Amnesia and the Externalized Personality in Early Dostoevskii

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> Our memories go back no further than yesterday [. . .] We are like those children who were not forced to reason for themselves, so that when they grow up there is nothing of their own in them; all their knowledge is on the surface, their entire soul is outside themselves.
>
> —Petr Chaadaev

Fedor Dostoevskii's conception of individual identity is among the most confusing and perpetually double-edged aspects of his writing. Readers have often remarked on the mysterious ambivalence in his characters who are "both separate from other personalities and incomprehensibly connected with them all."[1] Central to this ambivalence is the problem of personal interiority in Dostoevskii's conception of character. Though the author set himself the task of depicting "all the depths of the human soul," his psychological interiors nevertheless tend toward obscurity. Many critics have argued that the "inner" personal dimension is either largely absent in Dostoevskii's characterizations, or invariably transposed into external, intersubjective space. Mikhail Bakhtin, for one, celebrated the outwardness of Dostoevskii's characters as a key feature of a new dialogical poetics. The radical sense of freedom enjoyed by the "unfinalizable" inner self in Dostoevskii, Bakhtin observes, stems in part from an utter lack of inner architecture, memory, or personal biography; these characters are always on the "threshold," looking outward, existing fully in the "living *present*," never determined or limited by biographical pasts.[2]

Bakhtin's readiness to accept the absence of essential ingredients of personality in Dostoevskii's characters is by no means an isolated viewpoint. Some of the most influential early investigators of personality in Dostoevskii—Viacheslav Ivanov, Nikolai Berdiaev, Dmitrii Chizhevskii, Konstantin Mochul'skii—tend to read his vision of the self as an externalized, interpersonal phenomenon. Berdiaev observes that the "depths" of the human personality are transferred into external space in Dostoevskii's works, since

Epigraph taken from P. I. Chaadaev, "Pis'mo pervoe," *Filosoficheskie pis'ma*, in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i izbrannye pis'ma*, 2 vols. (Moscow, 1991), 1:326.

1. L. A. Zander, *Dostoevsky*, trans. Natalie Duddington (London, 1948), 84. See also, for example, Nikolai Berdiaev, who commented on a "fatal duality" in Dostoevskii between, on the one hand, a "fanatical" belief in the "personal principle," and, on the other, an attraction to "collectivism, which paralyzes the principle of [. . .] personal spiritual discipline." Berdiaev, *Mirosozertsanie Dostoevskogo* (Prague, 1923), 232–33.

2. Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, trans. Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis, 1984), 108. Emphasis in the original. "[In Dostoevskii's art] all is simultaneous, everything coexists. That which [. . .] is valid only as past, or as future [. . .] is for him nonessential and is not incorporated into his world. That is why his characters remember nothing, they have no biography in the sense of something past and fully experienced. They remember from their own past only that which has not ceased to be present for them, that which is still experienced by them as the present, an unexpiated sin, a crime, an unforgiven insult." Ibid., 29.

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all the characters of a novel, taken together, are dramatizations of the journey of "a single human soul, of a single human spirit, revealed from different sides and various moments of its path."[3] The realm of the novel, he suggests, is *all* inner space, with various persons interacting as aspects of an extended cosmic psyche in a state of crisis: a "whirlwind" forms around a single character, drawing all others, as interacting fragments of that character's personality, into a maelstrom of external events.[4] Psychoanalytic readings, moreover, tend to coincide with Berdiaev's approach in the limited sense that Dostoevskii's characters are often taken to represent agencies within a psyche; and thus, the novel, with all its conflicting personalities, becomes an exploration of the depths of one individual mind.[5]

In short, philosophy tends to overtake psychological realism in many of the seminal investigations of Dostoevskii's conception of personality. When Shatov confesses his eternal love for Stavrogin, when Myshkin weeps onto Rogozhin's face, or when Raskolnikov and Razumikhin stare protractedly into each other's eyes, interpretation inclines toward philosophical allegory, metaphor, and symbolic structure. Characters come to be seen as emanations of a larger "metaphysical Personality" or as embodied voices in a polyphonic artistic universe, rather than as fleshed out individuals with meaningful pasts and reflective dimensions of their own.[6] The emptiness within the personal

3. Berdiaev, *Mirosozertsanie Dostoevskogo*, 17. For a related view, see Mochul'skii's reading of *Crime and Punishment:* "The battle between good and evil waged within the murderer's soul, is substantialized in the opposition of these two personalities, Sonya and Svidrigailov. [. . .] Raskolnikov is [. . .] the spiritual center of the novel. [. . .] The tragedy springs up in his soul and the external action only serves to reveal his moral conflicts." Konstantin Mochulsky, *Dostoevsky: His Life and Work*, trans. Michael A. Minihan (Princeton, 1967), 298–99.

4. Berdiaev, *Mirosozertsanie Dostoevskogo*, 39: "Some kind of center, a central human personality takes shape and everything turns around this axis. A whirlwind of passionate human relationships takes shape and everyone is drawn into it." Dmitrii Chizhevksii describes this phenomenon as an illustration of the *mikrokosmichnost'* (microcosmic nature) of the Dostoevskian personality: the human being is a center of the universe that incorporates all other personalities into itself. Chizhevskii, "Dostoevskij—psikholog," in A. L. Bem, ed., *O Dostoevskom: Sbornik statei* (Prague, 1929), 1:55.

5. See, for example, Louis Breger, who describes Dostoevskii's development of the novel as a protracted attempt at psychoanalysis, an attempt to discover balance between the "characters who embody different sides of his conflicts—who represent his different inner selves." Breger, *Dostoevsky: The Author as Psychoanalyst* (New York, 1989), 9–11. Related approaches can be found in A. L. Bem, *Dostoevskii: Psikhoanaliticheskie etiudy* (Prague, 1938), or in Elizabeth Dalton, *Unconscious Structure in* The Idiot: *A Study in Literature and Psychoanalysis* (Princeton, 1979).

6. I. I. Evlampiev, "Lichnost' kak absoliut: Metafizika F. Dostoevskogo," *Istoriia russkoi metafiziki v XIX–XX vekakh: Russkaia filosofiia v poiskakh absoliuta. Chast' 1* (St. Petersburg, 2000), 119–20; emphasis in the original: "Dostoevskii is not interested in the psychological nuances of a person's inner [*dushevnaia*] life that ground his behavior, but in those 'dynamic' ones [. . .] in which the volitional energy of personality is expressed. [. . .] Although Dostoevskii's protagonists, at first glance, in no way differ from ordinary 'empirical' people, in essence, alongside the ordinary empirical dimension, they have yet an 'additional' dimension of being, which is the most important. Most important is a metaphysical dimension in which [. . .] the empirical protagonists are connected in some kind of unity, which expresses an integral energy [. . .] *in the form of a metaphysical Personality, of a single metaphysical Protagonist.*"

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dimensions of an individual self may be accepted, of course, as a necessary aspect of dialogism or as a rare glimpse into cosmological unity and *sobornost'*.[7] Yet the startling conclusion—that Dostoevskii spent his career exploring "the depths" of human psychology while creating only fragments of human characters braced in dialectical tension—remains unacceptable, or at least insufficient, in light of his attentiveness to the problem of "inner content" and to the multidimensionality of the self.[8] Our experience of Dostoevskii's deep, vivid, and memorable characters who demand to be seen as living entities (rather than as "emanations" of another consciousness) points, however vaguely, to a weakness in such overtly philosophical readings.

This article examines the problem of emptiness in Dostoevskii's early studies of the self by tracing a pattern through the 1840s in which characters are bound to each other as interacting aspects of a larger personality. There is significant evidence in the early works—specifically, *The Double*, "The Landlady," and *Netochka Nezvanova*—to suggest that the writer was fascinated with the obliteration of personal memory and the vacuum that develops in the personality as a result of early, repressed childhood trauma. It is this troubled amnesia that gives rise to the mechanism of intersecting selves, in which the structure of one personality is extended throughout numerous consciousnesses. In order to contextualize this approach within existing interpretations of Dostoevskii's doubles, I will begin by presenting a brief overview of the extensive commentary on this issue, with particular attention to two kinds of doubling, often conflated by critics: a psychic Romantic double, rooted in the unconscious, on the one hand, and a cognitive emanation, on the other, which enacts the process of self-consciousness externally. Dostoevskii synthesizes two different traditions of doubling as he sketches the outlines of a tripartite conception of personality that would be singularly important for his later career. His early stories reveal an extensive diagnosis of a spiritual problem—the absence of interiority—that will occupy the later novels, and the discovery of a psychological mechanism—the extension of the self into others—that will become one of the author's key philosophical devices.

Two Kinds of Doubling: Psychic and Cognitive Emanations

We can begin our discussion of Dostoevskii's method of externalizing personality by outlining two general tendencies in his treatment of the double which are, nevertheless, intertwined: From one perspective, Dostoevskii's

7. See, for example, David S. Cunningham's reading of the Karamazov brothers as illustrative of the intersecting and interpenetrating life of one more complete personality, and ultimately as an icon of the divine trinity. Cunningham, "'The Brothers Karamazov' as Trinitarian Theology," in George Pattison and Diane O. Thompson, eds., *Dostoevsky and the Christian Tradition* (Cambridge, Eng., 2001), 144–50.

8. "The more spirit and inner content there is in us, the more beautiful our corner and life. Of course, the dissonance is frightening. [. . .] The outer must be in balance with the inner. Otherwise, in the absence of external phenomena, the internal will take too dangerous an upper hand." Letter to M. M. Dostoevskii, January–February 1847, in F. M. Dostoevskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem v tridtsati tomakh* (Leningrad, 1972–84; hereafter *PSS*), 28:137–38.

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doubles (from the two Goliadkins, to Ivan and his Devil) are a development of the Romantic paradigm of the doppelgänger, which has been described as "a projection of the unconscious and [. . .] latent second self as a physical [being], apparent to the senses."[9] In this regard, Dostoevskii's doubles represent explorations of unconscious elements in human personality. Within the framework of this narrative, critics have provided accounts of how Dostoevskii inherited Neoplatonic and Romantic models of inward dualism (Franz Mesmer's "night-side of the mind," Carl Gustav Carus's "night of the unconscious," Friedrich Schelling's "dark basis" or "*grund*," among many other reverberations and echoes), and, in his own creative formulation, prefigured key aspects of twentieth-century psychoanalytic theory.[10] This tradition of the double encompasses both metaphysical conceptions of immanence (the dissonance between the conscious rational self and a deeper underlying essential identity—for example, Sonia is Raskol'nikov's soul) and psychoanalytic conceptions of unconscious agencies in the mind (for example, Rogozhin is Myshkin's id).[11] Dostoevskii's exploration of doubles and the unconscious mind continues to resonate in contemporary psychology, especially in the field of object-relations, in which accounts of the schizoid mechanism of "projective identification" illuminate how a repressed unconscious inner self can become projected onto an object or person in the outside world.[12]

9. Ralph Tymms described the double in Romantic literature, especially in the works of E. T. A. Hoffmann, as a "secondary, non-conscious self," a "part of the mind inaccessible to the conscious personality," which, "freed from its hiding-place," becomes "projected into the outside world in the visible form of a physical double." Tymms, *Doubles in Literary Psychology* (Cambridge, Eng., 1949), 119. Many of Dostoevskii's readers apply this theory of doubling, including Mochulsky, *Dostoevsky*, 50; Joseph Frank, *Dostoevsky: The Seeds of Revolt, 1821–1849* (Princeton, 1976), 304; and Leonard J. Kent, *The Subconscious in Gogol' and Dostoevskij, and Its Antecedents* (The Hague, 1969), 90: "[Goliadkin's] double is a manifestation of the repressed unconscious." Tymms's reading of Dostoevskii reduces his work to an intensification of this theme; the doppelgänger does not "lose this romantic character when it reappears in Dostoevskii's works [. . .] for his use of the theme only corroborates Hoffmann's half-intuitive understanding of the obscurest processes of the mind" (121). See also Charles E. Passage for a reading of Goliadkin as a reformulation of Hoffmann's Medardus: Passage, "The Double," *Dostoevski the Adapter: A Study in Dostoevski's Use of the Tales of Hoffmann* (Chapel Hill, 1954).

10. On Dostoevskii and Neoplatonism, Carus, and Mesmer, see Chizhevskii, "Dostoevskii— psikholog." For an appraisal of Dostoevskii's reading of Carus during his exile, and the many similarities they shared in their treatment of the unconscious, see George Gibbian, "C. G. Carus' *Psyche* and Dostoevsky," *American Slavic and East European Review* 14, no. 3 (October 1955): 371–82. For an account of German literature's development of the unconscious in the context of Russian literature, see Leonard J. Kent, "Towards the Literary 'Discovery' of the Subconscious," *Subconscious in Gogol' and Dostoevskij*, 15–52.

11. On Sonia as Raskol'nikov's soul, see, for example, Zander, who argues that "the fate of the 'Sonias,' of Maria Lebyadkina, symbolizes the life of a feminine soul and even of the world-soul." Zander, *Dostoevsky*, 100. On Rogozhin as Myshkin's id, see Dalton, *Unconscious Structure in* The Idiot, 83.

12. The field was pioneered in the 1940s by Melanie Klein who influentially described the "projective identification" exhibited by "schizoid personalities" who externalize the self, a normal process in childhood development, but which underlies deeper mental illness when "a weakened ego feels incapable of taking back into itself the parts which it projected into the external world." Klein, "Notes on Some Schizoid Mechanisms," *Envy and Gratitude and Other Works, 1946–1963* (New York, 1975), 12.

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This former, "psychic" reading of Dostoevskii as a neo-Romantic psychologist who stands roughly between E. T. A. Hoffmann and Sigmund Freud has, with the rise of Bakhtin, lost considerable ground to yet another Dostoevskii, namely, the dramatizer of self-consciousness. For Bakhtin, Goliadkin Junior is not a dark, irrational, unconscious element of Goliadkin's personality, as Hoffmann might have conceived of such a character, but quite the opposite: he is a much-observed external self that Goliadkin is desperate to shirk in his desire to exist as a free and "unfinalized" consciousness. In this sense, the doubles are an expression of conflicting orientations within consciousness, the I-for-myself and the I-for-others (transcendence and facticity, absence and presence), representative of twentieth-century phenomenological models of selfhood, with their foundations in German idealism.[13] For Bakhtin, Dostoevskii's conception of personality focuses not on the sleeping mind but on the mind that is remarkably, radically, awake to its potential manifestations. In other words, if the Romantic doppelgänger evokes a dualistic relationship between the conscious mind and the unconscious soul, the Kantian-Bakhtinian conception represents a cognitive divide between the conscious mind aware of its unlimited potential and the self as an embodied, perceived thing.

Both these conceptions of doubling—the psychic and the cognitive—have their limits as all-encompassing models of Dostoevskii's theory of the externalized personality. When considered together, their resonance is fuller and more complex. As we approach Dostoevskii's early narratives, we can observe the emergence of two kinds of doubles, or emanations, with relation to one protagonist, prompted in turn by two conflicting impulses of the psyche toward self-annihilation. On the one hand, Dostoevskii's early characters desire to erase their internal dimensions, to stifle their memories, to avoid introspection, and to become a purely outward, relational phenomenon. On the other hand, there is a strong impulse to erase that outward self, to distance oneself from and rid oneself of the bodily, relational being that occupies space in the perceptions of others. Each of these impulses evokes external emanations

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On projective mechanisms and *The Double*, see Richard J. Rosenthal, "Dostoevsky's Experiment with Projective Mechanisms and the Theft of Identity in *The Double*," in Daniel Rancour-Laferriere, ed., *Russian Literature and Psychoanalysis* (Amsterdam, 1989), 59–88. Rosenthal describes how Goliadkin's projection of himself onto others ultimately points to a lack of subjectivity, an inner emptiness: "Something which should come from within, which should be part of the self, is missing and felt to come from the outside world" (67). See also Breger: "What is portrayed here is a failure of projection as it would be experienced by such a person. Golyadkin tries to get rid of his undesirable qualities by putting them in a split-off 'other,' but this only makes them more undesirable and they follow him around and ruin his life; he cannot get rid of them. Nor does the disassociation ease his pain." Breger, *Dostoevsky*, 123.

13. Kathryn Szczepanska's examination of Dostoevskii's doubles tends toward this avenue, especially in her emphasis on the significance of G. W. F. Hegel's dialectic of self-consciousness as an explanatory paradigm: "characters become the physical representation of thesis and antithesis; the protagonist himself represents at the same time the conflicts and its possible synthesis." Szczepanska, "*The Double* and Double Consciousness in Dostoevskii" (PhD diss., Stanford University, 1978), 22. This aspect of the doppelgänger tradition is the focus of Dmitris Vardoulakis's recent book in his contention that the "doppelgänger makes possible an ontology of the subject" without entailing "a lapse into metaphysics." Vardoulakis, *The Doppelgänger: Literature's Philosophy* (New York, 2010), 1.

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that, together, reveal the outlines of a broader, more multifaceted conception of personality in a state of acute imbalance.

Goliadkin's Other Emanation and Mr. Smit's Howling Soul

In the case of *The Double,* Bakhtin's conception of the cognitively divided self powerfully illuminates Goliadkin Senior's relationship with his "twin." As Bakhtin's reading suggests, Goliadkin panics under the gaze of others as he perceives himself through their eyes, and he defends himself by obliterating the world that limits him, directing his "all-destroying gaze" against it.[14] For Goliadkin, the distance between the self as a free limitless consciousness and the self mercilessly scrutinized by others generates a painful dissonance, which, in this case, becomes an actual separation between two individuals. "Goliadkin's intrigue with his double," Bakhtin argues, "unfolds as the dramatized crisis of self-consciousness," and consequently the entire novel is caught within the bounds of Goliadkin's self-consciousness, between his "'I for myself'" and his "fictitious 'I for the other.'"[15] "In the narration," Bakhtin insists, "we do not find a single element that exceeds the bounds of Goliadkin's self-consciousness, not a single word or a single tone that could not have been part of his interior dialogue with himself."[16]

Bakhtin's persuasive reading of *The Double,* however, overlooks some singular occurrences in the narrative, for there appears to be at least one element of personality that exceeds the bounds of Goliadkin's self-consciousness, one that subtly evokes an unconscious depth of character in Goliadkin and resonates with the psychic, rather than the cognitive, tradition of doubling. As Goliadkin chases his double through the streets of Petersburg, another emanation, or projective identity, follows the unfortunate character and "links" itself to him:

14. Dostoevskii, *PSS,* 1:125. All translations are mine. Malcolm Jones describes this gaze as "the disconfirming glance of the other," which "constantly throws [Goliadkin] into a state of inarticulate panic." Jones, *Dostoyevsky after Bakhtin: Readings in Dostoyevsky's Fantastic Realism* (Cambridge. Eng., 1990), 42.

15. A third voice, Bakhtin says, is the voice of the narrator, yet another aspect of Goliadkin's self-consciousness. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics,* 217.

16. Ibid. Compare this with the widely held contrasting view, for example, in Leonard J. Kent's analysis: "the subconscious is the single most important factor governing Goljadkin's life, controlling him not only from within, but flowing over to infect the total context of his life." Kent, *Subconscious in Gogol' and Dostoevskij,* 94.

Others have read Goliadkin's dualism as a comic parody of the Romantic tradition. See, for example, Viktor Shklovskii: "Dostoevskii's double is the simplest, saddest and most hopeless version of the double. The two heroes are not different from each other in any way. A clerk-failure invented himself just the same as he was, with the same goals, but a success. This absence of an ideal, the refusal to move further denotes the limitedness of the given hero." Shklovskii, *Za i protiv: Zametki o Dostoevskom* (Moscow, 1957), 57. See also Victor Terras who emphasizes the parodic element, or travesty of the doubling: "we witness a struggle not between Heaven and Hell for a man's soul, but between two ridiculous underlings—for a snug little job. [. . .] These grotesque antics can well be viewed as a travesty of the frenzied sciamachies of Hoffmanesque Doppelgangers." Terras, *The Young Dostoevsky (1846–1849): A Critical Study* (The Hague, 1969), 14.

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> Some kind of forsaken little dog, all wet and shivering, linked itself to Mr. Goliadkin and also ran around his side, hurriedly, [. . .] looking at him shyly and intelligently from time to time. Some kind of far-off, long ago forgotten idea—a remembrance of some long ago occurring circumstance—came into his head now, knocked as if with a little hammer in his head, bothered him, would not unlink itself from him. "Ah, this nasty little dog," whispered Mr. Goliadkin, not understanding himself. Finally, he saw his stranger at the corner of Ital'ianskaia street.[17]

While Goliadkin chases his hated external manifestation through the streets of Petersburg, this second projective emanation stirs some hidden memory and, as a result, a "remembrance of some long ago occurring circumstance" resurfaces. Here we encounter the novel's only reference to personal memory that does not touch immediately upon Goliadkin's situation, and it is externalized as a "forsaken," "shivering," "intelligent" creature, which appears for a moment and then is easily outrun.

Yet, for all its brief appearance in *The Double*, this psychic echo that attaches itself to the divided self—the dog at the heels who carries a memory from the unconscious realm—is to reappear persistently in Dostoevskii's early works. To jump ahead in time for a moment, Goliadkin's dog, as the carrier of suppressed memory, makes a more central and much more fantastic entrance into Dostoevskii's post-Siberia writing. In *The Insulted and the Injured* (1861), the old Mr. Smit, who has attempted to annihilate his feelings for his daughter, to the point of morbid psychological disturbance, is inseparable from his dog, Azorka: "From where did he get this hideous dog," asks the narrator, "which is always at his side, as if together they constitute something whole, indivisible, and which looks so much like him?"[18] The narrator emphasizes "something fantastical, enchanted" in this relationship and recognizes a parallel with classical German literature, in Faust's entanglement with Mephisto:[19] "from the first time I saw [the dog], it immediately came into my head that this dog could not be like all dogs; that it is an extraordinary dog; [. . .] that perhaps this is some kind of Mephistopheles in a dog's form and that her destiny is united with the destiny of her master in some mysterious unknown paths."[20] Dostoevskii fleshes out the psychic relationship between Smit and Azorka to a point that risks losing all subtlety, especially in the scene where Nellie recalls the encounter between Smit, Azorka, and Smit's beloved and shunned daughter:

> mama cried out "Azorka! Azorka!" and suddenly a big dog [. . .] ran up to mama, howled and threw herself at her. [. . .] [Grandfather] grew completely pale, and when he saw how mama was lying before him and embracing his feet, he broke away, pushed mama, hit his stick against the stone street and quickly walked away from us. Azorka still stayed behind, all howling and licking mama, then ran to grandfather, grabbed him by the edge of his coat

17. Dostoevskii, *PSS*, 1:142.

18. Ibid., 3:170–71.

19. Apparently, Goethe approved of the reading of *Faust* in which Mephisto is interpreted as a projected aspect of Faust's personality. See Tymms, *Doubles in Literary Psychology*, 34–35.

20. Dostoevskii, *PSS*, 3:171.

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> and pulled him back, but grandfather hit him with the stick. Azorka wanted to run to us again, but grandfather called to her and she ran after grandfather and kept howling.[21]

The relationship between Smit and Azorka can hardly be considered to illustrate the doubling of self-consciousness that we observe in the two Goliadkins. Rather, it dramatizes the individual's relationship with his suppressed unconscious life, which is externalized into a living creature, as a result of the erasure of memory.

On the whole, however, the two traditions of doubling, psychic and cognitive (as in the case of Goliadkin), tend to appear simultaneously in Dostoevskii's early works; rarely does a character have only one kind of double. Consequently, the notion of duality entailed by the concept of the "doubles" becomes further complicated by the multiple roles that the externalized personality assumes and embodies. As we follow this pattern in more detail through some of the early works, we can observe Dostoevskii's movement from the depiction of the individual with two projected manifestations toward a coherent triadic conception of personality.

"The Landlady" Part I: Allegories of Adjacent Personalities

Dostoevskii's "The Landlady" (1847) offers an intricate depiction of the process through which one intermediary consciousness generates two different kinds of doubles. On the surface, "The Landlady" is an investigation of the solipsistic idealism of the Romantic dreamer, the perils of *mechtatel'nost'*, which preoccupied Dostoevskii in the late 1840s.[22] A Victor Frankenstein figure, devoted exclusively to disembodied intellectual concerns, the protagonist, Ordynov, is forced to encounter those neglected emotional and bodily faculties externally, not in the form of a vengeful monster, but as a weeping woman, a "landlady," enslaved by a calculating tyrant. Because of the clear analogy between Ordynov's fragmented inner state and the two characters that begin to dominate his life, critics have often read the events of the story as divorced from realism—delirious projections of Ordynov's psyche, or illustrative allegory on Dostoevskii's part.[23] Yet while the story abounds in rich and

21. Ibid., 3:411.

22. For a basic reading of Ordynov as a Romantic dreamer who projects fairy-tale qualities onto his interlocutors, see W. J. Leatherbarrow, "Dostoevsky's Treatment of the Theme of Romantic Dreaming in 'Khozyayka' and 'Belyye nochi,'" *Modern Language Review* 69, no. 3 (July 1974): 584–95.

23. Reactions have been divided over whether Ordynov's experience is real, a subjective fantasy, or whether the entire story should be read allegorically. A. L. Bem argued that Ordynov's experiences are entirely imaginary. Ordynov, in his feverish state, projects fairy-tale qualities onto the normal lives of Katerina and Murin. Bem, "Dramatizatsiia breda, (Khoziaika Dostoevskogo)," *Dostoevskii: Psikhoanaliticheskie etiudy,* 77–141, a conclusion that Leatherbarrow supports in "Dostoevsky's Treatment of the Theme of Romantic Dreaming," 584–85. Terras describes two plots, "objective" and "subjective," suggesting that the story calls attention to the dissonance between reality and the fantastic subjectivity of the Romantic dreamer. Terras, *Young Dostoevsky,* 195–96. In a more recent article Leatherbarrow examines the tyranny of Ordynov's authorial imagination; he im-

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diverse allegorical imagery, the more unusual and innovative aspect of the work lies in Dostoevskii's examination of the convulsive relationships that form between three central characters—the circumstances in which a traumatized young man finds himself spasmodically attached to two kinds of extensions: the first, a manifestation of the subdued, suppressed unconscious life, and the second, the all-perceiving gaze of self-consciousness that obliterates any attempt to pursue a relationship with the unconscious.

At the center of the story, as mentioned above, Dostoevskii constructs a parallel between the hero's inner state and the relationship enacted by his new landlords—the old man, Murin, and his wife/daughter, Katerina. In observing their interactions, Ordynov watches with horror the power that a calculating intellect can wield over a "weak heart," a site that reflects and externalizes Ordynov's own inner predicament: "The old man grasped her with his mighty arms and almost crushed her on his chest. But when she hid her head on his heart, every feature on the old man's face laughed with such naked shameless laughter that Ordynov's whole being was seized with horror. Deceit, calculation, cold jealous tyranny, and terror over a poor torn heart—this is what he understood in this shameless, already unconcealed, laughter."[24] Repeatedly, his hosts appear to Ordynov in the form of disjointed agencies, with Katerina pressed uncomprehendingly against the chest of the shamelessly ironic master, together enacting the intellect's "sly" "tyranny" over the "soul": "Who were they? He didn't know. But he dreamed constantly of a profound, inescapable tyranny over a poor, defenseless being; [. . .] It seemed to him that before the frightened eyes of a suddenly awakened soul the idea of its degradation had been slyly presented, the poor, *weak* heart had been slyly tormented, [. . .] and little by little the wings of the willful, free soul had been cut, and now finally it was incapable of rising up, not to free flight into real life."[25] Dostoevskii carefully establishes the analogy between Ordynov's interlocutors and his own inward experience of imprisonment. In his dream, Ordynov relives the awakening of consciousness, once again de-

poses narratives upon Murin and Katerina: "The displacement of God's creation with an individualized universe leads to the absorption, loss of otherness and 'spoiling' not only of third parties, but also of Ordynov himself." W. J. Leatherbarrow, "The Sorcerer's Apprentice: Authorship and the Devil in Dostoevsky's Poor Folk and 'The Landlady,'" *Slavic and East European Review* 83, no. 4 (October 2005): 613. Another tendency in criticism puts the emphasis upon the relationship that Ordynov observes, not upon Ordynov himself. Joseph Frank, for example, dismissed Bem's reading as unlikely: "the story itself does not center thematically on this type [the dreamer] at all. As the title indicates, the focus is on Katerina and her relation both to Murin and Ordynov; the psychology of the latter is sketched in briefly but not really developed." Frank, *Dostoevsky: The Seeds of Revolt*, 342. Other readings of the relationship between the three characters have been symbolic and allegorical. For example, in Rudolf Neuhauser's argument: "the landlady is meant to represent the Russian people"; "we can define [Murin] as the personification of [. . .] national traditions reaching back to pre-Petrine times," while Ordynov is the new-fangled idealist/utopian socialist who wants to rescue the Russian soul from repressive autocracy. Neuhauser, "The Landlady: 'A New Interpretation,'" *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 10, no. 1 (Spring 1968): 42–67.

24. Dostoevskii, *PSS*, 1:311.

25. Ibid., 1:319. Emphasis in the original.

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picted through the image of an old man torturing a child, destroying the life of the soul with "slow poison":

> But here [among idyllic images of childhood] began to appear one being, which disturbed him with some kind of unchildlike terror, which poured the first slow poison of grief and tears into his life. [. . .] [The old man] peeked out from every letter of his grammar. Then, while Ordynov was asleep, the evil old man sat down at the head of his bed. . . . He chased away swarms of light spirits, which brandished their golden and sapphire wings around his cradle [. . .] and began, for whole nights on end, to whisper a long, marvelous fairy tale to him, which was unintelligible to the child's heart, but which tore at him, upset him with terror and unchildlike fear.[26]

Dostoevskii insists on the analogy here between the old man tormenting the child in the dream and Ordynov's destruction of himself through study. The phrase used to describe the old man "poisoning" the child with "fairy tales" is the same as that used to describe Ordynov poisoning himself with the study of science: "the slow poison."[27] When Ordynov awakens, he sees, through a hole in the wall, Murin reading "fairy tales" to Katerina, who, like the child in the dream, is both horrified and fascinated, and he rushes into the room to save the girl from Murin's tyranny.

In this context, Ordynov's attempts to liberate Katerina from Murin possess obvious allegorical significance as the ego's impulse to liberate his own soul, or anima ("the image of a weeping woman" that "overwhelms his imagination") from the cold tyranny of the conscious mind.[28] The dynamism of personality that Dostoevskii captures here is decidedly Romantic. Reason appears as a tyrannical force that subdues nature, trapping it in patterns of shame and guilt. The ego, finding itself caught between these polarities, feels a deep bond with suffering nature but also identifies itself with consciousness. In this sense, critics are justified in evaluating the story as derivative of Romantic literature, and echoes of Murin's tyranny can readily be found in Hoffmann's Alban ("The Magnetizer") or in Nikolai Gogol''s Antichrist ("A Terrible Vengeance"), both of whom present themselves as tyrants who have captivated and subdued the feminine soul.[29]

There is, however, a more immediate question concerning the hero's inability to differentiate between his own inner divisions and the relationships

26. Ibid., 1:278–79.

27. Ibid., 1:265, 278.

28. Ibid., 1:269. Rudolf Neuhauser presents a psychoanalytic reading, associating Ordynov with the life of the spirit trying to gain mastery over the soul: "the main characters of the tale form one composite figure: man, particularly adolescent man, on his uncertain path to maturity. The prince symbolizes human spirituality, the intellectual component of man; the princess or bewitched beauty embodies the principle of the soul, the emotional component of man; the wizard represents evil drives, the psychological substratum in man, which rises against him in adolescence and has to be overcome before the intellect can be united to the soul, that is, gain power over the emotional, animalistic self. Only then has adolescent man, the composite hero of the tale, reached maturity." Neuhauser, "The Landlady," 45.

29. Many readings of "The Landlady" have emphasized its derivative qualities. See, for example, Charles E. Passage, "The Landlady," *Dostoevski the Adapter*, 40–62. See Terras's overview of "The Landlady" and Romantic antecedents in *Young Dostoevsky*, 27–30.

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he forms in the outside world. A parallel question concerns the hosts themselves who respond to Ordynov with so much mutual intensity. What kind of individuals are these who can become so indistinguishable from the projected aspects of an inner life? Indeed, there are details in "The Landlady" that, when read together with other stories from this period, suggest that Dostoevskii was not so much imposing a Romantic allegory of mind and soul upon his characters, as examining instead how the personality can extend itself actively into other individuals.

"The Landlady" Part II: Weeping onto Other People's Faces, "Giving a Start," and the Phenomenology of the Traumatized Mind

The clearest indication that Ordynov is not simply the traditional Romantic dreamer suggested by the narrator and genre, is that Ordynov, in fact, has no palpable inner life, no ability to reflect; nor does he exhibit any traces of active memory. Rather, Ordynov is introduced as a man in a state of amnesia, unable to make any sense of his thoughts and impressions. Emphasis is placed throughout on the unbearable pain associated with Ordynov's efforts at self-reflection, and his unwillingness to remember: "He couldn't reason and was even afraid to. [. . .] Walking at random, not seeing the road, he tried with all his might, as much as he could to concentrate his spirit, to direct his fractured thought and at least to reason a little bit about his situation. But the exertion only brought him to suffering, to torment [. . .] 'No, death would be better,' he thought, 'better death,' he whispered."[30] When Katerina asks Ordynov of his past, his answer manifests both avoidance and suppression: "There is no one; I am alone . . . it doesn't matter, let it be! Now it's better . . . It's good now!"[31] Thus, marked by a sense of constant irrational anxiety, Ordynov has no functional inner space. When he wanders into the church and prostrates himself on the ground, sobbing and feeling "crushed," in this gesture of prayer he does not pray but only falls into a state of "oblivion."[32]

In the portrayal of Ordynov's amnesia and utterly collapsed inner life, his dream becomes the only trace of any specific inner dimension through its evocations of images from childhood. In this context, the old man in the dream is not simply the allegorical "force of consciousness" robbing the soul of its life, but the fragment of a recollection of events in which an actual child is being tormented. The descriptions of the child's pain in the dream are terrifying and vivid. The "spiteful" or "evil" old man "follows him everywhere" and Ordynov "cannot take his eyes from him." He sits at the head of Ordynov's bed when the latter is asleep and "for whole nights on end [. . .] whispers" a tale that is "unintelligible to a child's heart" but that "tears at him" and "upsets him with terror and unchildlike fear." Ordynov begs him to stop, but the old man "does not heed his sobbing and entreaties" and continues until Ordynov falls into "stupor, into oblivion."[33] This disturbing picture is one of the closest

30. Dostoevskii, *PSS*, 1:273–74.
31. Ibid., 1:276.
32. Ibid., 1:267, 270.
33. Ibid., 1:278–79.

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things to a memory we are given to help explain why this individual panics at the very sight of other people and looks in others for the fragments of his collapsed self. Dostoevskii also makes it clear that, in Ordynov's unconscious life, this image of being tormented by an old man is connected to his conception of himself as disembodied, as a purely subjective mind who himself is outwardly only "a speck of dust": "Then the little boy suddenly awoke as a man; [. . .] He suddenly became conscious of his real position, suddenly began to understand that he was alone and alien to the whole world [. . .] he thought not in disembodied ideas, but in whole worlds, whole creations [. . .] how he was borne along like a speck of dust in all this endless, strange inescapable world."[34] The process of disembodiment, or the flight into extreme transcendentalism, is given here as a child's response to traumatic experience.

These vague memories suggest that Ordynov is not simply a Romantic dreamer, ruined by excessive attention to ideal things and intellectual pursuits, but a traumatized individual who has barred himself from any relationship with his unconscious life.[35] Katerina becomes for him the expression of these erased internal dimensions, as she is constantly associated in his eyes with the life of "the soul": "as if in answer to his despair, in answer to his trembling heart, the familiar, thick, silver voice of Katerina sounded like that internal music known to a person's soul."[36] Moreover, it is through the relationship with Katerina that Dostoevskii explores the nature of Ordynov's amnesia. When she begins to tell him of her memories, "Ordynov wants to stop her," but she continues, and he recognizes the barely coherent events she describes, her own imprisonment and torment at the hands of an "old man," as his own memories: "Her story was incoherent, the soul's storm could be heard in her words, but Ordynov understood everything, since her life had become his life, her sorrow his sorrow and since he could already see his enemy standing before him, taking form and growing before him in every word. [. . .] The evil old man of his dream (Ordynov believed it) was in reality before him."[37] Through these memories of tormented childhood, Ordynov and Katerina are inherently connected. Katerina tells Murin that she has only now, through telling Ordynov, recovered her past: "I didn't know myself for a long time, did not remember, and the time came, I recognized everything and remembered; everything that had passed, I lived through again with my insatiable soul."[38]

As these memories resurface between them, the young protagonists simultaneously enact a mysterious and bizarre form of intimacy that will become prominent in Dostoevskii's later novels. The intensity of their sudden intimacy is unlikely, even impossible. When Ordynov first visits the house,

34. Ibid., 1:279–80.

35. In the words of Leonard J. Kent, "whatever merit *The Landlady* has results primarily from Dostoevskij's use of the subconscious. Dostoevskij was very early convinced that the delineation of the pathological and the psychological could not only serve the ends of literature but could encompass and express the philosophical and ethical, and even the least successful pieces he wrote are therefore necessarily of some profundity." Kent, *Subconscious in Gogol' and Dostoevskij*, 105.

36. Dostoevskii, *PSS*, 1:302.

37. Ibid., 1:294.

38. Ibid., 1:306.

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he can hear Katerina's heart beating from two steps away.[39] She admits that she felt close to him immediately, and Murin comments on their unexpectedly sudden closeness, likening their relationship to that of "lovers" or of "brother and sister."[40] In the vivid descriptions of their interactions, among the images of breath upon each other's faces and passionate kisses, Dostoevskii uses an image that in his works will become a recurrent signifier of the extended self, namely, the shedding of tears upon each other's skin: "[she] placed her cheek to his cheek; her warm, humid breath fluttered along his face . . . Suddenly Ordynov felt that her hot tears poured from her eyes in a torrent and fell, like molten lead, on his cheeks."[41] In *The Double,* the fleeting moment of reconciliation with the other Goliadkin is described with the use of the image of hot tears on cold skin: "he himself became very tearful and clearly felt how his hot tears flowed on his cold cheeks."[42] A similar device is used much later in *The Idiot,* in the mysterious communion between Myshkin and Rogozhin at the end of the novel: "tears flowed from his eyes onto Rogozhin's cheeks, but perhaps he already didn't feel his own tears."[43] In "The Landlady," the sensation of warm foreign tears as an image of self-reconciliation is enhanced when, as Ordynov sleeps, the tears that fall onto his cheeks are from an ambiguous source, perhaps even from his own eyes: "someone's scalding tears burned his inflamed cheeks."[44] The image of the tears on the face, repeated between them three times, testifies to an unusual sense of identification.[45]

If Ordynov relates to Katerina as to a manifestation of the unconscious, he simultaneously generates another double, Murin, who stares at him "fixedly" throughout.[46] "Not taking his eyes from Ordynov," he enacts the process of self-consciousness externally and attempts to suppress Katerina's awakened memories.[47] Murin advocates an escape from memory: "let my memory vanish altogether," he declares, and he warns Katerina against the act of recollection: "What is past is like wine that has been drunk! What happiness is in the past? A worn out coat must be cast off."[48] While Ordynov struggles for intimacy with his psychic double, he constantly senses Murin's gaze upon him, a gaze that debilitates the young man's overtures toward Katerina. Ordynov moves to embrace her, but "the cursory, momentary gaze of the old man again bound him to his place. Some kind of strange mixture of disdain, contempt, impatient, irritated concern and [. . .] spiteful, sly curiosity gleamed in his cursory, momentary gaze, from which every time Ordynov gave a start and which every time filled his heart with bile, irritation, and impotent malice."[49] When Ordynov follows them from the church, seized by a desire to apprehend

39. Ibid., 1:272.
40. Ibid., 1:304.
41. Ibid., 1:277.
42. Ibid., 1:225.
43. Ibid., 8:507.
44. Ibid., 1:278.
45. Ibid., 1:277, 278, 292.
46. Ibid., 1:272.
47. Ibid., 1:281.
48. Ibid., 1:306.
49. Ibid., 1:307–8.

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Katerina, "the old man turned and glanced at Ordynov with impatience. The young man stopped as if rooted to the spot."[50]

The use of *vzdragivat' / vzdrognut'* (to shudder or to give a start), perhaps the most strangely and widely used verb of Dostoevskii's novels, occurs constantly between the three characters. Ordynov "starts" when his eyes meet Murin's, and Murin, in turn, "starts" at Ordynov's rebellious gaze.[51] The convulsive shuddering extends to Katerina; Ordynov "starts" when he first sees her in the church, and Katerina "starts" when Ordynov rushes into her room to save her, as she does when she tells Ordynov of Murin's entry into her life, and when she meets Ordynov's gaze.[52] One senses that this shuddering, which would later become such an important and mysterious element of characterization for Dostoevskii, is founded in the ties of extension that exist between these characters, pulling them toward, or away from, each other.

For all its considerable aesthetic flaws, "The Landlady" is rich ground for approaching Dostoevskii's early conception of the internal dimensions of human personality.[53] Three major narrative elements will remain particularly important for Dostoevskii throughout his career, as they help to shed light on the problem of the individual personality in his novels.

First, the psychological mechanism that binds these characters together already bears some considerable degree of complexity. Murin and Katerina are not simply allegories for conflicting agencies in Ordynov's mind. Dostoevskii gives them lives and histories that have nothing to do with Ordynov. In the presence of the subject, who has suppressed the dimensions of his own personality, however, they are drawn in as convulsive extensions. The psychological mechanism that binds the three protagonists reflects elements of object-relations theory in twentieth-century psychoanalysis, especially Melanie Klein's concept of "projective identification" in narcissistic personalities: "a person treats others as though they were part of oneself" and then attempts "to control the parts of the self that have [. . .] been lodged into the other person."[54] This process can become successfully externalized as the schizoid personality "induce[s] complementary or identical states of mind in the recipient" through "subtle, usually unconscious, affective or cognitive communications and behaviors."[55]

Second, the psychological study of binding is presented simultaneously

50. Ibid., 1:268.

51. Ibid., 1:301 and 308, 305.

52. Ibid., 1:269, 281, 297, and 299, respectively.

53. For more than a hundred and fifty years now, "The Landlady" has been panned by critics. Vissarion Belinskii set the tone for the story's reception shortly after its appearance, describing it as "far-fetched, exaggerated, stilted, spurious and false." For more on this, see Frank, *Dostoevsky: The Seeds of Revolt*, 342.

54. David E. Scharff, *Object Relations Theory and Practice: An Introduction* (Northvale, N.J., 1996), 137.

55. The mutuality of their relationship is compatible with psychiatric theories of projective mechanisms. "Projective identification," explains Richard J. Rosenthal, "is a bridging concept between the intrapsychic and the interpersonal. Simultaneous with the fantasy are often subtle, usually unconscious, affective or cognitive communications and behaviors which induce complementary or identical states of mind in the recipient." Rosenthal, "Dostoevsky's Experiment with Projective Mechanisms," 63.

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as a spiritual crisis. The ailing Ordynov finds himself in a church, despairing, kneeling before the icons, but he does not pray. In fact, his anguish reaches an unbearable intensity when he is faced with the icons, a scenario that Dostoevskii later repeats in *Netochka Nezvanova*. It is noteworthy that the breakdown in the church, in the gesture of praying, occurs at the very moment when Ordynov's interlocutors, Murin and Katerina, appear: "The blacker the darkness that thickened under the dome of the temple, the brighter shone in places the gilded icons illuminated by the quivering glow of the icon lamps and candles. In an attack of profound anxious anguish and some kind of trampled feeling, Ordynov leaned against the wall in the darkest corner of the church and sank into oblivion for a moment. *He came to when the measured, muffled sound of two arriving parishioners sounded under the domes of the temple.*"[56] The icons, at which Ordynov cannot look, are subsumed into Katerina's presence, as the "*obraz*" (image, or icon) "of a weeping woman." Katerina, as an extension of Ordynov, prays continually to this icon of the Mother of God. The psychic double as the prayerful, religious being with sorrowful memories is contrasted with the other emanation, which contemptuously watches the prostrated soul. As Ordynov collapses into oblivion, the two emanations that enter the church signal an early template for Dostoevskii's diagnosis of the complex enmity between self-consciousness and the religious sensibility, a conflict that will famously characterize the relationship of Svidrigailov and Sonia, as mediated through Raskol'nikov. In his early works, however, Dostoevskii returns to this moment—the protagonist kneeling in front of the icon, overwhelmed by despair and anxiety, and immediately searching out other selves—with greater clarity in *Netochka Nezvanova*.

Finally, the picture of doubling in "The Landlady" presents us with a vision of Dostoevskii's thoughts on the structure of the personality, the notion of a conscious mind fighting for tyranny over the personality; an unconscious soul that hides its memories from consciousness; and the ego as a mediator who unlocks those memories, while constantly threatened in this task by the force of self-consciousness. At this very early stage in his development as a theorist of the self, one can already discern a complex and dynamic model that resonates with both the psychic and cognitive traditions of doubling. Moreover, the depiction of the direct relation of self-consciousness to amnesia signifies a landmark in Dostoevskii's approach to memory and interiority, themes discovered in "The Landlady" that Dostoevskii will continue to think through in *Netochka Nezvanova*.

Netochka Nezvanova Part I: Suppressed Memory and the Trembling Creature

In *Netochka Nezvanova* (first published in 1849, but never completed), Dostoevskii continues to refine these mechanisms of doubling and provides a more focused investigation of the tripartite relationship that he had explored with little aesthetic success in "The Landlady." The plan for the novel, according to the stated intentions of its narrator, was to include three central protagonists

56. Dostoevskii, *PSS*, 1:267. Emphasis added.

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of approximately the same age: Netochka, Laria, and Katia. The sections that Dostoevskii completed before his arrest establish the pathologically intimate relationships that bind the three figures.[57] Netochka, the central figure, transforms the other two children into aspects of her personality, which, on its own, is marked by a sense of absence—her nickname "Netochka," derived from Annetochka (little Annette), means roughly "little nothing."[58] When she encounters these two emanations, Netochka is in the midst of an intense effort to suppress her terrifying thoughts and memories in the wake of her parents' death.

The mechanism of amnesia appears more subtly in "The Landlady," but here it takes center stage. Netochka's inability to remember is central to the narrative and is described at length:

> But such a strange thing happened! It was as if I forgot the ending of what had happened to me with my parents, and the whole terrible story. [. . .] It was true, I remembered everything—the night, the violin, and my papa, I remembered how I got the money for him; but I somehow wasn't able to make sense of or clarify all these events to myself . . . *It only became heavier on my heart, and when I came up in my remembrance to that moment when I was praying next to my dead mother, then frost suddenly ran across my members; I shivered, cried out lightly, and then it became so difficult to breathe that my whole breast ached, my heart thumped so powerfully, that I ran out of the corner in fright.*[59]

Ordynov's memories were warped and unrecoverable; an old man tormenting a child with fairy tales suggests a screen image of fictitious accounts, overshadowing and concealing real events. In Netochka's case, we encounter the suppressed events directly. Feelings of terror surround two adjacent images in Netochka's mind: the corpse of her recently deceased mother and the icon of the Mother of God:

> [My stepfather] led me to the corner where the icon was and told me to kneel. "Pray, my child, pray! You'll feel better! [. . .]" he whispered to me, pointing to the icon. [. . .]
>
> I threw myself on my knees, clasped my hands, and full of horror [. . .] fell on the floor and lay there for some minutes as if lifeless. I strained all my thoughts and all my feelings to pray, but fear overwhelmed me. [. . .] "Papa," I said, in a flood of tears, "[. . .] Where is mama?" [. . .] Finally he took me by

57. In a recently completed, as yet unpublished manuscript, Thomas G. Marullo examines the relationships between the novel's characters from the perspective of "morbid codependency," a state in which the boundaries between self and other are obscured and dissolved: "Initially, in morbid codependency with others, the child Netochka enjoys untold happiness. To her the advantages are obvious. She can take from others what she believes she lacks. [. . .] Fearing loneliness, abandonment, and eviction, she latches onto her host with gritted teeth and white-knuckled hands." Marullo, "Heroine Abuse: The Poetics of Codependency in *Netochka Nezvanova*" (unpublished manuscript, 2012), 69–70.

58. Mochul'skii sees this as a compositional defect in the work: "Netochka is too pale a figure, too much the narrator and not the heroine. With discreet modesty she invariably yields the foreground to other individuals and is incapable of focusing the novel's events on her own personality." Mochulsky, *Dostoevsky*, 108.

59. Dostoevskii, *PSS*, 2:191. Emphasis added. References are to the 1860 revised text.

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> the hand, led me to the bed [. . .] and opened the blanket. My God! She was lying dead, already having grown cold and blue. As if unconscious, I threw myself on her and embraced her corpse. Father placed me on my knees. "Bow to her, child!" he said, "say farewell to her . . ." I bowed.[60]

In the description of Netochka's traumatic experience, Dostoevskii carefully conflates the images of the dead mother and the icon, so that the image of the icon evokes terror by association, and the inability to remember becomes synonymous with religious despair. Attempts to recover these images lead Netochka either into serious illness or into relationships of passionate extension. Later, her guardian asks her to pray before the icon, drawing her into a fit of near fatal anxiety: "The Prince hurriedly placed me on my knees before the icon of the mother of God and he knelt down beside me. But I could not pray; I was stricken, even frightened; I recalled the words of my father in that final night, at the body of my mother, and I was overcome by a nervous fit."[61]

Two relationships pull her away from these suppressed images. The first interlocutor Netochka encounters is a boy, Laria, so deeply traumatized by his own memories that he has been reduced to a semicoherent, hysterical, constantly weeping and trembling "creature": "a creature who was hiding from me, terrified and who almost cried out when I approached him. It was a boy, about eleven years old, pale, skinny, redheaded, who was squatting and whose whole body was trembling."[62] Netochka recognizes "instinctively" that there is an implicit connection between them as she questions him about his past: "Who was he and where had he been before? But at my question his face changed . . . I remember that my heart contracted as I looked at him, perhaps because I instinctively felt that his grief was akin to my grief, which I felt at times painfully in my soul, but which I still had not comprehended fully: some kind of fear would descend upon me whenever I would begin to think of myself."[63] Here we can observe an almost exact parallel of Ordynov's intense identification with Katerina. Netochka comments explicitly on the inexplicable connection between her own inner confusion and Laria's visible agony.[64] Unable to look inward, she can only approach her memories by externalizing them, by encountering them in Laria:

> And it was Laria who was chosen to explain to me all my grief with his story! [. . .] listening to his story, I made sense of almost all my past. I myself was in some kind of frenzy from grief, from terror, from everything that had so suddenly risen from my heart, but that had long been accumulating in him. Finally I began to understand my poor mother, and my conscience deeply rose up against me! [. . .] When Laria finished his story, I was weeping violently, I embraced him and already didn't try to comfort or dissuade him. I myself was under the influence of that same impression, which was destroying the

60. Ibid., 2:185–86.

61. Ibid., 2:194.

62. Dostoevskii, *PSS*, 2:440. The section with Laria was removed from the unfinished novel in Dostoevskii's later revision. See Terras, *Young Dostoevsky*, 145–47.

63. Ibid., 2:441.

64. Joseph Frank describes Laria as a "'reflector' for Netochka [who] helps her, even at this early stage, to understand the significance of her own twisted psychic history." Frank, *Dostoevsky: The Seeds of Revolt*, 357.

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> poor child, and some kind of enthusiasm of sympathy for him enveloped my entire soul.[65]

As was also the case with Ordynov and Katerina, moreover, the impression is mutual; Laria recognizes himself in Netochka as well, as she tells him about her parents, and he clings to her passionately, becoming actively subsumed into, and conquered by, her personality: "He pressed himself to me and began ardently to kiss my cheek, shoulders, dress. He was in a state of intense anxiety. An indescribably pleasant feeling overtook me. I understood that I had finally overcome his fear, his distrust, and had obtained his love. [. . .] I became calm while he was kissing me, and a sweet confusion enveloped my heart."[66] As in the earlier story, the act of remembering takes on a mysteriously communal form and binds the two together into a compound personality. Connected by their remarkably similar pasts, the characters cannot disentangle themselves from each other, as they become faculties of a larger, extended self.

This mutual recognition, however, does not take the place of actual recollection. As with Ordynov and Katerina, the convulsive relationship leads to an intense deterioration in both individuals: "We didn't part for the whole week, we only existed for each other; but the more tightly connected we became, the more wild and unsociable we became to everything around us. As for me, I had already completely assimilated his manner of thinking and thus was perishing just as he was."[67] The compound personality is highly unstable. We are told that Laria had "developed abnormally, developed in a sensory manner [*chuvstvenno*], as a heart, while his mind was more and more obscured in dreams."[68] Netochka, as the administrative mind, tries to take control of this emotional self, while finding herself pulled into its sphere of unintelligibility.

Netochka Nezvanova Part II: Self-Consciousness and the Ideal Beauty

Laria's sudden disappearance from the house evokes a crisis in Netochka. With her projective addressee absent, she begins to search for her dead mother in external space and ultimately finds herself in front of the icon of the mother of God, an experience that, as mentioned above, sends her into a dangerous illness. As the primary trauma is restaged, a second relationship of extension is immediately formed. She awakens to see a young girl "just like me" (*takaia zhe devochka, kak i ia*), "the same age as me," and "my first movement was to stretch my hand towards her."[69] Netochka's identification with this new counterpart is again immediate and encompasses the whole of her inner life: "From my first glance upon her *my entire soul* was filled with some kind of happiness. [. . .] My first idea was to never again be separated from

65. Dostoevskii, *PSS*, 2:445.
66. Ibid., 2:442.
67. Ibid., 2:446.
68. Ibid., 2:445.
69. Ibid., 2:189, 197.

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Katia. Something uncontrollable pulled me to her."[70] If the first emanation appeared as a trembling creature, whose memories were somehow the same as Netochka's, this second interlocutor is aloof, unknowable, and sublime: "Imagine an ideally beautiful little face, an astonishing, blazing beauty, one of those before whom you suddenly stopped as if pierced, in sweet confusion, shuddering from rapture."[71] Netochka encounters a remote, detached, ideal self, that watches her, and to which she aspires, whose ideal beauty "awakens" Netochka's "aesthetic feeling."[72]

Like Ordynov's relationship with Murin, Netochka's convulsive attachment to Katia dramatizes the awakening of self-consciousness. To Netochka, Katia assumes the status of a transcendent, imperious, perfect being who observes Netochka with ironic detachment as she "trembles with all [her] members" under this scrutiny and strives to look at herself constantly through Katia's eyes.[73] Dostoevskii persistently calls attention to Katia's fixed gaze upon the heroine: "The Princess would usually sit down across from me [. . .] and would begin to look me over with her black eyes [. . .] she constantly looked me over from head to foot with the most naive amazement"; "she looked me over for a very long time [. . .] as if solving a new problem that had suddenly arisen in her mind"; "she glowered at me, [. . .] and for half an hour didn't take her gaze from me"; "more and more often, she would sit across from me in order to scrutinize me more comfortably."[74] Under Katia's gaze, Netochka becomes intensely aware of herself as an awkward and imperfect creature: "I wanted with all my strength for her to like me and thus I was afraid of my every word, of my every action"; "my failures [to make Katia like me] hurt me to the point of pain, and I was ready to cry from Katia's every strict word, from her every distrustful look."[75] From her powerful vantage point of pure perception, Katia observes the sluggish and infuriating creature across from her, annoyed at Netochka's inability to recover from her illness immediately, and at her awkwardness, and irritated by the unflattering mirror that follows her around. When their governess compares them to each other, Katia uses Goliadkin's solipsistic mechanism of the "all-destroying gaze" to obliterate her embodied counterpart: "she looked at me, as if she wanted to burn me with her gaze."[76]

In response to Katia's imperious observational distance and her "disgust," Netochka's obsession with Katia becomes the sole substance of her inner life.[77] The rapturous identification fills her mind entirely, erasing all other potential thoughts and gradually "dislodging" the "memories of [her] sad past": "At first Katia's indifference tormented me to the point of offense; but now everything in me grew dim, and I had no awareness of my sensations. Thus, new impressions little by little dislodged the old ones, and the memories of my sad past lost their painful force and were replaced in me by a new

70. Ibid., 2:197–99. Emphasis added.
71. Ibid., 2:197.
72. Ibid., 2:207.
73. Ibid., 2:203.
74. Ibid., 2:198, 199, 202, 206.
75. Ibid., 2:197, 199.
76. Ibid., 2:202.
77. Ibid., 2:200.

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life."[78] When Katia inquires about Netochka's thoughts, she answers truthfully: "I think about you."[79] Hidden grief or terror becomes externalized, and, when Netochka steals Katia's ribbon and kisses it, "the whole night through, drenched in tears," she has found an external object on which to focus all her anguish, longing, spiritual devotion, all the aspects of her collapsed inner life: "I didn't take my eyes off her, and when she would go away, I would continue to look, as if enchanted, at where she had stood. She began to appear in my dreams. And when I was awake, when she wasn't there, I composed whole conversations with her."[80] In the increasing state of amnesia intensified by the relationship, Netochka blocks her past from Katia's inquiries: "The little princess's questions oppressed my heart more and more. [. . .] 'Why are you asking me,' I said, trembling all over from some kind of new unknown feeling."[81] Thus, the initial trauma does not disappear but is blurred, as is all Netochka's inner life, in the intensity of the external relationship. Here we have a template for the Bakhtinian dramatization of self-consciousness, which obliterates the sphere of personal memory and draws the individual utterly into the "living present."

Katia is not a mere aspect of Netochka's personality. On her own, as a character she exhibits a wide range of emotional and psychological complexity. The intensity of Netochka's attachment, however, gradually destabilizes Katia, drawing both girls into the sphere of pathology, so that they become aspects of an extended, shared personality: "Little by little I observed—since I already didn't take my eyes from her all month—that Katia was daily becoming more lost in thought, her character was beginning to lose its evenness."[82] The erotic intimacy of their relationship expresses itself in a gradually intensifying mirroring, or an extension of faculties into the other person, a desire for mutual substitution. Their first loving exchange involves Katia's tying Netochka's shoes for her, then tying her kerchief.[83] The climactic act of substitution between them occurs when Netochka takes the blame for Katia's mischief and is punished in her stead.[84] When they are reunited after this event, their intimacy takes a radical turn. In their intense physical embraces, their interactions continue to express a wish for mutual substitution. They fantasize, for example, of being each other's slaves: "Katia thought up that we will live in this way: she would order me around for one day, [. . .] and the next day would be the opposite—I would give orders, and she would obey unques-

78. Ibid., 2:210.

79. Ibid., 2:198.

80. Ibid., 2:210, 197.

81. Ibid., 2:204. Netochka does, later, tell Katia of her memories, but, she does not, in Katia's presence, approach those painful, suppressed memories she and Laria share in common.

82. Ibid., 2:210. In *Heroine Abuse*, Marullo stresses the infectious nature of "morbid codependency" in *Netochka Nezvanova*: "morbid codependents bend their hosts into their own image and likeness; or, they transmute to doubles, mirroring with stunning veracity the (often bizarre and unstable) thoughts, actions, and emotions of their partners." Marullo, "Heroine Abuse," 23.

83. Dostoevskii, *PSS*, 2:211.

84. Ibid., 2:215.

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tioningly; and then we would both equally give each other orders."[85] Again, the description of their intimacy is accompanied by the image of the tears on each other's faces, as well as convulsive sudden movements: "Several drops from her tears fell on my cheeks."[86] As they are pulled toward each other, they "start," and Netochka can hear "every thump" of Katia's heart.[87] As in the case with Netochka and Laria, their shared personality is quickly collapsing; the governess notices "that we were both in some kind of frenzy, already three days we did not separate from each other, constantly kissing, crying, guffawing like crazy people—like crazy people chattering endlessly."[88] In both cases, the personality that has been extended into two people is extremely unstable.

These early sections of the unfinished work indicate that, already in the 1840s, Dostoevskii was writing a novel about an externalized personality, a tripartite self, conceived as an interpersonal phenomenon. With Netochka as an intermediary principle between her sublimely beautiful friend, Katia, and her terrified, trembling double, Laria, we can observe a vague precursor of those later "whirlwind" arrangements in which, for example, Alesha and his brothers, while separate individuals, are simultaneously cognitive potencies on a spectrum of one extended personality. As Dostoevskii examines two separate dialectical relationships within the sphere of one extended personality, he intensifies their discreteness as separate and progressively more unstable clusters of personality that form around a traumatized individual. Unlike Katerina and Murin, for instance, Laria and Katia do not encounter each other, do not even know of each other's existence. It is also here that the nature of these relationships as pathology becomes explicit, signaled by the deepening presence of amnesia and the marked deterioration of the convulsive pairs.

At the heart of Dostoevskii's concept of the person, there is, to use the language of trauma theory, a "crying wound" that provides the ground for the vast intersecting constructions of character that will constitute his later novels.[89] The "forsaken little dog" that links itself to Goliadkin, stirring the "remembrance of some long ago occurring circumstance," is no mere textual anomaly. Its presence indicates the unconscious survival of memories that prompt the individual to identify himself in external space. In *The Demons*, Stavrogin confesses that, although he has the power to exterminate his memories ("I discarded all [my memories] at once in a mass, and the entire mass obediently vanished each time as soon as I wished it"), he nevertheless re-

85. Ibid., 2:221.
86. Ibid., 2:219.
87. Ibid., 2:206 and 212, 217.
88. Ibid., 2:221.
89. Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (Baltimore, 1996), 8. In her influential discussion of trauma theory and literature, Caruth identifies trauma as "a wound of the mind" that "cries out" not at one specific moment in the past, but in the shaping of one's life and one's relations with others. Caruth argues that literature is particularly capable of examining traumatic experience since it "is interested in the complex relation between knowing and not knowing" (4).

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mains haunted by the apparitions of Matresha, on one hand, and of another "malicious being, contemptuous and 'reasonable,' on the other."[90] Given the experiences of Goliadkin, Ordynov, and Netochka, we can partially predict the complex whirlwind of personal emanations—Petr Verkhovenskii, Shatov, Kirillov, and so on—that will be drawn to Stavrogin so compulsively in his state of incomplete amnesia. Thus, Bakhtin's celebration of the absence of memory in Dostoevskii's characters as a prerequisite for existential freedom, is intensely problematic, for the amnesia that allows for such freedom is also a major symptom of the illness that Dostoevskii confronts in his writing. The attempt to remember is central to Dostoevskii's spirituality, since the "crying wound," preserved and guarded, in a positive sense, can also become the ground for the "salvation" of the personality, as Alesha explains in his final speech, in the wake of Iliusha's death.[91]

Through this early description of pathology, Dostoevskii begins to sketch as yet somewhat indistinctly the outlines of a tripartite model of personality. In "The Landlady," Ordynov appeared as a third presence within a mind/soul relationship, destabilizing Murin's tyranny over Katerina, accessing memories in Katerina that had long been suppressed, and challenging Murin's authority, thus generating three different dialectics within their extended personality rather than one tyrannical relationship. In the obscure interactions of the three characters, we observed the dialectic of self-consciousness raging between Murin and Ordynov, the psychoanalytic dialectic of the unconscious as Ordynov draws out Katerina's suppressed memories, and the tyranny of mind over nature as Murin reads to Katerina, and "presses her to his chest." It was clear that the latter form of dualism was the most stable, and that "there was no way for three people to live in this apartment," where one element is always at risk of annihilation.[92] In Netochka's relationship with Laria, she began to lose her ability to think, while the convulsive attachment to Katia blotted out her memories. In these clusters of personality, the agencies bind themselves in pairs, and some element of the personality is lost in each pairing, whether it be the soul's memory or the mind's awareness. Throughout these sketches, Dostoevskii's hero emerges as the mediator who cannot hold the fullness of her personality together at once, who, in simple terms, cannot unite conscious and unconscious lives in the same mind.

At this time, Dostoevskii had not yet begun to explore the immense philosophical potential of this arrangement—for instance, to examine the problems of freedom and determinism posited in the cognitive doubling of self-consciousness, or the relationship with the divine implicit in the theory of the

90. Dostoevskii, *PSS*, 11:9, 21.

91. "We will remember how we buried the poor boy. [. . .] We will remember him, gentlemen, for our entire lives. [. . .] Know that there is nothing higher, more powerful, wholesome and more useful later in life, than some good memory, and especially one taken from childhood, from one's parents' house. [. . .] And even if only one good memory remains in us in our heart, then even that can serve at some point for our salvation." Dostoevskii, *PSS*, 15:195. See Diane Oenning Thompson's discussion of memories "that affirm the system of Christian memory." Thompson, *The Brothers Karamazov and the Poetics of Memory* (Cambridge, Eng., 1991), 74.

92. Dostoevskii, *PSS*, 1:272.

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unconscious. We do not yet encounter the rebellion of the other who demands to be unbound from the traumatized personality. Nor had Dostoevskii begun the reconstruction of interiority that would allow for characters to overcome their status as mental agencies. The illness that he diagnoses in his early works will become a point of departure, since Dostoevskii is ultimately dealing, not only with children who have suppressed their inner lives, but with an entire civilization that has lost its doctrine of soul in the rise of positivistic and socioeconomic accounts of individuality. When Shigalev and the Grand Inquisitor champion the annexation of human personalities by a larger administrative mind, or when Petr Verkhovenskii attempts to bind groups of people, through the spilling of blood, into inseparable units, these characters are pursuing political projects founded upon the possibility of erasing the internal life. In his early writing, Dostoevskii explores how the personality can become externalized and extended, so that the novel itself comes to enact the structure of the self, not on an allegorical plane, but in a very real and direct manner.

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