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WHAT'S TO BE DONE ABOUT POOR NASTJA: NASTAS'JA FILIPPOVNA'S LITERARY PROTOTYPES

The myth of the fallen woman has its origins in the biblical tradition in which she has two opposing meanings: the whore of Babylon, who is seductive and evil, and Mary Magdalene, the archetypal holy sinner reclaimed by Christ. Embodying those characteristics of women which are traditionally considered destructive of the existing order, the Babylonian harlot is subversive and represents defiant female power associated with magic and the supernatural. In most mythologies female sexual transgression results in the woman's "return to Nature and to the Demon," which releases uncontrollable evil forces,[1] requiring the expulsion of the fallen woman from the community. Although Mary Magdalene is also perceived as socially disruptive, she is tamed and reintegrated into the tribe by means of Christ's boundless love and ethical authority. Besides the biblical harlots, the nineteenth-century literary image of the fallen woman can also be traced back to the seduced and betrayed young women of the sentimental novel and the persecuted maiden of Gothic fiction. Whatever its origins, the fallen woman character, more than any other female literary image, reflects the ambiguities of female power and its correlation with female sexuality.[2]

Dostoevskij's vision of femininity is directly related to the literary image of the fallen woman and the psychology of female victimization. Seduced maidens, betrayed young women reclaiming their power, saintly whores with redemptive powers, and downtrodden prostitutes as objects of salvation occupy a central place in Dostoevskij's repertory of female characters. In accordance with the philanthropic treatment of the saintly whore, the fallen woman is exalted by Dostoevskij, in contrast to her disreputable social image in the context of his novels. The author seems to identify with the female victim's role as transgressor and outcast in conflict with society and its values. Dostoevskij is drawn to the romantic image of the prostitute who, in the words of Simone de Beauvoir, is a kind of "pariah, living at the margin of a hypocritically moral world," invalidating official virtue: her low estate relates her to the authentic saints.[3]

The fallen woman is Dostoevskij's favorite female character, just as Mary Magdalene was Christ's favorite. In *Zapiski iz podpol'ja* and *Prestuplenie i nakazanie*, the author's *imitatio Christi*, for all intents and purposes, surpasses the redemption of the prostitute in the New Testament. It is Liza and Sonja, and not the male heroes, who are cast in the role of redeemer, hoping to save the debased "fallen" man. While working on *Idiot*, Dostoevskij spent a great deal of time in the Dresden gallery where he was particularly attracted to paintings

depicting the "legend of the fallen woman regenerated by the untainted beauty of a perfect man."[4] Although the Christian redemption model of the prostitute underlies the image of Nastas'ja Filippovna, the New Testament version of the fallen woman has been modified in accordance with her romantic transformation into a vengeful *femme fatale.* In the course of the novel, Nastas'ja usurps the power of both her male victimizer and reedemer, and as has been recently shown, she also "attempts the pen" in trying to author her own life.[5]

The image of Nastas'ja Filippovna seems to contain all of the established literary motifs related to the fallen woman: the young woman as chaste dreamer, the Gothic persecuted maiden, seduction and betrayal by a man of the world, the victimized woman's vengeance and reclamation of power, redemption by a Christlike savior, and her appropriation of his redemptive properties. Nastas'ja Filippovna's behavior also reveals the full range of female power and powerlessness associated with the literary mythology of the fallen woman character. Although her initial image in the novel is that of an influential courtesan controlling men's lives, it is almost immediately replaced by a string of ambiguities regarding her power and influence over others.

Power/powerlessness, revenge/redemption and the interrelationship between them constitute the novel's plot, certainly as it relates to Nastas'ja Filippovna. In terms of suspense and the choices offered to her, the novel can be divided into two competing plot lines - the seduction and betrayal plot and the redemption parable. Will Nastas'ja perish and become a feared magic object, as in the supernatural seduction tale, or will she be saved and reclaimed by the community? Intertextually it is as if Karamzin's *Bednaja Liza* and the romantic myth of the drowned girl are competing with the Christian parable of Christ and Mary Magdalene and its nineteenth century radical version in Černyševskij's *Čto delat'* ? From the perspective of female power, the contest is between the more subversive violated fallen woman and her more submissive Christian image.

In a typical instance of Dostoevskian dialogicity, Nastas'ja Filippovna's biography, a tale of seduction and attempted betrayal, is presented from the point of view of the victimizer, although told by the narrator. This ambiguous story is the plot's primary catalyst and is followed in the narrative by another inserted text: Myškin's tale about the victimized Swiss girl Marie, as told by the Prince himself. The story of Marie's redemption, which provides the novel's moral imperative, offers an optimistic Christian alternative to the tragic ending that befalls Karamzin's fallen woman. On the level of plot, Marie's moral regeneration has the function of manipulating the susceptible reader into believing that a happy outcome is at least a dim possibility.

Seduction and *Bednaja Liza*

The biblical and radical subtexts of Myškin's relation to Nastas'ja Filippovna have been discussed in Dostoevskij criticism,[6] whereas the impact of *Bednaja Liza* and its literary progeny has been overlooked until now. Dostoevskij was, of course, thoroughly familiar with Karamzin's historical and fictional writings (*Bednaja Liza* was read aloud in Dostoevskij's childhood home and became one of his favorite works of literature). [7] In his own fictional writing, there are many direct references to Karamzin's groundbreaking story:[8] to start with, the title of *Bednye ljudi* may be read as a parody of *Bednaja Liza*, especially since Varvara is also a victim of seduction and of the intrusion of the city into her happy country childhood. In "Slaboe serdce" the narrator addresses Lizanka, the story's main female character, as "bednaja Liza", for she has been abandoned by her two fiances; the first one, like Ėrast, has to go to the army somewhere far away, and the fainthearted Vasja, like Makar Devuškin, simply cannot handle the strain of love. Even though Liza in *Zapiski iz podpol'ja* is representative of the redemption model and is a response to Černyševskij's Nastja Krjukova, she is clearly associated with Karamzin's predecessor by virtue of her name and the refusal of money in exchange for love. In asking Stepan Trofimovič to pray for "bednaja Liza", Liza Tušina of *Besy* acknowledges the literary kinship betweeen her illicit involvement with Stavrogin and the ill-fated romance in Karamzin's story.

Although there are several direct references to Karamzin in *Idiot*, [9] none of them relate to *Bednaja Liza*, whose presence in the novel may be adduced, however, in a variety of ways. Like in Karamzin's novella, the story of young Nastja's childhood and youth combines elements of the pastoral with typical sentimentalist and Gothic heartbreak and villainy. Fallen on hard times, young Nastja is a country orphan who lives with a kind elderly widow in the idyllic countryside. Their quiet little wooden house (*tixij derevjannyj domik*) is located in a Garden of Eden appropriately called *sel'co Otradnoe*. In a possible echo of Ėrast's pastoral fantasy about Liza, Tockij perceives his victim, whose family name is *Baraškova* (from the Russian *barašek* meaning lamb), in literary terms - in any case such is the narrator's interpretation of Tockij's story.

The literary imagination of Tockij and his narrator goes beyond the pastoral genre and includes more contemporary literary models: besides Liza, the image of young Nastja is shaped by Puškin's romantic dreamer Tat'jana who lives in idyllic isolation reading sentimental novels, with the obvious exception that Tat'jana only reads of sentimental villains, whereas Nastas'ja Filippovna lives the sentimental seduction tale. Tockij's fantasy about her also seems to have been influenced by the elegant genre portraiture of young women, as was the representation of Dunja in "Stancionnyj smotritel'" (each of the reader's views of Dunja takes the form of

a genre painting[10]). As if replicating a noble genre portrait, the description of Nastas'ja's domestic environment in *Otradnoe* is highly refined and almost exaggeratedly artistic. An elegant domestic hound dog at her side, she is surrounded by books, musical instruments, drawings, paints and brushes. The device of the portrait, used by Dostoevskij in constructing Nastas'ja Filippovna's image, is laid bare in the preceding chapter, in which Myškin and the reader get their first visual glimpse of the heroine. Containing several objects of artistic culture placed in the midst of nature, the *Otradnoe* frame may also be associated with the paintings of Claude Lorrain, whom Dostoevskij admired very much.[11] In terms of character development and the seduction tale, however, the *Otradnoe* picture is a display of Tockij's refined tastes, literariness, and aestheticism.

The resonance of Nastas'ja Filippovna's pastoral background, also invoked in the characterization of Myškin's past life in Switzerland, is both serious and mocking. Although Nastas'ja's family name *Baraškova* sounds like an invented comic name, in the context of the sentimental seduction tale, it has several pastoral as well as mock-pastoral connotations. Besides shepherds and shepherdesses, the name evokes the image of the seduced young woman as sacrificial lamb disrupting the tranquility of the pastoral or Edenic golden age. Both of these connotations may be traced back to the portrayal of Karamzin's Liza, who is described as a "sacrificial lamb" (*agnets*) after her "fall," which in turn results in the disruption of pastoral harmony. In a virtual explosion of idyllic love and the pastoral myth, Nastas'ja Filippovna is later killed, becoming a slaughtered lamb, who dies under Rogožin's knife. The stationmaster's biblical reference to Dunja as "wayward lamb" (*zabludšaja ovečka*) is also reflected in Nastas'ja's image, especially since Makar Devuškin, Dostoevskij's first aspiring redeemer of the fallen woman, quotes Puškin's words and compares Varvara with Dunja.[12] In the context of the novel the most obvious symbolic association of the name *Baraškova* is Nastas'ja Filippovna's role of wayward lamb in relation to Myškin's Christlike shepherd, as foreshadowed in the story about Marie. But this Christian emphasis in no way diminishes the additional pastoral origins of the images of Nastas'ja Filippovna and Marie. Replete with diminutives (*Baraškova, domik, sel'co, dereven'ka* etc.) and the discourse of sensibility, their stories are told in mock-sentimental language, reminiscent of Dostoevskij's early fiction. For example, the expression "*sinjaki fortuny*," which appears in quotes in the narrator's text about Nastas'ja's father, is a typical incongruous combination of the elevated sentimentalist *fortuna* (see Fedor Emin's *Nepostojannaja fortuna, ili Poxoždenija Miramonda*[13]) and the substandard *sinjaki*.

Myškin's belief that Paradise can be regained is a reflection of the pastoral myth which the Prince seems to have lived while in Switzerland. Certainly such is the tenor of the Christian pastoral idyll about Marie's salvation and its replication in the attempted redemption of Nastas'ja Filippovna. Mocking Myškin's pastoral

vision of life, the young nihilist Keller claims that the Prince perceives life in a "pastoral" manner ("vy...daže, možno skazat', pastušeski smotrite na žizn'"). As his twin from another world, Nastas'ja also expresses faith in the pastoral myth by frantically trying to recapture Edenic time and start life afresh.[14] But like in *Bednaja Liza*, the pastoral myth is shattered, both for the Prince and Nastas'ja Filippovna.

Although Tockij's mock-confession of his worst deed[15] may be read against Karamzin's novella, it is told against the background of Dumas' then very popular *La Dame aux Camelias*, which Afanasij Ivanovič Tockij praises as a major work of literature, in yet another reflection of his artistic refinement and literariness. By itself Tockij's story is about youthful male rivalry in the manner of Onegin and Lenskij or Pečorin and Grušnickij, and its unexpected tragic consequences. Contextually and intertextually, however, it also represents Tockij's attempted revision of the role of seducer in a seduction and betrayal plot, which is the source of Nastas'ja Filippovna's literary identity. In contrast to sentimental and moralistic stories of the victimization of women, Tockij's narrative transforms the bourgeois novel of seduction and of fallen women into an aristocratic society tale. His choice of *La Dame aux Camelias* as the literary context for his confession releases him from any moral responsibility for Nastas'ja Filippovna's predicament, since Dumas does not assign any blame either: in his novel there are no villains, only victims of circumstance. But Tockij chooses to trivialize Dumas' tearful human drama altogether by focusing on the camelia fashion that Dumas' novel inspired among frivolous society ladies. In a more serious vein, he can be compared to Armand's father who is concerned with social respectability and his son's bourgeois happiness, with the exception that Tockij is pleading his own case. Although these references to *La Dame aux Camelias* are not present in his actual narrative about camelias and male rivalry, they are part of his subtext. Everyone knows that it is this evening that Tockij hopes to be released from Nastas'ja Filippovna in order to fulfill his longstanding wish to marry a socially appropriate partner. In this respect, he can be compared to Èrast, who marries a woman of his own social class.

Despite Tockij's attempt to rewrite the seduction plot by turning it into a Lermontovian society tale or to mediate his guilt by association with Dumas' novel, it is Nastas'ja's sexual biography and the fictions which have informed it that dominate the reception of Tockij's confession. The literary associations which it evokes in the recipients of the story include the image of Marguerite Gauthier and Nastas'ja Filippovna's position as courtesan (in the 1860's the term 'camelia' referred to a kept woman and is applied to Nastas'ja Filippovna by General Ivolgin, Lebedev and others);[16] flowers as metaphors of female sexuality, seduction, and defloration; and the callousness of the male seducer.

Even though the confession signifies Tockij's attempted dissociation form Ėrast's role and the Russian sentimental seducer's repentance, it makes use of Karamzin's and Dumas' sexual euphemisms: like the two authors, Tockij uses the flower motif signifying sexual favors associated with the seduction tale. While the purchase of flowers from a woman is a euphemism for an illicit sexual encounter, it also marks the beginning of tragedy in Karamzin's and Tockij's plots: Liza's suicide and the death of Tockij's male rival. Flowers may be read to represent defloration in Tockij's society tale, if interpreted against the background of *Bednaja Liza* and Nastas'ja Filippovna's seduction. The association of flowers with loss of innocence is also reflected in Ėrast's and Tockij's attempted overpayment for them and the flower sellers' refusal to take the extra money. Behind the generous gesture hide the seducers' dishonorable intentions. It is the sentimental flower motif, with all its time-hallowed connotations, that underlies Nastas'ja Filippovna's reference to Tockij as "monsieur aux camelias." By substituting "monsieur" for "madame," Nastas'ja Filippovna puts the onus back on him, refusing to release him from the moral responsibility that is his in the seduction tale.

The typical distribution of power in the male seducer/female victim paradigm reflects the man's higher social position in relation to the woman's moral superiority (as in Richardson's *Clarissa* and *Pamela*). While morally superior to Ėrast, Liza perishes as a result of her lower social standing. Such is the social subtext of the sentimental seduction tale, and its later treatment in nineteenth century Russian literature. From the perspective of female magic, however, the suicide results in Liza's appropriation of supernatural power over Ėrast, her mother and the sentimental narrator, all of whom are deeply and irrevocably affected by Liza's death. In fact, it is Liza's suicide, and not her seduction, which make her the central character in the story. Typologically, she can be compared to the drowned girl or mermaid, whose hybrid nature connotes mystery and evil. From pastoral nature Liza moves into the supernatural realm associated with a woman's distruptive powers.

The English and continental romantic image of the nineteenth-century mermaid, which can be traced back to the Medusa and to Shakespeare's Ophelia, derives from the serpent woman.[17] Although the fokloric *rusalka* in northern Russia was an evil creature who at night drowned the men and women passing by her lake and river banks, she later became a vindictive young woman who had drowned herself for love. As a seduced and abandoned young woman in her past life, the literary drowned girl in European literature returns to nature in order to reclaim her supernatural power. Introducing supernatural romantic elements into the pastoral idyll, Del'vig's *Konec zolotogo veka* tells the story of a betrayed shepherdess, who had fallen in love with a city slicker, and who drowns herself like Ophelia and becomes a water nymph. In Gogol's "Majskaja noč', ili Uto-

plennica" the seduction and betrayal motif underlying the romantic plot of the drowned girl is split into two parts: the seduction portion is reflected in the incestuous romance between Levko's father and the beautiful young Ganna who is in love with his son; betrayal is represented in the Pannočka episode. Although not a victim of seduction, she is betrayed by her father, who marries a beautiful young witch. The daughter in turn drowns herself, becoming a vindictive *rusalka*. [18]

Puškin's unfinished drama *Rusalka*, whose plot parallels very closely *Bednaja Liza*, is the most fully developed Russian literary treatment of sentimental betrayal and a drowned girl's vengeance. The miller's daughter regenerates herself through drowning and by becoming a vindictive mermaid. In a power reversal, the seduced woman assumes the role of victimizer by means of her mesmerizing supernatural presence[19]. If vengeance elevates Nastas'ja Filippovna to the status of heroine, then the vindictive drowned girl, who has sown destruction all around her, may be one of Nastas'ja Filippovna's literary prototypes. In Puškin's *Rusalka* the drowned young woman and her mermaid community , which includes her little daughter, also evoke the image of collective female power. Perhaps Nastas'ja Filippovna's almost exclusive friendships with women, especially spinstresses, can be compared to Puškin's community of drowned girls who live without men. The fictional old maid is closely allied with the fallen woman iconographically and socially, since each in her own way is excluded from "woman's conventional family-bound existence."[20]

In contrast to Karamzin's and Puškin's seduced and drowned maidens, Nastas'ja Filippovna reclaims power before death and not after, although her "fatal" image is also associated with the Gothic dead woman. Nastas'ja Filippovna's vengeance is played out in the social and psychological contexts of literary realism, especially the all important marriage arena of the realist novel. Yet "the language of the Gothic novel and its themes offered Dostoevskij a powerful rhetoric for describing modern man's predicament."[21] Perhaps it is the special combination of the Gothic persecuted maiden and supernatural *rusalka* with the realistic treatment of the fallen woman which resulted in Dostoevskij's image of Nastas'ja Filippovna.

Unlike Liza, who commits suicide and becomes a drowned girl in response to Erast's marriage to a social equal, Dostoevskij's heroine interferes with Tockij's marriage plans on the plane of social reality. According to Tockij and the narrator, Nastas'ja Filippovna's self-assured vengeful interference has been informed by the "woman question" and the progressive ideas of the 1860's, rather than supernatural revenge. In an apparent allusion to Černyševskij, Tockij refers to Nastas'ja Filippovna as a "new woman", surprisingly well-informed about judicial matters and certain "exact concepts" (*točnye ponjatija*, which may have been coined by analogy with *točnye nauki*). According to him, she could not have gleaned these ideas from the books he had authorized, implying that she has been

corrupted by the new writing of the 1860's. Tockij also refers to her *romaničeskoe negodovanie* which, like Tat'jana Larina's youthful romanticism, reflects Nastas'ja Filippovna's imitative bookish behavior, although the content of her fantasy is, of course, very different. In contrast to Tat'jana, who dreamed of sentimental seducers and romantic fatal men,[22] Nastas'ja dreams of revenge and power, and, as far as Tockij is concerned, models her fantasy on a novel like *Čto delat'?* Her erudition, bookishness, and blue stocking values are also discussed by other characters in the novel, which further underscores the literariness of her image.

In choosing between the victimized drowned girl and the redeemed prostitute, Nastas'ja Filippovna seems to reject both in an attempt to write her own plot in which the fallen woman is rehabilitated according to a "new" set of terms. In Nastas'ja Filippovna's version of her own attempted rehabilitation, Karamzin's drowned girl and Puškin's vengeful *rusalka* are transfered from the supernatural tale to the realistic social realm of Petersburg in the 1860's. Perhaps Nastas'ja Filippovna's reading of *Madame Bovary*, a recent, psychologically realistic portrayal of a fallen woman, should be viewed as part of her effort to write her own story in accordance with the realistic ethos, although Emma also commits suicide.

In the first significant event in the actual plot as it relates to Nastas'ja Filippovna, Tockij offers her a restitutional payment of 75,000 rubles which is reminiscent of the 100 rubles that Ėrast gives Liza when she finds him in Moscow. (Both women go to the "city" in pursuit of their high-born lovers; in the case of Nastas'ja, she prevents Tockij from marrying a beautiful and rich young woman when she first comes to Petersburg from *Otradnoe*.) Tockij's 75,000 ruble payment reflects his second attempt to get married, but Nastas'ja Filippovna again subverts his Ėrast-like intentions. After upsetting Tockij's marriage plans twice, she, in a manner of speaking, expels him from her plot. His third and last effort at marry, this time a French marquise with Legitimist connections, surfaces only on the level of rumor and is never confirmed. Since a very similar rumor is linked both to Myškin and Rogožin, the actuality of Tockij's marriage becomes even more doubtful. In contrast to her female predecessors, Nastas'ja Filippovna, for all intents and purposes, prevents the marriage of her seducer to another woman, which can be viewed as social victory.

Besides wreaking havoc in Tockij's social life, Nastas'ja Filippovna also assaults the marriage taboo as it applies to fallen women. Whereas literary fallen women are normally excluded from the family context, Nastas'ja Filippovna is given the opportunity to get married several times, yet proves herself unable to break with literary tradition. Like Gogol's Podkolesin (*Ženit'ba*), who is discussed by the author as a literary type, she gets very close, but always escapes in the last minute. (The association with Podkolesin clearly deflates Nastas'ja's image, turning her ambivalence into grotesque farce.) In the marriage arrangement with

Ganja, it is the Ivolgin family's refusal to treat her as an honorable woman which explains her decision. In contrast to the Ivolgins, there is no question of Myškin's love and respect for Nastas'ja Filippovna, but that does not suffice either. Instead of marrying one of her suitors in order to rewrite the traditional plot of the fallen woman, she chooses to subvert marriage itself. Just about everybody's marriage plans are obstructed by Nastas'ja Filippovna, which undermines one of the central questions in the plot: the eternal "who will marry whom?" is replaced by the gradual dissolution of most potential "marital alliances", to use Lizaveta Prokof'evna's phrase. Rather then reclaiming the family context and domesticity, Nastas'ja destroys it for herself and for others, in magical rather than radical or realistic terms.

While attempting to rewrite the story of seduction and betrayal in accordance with a new literary reality, which includes women's emancipation, victory over Tockij and the subversion of marriage, Nastas'ja Filippovna only postpones the inevitable. Despite Tockij's view of her as a "new woman" or her involvement in the nihilist practice of mutual self-education (e.g. her attempt to educate Rogožin), Dostoevskij's heroine is psychologically a traditional seduced maiden, except that Nastas'ja seeks vengeance in this life and not the hereafter. In contrast to Černyševskij's Vera Pavlovna, she uses the "new" knowledge punitively, threatening to blackmail Tockij, instead of asserting her independence from him; and as far as Rogožin is concerned, she supervises his reading as a matter of power play.[23] Even though her destructive behavior is realistically presented, the sheer number of dissolved marriage plans and the irrationality of her vindictiveness seem to connote magical power associated with the drowned girl and the supernatural. By seducing men away from this world and their wives, future or present, the mermaid (*rusalka*) undermines the very foundations of marriage. Nastas'ja Filippovna lacks the necessary strength and ideological resolve to fight the stigma of the fallen woman on the social battleground and ends up resorting to traditional magical means; in relation to Rogožin, she can also be compared to the Gothic persecuted maiden. The connection with the Gothic mode is clearly revealed in her prescribed death at the end, whose effect on Myškin and Rogožin, like the images of his house and her corpse, are strictly Gothic, as Robin Miller has so convincingly demonstrated.[24] To put it another way: Nastas'ja ultimately opts for magic, which paradigmatically requires her death.

Nastas'ja Filippovna's preordained sentimental or Gothic death is reflected, among other things, in the image of poor Liza's "pond" (*prud*) as the site of suicide, invoked several times in the novel. When describing her sexual corruption by Tockij, his comings and goings to her little wooden house in the country, Nastas'ja Filippovna speaks of her frequent desire to throw herself in the pond (p. 144). In talking of her neurotic self-torment, Rogožin claims that she

would have thrown herself in the water long ago had it not been for him: "potomu i ne kidaetsja, čto ja, možet, ešče strašnee vody" (p. 180). In the novel's eighth draft, Nastas'ja Filippovna's counterpart commits suicide by drowning herself ("i vdrug bežit topit'sja", or "pered brakom utopilas'").[25] The consequences of Nastas'ja Filippovna's betrayal and humiliation by Tockij's effort to pay her off, as reified in the auction at her birthday party, end up being just as tragic as in Liza's case. The postponement of Nastas'ja's death results in a long and painful novelistic version of the seduced woman's self-destruction *cum* vengeance. In the long run, Nastas'ja Filippovna emerges as a drowned girl, despite her appropriation of the realistic context.

Redemption: Mary Magdalene or Nastas'ja Krjukova

While the novel begins with Nastas'ja Filippovna's refusal to play the passive role accorded to the seduced young woman and humbly accept the position of social outcast, it gradually falls back into the traditional seduction plot, which ends in the heroine's death. In yet another presentiment of her inevitable demise, Nastas'ja Filippovna reads *Madame Bovary* just before she dies. Instead of reading the novel to the end, she acts out the inevitable tragic finale, which reinforces her literary and bookish image. As I stated in the beginning, her attempt to escape the sad fate of the fallen woman is expressed not only by the reclamation of power but also by means of redemption, as offered by the Christlike Prince. The name Anastasija (Nastas'ja's full Christian name) means 'resurrected woman' or 'one brought back to life'. In a paraphrase of Christ's words about the harlot brought to the temple (John, ch. 8, 3-11), Myškin pleads with Aglaja not to shame Nastas'ja Filippovna and cast stones at her (p. 361). When trying to make sense of Myškin's relation to Nastas'ja Filippovna, Evgenij Pavlovič Radomskij also refers to Christ's forgiveness of the woman taken in sin, except, as he notes, the Prince seems to have exalted her by claiming Nastas'ja's moral superiority (p. 482). The contamination of the fallen woman's New Testament image may be attributed to Dostoevskij's own nineteenth-century romantic social ethos, which, among other things, idealized the woman taken in sin.

In contrast to Nastas'ja Filippovna's attempted appropriation of power, redemption emphasizes the fallen woman's passivity and unambiguous shame, which can be reversed only by a saintly male savior who is morally superior to the *fille perdue*.[26] While still in the country, Nastas'ja used to dream of such a redeemer who would suddenly appear with the words: "vy ne vinovaty, Nastas'ja Filippovna, a ja vas obožaju!" (p. 144). By the time that Myškin presents her with his generous offer of love and forgiveness, she has created a new fantasy which is "not about rescue from her seducer, but of revenge against him."[27] In spite of the very obvious change in Nastas'ja's mood, which makes redemption highly

unlikely, the reader together with the heroine are nevertheless bewitched by Myškin's heroic attempts to save her, especially since he had been successful in redeeming Marie.

To support the reader's hope in the possibility of redemption, Dostoevskij offers several points of contact between Marie's story and the tale of Nastas'ja Filippovna's seduction and betrayal. Both narratives are told against the background of the pastoral which is subverted by human evil. Like Nastas'ja, whose family name is Baraškova, Marie is a shepherdess living in an Alpine natural setting, but her human environment is anything but idyllic. Abandoned by her seducer who, in the manner of Ėrast and Tockij, is an intruder from the city, she is mistreated by her cruel mother and heartless villagers, in contrast to Liza and Nastas'ja Filippovna. The transformative power of moral goodness in the tale of Marie is associated with the Christian version of the pastoral myth. It is Myškin's Christlike love and charisma that transfigure Marie's fall into its opposite state of grace. In teaching active love and compassion first to the local children and then to the other villagers, the Prince reclaims the fallen woman into the community, which he tries to replicate in his relation with Nastas'ja Filippovna.

Myškin suffers successive failures in saving Nastas'ja from Rogožin and from herself, making her redemption increasingly unlikely. Yet the role of rehabilitated Mary Magdalene is available to Nastas'ja Filippovna till the very end of the novel; she tries it on one last time after her hysterical confrontation with Aglaja, when Myškin predictably assumes his Christlike identity (he chooses compassion and redemptive love for the fallen woman over passion and romance). However, just before her wedding to Myškin, Nastas'ja Filippovna descends again into the sphere of the vengeful fallen woman, this time by association with the image of Puškin's Cleopatra. She switches roles in response to Cleopatra's fateful words from Puškin's *Egipetskie noči*, which a curious onlooker outside her house addresses to her ("Knjaginja! Za takuju knjaginju ja by dušu prodal, zakričal kakoj-to kanceljarist: 'Cenoju žizni noč' moju!,'" p. 492).[28] Appropriating Cleopatra's words, Nastas'ja abandons her identity of repentant sinner and returns to the domain of the fatal woman.

Myškin's mimetic desire to redeem the fallen woman is clearly mediated by Christ,[29] but the narrator and some of the characters in the novel believe it has been influenced by popular philanthropy of the time and by the radical redemption model, proposed in *Čto delat'*?[30] As is so often the case in Dostoevskij, the problem is point of view: who sees Myškin in the role of Kirsanov saving Nastas'ja Krjukova (note the same first names) - society mesmerized and simultaneously threatened by radical ideas, or the implied author? In most instances the dividing line between the author's vision of Myškin as Christ and society's fashion-conscious misreading of his goodness in terms of the radical

model is drawn clearly. Yet Lizaveta Prokof'evna, who is otherwise trustworthy in her judgements, perceives the Prince as an'impermissible democrat' affected by new ideas (p. 421); the sophisticated Evgenij Pavlovič, the author's mouthpiece on certain issues, concludes that Myškin's love for Nastas'ja Filippovna is only cerebral and bookish. It has been influenced by the image of Christ, the woman question and the books about Russia that the Prince had read in Switzerland (p. 481-2). Taking his supposed radical leanings even further, the narrator and local society believe that Myškin's preference for Nastas'ja Filippovna over Aglaja is an expression of nihilism, which does not distinguish between virtuous and fallen women; if anything, the fallen woman is considered superior (p. 476-7).

The widespread interpretation of Myškin's intentions according to the nihilist model is parodied in the ridiculous falsification of the relationship between Myškin's late benefactor Pavliščev and the mother of the small-time local nihilist Burdovskij. In trying to extort money from the Prince, the young nihilists concoct a seduction and betrayal plot in which Burdovskij's mother had been seduced by Pavliščev, who then attempted to marry her off to another man. The tale resembles the fate of Nastas'ja Filippovna and is intended to move Myškin, the Kirsanov-like quixotic redeemer of the fallen woman. Referring to the redemption model according to Nekrasov (see "Kogda iz mraka zabluždenija"), Ganja seems to imply that he also considered it in his courtship of Nastas'ja Filippovna. He is convinced that she would have been taken in by his literary game and overjoyed at regaining her respectability; but then Ganja is not a reliable judge of human character.

Most critics have perceived the above examples of Myškin's supposed nihilism as parodic,[31] displaying society's foolish misreading of Prince Christ, even when the interpretation has been provided by a sympathetic and intelligent character. According to Lidia Lotman, however, the association of Myškin with the "new men" is not simply polemical but dialogic, reflected in the commonality of some of their human concerns and their utopian socialist backgrounds. She adduces convincing evidence to show that Christ, Rousseau, his image of the natural man, and Enfantin are the prototypes not just of Černyševskij's radical heroes (Kirsanov and Raxmetov), but of Myškin as well.[32] Needless to say, their kinship is mediated by the figure of Christ invoked in utopian socialism and Russian radical thought of the 1840's, and not in the New Testament. Yet it may be argued that the biblical paradigm of Christ and Mary Magdalene is, in actuality, more fully realized in *Čto delat'?* than in *Idiot.* After all, Kirsanov succeeds in rehabilitating Nast'ja Krjukova, whereas Myškin is unable to reclaim Nastas'ja Filippovna's honor or to make her happy.

In terms of the actual plot of the novel, the most striking similarity between Myškin and the "new men" is his exaltation of the fallen woman, linking him to his time ideologically, while subverting his New Testament Christlike image. If

viewed from the perspective of the time, Myškin's love both for Nastas'ja Filippovna and Aglaja can be compared to the personal lives of the radical *raznočincy*, in life more so than in literature. Irina Paperno writes that "the sympathies and passions of 'the new men' were divided between the world of 'fallen women', whom the idealistic youths tried to 'save' and reform with invariably tragic results, and that of 'society ladies', glamorous enticing and unattainable."[33] This very accurately describes Myškin's socially redemptive love of the fallen woman and his courtly love of the desirable gentry maiden. In the manner of the socially inept and sexually insecure *raznočinec* of the 1860's, which, in fact, may help explain Myškin's impotence, the Prince ultimately opts for the degraded fallen woman, whom "new men" like Černyševskij perceived as more accessible and less threatening than the Aglajas of this world.[34] But despite the many similarities between *Čto delat'?* and *Idiot*, especially between the mores of the "new men" and Myškin, Dostoevskij's heroes are, in the final analysis, polemical responses to Černyševskij's novel and radical ideology. Even though Myškin's personal life and social demeanor may have been patterned on the radical *raznočincy*, they only reveal the social subtext of his character, which is only one aspect of his enormously complex literary image.

To return to the perspective of Nastas'ja Filippovna as heroine and *femme fatale* - her rehabilitation fails because she cannot accept the role of repenting wayward lamb. Raising Myškin to the level of subject, the redemption parable objectifies Nastas'ja Filippovna, as reflected in the numerous interpretations of Myškin's intentions based on the Černyševskij model. In having achieved the influential role of *femme fatale*, she refuses to be dispossessed a second time, choosing power over honor and family. Although Nastas'ja Filippovna also exhibits noble behavior in the manner of Marguerite Gauthier, by not wanting to corrupt Myškin, or by promoting his romance with Aglaja, she ultimately prefers the magical power of the drowned girl over the nobility of Dumas' heroine. In the long run, Nastas'ja allies herself with the heroine of Puškin's *Rusalka* who returns to nature and the demon, loosing uncontrollable evil forces in society.

The victory of female magic and demonic power over repentance and rehabilitation are consonant with the overriding apocalyptic mood of the novel and the general nineteenth-century treatment of fallen women. With very few exceptions, there are no literary examples in which the fallen woman is reclaimed by the community through the mediation of the virginal male redeemer: Piskarev in "Nevskij prospekt" fails to save the prostitute with the face of a Perugino Madonna; the same happens in Garšin's and Krestovskij's stories about the attempted redemption of a fallen woman. Even though Katjuša Maslova is morally rehabilitated, it is not the doing of her self-appointed savior Nexljudov. Except for the radical model, the nineteenth-century fallen woman, especially if she assumes the role of heroine, is doomed and must remain on the periphery of

society, representing a social and supernatural threat to the stability of the community.

Notes

1 Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (New York, 1952), p. 219.

2 For a more complete discussion of the fallen woman character in nineteenth century Russian literature, see Olga Matich, "A Typology of Fallen Women in Nineteenth Century Russian Literature," *American Contributions to the Ninth International Congress of Slavists,* Vol. II. *Literature, Poetics, History,* Paul Debreczeny, ed. (Columbus, Ohio, 1983), pp. 325-343.

3 Beauvoir, p. 214

4 Leonid Grossman, *Dostoevsky,* Mary Mackler, trans. (Indianapolis-New York, 1975), p. 410. According to Grossman, Dostoevskij was interested in paintings depicting the fallen woman at a younger age as well. "He had mentioned 'Christ Forgiving the Adulteress', by the contemporary French painter Emile Signals, in one of the manuscripts of *Netochka Nezvanova.* In the Dresden gallery he saw Batoni's 'Regeneration of the Fallen Woman'; Bartolomeo Biscaino's 'Sinner,' showing a festively dressed courtesan, overwhelmed by a death sentence passed against a wise and righteous man; and the 'Penitence of Mary Magdalene of Leys'," p. 411.

5 Diana Lewis Burgin, "The Reprieve of Nastas'ja: A Reading of a Dreamer's Authored Life," *Slavic and East European Journal,* 29, 3 (1985), p. 259.

6 On the biblical subtext, see M. Gus, *Idei i obrazy F.M. Dostoevskogo* (Moscow: 1962), Richard Peace, *Dostoevsky: an Examination of the Major Novels* (Cambridge: 1971), p. 83; V. Ja. Kirpotin, *Mir Dostoevskogo* (Moscow: 1980), pp. 60-63; Robin Feuer Miller, *Dostoevsky and the Idiot: Author, Narrator, and Reader* (Cambridge: 1981), p. 83. The existence of a radical subtext, much more controversial and problematic than the image of Myškin and Nastas'ja Filippovna as Christ and Mary Magdalene, has been argued convincingly by L.M. Lotman, *Realizm russkoj literatury 60x godov XIX veka* (Leningrad: 1974), pp. 244-56. Sakulin and Fridlender also consider *Idiot* to be a serious, not just parodic, response to the radical novel *Čto delat'*?, although neither refers specifically to the Myškin-Nastas'ja Filippovna relationship. P.N. Sakulin, "Rabota Dostoevskogo nad 'Idiotom,'" *Iz arxiva F.M. Dostoevskogo. Idiot.,* P.N. Sakulin, N.F. Bel'čikov, eds. (Moscow-Leningrad: 1931), pp. 274-5; Georgij M. Fridlender, *Realizm Dostoevskogo* (Moscow-Leningrad: 1964), pp. 22, 250, 253.

7 F. M. Dostoevskij, *Pis'ma,* 4 vols. A.S. Dolinin, ed. (Moscow: 1928-59), 2: p. 298.

[8] Grossman, p. 20. According to A.V. Čičerin, *Bednaja Liza* had a major impact on Dostoevskij's early fiction, "Rannie predšestvenniki Dostoevskogo," *Dostoevskij i russkie pisateli*, V. Ja. Kirpotin, ed. (Moscow: 1971), p. 357. See also Joseph Frank, *Dostoevsky: The Seeds of Revolt (1821-1849)* Princeton: 1976 , pp. 58, 132; Rudolf Neuhäuser, *Das Frühwerk Dostoevskijs* (Heidelberg: 1979), pp. 164, 253.

[9] In the very beginning of the novel Lebedev claims that Myškin's family name appears in Karamzin's *Istorija Gosudarstva Rossijskogo*, which according to numerous sources Dostoevskij practically knew by heart. Without referring to Karamzin, General Ivolgin quotes a line from *Epitafii* ("Pokojsja, milyj prax, do radostnogo utra") in a grotesque story about Lebedev who supposedly buried his leg at Vagan'kovo cemetery in Moscow. F.M. Dostoevskij, *Idiot*, *Polnoe sobranie sočinenij*, vol. VIII (30 vols., Leningrad: 1972-), p. 411. (All susequent quotations from the novel will be identified by page number in the text.) The same epitaph appeared on the tombstone of Dostoevskij`s mother. See *PSS*, vol. IX, p. 385.

[10] L. Michael O'Toole, *Structure, Style and Interpretation in the Russian Short Story* (New Haven: 1982), pp. 105-8. See also S.G. Bočarov, *Poėtika Puškina* (Moscow: 1974), pp. 163-74.

[11] Robert Louis Jackson, *Dostoevsky's Quest for Form* (2nd ed.) (Bloomington: 1978), pp. 215-6. As Jackson writes, Lorrain's 'Acis and Galatea', which Dostoevskij referred to as the "golden age," is reflected in several works of the 1870's: in Versilov's story about the beginnings of European humanity, in Stavrogin's dream, and in "Son smešnogo čeloveka." It is my suggestion that Dostoevskij's interpretation of Lorrain's mythological painting as a pastoral or Edenic idyll before the Fall is already reflected in *Idiot*, especially in the image of Nastas'ja Filippovna's life before her fall. It was while planning and writing this novel that he was so powerfully impressed by the painting in the Dresden gallery.

[12] As a mockery of sentimental style and sentimental assumptions, especially of the obligatory moral purity of seduced young women, "Stancionnyj smotritel'" is, among other things, a parody of *Bednaja Liza* (see e.g. Paul Debreczeny, *The Other Pushkin* (Stanford: 1983), pp. 130-1). *Bednye ljudi* reinstates Karamzin's sentimental moral by making Varvara an innocent victim of the rich and callous Bykov. Dostoevskij, however, also takes Puškin's version of the sentimental seduction tale as his point of departure: Makar reads "Stancionnyj smotritel'" and identifies with the old stationmaster abandoned by his daughter, revealing the incestuous underpinnings of his attachment to Varvara and, perhaps in retrospect, of Vyrin's to Dunja.

[13] On the literary relation between Dostoevskij's and F. Ėmin's fiction, see Čičerin, pp. 365-9.

[14] Michael Holquist, *Dostoevsky and the Novel* (Princeton: 1977), p. 116.

[15] For a thorough discussion of the double-edged nature of confession in *Idiot* and Dostoevskij's parody of Rousseau's *Confessions* in the *petit-jeu* played at Nastas'ja Filippovna's nameday party, see Miller, pp. 175-82. Fridlender, Gus, and Lotman consider Rousseau and his natural man Myškin's prototype. (Fridlender, p. 245, Gus, pp. 367-9, Lotman, pp. 258-61.)

[16] M.S. Al'tman, "Dostoevskij i roman A. Djuma 'Dama s kamelijami,'" *Meždunarodnye svjazi russkoj literatury*, M.P. Alekseev, ed. (Moscow-Leningrad: 1963), pp. 360-1.

[17] Nina Auerbach, *Woman and the Demon: The Life of a Victorian Myth* (Cambridge : 1982), p. 94. Auerbach makes a very convincing claim for a mythologica relationship between the romantic mermaid and nineteenth-century fallen women.

[18] The romantic European mermaid and Slavic *rusalka* were a standard literary theme in Russia in the first half of the nineteenth century. It is generally claimed that the popularity of the theme is associated with the successful Viennese operetta *Das Donauweibchen* and its Russian version *Lesta, Dneprovskaja rusalka.* In addition to the examples in the text, we should also mention Žukovskij's *Undina*, which is a translation of de la Motte Fouqué's *Undine* and is about the love of a water nymph for a human being. Both Puškin and Lermontov wrote short narrative poems entitled *Rusalka*, in which a water maiden entices a man into her aquatic realm. Lermontov also spoofs the supernatural powers of the*Undina* in "Taman'," demythologizing the "water maiden" who turns out to be a member of a gang of smugglers.

[19] Even though *Rusalka* remained unfinished, its ending was clear according to Belinskij: "the prince must perish, enticed by the rusalki to the bottom of the Dnepr," *Sobranie sočinenij v trex tomax*, vol. III. p. 629. The standard reading of Puškin's play (e.g. A.F. Vel'tman, A.I. Štukenberg, Ja.A. Bogdanova, D.P. Zuev) emphasized the victory of the miller's daughter over her seducer and her transformation into a vindictive *rusalka* (cf. Gothic fatal woman), St. Rassadin, *Dramaturg Puškin: Poėtika, idei, ėvoljucija* (Moscow: 1977), p. 251. It should also be mentioned that the plot of "Janyš-korolevič," from the cycle *Pesni zapadnyx slavjan*, was taken from the earlier *Rusalka* and is very similar in content.

[20] Auerbach, p. 150, passim.

[21] Miller, p. 108

[22] Ripe for a sexual encounter with Onegin, Tat'jana perceives him as a romantic fatal man from Richardson's novels. In this context, her dream can be read as a sexual fantasy of rape and defloration; before going to bed, Tat'jana removes her silk belt, which in folksongs signifies loss of virginity. For that matter, had it not been for Onegin's gentry code, according to which a gentry male cannot seduce a young, unmarried woman of his own class, Tat'jana may have become a fallen woman. (See Matich, pp. 328-35.)

[23] Unlike Nastas'ja Filippovna, whose association with Vera Pavlovna is tenuous, to say the least, Aglaja very definitely was influenced by Černyševskij's heroine, imitating her "new" behavior and emancipated values.

[24] Miller, pp. 114-5.

[25] Sakulin, p. 240.

[26] For a discussion of the redemption motif as it applies to the fallen woman, see Matich, pp. 335-40.

[27] Burgin, p. 260.

[28] For a discussion of the Cleopatra motif and its relation to the image of Nastas'ja Filippovna, see Miller, p. 270, n. 35; Burgin, p. 360-2.

[29] Although René Girard, the author of "mimetic desire," seems to claim that Myškin's desire is unmediated, as if he is free of imitative desire, it seems to me that Myškin's redemptive love for Nastas'ja Filippovna is mediated by Christ, who is, of course, the most important prototype of Dostoevskij's hero. *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel: Self and Other in Literary Structure* (Baltimore: 1966), pp. 163-4.

[30] See note 6, Lotman, pp. 244-56.

[31] For a discussion of *Idiot* as a polemic with *Čto delat'?*, see Fridlender, pp. 22, 250, 253; Peace, pp. 112-3; Lotman, p. 245; Kirpotin, p. 137-8; V.S. Dorovatovskaja-Ljubimova, "Dostoevskij i šestidesjatniki," *Dostoevskij. Trudy Akademii Xudozhestvennyx nauk. Literaturnaja sekcija,* vol. III (Moscow: 1928), pp. 54-56.

[32] According to Lotman one of the may prototypes of Myškin's synthetic image, among whom she lists Christ and Don Quixote, as well as Rousseau, Tolstoj (cf. Myškin's and Tolstoj's name and patronymic) and Černyševskij's Kirsanov, is Raxmetov, the archetypal utopian hero. Like Raxmetov, Myškin is a very positive, yet mysterious figure, who comes from abroad, gets

involved in Russian life, trying to resolve the local conflicts in terms of a higher ideal that he seves, after which he disappears again (pp. 251-2). While undoubtedly a controversial interpretation of Myškin's image, it is quite convincing, if we accept the synthetic and contradictory nature of Myškin's character. I would, however, question Lotman's conclusion regarding Kirsanov's failure to save the fallen woman. Even tough Krjukova dies, in Christian and moral terms Černyševskih's "new man" is successful in rehabilitating her honor and returning her to the community, in the same way as Myškin saves the Swiss shepherdess Marie.

[33] Irina Paperno, *The Individual and Literature: N.G. Chernyshevsky and the Age of Realism (A Study in the Semiotics of Behavior.)* , ms. p. 137 (forthcoming).

[34] On Černyševskij and the raznočincy of the 185O's - 186O's, see Paperno, passim.