displays his total resignation, this end to his self-denial is a reality with which he is not prepared to deal. He has become self-obsessed and insane to the point of completely forgetting about Netochka, and he shows no concern for her future.

²¹ Dostoevsky, Netochka Nezvanova 52.

²² Dostoevsky, Netochka Nezvanova 63.

whatsoever (nor did he ever) As Dostoevsky demonstrates, obsession quickly crosses over into the realm of insanity, with death not far behind.

CHAPTER II

NETOCHKA: THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FEMALE PSYCHE

As I mentioned at the beginning of the last chapter, Dostoevsky was searching for new character types to enable him to embark upon a deep psychological examination of his heroes and heroines. The artist was just one of these new types. The other is the child heroine, of whom Netochka is the first and perhaps the most fully developed, for the simple reason that we are able to observe her behaviour over a very long period of time, approximately eight years. Netochka's literary predecessors are somewhat less obscure than Efimov's, I will point to Balzac, George Sand, Eugène Sue, and Aleksandr Druzhinin as having had a part to play in the shaping of Netochka's character, while still maintaining that Dostoevsky's re-working of this material left him with a highly original and creative heroine.

While Terras admits that Dostoevsky was indeed influenced by Balzac, he has difficulty pointing to any one specific work of Balzac's which is felt directly in Netochka. However, I feel that the influence of Balzac's Eugénie Grandet, a work which Dostoevsky had translated just prior to starting Netochka, is evident throughout the entire novel. Many parallels exist between Netochka and Eugénie. They both quietly accept suffering, and watch the all-consuming passion and self-destruction of their fathers. Both try hard to please their fathers and win their love, but remain feeling lonely and unloved. As Leonid Grossmann suggests, Eugénie provided Dostoevsky with the model for all of his future meek

women (as in Netochka Nezvanova, "A Meek Woman," and A Raw Youth)²³ Although both Netochka and Eugénie may be considered meek in that they passively and submissively accept suffering and fate, they are both strong, positive female characters in their abilities to eventually overcome suffering. After a whole lifetime of obedience, Eugénie dares to stand up to her father, demonstrating her strength and determination to follow her own will. Netochka breaks off just at the point when we begin to witness the heroine's ability to overcome her own suffering, and show strength enough to bear the suffering of others. Both writers purposely use young heroines in order to show this transition from weakness to strength. In Netochka, though, the reader is given a better understanding of what happens along the way. Not only is Dostoevsky more skilled than Balzac at painting a psychological portrait of his characters, but his use of a first-person narrator in Netochka facilitates the reader's ability to relate to the heroine. Balzac's use of a third-person narrator in Eugénie allows for more intrusion of the author's voice and a more detached portrayal of the heroine. Balzac's characters in general lack psychological depth and intricacy. In comparison, Dostoevsky makes the psychological portrayal and maturation of his characters his prime objective.

Dostoevsky was a great admirer of George Sand, and he was well acquainted with her works. While for most Dostoevsky scholars it suffices to only mention George Sand's name in passing as someone whom Dostoevsky admired greatly, Victor Terras has examined the literary influence of this French writer on Dostoevsky in more detail.

²³Leonid Grossman, Balzac and Dostoevsky. Trans. Lena Karpov (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Ardis, 1973) 28.

Terras himself, though, is hardly a great admirer of Sand's, he maintains that in Netochka, Dostoevsky absorbed all of the negative aspects of Sand's writing. Terras notes that in the second and third sections of the novel, "[Netochka] shows a very George-Sandian [sic] lack of discipline, superficialities, repetitions, careless formulations, and thoughtless 'phrases'."²⁴ While I do find this to be the case, I hardly think that Sand's influence on Dostoevsky was purely negative. In his quest for a female narrator, Dostoevsky clearly followed Sand's model in terms of the behaviour and speech of the heroine. Despite this, though, I am hard pressed to point to one specific work of Sand's that is evident above all others in Netochka. Terras suggests that Alexandra Mikhailovna was modeled directly on Sand's heroine of Indiana (1832), yet these two characters have very little in common. Much of Alexandra Mikhailovna's portrayal was left undeveloped due to the novel's incompleteness, Sand's heroine Indiana is a more thorough character sketch. Rather than having any specific literary predecessor, I see Alexandra Mikhailovna as Dostoevsky's attempt to create a female character with the characteristics of many of Sand's heroines in general. Alexandra Mikhailovna possesses some of the traits of Indiana, Lélia, and Valentine to name but a few. Although Dostoevsky left us with no definite indication, it seems quite possible that his idea to have Netochka become an opera singer (which is only suggested in the finished portion of the novel) came directly from Sand's opera-singer heroine of Consuelo (1842). Isabelle Naginski sums up the themes of Consuelo in her excellent critical work on George Sand.

²⁴Victor Terras, The Young Dostoevsky (1846-49): A Critical Study (The Hague, Mouton, 1969) 103.

George Sand's novel explores such areas of irrational behavior as madness, genius, artistic inspiration, the dream life, nightmares, visions, extreme fear, and passionate desire, in a word, the workings of the unconscious upon reflection and behavior ²⁵

In a separate article devoted exclusively to examining the influence of Sand on Dostoevsky, Naginski states that "The literary relationships of the Russian novelists with their chosen Western predecessors follow the model of the serenity of influence," meaning that "the affinity between writers is often established along the lines of moods and feelings, even the sensibilities of a given literary movement, rather than techniques or points of view" ²⁶ The inability to pinpoint in concrete terms exactly which elements of Sand's novels had an influence on the creation of Netochka leads me to believe in Naginski's theory of "serenity of influence" I conclude, therefore, that Dostoevsky learned from Sand an overall mood and tone, and perhaps a few of the negative points of which Terras accuses him, while re-working the more specific characteristics of other writers

Many critics have also noted in passing the influence on Netochka of Eugène Sue's voluminous social roman-feuilleton, Mathilde, or the Memoirs of a Young Woman (1841). Leonid Grossman has more to say than most critics on Dostoevsky's re-working of specific themes and ideas, some of these found in Sue's work include poverty in the big cities, the idea of a traditional romantic mixture of fantasy with reality,

²⁵Isabelle Naginski, George Sand: Writing for Her Life (New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1991) 201.

²⁶Isabelle Naginski, "The Serenity of Influence: The Literary Relationship of George Sand and Dostoevsky," George Sand: Collected Essays, ed. Janis Glasgow (Troy, N.Y.: Whitston, 1985) 116.

and the justification of any crime as the inevitable product of social inequality.²⁷ Sue chose to completely avoid the exploration of the erotic which so fascinated Dostoevsky, and instead concerned himself with portraying the social problems of the day. The romance between two young girls, as well as the presence of a governess, a prince, and the dog motif has suggested plagiarism on Dostoevsky's part to some, yet apart from these various characters, Dostoevsky thankfully left the borrowing at that. Although Sue's work was popular in its time, his cliché-ridden style makes it a chore to read.

With most Western scholars focusing their attention on the question of Balzac's and Sand's literary influence on Dostoevsky, the name of the Russian writer Aleksandr Druzhinin gets sorely neglected. Yet Dostoevsky was familiar with his work and, no doubt, influenced by it while working on Netochka. Druzhinin's enormously popular novel Polinka Saks does indeed make its presence felt in Netochka. Perhaps most importantly, it was one of the first major Russian novels to discuss the "women's question." Druzhinin was noticeably influenced by George Sand, although he departs from the French writer in his more conservative stance. Perhaps what interested Dostoevsky most was the originality of Druzhinin's characters, and their complex psychology. Druzhinin explores not only a woman's freedom, but a person's ability to distinguish true from superficial love and the self-awareness that this ability results in. While Dostoevsky may have looked to Druzhinin for this example of a psychological sketch, he looked elsewhere for the young heroine. Indeed, nothing of Polinka is evident in Netochka,

²⁷Grossman, Balzac and Dostoevsky 79.

Druzhinin's heroine is a spoiled, uncultured, and naive nineteen-year-old caught in the midst of a love triangle

In Netochka, Dostoevsky had no need to re-work the tradition of Romantic heroines; he had instead a whole gallery of female characters from the Realistic school upon which to draw. Netochka, then, is perhaps the most convincing character in the novel, as the portrayal of her psyche is more fully formulated than the psyches of those characters which must first shed their Romantic skins. I wish now to examine the various ways in which Dostoevsky allows his reader to glimpse into his characters' psyches.

Dostoevsky avoids falling into the trap of Romantic tradition in his (lack of) description of the external appearances of his characters or their surroundings. We know Netochka's innermost thoughts, but we are given no indication of what she looks like; the depiction of her psyche completely supersedes any portrayal of her outward appearance. This is in contrast to the Prince's daughter Katya, who has "a face of idyllic charm and stunning, dazzling beauty,"²⁷ but whose psyche we never really see. In this respect Katya is a more typical Romantic heroine, a beautiful, spoiled, carefree princess living in a luxurious mansion. Dostoevsky's interest lies, then, not in the external world so much as in the internal, within an individual person's mind and soul. To him, the beauty of nature or the external world in general is secondary to the intricacies of the human mind, yet it is impossible to describe these two worlds in the same terms. Instead it is necessary to relate the nature of the psyche to his reader in a more indirect way:

²⁷Dostoevsky, Netochka Nezvanova 81.

through, for instance, a character's response to a crisis situation. It is interesting to compare the roles of the external world in each of the three main sections of the novel. In the first section, the poverty of Netochka's living conditions is constantly referred to, and the indifference to the world outside of their one-room apartment only exacerbates their suffering. The outside world is one of successful musicians who threaten Efimov's sanity, drinking houses demanding the money they do not have, and the luxurious house of the Prince, which provides fuel for Netochka's dream of a better life. In the second and third sections, the world outside the home plays almost no role whatsoever, all of the action is internal (both in the home and in the psyche), and we completely lose sight of the novel's urban setting. This parallels Netochka's development: both the novel's action and Netochka's suffering have become more internalized and less dependent on external societal factors. This allows the reader to gain a progressively deeper understanding of her psyche.

One of the main elements which allows us to comprehend Netochka's psyche is Dostoevsky's narrative technique. The novel is in the form of a confession, with an older Netochka as narrator. This type of narrator provides the reader with a more subjective view of events, while also providing a glimpse at the development of her psyche over a period of approximately eight years. There is an abrupt stylistic change in the last third of the novel, the part that Dostoevsky wrote after his ten years of exile in Siberia. This reflects both the changes in the way Dostoevsky viewed the world, as well as Netochka's own process of maturing. She is no longer the naive, easily manipulated little girl, but a young woman with definite opinions of her own. Dostoevsky's plan to

have Netochka become an opera singer would fit in with the overall trend of the novel to portray Netochka as a positive female character, able to overcome a life full of such suffering. It becomes evident that Netochka looks at her life (especially the childhood years spent with her parents) more objectively, regretting the fact that she so easily allowed Efimov to estrange her from her mother. Moreover, she is able to overcome her hatred for her mother, and to learn how to identify with the suffering of others. In the first part we see her as sometimes torn apart by her mother's suffering, but at others (as when Efimov promises her something) totally indifferent to it; by the third part, however, she is able to show genuine sympathy for and understanding of Alexandra Mikhailovna's suffering. This reflects the maturation of Netochka's psyche. As a mature narrator, she is also finally able to identify with her mother's suffering, something that she is still too naive to reflect upon in the second and third sections of the novel.

Another way in which Dostoevsky exposes his characters' psyches is by subjecting them to extreme psychological stress. In Netochka, Dostoevsky chooses a different means to do this in each of the three distinct sections of the book. In the first section, Netochka is subjected to manipulation by her step-father, unjustified hatred for her mother, the display of antagonism between her parents, and terrible living conditions. In response to these factors, Netochka becomes resigned to her life at a very young age. While she does not show any attempt to defy or overcome what she sees as fate (a word often repeated throughout the novel), the reader is presented with signs of the psychological stress under which she is placed. Netochka describes herself as a very withdrawn child, never having contact with other

children, and constantly stealing from her mother with the desire to win over Efimov's love. She later realizes that she was too young and powerless to prevent herself from being forced to choose between her parents, and as a child, should never have had to face making such a dreadful choice. Subconsciously, she realized this at the time too, as it manifested itself in her dreams. "I experienced sensations similar to those of my dreams: running away from someone, my legs failing me, and falling unconscious as the pursuer caught up with me"²⁹. She is trying to run away from the problems she cannot bear and, when unable to, passively submits and accepts them as part of her fate. In the second section of the book, although her living conditions have been improved (and in this respect her dream of a better life was partially fulfilled), she experiences suffering of a different sort. Despite the fact that she befriends Katya, she is still very much alone and unloved. Her relationship with Katya causes her much pain, too, she must constantly control her desire to show affection towards Katya, and she is both jealous of and awed by all of those qualities in Katya which she herself is lacking. Katya may, in many respects, be looked upon as Netochka's *Doppelgänger*. She is the complete opposite of Netochka--outgoing, carefree, domineering, spoiled--and reflects the type of person that Netochka longs to be. This desire alone causes Netochka a feeling of insecurity and suffering. As in the first part, she remains resigned to her way of life (one of the prime examples of this is the total resignation with which she takes Katya's punishment of solitary confinement upon herself). Even when she is forgotten until four o'clock in the morning she

²⁹Dostoevsky, Netochka Nezvanova 67.

does not complain, heroically enduring her punishment as proof of her love for Katya), but here also, upon seeing the example of Katya, Netochka maintains a new hope for change and her own future happiness. In the third, unfinished section Netochka's suffering results from both her dislike for Pyotr Alexandrovitch and her concern for and commiseration with Alexandra Mikhailovna's suffering. Finally in this section we see more distinctly the maturing of the psyche. Netochka begins to show signs of defiance, particularly in her relationship to Pyotr Alexandrovitch and her secret borrowing and reading of "forbidden books." These acts of defiance allow her to feel as if she has more control over her own life, but at the same time she remains resigned to her fate. This resignation is apparent in her fear of the unknown. "The secret in that letter had taken me into a world where there was so much that was cold, unknown, mysterious and hostile, even from a distance--and it was now closing in on me. What would happen to me, I wondered. . . the corner in which I felt so safe and secure would be empty!"²⁹ This feeling of being closed in on reminds the reader of Netochka's childhood dreams of losing consciousness when being pursued. Perhaps now, though, she has more strength to endure her fate.

Dostoevsky explores the theme of erotic love in several aspects in this novel, revealing a side to his characters and their psyches that was virtually unexplored to such depths by his contemporaries. Nearly all of the characters in the novel can be neatly paired off as a "couple," their relationship being defined in either erotic or non-erotic terms. As

²⁹Dostoevsky, Netochka Nezvanova 160.

Netochka figures most prominently of all in this examination of erotic love, I wish to discuss this theme in relationship to her. Netochka first experiences "true love" towards Efimov, her stepfather. Their father-daughter ties are de-emphasized to the point of being completely overshadowed by the eroticism of their relationship. She believes that if she does everything he asks of her, she will receive his love in return. She takes great pleasure in being caressed while sitting on his lap, after just having stolen money from her mother to pay for his drinking habit. It is the only satisfying love that she feels in her life with her parents (as she has alienated herself from her mother), and therefore clings to it desperately. Her experiences with homosexual erotic love in the second section suggest a possible traumatization after being deserted so cruelly by Efimov, the desire to experience something different, and her desperate need for comfort and security. The description of Netochka's "romance" with Katya is much more daringly descriptive and vivid than that with Efimov. Netochka worships Katya much the same way she did Efimov, but this time she is able to express that love more directly and also to have it reciprocated. Descriptions of their erotic encounters abound.

I remember sometimes waking up in the night, getting out of bed and tiptoeing over to the Princess, and in the dim light of our night lamp standing there for hours, gazing as she slept. Sometimes I sat down on the bed beside her and, bending down, I felt her warm breath on my face. Silently, and trembling with fear, I would kiss her hands, her hair, her shoulders, and her little feet, if they were peeping out of the blankets.³⁰

³⁰Dostoevsky, Netochka Nezvanova 98.

Confessions such as "Crying and laughing, we kissed each other until our lips were swollen,"³² leave little room for doubt as to the nature of the relationship. While this type of love is immature love or simply blind infatuation, Dostoevsky never seems to doubt that an eight-year-old child is actually capable of erotic love. On the contrary, the experiences of these two children are infinitely more erotic than the love that exists between any of the other characters in the book. The three married couples--Netochka's mother and Efimov, the Prince and Princess, and Alexandra Mikhailovna and Pyotr Alexandrovitch--are all caught in non-erotic, loveless relationships. Although Netochka's mother did love Efimov at one time, their relationship had become one of constant arguing. Netochka comments: "I realized that there was a vague but permanent antagonism between them, which produced an atmosphere of grief and disorder that permeated our life."³³ Netochka, then, did not grow up witnessing the love of her parents. Once in her new home, there is even less interaction between Netochka and her new parents. The Prince and Princess reside in different parts of the house from each other, and "sometimes [the Princess] . . . did not see him for weeks on end."³⁴ There is not even a single episode in the novel where the Prince and the Princess appear together. Netochka's third home, with Alexandra Mikhailovna and Pyotr Alexandrovitch, rejoins the parent-figure couple in closer proximity to Netochka, bringing back as well the antagonism experienced between Efimov and Netochka's mother. Their relationship is one of anguish and mistrust. While this third section of

³²Dostoevsky, Netochka Nezvanova 112.

³³Dostoevsky, Netochka Nezvanova 38.

³⁴Dostoevsky, Netochka Nezvanova 71.

the book is very vague in its details and possible conclusion, certain things are hinted at. Pyotr Alexandrovitch's behaviour towards Netochka suggests a possible less-than-innocent interest on his part. Indeed, Netochka seems to sense this and takes a rather strong disliking to him from the beginning. The other incident that is touched upon but not clarified or fully explained is the love letter discovered by Netochka, addressed to Alexandra Mikhailovna. It is suggested that Alexandra Mikhailovna's feelings towards the writer of that particular letter are a possible cause of the grief she suffers in her marriage.

After this examination of the different "couples" in the novel, it becomes possible to separate them into two distinct, revealing categories. Efimov and Netochka's mother, the Prince and Princess, and Alexandra Mikhailovna and Pyotr Alexandrovitch (all the married couples) are involved in non-erotic, non-loving, even antagonistic and alienating relationships. On the other hand, Netochka's relationships with Efimov, Katya, even Pyotr Alexandrovitch, and Alexandra Mikhailovna's relationship with a mysterious lover are all highly erotic encounters, yet forbidden by social constraints (incestuous/homosexual/adulterous). I doubt that Dostoevsky had it in mind to portray marriage as a purely negative institution. Rather, I believe he was more concerned with tracing Netochka's own relationships and loves in relationship to, and in response to, those that she witnessed around her. In such a sterile, unloving atmosphere, she seeks comfort, reciprocal love, and understanding--the very things that she does not receive from her elders (with the possible exception of Alexandra Mikhailovna). The compassion she is capable of showing towards Katya assures the reader that she has not been so stunted by her upbringing as to be

incapable of either giving or receiving love. Her very attitude towards Katya, one of both trepidation and admiration, reveals the true force of her desire to love another, and therefore her capacity to love without the antagonism that the adult relationships reveal. With Katya absent from the third section of the book, it seems likely that Dostoevsky would again explore a re-direction and maturation of Netochka's love towards another (though who the object of this love might be is not even suggested). While this remains pure speculation, it would complete Dostoevsky's examination of the sensual/erotic side of Netochka's development, and therefore seems quite probable.

So far I have dealt with Dostoevsky's depiction of Netochka the woman almost entirely. Yet the fact that she is, for most of the novel, a child cannot be forgotten. The novel spans her life from the ages of nine to sixteen; she claims she does not remember anything before the age of nine. The reader is given no indication of her age while she is retelling her life story, but the time must be at least several years into the future, as she is able to look very objectively upon the events in her life. One of the short-comings of Netochka's character is that, even in the first part of the novel, she is not a true child. She has no friends with which to play, but is instead thrown into the world of adult decisions and problems and left to fend for herself. Like a child, she does not comprehend everything that goes on around her and is often confused and scared by that which she does not understand. Yet even with Katya nearby, Netochka much prefers to read books than to play outside. Her only true childlike characteristics are her immense imagination and her dreams of a fairytale existence (which, unlike Efimov, she eventually outgrows). As a mature narrator, Netochka recognizes the strangeness

of her upbringing. She refers to her childhood as "a period of quite abnormal development."³⁵ Perhaps Dostoevsky portrays his child as such on purpose, seeking to show his character's development in an abnormal world. It is also possible, though, that Dostoevsky did not yet feel comfortable in his portrayal of the child, indeed, none of the works which I have shown to have had an influence on his writing of Netochka includes a child as young as Dostoevsky's heroine, nor does he deal with the theme of the child in any of his previous works. He did not abandon this character, however, for he recognized in it the possibility for tracing the maturation of the psyche. Dostoevsky's development of this character type in his future work will be discussed in the following chapter.

³⁵Dostoevsky, Netochka Nezvanova 36.

CHAPTER III

NETOCHKA AS THE FOUNDATION FOR LATER WORKS

Although traits of "psychological realism" are apparent in even the earliest of Dostoevsky's writings, his first two published works, "Poor Folk" and The Double, did not depart dramatically from the pre-existing literary tradition. "Poor Folk" is an epistolary novel following the example of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's Julie, ou la Nouvelle Héloïse and George Sand's Jacques. The work's indebtedness to Pushkin and Gogol for the portrayal of character types and overall tone is made apparent by direct reference to Pushkin's "The Stationmaster" and Gogol's "The Overcoat". Because "Poor Folk" was his first published work, Dostoevsky had not yet fully realized the psychological potentialities of his characters. Varenka and Devushkin, therefore, appear as some of the least convincing of Dostoevsky's characters. The Double also relies heavily upon the literary tradition of Gogol and Hoffmann in its use of the grotesque and the *Doppelgänger* theme. Dostoevsky's inability to successfully reconcile this pre-existing literary tradition with his own vision of "psychological realism" is in part responsible for the novel's failure. But with Netochka this reconciliation is more effectively and subtly achieved, and the uniquely Dostoevskian psychological element is examined in more depth. The work, therefore, presents a greater rupture with literary tradition than either of Dostoevsky's earlier works. What makes Netochka remarkably different from the writer's later works is that it represents a nucleus for the development of themes, narrative devices, and character types which

were to preoccupy him in nearly all of his future literary endeavours. The character types used in Netochka, particularly that of the hero, underwent a gradual metamorphosis. Dostoevsky quickly abandoned the artist-hero for something with which he was more comfortable. The artist-hero served as the precursor for the dreamer (mechtatel'), a character type which Dostoevsky later developed into the underground man. Traits of both the dreamer and the underground man are already evident in Efimov. In this chapter I wish to show the evolution from artist to dreamer to underground man by discussing specific similarities between Efimov and several of Dostoevsky's future heroes. The child-heroine of Netochka underwent a gradual change as well. As I will be examining later in this chapter, Dostoevsky continued the theme of the child in such works as Brothers Karamazov, Crime and Punishment, "The Eternal Husband," and others, and used the model of Netochka, the woman, for many of his future heroines.

Character types aside, Dostoevsky developed several narrative devices in Netochka in order to expose his characters' psyches, which became extremely important, almost integral parts of his later works. A comparison of these devices as used in Netochka to examples from specific later works reveals a corresponding increase in the psychological depth of his characters. The perfection of these devices coincides with the increasingly great multi-dimensionality of his characters, that is, as he perfected the means of portraying the human psyche, he developed character types flexible enough and interesting enough to allow for psychological exploration. Before embarking upon an examination of the metamorphosis of his artist-hero and child-heroine, I wish to examine several of these narrative devices. More

specifically, Dostoevsky uses time, dreams, the urban environment, and the crisis situation as vehicles by which he is able to achieve his "psychological realism "

A writer is able to reveal much about his characters' motivations by the way he uses time. Time may be distorted--either shortened, lengthened, or presented non-chronologically--as a reflection of the way the hero views particular events and time in general. This distortion of time is evident in Netochka, where eight years are packed into less than two hundred pages (a rarity for Dostoevsky). While having the action of the novel spread over such a long time period enables us to see the development of Netochka's psyche, the telescoping of time reflects the fact that she is still the same martyr-like heroine in her acceptance of suffering, and that little has changed in this respect. As well, Dostoevsky's unusual use of a narrator retelling an entire series of events that happened at some point in the past (a retrospective story, in fact) allows for more self-reflection on the narrator's part than if Netochka were recounting events while they happened. This manipulation of time finds its full realization in Crime and Punishment. Most of that novel's action takes place over a surprisingly short period (approximately nine days). Time, however, seems to move unbelievably slowly. In fact, time seems to have stopped completely during the ten-page description of the actual crime. This prolongation of time allows for the meticulous representation of Raskolnikov's every thought and action. The intensity of emotions that arises from Dostoevsky's unique portrayal of a crime makes the resulting suspense one of an almost purely psychological nature. The constant oscillation of Raskolnikov's feelings is given such a protracted description that it becomes painful to

read Before he actually commits the crime Raskolnikov is in a state of uncertainty and confusion " his mind was as it were clouded at moments and he was almost unconscious of his body "36 Immediately following the murder of Alyona Ivanova he has regained his composure "He was in full possession of his faculties, free from confusion or giddiness, but his hands were still trembling "37 This composure, however, is short-lived, and he becomes increasingly desperate to leave the scene of the crime. "Fear gained more and more mastery over him a sort of blankness, even dreaminess had begun by degrees to take possession of him "38 It is by prolonging the duration of the crime that Dostoevsky helps his reader to understand the extreme psychological agitation that Raskolnikov is suffering from This same manipulation of time is then used throughout the remainder of the novel, portraying the hero's increasingly deeper state of psychological torture Time does indeed move slowly for Raskolnikov, who spends a great deal of it in feverish contemplation, constantly verging on the brink of confession. This is contrasted sharply to the other characters in the book, who pack a great deal of activity into this short time period, for the police involved in the investigation, Raskolnikov's mother and sister, as well as most of the other characters, time moves at a more normal pace. They are unaffected by Raskolnikov's suffering, and continue their lives as always While time can be used in a variety of ways to achieve a variety of results, then, one of its prime functions is to give the reader a look at the hero's psyche and his relationship to the external world

³⁶Dostoevsky, Crime and Punishment 76.

³⁷Dostoevsky, Crime and Punishment 78.

³⁸Dostoevsky, Crime and Punishment 81.

Dreams are used by Dostoevsky as devices to further investigate the psychological depths of his characters. The dream is a place where one's involuntary thoughts and desires come forth, unhindered by any restraints, socially imposed or otherwise, it is a means of communicating with the subconscious world of irrational human nature. Dostoevsky uses dreams to both illuminate the hero's psyche to the reader, as well as to show the hero's potentially deeper self-understanding. Leonard Kent pinpoints exactly the importance of dreams in Dostoevsky's works:

The dreams, for example, regardless of their type and origin, not only dramatize the abstract, not only inform us, not only, because they cannot lie, show us the very soul of the dreamer, but they anticipate action, pace action, terminate action, and, when they flow over into reality, they may even accelerate action.³⁹

Dostoevsky employs dreams sparingly, reserving them for crucial moments in the plots of his works. Only one dream occurs in Netochka (her dream of being pursued, discussed in Chapter Two), and this testifies to Dostoevsky's still-experimental use of dreams. In his later works he became much more skilled at their use. To use the example of Crime and Punishment again, Raskolnikov's dream about Mikolka and the mare serves both as a look into his psyche (projecting and foreshadowing the mindless brutality of the act he is about to commit), and also as an impetus to follow through with his plan to murder the pawnbroker. The dream reveals the duality of Raskolnikov's nature, for he is at once the cruel Mikolka who beat the mare to death, and the sympathetic little boy who cries over and kisses the dead animal. When

³⁹Leonard J. Kent, The Subconscious in Gogol' and Dostoevskij, and Its Antecedents (The Hague: Mouton, 1969) 158-159.

he awakes, Raskolnikov is disturbed by the dream, but prays to God and frees himself from its memories. His resolve is then strengthened to follow through with his plan. The dream not only foreshadows the murder, but also foreshadows the guilt and remorse which Raskolnikov thinks himself above. Later on in the novel Raskolnikov dreams again of killing the pawnbroker, who this time simply laughs at him. This second dream serves to reinforce the fact that Raskolnikov is tortured by his guilty conscience.

Another of the characters in Crime and Punishment, Svidrigailov, experiences three successive dreams that play a decisive role in his fate. The first dream he experiences is that mice are running all over his body and into his bed. In the second dream he sees, in a house bedecked with flowers, the coffin of a fourteen-year-old girl who had drowned herself, the implication here is that her suicide was a result of her being raped by Svidrigailov. His third dream involves a little girl, huddled up in the corner of the corridor and soaking wet from the rain. He picks the child up, gives her dry clothes, and wraps her in a blanket. But as she sleeps, he sees in her innocent face "the shameless face of a French harlot."⁴⁰ He raises his hand to strike her, but at that moment awakes. His first two dreams reveal not guilt, but an awareness of his own evil. The third dream, however, reinforces the fact that he is still capable of such base behaviour. Whereas Raskolnikov's second dream is partially responsible for his confession and subsequent spiritual rebirth, Svidrigailov's dreams represent three intensifying stages for his decision to commit suicide.

⁴⁰Dostoevsky, Crime and Punishment 494.

The crisis dream and the hallucination also play a crucial role in the moral transformation of Dostoevsky's characters. These types of dreams are characteristic of his later works, and are completely absent from Netochka. Again, they are used to illuminate the character's psyche, deepen his self-awareness, and potentially push him into some type of action. At the end of Crime and Punishment, Raskolnikov dreams that the world has been reduced to utter chaos and total destruction by the existence of an entire society filled with "supermen." This dream makes him at last realize that his theory was ludicrous, and this in turn becomes the main impetus for his repentance and eventual spiritual rebirth. A similar effect is achieved by the use of the hallucination. In Brothers Karamazov, Ivan returns home one day to find himself confronted by a devil. This devil is actually his own conscience, forcing Ivan to face his secrets and fears, and allowing him to carry on an inner dialogue. (The devil is, in this respect, similar to the Grand Inquisitor, who is also a projection of Ivan's self.) Ivan immediately recognizes the devil as a part of himself.

You are a lie, you are my illness, you are a phantom. It's only that I don't know how to destroy you and I see I must suffer for a time. You are my hallucination. You are the incarnation of myself, but only of one side of me — of my thoughts and feelings, but only the nastiest and stupidest of them."⁴¹

Ivan's conversation with the devil makes him recognize much that is contemptible in his own nature. He is ill-prepared for this confrontation with his own psyche, and it drives him to a nervous breakdown.

⁴¹Fyodor Dostoevsky, Brothers Karamazov. Trans. Constance Garnett. (New York: Random House, 1950) 775.

Dostoevsky uses an urban setting in many of his works in order to expose a part of his characters' psyches. In Netochka the external, urban world plays a minor role, and is used primarily as a contrast to the internal action, both domestic and psychological. As I have already discussed in Chapter Two, the urban setting is a hostile one, one that threatens Efimov's dreams of fame and exacerbates the family's suffering. The urban setting came to play an increasingly important role in Dostoevsky's works. With few exceptions ("White Nights," for instance), this urban landscape is described as a commonplace, ugly world. A passage from "The Landlady" reveals both the monotony of the metropolis and the hero's unexpected view of it:

The crowds and the life of the street, the noise, the movement, the novelty of his situation--all the pettiness and commonplace rubbish, which the practical and busy citizen of St. Petersburg tired of long ago in his fruitless but agitated quest for the possibility of settling down in the peace and quiet of a warm nest somewhere, a nest gained by sweat, toil, and various other means--all this tastlessly coarse "prose" and tedium aroused in Ordynov a sort of quietly joyful, luminous sensation.⁴²

The glimmer of hope that would provide a refuge from this chaos is destroyed by Dostoevsky's description of the preconditions for this "warm nest", an expression such as "sweat, toil and various other means" would never be found in the works of Pushkin or other Romantic writers in describing one's home. Moreover, this passage reveals Ordynov's relationship to the external world, he is not repulsed by these terrible living conditions, but quite to the contrary, finds comfort in them.

⁴²Fyodor Dostoevsky, "The Landlady." Poor Folk and Other Stories. Trans. David McDuff (Harmondsworth, Eng.: Penguin, 1988) 133-134.

Further on in "The Landlady" the yard of an apartment building is described as "a cesspit inside the building itself"⁴¹ The theme of the city is found in the majority of Dostoevsky's works (especially in the early works "Poor Folk" and The Double, it plays its most important role in Crime and Punishment) and is one of the reasons for the labelling of Dostoevsky as a writer of realism; the urban setting allows him to describe man as a single unit of an entire society, and to expose man's psyche by revealing his relationship to the external world Dostoevsky does not describe the city in concrete, black-and-white terms, but rather as the individual, inner experience of each character The reality of the city is seen through the prism of the hero's inner world, and its description is actually part of the hero's stream of consciousness. The urban setting, therefore, serves the role of portraying the hero's psyche, and is not just a naturalistic description of the environment

Perhaps the most effective way that Dostoevsky reveals his characters' psyches is by subjecting them to extreme suffering or moments of crisis Netochka is permeated by this feeling of suffering. In Chapter One I examined Efimov's sado-masochistic need to inflict suffering on both himself and those close to him Netochka's three distinct periods of suffering, discussed in Chapter Two, correspond to the three parts of the story and provide a gauge to measure her maturation as a character Netochka's mother suffers as well, due to her difficult, unhappy family life and her inability to reconcile her dreams with the reality of this life. Alexandra Mikhailovna suffers from ill health and her husband's tyranny Netochka, then, examines many aspects of

⁴¹Dostoevsky, "The Landlady" 143.

suffering and its various causes. The characters' responses to their suffering reveal part of their psyches. Suffering plays this role in all of Dostoevsky's works. In Crime and Punishment Raskolnikov's suffering, which occurs as a consequence of his committing two murders, provides the reader with the perfect opportunity to see the inner workings of his mind. He becomes paranoid about possible clues he may have unwittingly left for the police to find. His psychological suffering finally becomes unbearable, until it is manifested physically. Raskolnikov spends several days in a feverish delirium.⁴⁴ His suffering also results in a change of behaviour, which those around him notice immediately. As he begins to feel increasingly guilty for what he has done, he becomes more withdrawn and exhibits behaviour that was previously uncharacteristic of him--loss of appetite, sickness, preoccupation with his own thoughts, and so on. His guilt and suffering become unbearable for him, until he finally confesses his crime. (His motivation for committing the crime in the first place was to prove his "superman" theory that he was above moral law, and therefore would not feel guilt for what he saw as a justified act.) Raskolnikov's response to his suffering, that is, his eventual confession and spiritual salvation, reveals the inherent goodness of his nature, a feature which is contrasted to Svidrigailov's baseness. Suffering serves a similar purpose in Brothers Karamazov. Ironically, Dmitri's suffering is a result of his plan to commit suicide. As he is already resigned to death, he is no longer concerned with the consequences of his actions, he spontaneously decides to

⁴⁴Undue psychological strain results in physical breakdown in several of Dostoevsky's characters, for example Grushenka and Ivan in Brothers Karamazov.

spend the rest of Katerina Ivanovna's money and to leave Grigory to die from his wounds. This behaviour is the direct cause of his future suffering, as it implicates him in the murder of his father. His resignation to death excludes his concern for the immediate consequences of his actions, and causes him to act irrationally.

With this look at some of the ways in which the psyche manifests itself in Dostoevsky's works, I now wish to examine the metamorphosis of Netochka and Efimov into new character types which further aided Dostoevsky in the realization of his "psychological realism." As has already been noted, Dostoevsky was most likely uncomfortable in the portrayal of an artist, and had probably exhausted his knowledge of the artist's world in Netochka. In every other respect, though, Efimov has the makings of a truly successful character. The brilliant psychological portrait which Dostoevsky is able to paint allows the reader to forget the discomfort and vagueness with which the author describes his musical scenes, notably rare as they are. Yet while Efimov's psychological portrayal is beautifully executed, he is still a failure as a character, the sketchy and unconvincing depiction of his life as an artist contrasts too sharply with his well-developed psychological portrayal. It was necessary, therefore, for Dostoevsky to create a new hero in his subsequent works, bearing many of Efimov's characteristics, but one who would be more flexible and original.

The traits of the dreamer and the underground man are already evident in Efimov. These two new character types would become the main vehicles by which Dostoevsky embarked upon a psychological study of his (predominantly male) heroes. The dreamer, who is generally a Romantic character due to his proximity to nature and his

reliance on escape to a fantasy world, is given a more realistic quality by Dostoevsky through the portrayal of the psyche and the exploration of man's dual nature. The duality of the inner world is shown indirectly by an opposition between the dreamer's fantasy world and the reality of the external world. The dreamer's fantasy world is sometimes made more explicit by showing the dreamer's proximity to art and music. In Netochka, Efimov becomes completely dependent upon his musical surroundings. In order to survive, it is only amongst other musicians that he is able to fuel his ideas of megalomania. In "White Nights" the dreamer shows less dependence on the musical atmosphere, but it is nonetheless present. In this story, music provides a dream-like atmosphere, and serves to set the overall mood. There are many other characters throughout all of Dostoevsky's works who possess the characteristics of the dreamer. As I mentioned in the first chapter, Netochka's mother ought to be added to the list of dreamers. Despite the terrible poverty in which they lived, she still maintained the hope that she could change the world in an instant. Her death was most likely a suicide, one which she justified by her belief in the fame Efimov would achieve when she was gone. Traits of her character are evident in Katerina Marmeladovna of Crime and Punishment. Katerina also lives in poverty, tolerates her drunken husband, and struggles to provide for her small children. As well, she deludes herself into believing and expecting circumstances to suddenly improve because she has wished them to. She is unable to reconcile her expectations with reality, and instead imagines her own reality. Three of Dostoevsky's later stories deal with the theme of the dreamer and his conflict with reality. "The

Landlady," (which Dostoevsky was working on at the same time as Netochka) "A Weak Heart," and "White Nights "

The hero of "White Nights," who remains nameless, manages to completely erase reality with the power of his imagination, leaving him to live in his own world of fantasy. His acquaintance with Nastenka, however, forces him to confront reality. This results in a conflict between his fantasy world and the real world, which ultimately causes him pain and remorse. In the end he expresses his desire to experience reality, but at the same time is drawn in by the comfort and familiarity of his own fantasy world. Yet the dreamer never resolves this conflict, and remains torn between the two worlds.

The hero of "A Weak Heart," Vasya, is a dreamer of a different sort. He is a clerk with a good position, and is engaged to be married to the woman he loves. Yet he literally goes out of his mind with happiness, as he feels that he is unworthy of such happiness in an imperfect world, the burden is too much for him to bear. "Vasya felt guilty *in his own judgement* and . . . had been shaken and overwhelmed by his good fortune and considered himself unworthy of it . . ." ⁴⁵ Vasya is unconvincing as a dreamer, though, for his conflict between dream and reality upon which the entire story is based is too far-fetched to be believable. Many romantic elements are present here which echo the Hoffmannesque tradition. This makes the story one of Dostoevsky's less original works and not as psychologically complex as those that were to come.

⁴⁵Dostoevsky, "A Weak Heart" 59.

In "The Landlady," Dostoevsky's dreamer, Ordynov, has undergone another transformation, and already possesses many of the characteristics of the underground man. The difference between them is that "in [contrast] to 'the underground man,' the 'dreamer' still has not understood himself, has not created his philosophy of the underground, is therefore helpless in the face of reality."⁴⁴ He exhibits the complete absence of self-consciousness which is so important to the underground man. Ordynov, however, is the least exciting, least interesting of Dostoevsky's dreamers. Like Vasya, he is not a very psychologically complex character. He, too, is burdened by the romantic elements of Hoffmann and Gogol.

Efimov undeniably fits the description of the underground man: he possesses definite sado-masochistic tendencies, hostility towards those who try to help him, and obsessive behaviour leading to total insanity. The underground man is reminiscent of the dreamer, but is taken one step further. Unlike the dreamer, the underground man is marked by a profound self-consciousness and self-analysis (his main preoccupation). He is not so painfully out of touch with reality as the dreamer, and does not rely entirely upon the comfort of his own dream world. Yet he is, even more than the dreamer, an ineffectual part of society, hostile to the world he believes is hostile towards him. He seeks at the same time to be both humiliated by others and in control of them; he cannot survive without the fulfillment of these sado-masochistic desires. The underground man has no friends and, indeed, no normal relationships whatsoever. Ultimately, he seeks total freedom, including

⁴⁴Fanger, Dostoevsky and Romantic Realism 166.

freedom from the laws of nature As Wasiolek states in his detailed analysis of the underground man, "he must be in [eternal] revolt not only against society, but against himself"⁴⁷ The aggressive-submissive behaviour patterns that are so characteristic of the underground man are perhaps most evident in the narrator of "Notes from the Underground" He seeks constant humiliation (envying a man who is thrown through the window of a bar), yet jumps at the opportunity to humiliate those that he knows are socially below him, especially downtrodden, victimized women, such as the prostitute Liza. Characteristics of the underground man are evident in even the earliest of Dostoevsky's characters Devushkin from "Poor Folk" is a pathetic simpleton whose infatuation with Varenka makes him oblivious to the reality of life around him Despite the amount of time he spends in self-reflection, he gets nowhere in life. Other examples of the underground man are Marmeladov of Crime and Punishment and Trusotsky of "The Eternal Husband." Marmeladov, like Efimov, has turned to drink to drown his despair As well, he ruins his family, and gradually begins to understand the uselessness of his life, sending him into even deeper despair. Trusotsky also understands the uselessness of being stuck in his position (that of the "eternal husband") He seeks revenge, degrades himself even further, and at the end of the story is yet again in the same position as before He too drinks out of despair and is indirectly responsible for his daughter's death.

As Efimov served as a foundation upon which Dostoevsky created many of his future dreamers and underground men, Netochka

⁴⁷Edward Wasiolek, Dostoevsky: The Major Fiction (Cambridge, MA: MIT P, 1964) 42.

served as the genesis of future women and children. Although Netochka remained undeveloped as a character, the seeds of these women and children are firmly rooted in her character. I wish first to examine Netochka the child, and then Netochka the woman, as these two aspects of her character generated numerous characters in Dostoevsky's later works.

Like many of Dostoevsky's children, Netochka is too mature for her age, too sophisticated for us to believe that she is so young, she has already outgrown the role she was made for.⁴⁸ She is caught up in the adult world, and expected to act like an adult. Despite this short-coming as a character, though, she is still able to fulfill the expectations that Dostoevsky had for her. In his child-hero, and in many of his future children, Dostoevsky wished to show not just the psyche, but the awakening and maturation of the psyche as it comes into contact with the cruel, hostile world. This is perhaps why many of his children are victimized either by their parents, older men, or external circumstances. His near-obsession with young, victimized girls, a recurring theme throughout his *œuvre*, has not escaped the attention of both critics and psychologists.⁴⁹ In Netochka, we see this victimization first in her relationship with Efimov. As she matures in Part Two, she is able to avoid becoming the victim of Pyotr Alexandrovitch in Part Three (unlike his wife), and instead has found the strength to rebel against him. Of all Dostoevsky's victimized females, Netochka is perhaps the luckiest one.

⁴⁸See also Brothers Karamazov's Kolya Krasotkin, who displays a preoccupation with his age (fourteen) and extremely adult-like behaviour.

⁴⁹See, for example, Chapter One: "The Child as Victim" of William Woodin Rowe's book Dostoevsky: Child and Man in His Works (New York: New York UP, 1968) 3-40.

Liza of "The Eternal Husband" is unable to bear the tyranny of her father and his use of her to gain revenge on Velchaninov. A certain adult-like wisdom is evident in her as well.

Her eyes were full of that gravity one sees in children, when they are left alone with a stranger and, retreating into a corner, look gravely and mistrustfully at the unfamiliar visitor, but there may have been some other thought, by no means childish, in her mind--so Velchaninov fancied.⁵⁰

The short story "A Christmas Tree and a Wedding" revolves mainly around a middle-aged man's unnatural attraction to an eleven-year-old girl (further sparked by the girl's favourable financial situation). He asks her "And will you love me, little girl, when I come and see your papa and mamma?"⁵¹ even though they have never seen each other before. He tries several times to kiss her, despite the fact that there is another child in the room and that the little girl is near tears. This victimization of a young girl by an older man is the central scene of the story. Yulian Mastakovitch's sexual perversion stands in complete opposition to the little girl's innocence and susceptibility, reminiscent of the relationship between Efimov and Netochka. Further parallels may be drawn between these relationships when we view them in terms of power/weakness. Yulian Mastakovitch represents the greedy individual to an extreme. He is the manifestation of both financial and sexual greed, and demonstrates the domination of age over youth. The little

⁵⁰Fyodor Dostoevsky, "The Eternal Husband." Three Short Novels of Dostoevsky. Trans. Constance Garnett (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1960) 342.

⁵¹Fyodor Dostoevsky, "A Christmas Tree and a Wedding." The Short Stories of Dostoevsky. Trans. Constance Garnett (New York: Dial, 1946) 295.

girl, however, displays the complete defenselessness of the weak and young when confronted by a power such as Yulian Mastakovitch

Child suicides are evident in Crime and Punishment, Brothers Karamazov, and The Idiot--the victim usually a young female who has been either sexually molested or pursued by an older man. Mentions of child torture are also present in Brothers Karamazov (with at least three instances) and The Idiot (regarding twelfth-century cannibalism of children). In Brothers Karamazov, Ivan details several hideous incidences of child torture: Turks stabbing babies to death before the mother's eyes, a father and mother covering their five-year-old daughter with excrement, a general ordering his hounds to tear an eight-year-old boy to pieces for injuring the paw of his favourite dog, and so on for six long pages. Ivan cites these incidences--based on historical fact--as evidence to support his belief that divine creation lacks order. Dostoevsky saw this torture of children as the result of egoism on the part of the adult responsible. These many scenes are meant to both reveal the serious social problems of the day as well as to arouse the reader's pathos by contrasting the innocence of childhood with the cruelty of the adult world. At the same time Dostoevsky wished to show that love of children is a measure of man's goodness.

While Dostoevsky's later works explore children in relation to the religious world (Raskolnikov "children, you know, are the image of Christ"⁵²), his early works examined children more in terms of their potential for sexual awakening (see "A Little Hero," which closely parallels Netochka in this respect). As I have already discussed in the

⁵²Dostoevsky, Crime and Punishment 324.

preceding chapter, the heroine's sexual awakening is examined in Netochka on several planes (incestuous, homo-erotic). Sexual awakening is inextricably linked to a self-understanding of the psyche in all of Dostoevsky's works; as a "sexually-awakened," mature narrator, Netochka is finally able to understand the nature of her relationship with Efimov.

Netochka also provided the prototype for many of Dostoevsky's future heroines. Krag classifies many of the later heroines as either "meek" (Netochka) or "proud" (Katya).⁵¹ Unlike the underground man, the meek woman is a sensitive, suffering victim of society, and does not display the masochistic desire to control her own life by inflicting suffering upon others. These women are victimized by external circumstances, and not by their own egoism or masochistic tendencies. Instead, they show an inner strength that signifies some desire for change. Netochka shows signs of rebellion at injustice, and more importantly, the strength to fight; Alexandra Mikhailovna displays her strength in her ability to withstand her suffering (due to her husband, her past, and her health), though Dostoevsky was probably planning for her death. The heroine of "The Meek Girl" is perhaps the most tragic of all of Dostoevsky's meek women. She is the victim of an unscrupulous man seeking to control her out of his own feelings of moral superiority (much like both Alexandra Mikhailovna and Pyotr Alexandrovitch, and Murin and Katerina from "The Landlady"). The Meek Girl displays her desire and strength for change in her own death, by throwing herself out of a window with an icon clutched to her breast. Sonia from Crime and

⁵¹Eric Krag, Dostoevsky: The Literary Artist (Oslo, Norw.: Universitetsforlaget, 1973) 58.

Punishment is yet another meek woman, who displays her inner strength by her religious devotion. When considering the women of Dostoevsky's oeuvre as a whole, it becomes apparent that Netochka possesses one remarkable difference. Dostoevsky's suggested plan to make Netochka a singer would have made her the most successful, career-oriented of all his women. Perhaps it is this very transition of Netochka from a "meek" woman to a successful, mature "proud" woman that presented Dostoevsky with difficulty in completing the novel.

Dostoevsky's proud women--Nastasia Filippovna of The Idiot, Katerina Ivanovna of Brothers Karamazov, Polina of The Gambler to name but a few--continue the character type that began with Katya. They display all the inner strength of the meek women, but are infinitely more robust and beautiful, and have not been the victims of unjust suffering to the extent that the meek women have. Because Katya is his first in a whole series of proud women, and because she is not forced to endure unusual suffering, the portrayal of her psyche is sketchy. For all of Katya's charm, wit, and vivacity, there is no trace of self-awakening in her, no evidence of maturation of the psyche during the eight years that Netochka lives at the home of Prince X. With time, however, Dostoevsky's proud women became much more complex. Nastasia Filippovna is perhaps the most interesting of these proud women, combining beauty, charm, and social skills with madness and a certain self-destructive tendency. Her proud nature is most apparent in her resolve to avenge Totsky's manipulation of her when she was younger. Katerina Ivanovna is also a proud woman. She displays both an unrelenting love for Dmitri and a desire to punish him at the same time; this contradiction in her nature expresses man's duality and

psychological complexity Polina from The Gambler also displays this same duality--to both love and hurt the same person--but is not as interesting a character as either Nastasia Filippovna or Katerina Ivanovna

CONCLUSION

Netochka Nezvanova is a well-suited point from which to examine Dostoevsky's maturation as a writer and the techniques he employed which enabled him to portray his characters' psyches. It was a work with which Dostoevsky himself was pleased. Despite its obvious influences from Russian and Western European literature, it displays less reliance on this literary tradition than his two previous works, showing the development of a style truly his own. Moreover, it contains the kernels for nearly all of the themes and character types of his later works. The future dreamers and underground men, the children, and the women (both proud and meek) are evident in Netochka's cast of characters. The themes of love and obsession leading to insanity predominate here as in many of his later works. Even the devices he uses for the exploration of the psyche--manipulation of time, dreams, a setting in the urban environment, and suffering--are in their infancy here, and were to play major roles in the success of Dostoevsky's later works.

In spite of the fact that Netochka opened a new page in Dostoevsky's literary career, the work remains indebted to its literary predecessors. Strictly in terms of character types, Dostoevsky did not embark upon much that was novel. His artist is a direct descendent of the romantic artists of Hoffmann and the more realistic artists of Gogol and Balzac. These realistic artists remained sketchy, however, due to the choice of medium for their portrayal, the short story did not allow for as complete a character exposition as Dostoevsky sought to achieve in his planned novel. Furthermore, the other writers who sought to portray

an artist-hero concerned themselves more with plot (Hoffmann) or message (Gogol) than with the inner workings of the human mind. Dostoevsky, however, succeeded in introducing, developing, and destroying his artist in a surprisingly small amount of space--a mere sixty-two pages of the entire work. Indeed, Dostoevsky managed to provide a more insightful look into the psyche of Efimov than any of the other characters in the entire work, except perhaps Netochka. Dostoevsky did this by both appropriating elements from the above-mentioned writers and combining them with his own novel ideas in order to create an entirely new hero. Hoffmann's plot lines and artist-types, Gogol's greedy painter, Balzac's self-obsessed composer all unite to participate in the creation of Efimov. Combined with Dostoevsky's understanding of the human psyche, the result is a character who is remarkably convincing in his multi-dimensionality. Furthermore, the manifestation of Efimov's psyche provides the reader with a frightening look at the potentialities of human nature and the results of an obsession gone awry.

In his portrayal of Netochka, Dostoevsky had a much broader selection of literary predecessors to choose from. The female characters of Balzac, Sand, Sue and Druzhinin were instrumental in the contributions they made to the formation of Netochka. Sand's various heroines, Sue's Mathilde, Druzhinin's Polinka, and, most importantly, Balzac's Eugénie are all evident in Netochka. As with the creators of Efimov's predecessors, none of these writers concerned themselves with the manifestation and exposition of the human psyche to the extent that Dostoevsky did. Like Efimov, Netochka is more multi-dimensional than any of her literary predecessors. Dostoevsky arouses the reader's

pathos for her from the very beginning she is portrayed as a helpless, poverty-stricken little girl condemned to very unfortunate, unhappy, and unhealthy living conditions. Unlike any of her literary predecessors, Netochka shows the beginnings of a transition to a more positive, successful woman and the ability to finally gain some control over her life. This becomes evident in the way she handles her confrontation with Pyotr Alexandrovitch. The reader's opinion of her changes as well, from pity of a poor orphan to admiration of a young girl's strength.

Dostoevsky's acquaintance with and admiration of the works of the aforementioned writers moulded his own writing to a very large degree. By examining the specific influences of several of these writers, it is now possible to see the important place that foreign literatures held among the writers of Russia. In an attempt to stimulate Russian literary activity to rival that of Western Europe, the writers of the day strove to imitate and appropriate other literatures, while still contributing a uniquely Russian element. Dostoevsky is just one of the many writers who began his literary endeavours under the influence of these foreign writers. Their influence, however, must not be over-estimated, for Dostoevsky still managed to create highly original, distinctly Russian works. If Dostoevsky had simply Russified Western European literature, his works would not have achieved recognition on such an international scale; indeed, he would hold little interest whatsoever. The critics of the last century and a half, however, attest to the fact that there is indeed something unique in his writing, something which no writer before or after him was able to attain with such remarkable success. That timeless "something" which so enthralls his readers is the depiction of the darkest recesses of man's psyche and human nature in general.

Dostoevsky's insights into human nature have prompted the appearance of many works which examine Dostoevsky's psyche and the importance of his own psychological makeup in the creation of his characters. Most psychoanalysts are in agreement over the fact that many of Dostoevsky's obsessed heroes are in reality portrayals of the writer himself. Certainly, his understanding of his own psyche aided him in the creation of such psychologically convincing characters. Yet it is of little concern whether or not Dostoevsky's portrayal of the human psyche is accurate, for who is to judge what really lies at the bottom of man's nature? The more important fact is that the reader can relate to Dostoevsky's characters because they seem so human and life-like, and express such basic human emotions. Furthermore, Dostoevsky makes the psychological peculiarities of his characters unmistakably obvious by showing these characters on the brink of a crisis situation, they are characters whose obsessions have completely taken over their lives and not characters who show only slight indications of psychological peculiarities. They are the criminals, the suicidal types, the megalomaniacs, the middle-aged men with extreme sexual perversions, and they provide the most insightful material from which to begin an exploration of the disturbed mind which so interested Dostoevsky.

While Netochka is able to stand alone on the strength of its literary merits, its importance is better appreciated when this work is understood as a part of Dostoevsky's *œuvre* and Russian literature as a whole. The contributions that this work made to literature must be seen in relation to the previous literary tradition as it existed in both Russia and Western Europe. While seemingly not a controversial work, Netochka was actually a shocking novelty when it first appeared in print.

Shocking was the way Dostoevsky so frankly portrayed a young girl's sexual awakening, shocking was the frightening clarity with which he portrayed an insane, obsessed individual, and most importantly, shocking was what he did with his knowledge of the themes and approaches of the previous literary tradition. No writer before him was able to provide so much psychological insight into his characters. And the most exciting part for the literary world is that Netochka marks just the beginning of Dostoevsky's great literary career.

In conclusion, I wish to summarize the main points of my thesis that, first, Western European and Russian literatures played a major role in the creation of Netochka, yet the work contributes a surprisingly new element to literature by Dostoevsky's thorough psychological examination of its characters; and, second, that Netochka served as a foundation upon which many of the character types, themes, and devices of Dostoevsky's later works were based.

Netochka has been unfairly neglected and relegated to the position of a work of only secondary importance. Volumes of critical analyses have been written by scholars on Crime and Punishment and Brothers Karamazov. Yet most of these scholars overlook the importance of understanding how Dostoevsky achieved such masterpieces in the first place. Too often his re-working of literary tradition and the techniques he developed for portraying the manifestation of the psyche are over-shadowed by the critics' preoccupation with Dostoevsky's psychology in general. Perhaps the next century-and-a-half will bear witness to the recognized importance of some of these neglected works. Undoubtedly, though, Dostoevsky's name will live on in world literature for a very long time yet to come.

APPENDIX

I have provided the original Russian quotations from Dostoevsky's works below, as there is often much that is lost in a translation. Each quotation is identified by the footnote number from my thesis. In parenthesis I have included the volume number and page number of each individual quotation from the Russian text, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii Ed. V. G. Bazanov, et al. Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Nauka, 1972. The quotations from Crime and Punishment, however, come from the Khudozhestvennaia literatura edition, Moscow, 1966.

Footnote 10 (2. 168)

В этой *khfv* толковалось о несчастьях одного великого художника, какого-то Дженао или Джакобо, который на одной странице кричал: «Я не признан!», и потом, через несколько строк: «Я с талантом!» Всё оканчивалось очень плачевно. Эта драма была, конечно, чрезвычайно пошлое сочинение; но вот чудо--она самым наивным и трагическим образом действовала на обоих читателей, которые находили в главном герое много сходства с собою.

Footnote 18 (2. 158)

... Б. встретил его два раза, но в таком жалком виде, что сострадание еще раз взяло в нем верх над отвращением. Он позвал его, но отчим обиделся, сделал вид, будто ничего не слышал, нахлобучил на глаза свою старую исковерканную шляпу и прошел мимо.

Footnote 19 (2 155)

Увериться же в ужасной мысли, что он уже давно и навсегда погиб для искусства, он не мог. Он судорожно боролся, как с болезненным кошмаром, с этим ужасным убеждением, и, наконец, когда действительность одолевала его, когда минутами открывались его глаза, он чувствовал что готов был сойти с ума от ужаса. Он не мог так легко разувериться в том, что так долго составляло всю жизнь его, и до последней минуты своей думал, что минута еще не ушла. В часы сомнения он предавался пьянству, которое своим безобразным чадом прогоняло тоску его. Наконец, он, может быть, сам не зная, как необходима была ему жена в это время. Это была живая отговорка, и, действительно, мой отчим чуть не помешался на той идее, что, когда он схоронит жену, *которая погубила его*, все пойдет своим чередом. Бедная матушка не понимала его. Как настоящая мечтательница, она не вынесла и первого шага в враждебной действительности: она сделалась вспыльчива, желчна, бранлива, поминутно ссорилась с мужем, который находил какое-то наслаждение мучить ее, и беспрестанно гнала его за работу. Но ослепление, неподвижная идея моего отчима, его сумасбродство сделали его почти бесчеловечным и бесчувственным. Он только смеялся и поклялся не брать в руки скрипки до самой смерти жены, что и объявил ей с жестокой откровенностью.

Footnote 20 (2 156)

Он волевался преимущественно с театральными служителями, хористами, фигурантами--одним словом, с таким народом, между которым мог

первенствовать, и избегал людей истинно талантливых. Он успел им внушить к себе какое-то особенное уважение. . . .

Footnote 21 (2 175)

. . . он очнется тотчас же; его сумасшествие сильнее истины, и он тут же выдумает какую-нибудь отговорку.

Footnote 22 (2 184)

Ах! Так еще ты осталась!

Footnote 28 (2 197)

Представьте себе идеально прелестное личико, поражающую, сверкающую красоту. . . .

Footnote 29 (2 187)

. . . во мне рождалось такое же ощущение, как и во сне, когда мне снилось, что я бегу от кого-нибудь, но что ноги мои подкашиваются, погоня настигает меня и я падаю без чувств.

Footnote 30 (2 256)

. . . тайны, с которой как будто переломилось и вновь началось мое существование и повеяло на меня так много холодного, неизвестного, таинственного, неприветливого, уже и теперь издали так сурово грозившего мне . . . «Что с нами будет,--думала я,--угол, в котором мне было так тепло, так привольно,--пустеет!»

Footnote 31 (2: 210)

Помню, я иногда просыпалась ночью, вставала с постели¹ на цыпочках подходила к княжне. Я заглядывалась по целым часам на спящую Катю при слабом свете ночной нашей лампы, иногда садилась к ней на кровать, нагибалась к лицу ее, и на меня веяло ее горячим дыханием. Тихонько, дрожа от страха, целовала я ее руки, плечики, волосы, ножку, если ножка выглядывала из-под одеяла.

Footnote 32 (2. 220)

И мы целовались, плакали, хохотали; у нас губы распухли от поцелуев.

Footnote 33 (2. 164)

... я поняла эту глухую, вечную вражду их, поняла всё это горе и весь этот чад беспорядочной жизни, которая угнездилась в нашем углу. ...

Footnote 34 (2. 189)

[Княгиня] тоже не видалась с князем иногда по целым неделям.

Footnote 35 (2. 163)

... в эпоху такого неестественного развития моей первой жизни.

Footnote 36 (94)

... ум его как бы померкал мгновениями, а тела своего он почти и не чувствовал на себе ...

Footnote 37 (96)

Он был в полном уме, затмений и головокружений уже не было, но руки все еще дрожали.

Footnote 38 (98-99)

Страх охватывал его все больше и больше . . . какая-то рассеянность, как будто даже задумчивость, стала понемногу овладевать им

Footnote 40 (481)

. . . нахальное лицо продажной камелии из французов.

Footnote 41 (15.72)

Ты ложь, ты болезнь моя, ты признак. Я только не знаю, чем тебя истребить, и вижу, что некоторое время надобно протерпеть. Ты моя галлюцинация. Ты воплощение меня самого, только одной, впрочем, моей стороны . . . моих мыслей и чувств, только самых гадких и глупых.

Footnote 42 (1. 264)

Толпа и уличная жизнь, шум, движение, новизна предметов, новизна положения--вся эта мелочная жизнь и обыденная дребедень, так давно наскучившая деловому и занятому петербургскому человеку, бесплодно, но хлопотливо всю жизнь свою отыскивающему средств умириться, стихнуть и успокоиться где-нибудь в теплом гнезде, добытом трудом, потом и разными другими средствами.--вся эта пошлая проза, и скука возбудила в нем, напротив, какое-то тихо-радостное, светлое ощущение.

Footnote 43 (1. 271)

. . . нечто вроде помойной ямы в доме.

Footnote 45 (2. 40)

... Вася чувствует себя виноватым *сам пред собою*... Вася подавлен, потрясен счастьем и считает себя его недостойным

Footnote 50 (9 33)

Во взгляде ее была та детская важность, когда дети, оставшись одни с незнакомым, уйдет в угол и оттуда важно и недоверчиво поглядывают на нового, никогда еще и не бывшего гостя; но была, может быть, и другая, как бы уж и не детская мысль,--так показалось Вельчанинову.

Footnote 51 (2 98)

А будете ли вы любить меня, милая девочка, когда я приеду в гости к вашим родителям?

Footnote 52 (396)

А ведь дети--образ Христов

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