THE SYMBOLIC RELIGIOUS SIGNIFICANCE OF AGLAIA EPANCHINA AND
NASTASIA FILIPPOVNA IN DOSTOEVSKY'S THE IDIOT

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ABSTRACT

In Dostoevsky's *The Idiot* (1868) critics have often examined the psychological motivations for the behavior of the two main female characters, Aglaia Epanchina and Nastasia Filippovna. However, these characters also have symbolic or allegorical meaning. For Dostoevsky, Aglaia and Nastasia symbolically represent spiritual opposites. On the symbolic level, Nastasia is a more positive character because she represents what Dostoevsky termed the “Russian Idea”. He opposed the “Russian Idea” with what he called the “Catholic Idea,” which is represented in the novel by Aglaia. Both the “Russian Idea” and the “Catholic Idea” have cultural as well as religious significance.

By examining the allegorical meanings of Aglaia and Nastasia, we obtain a better understanding of the significance of the fates of these characters (Aglaia’s conversion to Catholicism and Nastasia’s sacrificial death) and of the novel as a whole. We also better understand the development of Dostoevsky’s ideas on the heritage of the Catholic Church and on Russia’s role in the world, ideas that are very important for his thought and work.
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INTRODUCTION

I. Introductory remarks

While Dostoevsky was writing *The Idiot* (1868), he was preoccupied with what he termed the “Catholic idea” (*katolicheskaia ideia*) and the “Russian idea” (*russkaia mysl’*). The Catholic idea, in Dostoevsky’s understanding, was responsible for the lamentable modern religious, political, and social situation in nineteenth century Western Europe. The more positive Russian idea, on the other hand, was one that had not yet fully been expressed, or at least understood, by the rest of the world. That idea would lead to the salvation of both Russia and Europe. Both of these ideas are reflected in the novel. Specifically, Aglaia Ivanovna Epanchina is associated with the Catholic idea, while Nastasia Filippovna Barashkova is linked to the Russian idea.

Despite Dostoevsky’s views on Catholicism and Russia, most scholars of the novel claim that Aglaia Epanchina is either on the same moral level as Nastasia Filippovna or morally superior to her. For example, Joseph Frank, in his impressive and comprehensive work on Dostoevsky, defines a moral scale on the highest level of which he places Aglaia (with Prince Myshkin, Lizaveta Epanchina, and Radomysl); Nastasia occupies the second level (with Rogozhin).¹ Frank Seeley puts Aglaia and Nastasia on the same level. When he concludes his argument on Aglaia, he asks why she is
“condemned by Dostoevsky to the grimmest destiny,” by “deserting Russia” and “embracing Catholicism.” Seeley sees nothing in the text that indicates that Aglaia deserves such a fate.\(^2\) But Dostoevsky does not condemn her arbitrarily to the “grimmest destiny”: Aglaia’s abandonment of Russia and conversion to Catholicism are well motivated in the text. Clearly Dostoevsky saw something in the development of Aglaia’s character that made this a sensible dénouement.

Both Frank and Seeley, who put Nastasia Filippovna on the same moral level or lower than Aglaia, emphasize the former’s shortcomings. Seeley states that Nastasia Filippovna “found peace—the only peace she could have known—in death,” because of Nastasia’s pride and vengeful heart, death is the “only peace” possible.\(^3\) Similarly Frank states that Nastasia is “the supreme example in Dostoevsky’s work of what [Dostoevsky] called ‘the egoism of suffering,’ that is, the egoism of the insulted and injured, who revenge themselves on the world by masochistically refusing all attempts to assuage their sense of injury.”\(^4\) In psychological terms, both of these analyses are accurate, but there is also a symbolic side to the issue. I will argue in the following pages that Nastasia achieved peace, not by death itself, but by accepting her role as a sacrificial victim. This was an important idea for Dostoevsky. As he wrote in Winter Notes on Summer Impressions (1863), “voluntary, completely conscious self-sacrifice imposed by no one, sacrifice of the self for the sake of all, is, in my opinion, a sign of the very highest development of the personality, of the very height of its power, the highest form of self-mastery, the greatest freedom of one’s own will. To voluntarily lay down one’s life for the sake of all, to go to the cross or to the stake for the sake of all, can be done only in the light of the strongest development of the personality.”\(^5\)
While several critics have commented on the psychological motivations for Aglaia’s and Nastasia’s behavior, I am more interested in this study to explore the symbolic motivation for these characters’ actions and their allegorical significance. More specifically, such an approach sheds new light on the novel’s denouement, i.e. Aglaia’s conversion and Nastasia’s sacrifice. When viewed symbolically, Nastasia (the Russian idea) becomes a much more positive character than Aglaia (the Catholic idea). By analyzing Nastasia and Aglaia allegorically, we gain a better understanding of the novel as a whole and of Dostoevsky’s views—these latter are important for his later fictional works as well.

In order to better understand Dostoevsky’s Catholic and Russian ideas and all of their implications, I will discuss the letters, essays—particularly *Diary of a Writer* (1873-1881), and subsequent novels in which he expressed related views before, during and after the writing of *The Idiot*. Dostoevsky is much more polemical in his letters and essays, which thus allow for a more direct or absolute understanding of his opinion. In fictional works Dostoevsky presents his ideas much more subtly and artistically as he explores the many nuances of various issues. It is often in Dostoevsky’s fiction that he works through the finer points of his ideas. Aglaia and Nastasia are not just characters in his novel, but two ideas that will come into conflict. By examining the symbolic meaning of Aglaia and Nastasia in this context we will be able to understand how these enhance the novel as a whole and examine Dostoevsky’s thought process as he works through two of his most prominent ideas, which he will continue to develop in his future novels.
II. Dostoevsky's Ideas on Catholicism and Russia

Dostoevsky's general opinions about Western Europe, Catholicism, Russia, and their interrelationships have been well examined by literary critics. Here, I will examine specifically those ideas that are relevant to The Idiot.

Dostoevsky lived abroad in Western Europe the entire time he worked on the novel (1867-69). In many of the letters that he wrote during the creation of the novel he expresses his opinions about Western Europe. Dostoevsky formed many of those opinions on his first journey to Europe, undertaken because he wanted to experience it firsthand (1862). He noted that he was not there long enough to make a detailed account of the countries, but only impressions, which he published in Winter Notes on Summer Impressions (1863). In that publication he discusses the materialistic ambitions and egotism of the West Europeans. Dostoevsky wrote The Idiot abroad. His negative judgments of Europe five years later while working on the novel are probably stated so often because of heightened anxieties about living abroad, away from his beloved Russia and in countries that he already despised. In letters from Europe, he constantly expresses his desire to go back to Russia. He deplores that he cannot return because his wife felt compelled to distance themselves from some of his family members and also for health and financial reasons: Dostoevsky believed that his epilepsy would improve abroad, and he could not pay off the large amount of debt he incurred in Russia (Frank 1995, 184).

While working on the beginning of The Idiot, he sent a letter to his friend, A. N. Maikov, expressing his dissatisfaction with Western culture and professing Russia's
mission to the rest of the world. In that letter he conveys some negative ideas about the
Swiss and then the Germans, and compares them to Russia:


Dostoevsky’s view that Russia retained her idea through the Mongol invasions and attacks from the West and endured endless suffering was important for his conception of The Idiot.

Here, it is important to note that Dostoevsky’s contrast of the Catholic idea and the Russian idea does not simply oppose the Catholic religion to the Orthodox religion or non-Russians to Russians. As he saw it, the problem with Catholicism was that the church authorities had distorted religious beliefs for political power for centuries. Dostoevsky does not claim that all Catholics are evil. He even has sympathy for the common believer whom he feels has been raised with a misguided faith. Dostoevsky does not see a distinction between the Catholic idea and other social, cultural, and religious ideas in Western Europe. Though Dostoevsky distinguishes Catholicism and Lutheranism in this letter, he thought that Protestantism in general stemmed naturally from Catholicism. Dostoevsky thought that the ideas of the whole of Western Europe
could be explained by its roots in Catholicism, an idea he expresses most directly in *The Diary of a Writer* (January 1877):

Я не про религию католическую одну говорю, а про всю идею католическую, про участь нации, сложившихся под этой идеей в продолжение тысячелетия, проникнутых ею насквозь. В этом смысле Франция, например, есть как бы полнейшее воплощение католической идеи в продлжение веков, глава этой идеи, унаследованной, конечно, еще от римлян и в их духе. Эта Франция, даже и потерявшая теперь, почти вся, всякую религию (неузыны и атеисты тут всё равно, всё одно), закрывавшая не раз свои церкви и даже подвергавшая однажды баллотировке Собрания самого бога, эта Франция, развившая из идей 89 года свой особенный французский социализм, то есть успокоение и устройство человеческого общества уже без Христа и вне Христа, как хотел да не сумело устроить его во Христе католичество...Самый теперешний социализм французский, -- по-видимому, горячий и роковой протест против идей католической все измученных и задушенных ею людей и наций...самый этот протест, начавшийся фактически с конца прошлого столетия (но в сущности гораздо раньше), есть не что иное, как лишь вернёшнее и неуклонное продолжение католической идеи, самое полное и окончателное завершение ее, роковое ее последствие, выработавшееся веками (*PSS* 25: 6-7).

This diary entry makes it clear that for Dostoevsky, Catholicism is linked with atheism and socialism. Those two connections are important in *The Idiot*. In that same entry, Dostoevsky explains that Protestantism will disappear along with Catholicism because it will have nothing left to protest against and the West will be forced to look eastwards to the Slavs for the “new idea” (*PSS* 25: 8-9).

While this diary entry states Dostoevsky’s ideas quite completely and synthetically, he began to contemplate the nature of Western Europe and Russia much earlier, before *Diary of a Writer* and even many years before *The Idiot*. He was well aware of the relevant debates between the so-called Westernizers (Russians) and Slavophiles that had been going on since the 1840’s. The Westernizers believed that Russia was lagging behind Western Europe and needed to become like a Western nation
in order to develop into a modern civilized state. Conversely, the Slavophiles believed that the best qualities of the Russian man were his “Russianness” which included a connection to the Russian Orthodox tradition. Dostoevsky was more sympathetic to the views of the Slavophiles whom he read “assiduously” a few years before writing The Idiot. In the midst of working on the novel in 1868, Dostoevsky argues that the Slavophiles accurately understand the principle difference between Russia and Western Europe: while true Russians know the principle of love, Westernizers “pride themselves on basing their theories on facts, and have overlooked the primary, the greatest fact [mutual love between tsar and the people] of our history.”

The Westernizers’ approach was wrong according to Dostoevsky: facts did not get at the essence of Russia. The problem was that Russia’s tendency to copy Western Europe had partly alienated Russia from itself since, “What is most important and necessary for the Russian, is the awareness of being Russian.”

In comparing Russia to Western Europe, Dostoevsky emphasizes Russia’s moral superiority. However, much in the same way that Dostoevsky did not apply the Catholic idea to all Catholics, he would also not equate the Russian idea with all Russians or exclude non-Russians. The Russian idea is so-called because Dostoevsky thought that the common Russian people (not its high society) tended to truly understand the Christian faith. According to Dostoevsky, the Russian idea entails all those who spiritually (not physically) belong to the Orthodox true Christian Faith. In particular, he strongly contrasted the Orthodox belief that salvation exists in the afterlife with the Catholic belief in material comfort on earth:

Во всяком случае, наша сущность бесконечно выше европейской. И
вообще, все понятие нравственные и цели русских -- выше европейского мира. У нас больше непосредственной и благородной веры в добро как в христианство, а не как в буржуазное разрешение задачи о комфорте.

Всему миру готовится великое обновление через русскую мысль (которая плотно спаяна с православием, [...], и это совершится в какое-нибудь столетие -- вот моя страстная вера. Но чтоб это великое дело совершилось, надобно чтоб политическое право и первенство великорусского племени над всем славянским миром совершилось окончательно и уже бесспорно. (А наши-то либералишки проповедуют распадение России на союзные штаты!) (PSS 28.2: 260, italics mine-K. K.).

Dostoevsky was still preoccupied with these ideas about Russia's purpose and Catholicism's deleterious effects in Europe after completing *The Idiot*. A letter of 1870 argues that:

Другая сила была бы наша собственная вера в свою личность, святость своего назначения. Всё назначения России заключается в православии, в свете с Востока, который потекёт к ослепшему на Западе человечеству, потерявшему Христа. Всё несчастье Европы, всё, всё без всяких исключений произошло оттого, что с Римскою церковью потеряли Христа, а потом решили, что и без Христа обойдутся (PSS 29.1: 146-7).14

According to Dostoevsky, a desire for earthly power motivates the Catholic Church instead of Christ: "...once, [Roman Catholicism] sold Christ without hesitation in exchange for earthly power."15 Russia’s mission is to bring salvation to itself and Europe.

As will become apparent, that mission is symbolically significant in *The Idiot*.

Nonetheless, while writing the novel, he does not think that Russia has yet realized its potential for bringing the true faith to the world. His letter continues:

Ну, предсказать же вы себе теперь, дорогой мой, что даже в таких высоких русских людях, как, например, автор «России и Европы» [N. Ia. Danilevskii], я не встретил этой мысли о России, то есть об исключительно-православном назначении ее для человечества. А коли так — то действительно еще рано спрашивать от нас самостоятельности. (29. 1: 147)

As noted by M. M. Bakhtin, Dostoevsky usually presents his ideas dialogically in his fiction.16 In *Demons* (1872), the next novel that Dostoevsky wrote, he shows how the
influence of Western ideas leads some Russians to suicidal atheism, socialism or nihilism. In *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880) he reworks the idea of the Catholic Church selling itself for earthly power: in possibly the most famous chapter Dostoevsky ever wrote, “The Grand Inquisitor,” Ivan Karamazov relates the legend of the Spanish Grand Inquisitor who tells Christ that the Catholic Church does not need Him anymore. In *The Idiot* he works out his ideas on Catholicism and Russia through the speech, thoughts, and action of two young female characters, Aglaia Epanchina and Nastasia Filippovna.

III. Aglaia Epanchina and Nastasia Filippovna

Dostoevsky was surprised when he began to write *The Idiot* by the appearance in his novel of four main characters instead of one or two, as he had planned. Two of those characters are Aglaia Ivanovna Epanchina and Nastasia Filippovna Barashkova, whose lives are interconnected throughout the novel. While most of the members of high society in the novel see Aglaia as a desirable young woman, Nastasia is seen as the ex-mistress of a well known socialite. Both women are full of pride and behave vengefully at times. Aglaia Epanchina is considered very attractive both because of the family fortune and her beauty. She is the darling of the family as the youngest of three daughters of an industrious business man and retired general, Ivan Fedorovich Epanchin. Nastasia Filippovna’s background is less respectable. She is an orphan who was both financially supported and morally “ruined” by the nobleman, Afanasy Ivanovich Totsky.
Despite these differences, Aglaia Epanchina’s and Nastasia Filippovna’s lives parallel each other. They do not often directly interact with each other in the novel, but each is quite aware of the other, as they do interact through various intermediaries, such as Myshkin, Gania, General Epanchin, etc. Their more direct contact (Nastasia’s letters to Aglaia and their confrontation in the presence of Myshkin) are key moments in examining who they are and what they represent in the novel.

Moreover, both Aglaia and Nastasia are intimate with and have a chance to marry the main character, Myshkin. The Prince loves both of these young women, though in different ways. He loves Aglaia romantically, while he loves Nastasia out of compassion. Both Nastasia and Aglaia love the Prince Lev Myshkin, but reject marrying him for different reasons: Nastasia because she knows that he does not love her romantically, and Aglaia because his meekness makes her feel humiliated. Nastasia chooses instead to accept death at the hands of Rogozhin, while Aglaia abandons her family and Russia, converts to Catholicism and marries a Catholic Pole.

Another of the main characters is, of course, Myshkin who serves as the moral compass of the novel. Dostoevsky wanted to depict a completely positive character and, though he may not have completely succeeded, the Prince’s similarity to Christ is clear. He brings the possibility of betterment to all characters with whom he comes in contact, including Nastasia Filippovna and Aglaia Epanchina. And while the “idiot” of the title primarily refers to Myshkin, Dostoevsky also called him “Prince Christ” in his notebooks. He wrote in his letters that there is only one truly positive man in the history of the world and that is Jesus Christ (PSS 28.2: 251). Dostoevsky gives the Prince
many of His important characteristics. Myshkin is often considered to be an idiot by the other characters precisely because they do not understand his true Christian essence.

With the Prince, Dostoevsky forgoes his usual techniques of dialogism to monologically express his ideas on the destructive nature of Catholicism through the main protagonist, Prince Myshkin. Myshkin is appalled to learn that his previous benefactor, Pavlishchev, converted to Catholicism. Despite the fact that the Prince is normally meek and mild, he is compelled to respond forcefully when the assembled guests at the Epanchin household are informed of Pavlishchev’s conversion. Although Myshkin wants to impress those very guests because of his affection for Aglaia, he cannot help becoming overly emotional and cries out in horror to all present:

“Павлищев...Павлищев перешел в католицизм? Быть этого не может!” He then added “with flashing eyes”, “Павлищев был светлый ум и христианин, истиный христианин, … как же мог он подчиниться вере... нехристианской?...

Католицизмо – всё равно что вера нехристианская!” (PSS 8: 450-51, italics mine-

K. K.).

When asked by one of his distinguished guests to explain, Myshkin continues:

--Нехристианская вера, во-первых! -- это во-первых, а во-вторых, католицизм римское даже хуже самого атеизма, таково мое мнение! Да! таково мое мнение! Атеизм только проповедует путь, а католицизм идет дальше: он исказенного Христа проповедует, им же оболганного и поруганного, Христа противоположного! Он антихриста проповедует, клянусь вам, уверяю вас! Это мое личное и давнишнее убеждение, и оно меня самого измучило... Римский католицизм верует, что без всеведшей государственной власти церковь не устоит на земле, и кричит: «Non possimus!» По-моему, римский католицизм даже и не вера, а решительно продолжение Западной Римской империи, и в нем всё подчинено этой мысли, начиная с веры. Папа захватил землю, земной престол и взял меч; с тех пор всё так и идет, только к мечу прибавили ложь, проницательство, обман, фанатизм, суеверие, злодейство, играли самыми святыми, правдивыми,
простодушными, пламенными чувствами народа, всё, всё променяли за деньги, за низкую земную власть (PSS 8: 450-1, italics mine—K.K.).

While Myshkin is Orthodox, and thus linked to the Russian idea, he also has a connection to Western Europe. He is raised mostly away from Russia, in an idyllic Swiss mountain village. The Prince, who also must make choices as a human being, fluctuates between the temptation represented by his romantic love for the powerful and alluring Aglaia and the more Christian compassionate love for the suffering Nastasia. He chooses Nastasia but is unable to prevent her murder. The implications of Myshkin’s background and his choice of Nastasia over Aglaia are explored in this study’s conclusion.

The other main character is Parfen Rogozhin, whom I will treat only marginally here. He represents a Russian struggling with atheism and sectarianism and is symbolically significant because of interactions with Myshkin and Nastasia. Rogozhin’s passion for Nastasia Filippovna and their Russianness draws them together.
CHAPTER 1
AGLAIA AND THE CATHOLIC IDEA

Aglia Epanchina is the character who most strongly represents the Catholic idea in the *The Idiot*. Throughout the novel, she is engrossed with the problem of earthly power. Her hunger for power over others adversely affects the way she deals with other characters in the novel much as the Catholic Church’s struggle for power prevents it from performing its duties of saving souls. Aglia’s self-serving pride compels her to seek a position of superiority over all those with whom she comes into contact. Her desire to occupy a position of authority in her social relationships has its origins both in a family that constantly doles upon her as well as in society that values her for her beauty. Because of these and her youth and immaturity, Aglia’s prideful behavior is psychologically understandable. Her poor decisions are therefore tragic, because she is not strong enough to overcome the difficult obstacle of her environment and her youthful temperament. She expects to be treated like a princess, which causes her to reject anything that does not match her ideal, including the ungainly Prince. While she recognizes goodness in the person of Myshkin, she rejects him when he interferes with her ability to control a situation much as Dostoevsky thought the Catholic Church rejects Christ in order to control the world.
From the very beginning of the novel, Aglaia concerns herself with relationships of power between people. She is overly suspicious of Prince Myshkin when he is first introduced to the Epanchina women (Aglaia, her two elder sisters and Madame Epanchina, their mother) as they sit down to an early lunch. Though her mother and sisters are slightly curious about the new guest and relative, Aglaia is so suspicious that Myshkin is manipulating them that she constantly misses the real point of what he is doing and saying. She decides at the very beginning of their relationship that the Prince somehow threatens her power, making it almost impossible for him to convince her otherwise.

Aglaia's suspiciousness leads her to test the Prince. She alone seeks an ulterior motive in his actions. However, while her sisters and her mother think that he is a little odd and ask him questions about himself that show that they are playing with him, they understand the Prince much better than she. The other Epanchina women are very pleased and somewhat surprised with the wisdom of Myshkin's answers. They are convinced that he is wiser than he seems and is actually giving them a moral lesson. Aglaia watches him attentively and often after he replies to a question or tells a story, she either looks at him suspiciously or makes a sarcastic remark about what he has said. She suspects that he is acting the fool in order to gain some sort of advantage over them.

When Prince Myshkin gives her mother and sisters a description of their personalities according to what he reads in their faces, for example, Aglaia says, "Не торопитесь, maman, князь говорит, что он во своих признаниях особую мысль имел и неспроста говорил" (PSS 8: 66). Indeed, the Prince does have some design in mind (there are lessons in his stories), but his goals are didactic, not selfish. Aglaia wonders what angle
the Prince is using to gain control over the situation and imagines that he seeks power, although that, in reality, does not concern him.

When Aglaia attempts to trip up the Prince with sarcastic responses to his ideas, she uses the cold logic that Dostoevsky accused Westernizers of using. For example, when Myshkin tells a story of a man whose death sentence was revoked. When that man still continued to squander his time despite earlier claims that he would use his time more wisely given the chance to live, the following conversation ensues:

-- Ну, стало быть, вот вам и опыт, стало быть, и нельзя жить, взаправду «отсчитывая счетом». Почему-нибудь да нельзя же.
-- Да, почему-нибудь да нельзя же, -- повторил князь, -- мне самому это казалось... А все-таки как-то не верится...
-- То есть вы думаете, что умнее всех проживете? -- сказала Аглая.
-- Да, мне и это иногда думалось.
-- И думается?
-- И...думается, -- отвечал князь, по-прежнему с тихою и даже робкою улыбкой смотря на Аглаю; но тотчас же рассмеялся опять и весело посмотрел на нее.
Скромно! -- сказала Аглая, почти раздражаясь (PSS 8: 53).

The Prince, however, is not being arrogant. He again believes in the possibility of the ideal (living wisely). For him that chance of goodness is reality despite contrary evidence or facts (the pardoned man did not live more wisely). He honestly believes that he will use his time better, loving life as it is. His honesty and goodwill is interpreted wrongly by Aglaia who becomes agitated. More generally, she misses the point that one must believe ideals of goodness no matter how they contradict experience, while the Prince does not restrict himself to the bounds of reason. She is looking at Myshkin's conversation in an overly rationalistic manner.

Myshkin often operates beyond the constraints of reason and chooses to accept what is true and good, no matter how it contradicts the "rational" world. At Rogozhin's
house, the Prince recounts four separate anecdotes that contradict the possibility that true
"religious feeling" is based on rationality. One anecdote was about an atheist whom the
Prince describes as very agreeable. Then he rerels a story about a man who believed in
God so much that he prayed before he killed his friend and stole from him. The third was
about a man who sold the cross he wore on his chest to get money to go drinking. Then
he talks about the faith of a simple peasant woman. Finally, he tells Rogozhin, "Слушай,
Парфен, ты давеча спросил меня, вот мой ответ: сущность религиозного чувства ни
под какие рассуждения, ни под какие проступки и преступления и ни под какие
атеизмы не подходит; тут что-то не то, и вечно будет не то, тут что-то такое, обо
что вечно будут скользить атеизмы и вечно будут не про то говорить" (PSS 8: 184).
Myshkin does not say exactly how the atheists are not speaking about what they claim.
The only time Myshkin attempts to use logic to prove his point, ironically enough, is his
tirade against Catholicism after learning of Pavlishchev’s conversion.

Myshkin’s moral superiority in the novel often depends on what he believes in
and not the results of his actions. Because of the goodness of his heart he can see
goodness. For both Myshkin and Aglaia, as well as for other characters of Dostoevsky’s
novels, what they say regarding others is a reflection of themselves more than the
character of whom they are speaking. The Prince’s purity allows him to focus on the
good in others rather than dwelling on the bad. Aglaia’s rudeness and suspiciousness
demonstrate her own deep concern with the Prince. Her initial misgivings about Myshkin
whom she knows no better than any stranger, suggest that she would expect competition
for power from humanity in general. Her general views on humanity reflect that in
general she is that way herself. The only design Myshkin has is teaching the Epanchin

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family about goodness and, that makes him happy. His behavior is self-serving only in that sense. Throughout the entire novel Myshkin constantly tries to help all of those with whom he comes in contact, even when he senses that little will come from his words. Aglaia, on the other hand, does nothing in the novel that is not self-serving.

The biggest tragedy for Aglaia is that she is never ready to truly accept Myshkin despite the fact that she later comes to a very good understanding of him later. Like the Western Roman Empire that, according to Dostoevsky, never rejects Christ because of its desire for earthly power, Aglaia rejects the Prince. After their first encounter she does begin to understand him somewhat, although it proves impossible for her to break free from her prejudices in order to accept his meekness. She wants him to be someone he is not, so that she can be with him without relinquishing her social position of power.

Aglaia demonstrates a better understanding of Prince Myshkin at Lebedev’s dacha when she links Myshkin with the “poor knight” from Pushkin and with Don Quixote. Aglaia had talked about the “poor knight” on a previous occasion as well with Kolia, her sister, and Radomsky (Aglaia’s suitor). Kolia brings it the topic up at Lebedev’s dacha. It is clear to most of those present that Aglaia is thinking of the Prince when she first blurts out, “there is nothing better than the poor knight.”¹⁸ Aglaia also understands that Myshkin is devoted to Nastasia Filippovna as she replaces the letters A. M. D. in that poem with N. F. B. (Nastasia Filippovna Barashkova).

Before Aglaia recites Pushkin’s poem she comments that the poor knight’s ideal in the poem is an “образ чистой красоты.” When questioned about changing the letters A. M. D. to A. N. B., Aglaia responds:

А я говорю А. Н. Б., и так хочу говорить, -- с досадой перебила
Аглая, -- как бы то ни было, а ясное дело, что этому «бедному рыцарю» уже всё равно стало: кто бы ни была и что бы ни сделала его дама. Довольно того, что он ее выбрал и поверил ее «чистой красоте», а затем уже преклонился пред нею навеки, в том-то и заслуга, что если б она потом хоть воровкой была, то он все-таки должен был ей верить и за ее чистую красоту копья ломать. Поэту хотелось, кажется, совокупить в один чрезвычайный образ всё огромное понятие средневековой рыцарской платонической любви какого-нибудь чистого и высокого рыцаря, разумеется, всё это идеал.

В «рыцаре же бедном» это чувство дошло уже до последней степени, до аскетизма; надо признаться, что способность к тому чувству много обозначает и что такие чувства оставляют по себе черту глубокую и весьма, с одной стороны, похвальнюю, не говоря уже о Дон-Кихоте. «Рыцарь бедный» -- тот же Дон-Кихот, но только серьезный, а не комический. Я сначала не понимала и смеялась, а теперь люблю «рыцаря бедного», а главное, уважаю его подвиги (PSS 8: 207).

Here, Aglaia understands the Prince very well: he does love an ideal that he is able to perceive in Nastasia Filippovna, despite her reputation and contrary to the actions. Aglaia’s mention of Don Quixote also supports that she knows him as well. Don Quixote was one of Dostoevsky’s initial models for Myshkin—one character that Dostoevsky mentioned in a letter to S. A. Ivanovna when he told her his idea about creating “a positively beautiful person,” which later became Myshkin: “Упомяну только, что из прекрасных лиц в литературе христианской стоит всего законченнее Дон Кихот. Но он прекрасен единственно потому, что в то же время и смешон” (PSS 28.2: 251).

Aglaia loves the Prince precisely for his devotion and sees in him great strength of character. However, she oversimplifies Myshkin. She expects he can be the knight she wants him to be, because she sees that he is good, and says that unlike Don Quixote, the Prince is not comical, but serious. But he is still not the knight that she wants. When his honor is in question, Aglaia wants him to respond by triumphing over the enemy. Though Aglaia does sense Myshkin’s goodness, she errors in attempting to make Myshkin a Western European medieval knight. The Prince, like Don Quixote and the
knight in Pushkin’s poem, is not worried about being honored in this world. Aglaia, wants the one to whom she wishes to devote herself to use his power in this world. However, the Prince, like Christ, acts submissively in most situations. Myshkin is too meek and humble to respond to conflict as Aglaia would like, i.e. within the tradition of medieval (Catholic) Europe and of an institution of knighthood based on honor. Russia had no such tradition.

The first time Aglaia expects knightly behavior from the Prince is after Antip Burdovsky (who is fooled into believing he is Pavlishchev’s son) and his supporters arrive at Lebedev’s dacha to demand that Prince Myshkin give to Burdovsky his rightful share of the inheritance that the Prince received from Pavlishchev. The new guests enter aggressively and cause a slight commotion. Aglaia expects Myshkin to triumph when: “Это будет очень хорошо, если вы сейчас же и сами дело окончите, а нам все позволите быть вашими свидетелями. Вас хотят замарать, князь, вам надо торжественно оправдать себя, и я заранее ужасно рад за вас” (PSS 8: 213). But even though the Prince would be correct according to the laws of society in “justifying himself triumphantly” against his foes, he is only interested in clearing up the situation in the most comfortable way for all involved. He thus demonstrates true Christian meekness and forgiveness, rather than a desire for the ways that will help him pridefully triumph. He genuinely wants to help everyone. Prince Myshkin does not even feel wronged, but on the contrary feels that he has wronged others. He even offers his antagonist, Antip Burdovsky, money after it has been proven that he is not Pavlishchev’s son, much to the dismay of the others, including Aglaia. It is at this moment that Aglaia begins to realize that she will not be able to make the Prince into the powerful conqueror
that she wants. Aglaia has been duped into believing that she must have a suitable husband who will have power in this world, like the misguided Catholics have been duped into believing in the importance of the earthly power of the Catholic Church according to Dostoevsky’s view. Myshkin, however, will remain like the meek Christ from the New Testament. He is possibly more like the Christ that Dostoevsky described in a letter written while working on the novel, in which Russia would bring to the world a Christ truer than that of Europe.\(^{19}\)

Although Aglaia understands that Myshkin is truly a beautiful person and struggles over whether she will marry him, she ultimately rejects him. She does this because although she sees that deep inside he is truly good, she may not want to admit it to others or herself, because she will lose a sense of her power over others if she humbles herself before the Prince. Therefore, even while she is considering marrying the Prince, she constantly puts him down. She is afraid that the Prince will not be the type of person that will allow her to become the powerful, respected person that she wishes to become if she marries him.

One of the defining moments of Aglaia’s rejection of the Prince is when she demands that he throw out all of his guests. After Ippolit bursts out that he hates Prince Myshkin more than anyone else in the world and Madame Epanchin scolds the Prince for allowing this scandal in her presence, Aglaia threatens Myshkin: “Если вы не бросите сейчас же этих мерзких людей, то я всю жизнь, всю жизнь буду вас одного ненавидеть” (\textit{PSS} 8: 250). At that point, however, there is no one to throw out because all have left, thus Myshkin has already failed in Aglaia’s mind. She cannot tolerate that the Prince allows himself to be shamed. The rest of her family and her fiancé are more
forgiving. They say good-bye to him with some sympathy for what he endured that evening. Since Aglaia leaves without saying good-bye, her threat remains the last communication between herself and Myshkin, until guilt later causes her to return.

Aglaia has a lot of power and, like the Catholic Church (according to Dostoevsky), uses it destructfully. One prime example of Aglaia’s destructive nature is her treatment of Gania. Gania gives Aglaia the opportunity to be his savior, but she declines. She receives a letter from him where he professes his love for her and his desire not to marry Nastasia Filippovna, saying he will leave Nastasia if only Aglaia gives him the word. He begs Aglaia to save him from an act he already knows is base, i.e. marrying Nastasia Filippovna for money. He even hates Nastasia because of what he is lowering himself to do. Aglaia is given the chance to save Gania not only from making a serious mistake, but also from the greedy, money motivated world. All she has to do is tell Gania not to marry Nastasia. She could have rescued him from himself if she would have only abandoned her pride and offer her friendship. Her relationship with Gania demonstrates how self-serving she can be, and that her self-exaltation drives her to reject helping Gania. When instructing Myshkin to return his letter unopened, Aglaia explains:

Я просто раз пожалела его. Но он дерзок и бесстыден: у него тотчас же мелькнула тогда мысль о возможности надежды; я это тотчас же поняла. С тех пор он стал меня улавливать; ловит и теперь. Но довольно; возьмите и отдайте ему записку назад (ПСС 8: 72).

It is possible, as Aglaia herself suggests, that their (Aglaia’s and Gania’s) relationship could be different, “Он, впрочем, знает, что если б он разорвал всё, но сам, один, не ожидая моего слова и даже не говоря мне об этом, без всякой надежды на меня, то я бы тогда перемену мои чувства к нему и, может быть, стала бы его другом”
(PSS 8: 72). But since Aglaia is not willing to sacrifice a little pride for Gania’s sake, he is left to suffer.

Unlike Myshkin, Aglaia is not compassionate. He sees in people the good, which is their true essence in Orthodox theology: the good is man created in the image of God, while the bad is the sin which separates man from God, and hence man from himself. Aglaia sees Gania’s differently: in terms of sin, rather than the good in him. She says of Gania, “Но у него душа грязная: он знает и не решается; он знает и все-таки гарантии просит” (PSS 8: 72). Of course Gania is wrong for asking for a guarantee from Aglaia. She knows he is weak, but does not respond with mercy. Her response (or lack of response) was motivated completely by pride. She thinks he deserved to be punished. Throughout the rest of the novel Aglaia allows Gania to cherish the hope of obtaining her affections and often brings out the worst in his character (his sinful side). Gania is constantly agitated because of her. She manipulates him, never intending to give herself to him (humble herself), and yet not wanting to lose his attachment to her. Her dominance over him indicates her power and possibly serves as a consolation for her feelings of jealousy over Nastasia.

While Aglaia has many negative traits that connect her to Catholicism, she is not the villain of the novel. The harmful effects of her upbringing and society’s exaltation of her motivate us to sympathize with Aglaia. Her family dotes on her, sacrificing themselves for her, and treat her better than they treat each other and everyone else. Aglaia expects the sacrifices to continue and expects them from everyone else in order to make her happy. Her family even convince her that her “future husband is to be a paragon of all perfections and achievements, as well as the possessor of vast wealth.”

22
According to Dostoevsky, the Russian nobility's interest in wealth, status, and prestige was borrowed from the West. General Epanchin, as a self-made man who acquired his riches and social status through calculation, is the leading corrupting influence in the family. For General Epanchin "money" meant "recognition" and "power" and not "opulence." Aglaia seeks "recognition" and "power" as well.

Aglaia also represents that part of Russian society that is corrupted by the West. She has great difficulties realizing her true Russian self, that self which according to Dostoevsky harbors the essence of true Christianity. In his words, the "self-realization of the Russian man is oneself." Aglaia is conclusively separated from her "Russian" self at the end of the novel when she converts to a different faith and marries a Polish count.

She is inclined to this fate because of her strong connection to the ideals of Catholicism, instilled by the negative influences of her family and society. In fact, Aglaia's story is tragic: her inward struggle in accepting/rejecting the Prince, may demonstrate that she resembles a common member of the Catholic Church. Dostoevsky had much sympathy for the simple Catholic believers because he felt that the Church was deceiving them.

Aglaia is still free to choose in the end, however, and this choice is her main developmental struggle in the novel. When she ultimately chooses to marry a Catholic Polish "count" and convert to the Catholic faith, her fall is complete:

Оказалось, что этот граф даже и не граф, а если и эмигрант действительно, с какою-то темното и двусмысленною историей. Пленил он Аглаю необычайным благородством своей истерзавшейся страданиями по отчизне души, и до того пленил, что та, еще до выхода замуж, стала членом какого-то заграничного комитета по восстановлению Польши и, сверх того, попала в католическую исповедальную какого-то знаменитого патера, овладевшего ее умом до иступления (ПСС 8: 509).
Dostoevsky's choice to have Aglaia marry a Polish count and convert to Catholicism puts the finishing touches on Aglaia's character. Unfortunately for Aglaia she loses herself to a Catholic priest who gains control over her mind. Dostoevsky's choice of words is key here: the Catholic priest gains control over Aglaia's mind, but not her soul. For Dostoevsky, the soul apparently lay outside his reach, implying that there is hope for Aglaia, as well as for Catholics in general, because their souls remain untouched by Catholic doctrine.
CHAPTER 2

NASTASIA IN COMPARISON WITH AGLAIA

Nastasia Filippovna Barashkova, though not perfect, is the symbolic and spiritual opposite of Aglaia. She, like Russia encompasses what is essential for Dostoevsky about Orthodox belief. Nastasia is sexually abused by Afanasy Ivanovich Totsky who also is instrumental in giving her an education influenced by the ideas of Western Europe. However, Nastasia is not completely ruined. She retains what is truly essential to remain Russian (she is meek and suffers). Nastasia, unlike Aglaia, does not think highly of herself. She rejects Prince Myshkin as a groom because she understands that he does not love her romantically, and she is afraid that she will ruin him. Nastasia Filippovna, sometimes resembles the prideful Aglaia in outward appearances. For example, she sometimes behaves atrociously, because she wants revenge. Nonetheless, she brings about much different outcomes with her actions. Nastasia still embodies the spirit of a simple Russian. She is from a poor family. Dostoevsky believed that anyone could be redeemed, especially a simple Russian. As he later wrote in his *Diary of a Writer*:

В русском человеке из простонародья нужно уметь отвлекать красоту его от наносного варварства. Обстоятельствами всей почти русской истории народ наш до того был предан разврату и до того был развращаем, соблазняем и постоянно мучим, что еще удивительно, как он дожил, сохранив человеческий образ, а не то что сохранив красоту его. Но он сохранил и красоту своего образа. Кто истинный друг человечества, у кого хоть раз
The ability of the Russian people (narod) to retain their beauty despite their depravity and suffering echoes Prince Myshkin’s characterization of Nastasia early in the novel: “Вы страдали и из такого ада чистая вышли, а это много” (ПСС 8: 138).

While Nastasia resembles Aglaia in that she is inclined to see the bad in others, unlike Myshkin, she does not confront society because she wants advantage for herself. One of the ways that Nastasia’s character represents Dostoevsky’s faith is her meekness. Though she shows a great deal of pride and superiority toward some of the characters, she never thinks highly of her self, and her behavior is in some way useful for others. Nastasia works for the salvation of others, unlike Aglaia. Some of her behavior resembles the holy fool of Russian culture who does things that normally would be sinful in order to show society its own faults. If the Prince offers to society an example of how to live a pure and humble life and how to forgive, Nastasia is necessary brings others to acknowledge their sins, in order to prepare them for living a more pure life. Though some of their actions differ, the Prince and Nastasia ultimately work towards the same goal of salvation for others. It seems unlikely that Nastasia acts consciously for the improvement of society. Nastasia’s conscious motives appear no better than Aglaia’s. However, Nastasia improves the moral behavior of various characters, which is not chance occurrence in Dostoevsky’s worldview.

When Nastasia behaves scandalously she never derives true enjoyment, but suffers through it all. In Dostoevsky’s world, suffering is one of the necessary conditions
that leads to salvation. Nastasia, like Russia, is not destined to dominate the world, but to be sacrificed as her surname, Barashkova (barashok = lamb) suggests. Her name also calls to mind the biblical and liturgical Lamb, which is Christ and thus suggests a connection between Nastasia and Myshkin. The lamb is sacrificed in order to bring salvation to the world. Dostoevsky also brings attention to the concept in Lebedev’s discussions of Revelation. Lebedev claims to be an interpreter of that book and sometimes quotes it. Another part of Revelation, not quoted by Lebedev, also sheds light to the symbolic significance of Nastasia and Myshkin:

And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals. Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?” And no one in heaven or on the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it. So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it. But one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals." And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all of the earth.22

Myshkin’s first name, Lev, is the Russian word for Lion. Both Lion and Lamb are used to symbolize Christ in Christianity. Myshkin and Nastasia play a special role because they understand much more than those around them. Myshkin, usually acknowledges that which is good in man, or is his true self, while Nastasia points out that which makes man unworthy of himself, his sin. Their similar upbringing (Myshkin was raised in Switzerland and Nastasia’s governess was Swiss) and their dislike for high society further strengthens the connection between them.23 Though both perform Christ-like functions, Myshkin is more symbolic of Christ because he does not have Nastasia’s faults.
One of the main sacrifices that Nastasia makes is giving up her own happiness for that of the most worthy character in the novel, Prince Lev Myshkin. She is obviously in love with him, and he is the only person that recognizes her suffering. Both she and the Prince see themselves as lowly beings, thus epitomizing Christian humility. They are two noblest characters in the novel. They both instantly agree to many of the reproaches which come their way, deservedly or not, whereas Aglaia and many other characters are unwilling to accept any personal responsibility or guilt for their own sins. While Nastasia has enough power and influence over the Prince to make him marry her and he is prepared to do so, she understands that Myshkin loves Aglaia and is willing to give him up and with him, her chances for a respectable, comfortable life. Instead, she chooses to take the more difficult path, to continue to confront high society alone and later to die because Nastasia understands that she must play her sacrificial role.

Nastasia’s willingness to combat others’ sins is demonstrated in her relationship with Gania. On the surface there seems to be little difference between Nastasia’s treatment of Gania and Aglaia’s. Both are cruel to Gania. However, Aglaia only wanted to punish Gania and did not care what happened to him after that while Nastasia wants Gania to recognize his sin. Unlike Aglaia’s, Nastasia’s treatment of Gania results in a renewal for Gania. Nastasia sometimes takes the truth so far that she seems ridiculous and even cruel. She behaves atrociously towards Gania’s sister and mother, trying to provoke Gania to see that he is acting immorally in marrying her. Nastasia knows that she cannot marry Gania because he hates her. When Nastasia treats him poorly, she only wants to humiliate him to the extent that he will see what he is doing as she explains, “А что я давеча издевалась у тебя, Ганечка, так это я нарочно хотела сама в последний
раз посмотреть: до чего ты сам можешь дойти?” (PSS 8: 136). While Nastasia does not expect him to marry her after the way she treats his family, it surprises her that he lets her behave so cruelly without kicking her out of his house and calling off the engagement. Later, Nastasia tests Gania again by challenging him to pull a bundle of rubies out of the fire. This time he surprises her by not going after the money. He passes out from the strain of his passion for money, but resists. After Gania recovers from this incident, however, he is a much better person. At Lebedev’s dacha, Aglaia notices the change as well:

-- Ведь это Гаврил Ардальонович вышел? -- спросила она вдруг, как любила иногда делать, громко, резко, прерывая своим вопросом разговор других и ни к кому лично не обращаясь.
-- Он, -- ответил князь.
-- Едва узнала его. Он очень изменился и…гораздо к лучшему.
-- Я очень рад за него, -- сказал князь (PSS 8: 204).

Nastasia forces Gania to face his passions (sins), which allows him to overcome them. Her motives are probably not completely selfless—she may have revenge on her mind—but the results of her action suggest some amount of goodwill on her part. From a Orthodox point of view, one cannot get good results from complete evil. While Gania does not become a saint, and continues to struggle throughout the novel, his struggle is aggravated not by Nastasia, but by Aglaia (who continues to nurture his false hopes for her) and by the rest of the vitiated society in which he lives.

Nastasia forces many other characters to confront their sins along the way. At the same birthday party where she tempts Gania by throwing money into the fire, Nastasia insists on playing a game in which everyone confesses the worse thing that he/she has done. Nastasia wants the people to confess their sins. When the participants do not play
the game seriously or honestly, Nastasia becomes agitated, especially when Totsky does not acknowledge that he took advantage of her as a child. In part, Nastasia’s behavior is motivated by wounded pride, but she could have exposed Totsky and General Epanchin in many other ways or made them suffer much more. While Nastasia has made Totsky suffer in the past, she admits or confesses this sin to Totsky and the others present at the party. When she gives Totsky one last chance to confess his sin during this game, and he does not, she releases him from his obligations to her and tells him that he need not fear her anymore, because she realizes that she is wrong for being vengeful.

Nastasia coaxes General Epanchin to confess a sin. The way he tells his worst deed makes it sound as though he was not really guilty of anything.\textsuperscript{24} However outwardly insincere his confession may seem, it somehow does benefit him: after the incident General Epanchin begins to treat Myshkin and his family better.\textsuperscript{25} Nastasia helps General Epanchin improve through confession.

Nastasia later makes Radomsky publicly confront his own faults, though she had an ulterior motive in doing so. She wants to drive away Radomsky, who is a rival of the Prince for Aglaia, in order that the Prince may be happy. She thus yells out that Radomsky has I.O.U’s, soiling his reputation. Although most of society doubts Nastasia at first, these I.O.U’s turn out to be authentic, ruining Radomsky’s aspirations for Aglaia. Radomsky later returns to Petersburg somewhat changed and begins to develop a closer relationship with the Prince.

Nastasia is constantly ridiculed and chastised by the corrupt society that surrounds her, while Aglaia continues to be praised by all no matter what she does. Aglaia retains her power in this world.
In contrast to Aglaia, Nastasia sacrifices herself and suffers even for those who do not care for her. Nastasia makes the ultimate sacrifice in her relationship with Rogozhin. She allows herself to be killed so that Rogozhin can reach the limits of his passion. Rogozhin is important in the novel because he represents a Russian man who struggles with belief in God. The character with the most references to the Russian soul in the novel is Rogozhin, ironically enough since he is the one who has lost his Orthodox faith. Rogozhin’s struggle with atheism is the result of outside influences taken to the extreme. In Dostoevsky’s view, all is not lost because Rogozhin still has his Russian soul, and thus the chance for salvation. Rogozhin is not a complete atheist, but questions the Prince about faith (ПФС 8: 184) and continually returns to him as the representative of a faith that he wants to have. Rogozhin’s first religious influences comes from his sectarian father, a circumstance that was likely to have harmed his spiritual growth and made him susceptible to other negative influences. Later Rogozhin struggles with a painting in his house that depicts an all too human Christ after His crucifixion. That painting presents the dead Christ as a regular person. According to Myshkin and Dostoevsky, the concrete representation of all the grim details makes it difficult to believe in Christ’s resurrection.

Rogozhin and Nastasia are linked by their Russian souls. Myshkin notices this link and that both Nastasia and Rogozhin are in some sense mad. He sees Rogozhin as the suffering man who lost his faith:

Тут безумство с обеих сторон. А ему, князю, любить страстно эту женщину – почти немыслимо, почти было бы жестокостью, бесчеловечностью. Да, да! Нет, Рогожин на себя клевещет, у него огромное сердце, которое может и страдать и сострадать. Когда он узнает всю истину и когда убедится, какое жалкое существо эта поврежденная,
погощая, — разве не просит он ей тогда всё прежнее, всё мучения свои? Разве не станет ее слугой, братом, другом, провидением? Сострадание осмыслит и научит самого Рогожина. Сострадание есть главнейший и, может быть, единственный закон всего человечества. О, как он непростительно и бесчестно виноват пред Рогожиным! Нет, не «русская душа потемки», а у него самого на душе потемки, если он мог вообразить такой ужас. За несколько горячих и сердечных слов в Москве Рогожин уже называет его своим братом, а он... Но это болезнь и бред! Это всё разрешится! Как мрачно сказала довече Рогожин, что у него «пропал вера»! Этот человек должен сильно страдать. Он говорит, что «любит смотреть на эту картину» [of the crucified Christ]; не любит, а, значит, ощущает потребность. Рогожин не одна только страшная душа; это всё-таки боек: он хочет силой воротить свою потерянную веру. Ему она до мучения теперь нужна... Да! во что-нибудь верить! в кого-нибудь верить! А какая, однако же, странная эта картина Голеймана...(PSS 8: 191-192).

Rogozhin’s and Nastasia’s madness make it difficult to judge them harshly or hold them accountable for their actions. This is especially true since their madness is caused by external influences, both societal and familial: Rogozhin’s father was a member of a religious sect and Nastasia had only Totsky as family after her parents’ death. Both Nastasia and Rogozhin, however, are imperfect and their faults prevent them from being completely positive characters. In fact, they are mad and commit some of the worst sins (orgies, etc.) in the novel.

Nastasia understands that eventually Rogozhin will kill her. She together with the Prince understands that this is a necessary step for both Rogozhin and herself. There are numerous moments of foreshadowing that each of these three characters notices and each feels the inevitability. Myshkin, however, cannot quite understand how Rogozhin could go so far, since this kind of passion is alien to Myshkin. Like Gania and like Raskolnikov in *Crime and Punishment*, Rogozhin must be pushed to that final step before he can begin to move towards his recovery. After Rogozhin kills Nastasia and confesses to Prince Myshkin, both men lie down beside her, Myshkin (the symbolic representative
of Christ) reaches his hand out to Rogozhin as to an infant, “Князь сидел подле него неподвижно на подстилке и тихо, каждый раз при взрывах крика или бреда больного, спешил провести дрожащей рукой по его волосам и щекам, как бы лаская и унимая его” (PSS 8: 501). This scene evokes Nastasia’s description of Christ with a child in her letters to Aglaia in which Christ assures the child that he is not guilty (PSS 8: 380) much as Prince Myshkin tells Nastasia that she is not guilty. In another scene the Prince extends his hand to Nastasia after the disastrous meeting with Aglaia:

Он [Князь] ничего не говорил, но пристально вслушивался в ее [Nastasia’s] порывистый, восторженный и бессвязный лепет, вряд ли понимал что-нибудь, но тихо улыбался, и чуть только ему казалось, что она начинала опять тосковать или плакать, упрекать или жаловаться, тотчас же начинал ее опять гладить по головке и нежно водить руками по ее щекам, утешая и уговаривая ее, как ребенка (PSS 8: 475).

The importance of this gesture is reflected in a letter that Dostoevsky wrote while working on the novel. In discussing the gospel of Luke where Jesus casts out the demons from a man into pigs that subsequently go crazy and drown themselves, Dostoevsky likens the demons to liberals like the literary critic Belinsky who have made Russia ill (or possessed by demons). In the gospel scene, the formerly possessed man ends by sitting at the feet of Jesus. In Dostoevsky’s words, “Бесы вышли из русского человека и вошли в стадо свиней, то есть в Нечаевых, в Серно-Соловьевичей и проч. Те потонули или потонут наверно, а исцелившийся человек, из которого вышли бесы, сидит у ног Иисусовых. Так и должно быть” (PSS 29: 145). Similarly, Nastasia and Rogozhin are healed from the corruption of foreign influences to sit at the feet Myshkin (Christ). They are forgiven because of their Russianness. There is a type of prayer in their repentance as they humble themselves before Myshkin (Christ).
Dostoevsky’s concepts of Christian humility are expressed throughout the novel by the repentance of Nastasia and Rogozhin, who are exorcised of their demons. The “demon” never comes out of Aglaia, however: she never does what is necessary in order to get rid of her sins. Nor does she suffer for anyone else or because of her own sins so that she may be comforted and sit at the feet of Jesus. She would never sit at anyone’s feet. When Jesus says, “I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance” (Luke 15:17), his comment closely resembles Myshkin’s anecdote about Christian humility as explained by an old peasant woman: “А вот, говорит, точно так, как бывает материна радость, когда она первую от своего младенца улыбку заприметит, такая же точно бывает и у бога радость всякий раз, когда он с неба завидит, что грешник пред ним от всего своего сердца на молитву становится” (PSS 8: 184).

Nastasia ultimately rejects the world, a step that is also necessary for salvation according to Christianity. Although she does accept some of the riches and gifts bestowed upon her, she does not value them, but on the contrary, flaunts them so much that she exposes them for what they are. If Nastasia rides around in “luxury” and “elegant dress,” it is obvious that she does so in order to rouse the disgust of other characters who perceive Nastasia as a great sinner and do not see that they have already sold themselves to materialism. In her letter to Aglaia she explains:

Но я отказалась от мира; вам смешно это слышать от меня, встречая меня в кружевах и бриллиантах, с пьяницами и негодяями? Не смотрите на это, я уже почти не существую и знаю это, бог знает, что вместо меня живет во мне (PSS 8: 380).

In the letter it is clear that she is willing also to accept her fate, the will of God.
Although Nastasia is outwardly different from Myshkin, she inwardly resembles him. While Myshkin is reproached for his humility, society does not recognize the humility in Nastasia. It is a mystery to the others at Nastasia’s party why Prince Myshkin after agreeing to marry Nastasia says to her: “сочту, что вы мне, а не я сделаю честь. Я ничто, а вы страдали, а из такого ада чистая вышли, а это много” (PSS 8: 138).

The others don’t see her as “pure,” but as a fallen woman. Although most of the main characters in the novel (Kolia and Marie excepted) feel superior to the Prince at times, Nastasia never does. She never puts herself on his level, although at times she says and does things that he does not completely understand because Myshkin shields himself and does not recognize the filth in the world. He is all-forgiving and pure, only able see good. While Myshkin was shown kindness and generosity as a child, however, Nastasia was cruelly exposed to the sins of man at an early age. She therefore plays in part the role of a holy fool who exposes society’s sins. In some ways, Nastasia actually is stronger than the Prince because she understands the evil side of the world, having been a victim of it, while he is too pure. The only connection that he has to the world are people like Marie, the children in Switzerland, and Nastasia. After Nastasia is taken away from him he has no further connection to the Petersburg and after she is murdered he falls into complete idiocy. Nastasia accepts the Prince for who he is the way that that Russia accepts Christ the way He is. She accepts that purity from another world. Nastasia’s faults and terrible pride prevent her from completely saving the many characters with whom she comes into contact. Although she does positively affect them, they often are
changed only slightly. Her relationship with Aglaia not only makes the differences between the two characters more explicit, but also demonstrates that Nastasia (Russia) is not ready to save the world.
CHAPTER 3

AGLAIA AND NASTASIA’S INTERACTION

The interactions between Aglaia Epanchina and Nastasia Filippovna provide some of the best material for evaluating what each of these two characters represent. The characters engage each other in communication only twice: when Nastasia writes to Aglaia and when they meet together with the Prince toward the conclusion of the novel.

Nastasia’s characterization of Aglaia in her letters indicates that Nastasia is capable of the lofty thoughts and ideals that Dostoevsky claims are embedded in the Russian soul. When Aglaia and Nastasia meet face to face, however, Aglaia’s comments to Nastasia make it clear that Aglaia does not embody those same ideals. The confrontation demonstrates that Nastasia is the morally superior of the two heroines. In the final scene between them we also see how Nastasia struggles with her fate. She is not ready to accept death, but still hopes to marry Myshkin and live happily ever after.

Nastasia is willing to see Aglaia in a positive light. Though aware of Aglaia as her rival for the Prince, Nastasia is willing to believe that Aglaia must be good if the Prince loves her so much. She even makes an effort to bring the Prince and Aglaia together through encouraging Aglaia in her letters. Although Nastasia does not know
Что это, вчера я прошла мимо вас, и вы как будто покраснели? Не может быть, это мне так показалось. Если вас привести даже в самый грязный вертеп и показать вам обнаженный порок, то вы не должны краснеть; вы никак не можете ненавидеть из-за обиды. Вы можете ненавидеть всех подлых и низких, но не за себя, а за других, за тех, кого они обижают. Вас же никому нельзя обидеть. Знаете, мне кажется, вы должны любить меня. Для меня вы то же, что и для него: светлый дух; ангел не может ненавидеть, не может и не любить...В отвлеченной любви к человечеству любишь почти всегда одного себя. Но это нам невозможно, а вы другое дело: как могли бы вы не любить хотя кого-нибудь, когда вы ни с кем себя не можете сравнивать и когда вы выше всякой обиды, выше всякого личного негождования? Вы одни можете любить без эгоизма, вы одни можете любить не для себя самой, а для того, кого вы любите (PSS 8: 379).

Nastasia thinks lofty things of Aglaia because the Prince loves her, even though she admits, “Ведь я не сужу вас; я не рассудком дошла до того, что вы совершенство; я просто уверовала” (PSS 8: 379). Nastasia indicates that she reached her conclusion through belief and not intellect, much as Dostoevsky believed Russia’s strength was in its faith. She humbles herself when claiming not to be Aglaia’s equal.

Like the Prince, she believes in Christian love and in the ideal represented by the Prince, and in the possibility of other good people, which she projects onto Aglaia at first.

Nastasia projects her own virtues onto Aglaia when she describes a vision of Christ that she claims was inspired by Aglaia:

[Я] бы изобразила его одного, -- оставляя же его иногда ученики одного. Я оставила бы с ним только одного маленького ребенка. Ребенок играл подле него; может быть, может быть рассказал его что-нибудь на своем детском языке, Христос его слушал, но теперь задумался; рука его невольно, забывчиво осталась на светлой головке ребенка. Он смотрит в даль, в горизонт; мысль, великая, как весь мир, покоится в его взгляде; лицо грустное. Ребенок замолк, облокотился на его колена и, подперши ручкой щеку, поднял голову и задумчиво, как дети иногда задумываются, пристально на него смотрит. Солнце заходит...Вот моя картина! Вы невинны, и в вашей невинности всё совершенство ваше. О, помните только это! Что вам за дело до моей страсти к вам? Вы теперь уже моя, я буду всю жизнь около вас...Я скоро умру (PSS 8: 380).
Since the Prince is the one who tells Nastasia that she is not guilty at her name day party, Nastasia’s conception of Christ telling Aglaia that she is not guilty indicates that Nastasia is talking about herself (though not consciously aware of that fact). More evidence that supports the idea that Nastasia is talking about herself comes after the argument between Nastasia and Aglaia: “Через десять минут князь сидел подле Настасьи Филипповны, не отрываясь смотрел на нее и гладил ее по головке и по лицу обеими руками, как малое дитя” (PSS 8: 475). Nastasia obviously is describing herself, but in her humility tries to attribute her own righteousness to Aglaia.

While Nastasia is ready to believe good things about Aglaia, Aglaia generally tends to believe the worst in others. She is acutely aware of Nastasia Filippovna from the very beginning of the novel, as a rival (in some sense) for the attention of both Gania and the Prince. Nastasia Filippovna’s very name arouses Aglaia’s envy. Myshkin first mentions her name to Aglaia when describing Aglaia as almost as beautiful as Nastasia Filippovna. When Aglaia, her mother and sisters out that Myshkin has seen Nastasia’s portrait, they insist that Gania bring it immediately. All look at the portrait and remark how beautiful Nastasia is except for Aglaia who “взглянула на портрет только мельком, прищурились, выдвинула нижнюю губку, отошла и села к стороне, сложив руки” (PSS 8: 69). The competition is uncomfortable for Aglaia who is used to being doted upon by her family as well as others. She senses that Nastasia is more powerful than she.

Later, Aglaia’s comments and reactions to Nastasia betray that Aglaia is capable of thinking awful thoughts about the unfortunate Nastasia (Myshkin’s words). Aglaia brings out the worst in Nastasia. She even goes so far in insulting Nastasia that Nastasia
has difficulty controlling herself. The narrator explains that Nastasia’s insulting reactions are completely out of character and that she doesn’t even understand what she is doing or saying. When Aglaia enters the house where Nastasia is staying, for example, she is met with an almost hateful look. Aglaia recognizes Nastasia’s love and her jealousy for the Prince. She even fears Nastasia’s love, because she knows it to be stronger than her own. Aglaia, nevertheless is very proud and responds with the condescension which has become such a part of her nature that she does not even notice it:

Раза два, как бы нечаянно, она окинула взглядом комнату; отвращение видимо изобразилось в ее лице, точно она боялась здесь замараться. Она машинально оправляла свою одежду и даже с беспокойством переменила однажды место, подвигаясь к углу дивана. Вряд ли она и сама сознавала все свои движения; на бессознательность еще усиливал ее обиду (PSS 8: 469-70).

The modest, big, old, wooden house in which Nastasia is staying is below Aglaia’s standards as is the company in which she finds herself. She is like those West Europeans whom Dostoevsky accuses of condescension towards traditional, but sturdy Russia—here represented in the house, in Nastasia, and in Daria Alekseevna, the home’s owner and one of the very few morally sound characters in the entire novel.

Aglaia betrays her intentions to fight (сражаться) in her first words. She remarks that she is uncomfortable, because she is on an unequal playing field, at Nastasia’s residence. Nastasia’s letters to Aglaia had put her on a higher level, because Nastasia humbled herself for Aglaia. Now she recognizes that Aglaia has come to triumph once and for all over her rival, to “answer” the letters in person. Aglaia at first tries to belittle Nastasia’s character by slandering her:

Выслушайте же мой ответ на все ваши письма: мне стало жаль князя Льва Николаевича в первый раз в тот самый день, когда я с ним познакомилась и
когда потом узнала обо всем, что произошло на вашем вечере. Мне потому его стало жаль, что он такой простодушный человек и по простоте своей поверил, что может быть счастлив... с женщиной... такого характера. Чего я боялась за него, то и случилось: вы не могли его полюбить, измучили его и кинули. Вы потому его не могли любить, что слишком горды... нет, не горды, я ошиблась, а потому, что вы тщеславны... даже и не это: вы себялюбивы до... сумасшествия, чему доказательством служат и ваши письма ко мне. Вы его, такого простого, не могли полюбить, и даже, может быть, про себя презирили и смеялись над ним, могли полюбить только один свой позор и беспрерывную мысль о том, что вы опозорены и что вас оскорбили (PSS 8: 471).

But it is not Nastasia who drops the Prince because of his simplicity: Aglaia’s words are an indictment of herself. They contain a grain of truth though these accusations of Nastasia are mostly false.

Aglaia tries to bring down Nastasia by belittling Nastasia’s love for the Prince. She says that Nastasia’s character prevents her from truly loving and only pretends to love the Prince by trying to join the him with Aglaia. Aglaia tries her best to denigrate this noble deed by claiming that Nastasia only wanted to appear noble. There is no supporting evidence for Aglaia’s judgment in the novel: Nastasia never once tries to promote herself as a good Samaritan and does not care about society’s opinion of her.

Aglaia sees Nastasia as a fallen women and undeserving of the Prince’s devotion, a woman in whom “the poor knight” blindly believes, “no matter what she does.” Aglaia judges superficially. Her power is in the material world and its opinions and constraints: she does not let herself be dragged into the deeper, moral, ethical existence of the Prince and Nastasia. Nastasia, on the other hand, gives up her earthly power and her earthly passion for the Prince (like the Prince gives up his earthly passion for Aglaia when faced with the choice) out of love and because she knows that she has another role in life, even though that means accepting the suffering that goes along with it.
Despite Nastasia’s attempts to make Aglaia an ideal, she finally begins to understand who Aglaia really is, much as nineteenth-century Russia is beginning to understand Western Europe—a process, according to Dostoevsky, that was made possible through the theories of the Slavophiles and others. Nastasia interferes in Aglaia’s relationship with Myshkin much as Dostoevsky thought Russia would interfere in Western Europe’s relationship with Christ. Nastasia’s inability to bring Aglaia to Myshkin, mirrors Dostoevsky’s apprehension of Russia’s unpreparedness to accept its messianic mission. She is not ready to bring them together. She is not really conscious of her potential, still struggles with her pride, and still fluctuates between staying with the Prince and going to Rogozhin, what she knows will be a sacrificial role. Nastasia at first does not know Aglaia well enough to understand how to make the Prince and Aglaia happy with one another. Nastasia also has flaws that detract from her ability to help. First, she lets her own jealousy and desires cloud her judgment of Aglaia. Aglaia may have reacted too strongly against Nastasia’s intentions in writing her those letters, but there was a hint of truth in what Aglaia said (Nastasia does love the Prince). Nastasia also does not react meekly when they meet, but attacks Aglaia back with viciousness.

Aglaia is more calculating. As she tries to regain control over the escalating argument between Nastasia and herself, she attempts to tarnish Nastasia deceitfully. First, she tells Nastasia the truth, but in the most brutal way possible, trying to demonstrate that Nastasia is unworthy of the Prince. Then she lies outright, telling Nastasia that the Prince hates her. Nastasia responds to this with some skepticism, “Может быть; может быть, я и не стою его, только... только солгали вы, я думаю! Не может он меня ненавидеть, и не мог он так сказать!” (PSS 8: 474). Nastasia
identifies Aglaia’s lie, not because she wants to be cruel to Aglaia, but because she truly understands the Prince. At the same time, however, Nastasia cannot handle so many insults and is pushed to the point where she falters. She tells Aglaia to take the Prince if she will only leave and then falls into the chair crying.

Here, Nastasia’s pride comes to the fore: she tells Aglaia that she has the power to command the Prince to leave Aglaia and stay with her. Nastasia is hysterical at this point and according to the text is not fully aware of what she is saying. She suffers: “кричала она почти без памяти, с усилием выпуская слова из груди, с искажившимся лицом и с запекшимся губами, очевидно сама не веря ни на каплю своей фанфаронаде, но в то же время хоть секунду еще желая продлить мгновение и обмануть себя” (PSS 8: 474). Nastasia tries to counter Aglaia, abandoning her meek nature, trying to be powerful for once in her life.

The Prince eventually chooses Nastasia over Aglaia. His choice is not rationally made, however. Myshkin loves Aglaia for her physical beauty. He is also not immune to temptation. She has a power over him that makes him fearful of her beauty, which is why he refuses to describe her face when he meets her the first time. The Prince knew that eventually he would have to confront his Christian love for Nastasia with his material, earthly love for Aglaia. When the two women finally do confront one another, it seems completely natural to the Prince: “Князь, который еще вчера не поверил бы возможности увидеть это даже во сне, теперь стоял, смотрел и слушал, как бы всё это он давно уже предчувствовал” (PSS 8: 470). Myshkin’s choice is very important, because the two female characters represent two different kinds of love. He is afraid of the spiritual love that Nastasia represents because he knows that it is stronger than the
earthly love that Aglaia represents and he desires Aglaia very much. He foresees that he will have to give up the earthly love for the eternal love. When walking with Aglaia to meet Nastasia, the Prince understands that he fears Nastasia because he loves Aglaia and that his feelings for Nastasia are stronger as he asks himself, “Почему ему всегда казалось, что эта женщина [Настасья] явится именно в самый последний момент и разорвет всю судьбу его, как гнилую нитку?” (PSS 8: 466).

Symbolically, Myshkin’s choice of Nastasia over Aglaia is analogous to Christ’s choosing the Russian over Western faith. It was Myshkin’s compassion for Nastasia’s suffering that compelled him to stay with her. Nastasia is representative of the suffering Russia who, according to Dostoevsky, can obtain salvation. Despite Nastasia’s many sins, she remains humble enough to recognize and accept Myshkin’s moral superiority.

After Nastasia is murdered, Myshkin falls into complete “idiocy” and returns to Switzerland. Russia was not ready for him and so the only place he could go is the idyllic Swiss village. In that setting, Myshkin had been able to effect great change by inspiring compassion in the villagers for the fallen women, Marie. She dies “happily” because of Myshkin’s actions. He was more “successful” in Switzerland because of Marie’s idyllic village community with all its children, who Dostoevsky felt could save the world. Marie was also much simpler than either Aglaia or Nastasia.

Myshkin’s inability to make profound changes in Russia reflects Dostoevsky’s ideas on Russia’s non-readiness for accepting Christ. But Myshkin is not a complete failure there. Like Christ, he plants the seed of righteousness. Kolia, for example, was very much affected by Myshkin. In fact, the Prince touches each of the characters in a way that makes them aware of goodness. Myshkin is only a “failure” in the sense that
Christ was a failure in his time on earth. Both effect little change on earth, but plant the seed of goodness.

In conclusion, Aglaia and Nastasia represent more than two female rivals for the love of a Prince. They represent Dostoevsky’s ideas on Catholicism and Russia. Without an understanding of Dostoevsky’s Catholic and Russian ideas, perceiving the moral implications reflected in the novel is more difficult. He rejects the proud, self-willed, materialistic (comfortable) and power hungry which as represented in The Idiot by Aglaia Epanchina. Dostoevsky idealizes Christian love and humility, rejection of power in this world, suffering, and a submission to fate (God’s will) which is represented in The Idiot by Nastasia Filippovna.

In this light, the final outcomes in the novel take on a fuller meaning. Aglaia marries a Catholic Pole, converts to the Catholic faith, becoming part of an active Catholic organization that is working for the independence of Poland from Russia, a plan that Dostoevsky opposes. Nastasia accepts Christ and follows his example (though she, like any human, falters along the way) by becoming a sacrificial victim. Dostoevsky’s novel suggests that through her suffering and sacrifice she will receive her resurrection implied by her first name, “Anastasia”—a Greek name meaning “resurrection.
ENDNOTES

1Joseph Frank, *Dostoevsky: The Miraculous Years, 1865-71* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 323-4, 334-5. Frank states that all characters in the novel suffer from some form of egoism. He places Aglaia on the highest moral level with Prince Myshkin, Lizaveta Prokofeevna Epanchina, and Radomsky, because their egoism "does not assume any overtly aggressive form and is combined with admirable qualities of mind and heart." He places Nastasia, along with Rogozhin on the second level of his three-tiered scheme. On that level are those "whose egoism, even though taking a self-destructive form, testifies to a genuine capacity for some sort of moral-spiritual experience." On the lowest level, Frank places Gania, Totsky, and General Epanchin; those who pursue utilitarian advantage or the satisfaction of physical desires. Frank's argument is sound in its discussion and evaluation of the characters' psychological motivation. While he points out many of the details that relate Aglaja to Catholicism, Frank does not account for the contradiction between Dostoevsky's anti-Catholic worldview and the fact that Aglaja occupying the highest level on the moral scale and ending as a Catholic convert.


3Ibid.

4Frank, *Miraculous Years*, 323.


motivations of Aglaia Epanchina and/or Nastasia Filippovna, in particular Aglaia’s or Nastasia’s pride and how it provokes their behavior. Only Victor Terras also focuses on the characters’ allegorical meaning, but he only makes general remarks about the Christian significance of Nastasia Filippovna, (80-81).

7In M. M. Bakhtin’s important study on Dostoevsky, he notes that Dostoevsky used the technique of “heteroglossia” in his fiction, thus giving full weight to the various characters in the novel who express distinctive viewpoints (Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics, ed. and trans. Caryl Emerson [Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1984]).

8Dostoevsky’s ideas on Western Europe and Catholicism are extensively examined in Denis Dirschler, Dostoevsky and the Catholic Church (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1986); Bruce K. Ward, Dostoyevsky’s Critique of the West: The Quest for the Earthly Paradise (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1986); Iustin Popovich, Dostoevskii o Evrope i slavianstve, trans. (from Serbian) L. N. Danilenko (Spb.: Admiralteistvo, 1998); Wayne Dowler, Dostoevsky, Grigor’ev, and Native Soil Conservatism (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987); and N. Losskii, Dostoevskii i ego khristianskoe mirroponimanie (New York: Izd. Imeni Chekhova, 1953).

9Fyodor Dostoevsky, Winter Notes on Summer Impressions.

10To A.N. Maikov, 31 December 1867, Geneva, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridtsati tomakh 28, bk. 2 (L.: Nauka, 1973), 243-4. Subsequent untranslated citations of Dostoevsky’s work will be taken from PSS.


14To A. N. Maikov, 9 October 1870, Dresden, PSS, 146-7.


16See reference 7.


19 To N. N. Strakhov, 18 March 1869, Florence, *PSS* 29.1, 30.

20 Masing-Delic and King point out that the family’s influence on Aglaia makes her a hollow object like the vase that the Prince breaks while at the Epanchins and also that “her scale of values has irreversibly been tipped in favor of ‘worldly vanity.’” (“General Epanchin as Germann. A Travesty on Pushkin’s ‘Queen of Spades’ in Dostoevsky’s *The Idiot,*” *Dostoevsky Studies: Journal of the International Dostoevsky Society* 9 [1989]: 182).

21 Ibid., 175.

22 Rev. 5:1-6 NKJV.


25 Masing-Delic and King point out that ultimately Epanchin’s “thrift philosophy” ultimately caused the death of an old woman” (178). They also point out how his life changes for the better (he treats Myshkin and others better) after his confession (184).

26 Rogozhin is brought up in a house influenced by the religious sect of “Castrates” (*Skoptsy*), a dangerous, fanatic group according to Dostoevsky. In his view, any faith that separated man from the soil and from true Orthodox belief made him “susceptible to atheist, Jesuit and socialist influences” (William J. Comer, “Rogozhin and the ‘Castrates’: Russian Religious Traditions in Dostoevsky’s *The Idiot,*” *Slavic and East European Journal* 40.1 [Spring 1996], 85-99).

27 Burgin notes that Nastasia’s letters are addressed to Nastasia’s own poetic self as well as Aglaia. Many of the characteristics that she gives to Aglaia apply to a more innocent, purer version of herself, which she dreams of recovering (Diana Lewis Burgin, “The Reprieve of Nastasia: A Reading of a Dreamer’s Authored Life,” *Slavic and East European Journal* 29.3 [Fall, 1985], 259-75).
LIST OF REFERENCES


