

DOSTOEVSKII'S OVERCOAT:
INFLUENCE, COMPARISON, AND TRANSPOSITION

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DOSTOEVSKII'S OVERCOAT:
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Shkliarevskii and Russian Detective Fiction: the Influence of Dostoevskii

Claire Whitehead

Amongst the contemporary Russian reading public, the *detektiv* reigns supreme. The relaxation of censorship laws and the liberalization of commercial conditions which accompanied the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 led to an influx of crime thrillers and detective stories from the West. Gradually these were joined and then overtaken by indigenous production in these 'popular' genres: nowadays the novels of Daria Dontsova, Aleksandra Marinina and Boris Akunin frequently top the bestseller list.¹ Whilst there may be many aspects of this post-Soviet flourishing of detective fiction which are unique, the broader phenomenon of liberalization (both political and commercial) acting as a stimulus to the public's taste for such literature can be seen to have an historical precedent. As Jeffrey Brooks has demonstrated in *When Russia Learned to Read*, developments in literacy and primary schooling as well as the diversification in publishing practices which followed the Emancipation Act of 1861 led to an explosion in the production of fiction featuring crime, detectives, adventure and bandits in the final decades of the nineteenth century.² The purpose of this chapter is to begin to examine the work of a little-known contributor to this first wave of popularization - Aleksandr Alekseevich Shkliarevskii (1837-83) - and his relationship with the work of Fedor Mikhailovich Dostoevskii. Through his activity in the realms of both fiction and non-fiction, Dostoevskii was a key figure in the birth of fiction featuring crime in Russia. Although it is reasonable to expect that his influence was felt keenly by successors in the nascent genre of detective fiction, little, if any, research has yet been conducted in this area. History has all but dismissed authors such as Shkliarevskii (and contemporaries like N.M. Sokolovskii and N.P. Timofeev) as practitioners of 'pulp fiction'. However, such a characterization ignores or underestimates the literary qualities of their work which bear witness to lessons learned from their illustrious predecessor.

Russian detective fiction was a later arrival on the nineteenth-century literary scene than its counterparts in France, the United States or Britain. Critics can, and frequently do, point to Honoré de Balzac's Vautrin in *Le Père Goriot* of 1834, Edgar Allan Poe's C. Auguste Dupin in a trilogy of stories of the 1840s and Charles Dickens' Inspector Bucket in *Bleak House* from 1853 as amongst the earliest examples of fictional detectives in these countries.³ In Russia, however, a variety of factors, including the pre-1861 organization of social institutions, the concomitant lack of a truly professional police force and judiciary, publishing trends, and the absence of capitalism impeded the genesis of a home-grown genre.⁴ Fertile ground began, though, to be cultivated by the post-1856 atmosphere of reform, and not least the changes which were wrought upon Russia's legal system during this period. Whereas, in the words of William Burnham, 'the Russian legal system during the reign of Nicholas I was a mess that cried out for reform',⁵ under Alexander II it became one of the most forward-looking in Europe. The reforms to the judiciary, which culminated in the 1864 Court Statutes, rendered it independent of the administrative framework of the state, introduced jury trials, and had as one of their primary aims 'greater professionalism, legality and objectivity in the investigatory stages of the case'.⁶ A crucial figure in this professionalization was the 'судебный следователь' (or 'examining / investigating magistrate') - arguably the closest Russian equivalent at the time to the detective of the West.⁷ In the first few years of the 1860s, the public had its appetite for crime and the 'investigator' whetted by the documentary sketches penned by M.M. Maksimov, N.M. Sokolovskii and P.I. Stepanov, which included details of actual investigations and descriptions of court proceedings observed first-hand.⁸ Nevertheless, Russia still needed to take the next step and transform such *realia* into literary fiction, and Dostoevskii and Shkliarevskii are important figures in this regard.

Given Dostoevskii's acutely personal acquaintance with the arbitrary nature and application of Russia's pre-reform laws, it is perhaps unsurprising that, upon his return to St Petersburg in 1859, a good deal of his time was dedicated to thinking and writing about crime and the changing juridical landscape. Dostoevskii spent countless hours watching trials; moreover, he was in direct contact with two of the leading prosecutors of the period: Anatolii Koni (whom he generally admired) and Vladimir Spasovich (whom he labelled 'the corruptor of thought' and parodied in the character of Fetiukovich in *The Brothers Karamazov*).⁹

This personal interest, coupled with the enthusiasm shown by public opinion for discussions of criminality and legal reform, ensured that crime was a central concern of the journals which Dostoevskii edited. *Time*, for example, frequently examined the psychology of the criminal and, to this end, reported on numerous contemporary French court cases, justifying their publication with the claim that ‘they are more absorbing than any novel, because they reveal the very darkest sides of the human soul, which art does not like to touch [...] reading these trials, in our opinion, will not be without benefit for the Russian audience’.¹⁰ However, Dostoevskii also used the journal’s literary section to begin to introduce such criminal preoccupations into art with the serialization of his novel *Notes From the House of the Dead* between 1861 and 1862. In 1866, the publication of *Crime and Punishment* saw the author once again take a criminal as his protagonist and, in the character of Porfirii Petrovich, provide the first depiction of an ‘examining magistrate’ in Russian literature. His last novel, *The Brothers Karamazov* (1878-80), which describes the events surrounding a parricide, showed that he had lost none of his interest in the insights which could be revealed by means of a depiction of crime.

A.A. Shkliarevskii warrants consideration as an important contributor to the history of Russian detective fiction simply in terms of the volume of his output. Between 1870 and 1883, he wrote some two dozen works in the genre. These include *Why Did He Kill Them?* (*Отчего он убил их?* [1872]), *The Russian Tichborne* (*Русский Тичборн* [1876]), inspired by the mystery which had so fascinated English society in the 1860s and 1870s,¹¹ *An Undiscovered Crime* (*Нераскрытое преступление* [1878]) and *What Prompts Murder?* (*Что побудило к убийству?*), published in 1879. However, the need for a more in-depth examination of the structure and content of this output is suggested by Shkliarevskii’s admission that Dostoevskii was his principal role model. In a letter to Dostoevskii in the early 1870s, Shkliarevskii wrote: ‘I number amongst the most ardent disciples of your works for their deep psychological analysis, which is shared by none of our other contemporary writers [...] If I imitate any writer, then it is You ...’¹² Indeed, traces of Dostoevskii’s influence can be discerned in a number of different aspects of Shkliarevskii’s writing. Both men depict not only post- but also pre-1864-reform legal landscapes in their works, and the implications this distinction has upon the investigation and prosecution of criminals. Both address, albeit from somewhat different angles and

with varying degrees of success, questions of the psychology of the criminal and the role of environment (среда) in their behaviour. However, for the purposes of this chapter, the discussion of similarities between the work of Dostoevskii and Shkliarevskii will be restricted to two issues: the treatment of narrative voice and point of view on the one hand and the organization of time on the other. A comparison of these aspects in Dostoevskii's *Crime and Punishment* and *The Brothers Karamazov* and Shkliarevskii's *The Tale of an Examining Magistrate* (*Рассказ судебного следователя* [1872]) and *A Secret Investigation* (*Секретное следствие* [1876]) will allow three broad contentions to be made. First, that in these two novels, Dostoevskii demonstrates cognizance of certain of the conventions of detective fiction. Second, rather than simply imitating such practice, Dostoevskii develops or recasts these conventions in order to achieve aims that can be seen to be much broader than those of detective fiction. Finally, and most importantly in terms of breaking new ground, that Shkliarevskii assimilates certain of the lessons offered by Dostoevskii and echoes his technique in his own works. In so doing, he establishes a position for himself as an important contributor to the history of detective fiction in Russia which deserves to be recognized more widely.

Given the sheer weight of criticism which has been devoted to detective fiction over the past 150 years, it is surprising that so little sustained and explicit attention has been paid to the issue of the genre's exploitation of the poetics of narrative voice and point of view. In order to attempt to arrive at a set of conventions for the relationship between detective fiction and the issues of 'who sees' and 'who speaks', it is necessary to extrapolate from statements which do not primarily address this question. For example, Willard Huntingdon Wright, the author of the influential 'Twenty Rules for Writing Detective Fiction', states elsewhere that 'the style of a detective story must be direct, simple, smooth, and unencumbered'.¹³ Although Wright is here specifically arguing against a florid, overly descriptive or metaphorical style in detective fiction, his statement might legitimately also be applied to the performance of the narrative voice in such works. The notion of 'fair play' is also considered by many critics to be central to the construction of detective stories.¹⁴ Outside its immediate reference to the ethical dimension of the genre, such 'fair play' can be equated with the authority assumed by a narrative voice, particularly what Susan Lanser labels its 'mimetic authority'.¹⁵ A narrator possessing mimetic authority is one who is: (1) honest and

sincere, 'he or she will not dissimulate and [...] will not omit any information that is crucial to the meaning of the story'; (2) intellectually and morally trustworthy; and (3) 'competen[t] as a storyteller to present the story in a manner that is coherent, complete and skilful'.¹⁶ This tendency towards frankness, reliability and skill also associates itself with standards of 'diegetic authority' as well as chiming with Martin Kayman's assertion that detective fiction favours the presence of an 'objective narrator'.¹⁷

Turning from theory to practice, insofar as it is possible to generalize about the type of narrators encountered in nineteenth-century detective fiction, such claims appear to be corroborated. Orthodox practice saw the use of a reliable and credible narrative voice which allows certain, although not necessarily complete, insight into the thought processes of the detective. In Edgar Allan Poe's stories, for example, the homodiegetic narrator is a friend of C. Auguste Dupin who accompanies the detective closely through his investigations without being privy to the full extent of his knowledge and ratiocinations. In the novels of Emile Gaboriau (1832-73), the narrating voice occupies a position of heterodiegetic privilege but is nevertheless sufficiently close to the work of Monsieur Lecoq to be able to persuade the reader that he is being kept reasonably well informed.

Both Dostoevskii and Shkliarevskii can be seen to break with this convention, however, albeit in somewhat different ways and for arguably distinct reasons. In the case of Dostoevskii, one might protest that reading his work against such a convention is misleading precisely because he is not engaged in writing detective fiction in the same way as Poe or Gaboriau. In *Crime and Punishment*, the reader does not observe a detective working towards the unmasking of a hidden culprit, in part because the reader already knows Raskolnikov to be the murderer and, in part, because Porfirii Petrovich's investigative method is so unusual. In *The Brothers Karamazov*, while we are closer to the realm of a traditional whodunit, we do not have a detective figure at work to whose thought processes the reader would wish to be privy. Nevertheless, in spite of these important distinctions, the degree to which Dostoevskian narrators are at variance with the model of reliable informants remains noteworthy, not least in terms of the influence that such an attitude might have exerted upon a notionally more conventional practitioner of detective fiction such as Shkliarevskii.

In both *Crime and Punishment* and *The Brothers Karamazov*, as has been extensively documented, the reader has to contend with an ostensibly heterodiegetic narrative voice which nevertheless refuses to fulfil expectations regarding information, reliability and competence. The problematic relationship between reader and narrator can be traced to the profoundly unstable relationship which exists between this narrator and the fictional world. Most significantly, the narrator's perspective and voice are not consistently external and differentiated from those of the characters; neither do they occupy a static and predictable position vis-à-vis the action described. For example, in the opening chapter of *Crime and Punishment* the heterodiegetic narrator shows he possesses omniscient privilege when he describes Raskolnikov's attitude to his landlady; subsequently, however, this omniscience appears to be limited as we are not told why the protagonist is worried about wearing a distinctive hat on his way to Alena Ivanovna's apartment. Moreover, the reader's attitude towards Porfirii Petrovich cannot help but be unfavourably prejudiced by the fact that, whilst voiced by the heterodiegetic narrator, descriptions of his interrogation of Raskolnikov are coloured by the latter's subjective and antagonistic perspective. In *The Brothers Karamazov*, the reader's evaluation of the narrator's performance is problematized by his dual status as both a first- and third-person narrator. As Diane Oenning Thompson has illustrated, Dostoevskii's narrator sometimes presents himself as an involved biographer of his hero and sometimes as a practically absent stage director who allows the characters to speak for themselves with virtually no commentary.¹⁸ Such complications in what Frank Stanzel calls 'mediacy' mean that the reader struggles to judge the reliability of the narrating voice and the degree of credence which should be invested in the information which it provides.¹⁹ Consequently, it becomes clear that, even in the novel which more closely conforms to the mystery of a whodunit, Dostoevskii might be seen not to 'play fair' with his reader.

Complicating the relationship between narrator and reader, by imbuing the former with a considerable degree of unreliability, is the first lesson which Shkliarevskii seems to take from Dostoevskii. Initially, in both *A Secret Investigation* and *The Tale of an Examining Magistrate*, such unreliability seems unlikely as descriptions are provided by what appears to be an uninvolved, heterodiegetic voice. The opening of *A Secret Investigation* is typical: details related to temporal and spatial location are provided in a matter-of-fact tone and the voice's omniscience

is confirmed by the presence of insights into characters' thoughts and feelings. Moreover, a bird's-eye visual perspective is exploited as actions occurring in different quarters of St Petersburg are observed apparently simultaneously: in *The Tale of an Examining Magistrate*, the yard-keeper at 36, Valdaiskaia ulitsa is shown shouting for a policeman just as the latter is depicted in a wine merchant's elsewhere. After a while, however, and in a move which is calculated to create a sense of uncertainty similar to that created by Dostoevskii, the reader is informed that the set of expectations she has formed about the narrator's performance is false. Rather than enjoying heterodiegetic privilege as has seemed to be the case, the narrative voice confesses not only to being involved in the fictional world of the story, but to being its central protagonist. In *The Tale of an Examining Magistrate*, for example, the closing sentence of the second chapter sees the apparently heterodiegetic voice reveal that it is actually homodiegetic: 'the event described occurred in Petersburg, on November 20th, in the late 1860s, and the investigation was assigned to me'.²⁰ The unusual and unsettling aspect of Shkliarevskii's technique here is the delay he employs in these two stories in revealing the actual status of the narrator. The effect of this late admission of homodiegetic status as opposed to heterodiegetic privilege is to undermine fundamentally the trust that the reader can place in this voice. Subsequent to such a shift, significant retrospective questions arise about how such a first-person voice could have been justified in providing the previous unlimited information. Had the narrator's first-person privilege been made explicit from the outset, details pertaining to the victim and the murder scene, for instance, would have been considered by the reader to be little more than hearsay or assumption and accordingly granted a far lesser degree of credence. Now the reader does not know how to assess either the information given before this revelation or the details provided after it. As is the case in Dostoevskii's novels, therefore, the reader of Shkliarevskii's stories is made profoundly hesitant about the degree of trust which should be placed in the narration of events constructed by a voice with such unpredictable (and arguably irreconcilable) abilities. In a genre where the authority with which the narrating voice is imbued is of such fundamental importance, such exploitation of unreliability by both Dostoevskii and Shkliarevskii represents an original challenge to convention.

A second area in which the influence of Dostoevskii upon Shkliarevskii can be perceived is in their use of multiple voice. There are

several reasons why a multiplicity of interacting voices should be even more of a commonplace in detective literature than in fictional narratives generally. Tzvetan Todorov characterizes the ‘roman à énigme’ (whodunit) strand of detective fiction as containing not one but two stories: the story of the murder and the story of the investigation into this murder.²¹ Considering the temporal implications of such duality (which will be addressed later in this chapter), Dennis Porter argues that ‘detective fiction is preoccupied with the closing of the logico-temporal gap that separates the present of the discovery of crime from the past that prepared it’.²² Multiple voice can legitimately be seen to make a key contribution to bridging this gap: whilst it is quite possible for all of the relevant missing information to be provided by a single voice, it is far more realistic for the necessary details to be contributed by a variety of different voices who each have a different part of the story to tell. Secondly, in a generically permitted, albeit paradoxical, manner, such polyphony also responds to the genre’s need for suspense. Whilst readers seek the closing of the logico-temporal gap between the crime and the end of the investigation, a degree of their enjoyment is achieved precisely by postponing such resolution; and listening to a series of different voices supplying piecemeal information is inherently a technique of retardation. A third reason for the genre’s propensity towards a multiplicity of voice is that this device functions as a subtle but effective analogy of the various clues which the detective and the reader must put together in order to construct a single coherent narrative - the story of the crime. Just as the detective might visit a series of different locations collecting physical evidence which tells a story, so he must also listen to a number of different voices which each have their own narrative to recount. Nevertheless, it is most often the case in detective fiction that this multiplicity of voices is arranged into a strict hierarchy of authority, atop of which sits the voice of the detective himself, even if he is not himself the primary narrator. If we take the case of Poe’s stories again, whilst the reader is presented with a number of different voices in *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* or *The Purloined Letter*, it is the educated and analytical voice of Dupin which ultimately remains in control, with the narrator as his subordinate. Even in Agatha Christie’s *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* (1926), where the narrator is unmasked as the murderer, the voice of Hercule Poirot retains its position as that of ultimate authority.

In the work of Dostoevskii and Shkliarevskii, however, the reader confronts a different, less conventional organizational relationship

between the various voices in the narrative. Mikhail Bakhtin claims that the chief characteristic of Dostoevskii's novels is the presence of 'a plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses, a genuine polyphony of fully valid voices'.²³ He makes explicit the absence of a single, authoritative voice in these novels when he argues that what unfolds in Dostoevskii is 'not a multitude of characters and fates in a single objective world, illuminated by a single authorial consciousness; rather a plurality of consciousnesses, with equal rights and each with its own world, [which] combine but are not merged in the unity of the event'.²⁴ As above, it may appear axiomatic to argue that Dostoevskii's practice departs from that of orthodox detective fiction. Nevertheless, although the identity of the criminal may be known from the outset in *Crime and Punishment*, the reader can still justifiably be considered to be involved in a quest to discover a motive for the murders. This search is significantly complicated, and not primarily for the purposes of suspense, by the non-unified voice of Raskolnikov as well as by the unmerged voices of the myriad other characters. The reader hears Raskolnikov express an ever-shifting panoply of motives for his crime, including opportunity, poverty, natural justice, ideology and existential ambition, but no single one of these ever establishes itself as the 'truth'. Similarly, we are presented with the various theories of other characters such as Zosimov and Lebeziatnikov regarding the identity of the criminal and the reasons which can be used to explain the crime. Detective fiction boasts just such a multitude of possible interpretive avenues as its very lifeblood; in Dostoevskii, however, the various voices which express such possibilities are never reconciled in order to tell a single, unified story. This lack of resolution can ultimately be traced to the performance of the heterodiegetic narrator who steadfastly refuses to impose itself as the voice of ultimate authority, to which all other voices and consciousnesses are subordinate. The outcome of all of this for the reader is a sustained confusion surrounding the question of *why* exactly Raskolnikov kills. The gap between the two stories in *Crime and Punishment* is never definitively closed.

A similar desire for open-endedness can be glimpsed in the work of Shkliarevskii, even if it is neither as ubiquitous nor as deftly executed. Following more conventional practice, his detective stories feature multiple voices which are introduced as the detective interrogates them as witnesses in an effort to identify the murderer. So, for example, in *A Secret Investigation*, the detective looking for Zinaida Mozharovskaia's

killer interviews five characters in turn and, on each occasion, the reader is confronted by a lengthy embedded narrative during which the voice of the narrator-detective is almost entirely absent. These absences theoretically allow the characters' voices a greater degree of autonomy from the unifying consciousness of the narrator. Nonetheless, despite their apparent freedom, these voices still merge to construct the type of cognitive monologism absent in Dostoevskii. The voices may temporarily replace the narrator's, but ultimately they are not independent of it and still combine, from their different angles, to establish a single truth: the identity of Mozharovskaia's best friend, Avdotia Kriukovskaia, as her poisoner. However, *The Tale of an Examining Magistrate* testifies to a greater, and more original, deviation from generic conventions. For much of the story, it appears that orthodox practice will be observed. The detective investigating the violent strangling of Nastasia Pylneva interviews an array of characters: Aleksandra Lastova, her closest friend; Collegiate Assessor Zarubin, her guardian; the student Garnitskii who had been in love with her; her estranged husband and then Aleksandra Lastova again. Although these various voices suggest the usual string of red herrings which detective fiction so craves, the middle three also hint at the possibility of arriving at a single, unified story: that of the guilt of Aleksandra Lastova. But just when it appears that this story will be definitively established - during the investigator's second interview with Lastova - something unpredictable happens. Having seemingly acquiesced to this monologic urge by making a confession (which is entirely plausible precisely because it is borne out by the other voices), Lastova then rebels by retracting her testimony, disposing of the only piece of physical proof the examining magistrate has (by swallowing the signet ring) and accusing him of entrapment. In this unexpected move, Lastova's voice ultimately refuses subordination to the authority of the narrator-detective. By withdrawing her confession, an action which denies the legitimacy of her first voice, and by providing an alternative (and equally feasible) narrative, Lastova effectively constructs two distinct and ultimately irreconcilable readings. And both the detective and the reader are thereby defeated. The narrator-detective is unable to impose his voice at the pinnacle of the hierarchy of authority and so Lastova's voice ultimately remains free and independent. Such an open-ended conclusion to the story suggests that Shkliarevskii possessed some degree of understanding of the potentialities of Dostoevskii's polyphonic vision.

Whereas questions of voice have been relatively little discussed by theorists of detective fiction, the fundamental importance to the genre of temporal organization has been far more frequently addressed. Todorov's notion of the existence of two stories (one of the crime and the other of the investigation) which has been mentioned above can again be seen to play a pivotal role in this regard. Added to narrative's usual temporal duality (that of 'the time of the signified and the time of the signifier'),²⁵ Todorov contends that the detective genre's possession of a double story means that its narratives 'superimpose two temporal series: the days of the investigation which begin with the crime, and the days of the drama which lead up to it'.²⁶ Dennis Porter elaborates upon this notion of superimposition when he explains:

In the process of telling one tale a classic detective story uncovers another. It purports to narrate the course of an investigation but the 'open' story of the investigation gradually unravels the 'hidden' story of the crime. In other words, the initial crime on which the tale of detection is predicated is an end as well as a beginning. It concludes the 'hidden' story of the events leading up to itself at the same time that it initiates the story of the process of detection. [...] [Detective fiction] is a genre committed to an act of recovery, moving forward in order to move back.²⁷

The often subtle and unexpected ways in which such retrospection and anticipation are combined in detective fiction give the lie to the still unfortunately common claim that this is a formulaic and unsophisticated genre. However, the work of Dostoevskii and Shkliarevskii goes a step further. The influence of the former upon the latter can be seen in the original use that both make of this dual temporal direction. Their treatment of retrospection can be considered to be imbued with a particularly Russian hue; but it is their manipulation of anticipation which is most intriguing.

With respect to retrospection, in the works of Dostoevskii and Shkliarevskii under consideration here, the present time of the exploration of who- or why-dunit is unremittingly supplemented by temporal shifts backwards which seek to recover the facts and effects of the past and to establish the role they might have played. This might seem somewhat unusual in the case of *Crime and Punishment*: the fact that the

identity of the criminal is known in the present time of the crime being committed means that there is no need to reconstruct a past which uncovers the identity of the perpetrator. Nevertheless, retrospection remains a key technique in the 'detective strand' of the novel and this is explained by two principal factors. First, until the moment of his actual accusation of Raskolnikov in part six, chapter two of the novel, it is not clear that Porfirii Petrovich definitely knows the identity of the murderer. And so, from his perspective as an investigator, there is still a past which needs to be constructed, or a suspected past which needs to be confirmed, in an attempt to unambiguously unmask the culprit. Second, even the search for a motive rather than an identity, implied by the novel's unconventional status as a whydunit, necessitates a looking backwards to a time which preceded and determined the crime. One of the clearest illustrations of the use of retrospection in *Crime and Punishment* comes when Raskolnikov meets Porfirii Petrovich face to face for the first time in part three, chapter five. This first interview is dominated by a representation of the taxonomy of society from Raskolnikov's article in *Periodical Leader*: this article dates from a past outwith the scope of the novel's *siuzhet* and is therefore also unknown to the reader. The investigator's request for Raskolnikov to outline the ideas expounded therein prompts a retrospective discursive act which might potentially help to close the logico-temporal gap between the pre-crime past and the post-crime present. In *The Brothers Karamazov*, retrospection is arguably the dominant temporal mode of narration. The presence of a dual temporality is made explicit by the narrator's admission that he needs to tell one story (temporally located 13 years ago) in order that the reader should understand the facts and circumstances of a second (ostensibly situated in the present moment). In Shkliarevskii's stories, the present time of the investigation of the murder is consistently and repeatedly expanded backwards as the embedded narratives told by the various voices attempt to fill in sections of the back story. So, in *A Secret Investigation*, the reader moves from the information provided by Zinaida Mozharovskaia's maid regarding the details of her recent life in St Petersburg, through the extended account of the investigator's friend, Doctor Mikhailovskii, which reaches back to his time at medical school, to the eventual written confession of Avdotia Kriukovskaia. The present 'truth' of the crime is thus established by means of various retrospections to a series of different, though overlapping, past times. Similarly, in *The Tale of an Examining Magistrate*, characters reach some 20 years back

into the past, to the childhood of Nastasia Pylneva, in order to present possible motives for her murder.

Whilst such retrospection is a conventional feature of detective fiction, it might be considered to have a more marked resonance in the context of nineteenth-century Russia, and particularly in the light of the significance of contemporary debates surrounding determinism. A.I. Reitblat contends that one of the key ideas expressed by Shkliarevskii in his works is that 'the present is now determined by the past'.²⁸ It is certainly the case that, in the majority of his stories which feature crime and / or a detective, a single persuasive motive is arrived at by means of an examination of the perpetrator's past relationship with the victim. In *Crime and Punishment*, a number of the characters offer up deterministically-informed ideas regarding the motivations for bad behaviour, including crime. Svidrigailov, for instance, argues that the circumstances of his life with his wife in the country, having been bought out of debtors' prison for 30,000 silver pieces, might be considered to make him a victim rather than a monster. And, parodically echoing Chernyshevskii, Lebeziatnikov claims that Sonia's situation can be explained because 'everything depends upon a person's circumstance and environment. Everything depends on environment, and man himself is nothing'.²⁹ Ultimately, however, Dostoevskii's novel argues against the rationalist-determinist position which deprives man of individual responsibility for his actions, whether good or bad. And it would be equally wrong to consider Shkliarevskii as a strict determinist. Rather, what the use of retrospection in his works can be taken to illustrate is the interest that Shkliarevskii had inherited from Dostoevskii in the psychology of the criminals he depicted.

Far more unusual than the use of retrospection in these two authors, though, is their use of anticipation or what Diane Oenning Thompson has labelled 'foreshadowing'.³⁰ Both Dostoevskii and Shkliarevskii appear to place a generically unconventional emphasis on the role that the future has to play in their narratives. Detective fiction typically moves forward in time from the discovery of the crime (usually the beginning of the *siuzhet*) to arrive at the point at which the crime is solved and the culprit is identified (usually the end of the *siuzhet*). But the very means which permit such forward movement to be made is the act of looking backwards at the stories and clues which have forged a past which makes the crime possible. Within such acts of retrospection, it is not entirely uncommon for a reader to come across embedded moments

of anticipation: a character fills in the background of their relationship with the victim and either wittingly or unwittingly reveals how their attitudes make them the potential perpetrator. However, when it is encountered, such anticipation is still typically restricted to the time period which ends with the discovery of the crime. What marks Dostoevskii and Shkliarevskii out from other writers in the genre is that their narratives include a far denser use of such anticipation and that the orientation of their foreshadowing is dualistic - it relates to two different categories of future. The first is the more typical one of a future time, from a past moment of speaking, which is still at a point prior to the crime; the other, more significantly, relates to a time which is post-crime, and sometimes even post-resolution of the crime. It can be argued, therefore, that by such a use of foreshadowing, the work of both writers not only moves in two directions but attempts to *control* time in two directions: backwards by reconstructing the past, but also forwards by predicting the future.

From the outset, the temporal organization of *Crime and Punishment* is distinct from the conventions of detective fiction because, rather than opening with the discovery of a crime, it begins with a depiction of Raskolnikov at a time when he has not yet committed the murders. The importance to this narrative of anticipation is clearly established early on as part one of the novel is peppered with veiled allusions by Raskolnikov to what he plans to do: 'But why am I going now? Am I really capable of *this*? Is *this* serious? Of course not' (V, 6: original italics). At a later stage, Raskolnikov's article on crime in *Periodical Leader* possesses an interesting dual temporal status. When it is paraphrased by the protagonist in part three, chapter five in response to provocation by Porfirii Petrovich, it should be seen to constitute an act of retrospective reading of the murder. The murder is at this point an event in the past and Raskolnikov's article effectively reaches into a pre-crime past in order to unveil a potential motive or motives: a utilitarian view of the division of society. And yet, if we position ourselves temporally at the time of the writing of the article, some six months prior to the murders, it functions as a predictive account of the crime. Indeed, this anticipatory status is obliquely suggested by Raskolnikov's overhearing of the conversation between the student and the officer in part one, chapter six which echoes so many of his own ideas: it takes place after he has written the article but before he becomes the author of the crime. The second category of anticipation is most apparent during

Raskolnikov's conversations with the examining magistrate. One of Porfirii Petrovich's favoured strategies with his suspect is to outline his own counter-theory regarding what a criminal *will* do in a particular set of circumstances: 'Well let him, let him run about for a bit longer if he wants; I mean, I know that he's already mine and won't run away from me!' (V, 353) Porfirii's strategy of anticipation and the interest which he shows in the future that is still in store for Raskolnikov is key to his symbolic role in the novel and is what distinguishes him from a more conventional detective. Having eventually revealed in part six, chapter two that he believes Raskolnikov to be the murderer, Porfirii's speech is heavily inflected with references not to a hypothetical future, but to a definite future that the Lord intends for him. By looking towards a post-confession future, and functioning as a secular priest, Porfirii contributes to the religious-philosophical content of the novel which is obviously concerned with very much more than the simple reconstruction of the circumstances of a past event.

Thompson believes that Dostoevskii's striving to divine and overtake the future 'finds its fullest, most voiced and urgent expression in his last novel'.³¹ *The Brothers Karamazov's* dual chronology is crucial in this regard because the 'present' of most of the novel's action (located some thirteen years before the 'present' of the narrative voice) includes so many hints, clues and discussions about the future. On the one hand, as Maria Kanevskaia suggests, such clues can really only be activated upon a second reading, once the resolution of the *fabula* has been reached.³² On the other, even on a first reading, the reader is assailed by the frequency with which the speech of both the narrator and the characters is coloured by references towards, or predictions of a future time or future events. For example, all of Alesha's actions in the first half of the novel are carried out under the pressure of the predicted imminent death of Father Zosima. Most significant, perhaps, is the temporal orientation of Smerdiakov's dialogue with Ivan in the chapter 'So Far Still a Very Obscure One' where he predicts that Dmitrii might come to the house to steal his father's money and possibly kill him whilst he, Smerdiakov, might have an epileptic fit that will lay him up for several days. Tellingly, this prompts Ivan to ask: 'You're not by any chance planning it all to happen like that?' (IX, 342), a question which, with hindsight, clearly indicates the real culprit - Smerdiakov himself. And, as Maria Kanevskaia claims, 'Omens make the future not only inevitable, but also actively a part of the present. In the structure of the narrative the

present and the future switch roles, cause-effect links between them break down and the future begins to determine events which precede it'.³³ Such an apparent desire to suggest that the future is controlled might appear to stand at odds with Dostoevskii's anti-determinist relationship to 'open' time but, as Gary Saul Morson has shown, such authors can create a persuasive vision of the future as many different things.³⁴

As a far more secular writer, it would be inappropriate to claim that Shkliarevskii's works share the religious and eschatological concerns expressed by Dostoevskii. Nevertheless, his examination of the past is still predicated on a sharply enunciated presence of the future. It is a recurrent feature of Shkliarevskii's stories that the various embedded narratives which all, in principle, look backwards also all, in some way or other, attempt to manipulate the future by claiming to anticipate the crime and its immediate aftermath. For instance, in *The Tale of an Examining Magistrate*, within Aleksandra Lastova's first account, Collegiate Assessor Zarubin foresees problems with the girls' suitors and wonders, 'But what will this acquaintance lead to?' (91) Later in the story, the narrator drops a Dostoevskii-style hint to the eventually unsuccessful outcome of his investigation - which will only be appreciated on a second reading - by confessing, 'I have taken on, as the saying goes, "something tough", but have proved "not to be up to it"' (121). In *The Secret Investigation*, the ostensibly retrospective story told by the detective's friend, Dr Mikhailovskii, is heavily imbued with a sense of the circumstances of the future demise of Zinaida Mozharovskaia, even though he knows very few of the actual details. Immediately upon hearing of her death, Mikhailovskii claims that she must have been poisoned with curare by her best friend, Avdotia Kriukovskaia. As justification for this allegation, he recounts the story of his own medical friend, Belotserskii, who experimented with the same poison as a student. And this evidence, provided by a story from some 30 years previously, does indeed foreshadow the eventual explanation given for Mozharovskaia's death. This future-oriented temporality also helps to explain the recurrence of vocabulary marked with the prefix 'пред' ('pre' or 'fore') throughout this work. Dr Mikhailovskii attributes his visit to the Mozharovskii household on the night that the victim is first, non-fatally poisoned to 'предчувствия' ('premonitions'). He reveals that he feared at the time that this first incident would be repeated at some future point in time and that, these fears having been borne out, he is justified in claiming: 'I could have predicted the present crime' (160). The

detective himself admits that Mikhailovskii's story chimes with his own 'инстинктивное предубеждение' ('instinctive prejudice') towards Kriukovskaia (loc. cit.). And with the death having initially been ruled natural and the poisoner still at large, the story is lent a far greater urgency because it is not simply a question of reconstructing the past but of preventing a murderous future. And so in both Dostoevskii and Shkliarevskii, the temporal planes of present and past which we would most naturally associate with detective fiction are productively and intriguingly supplemented with a potent sense of the future. In one sense, such heterochrony (or multi-temporality) might be considered to be nothing more than the natural accompaniment to heteroglossia. After all, the interrelationship of multiple voices, as Stacy Burton has claimed, can be understood in significant ways as a dialogue of chronotopes.³⁵ Nevertheless, in the context of the present argument, it can be contended that the tendency of the work of Dostoevskii and Shkliarevskii to make widespread use of such a device allows them to express a noteworthy degree of originality in relation to the conventions of detective fiction.

This chapter has not sought to reduce Dostoevskii to the status of a detective writer. Neither should it be considered to be the first act in a mission to prove that in Shkliarevskii we actually have an undiscovered Dostoevskii. As this examination of narrative voice and time has made clear, at almost every juncture where it is possible to identify a convention of detective fiction, Dostoevskii departs from it. The radical uncertainty created by his exploitation of polyphony, for instance, arguably goes far beyond not only the orthodoxies of the detective genre, but of most genres one might think of. Equally, the notion of open time which imbues both *Crime and Punishment* and *The Brothers Karamazov* with such a heavy sense of anticipation challenges a resolution-oriented genre such as detective fiction. Nevertheless, such differences do not entirely negate the argument that Dostoevskii can be considered to be an author who incorporates elements of the detective genre into his writing. Therefore, it remains valid to consider him to have played a role as some sort of progenitor of detective fiction in Russia. It might be misleading to consider him to have set the standard for Russian practice of this genre; his is a standard that few writers, detective or not, have ever matched. However, during the period of the infancy of detective fiction in Russia in the 1860s and 1870s, Dostoevskii helped to popularize and legitimize a genre which is still going strong today. By the simple act of reaching beyond them, Dostoevskii displayed a tacit awareness of many of the

conventions of the detective fiction. His numerous successors, who can be more legitimately labelled detective writers, were undoubtedly influenced by his works and by his ability to outstrip convention. Shkliarevskii has not been remembered kindly by posterity. Nevertheless, there is something of considerable literary value to be discovered in the way in which he responded to Dostoevskii. Whilst lacking the breadth and sophistication of Dostoevskii, Shkliarevskii's work does reveal undeniable traces of his predecessor's influence. As such, Shkliarevskii should be considered to be a detective writer of significance who not only helped to establish relatively unconventional beginnings for the genre in Russia, but who also functioned as an important conduit between Dostoevskii and other successors such as A.A. Sokolov, N.E. Geintse and A.E. Zarin.

NOTES

1. Between 1995 and 2003, Eksmo published more than 27 million copies of Dontsova's crime novels whilst Marinina had sold some 32 million copies by the same year. Source: *PublishingTrends.com*'s articles of March and June 2003 which can be accessed at: <http://www.publishingtrends.com/copy/03/0303/0303intl.html>.
2. Jeffrey Brooks, *When Russia Learned to Read: Literacy and Popular Culture 1861-1917*, Northwestern University Press, Evanston, Illinois, 2003.
3. Balzac's Vautrin was in part inspired by the criminal turned detective, Eugène-François Vidocq who published his *Mémoires de Vidocq, Chef de la Police de Sûreté, jusqu'en 1827, aujourd'hui propriétaire et fabricant de papiers à Saint-Marché* in 1828. The three Poe stories are: *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* (1841), *The Mystery of Marie Rogêt* (1842) and *The Purloined Letter* (1844).
4. On the subject of the socio-economic conditions necessary for the genre, Ernst Kaemmel argues somewhat controversially that 'the detective novel is a child of capitalism [...] it is a product of capitalism and, with the latter's collapse, will likewise disappear one day' in 'Literature under the Table: The Detective Novel and its Social Missions' in *The Poetics of Murder: Detective Fiction and Literary Theory*, ed. G.W. Most and W.M. Stowe, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York, 1983, pp. 55-61 (57).
5. William Burnham, 'The Legal Context and Contributions of Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*', *Michigan Law Review*, C, 6, 2002, pp. 1227-48 (1232). In *The Development of a Russian Legal Consciousness*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1976, Richard S. Wortman contends that 'the primary goal of the old courts was to protect the power, interests and prestige of the administrative authorities rather than the rights of the population' (p. 238).
6. Burnham, p. 1240.
7. The post of *sudebnyi sledovatel'* (examining magistrate) was introduced in 1860.
8. M.M. Maksimov's *Moskovskie tainy* was first published in 1861; Nikolai Sokolovskii's *Ostrog i zhizn': Iz zapisok sledovatel'ia* appeared in 1863; and P.I. Stepanov's *Pravye i vinovatye. Zapiski sledovatel'ia sorokovykh godov* was written in 1869.
9. Just one sign of the affection between the two men is the fact that Dostoevskii gave Koni a copy of *Dnevnik pisatel'ia* for 1876 with the inscription 'as a mark of the deepest respect'. Andrzej Walicki notes the parody of Spasovich in Fetiukovich: see *Legal Philosophies of Russian Liberalism*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame and London, 1992, p. 76.

10. Quoted in V.S. Nechaeva, *Zhurnal M.M. i F.M. Dostoevskikh 'Vremia' 1861-1863*, Nauka, Moscow, 1972, p. 112 (my translation).
11. For more details on the Tichborne case, see Kate Summerscale's *The Suspicions of Mr Whicher, or The Murder at Road Hill House*, Bloomsbury, London, 2008, pp. 263-7.
12. *Literaturnoe nasledstvo*, LXXXVI, ed. V.P. Shcherbin, 1973, p. 429 (my translation).
13. Willard Huntingdon Wright (alias S.S. Van Dine) in his 'Introduction' to *The Great Detective Stories: A Chronological Anthology*, Scribners, New York, 1927; reprinted in Howard Haycraft, *The Art of the Mystery Story: A Collection of Critical Essays*, Grosset and Dunlop, New York, 1946, pp. 33-70 (39).
14. Amongst such critics are: Laura Marcus, 'Detection and Literary Fiction', in *The Cambridge Companion to Crime Fiction*, ed. Martin Priestman, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003, pp. 245-67 (262); Heta Pyrhönen, 'Genre' in *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative*, ed. David Herman, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2007, pp. 109-23 (110).
15. Susan Sniader Lanser, *The Narrative Act: Point of View in Prose Fiction*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1981, pp. 170-2.
16. Loc. cit.
17. Martin A. Kayman, 'The Short Story from Poe to Chesterton', in Priestman, ed., pp. 41-58 (42).
18. Diane Oenning Thompson, *The Brothers Karamazov and the Poetics of Memory*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991, pp. 26-51.
19. F.K. Stanzel, *A Theory of Narrative*, trans. Charlotte Goedsche, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1984, p. 14.
20. A.A. Shkliarevskii, *Sekretnoe sledstvie*, in Shkliarevskii, *Chto pobudilo k ubiistvu? Rasskazy sledovatel'ia*, Khudozhestvennaia literatura, Moscow, 1993, p. 81. Subsequent quotations from Shkliarevskii's works are from this edition, referenced in the text by page number. Translations are mine.
21. Tzvetan Todorov, 'Typologie du roman policier', in *Poétique de la prose*, Seuil, Paris, 1971, pp. 9-19 (11).
22. Dennis Porter, *The Pursuit of Crime: Art and Ideology in Detective Fiction*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1981, p. 29.

23. Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, trans. Caryl Emerson, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1984, p. 6.
24. Loc. cit.
25. Christian Metz, *Film Language: A Semiotics of the Cinema*, trans. Michael Taylor, Oxford University Press, New York, 1974, p. 18.
26. Todorov, p. 11 (my translation).
27. Porter, p. 29.
28. See A.I. Reitblat's preface ('*Russkii Gaboriau ili uchenik Dostoevskogo?*') to Shkliarevskii, p. 10.
29. F.M. Dostoevskii, *Sobranie sochinenii v desiati tomakh*, V, Khudozhestvennaia literatura, Moscow, ed. L.P. Grossman et al., 1957, p. 384. Subsequent quotations from Dostoevskii's works are from this edition, referenced in the text by volume and page. Translations are mine.
30. Thompson, p. 213.
31. Ibid., p. 212.
32. Maria Kanevskaia, 'Struktura detektivnogo siuzheta v *Brat'ia Kharamazovykh*', *Russkaia literatura deviatnadsatogo veka*, I, 2002, pp. 46-63 (48).
33. Kanevskaia, p. 52 (my translation).
34. Gary Saul Morson, *Narrative and Freedom: The Shadows of Time*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1994, p. 45.
35. Stacy Burton, 'Bakhtin, Temporality and Modern Narrative: Writing "The Whole Triumphant Murderous Unstoppable Chute"', *Comparative Literature*, XLVIII, 1, 1996, pp. 39-62.

