

Laura Hart

Madness in Nineteenth-Century

Russian Literature: Identity, Self and Other

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Declaration

I, Laura Hart, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Abstract

This thesis explores the connection between madness and identity in nineteenth-century Russian literature, with significant focus on works by Dostoevskii, Tolstoi, Gogol' and Pushkin. Proposing personhood as comprised of the personal and the social, I argue that discrepancies between these two halves – relating to different types of breakdown in social relations – engender madness in Russian literary works.

Analysing a range of characters through the lens of a variety of identity theories, I argue that duality is projected in three dimensions in these texts. Personal and social selves are opposed in the formation of identity, as are the real and imaginary in the construction of fictional worlds. The duality of sanity and madness straddles both to create an interdependence of self and other across the three spheres.

Examining different types of 'madness', including clinical disorders such as mania and spiritual concepts such as holy folly, I argue that the fluidity of insanity in literary protagonists means it can be viewed as a non-alignment with the social other on any plane. I aim to answer the questions of how a disparity between perceptions of reality leads to a definition of madness, and the significance of the role the other plays in the categorisation of 'the mad' and 'the sane'.

This thesis is divided into three main parts, assessing the mad individual in relation to: social system, society, and individuals. The first examines mania and St Petersburg's social hierarchy, demonstrating how relational identities create a desire for power, and how idealised selves distance an individual from reality. The second addresses group mindsets to explore how fluid definitions of madness are determined according to the social environment within the spheres of the provinces and holy folly. The third investigates epilepsy and depression, highlighting the importance of a loving relationship and morality for sanity.

Impact statement

How do we understand our relation to others and the impact that the external view has on our identity? This thesis explores how madness is depicted in nineteenth-century Russian literature and the impact that this has on self-other relations. Analysing the fluidity of madness and its role in literature, this project turns to philosophical, sociological and religious theories of the self to present an understanding of the mad self as dualistic in literature.

In the academic sphere this thesis contributes to the literary understanding of the individual in Russian literature of the nineteenth-century as well as the sociological change in the definition of madness, arguing that the discrepancies between the internal and external conceptions of self overcome the problem of exploring the unknowability of madness. Additionally, by analysing madness in a range of settings this thesis reveals how madness is socially defined, accounting for the change in definition with the introduction of clinical medicine. This project also highlights the interconnection between literature, madness and identity, demonstrating the duality inherent in all three.

This thesis has the potential to create an impact in literary, sociology and historical contexts given the changing definitions of madness explored, reflecting the social view of the time. Outside of the academic context, this thesis could also be used to explore the importance of the role that medicine and religion play in society.

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Introduction

The nineteenth century was a major turning point for Russian literature, with the rise of the novel leading to an exploration of themes ranging from the human personality to social conditions. From poor Evgenii in 'Mednyi vsadnik' (1833) onwards, the trope of madness arises time and again, developing into a major theme in tandem with the creation of Russian literary culture. This thesis will examine madness in nineteenth-century Russian literature, focusing on its impact on personhood. Analysing characters through the lens of a broad range of identity theories, I will assess the role of the other and the social environment in the development of identity, and how definitions and depictions of madness are affected by both.

The depiction of madness also relates to the question of the unknowability for others of what is happening within the victim's consciousness, and how narrative negotiates this. I argue that identity is comprised of two parts: a personal self and a social self, and that madness exposes this dualism through self-other relations, positing the mad character in contrast to the sane. Regarding this binary, each of the above concepts itself consists of two parts that combine to form the literary representation of madness. Literature creates a textual world that to some extent conforms to or denies the laws of the actual world, and uses these rules to construct definitions of 'sane' and 'mad'. Similarly, identity consists of I-for-myself and I-for-another which can either be aligned or opposed to represent madness. In both cases dichotomies construct sanity and madness as relative concepts. However, I recognise the limitations of this approach to identity and madness as not all characters fit perfectly into this binary with two distinct selves. This may be due to the fragmentation of self, resulting in multiple personal or social selves, or the fact that madness is fluid and a sliding scale. Nevertheless, I have chosen to analyse characters according to this binary in order to allow for an examination of a broad range of literature and types of madness as even in texts where

identity and madness may be more complex than this binary, this framework allows for a more productive comparison.

Many forms of nineteenth-century literature, whether drama, narrative poetry, or prose fiction, place significant emphasis on the depiction of person (character) and their place in society. This is the case across multiple authors and literary periods. For example, Lev Tolstoi's *Voyna i mir* (1869) is set within the historical timeframe of the French invasion of Russia but arguably the characters' development and relationships are a major focus, notably in respect to Pierre and Natasha. We follow Natasha Rostova from childhood into married life, from failed relationships to family contentment, a journey marked by depression as she struggles to find her place in the world. Aleksandr Ostrovskii's play 'Groza' (1859) explores how a young married woman, Katerina Kabanova, attempts rebellion against the oppressive relationships that define her society, in which madness is viewed as any deviation from accepted modes of thinking. Aleksandr Pushkin's 'Pikovaia dama' (1834) explores how an individual's socially constructed understanding of self and deviance from it can result in a complete break from reality. For different authors, genres and periods, characters, relationships and/or social context are the focal point. Corresponding to the wide scope of the thesis the umbrella term 'madness' includes not only labels such as 'lunatic' and 'religious fool', but also encompasses both partial and complete mental breakdowns and seemingly 'sane' characters who are labelled 'mad' by their society due to their deviation from the social norm. I examine both characters who show symptoms of 'madness' but who are portrayed as functioning in society and those who suffer a complete departure from reality. In some cases, such as with the holy fool, madness is identified in terms of its social function, requiring particular behaviour to assume the role and 'function' in society.

Madness affects society at every level and is not only a medical question, ‘but also an ideological, judicial, social, and existential one’.¹ Madness, at its core, is the negation of sanity, relying on the definition of sanity as a primarily social norm. If the vast majority of people hold a certain belief, or act in a particular manner, this becomes recognised as ‘sane’; any deviance from this is relegated to ‘mad’. Madness is, therefore, a dual concept: a matter of perception, and a social problem. Madness becomes a challenge for the individual’s relationship to society, to the other, as neither party works from the same plane, the same set of values, or the same perception. Madness and society, despite their rejection of one another, are inherently connected: ‘[m]adness *in* civilization? Surely madness is the very negation of civilization?’² As Andrew Scull highlights, for madness ‘its meanings, its consequences, where one draws the boundary between sanity and insanity [...] are matters that are deeply affected by the social context’ and cannot be separated from it.³ Such a definition renders madness fluid in nature, a characteristic Shoshana Felman has observed, stating that it is the boundary between ‘mad’ and ‘sane’ itself which is flexible and that the notions are inherently linked, as madness needs a counterpart in order to be recognised.⁴

The term ‘madness’ itself is one of many ways to describe this separation from ‘sanity’, and the sheer number of words to describe such an affliction represents the broadness of the concept.⁵ As Elena Dryzhakova states, ‘[w]hen one describes a person’s character in Russian, madness is generally denoted by the word “insanity” (*sumasshestvie*).

¹ Angela Brintlinger, ‘Introduction: Approaching Russian Madness’, in *Madness and the Mad in Russian Culture*, ed. Angela Brintlinger, Ilya Vinitsky (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), pp. 3–20 (p. 23).

² Andrew Scull, *Madness in Civilization: The Cultural History of Insanity from the Bible to Freud, from the Madhouse to Modern Medicine* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2016), p. 10.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁴ Shoshana Felman, *Writing and Madness (Literature/Philosophy/Psychoanalysis)*, trans. Martha Noel Evans (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), p. 36.

⁵ For example, in English the following words can be used to denote madness: mad, insane, psychotic, crazy, foolish, lunatic, irrational, raving, unhinged etc.

However, a great many synonyms exist to describe the afflicted person' as '[i]n the Russian language, the notion of insanity stretches from the psychopathological aspect to the metaphorical'.⁶ To name but a few of these symptoms, a person afflicted with madness can be described in Russian as *bezumnyi* (mindless), *sumasshedshii* (having gone out of one's mind), *pomeshannyi* (mixed up), *dushevnobol'noi* (mentally/spiritually ill), or *umalishennyi* (deprived of mind). For the purposes of this thesis I have chosen to use the term 'mad' precisely because of its ambiguity, as it does not refer to any one specific element of the concept and does not limit itself to any one field of inquiry or point of view. In different cases, the term 'mad', therefore, may denote mental illness, deviant social views, or religious fervour. My analysis will make the differences between these types of 'madness' explicit. The malleability of the concept of madness means that it permeates interconnected spheres of life, which are not easily separated from one another. Additionally, madness has become a specifically literary construct that can extend into all of these areas but which, at the same time, has its own dynamics outside of these 'real world' spheres. Thus, although my focus is on literary madness, in some instances it will be necessary to place this within the context of the development and changing understanding of madness in psychiatric, social, philosophical, and religious spheres.

Madness as a literary trope has interested writers for millennia. The theme occupied writers as far back as the fifth century B.C., focusing on 'madness as a revelation of processes of the human mind, indeed processes not limited to the minds of the insane'.⁷ Since then madness has been employed with copious agendas, ranging from diagnostic insight into a particular form of madness, such as mania in Etienne Esquirol's 1838 book *Des maladies*

⁶ Elena Dryzhakova, 'Madness as an Act of Defence of Personality in Dostoevsky's *The Double*', in *Madness and the Mad in Russian Culture*, ed. Angela Brintlinger, Ilya Vinitzky (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), pp. 59–74 (p. 59).

⁷ Lillian Feder, *Madness in Literature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. XI.

mentales considérées sous les rapports médical, hygiénique et médico-légal, to social or political criticism, as in Cesare Lombroso's understanding of epilepsy as a cause of criminality in his essay 'Identità dell'epilessia colla pazzia morale e delinquenza congenita' (1885). The theme of madness within literature is not limited to a particular genre or culture; it may appear in a fantastic story representing the workings of a disturbed consciousness or a realist text depicting life in a psychiatric clinic. Madness is potentially limitless in its agendas and uses.

The unknown and unknowable aspect of madness – the difficulty of rationally elucidating the irrational and subjective processes going on in the victim's mind, or unconscious, that is in many ways inaccessible to the reader – intrigues writers and readers, and often reflects contemporary social views of madness. For example, before the birth of psychiatry in Russia – as elsewhere – madness was commonly connected to the spiritual dimension, with lunatics placed under the care of the church as 'the mentally imbalanced were seen as part of the tradition of holy fools, or at any rate fell under the purview of the religious authorities'.⁸ The figure of the holy fool, its conception, history, and literary usage has been thoroughly studied by scholars. Priscilla Hunt and Svitlana Kobets explore the holy fool from all angles – hagiographical, literary, political etc. – as a figure expressing national identity, and Russian culture as inherently spiritual in nature, stating that 'it is embedded in a religious framework that reflects the spiritual basis of Russian culture'.⁹ They trace the figure from its genesis to the modern day, highlighting the changes in understanding as reflecting the social and cultural views on madness. They emphasise the prevalence of madness in different realms of society by exploring how the relationship between madness and the

⁸ Brintlinger, 'Introduction', p. 8.

⁹ Priscilla Hunt, 'Holy Foolishness as a Key to Russian Culture', in *Holy Foolishness in Russia: New Perspectives*, ed. Priscilla Hunt, Svitlana Kobets (Bloomington, IN: Slavica Publishers, 2011), pp. 1–14 (p. 2).

church shifted from an institution caring for the sick to the spiritual conception of holy folly. At the same time, the ambiguity associated with the holy fool – the difficulty of establishing whether the madness is real or feigned – and the importance of social recognition, they argue, ‘articulates and defines the problematics of identity’, a topic which will be central to this thesis.¹⁰

Elsewhere in the study of madness, psychology and medicine provide a scientific history of our understanding of the human brain, mental illnesses, and symptoms of diseases, and the nineteenth century in particular marked a turning point, when medicine’s understanding of madness dismissed spiritual conceptions for materialist, human-based prognoses. Daniel Beer charts the effects of psychiatric developments on the social understanding of madness in Russia, as towards the end of the nineteenth century ‘psychiatry was becoming established as a separate field within clinical medicine, gaining both a public profile and institutional recognition’.¹¹ Yet madness is not something that can be confined solely to one sphere of study. As society’s view of the ‘mad’ changed from a revered spiritual figure, or a feared lunatic (both somewhat exalted in their separateness), to a sick person in need of medical aid and therefore to be pitied, new clinical understandings of madness had significant social consequences. Michel Foucault charts the gradual change in understanding and treatment of madness from the middle ages to the end of the eighteenth century, highlighting how madness impacted society as a whole and not solely the afflicted individual.¹² His focus on the treatment of madness clearly shows its negative connotations, as highlighted by his analysis of the seventeenth-century’s ‘The Great Confinement’, when the ‘mad’, and other ‘undesirables’, were removed from society to keep it in working order,

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 5.

¹¹ Daniel Beer, *Renovating Russia: The Human Sciences and the Fate of Liberal Modernity, 1880-1930* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008), p. 38.

¹² Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, trans. Richard Howard (London: Routledge, 1989).

creating a stronger distinction between ‘mad’ (needing to be ‘kept’) and ‘sane’ (allowed to be free).¹³

Foucault, as Roy Porter highlights, ‘argues that mental illness must be understood not as a natural fact but as a cultural construct, sustained by a grid of administrative and medico-psychiatric practices’.¹⁴ Madness, he argues, is socially defined but also fictive in nature. It is defined socially as different, other, not corresponding to the wider world, and therefore ‘mad’. As Foucault states:

[m]adness is precisely at the point of contact between the oneiric and the erroneous; it traverses, in its variations, the surface on which they meet, the surface which both joins and separates them. With error madness shares non-truth, and arbitrariness in affirmation or negation; from the dream madness borrows the flow of images and the colorful presence of hallucinations.¹⁵

Differences in perception, thought, or understanding can, from the point of view of the social norm, simply be seen as ‘wrong’, and the conclusions drawn from these as imaginary. For example, megalomaniacs believe themselves to have a higher importance than they do in reality and their interior world affords them these desired social positions. Their skewed relationship to society can be realised only in the imaginary. Sigmund Freud argues that megalomania is a form of narcissism as it directs all desire inwards, towards the self, making it the object of affection and simultaneously removing the sufferer from reality.¹⁶ The megalomaniac lives in a fictive mental world, separated from the objective, ‘sane’ world, yet still connected physically and mentally to society as a construct. A fictional example is Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, whose titular character’s narcissism removes him from

¹³ Ibid., p. 42, p. 44–45.

¹⁴ Roy Porter, *Madness: A Brief History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 3.

¹⁵ Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*, p. 106.

¹⁶ Sigmund Freud, ‘On Narcissism: An Introduction’, n. trans. (Redditch: Read Books Ltd. 2013), p. 4.

reality. His hidden portrait ‘permits’ him to disregard the consequences of pursuing his own ends at the expense of others.

The same construction of dual worlds that separates reality and imagination relates to the concept of personhood. The self is both a personal and social construct, reflected in the duality of internal and external perceptions. R. D. Laing recognises that ‘I am accustomed to expect that the person you take me to be, and the identity that I reckon myself to have, will coincide by and large’, arguing that as a norm how I see myself and how others see me *should* be the same.¹⁷ Just as the ‘mad’ physically live in the real world but mentally live in an imaginary world, so too do others view us in the physical while we see ourselves primarily through the prism of the mental world. For a sane person, these two worlds may correspond almost entirely, but for the ‘mad’ a deviation is created between them. Helmuth Plessner clarifies this concept, stating that:

[o]ur relational self-understanding can be formalized thanks to the idea of the human being as a being that is generally related to its social role but cannot be defined by a particular role. The [...] bearer of the social figure is not the same as that figure, and yet cannot be thought of separately from it without being deprived of its humanity. ... Only by means of the other of itself does it have – itself.¹⁸

Therefore, I exist in the physical world as a social being for others, but I also exist in the mental world for myself. As Plessner argues, I cannot separate the physical individual from the mental individual without sacrificing a coherent identity – my humanity. I am not restricted to the limitations of my social role, but also cannot be separated from it.

¹⁷ R. D. Laing, *The Divided Self: An Existential Study in Sanity and Madness* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1965), p. 36.

¹⁸ Helmuth Plessner, quoted by Wolfgang Iser, ‘Staging as an Anthropological Category’, *New Literary History*, 23.4 (1992), 877–888 (pp. 878–879).

The two worlds, the physical and the mental, are always connected through the person; a person remains one and the same self, but in madness the I-for-myself and I-for-another do not align. Again, madness is a deviation from what is considered normal by society as a whole, and insofar as society views the self solely as the I-for-another, as it would be impossible for others to access an internal view, a non-aligned I-for-myself necessarily engenders some form of madness.

In common with madness and personhood, literature also has a dual aspect that identifies a separation of actual world, the world that the reader exists in, and the textual actual world, the fictional 'real' world of the characters. The degree to which these two resemble one another can also differ markedly depending on genre. As Frank Palmer highlights, there is controversy about reading characters as if they exist in the real world, attributing our morals and viewpoints to them. However, Palmer also highlights the need to understand fictional worlds from a real-world point of view as literature often relies on our moral reactions and empathy for others.¹⁹ Regardless of the status of texts, the process of literary identification means that many texts have a strong resemblance between the constructed world and the real world, so that the problems faced within the literary world resemble those within the reader's and the genre becomes the 'way of visualising the world'.²⁰ However, exactly how the reader is acquainted with this textual world relies on the narrative style. For example, are we presented with an external view with the use of an unfocalized extrafictional narrator who provides extra information as a result of their omniscience, or a character as a focalizer who provides judgements and colours the text with an attitude? Or are we presented with an internal view, focusing on private consciousness? The importance of

¹⁹ Frank Palmer, *Literature and Moral Understanding: A Philosophical Essay on Ethics, Aesthetics, Education, and Culture* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).

²⁰ Caryl Emerson, Gary Saul Morson, *Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of a Prosaics* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990), p. 306.

this point of view is stated by Susan Sniader Lanser when she asks us to question how close the narrator is to the events, the characters, the reliability of their information, and what limitations there are to their knowledge.²¹ With regard to the various points of view explored in this thesis, I will show how madness is always reliant on the other, be it narrator, other character, or reader.

Genre is a particular way of seeing events, of connecting to this ‘other world’. All genres ‘display specific features of format, including: beginning, middle, ending’ but ‘each genre [constitutes] a “form-shaping ideology,” a view of the world seeking expression through appropriate forms’.²² For example, a realist novel provides a wide picture of an epoch, an idea, or a people by depicting small details and seemingly insignificant events; a short story often closely follows a particular character; and an ode glorifies and praises its subject. Each genre has a ‘difference in vision’.²³ However, madness as a trope occurs across many genres, each using their own prism of visualisation to depict madness for a certain agenda.

The dual nature of literature, madness, and personhood all draw on the imaginary to be changed, augmented, and even defy the laws of physics. For example, the appearance of the fantastic in literature posits the possibility either of the supernatural or, alternatively, a mentally augmented view of reality on the character’s part. Yet even with the ability to adopt the imaginary, these fictive worlds cannot be separated from their real counterparts. Taking the fantastic as an example, Rosemary Jackson states that it ‘exists as the inside, or underside, of realism, opposing the novel’s closed, monological forms with open, dialogical structures,

²¹ Susan Sniader Lanser, *The Narrative Act: Point of View in Prose Fiction* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 157.

²² W. F. Hanks, ‘Text and textuality’, *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 18 (1989), 95–127 (p. 97). Gary Saul Morson, *Prosaics and Other Provocations: Empathy, Open Time, and the Novel*, (Boston, MA: Academic Studies Press, 2013), p. 2, www.academicstudiespress.com/arsrossica/prosaics-and-other-provocations-empathy-open-time-and-the-novel [accessed March 5, 2022, 11:38].

²³ Emerson, Morson, *Mikhail Bakhtin*, p. 277.

as if the novel had given rise to its own opposite, its unrecognizable reflection'.²⁴ Tzvetan Todorov's celebrated study *The Fantastic* defines the concept as that which 'lasts only as long as a certain hesitation: a hesitation common to reader and character, who must decide whether or not what they perceive derives from "reality"'.²⁵ A similar question relating to madness arises in fiction: is the seemingly unreal real? The outsider observer has limited access to the afflicted person's mind, resulting in uncertainty in the reality of the diagnosis, which parallels the hesitation in literature about the ontological status of the world being depicted. Indeed, as Allen Thiher states, madness may be fictive in nature. Thiher argues that:

[f]rom the outset we can theorize that the human capacity to create literature springs from the mind's potential or capacity to entertain certain kinds of insanity [...] especially insofar as both madness and literature enable us to believe in and be moved by what in a sense does not exist, by fictions, imaginations, hallucinations, inner voices.²⁶

Thiher's exploration of the fabrications of madness highlights the dualities these factors have in common, as the imagination lays the foundation for another world which is opposite, but linked to, the real: 'the world of mad fantasy is produced by the disjuncture between the phenomenal and the noumenal, between the objective and the subjective worlds'.²⁷ It is precisely at this break between reality and perception that madness lies; it is the bifurcation of the shared social reality and the individual personal reality. And that opposition of reality and perception, as well as of self and other, enables authors to incorporate madness across

²⁴ Rosemary Jackson, *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion* (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 25.

²⁵ Tzvetan Todorov, *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*, trans. Richard Howard (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1975), p. 41.

²⁶ Allen Thiher, *Revels in Madness: Insanity in Medicine and Literature* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1999), p. 2.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 185.

different genres and styles, from Pushkin's romantic madness to Anton Chekhov's realist portrayals. Given its fluidity, madness can be repositioned, redefined, *reimagined*.

A brief perusal of different types of madness within the European literary tradition reveals the centrality of the dual-worlds trope. Examples include Gérard de Nerval's *Aurélia* (1855) which plays with the boundary between the conscious and the unconscious worlds. The reader learns that protagonist is mad and is eventually confined to a mental ward, but it is through madness that Nerval's protagonist is depicted as 'transcend[ing] his temporal identity', showing how '[r]eality and hallucination melt together terrifyingly'.²⁸ The mad figure incarcerated in an asylum recognises his surroundings but does not let this affect his perception of himself as between two worlds, between the living and the other. The sane, such as those around him, are unable to recognise this duality of worlds and hence the idea that 'true perception requires a dissolution of the normal logistics of time and identity', leaving them unable to understand the protagonist's non-temporal quest to find his dead beloved.²⁹ By contrast, Shakespeare's *King Lear* (1606), portrays madness as a primarily social concept, highlighting the connection between social role and sanity. The titular character's removal from his social position as King marks a turning point in sanity, signalling a gradual descent into madness. As A. G. Harmon states, 'madness' as a term was not particularly well-known in this age and was synonymous with 'will' and 'appetite' which both opposed reason.³⁰ The greed that overwhelms the characters after King Lear's removal from his social position saturates the play with madness, but it is the King himself who is most greatly affected. He is unable to recognise his daughters and eventually even himself. In

²⁸ Rosanna Warren, 'The "Last Madness" of Gérard de Nerval', *The Georgia Review*, 37.1 (1983), 131–138 (p. 134, p. 137).

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 134.

³⁰ A. G. Harmon, "'Slender Knowledge": Sovereignty, Madness, and the Self in Shakespeare's *King Lear*', *Law, Culture, and the Humanities*, 4.3 (2008), 403–423 (p. 406).

place of his missing knowledge he constructs a new world. It is with the creation of this new world that

[w]e gradually trace Lear's new horizons in madness by contrasting his crazed allegations with objective fact. But the 'objective' frame of reference is actually the fictive universe of the antecedent action. Hence, the madness constitutes a fictive world within a fictive world analogous to a play within a play.³¹

Here too madness reveals the duality of fiction through the imaginary in the creation of alternative worlds.

E. T. A. Hoffmann's 'Der goldne Topf' (1814) similarly divides the fictional reality into two planes: the real and the aesthetic. The unconscious mind of the protagonist Anselmus creates fantastic images and it is in this state of dreaming that, 'as in moments of madness, the vividness of images produced by the unconscious mind rivals reality'.³² It is this contrast and ongoing pull between the two worlds that Anselmus finds himself struggling between. Thus it is:

[t]he fundamental tension between these two worlds, the inner vision of Atlantis and the conventional reality of Dresden, [that] sets the plot of *Der goldne Topf* in motion. And the plot itself traces Anselmus's development through a series of stages – the trance, madness or poetic inspiration, and death.³³

Contrasting Anselmus' own exploration of the dual worlds, we are met with the opinions of those around him, who call him 'mad' and remind him to keep his feet firmly on the ground, but the allure of the unconscious world is overpowering and Anselmus sacrifices himself happily to this 'madness'. However, as Maria Tatar states '[t]he contradictions between the

³¹ Paul A. Gottschalk, 'The Universe of Madness in *King Lear*', *The Bucknell Review*, 19.3 (1971), 51–68 (p. 54).

³² Maria M. Tatar, 'Mesmerism, Madness, and Death in E. T. A. Hoffmann's *Der goldne Topf*', *Studies in Romanticism*, 14.4 (1975), 365–389 (p. 375).

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 387.

two worlds are clearly never resolved, for until the very end the narrator persists in applying the technique of doubling' as events occur simultaneously in both the conscious and the unconscious worlds.³⁴

The duality of fiction, madness, and personhood is perhaps most perfectly expressed in one of the best-known examples of the mad literary character, Cervantes' *Don Quixote* (1605, 1615). As Cesáreo Bandera states, 'in *Don Quixote*, madness is functionality, operationally defined as the fictionalization of reality. Don Quixote is mad to the extent to which he has turned his life into a book of fiction'.³⁵ Alonso Quixano is the textual actual world's I-for-another, the character as he appears to others. However, each of the three elements involved here – fiction, madness, and personhood – has their own fictional counterpart. By contrast, Don Quixote de la Mancha is his I-for-myself, the character as he sees himself. The fictional world created by Cervantes also has a fictional counterpart in Don Quixote's world of giants and sorcerers. The fictionality of these three elements is emphasised by their origin: literature. Alonso Quixano lives out his own fiction as Don Quixote in a superimposed world filled by his imagination – itself inspired by his reading of picaresque literature – and comprised of fantastical elements such as sorcerers and giants, and believes himself to embody his ideal I-for-myself. However, they are created out of a madness. They are fictional in two ways: invented by Cervantes for his fiction, but also by Quixano's madness. Their 'real' counterpart (in the textual actual world) defines him as mad as '[t]he rest of the characters allow themselves to be defined by [Cervantes' created] society, but Don Quixote [...] stubbornly insist[s] on defining [himself]'.³⁶

³⁴ Ibid., p. 389.

³⁵ Cesáreo Bandera, *A Refuge of Lies: Reflections on Faith and Fiction* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2013), p. 139.

³⁶ Daria-Teodora Condor, 'Don Quixote and the Golden Age or the Meaning of Life as Fiction', *Metacritic Journal for Comparative Studies and Theory*, 1.1 (2015), 215–229 (p. 224), www.metacriticjournal.com/article/27/don-quixote-and-the-golden-age-or-the-meaning-of-life-as-fiction [accessed March 5, 2022, 11:36].

The mad character exists not in the real world, but in the fictive world – an imaginary literary world created by the author and explored by the reader. As Marie-Laure Ryan argues, the real world (the actual world of the reader) is linked to the *textual* actual world by a game of make-believe on the part of the reader.³⁷ Literature is the joining point of the two worlds, ‘a mixture of reality and fictions, and as such it brings about an interaction between the given and the imagined’.³⁸ It exists within the actual world as a literary text, an imaginary world, in much the same way as the world of the ‘mad’ exists within the world of the ‘sane’. Madness, like literature, relies on its other, sane, non-fictive counterpart; the literary world’s connection to the real world mirrors the connection of I-for-myself to I-for-another.

The textual actual world does not contain giants or sorcerers, only windmills and friars, and in this world Cervantes’ protagonist is the mad Alonso Quixano. His madness creates an unreconcilable opposition between I-for-myself and I-for-another when he refuses to explain himself. This is shown explicitly as ‘the majority of the figures who become the protagonist’s audience and victims are unaware of his condition, creating a multiplicity of perspectives and sympathies’.³⁹ The unknowability of the mad can lead to increasing weariness towards the character on the part of the textual actual world’s society, widening the gap between the mad personality and society, as well as the increasing stigma towards the figure.

The reflection in literature of madness as a social problem has been explored by Lillian Feder, whose argument parallels the initial idea discussed here of the relative definition of madness as other, but with the understanding that madness challenges society in

³⁷ Marie-Laure Ryan, ‘Possible Worlds in Recent Literary Theory’, *Style*, 26.4 (1992), 528–553 (p. 535).

³⁸ Wolfgang Iser, *The Fictive and the Imaginary: Charting Literary Anthropology* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), p. 1.

³⁹ Dale Shuger, *Don Quixote in the Archives: Madness and Literature in Early Modern Spain* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), p. 156.

regards to culture, mindset and values. She states that madness is not a concrete entity, but rather a social construct given meaning by those who diagnose and recognise it.⁴⁰ Feder looks to works ranging from Greek tragedy to modern fiction, allowing her to explore how the mad personage embodies the fear of the unknown in self-other relationships as ‘in literature, as in daily life, madness is the perpetual amorphous threat within and the extreme of the unknown in fellow human beings’.⁴¹ Literary texts often depict madness as a social problem simultaneously binding and ostracising the ‘mad’ from the other. Maija Kononen addresses the problem of what can be considered mad, contending that literary madness in and of itself is fluid.⁴² She argues that madness occurs when there is a conflict between the inner and outer worlds of a person, again emphasising the dualistic conception identified above, as ‘they always represent some kind of deviation from general norms of thought or behaviour’.⁴³ Madness as a type of break in duality was a result of literature reflecting developments in psychiatry, such as studies by the German psychiatrist Johann Reil (1759-1813), who argues that madness is a contradiction between the inner and outer worlds of the self.⁴⁴ Kononen argues that Russian diary fiction in particular foregrounds this opposition by using common, average protagonists: ‘middle-aged bachelors, balding civil servants’ and, through madness, contrasts them to their banal, everyday society to show how madness can mark anyone as other.⁴⁵

The division of self into physical and mental worlds brings the imaginary into play and separates the two halves of the self, drawing them into madness. Within Russian literature, this dualistic conception has been linked prominently to the figure of the double.

⁴⁰ Feder, *Madness in Literature*, p. 5.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁴² Maija Kononen, ‘Me, The Madman – Writing the Self in Russian Diary Fiction’, *Scando-Slavica*, 54.1 (2008), 79–101 (p. 80).

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

⁴⁴ Thiher, *Revels in Madness*, p. 171.

⁴⁵ Kononen, ‘Me, The Madman’, p. 83.

Samuel Stephenson Smith and Andrei Isotoff discuss dualism in terms of the conscious and unconscious self within the works of Fedor Dostoevskii and the double as the embodiment of this ‘second self’, arguing that they fight for control.⁴⁶ Victor Terras, focusing on Dostoevskii’s *Dvoynik* (1846, 1866), argues that a self is defined by a social role and that deviation from this exposes the duality of our human nature.⁴⁷ By moving away from two perfectly harmonious selves, creating one distinct social self and one distinct personal self, this duality is explicitly shown – our double is exposed and madness ensues. The duality then opens up the individual to the imaginary in madness, as Dmitri Chizhevsky highlights with his analysis of the philosophical concept of ethical rationalism in literature.⁴⁸ By introducing the double, Chizhevsky argues, Dostoevskii creates two planes within the text: the empirical and the non-empirical, on both of which the personality can be shown to be unstable.⁴⁹

The appearance of the double in literature, as Ralph Tymms states, can involve both the creation of a physical double – double by duplication – or the connection between two or more characters – double by division.⁵⁰ In both instances the original self is split and, as will be shown throughout this thesis, inhabits different roles within the text. For example, Nikolai Gogol’s ‘Nos’ (1836) portrays a double whose purpose is to occupy the ideal social sphere of Kovalev’s self that he himself cannot. Through the double he is able to achieve his desire for a higher rank, whereas Kovalev himself occupies the realistic aspect. Tymms highlights the prevalence of uncertainty in literature surrounding doubles, explaining that, in the case of Dostoevskii in particular, the reader is never sure where the boundary between the imaginary

⁴⁶ Andrei Isotoff, S. Stephenson Smith, ‘The Abnormal from Within: Dostoevsky’, *The Psychoanalytic Review*, 22 (1935), 361–391 (p. 370).

⁴⁷ Victor Terras, ‘Problems of Human Existence in the Works of the Young Dostoevsky’, *Slavic Review*, 23 (1964), 79–91 (p. 80).

⁴⁸ Dmitri Chizhevsky, ‘The Theme of the Double in Dostoevsky’, in *Dostoevsky: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. René Wellek (Engelwood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1962), pp. 112–129 (p. 128).

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 116.

⁵⁰ Ralph Tymms, *Doubles in Literary Psychology* (Cambridge: Bowes, 1949), p. 16.

and the textual actual world lies.⁵¹ Therefore, doubles in literature force the reader to consider the duality of fiction; does the double exist in the character's fictive world or the author's fictive world? Moreover, with the example of Kovalev in particular we can see how Gogol' explores the duality of selfhood with this dichotomy; Kovalev's I-for-another is his original self and his I-for-myself is his double. In his madness the separation between the two halves causes a split in an attempt to establish an unrealisable social ideal.

The other type of double, double by division, brings to the fore questions of morality and sanity. In *Brat'ia Karamazovy* (1880), the brothers are depicted as parts of a single whole but navigate their own, individual way through life. In relation to the question of madness, Smerdiakov and Ivan constitute two halves of a whole, with one half acting upon the desires of the other. The complexity of dealing with doubles as established characters rather than as supernatural or psychic phenomena will be explored in chapter five, but for now it is important to recognise that, as with doubles by duplication, doubles by division play on an insecurity. For Ivan, that insecurity relates to the inability to act on his desire for his father's death. His double comes to his aid. Just as Kovalev's nose performs the tasks that Kovalev is unable to, so too does Smerdiakov perform in Ivan's place. The double is able to realise unfulfilled wishes. This is one aspect that Tymms does not explicitly draw out: doubles mirror the duality of the self in that one embodies the personal while the other embodies the social. Roger Anderson argues that when a character ventures outside of social parameters – as with Kovalev believing he should hold a higher rank – they become subject to duality.⁵² Anderson contends that particularly within *Brat'ia Karamazovy* Dostoevskii contrasts the identity of individual characters to the collective identity of the social group.⁵³

⁵¹ Tymms, *Doubles in Literary Psychology*, p. 99.

⁵² Roger B. Anderson, *Dostoevsky: Myths of Duality* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 1986), p. 67.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

In more general terms, the divorce between the personal and social halves of the self creates a dichotomy of realities, and it is '[b]y exploring opposed realities [that characters][...] [experience] an epiphany of an ideal that changes [them] as a person'.⁵⁴ In so doing, doubling 'extends [...] into questions of individual identity relative to the identity of the social group' in spite of the fact that 'characters do not consciously examine the duality they internalize'.⁵⁵ Of course, where doubles are concerned we are confronted with the problem of the physicality of a double, as opposed to a duality of *perception* with a single self. In both cases, one half encompasses the social aspects of the self, and the other the personal. However, the duality of the single physical self can be involved in the creation of a self through the imaginary. For example, in Gogol's 'Zapiski sumasshedshego' (1835) the protagonist creates an imaginary portrayal of himself in his diary; not only does Gogol create his protagonist, but the protagonist (one of the ordinary, middle-aged civil servants identified by Kononen above) creates himself. Indeed, both characters exist only within the fictive sphere, but it is the reader's ability to discern the actual textual self from the imaginary textual self that defines the duality in the work. The reader's logic enables the realisation that the protagonist is mad, and it is through rationality that we recognise the gap between the protagonist as we see him (and presumably as other characters see him) and the protagonist as he sees himself. Therefore, his I-for-another and I-for-myself are unaligned in madness. Just as Dostoevskii's Goliadkin creates his ideal social self in a physical double, and Ivan has Smerdiakov as an ideal acting self, so too does Gogol's protagonist create his ideal social self through the medium of his diary.

The figure of the double in literature inherently represents duality, but this thesis will explore how it draws out the duality already inherent in fiction itself and in selfhood. The

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 93.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 117, p. 160.

unestablished boundary between the 'real' and the 'fictive' with reference to doubles will show the importance of the role of the imaginary for madness as a fundamentally dualistic concept.

For this reason, the figure of the double will not form its own chapter in this thesis, as it pervades all the forms of madness I address. Instead, I will reference doubles as a phenomenon in these different contexts in order to make explicit the theme of duality in madness. With regard to the topics that I have focused on specifically, I argue that generally the topic of madness in literature can be grouped into three categories: society, religion, and medicine. My initial intention was to structure this thesis according to these groups, assessing how madness was portrayed differently within each sphere. The idea was to parallel the literature with the rise and development of psychiatry and the newfound clinical understanding of madness in nineteenth-century Russia, eventually demonstrating how society's view of the mad defined madness. This would entail a move from an older religious concept to a 'modern' medical concept. However, it became clear during my research that how society viewed the mad, and the interrelations of the two, was at the forefront of my interpretation. Although nineteenth-century Russian literature did develop to include more clinical understandings of madness, this development is not the primary focus of my thesis. This is because although there is a gradual change in madness over the course of nineteenth-century Russian literary history, a greater sense of continuity is apparent in the themes of identity and self-other relations. My thesis argues that the mad figure cannot be separated from the other because he or she is defined by them; they are inherently linked. Madness does not fundamentally change their personhood, and neither do psychiatric discoveries, but rather their relation to the other causes this change. With self-other relations, and the idea of personhood as a dual concept, the relationship of the imaginary to madness became clear. As a result, I ultimately structured this thesis to allow for a more sustained analysis of self-other

relations and their connection to literary madness, following the link from a 'self-faceless society' relation to a 'self-faced society relation and finally to a 'self-individual other' relation. This highlights the effects of the other on the self and the social determination of madness in the various spheres I previously identified: the social, the religious, and the medical. It shows the individual as a malleable character reliant on acceptance by the other, and the denial of this when they come to be seen as mad by others.

The aim of this thesis is to examine how mad characters across a range of texts, genres and literary movements reveal the dualistic nature of identity, and the reliance on the other for recognition. The two chapters in part one assess the impact of the social environment on identity, with madness leading to removal from society. Exploring madness as juxtaposed to a faceless social order will permit me to analyse how madness exposes the duality of individual identity and the bifurcation of self and other. The other considered in part one is faceless in that they are made up of social structures, institutional frameworks, rumours and myths. The main thing that the mad character is affronted with is not a particular other character but rather something much larger, the concept of a hierarchical society, the functioning of which is privileged over the individual. I will explore how this 'otherness' is created from a desire for power within self-other relations and its application as a tool to an idealised self. This part will highlight the duality of selfhood by examining how madness splits identity into two halves: the personal and the social. The personal self (I-for-myself, the internal self), describes how a character perceives themselves, or how they believe they are identifiable. By contrast, the social self – the I-for-another or external self – indicates how the character is perceived by others. However, the reader, external to the textual realm, has access to both the character's internal and external selves, in so far as the text permits, allowing them to recognise discrepancies between the two. This privileged position is created

by narrational devices such as inner monologues and first-person narration, but also by contrasting them to others when this internal view is removed.

Part one addresses characters whose entire identities are portrayed as relational, who are constantly pitted against others as a result of the hierarchical fictional society they live in. It is this stratified system which causes individuals to define their identity in relation to the standing of another. I will argue that this is where the desire for power causes problems, including the onset of madness, which begins a separation between how the character is portrayed as perceiving themselves – either as they are or should be – and how they are perceived by other characters. It is in madness that these characters create an elevated I-for-myself, an idealised self, positing themselves as more ‘powerful’ and ‘important’ than those around them. It is precisely this illusion of a higher ranking, or more worthy, personal self created in the imagination of the character that divorces the two halves of the self. This I-for-myself requires no grounding in the text’s objective external world whereas the I-for-another does, demonstrating how the connection between selfhood, madness, and fiction is connected to dualism.

In part two the focus will narrow to self-other relations between an individual and their particular society (a society with a face), becoming more of an intimate connection, to analyse the role that mindset (constructed in the context of social environment) plays in the definition of madness and its effect on identity. As with part one, hierarchies exist within the societies depicted, but the primary focus here is instead the mindset of the collective: what are their principles and how do they affect the individual? The emphasis of my interrogation, in other words, shifts from society’s structure to the people upholding it, from a faceless social institution to a faced, known society. The move away from the individual character towards the other is also apparent in the lack of interior view in all works examined in part two, which forces the reader to rely on other characters’ perceptions of the mad individual in

question. This will necessitate addressing the question of unknowability in madness and how literature attempts to overcome this problem by mediating identity through the other.

The significance of the faced other and the filtering of the mad individual through their perception will enable me to advance the argument that an individual must align themselves with their own society's ideal of their assigned social role, or face ostracism. The provincial characters considered in chapter three all play the role of an individual fitting into society, upholding its values, due either to their fear of exclusion or to coercion from other characters. Similarly, the holy fools I assess in chapter four play the role of 'mad', in keeping with tradition. Thus I will show that all mad characters analysed in chapters three and four are *performers*. They are not explicitly presented as a concrete identity, but are mediated through the mind of the other characters, positively and/or negatively, according to the values and beliefs they uphold. The duality of perception, viewing one character both positively and negatively, will highlight the fluidity of madness and its ascription by the other, who considers themselves sufficiently sane to do so. In particular, Chekhov's 'Palata nomer 6' (1892) explicitly explores the idea that madness is simply a label given to those who differ from the collective, and not to characters who display any actual mental disturbance.

Part three of this thesis is comprised of two final chapters addressing epileptics and depressed characters. The concept of the other is again narrowed here, this time from a faced society to a faced individual. Here, however, the focus is on individuals' relational value at a very intimate level, as I argue that a genuine connection to another is necessary in order not only to establish identity but to relieve themselves of madness. The connection between two individuals places the focus on accountability. In the case of the epileptic, it is their counterpart who must come to terms with their actions and morality, whereas the depressed characters must themselves take responsibility for their actions. While epileptics serve as a mirror for the other, the role of the depressed characters will be shown to be more

complicated. They must come to terms with the evil in the world, simultaneously accepting it without corrupting themselves. They struggle to find their own place within their society in order to relate purely to another. Otherwise, as will be shown in the cases of both Kirillov in Dostoevskii's *Besy* (1871) and Anna in Tolstoi's *Anna Karenina* (1877), relation to and consideration only of oneself encourages madness, with fatal consequences. Hence, sanity involves a corresponding I-for-myself and I-for-another, and madness arises when this relation to the other is removed or distorted. By forming a genuine connection to another, be it through doubles or a relationship based on love, and not simply their social role, the 'mad' character is able to realign the two worlds of their identity and the intimacy of this self-other relationship allows for understanding, help, and encouragement to do so.

In this thesis I will explore madness in literature in connection to personhood to show how each of these concepts is dual in nature and connected to one another through the imaginary. I use the term 'personhood' interchangeably with 'selfhood', as both refer to the identity of a 'person', here a literary character. Personhood is a question that has plagued philosophers for centuries. The very idea of defining a 'person' has legal and ethical implications, among others. There is no correct way to define a person, but approaches to doing so can be divided into three main categories: moralist, metaphysical and materialist. Moralists argue that persons are those who can be considered moral agents, who act in the interests of right or wrong and should be held accountable for their actions.⁵⁶ Metaphysics encompasses a wide range of criteria for personhood, ranging from self-consciousness, the use of language and the ability to initiate actions. In general, a metaphysical understanding of personhood involves a condition that is not reducible to the physical and involves our

⁵⁶ John Deigh, *The Sources of Moral Agency: Essays in Moral Psychology and Freudian Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. viii.

experience of the world and our capability to understand it.⁵⁷ Materialists understand a person as a physiological being with no metaphysical components.⁵⁸

In conducting my analysis I will refer to a wide range of theories, not solely confined to philosophical theories of personhood. I will analyse the literature through political, religious, ethical, psychological and sociological theories of identity in order to explore the importance of the duality of identity from different angles. In so doing, I will not be *defining* the characters according to their qualities, actions, mental capabilities and so on, but examining the extent to which they constitute identity (personhood) by reading them in light of dualistic identity theories.

I will analyse various genres to explore how the mad figure is depicted in short stories, novels, novellas, plays, and poems. This will allow me a multifaceted view of how madness is portrayed, used, and explored within literature, for example through the narrow focus on the mad protagonist in short stories, the reliance on the audience within drama, the overarching tone in poems and the wide scope of novels, enabling comparison of the similarities and differences associated with, and transcending, genres.

My theoretical framework for this study is *bricolage*, used in the sense given by Levi-Strauss in *La Pensée sauvage* (1962), rearranging theories, and fragments of wider conceptions, about identity in order to approach the subject in relation to madness, arguing that the self is reliant on the other. Using this methodology will reveal that the mad figure, and its duality, exhibits the basic, unifying principles of a self-other relationship, and the importance that this holds for the creation of identity as a subjective and objective concept. I will examine the literature through the prism of these theories in order to assess how multiple theories, and theorists, arguing for a duality of the self – recognition by another to constitute

⁵⁷ S. F. Sapontzis, 'A Critique of Personhood', *Ethics*, 91.4 (1981), 607–618 (pp. 607–608).

⁵⁸ G. E. Scott, *Moral Personhood: An Essay in the Philosophy of Moral Psychology* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1990), pp. 14–15.

identity – can reinforce our understanding of the literary mad figure’s connection to society. I will explore how characters view themselves and how they are seen in society to interrogate discrepancies between their personal and social selves, their effect on self-other relations, and the role that madness plays in their construction.

Part One: The Social System and Self-Other Relations: False Power and Ideal Selves

1. Chapter One: Mania and the Self: Power and Personality

Nineteenth-century Russian society was based on a hierarchy that connected and related individuals to one another according to relative status. The implantation of such a system by titles reinforces a desire to rise above others. Self-other relations of this nature create a form of duality, pitting ‘me as I am’ against ‘me as I could (or should) be’. However, the inflexibility of the status system made it impossible for most people to fulfil the desire to rise in rank, causing an unbridgeable gap between these two halves of the self and causing a duality that paves the way for mania. The two forms of mania analysed in this chapter focus on the questions of: why are they ‘better’ than me? And who, therefore, am I? Exploring these questions will address the role the faceless other plays for identity as well as how the social environment lends itself to defining identity. The consequences of hierarchies for identity in particular settings will be discussed in subsequent chapters, while this chapter explores a type of madness common to social hierarchies in general: mania.

Mania, from the Greek *mainesthai* (to be mad), is an excited madness often associated with crazes and a frenzied state. Definitions identify abnormal mental states and loss of rationality as symptoms. For example, Hippocrates understood mania as a state of mental derangement that manifests itself through fear, delusions, and hallucinations, whereas Plato viewed mania as ‘an impairment of reason which allows the monstrous appetites of the irrational soul to emerge and take control’.⁵⁹

In the modern world, new understandings of mania evolved, with the rise in psychiatry opening up clinical perspectives on the behaviours and characteristics of ‘the maniac’. The medical term ‘mania’ denotes excited psychosis shown via exaggerated physical and mental

⁵⁹ Marke Ahonen, *Mental Disorders in Ancient Philosophy* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2014), p. 14, p. 67.

activity. However, many nineteenth-century Russian authors depicted mania as a ‘literary madness’ to ‘reflect and question medical, cultural, political, religious, and psychological assumptions of their time’.⁶⁰

The occurrence of mania in nineteenth-century Russian literature makes explicit the contrast between the character’s mental world and the text’s objective external world, centralising the question of perception. This, as will be shown below, often incorporates the fantastic to create a fine line between real and imaginary. Indeed, the focus on internalisation places particular emphasis on the protagonist’s viewpoint, allows the reader an insight into the effects of mania on the individual’s perception both of self and reality, and is a technique that overcomes the issue of depicting a subjective experience by placing the reader on the same plane as the character.

In this chapter, I will analyse two types of mania: monomania, a mental illness involving obsession about a single idea, object, or action; and megalomania, a condition that causes delusions of exaggerated importance. This will enable me to address the conception of humans being egotistical by nature, and their striving for individualism despite the need for the other to constitute selfhood, determining identity as a dualistic concept. I will argue that a ‘great man’, even when permitted to pursue individual good, must align his I-for-myself with I-for-another in order to ground his personal self in the textual objective world; the inability to do so, or its fabrication in the imaginary, results in madness. It is this reliance on imaginary foundations for selfhood that firstly permit false notions of power, and secondly rupture a cohesive self. The inability to reconcile this duality, or refusal to abandon their sense of self in order to do so, marks the characters as mad. In order to show the varying degrees to which mania relates to the separation of I-for-myself and I-for-another, I will

⁶⁰ Feder, *Madness in Literature*, p. 4.

consider both maniacs who are portrayed as being able to function in society and those removed from society.

1.1 A mania for money: Pushkin and Dostoevskii

The place of the individual in society was a major question for nineteenth-century Russian writers. The romantic school highlighted the figure of a ‘hero’, such as Lermontov’s Pechorin and Pushkin’s Onegin. A second influential school of this period, the natural school, focused on a type of protagonist at the opposite end of the social scale: the *malen’kii chelovek*, an alienated figure at the bottom of the social scale. The question of the individual’s relationship to society was also prevalent in the philosophy of the time, which was dominated by two branches of thought: the Slavophiles and the Westernisers. The Slavophiles’ philosophy was grounded in traditional Russian life and emphasised the importance of faith and the Orthodox church within a communal society, whereas the Westernisers focused on questions of the individual and reason and ‘the catastrophic retardation of Russia, its social backwardness [...] and the consequent need for Russia to catch up with the West’.⁶¹

The Westernisers, following the influence of German idealism, emphasised the individual personality. For example, Konstantin Kavelin saw the individual as a break from ‘traditional patriarchal bonds’ through the development of ‘a system based on political and juridical legislation’ and as needing to be ‘saved’ from traditional society.⁶² Timofei Granovskii also saw the individual as a figure to be ‘emancipated’, arguing that the power of progressive thought allows the individual to free themselves and contribute to historical

⁶¹ James M. Edie, et al. (eds.), *Russian Philosophy* (Chicago, IL: Quadrangle Books, 1965), I, commentary on ‘The Slavophiles’, pp. 157–164 (p. 160).

⁶² Andrzej Walicki, *A History of Russian Thought from the Enlightenment to Marxism*, trans. Hilda Andrews-Rusiecka (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1979), p. 148.

progress.⁶³ Hence, the individual personality was of primary importance, challenging traditional social structures. One major figure in Westernising circles championing this was the literary critic Vissarion Belinskii. However, under the influence of Hegel's philosophy, Belinskii attempted to reconcile his own ideas in the framework of what he saw as Hegel's subordination of the individual. Belinskii's concept of identity focused on the individual's need to 'reconcile' himself with society.⁶⁴ His interpretation of Hegel as 'a doctrine of *historical being* and of the dialectic of Absolute Spirit in its historical self-manifestation', was mediated through Mikhail Bakunin.⁶⁵ In order for Belinskii to align his ideas with the objective, anti-individualist philosophy that he preached, he sought to downplay the role of the individual.⁶⁶ He argues that the individual may exist in society, but this does not classify him as a person: 'общество состоит из людей, из которых каждый человек принадлежит и себе и обществу, есть индивидуальная и самоцельная особность и член общества, часть целого, принадлежащая не себе, а обществу'.⁶⁷ People belong both to themselves *and* to society; they are two halves of a whole individual, a dualistic being.

For Belinskii, an individual is permitted to clash with society since the person's status as an individualistic, subjective being pursuing his own interests is a dialectical one: 'он сам себе цель и, кроме себя и личного своего удовлетворения, имеет право никого и ничего не знать'.⁶⁸ This is then followed by the antithesis of recognising society and what is outside

⁶³ Ibid., p. 148.

⁶⁴ Isaiah Berlin, *Russian Thinkers*, ed. Henry Hardy, Aileen Kelly (London: The Hogarth Press, 1978), pp. 166–167.

⁶⁵ V. V. Zenkovsky, 'A History of Russian Philosophy', trans. George L. Kline (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1953), p. 245. For Bakunin's influence on Belinskii see: Martin Malia, *Alexander Herzen and the Birth of Russian Socialism* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1965), p. 204, p. 211.

⁶⁶ Berlin, *Russian Thinkers*, p. 166.

⁶⁷ Vissarion Belinskii, 'Retsenzii, Dekabr' 1839. Ocherki Borodinskogo srazheniia (Vospominaniia o 1812 gode). Sochinenie F. Glinki', in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 13 vols (Moscow: Nauka, 1953), III, pp. 325–356 (p. 338).

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 339.

the self on a greater level, eventually leading to the synthesis of fusion with the universal, allowing the subjective self to be ‘real’.⁶⁹ Yet when Belinskii revisits this subject, having rejected this mode of thinking, he asserts that ‘*человеческая личность выше истории, выше общества, выше человечества*’, placing the individual at the forefront of his philosophy.⁷⁰ This particular concept of personhood contains echoes of the romantic ‘great man’ as Belinskii’s individual is *permitted* to overcome society and place his egoistic needs before those of others.

By contrast, Aleksandr Gertsen, basing his arguments on a different interpretation of Hegel that rejected the ‘reconciliation with reality’, always retained the individual’s primary importance, stating that ‘[с]вобода лица независимо от всех отношений – великое дело; на ней, и только на ней, может вырасти действительная свобода общины’.⁷¹ In contrast to Hegel, Gertsen asserts that the individual should be free and allowed to express themselves, including revolting against the existing social order and future conditions which would ‘limit’ the individual.⁷² Gertsen, Aileen Kelly argues, following the influence of Schiller’s aesthetics and the relation of morality to freedom for the human person, refused to ‘settle for [...] [anything] short of the complete emancipation of the individual personality from all external constraint’.⁷³ Both the literary trends of the time and Westernising philosophies posit the position and importance of the individual in society as a key question. I will explore the

⁶⁹ Ibid., III, p. 340.

⁷⁰ Belinskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, XI, p. 556. All italics in quotations are the author’s, unless otherwise stated.

⁷¹ Aleksandr I. Gertsen, ‘Addio!’, in *Sobranie sochinenii v tridtsati tomakh*, 30 vols (Moscow: Nauka, 1955), VI, pp. 316–323 (p. 318).

⁷² William J. Leatherbarrow, Derek C. Offord (eds.), *A Documentary History of Russian Thought: From the Enlightenment to Marxism* (Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1987), p. 115.

⁷³ Aileen M. Kelly, *Views from the Other Shore: Essays on Herzen, Chekhov, and Bakhtin* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 47, quoting Martin E. Malia, *Herzen*, p. 55. Friedrich Schiller, ‘On Grace and Dignity’, trans. Jane V. Curran, in *Schiller’s “On Grace and Dignity” in Its Cultural Context: Essays and a New Translation*, ed. Jane V. Curran, Christophe Fricker (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2005), pp. 123–170.

understanding of the individual as more important than society in the following analysis of power relations and self-other relations forming identity.

Pushkin's 'Skupoi rytsar'' (1830) and Dostoevskii's 'Gospodin Prokharchin' (1846) are two works that feature the maniac, specifically monomaniacs obsessed with hoarding money. Pushkin's Baron accumulates gold and spends his time admiring his wealth, whereas Dostoevskii's Prokharchin is eventually revealed to be hiding a fortune under his mattress. As a part of their monomania, neither character is portrayed as possessing a rational mind; the Baron is oblivious to the impact his miserliness has on his son and Prokharchin does not use his fortune to better his life, choosing to hide it out of sight. The Baron and Prokharchin's act of collecting money reinforces their egotistical nature – they care only to indulge their obsession rather than spend their time and/or wealth to aid others. They view money as power, as their hoarding gives them a sense of control. We are presented with the characters from an external perspective – the Baron from the son's opinions and Prokharchin from the narrator's interjections and other characters' views of him – allowing us an understanding of their deficient I-for-another. The duality of selfhood becomes clear as the reader perceives the characters as miserly, alienated figures in contrast to their self-perception of power, marking them as mad.

However, it soon becomes apparent that the Baron and Prokharchin, rather than being fully rounded beings, are completely defined by their actions. The Baron cannot be separated from his gold: 'Весь день минуты ждал, когда сойду | В подвал мой тайный, к верным синдикам. | Счастливей день!' and his son's description: 'мой отец не слуг и не друзей | В них видит, а господь; и сам им служит'.⁷⁴ Prokharchin is not revealed as a monomaniac until the end of the work, but once this is evident the events of the story make sense to the reader –

⁷⁴ Aleksandr Pushkin, 'Skupoi rytsar'', in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v desiati tomakh*, 10 vols (Leningrad: Nauka, 1978), V, pp. 286–305 (p. 295, p. 291).

his entire life, strict diet and oppressive lifestyle revolve around collecting money. Here the ‘narrativeness’ of the short story, in Gary Saul Morson’s terms, becomes clear: the separate events throughout the work are all connected through money and form the picture of this individual.⁷⁵ Although the treatment of the obsession varies – the Baron treats his gold as a wife, whereas Prokharchin hides his wealth like treasure – ‘[j]ust as Pushkin in his drama *The Miserly Knight*, Dostoevsky focuses on the inner need of the miser to be safe, to defend his own money, concentrating on a completely introjected life’.⁷⁶ In this instance there is no ‘I-for-myself’ as this is reduced to the physical act of obtaining wealth. Neither protagonist has any conception of their own self outside of the mantra ‘more money equals more control’. The reduction of the protagonists to an act suggests that they are neither individuals for themselves nor part of society in Belinskii’s sense, a conclusion that can be made through their I-for-another.

Viewing these characters from an external point of view, we can see how they are entirely consumed by monomania. The external textual world ‘serves to define and explain’ via an ‘independent objective reality’ and provides the reader with an opinion on the character in the face of a lack of access to the character’s internal view, there is no reflection on their point of view apart from what can be externally observed.⁷⁷ As Mikhail Bakhtin argues, this outside view of the characters works to finalise them because the viewpoint is ‘located outside the hero and able to offer an integral image’.⁷⁸ Similarly, Laser demonstrates how locating the narrative voice outside of the character in question controls the reader’s

⁷⁵ Gary Saul Morson, ‘Narrativeness’, *New Literary History*, 34.1 (2003), 59–73 (pp. 60–61). Narrativeness refers to the creation of a story from anecdotes, the sequence of which is not fixed, presenting more than one possibility for what could happen.

⁷⁶ Maria Candida Ghidini, ‘The Imagination of Matter. The Earth Archetype in the Early Dostoevsky’, *Church, Communication and Culture*, 2.3 (2017), 284–291 (p. 288).

⁷⁷ Emerson, Morson, *Mikhail Bakhtin*, p. 264, p. 401.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

opinion of them and influences how they are portrayed.⁷⁹ Hence, in this sense, the Baron and Prokharchin are entirely reduced in both their selfhood and their portrayal.

The German philosopher Hannah Arendt's theory of personhood grounds itself in action. She argues that 'speech and action reveal this unique distinctness. Through them, men distinguish themselves instead of being merely distinct; they are modes in which human beings appear to each other, not indeed as physical beings, but *qua* men'.⁸⁰ Both the Baron's and Prokharchin's selves, as they exist in the text solely as an act, can be elucidated by Arendt. By reading these two works in the light of Arendt's theory, we can understand how their identity is constructed, despite the limitations of their I-for-myself. Arendt suggests that after death we are able to grasp identity as a whole, with particular actions being explained in the wider context of a life. Selfhood is then produced as a collection of actions.⁸¹ The very fact that the Baron's death tells us no more about him means that we can now understand that there was no greater plan beyond collecting money for its own sake. By contrast, it is only upon Prokharchin's death that we are able to truly understand his self by explaining his actions and revealing his monomania. Like Bakhtin's argument that third person fiction finalises a character, Arendt's theory highlights that so too does life. Arendt's theory confirms that we cannot define any concrete impression of personhood in relation to Prokharchin until after his death, when we are able to fully comprehend his actions and life. This highlights the problem of judgement from the other who is left without the knowledge necessary to understand the person until death occurs. The issue of I-for-another, an important concept in the works of Dostoevskii, which necessarily relates the individual to another, will become evident below in relation to Dostoevskii's later works.

⁷⁹ Lanser, *The Narrative Act*, pp. 12–13.

⁸⁰ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 176.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 192–193.

Moreover, Arendt's theory raises questions about the role of society in both texts. She states that 'action [...] is never possible in isolation; to be isolated is to be deprived of the capacity to act'.⁸² Yet both Prokharchin and the Baron aim to isolate themselves because of their obsession with money, reducing them to a single, anti-social act that effectively diminishes the selfhood they seek to establish. Although the connection of money to power posits the possibility of both characters being represented as a 'great man', it further alienates them from society and reveals the fundamental egoism of their I-for-myself, paradoxically undermining their claims to greatness. This is made explicit in 'Gospodin Prokharchin' when he is accused of being a 'Napoleon', the epitome of a 'great man' in the nineteenth-century imagination.⁸³ Rather than denying the claim, he perceives himself in such a role despite his obvious social insignificance.

The construction of character in 'Skupoi rytsar'' and 'Gospodin Prokharchin' proves the protagonists to be nothing more than the act of collecting money in a futile bid to be 'great men'. Arendt's theory clarifies how their alienation from society renders their actions as incomplete. For Arendt to act is to be observed, yet it is their mania-driven I-for-myself that denies them social recognition as an individual. Both Pushkin and Dostoevskii depict their characters as egoistic figures, concerned only for their own benefit.

1.2 A mania for social recognition: Pushkin and Gogol'

Pushkin's 'Pikovaia dama' also depicts a monomaniac who is obsessed with wealth and becoming a 'great man'. Germann, unlike the Baron and Prokharchin, is a monomaniac functioning in society. His monomania is combined with other, lesser obsessions: '[h]is obsession with wealth, stimulated by the anecdote [about the cards], is [...] a mania which he

⁸² Ibid., p. 187.

⁸³ Fedor Dostoevskii, 'Gospodin Prokharchin', in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridtsati tomakh*, 30 vols (Leningrad: Nauka, 1972), I, pp. 240–263 (p. 257).

cannot control'.⁸⁴ Indeed, his obsessions lead him to exhibit addict-like behaviour, to scheme and to think solely about short-term goals. Unlike Raskol'nikov, whose mania will be considered below, Germann's obsession functions to show the consequences of greed, of stepping out of line. Germann's obsessions are reflected in the wider themes of the story. The main figures he encounters, Lizaveta and the Countess, both have their own obsessions. For example, the Countess has a painstakingly large amount of beauty products and rituals in an effort to appear younger, while Lizaveta becomes obsessed with Germann when he is 'courting' her. Like the Countess, Lizaveta's obsession does not remove her from her original life, from society, but functions in it. This is in contrast to Germann, whose world-view is reduced by monomania before his final removal from society. As I will show, the difference is related to the connection between personal and social selves. At no point in her obsessive period is it indicated that Lizaveta considers herself to be different from before, or different to how others viewed her. As a result her selfhood remains coherent. The appearance of obsession in relation to other characters shows that Germann's sanity is not destroyed through obsession alone. Obsession combined with desire for power (the desire to be viewed differently) results in a split between his principled social self and self-important personal self, creating madness.

I argue that his monomania relates to upward mobility, with money and the anecdote about the cards as secondary obsessions that act as a means to an end. Upward mobility, in this case, is dependent on Germann overcoming chance, being more 'powerful' than the other players. A key problem of his character is the opposition between desire and sanity. Pushkin represents Germann as a sane, principled man who spirals into madness through obsession. Here Germann stands in contrast to the Baron of 'Skupoi rytsar'' since 'the Baron is not a

⁸⁴ Gareth Williams, 'The Obsessions and Madness of Germann in *Pikovaja Dama*', *Russian Literature*, 14.4 (1983), 383–396 (p. 383).

man of significant internal conflicts. There is no side of his personality he must overcome to achieve his idea'.⁸⁵ As Germann cannot simultaneously be entirely sane and a monomaniac, nor both how he wishes to be seen and how others actually see him, he must deny his principles. Unlike the Baron, Germann is capable of development, but only as is necessary for Pushkin's short story. He still does not define himself and is finalisable according to Pushkin's end.

Germann is presented as a principle-based character who states: 'я не в состоянии жертвовать необходимым в надежде приобрести излишнее'.⁸⁶ However, he is also a romantic figure whose aim is to show himself as a 'great man', a feat which he believes can be achieved by proving himself above chance. The depiction of him as this powerful figure is mockingly introduced by Tomskii's description: 'лицо истинно романтическое: у него профиль Наполеона'.⁸⁷ This mocking of German's desire to rise to a higher social level explicitly depicts his I-for-another as different from his I-for-myself. Belinskii's conception, formulated a few years after 'Pikovaia dama', sheds light on the dangers of self-aggrandisement. Following his 'reconciliation with reality', Belinskii's theory restores the individual to the primary position, recognises the importance of a single self, and contains the seeds of the concept of a 'great man' that implies its opposite. The idea of self-importance can be seen in Pushkin's work as Germann places himself above others, perceiving himself as the single most important figure, placing the values and needs of society beneath him. By reading the development of Germann's self in the light of Belinskii's theory we can better understand the negative effect of the freedoms afforded to the individual. As a result of his

⁸⁵ Gary Rosenshield, 'Gambling and Passion: Pushkin's *The Queen of Spades* and Dostoevsky's *The Gambler*', *The Slavic and East European Journal*, 55.2 (2011), 205–228 (p. 206).

⁸⁶ Aleksandr Pushkin, 'Pikovaia dama', in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v desiati tomakh*, 10 vols (Leningrad: Nauka, 1978), VI, pp. 210–237 (p. 210).

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 228.

power, on his journey to becoming a ‘great man’ Germann is *allowed* to falsely court Lizaveta and even to kill the Countess; the only thing that matters is him as an individual, as a subjective, egoistic self. Germann views himself as an individual ‘важнее судеб всего мира’ who may follow his ego and become a ‘great man’ outside of the common good.⁸⁸ His perception of himself would, within Belinskii’s theory, allow him this power. However, it becomes apparent that the fictional society in which Germann lives more closely resembles the actual Russian society at the time, rather than Belinskii’s idealised version. The external view of Germann is that he is a man of principle, a non-gambling man, so the deviation from this social self, by creating a more powerful I-for-myself, initiates his journey into madness. I will return to the question of the individual’s right to commit a crime below, in relation to *Prestuplenie i nakazanie* (1866),.

By presenting principles as the basis for selfhood, Pushkin’s construction of Germann’s self can be decoded by looking to the philosopher Charles Taylor’s history of identity. Taylor states that ‘identity is defined by the commitments and identifications which provide the frame or horizon within which I can try to determine from case to case what is good, or valuable, or what ought to be done’.⁸⁹ Taylor’s theory argues that identity lies in a moral framework, that is, not a specific set of morals, but purely on the existence of the scheme itself. Considering Germann’s sane self in relation to Taylor’s philosophy we see how his identity involves upholding the principle of not gambling, since this is what he proclaims ‘ought to be done’; this is his moral stance. But for Pushkin to present his ‘mad character’, Germann must refute his identity by negating his principle – he must gamble.

At stake here is the means by which Germann learns the secret of the cards and the introduction of the supernatural, through which Pushkin’s text enters into the genre of the

⁸⁸ Belinskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, XII, p. 22.

⁸⁹ Charles Taylor, *The Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 27.

fantastic. Todorov's definition of the fantastic denotes a moment of uncertainty concerning reality.⁹⁰ It is this questioning of perception that evokes the fantastic, raising the questions: is my reality as I see it? Or is this something unreal and imaginary? As Eric Rabkin argues, '[o]ne of the key distinguishing marks of the fantastic is that the perspectives enforced by the ground rules of the narrative world must be diametrically contradicted'.⁹¹ So far in Pushkin's work, the textual actual world is not a fantastic place controlled by laws different to those of the actual world of the reader, marking the oddity of a fantastic event. However, the hesitation between a rational or supernatural conclusion is an uncomfortable space, needing resolution. In the instance of a rational explanation, Todorov states that the work falls into the category of the 'uncanny' but that confirmation of the supernatural would render it 'marvellous'.⁹² It is precisely this uncertainty of perception which opens the work up to duality: either Germann is sane and a ghost exists within the textual actual world with a marvellous reading, or German is mad and creates a fictional world within the text itself with an uncanny reading. Interpreting the event as marvellous would seemingly change the ground rules of the textual actual world, branding it as other to the natural laws familiar to the reader, but forcing them to be accepted as: '[u]nless one participates sympathetically in the ground rules of a narrative world, no occurrence in that world can make sense—or even nonsense'.⁹³ On the other hand, Freud's analysis of the uncanny explores the relationship between the known and unknown, arguing that the uncanny creates an unnerving feeling that constitutes 'that species of the frightening that goes back to what was once well known and had long been familiar'.⁹⁴ Not only is the uncanny the familiar made unfamiliar but it also conjures the

⁹⁰ Todorov, *The Fantastic*, p. 41.

⁹¹ Eric S. Rabkin, *The Fantastic in Literature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 8.

⁹² Todorov, *The Fantastic*, p. 41.

⁹³ Rabkin, *The Fantastic*, p. 4.

⁹⁴ Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny*, trans. David McLintok (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 124.

imaginary, blurring the lines between the textual actual world and a fictitious world, as ‘an uncanny effect often arises when the boundary between fantasy and reality is blurred, when we are faced with the reality of something that we have until now considered imaginary’.⁹⁵ Despite the reader’s desire for a resolution, Pushkin’s narrator never indicates the validity of the appearance of the Countess after her death, leaving the reader in a state of ambiguity.

The consequences of this scene become clear to the reader at the climax of the novella when the effects of Germann’s principles are apparent. If we assume the marvellous, then Germann is not gambling – assuming that the secret of the cards is true – and he does not deviate from his moral principles, finding a loophole to obtain money. However, if the work is uncanny then the secret has no basis other than the imaginary; Germann will in fact be gambling when he sits down to play cards, even if he does not realise it. Nonetheless, as events unfold Germann chooses the wrong card, loses, and subsequently comes to the realisation that he has gambled after all. He is not the powerful man above chance, not a ‘great man’. The question of perception quickly becomes irrelevant; he has gambled, deconstructing his sane self, and as a result ‘Германн сошел с ума’.⁹⁶ It is at this point that monomania removes Germann from society – he is no longer the functioning maniac, but psychotic. His striving to become a ‘great man’ deconstructs his selfhood by the defiance of his moral framework and eventually reduces him to nothing more than the phrase ‘тройка, семерка, туз! Тройка, семерка, дама!’⁹⁷ His monomania, the subsequent failure to prove himself, and his ‘gambling’ eventually remove Germann from the text’s objective reality altogether.

However, Pushkin is not finished destroying the depiction of Germann as the great romantic individual. Not only has he been reduced to a phrase but Pushkin has also detailed

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 50.

⁹⁶ Pushkin, ‘Pikovaia dama’, VI, p. 237.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 237.

the hospital in which Germann is confined – Obukhovskaia, a hospital funded by the state. As Andrew Kahn states, ‘Pushkin’s intention in having Hermann incarcerated here is implicitly ironical: not only has he failed to secure a great fortune, but the would-be Napoleon cannot even pay for his own care’.⁹⁸ Any remaining hope for Germann to become a ‘great man’ is subverted. His selfhood is deconstructed through the egoistic striving of the I-for-myself which aims to prove itself better than the social self. By examining Germann through the prism of Taylor’s theory of identity we can see how this divergence is explored via moral principles and the influence of the desire for power.

In contrast to the romantic ‘great man’, Gogol’s ‘Shinel’ (1842) features the natural school’s *malen’kii chelovek*. In stark contrast to the depth of Germann’s character, Akakii is presented as a textual construction. Boris Eikhenbaum argues that Akakii is constructed via narrative voice – his name, and even his description, do not make him appear human, but rather the product of clever uses of wordplay.⁹⁹ His name, the repeated sound Akakii Akakievich, is chosen for comedic effect. So too does his description work not to depict the character, but to present him as comic:

this sentence is not so much a *description* of appearance, as a *reproduction* of it in an imitative verbal gesture: The words are chosen and placed in a certain order not on the principle of character delineation, but on the principle of sound-meaning.¹⁰⁰

As a result, the reader is presented with Akakii Akakievich as follows:

[и]так, в одном департаменте служил один чиновник; чиновник нельзя сказать чтобы очень замечательный, низенького роста, несколько рябоват, несколько

⁹⁸ Andrew Kahn, ‘Explanatory Notes’, in Aleksandr Pushkin, *The Queen of Spades and Other Stories*, ed. Andrew Kahn, trans. Alan Myers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 252.

⁹⁹ Boris Eichenbaum, ‘The Structure of Gogol’s “The Overcoat”’, trans. Muriel Nesbitt, Beth Paul, *The Russian Review*, 22.4 (1963), 377–399 (pp. 385–386).

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 386–387.

рыжеват, несколько даже на-вид подслеповат, с небольшой лысиной на лбу, с морщинами по обеим сторонам щек и цветом лица что называется геморроидальным...¹⁰¹

The fact that Akakii's complexion is 'hemorrhoidal' tells us nothing about his character.

Indeed, we are not presented with an objective representation of character; our view of Akakii Akakievich is coloured by the narrator's employment of comedy. We are told how the world views Akakii, how his social, external self is presented and about the comic, negative social perspective of him.

Critics such as Hilton Landry state that Akakii is 'a harmless nonentity', and Janet Tucker affirms that 'there is no true personhood in this tale, only the bureaucracy with its Table of Ranks, as befits the bureaucratic prose'.¹⁰² However, I argue that Akakii's selfhood does exist, as his recognition of I-for-myself evolves throughout the work, but that it is its non-alignment with his I-for-another as comic that classes him as mad. Akakii is initially constructed by the act of copying: 'лучше дайте я перепису что-нибудь' [...] '[в]не этого переписывания, казалось, для него ничего не существовало'.¹⁰³ Placing Gogol's character under the light of Arendt's theory allows us to recognise him as a socially acting self. Arendt's theory is able to account for personhood in 'Shinel', unlike in 'Skupoi rytsar' and 'Gospodin Prokharchin', due to the social aspect of Akakii's I-for-another. Akakii does not wish to recoil from society but aims to assert himself within it. As a result, this reading reveals Akakii to be an individual who develops throughout the work, not merely a collection of words.

¹⁰¹ Nikolai V. Gogol', 'Shinel', in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 14 vols (Moscow: Nauka, 1938), III, pp. 139–174 (p. 141).

¹⁰² Hilton Landry, 'Gogol's, The Overcoat', *The Explicator*, 19.8 (1961), 115–118 (p. 117). Janet G. Tucker, 'Genre Fragmentation in Nikolai Gogol's "The Overcoat"', *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*, 46 (2012), 83–97 (p. 93).

¹⁰³ Gogol', 'Shinel', p. 145.

Like the Baron and Prokharchin, Akakii is portrayed as becoming obsessed with saving money, but here it has a purpose: the purchase of an overcoat. His monomaniacal penny-pinching becomes an obsessive act whose sole purpose is the attainment of the physical overcoat. It is also by this acquisition of the overcoat that Akakii desires to be recognised as a ‘person’, as an individual in society, and not merely as a necessary social act or comic downtrodden figure. Indeed, this desire itself is a sign of the development of his identity. His I-for-myself recognises his social insignificance and aims to rise above his I-for-another with the purchase of the coat. As a result, Akakii becomes noticed by his acquaintances and invited to a party – an aim he has strived to achieve since his ‘humanitarian speech’ at the beginning of the story, and which stands in stark contrast to the narrator’s overall mocking tone. It gives us a glimpse of Akakii’s inner life, making the reader suspect that he has an I-for-myself and that he is not simply an automaton to be ridiculed as the narrator makes us believe.¹⁰⁴

Unlike the Baron and Prokharchin, Akakii’s mania allows him to function in society, permitting him to attempt to ground his identity in social terms. Despite his seeming desperation to be recognised as a worthy self by those in society, his allegiance still lies with his monomania – with his overcoat. It matters as the nature of his character does not allow him to become a self separate from his monomania. This is because he believes the overcoat to be his entry into society as a recognised self, rather than an automaton; for Akakii social identity and the coat are a package deal. The role of the *malen’kii chelovek* necessarily enforces this alienated, lowly role to which Akakii ascribes. Looking at the comic representation of Akakii’s I-for-another we can see how using Arendt’s theory highlights a gap in the conditions of personhood. Despite carrying out his copying in a social

¹⁰⁴ Gary Rosenshield, *The Ridiculous Jew: The Exploitation and Transformation of a Stereotype in Gogol, Turgenev, and Dostoevsky* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008), pp. 90–93.

environment, the other characters only consider Akakii as this act, not as an acting self who exists separately from it. This creates a rift between the reader's and other characters' perception of Akakii. The other characters recognise that Akakii fulfils an act, a social function, but not as anything more. On the other hand, the reader is aware of Akakii's I-for-myself, allowing them an insight into the character that the other of the textual actual world is unaware of. Akakii's monomania desires to overcome this restriction, to establish his I-for-myself as his I-for-another, for which he believes the overcoat is sufficient.

Gogol's shift to the fantastic mode complicates the conclusion of Akakii's selfhood as he dies shortly after having his overcoat stolen, seemingly leaving the ending without a protagonist. However, the rumour circulating, about Akakii's ghost stealing overcoats, can be seen as related to the fantastic as the rumour can either be read as a supernatural event or as Gogol's ironic undermining of his story, by presenting a flesh-and-bones thief as the rumoured ghost. If the reader assumes the ironic reading then Akakii's self is destroyed in death. His attempt to assert himself as an individual, instead of an act, failed. However, if we accept the supernatural explanation then Akakii continues to exist as he is still attempting to assert a recognised I-for-another. This reading would also falsely momentarily afford Akakii the recognition that he sought when the ghost steals the overcoat of the Important Personage. Yet even if we accept the ghost as an ironic element, the very fact that the rumour ascribes the act to Akakii cements some continuation of his selfhood, this time reducing him entirely to an act like the Baron and Prokharchin; the act of stealing itself *is* Akakii, regardless of the possibility of a 'real' thief as the cause of the action. At the same time the presence of the 'ghost' suggests that, contrary to Arendt's contention that the self is understood as an entity once the subject has died, Akakii's self still cannot be fully comprehended even after his death, as he continues to try and establish himself in society. The limits of Arendt's theory, based upon the laws of the actual world, become apparent when applied to a fictional self

functioning outside such rules. Hence, although we are able to view Akakii's selfhood as a dualistic concept, Arendt's theory shows how Akakii's selfhood ultimately escapes definition as we are never able to finalise him.

1.3 A mania for titles: Gogol'

Gogol's 'Zapiski sumasshedshego' also depicts a maniac character, but this time the mania in question is megalomania. This striving for power differs from that of Germann in that the protagonist, Poprishchin, does not aim to empirically prove his power, but simply awards himself powerful titles as he sees fit. This suggests that he associates titles and ranks with genuine power, but by awarding himself the titles he ironically strips them of any meaning. Power in 'Zapiski sumasshedshego', as in 'Shinel', is a social construction and used in attempts to ground identity. However, Poprishchin's title reveals an absence of power despite his assumption of the opposite; he requires only illusory power. This can occur due to the duality of fictional worlds. As Venkat Ramanan highlights, the issue of madness, here an affliction of the mind, poses an issue for Poprishchin's relation to the textual objective world as 'in our attempts to [...] understand the world, we are reliant on our senses [...] and our mind – but they are not perfect tools'.¹⁰⁵

Poprishchin's delusion of importance – megalomania – creates an alternative, imaginary world (within the textual actual world) which is known and governed only by himself. It is within this imaginary world that his I-for-myself is uninhibited by the strict social hierarchy of the textual actual world. The use of the diary form seemingly permits Poprishchin's mind to run wild, creating a world completely unfamiliar where dogs talk, dates are unrecognisable and the King of Spain can be hidden among the Russian populace.

¹⁰⁵ Venkat Ramanan, 'Literature and the Construction of Reality', *Literature & Aesthetics*, 28.1 (2018), 67–86 (p. 75).

The diary grants the reader access to Poprishchin's inner world but the lack of access to the textual objective world means that the reader must pay careful attention to recognise that the laws governing this fictional world resemble those of the reader's at the beginning with the distance between the two widening as the work progresses. This is one such work where the binary categorisation of 'sane' and 'mad' does not perfectly fit. The slow transition from sanity to madness is clearly indicated throughout the diary, but at no point is it indicated the exact stage at which he becomes mad. Additionally, Poprishchin's personal self is not a singular self, but rather multifaceted as it is influenced by his increasing madness, ranging from an enviable pen mender to the king of Spain. However, this disconnect between how the reader understands Poprishchin and how the character understands himself clearly marks a general binary regarding his identity.

Poprishchin's imaginary gradual social climbing illustrates his increasing self-importance and removal from the textual actual world. In contrast to the other characters discussed thus far, Poprishchin's delusion clearly marks the incompatibility of his social and personal selves. The split comes from the fact that Poprishchin thinks he is sane, not recognising the absurdity of events, which are clear to the reader. He may state, '[я] думаю, что девчонка приняла меня за сумасшедшего', but makes no further comment on the matter, continuing as if everything were normal.¹⁰⁶ However, the reader becomes aware of his madness through the progressive oddity of events and identifies him as the 'madman' of the title, constituting an external I-for-another despite minimal representations of other characters' points of view on him.

Megalomania implies deviation from the common good towards the individual good, allowing the character to 'achieve' their egoistic goal of overcoming society. A comparison

¹⁰⁶ Gogol', 'Zapiski sumasshedshego', in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 14 vols (Moscow: Nauka, 1938), III, pp. 191–214 (p. 201).

with Dostoevskii's 1861 piece 'Peterburgskie snovideniia v stikhakh i proze' establishes that an individual ascribing power to themselves does not necessarily entail megalomania. Here the character believes himself to be Garibaldi: '[и] могло же войти ему в голову, что он — Гарибальди! Да! все чиновники, его сослуживцы, показали, что он уже две недели заботился об этом'.¹⁰⁷ It is Poprishchin's desire to expect recognition from his 'titles' that makes him a megalomaniac. Dostoevskii's 'Garibaldi', by contrast, desires to be punished for his position: '[и] вот в одно утро он вдруг бросился в ноги его превосходительству: виноват, дескать, сознаюсь во всем, я — Гарибальди, сделайте со мной что хотите!'¹⁰⁸ This mode of thought marks him as delusional – a feature Poprishchin also possesses. However, Poprishchin's delusion only plays into his megalomania. He is portrayed as being able to function in society at the beginning of the work when he is solely delusional, for example believing his department chief to be jealous of him for mending pens, but once he is afflicted with megalomania the two elements of madness fuel one another, rendering him psychotic, much like Germann. Once he has 'realised' that he is the king of Spain he is incarcerated in an asylum, removing him from society, but his psychosis – his complete departure from reality – allows his imaginary 'ideal' self, his I-for-myself, to continue because it needs no grounding in the textual objective world.

Poprishchin's two selves can be enlightened by a later theory by the populist theoretician Petr Lavrov in his 'Ocherki voprosov prakticheskoi filosofii', published in 1859. Lavrov's theory establishes that 'a person is in reality indistinguishable from society' as they have:

¹⁰⁷ Fedor Dostoevskii, 'Peterburgskie snovideniia v stikhakh i proze', in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridtsati tomakh*, 30 vols (Leningrad: Nauka, 1979), XIX, pp. 67–85 (p. 72).

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

an inner being or self, which has two parts. One is the ‘real’ self, the sum of a person’s impulses, feelings, wishes, and moods. The other is the ‘ideal’ self, which serves to master the changing impulses of the real self.¹⁰⁹

An individual, he argues, firstly becomes conscious of themselves, of their ‘real self’, through their desires and pleasures and then when they are put in relation to others, an ‘ideal self’ emerges which he argues is ‘личное достоинство человека’, which ‘требует от человека [моральной] деятельности для своего достижения’.¹¹⁰ Lavrov’s concept of acting morally necessitates that the individual knows their place in society and acts accordingly, but respectfully, towards others. The publication date of both Gogol’s and Lavrov’s texts suggests that, much like with ‘Pikovaia dama’ and Belinskii’s theory, the society in question remains much the same and that, again, Lavrov’s is an idealised vision. The desires of Poprishchin’s real self – his egoistic desire for power, as shown via titles and his longing for his department head’s daughter – are apparent to the reader, but his megalomania renders him incapable of fulfilling Lavrov’s criteria for the ‘ideal self’ as he cannot correctly act with others in society. Hence, Poprishchin’s uninhibited ‘real self’, his I-for-myself, exhibits ‘естественное расширение личности, стремящейся к наслаждению [...] к желанию подчинить все окружающее своему [...]. Здесь лежал источник *властолюбия*’.¹¹¹ Poprishchin’s megalomania renders these two halves of his self incapable of reconciliation.

Thus, in Lavrov’s theory the ‘real’ self is the imperfect individualist kept in order by the ‘ideal’. But Poprishchin’s madness stops him from being a contributing member of society, a moral social self, regardless of his understanding of his own identity in social

¹⁰⁹ Victoria S. Frede, ‘Materialism and the Radical Intelligentsia: the 1860s’, in *A History of Russian Philosophy 1830–1930: Faith, Reason, and the Defense of Human Dignity*, ed. Gary M. Hamburg, Randall Allen Poole (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 69–89 (p. 74).

¹¹⁰ P. L. Lavrov, *Ocherki voprosov prakticheskoi filosofii* (Saint Petersburg: Tip. I. I. Glazunova i komp., 1860), p. 33.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

terms. By looking at Poprishchin through the lens of Lavrov's theory we can understand that not only has megalomania removed any hope of Poprishchin's integration into society, it has also limited his selfhood by exposing its duality; his 'real' I-for-myself self exists and has egoistic desires, but the individualistic focus of the 'ideal' self denies the existence of Lavrov's 'ideal self' in that the creation of an imaginary textual world through delusion falsely establishes these desires.

Unlike the other characters discussed thus far, who can best be understood within the framework of a modern theory of personhood, Gogol's framing of personhood, and emphasis on individualism, relates him to the ideas of the next generation. His focus on the dichotomy of internal-external perceptions of self, given his forays into the fantastic, paradoxically allies him more to the psychological realism and focus on internalisation associated with the 1860s.

1.4 The failed 'new men': Dostoevskii

The prose of the 1860s moved on from the romantic and natural schools to develop forms of psychological realism. While Gogol's use of the diary form in 'Zapiski sumasshedshego' allowed some insight into a character's mental state, psychological realism sought to explore characters in more complex ways through psychological processes in addition to internal narratives. This new literary style also coincided with a change in philosophical thinking in Russia. The focus shifted away from the debate around individualism and collectivism and gave way to positivism and nihilism – 'the radical rejection of tradition and principles held merely on trust'.¹¹² The object of philosophical discussion was now that which could be physically and scientifically verified, marking this as

¹¹² Richard Peace, 'Nihilism', in *A History of Russian Thought*, ed. William Leatherbarrow, Derek Offord (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 116–140 (p. 117).

the next stage of development of progressive, Europeanised thinking.¹¹³ However, the Russian concept of nihilism differed from European nihilism by its emphasis on materialism, reducing the individual to a physiological being. The individual therefore had no contradictory impulses – no dualism – for the nihilists and, in an equal society, the individual good would align with the good of society, marking a new social ideal.¹¹⁴

Turgenev's *Ottsy i deti* (1862) follows Bazarov's journey with nihilism, attempting to integrate it into his life despite outside rejections. However, the addition of a love interest creates a dichotomy in his interests that leads not to madness, but to death. Here the idea of illness as a metaphor, the fact that mental and physical illness were very often associated with one another, links Bazarov to the figure of the maniac in literature at this time who also had dualistic impulses: he wishes to remain in society yet overcome it, addressing the individual's non-alignment with the good of society in favour of their own wishes.

However, within nihilist theory attempts were made to reconcile the individual with society in a manner that would be beneficial for both. The radical philosopher Nikolai Chernyshevskii's 'new men' 'are enlightened beings who recognize that the strictest selfishness and the broadest altruism work together. They labor for the good of mankind because they passionately enjoy it'.¹¹⁵ Chernyshevskii highlights the importance of the individual *and* society, and the need for them to work in harmony with one another, as 'a man must behave socially or his individual pleasure-seeking will be thwarted and he will be destroyed'.¹¹⁶ The individual requires society. Yet despite Chernyshevskii's resoluteness that society is needed, others, such as Dmitrii Pisarev, pushed the matter further, totally negating

¹¹³ Frederick C. Copleston, *Philosophy in Russia: From Herzen to Lenin and Berdyaev* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986), p. 102.

¹¹⁴ Francis B. Randall, *N. G. Chernyshevskii* (New York: Twayne Publishers Inc., 1967), p. 85.

¹¹⁵ James M. Edie, et al. (eds.), *Russian Philosophy* (Chicago, IL: Quadrangle Books, 1965), II, commentary on Dmitrii Pisarev, pp. 61–65 (p. 64).

¹¹⁶ Randall, *N. G. Chernyshevskii*, p. 85.

any value that does not hold up to scrutiny, in a manner that alludes to the reassertion of the individual through personal fulfilment.¹¹⁷ However, this individual is not the average citizen but rather closer to the later idea of the Nietzschean *Übermensch*, an ideal person who accompanies a reset in value systems, grounding importance in life on earth in an opposition to religious beliefs.¹¹⁸ The reassertion of the ‘new individual’ became an important element of the time, including in literature:

[литература] должна всеми своими силами эмансипировать человеческую личность от тех разнообразных стеснений, которые налагают на нее робость собственной мысли, предрассудки касты, авторитет предания, стремления к общему идеалу и весь тот отживший хлам, который мешает живому человеку свободно дышать и развиваться во все стороны.¹¹⁹

The radicals believed that man must follow the example of literature and embrace nihilism in order to allow individual freedom. Dostoevskii’s *Zapiski iz podpol’ia* (1864) was written in opposition to these ideas, and in particular as a criticism of Chernyshevskii’s *Chto delat’?* (1863).¹²⁰ Dostoevskii maintained that ‘abstract philosophical systems [...] make no allowance for the complexity of human life, [...] [and that] the materialist view of humanity [...] reduced a person to a bodily automaton’.¹²¹

Zapiski iz podpol’ia presents a character sceptical of everything, with the exception of his self. In stark contrast to Chernyshevskii’s harmony between the individual and society, the underground man is ruled by contradictory impulses: his self is paradoxical and

¹¹⁷ Joseph Frank, *Dostoevsky: The Miraculous Years, 1865-1871* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), pp. 70–72.

¹¹⁸ Walicki, *A History of Russian Thought*, p. 201.

¹¹⁹ Dmitrii I. Pisarev, ‘Skholastika XIX veka’, in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem v dvenadtsati tomakh*, 12 vols (Moscow: Nauka, 2000), II, pp. 250–306 (p. 255).

¹²⁰ Joseph Frank, *Dostoevsky: The Stir of Liberation, 1860-1865* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), p. 312.

¹²¹ Sarah Hudspith, ‘Why we must Laugh at the Underground Man’, *Studies in Slavic Literature and Poetics*, 57 (2012), 67–79 (p. 70).

purposefully ambiguous. Unlike Chernyshevskii's simplistic conception of the individual, the underground man's disunity extends beyond his relation to society into his very self. We begin with a contradiction: 'я человек больной ... я злой человек' is refuted by 'это я наврал про себя давеча, что я был злой чиновник'.¹²² This confusion permeates the entire work. The underground man does not wish to explain and/or categorise himself. His 'hyperconsciousness' only plays to further complicate the construction of his selfhood, as it dissolves in himself all possible fixed features of this person, making them all the object of his own introspection, but in fact he no longer has any such traits at all, no fixed definitions, there is nothing to say about him, he figures not as a person taken from life but rather as the subject of consciousness.¹²³

Thus, it is impossible to 'finalise' the underground man beyond the constraints he imposes – beyond his I-for-myself – since Dostoevskii makes self-consciousness the dominant, breaking 'down the monologic unity of the work'.¹²⁴ As Bakhtin states, 'everything that had qualified him to be once and for all a completed image of reality, now no longer functions as a form for finalizing him, but as the material of his self-consciousness'.¹²⁵ So, in keeping with psychological realism, the focus is on the complex mental workings of the individual personal self rather than external perspectives of the social self. It is here that literature allows the character to develop, and not be confined to the limits set by the author, as Bakhtin argues 'Dostoevsky's heroes are never described, they describe themselves. [...] They are never represented at "second hand," and no authorial "surplus" finalises them. Strictly

¹²² Fedor Dostoevskii, *Zapiski iz podpol'ia*, in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridsati tomakh*, 30 vols (Leningrad: Nauka, 1973), V, pp. 99–179 (p. 99, p. 100).

¹²³ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, ed., trans. Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), p. 51.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 51–52.

speaking we do not see them at all; we see, instead, their self-conscious image of themselves'.¹²⁶

However, like Poprishchin, there are two selves at play – the ‘real’ and the ‘ideal’. Whereas Poprishchin simply awarded himself the titles of his ‘ideal’ self due to his delusion, the underground man must, in line with the nihilists’ outlook, empirically prove himself to be his ideal man; he must socially establish his I-for-myself. In opposition to Chernyshevskii’s rational egoism, which aligns the individual with society, the underground man is portrayed as believing himself to be better than society due to his ‘illness’ of ‘hyperconsciousness’, highlighting the portrayal of his egoistic nature. The underground man defines the ‘normal’ man as the antithesis of the ‘hyperconscious’ man. In so doing, he argues for the ‘hyperconscious’ man’s superior intellect, posing a me-versus-them mentality.¹²⁷ Moreover, the underground man argues that the normal man, the man of action, does not realise the restriction of his freedom, his free will, further countering Chernyshevskii by separating himself from such men. Consonant with Schiller’s philosophy, the underground man reasons to prove his free will by overcoming natural instinct, choosing not to relieve the pain from his toothache. This highlights the difference between man and animal because whereas an animal *must* remove itself from pain, the underground man chooses to revel in it.¹²⁸ Schiller argues that an animal acts from pure nature but that man, having the function of reason, can actively choose to overcome these instincts.¹²⁹ This is the beginning of a string of attempts by the underground man to prove himself as a free, powerful individual.

However, an incident in which an officer moves him aside as though he is an object rather than a person challenges this and incites his monomania. As with ‘Gospodin

¹²⁶ Emerson, Morson, *Mikhail Bakhtin*, p. 264.

¹²⁷ Dostoevskii, *Zapiski iz podpol'ia*, V, p. 104.

¹²⁸ Frank, *The Stir of Liberation*, p. 320.

¹²⁹ Friedrich Schiller, ‘On Grace and Dignity’, p. 155.

Prokharchin' the question of judging another comes into focus; the underground man believes he was judged unfairly by the officer – '[с]о мной поступили как с мухой' – and aims to rectify this.¹³⁰ Not only does the underground man become obsessed with proving himself to the officer – making him 'notice' him – but also with authenticating his 'ideal' self. This ideal self is, he believes, more intelligent and deserving of recognition than the average man, and is the underground man's I-for-myself. The fact that a 'normal' man has dared to not recognise (perceive) the underground man as his I-for-myself but as he exists externally, as his I-for-another, is depicted as inciting a manic need to attempt to enforce his personal view of his self.

The rift between I-for-myself and I-for-another continuously poses a problem for the narrator throughout the work and repeatedly leads to failures in the assertion of his personal self in the social sphere. The striving to justify himself as powerful links the underground man to the romantic concept of a 'great man', which is significant as part two of the work takes place in the 1840s. The references to the beautiful and the sublime, as well as discussion of the 'true romantic individual', relate the work to romanticism.¹³¹ Echoes of Lavrov's theory, cited above, can be found but, as with Poprishchin, the individualistic egoism of both the 'real' and 'ideal' selves highlights the futility of any reconciliation with society. Despite the novel's opposition to Chernyshevskii's utilitarianism, and the fact that in developing his theory of rational egoism in 'The Anthropological Principle in Philosophy' Chernyshevskii was in part responding to Lavrov, the underground man also stands in opposition to Lavrov's social 'ideal', leading to his attempt to overcome society, not to contribute to it.¹³² The underground man is unable to have a concrete identity due to this

¹³⁰ Dostoevskii, *Zapiski iz podpol'ia*, V, p. 128.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

¹³² Randall, *N. G. Chernyshevskii*, p. 70.

inability to reconcile his I-for-myself self with society, as he is unable to merge his ‘hyperconscious’ personal self with his lowly social self.

Dostoevskii’s next major work *Prestuplenie i nakazanie*, revisits the question of monomania and power. Valentina Vetlovskaia highlights the similarities between Pushkin’s Germann and Dostoevskii’s Raskol’nikov; she states that both characters use money as a part of their ‘arithmetical theory’, which in turn allows them to commit crimes, that they believe to be justified, in order to validate their power.¹³³ Raskol’nikov’s monomania is portrayed as already in place in his murderous obsession: ‘[э]то я в этот последний месяц выучился болтать, лежа по целым суткам в углу и думая... о царе Горохе. Но зачем я теперь иду? Разве я способен на *это*?’¹³⁴ It is through the act of murder that Raskol’nikov seeks to affirm himself to be an individual above society, like the underground man, but also to show that he, like a ‘great man’, is not subject to normal moral and state laws.

Unlike *Zapiski iz podpol’ia*, which is told in the first person, coloured with the underground man’s bias, and focuses primarily on the internal self, Raskol’nikov is depicted through both internal (the narrator’s closeness to his consciousness) and external (other characters’) views.¹³⁵ The closeness of the narrative voice stems from the original plan to write *Prestuplenie i nakazanie* in the first person.¹³⁶ We are explicitly told of Raskol’nikov’s mania, which is apparent to those around him: ‘мономания какая-то в вас засела’, whereas we become aware of the underground man’s mania through his obsessive thoughts.¹³⁷

¹³³ Valentina Vetlovskaia, ‘Petersburg Motifs in *Crime and Punishment*’, in *Dostoevsky on the Threshold of Other Worlds: Essays in Honour of Malcolm V. Jones*, ed. Lesley Milne, Sarah J. Young (Ilkeston: Bramcote Press, 2006), pp. 21–39 (pp. 26–27).

¹³⁴ Fedor Dostoevskii, *Prestuplenie i nakazanie*, in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridtsati tomakh*, 30 vols (Leningrad: Nauka, 1973), VI, p. 6.

¹³⁵ Linda L. Williams, ‘The Underground Man: A Question of Meaning’, *Studies in the Novel*, 27.2 (1995), 129–140 (p. 132).

¹³⁶ Fedor Dostoevskii, *The Notebooks for Crime and Punishment*, ed. and trans. Edward Wasiolek (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1967), p. 9.

¹³⁷ Dostoevskii, *Prestuplenie i nakazanie*, VI, p. 267.

A trope that unites these works is that of the ‘great man’ which, although a romantic concept, features in both *Zapiski iz podpol’ia* and *Prestuplenie i nakazanie* through the figure of Napoleon. However, the two protagonists relate to the ‘great man’ differently. The underground man combines his I-for-myself with the figure of Napoleon due to his ‘hyperconsciousness’. This is, as Jacques Cattaue notes, ironic since the underground man declares himself to be clever, but also states that ‘умный человек и не может серьезно чем-нибудь сделаться, а делается чем-нибудь только дурак’.¹³⁸ Paris states that ‘[h]e wishes to escape his inner torments by losing his selfhood, by being overwhelmed, by having his struggles and agonies subsumed into some larger, implacable phenomenon’, meaning his quest to validate himself as his ideal powerful figure, rather than accept his real, alienated self.¹³⁹ This suggests that even with his ‘hyperconsciousness’ the underground man cannot understand the complexities and oppositions of his own selfhood, but tries in vain to give fixed terms and ‘organize a self [...] through stories that fit into existing literary categories’, whilst aggressively rejecting any outside attempts to label him.¹⁴⁰ Hence, although the underground man places Napoleon in relation to his I-for-myself, he must empirically prove this connection.

This also holds true for Raskol’nikov: ‘я хотел Наполеоном сделаться, оттого и убил’.¹⁴¹ His attempt is through murder, the ultimate confrontation with, and denial of, the other – an act which normally subjects the murderer to moral and state laws but would be excused for a ‘Napoleon’. Whereas the idea of superiority is related throughout the work to

¹³⁸ Jacques Cattaue, *Dostoyevsky and the Process of Literary Creation*, trans. Audrey Littlewood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 200. Dostoevskii, *Zapiski iz podpol’ia*, V, p. 100.

¹³⁹ Bernard J. Paris, ‘Notes from Underground: A Horneyan Analysis’, *PMLA*, 88.3 (1973), 511–522 (p. 519).

¹⁴⁰ Michael Holquist, *Dostoyevsky and the Novel* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977), p. 63.

¹⁴¹ Dostoevskii, *Prestuplenie i nakazanie*, VI, p. 318.

money, for example the pawnbroker's power over her clients and Katerina Ivanovna's delusions of grandeur, which manifest themselves in physical objects and pretend displays of wealth, Raskol'nikov's rejection of material possessions reveals his desire for power by overcoming traditional morality. He is represented as not desiring wealth (he does not use the money or valuables he steals), just power. In killing the 'powerful' pawnbroker, who holds this position by her wealth, 'Raskol'nikov had sought to give himself definitive knowledge of his self in the murder'.¹⁴² Whereas seeds of a 'great man' theory are found in Belinskii, by viewing Raskol'nikov as part of the next generation the reader can see the consequences of his desire to rid the world of a 'louse'. Once more the question of judging another appears in Dostoevskii's work – Raskol'nikov judges himself to be worthy of fulfilling the role of a Napoleon, while simultaneously judging the pawnbroker to be a 'louse' that needs to be removed from the world. He supposedly murders both for himself and to 'help' society, demonstrating a 'great man's' ability to aid society in his bid to overcome it, again linking to the later concept of a Nietzschean *Übermensch*. The figure of a great man, however, is not limited to Raskol'nikov. Porfirii's comment 'кто ж у нас на Руси себя Наполеоном не считает?' is in reference to members of educated Russian society considering themselves superior to ordinary people and basic morality, highlighting the power associated with Russia's class system.¹⁴³ This form of power presents a contradiction as the theory negates itself, as if everyone were to become a 'Napoleon', the result would be an elevated norm, and not the placement of an extraordinary individual above society.

In this context, the Marxist theoretician Georgii Plekhanov's adaptation of the individualistic theory, which states that a 'great man' is a product of the social environment,

¹⁴² Holquist, *Dostoevsky and the Novel*, p. 92.

¹⁴³ Dostoevskii, *Prestuplenie i nakazanie*, VI, p. 204.

and that his position not in opposition to society, is pertinent.¹⁴⁴ It allows us to comprehend how, whereas previously a ‘great man’ was considered a powerful individual outside of society following his egotistical desires, Raskol’nikov could in fact be a new ‘great man’ who is able to serve society.¹⁴⁵ This is because an individual is unable to completely change the society of which they are a product: ‘[в]лиятельные личности благодаря особенностям своего ума и характера могут изменять индивидуальную физиономию событий и некоторые частные их последствия, но они не могут изменить их общее направление, которое определяется другими силами’.¹⁴⁶ Thus the romantic figure of a ‘great man’ is no longer an alienated individual but a social man, who causes change from within.

Raskol’nikov does indeed entertain such notions of altruism, as reflected in his recollection of the conversation at the tavern about using the pawnbroker’s money to help others.

However, this is countered by the other force at play within him: pleasure.¹⁴⁷ Raskol’nikov is a man of two halves: I-for-myself and I-for-another, the charitable man and the maniac. His desire to murder kills two birds with one stone: he will rid the world of a louse and be able to pay off debts, seemingly fulfilling the role of a ‘great man’ by aligning the personal good with the social good. However, his failure to procure a decent sum of money and the additional murder of the innocent Lizaveta signal Raskol’nikov’s inability to become a Napoleon. Mania exposes madness as a split between the personal and the social by highlighting the nonfulfillment of social good and the egoistic striving for personal good.

Both of Dostoevskii’s protagonists feel the need to confirm their elevated selfhood, unlike Poprishchin, and validate it empirically like Germann. However, the underground

¹⁴⁴ William H. Shaw, ‘Plekhanov on the Role of the Individual in History’, *Studies in Soviet Thought*, 35.3 (1988), 247–265 (p. 256).

¹⁴⁵ Copleston, *Philosophy in Russia*, pp. 270–271.

¹⁴⁶ Georgii Valentinovich Plekhanov, *Rol’ lichnosti v istorii* (ebook) (Kyiv: Strelbytskyy Multimedia Publishing, 2018), p. 66, available from: <https://books.apple.com/us/book/роль-личности-в-истории/id1328953068> [accessed February 15, 2021].

¹⁴⁷ Dostoevskii, *Prestuplenie i nakazanie*, VI, p. 54.

man's actions break no laws – he plays 'cat and mouse' style games with others in a bid to show himself as more powerful and intellectually above them – while Raskol'nikov's murders have legal consequences. As William Snodgrass argues, Raskol'nikov takes this risk because he 'suspects that he is a sub-man, unworthy of the notice of anyone, so invents a theory to prove himself superior to all, above all authority', hence his statement 'я просто убил; для себя убил, для себя одного'.¹⁴⁸ His mania entails an absence of middle ground, leaving him to consider only the extremes – he is either the 'great' man' or the 'louse'. If he cannot show himself to be this powerful, authoritative figure then, for him, he is no better than the pawnbroker herself. However, as Michael Holquist states, 'instead of raising a new self, his old identity is executed in the murder', that is, he proves the falsity of his I-for-myself.¹⁴⁹ Like the underground man, whose actions receive no recognition, Raskol'nikov fails to assert his vision of himself as a 'great man' and hence reconcile his I-for-myself and I-for-another.

However, Raskol'nikov confesses and is punished as a normal member of society, thrusting him into the world of the peasants he apparently aimed to place himself above. The underground man, by contrast, having abided by the law, despite committing morally dubious acts, can continue to attempt to validate his I-for-myself, potentially forever. Continuing to position himself in contrast to the other, attempting to socially assert his I-for-myself, he chooses a prostitute, Liza. Instead of merely trying to be noticed, as he did with the officer, he tries to assert himself as more powerful than Liza. He attempts to establish not only his I-for-myself but also her insignificance in comparison. As Martin Rice has shown, Georg Hegel's master-slave theory sheds light on the relationship between the two characters, as '[w]e can account for the Underground Man's calculated attempt to deceive and destroy this

¹⁴⁸ W. D. Snodgrass, 'Crime for Punishment: The Tenor of Part One', *The Hudson Review*, 13.2 (1960), 202–253 (p. 242). Dostoevskii, *Prestuplenie i nakazanie*, VI, p. 322.

¹⁴⁹ Holquist, *Dostoevsky and the Novel*, p. 93.

suffering woman only as an attempt to assert his own superiority'.¹⁵⁰ Rice states, '[o]nly by reducing Liza to the role of slave can he appear to himself as master and thus present a self which can be recognized'.¹⁵¹

Hegel's theory states that 'self-consciousness exists in itself and for itself, in that, and by the fact that it exists for another self-consciousness; that is to say, it *is* only by being acknowledged or "recognized"'.¹⁵² Hegel's conception of identity therefore requires the other. However, the underground man's attempt to assert his I-for-myself over Liza also fails, as she refuses his money that would cement her inferior role, forcing him to once again abandon his attempt at becoming his perceived powerful self. As a result, the underground man's 'ideal' self is again destroyed: '[t]he alienation is no longer social, but comes from the inner depths of being' as '[h]e is the man without a name, a person in search of identity [...] [trying] to find this ungraspable I in the other person, in anyone, in Liza the prostitute, in an unknown officer, in his old school-fellows'.¹⁵³

Due to earlier encounters with his acquaintances and his failure, once again, to realise his I-for-myself, he is forcing his internal self upon the situation, depicted as desperately attempting to validate himself by assigning Liza a 'lowly' role, which paradoxically elevates her and renders himself lower. He wishes to redeem his selfhood from his failed attempts: 'надо же было обиду на ком-нибудь выместить, свое взять, ты подвернулась, я над тобой и вылил зло и насмеялся. Меня унизили, так и я хотел унижить; меня в тряпку растерли, так и я власть захотел показать'.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁰ Martin P. Rice, 'Dostoevskii's *Notes from Underground* and Hegel's "Master and Slave"', *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*, 8.3 (1974), 359–369 (p. 361).

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 361.

¹⁵² G. W. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. J. B. Baillie, 2nd edition (New York: Humanities Press, 1964), p. 229.

¹⁵³ Catteau, *Literary Creation*, p. 222.

¹⁵⁴ Dostoevskii, *Zapiski iz podpol'ia*, V, p. 173.

The reader is presented with a Bakhtinian understanding of identity – a single self cannot be isolated, but exists in relation to other selves, who all intertwine.¹⁵⁵ Despite his attempts, the underground man, as he sees himself, cannot exist in society. Malcolm Jones states ‘that when the individual is absorbed in his own inner world [...] he is doomed to futility. The inner ideal must be linked to outer reality’, meaning the internal and external selves must be one and the same. The duality of selfhood cannot be shown.¹⁵⁶ As with Poprishchin and Raskol’nikov, the underground man’s ideal self is simply a desire that cannot be made a reality. But due to Poprishchin’s delusion, his ‘ideal’ self can develop, as he requires no grounding; his ‘ideal’ self does not need to function in society, whereas the rationality of the underground man and Raskol’nikov cannot afford them this. However, all three characters express their I-for-myself in relation to others in a hierarchical manner, despite their inability to reconcile this with their social selves. The underground man’s attempts consist of being noticed by the officer and proving himself more powerful than Liza. For Raskol’nikov it is the murder of the pawnbroker, and for Poprishchin it means grounding his ‘ideal’ self in social titles.

Whereas the underground man’s ‘ideal’ self is continuously deconstructed throughout the work, Raskol’nikov is given a second chance. Having previously viewed Sonia Marmeladova as a religious maniac, Raskol’nikov, upon failing to realise his I-for-myself, has a choice between polar opposites: nihilism and faith. Once again Raskol’nikov finds himself in a dichotomy. Nihilism – here in the normal philosophical sense, and represented in the novel by Svidrigailov – would culminate in suicide, proving his free will and agency, and providing a Nietzschean outcome as that which cannot be empirically proven should be destroyed. By contrast Sonia’s religious route would grant salvation at the expense of his

¹⁵⁵ Bakhtin, *Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, p. 70.

¹⁵⁶ Malcolm V. Jones, ‘Some Echoes of Hegel in Dostoyevsky’, *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 49.117 (1971), 500–520 (p. 512).

ideal. Raskol'nikov chooses the latter. In the epilogue, he seems set to become Sonia's ideal in place of his own, despite his reluctance to completely forsake his idea. This development of character within the novel shows the 'hero *continually* growing with experience, changing in response to external events and his [...] own decisions. Choices not only *reveal* the hero [...], but *make* them'.¹⁵⁷

All three putative 'great men' discussed (Germann, the underground man, and Raskol'nikov) have female counterparts who attempt to 'save' them, literally, from themselves, but Raskol'nikov is the only one who accepts this aid, chooses to reject his own ideal, and adopt someone else's. Thus his selfhood ultimately comes into existence not through the role of a 'great man', but by religious rebirth and salvation, by the restructuring of his I-for-myself in order to match his I-for-another. Raskol'nikov must be empirically proven not to be the 'great man' he wishes to become, before he can accept this religious self.

Both *Zapiski iz podpol'ia* and *Prestuplenie i nakazanie* are works of psychological realism that focus on the inner self and the individual through the 'great man' theory. Dostoevskii depicts all three of his protagonists (the underground man, Raskol'nikov, and even Prokharchin twenty years previously) as purely egoistic individuals, contrary to Chernyshevskii's conception of the human being's desires aligning with those of society, demonstrating the existence of dualism through madness. However, both *Zapiski iz podpol'ia* and *Prestuplenie i nakazanie* contrast this with empirical mindsets and the protagonists' need for external validation; they seek to authenticate their selfhood through the other. It is this inability to merge their own desires, their own internal selves, with the reality of society, and their external selves, that forces their attempts at realising their 'ideal' selves futile and leads them into madness. The need for the other ultimately removes Raskol'nikov from his own ideal and leads him to take on that of the other.

¹⁵⁷ Emerson, Morson, *Mikhail Bakhtin*, p. 382.

1.5 Clinically mad ‘saviours’: Garshin and Chekhov

The final period to be discussed in this chapter is the 1880s-1890s, with the development of the modernist short story that entailed ‘a powerful shift to the hyper-individualistic “I” when everything is subordinated to the dictatorship of a character’s egocentric utterance’.¹⁵⁸ Coincidentally with the shift in literary trend, the philosophy at the time turned away from such a sharp focus on the individual back towards society and the common good, both within socialist and anarchist theories that emphasised the commune as an ideal social structure, and in the revival of religious philosophy beginning with Vladimir Solov’ev, whose concept of *vsetserkovnost’* (unity of all within the church) reworked the Slavophiles’ *sobornost’*. The two short stories I will discuss here, Vsevolod Garshin’s ‘Krasnyi tsvetok’ (1883) and Chekhov’s ‘Chernyi monakh’ (1894), both feature a protagonist placing himself secondary to society and focus heavily on internal perception.

‘Krasnyi tsvetok’ incorporates the more clinical understanding of madness developing in Russia at the time, setting the tale in an asylum. Whereas other mad characters considered in this chapter have access to society at some point in the work, Garshin’s protagonist is removed from the social world due to his hospitalisation. From the outset the nameless patient’s megalomania is apparent: ‘имением его императорского величества, государя императора Петра Первого, объявляю ревизию сему сумасшедшему дому’.¹⁵⁹ As with Poprishchin, he awards himself unearned titles, grounding his “power” in social terms and empty titles despite the lack of influence such “ranks” actually afford him. Although the patient is removed from society there is still a social dimension to the work; the patient still considers himself in relation to the other. However, unlike Poprishchin, the patient is not

¹⁵⁸ Dennis Ioffe, ‘Modernism in the Context of Russian “Life-Creation”: “Lebenskunst” and the Theory of “Life↔Text” Sign Systems’, *New Zealand Slavonic Journal*, 40 (2006), 22–55 (p. 25).

¹⁵⁹ Vsevolod M. Garshin, ‘Krasnyi tsvetok’, in *Rasskazy* (Moscow: Sovetskaia Rossiia, 1976), pp. 202–217 (p. 202).

psychotic. He is not entirely removed from reality as the statements ‘он понял, что он болен и чем болен’ and ‘я в сумасшедшем доме. Но беда, если понимаешь, это решительно все равно’ show that he is aware of his illness and his surroundings.¹⁶⁰ However, as the work progresses it is evident that although the patient is depicted as rational in terms of procuring what he desires, his reasoning is faulty and so he can still be deemed ‘mad’ since ‘madness begins where the relation of man to truth is disturbed’.¹⁶¹

Conversely, Kovrin in ‘Chernyi monakh’ is constructed by Chekhov as a sane man only to be deconstructed by megalomania. Unlike other characters analysed here who award themselves high-ranking titles, a supernatural ‘monk’ appears to Kovrin to inform him of his role: ‘ты один из тех немногих, которые по справедливости называются избранниками Божиими [...] вся твоя жизнь носят на себе божественную, небесную печать’.¹⁶² Kovrin’s megalomania is incited by an external source which, at the same time, is a product of his mental illness.¹⁶³ He projects the internal onto the external, just as he desires to establish his personal self in the social world. The I-for-another that he believes necessary to assume is nothing other than a constructed ideal by his megalomaniac I-for-myself.

The main focus of both works is the individual’s madness and its consequences. Despite this individual focus, Garshin’s protagonist is given no name, leaving him to be considered as a ‘generic madman’. Chekhov’s protagonist does have a name, but from the beginning the reader is told that his importance is secondary to the medical context: ‘Андрей Васильич Коврин, магистр, утомился и расстроил себе нервы. Он не лечился, но [...] поговорил с приятелем-доктором’.¹⁶⁴ The focus shifts from the effects of madness on an

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 205, p. 206.

¹⁶¹ Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*, p. 104.

¹⁶² Anton P. Chekhov, ‘Chernyi monakh’, in *Izbrannye proizvedeniia v 3-kh t.*, 3 vols (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1971), II, pp. 255–286 (p. 269).

¹⁶³ Claire Whitehead, ‘Anton Chekhov’s *The Black Monk*: An Example of the Fantastic?’, *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 85.4 (2007), 601–628 (p. 619).

¹⁶⁴ Chekhov, ‘Chernyi monakh’, II, p. 255.

individual to a madness-focused plot. Like Pushkin's Germann, Kovrin is constructed only to be deconstructed; he is not allowed to develop in the same way as the characters in Dostoevskii's novels.

In addition to his megalomania, Garshin's patient also suffers from monomania, the object of which are red flowers growing in the asylum's garden.

'The Red Flower', distinguishes two phases in the mental illness of the patient. The first phase [...] [is] that of generic manic excitement with vague expansive thoughts; the second begins, when these thoughts acquire concrete form in an *idée fixe*.¹⁶⁵

Thus the patient's monomania directs his megalomania by ascribing 'evil' to the flowers.

Garshin, much like Gogol' in 'Shinel'', uses monomania as the plot in order to develop his protagonist's self. The patient's megalomania allows him to assume the role of 'saviour' by attributing 'evil' to the flowers, transcending the natural hierarchy, and to satisfy his megalomania with the ultimate 'powerful' role, seemingly reconciling the I-for-myself and I-for-another. Cate Reilly argues that 'the patient [identifies] himself as Tsar Peter the First, [sees] himself as the victim of a (potentially religious) ordeal or martyrdom, and consciously [evaluates] his "new" cognitive capacities'.¹⁶⁶ The patient awards himself a new, false, elevated sense of being with the evolution of his I-for-myself via his megalomania.

'Chernyi monakh' also has another element of madness at play – hallucinations.

Megalomania can exist without hallucinations, meaning Kovrin is afflicted by two types of madness both of which 'augment' the other. His hallucinations allow him the means in which he grounds his megalomania – the monk – while also introducing a supernatural element.

¹⁶⁵ Martine Artz, "'The Red Flower" of V.M. Garšin and "The Black Monk" of A. P. Čechov: A Survey of One Hundred Years of Literary Criticism', *Russian Literature*, 20.3 (1986), 267–295 (p. 270).

¹⁶⁶ Cate I. Reilly, 'Diagnosis and Revelation in Vsevolod Garshin's "The Red Flower" and Anton Chekhov's "An Attack of Nerves"', *Literature and Medicine*, 31.2 (2013), 277–302 (p. 287).

Kovrin, represented as initially sceptical of his vision, remains rational, questioning his perception of reality and highlighting the oddities of science needed for it to take place. This questioning allows the reader to establish the ground rules of this world and to recognise the vision as a symptom rather than a possible event. He is hesitant to tell others about his meeting with the monk but ‘он сообразил, что они наверное сочтут его слова за бред’, leaving him to consider whether or not his meeting was real.¹⁶⁷ This event also forces the reader to question Kovrin’s perception, marking him as mad.

Whereas monomania furnishes the plot in Garshin’s story, advancements of science provide Chekhov’s. Using his medical knowledge, Chekhov’s characters ‘treat’ Kovrin. As a result, the reader sees his mad and sane selves twice, initially being introduced to Kovrin before the onset of his megalomania while he is working, before following his downfall into madness after the ‘meeting’ with the monk. However, his ‘sane’ self reappears briefly thanks to treatments before he once more falls into madness and passes. Chekhov highlights the possibilities of medicine and the ‘salvation’ of the mad by presenting the second sane self, despite the seeming opposition to this from the ‘madman’. Kovrin displays his egoistic nature by wishing to be ‘mad’ and happy rather than sane and of use to society. His madness exposes an egoistic nature. By contrast, in Garshin’s tale, treatment only exacerbates the patient’s illness: ‘на здорово человека она могла произвести тяжелое впечатление, а на расстроенное, возбужденное воображение действовала тем более тяжело’.¹⁶⁸ There is no ‘saving’ the patient from madness; his character is entirely entwined with mania, and he continues in his imaginary quest to save mankind.

In order to fulfil his ‘duty’ of protection Garshin’s patient must remain more powerful than the flower, meaning his megalomania must overcome the object of his monomania. He

¹⁶⁷ Chekhov, ‘Chernyi monakh’, II, p. 263.

¹⁶⁸ Garshin, ‘Krasnyi tsvetok’, p. 203.

achieves this, but his own demise follows shortly after. The patient has followed in Poprishchin's footsteps by awarding himself the ultimate role of saviour, and succeeded in 'developing' his I-for-myself at the expense of his I-for-another. Despite his beliefs he is not actually contributing towards the common good and his personal self has no grounding in the textual actual world. Moreover, the reader is not presented with any coherent construction of personhood; the patient is not presented as a physical, stable psychological, or social being. Rather, he becomes a vehicle for the demonstration of madness and the workings of an asylum. Such a character poses problems for a definition of identity as he appears to be nothing more than his affliction. There are moments in the work where the character appears possibly outside of his madness, such as with references to his memory, but this is short lived as: 'на несколько мгновений он проснулся в полной памяти, как будто бы здоровым, затем чтобы утром встать с постели прежним безумцем'.¹⁶⁹ Although the patient is presented primarily as a rational character despite his madness, many psychological selfhood theorists would take issue with the absence of continuity of memory. As John Locke states, 'whatever has the consciousness of present and past actions, is the same person to whom they both belong'.¹⁷⁰ Although the reader sees glimmers of selfhood they are reminded of the sacrifice of character in favour of exploration of mania. Once mania is presented the self is no more.

In addition, the patient suffers from megalomania, therefore his character necessarily has an aggrandised I-for-myself. Despite his belief that he contributes to the common good – by saving the world from 'evil' – he is simply delusional, and his I-for-myself has no basis in reality. As with Poprishchin, both selves are separated from the social sphere. Yet the difference here is that the patient is not an individual self but rather is reduced to madness

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., pp. 205–206.

¹⁷⁰ John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Nature* (London: T. Tegg & Son, 1836), p. 230.

itself. His depiction is outside both individualistic and social theories of the self, demonstrating that mania is able to destroy any sense of personhood.

The self in ‘Chernyi monakh’ is equally unimportant, the reappearance of the sane Kovrin notwithstanding. Yet the effects of madness are not lost: ‘[Т]ы изменился, стал на себя не похож’.¹⁷¹ Kovrin’s contribution to society, as a part of the university, no longer interests him; only his own personal happiness matters. Kovrin, aware of the individualistic pleasures an elevated I-for-myself is able to afford him, no longer desires to adhere to the social self that, by comparison, made him unhappy. Madness has removed him from society to the extent that even his return to sanity does not shift his values away from individual pleasure; he *desires* to be egoistic and find happiness in his mania. This change in Kovrin leaves the focus on the madness itself. Chekhov does not pass judgement on the illness – it is presented as both positive and negative. The ‘mad’ characters – the monk and Kovrin – view madness as positive: ‘the black monk now confirms the protagonist’s self-diagnosis of mental illness. Although he argues that it should not be considered to be a negative development, he does acknowledge that Kovrin has made himself ill through overwork’.¹⁷² The sane character Tania contrasts this with her negative view of madness: ‘я давно уже заметила, что душа у тебя расстроена чем-то’.¹⁷³ Despite her comments, mania reveals Kovrin to be an egoist – his own happiness is his only concern: ‘[я] сходил с ума, у меня была мания величия, но зато я был весел, бодр и даже счастлив’.¹⁷⁴

Claire Whitehead contends that the conclusion, with Kovrin falling once more into madness and dying content, ‘clearly aligns *The Black Monk* with the Romantic tradition to which this story arguably pays homage’.¹⁷⁵ Chekhov transplants the romantic megalomaniac

¹⁷¹ Chekhov, ‘Chernyi monakh’, II, p. 280.

¹⁷² Whitehead, ‘Chekhov’s *The Black Monk*’, p. 618.

¹⁷³ Chekhov, ‘Chernyi monakh’, II, p. 277.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 278.

¹⁷⁵ Whitehead, ‘Chekhov’s *The Black Monk*’, p. 627.

into a clinical modern era, but the element of the supernatural, although hinting at ‘Pikovaia dama’, does not allow for the figure of a ‘great man’, as it once did Germann. How can anyone judge the selfhood of a character who comes secondary to his madness? His original sane self is constructed via his role in society, aligning his I-for-myself and I-for-another. Plato’s *The Republic* argues that the ‘performance of one’s social function also is the realization of one’s natural abilities which is important for the realization of all the potentialities of personhood’.¹⁷⁶ Hall argues that Plato’s theory illustrates how ‘[h]uman beings are set off from all other beings by the possession of reason and a distinctive, practical rational function whose realization results in justice, a necessary, if not sufficient condition of personality’.¹⁷⁷ Thus, according to Plato, a person must be social, rational, and just. Kovrin is certainly initially constructed in such a manner, but the infliction of mania deconstructs and overtakes this self. Even the reappearance of his sane self cannot adhere to its original construction, due to the egoism exposed by madness. Chekhov, like Garshin, explores how mania consumes selfhood and the limits it poses. Once inflicted with mania neither protagonist has any sense of self outside of their respective madness. All that exists is the I-for-myself causing them to act, much like the Baron and Prokharchin.

Thus, for both of these works selfhood comes secondary to the exploration of madness. The attempts to ‘restore’ the sane self explore treatments, cures, and asylums and to allow for the mad character to once again be considered a self by society by possible reintegration. However, the protagonists consider themselves in relation to others, as leaders, paying homage to a ‘great man’ in spite of their complete removal from a social reality. Therefore, the focus remains with the illness and its effects, not selfhood. The character is a vehicle to portray the illness and the limits it imposes on the self.

¹⁷⁶ Robert W. Hall, ‘Plato and Personhood’, *The Personalist Forum*, 8.2 (1992), 88–100 (p. 99).

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

1.6 Conclusion

Manic characters show the extent to which social hierarchy, and the perception of the other, affects the individual, pushing these anxieties to their extremes and allowing us to grasp possible negative outcomes of such systems. The characters considered in this chapter consider their I-for-myself as higher in importance than their I-for-another and, with the exception of Raskol'nikov's religious salvation, refuse to recognise the inability of their I-for-myself to exist in the textual reality. The imaginary perception of self, created by the personal view, allows for the misappropriation of titles, importance, and power, creating another world within which the protagonists can exist as they desire. However, the lack of connection between this imaginary plane and the textual actual world ruptures the unity of identity, leading to madness.

Each I-for-myself can be viewed as a rebellion against the restrictions of their reality – the inability to be more than they actually are. In some cases this leads to an internalisation of the self, reducing them entirely to this idea, for example, the reduction of the Baron in 'Skupoi rytsar'' to the act of collecting money, or to a function. In this instance identity is restricted to actions but, as I have shown by reading Pushkin's 'Little Tragedy' through the prism of Arendt's theory of identity, for actions to constitute personhood they must compose an I-for-another. Here, the character's desire to live in the imaginary, in a world where his inflated I-for-myself exists, removes him from the social sphere, resulting in a collapse of identity and complete diminution of self to an act.

2. Chapter Two: The Imperial City and the Self: Rank and Rebellion

In nineteenth-century Russia the established social hierarchy made aligning personal and social good difficult. The idea that the higher one's rank the more important and respected one was limits the scope of Belinskii's idealist theory outlined above. The city of St Petersburg controlled not only the placement of individuals in society, but also fuelled a wish to change this for the better, replacing the self with an institutional regime as a source of power 'whose social [force] shape[s] people labouring under the delusion of individuality'.¹ Many of the characters examined in chapter one were associated with St Petersburg and highlighted the importance of rank through their desire for power. This chapter complements that analysis by focusing on 'inferior' characters within a social hierarchy in order to show the effects of enforced unequal self-other relations. As with the previously considered maniacs, this desire for upward mobility created a duality of selves: myself-as-I-rank-now and myself-as-I-could-rank.

The city itself had a dual purpose. Built both to impress and to control, St Petersburg was inspired by Western European cities such as Venice and Amsterdam. Designed to be the new, imperial capital, 'St. Petersburg was all about show: the display of wealth, of rank, and of power'.² The city, supposedly built upon the bones of those who helped create it, gradually came to be known as a fantastic city, a supernatural city with a powerful founding myth.³ As Hubertus Jahn argues, '[p]artly responsible for this circumstance was the fact that St.

¹ Sandra M. Gilbert, Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*, 2nd edition (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), p. xxxviii.

² Janet Tucker, 'The Gogol-St. Petersburg Nexus', *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*, 50.3 (2016), 277–298 (p. 279).

³ N. P. Antsiferov, *Dusha Peterburga* (Paris: YMCA-Press, 1978), p. 26.

Petersburg actually lacked historical depth. [...] Myths were supposed to fill a “semiotic void,” which was covered elsewhere by local traditions and historical consciousness’.⁴

The nineteenth century saw the rise of a “Petersburg text” that foregrounded the negative sides of the city, in sharp contrast to earlier texts praising its creator and his forward-thinking ideas, such as Antiokh Kamemir’s *Petrída* (1730). This change allowed writers to develop the fantastic myth of the city, leaning towards an interpretation with demonic overtones. This led to a dichotomy in perception as:

by the end of the nineteenth century, St. Petersburg [...] had obviously acquired a dual image in the public mind: St. Petersburg as a majestic city, formally imperial from its origins, versus St. Petersburg as a city of rabble and the poor masses oppressed by the city’s imperial and formal nature and its luxury.⁵

The fantastic element allows the reader an insight into the characters’ minds through the possibilities conjured by their imaginations. The uncertainty of events permits a reading coloured by the characters’ internal worlds which are projected onto the external world, creating a fictional world within the textual actual world. The limited world-view of the characters – the result of their social backgrounds, which will be explored below – allows for, and even encourages, the flourishing of interiority. St Petersburg encouraged anxiety solely for the self, for the individual’s place in society and not for the other. It is this advocacy of egoism that promotes the creation of a dual self, as I discussed in chapter one.

St Petersburg’s identity became entwined with its founding myth, resulting in the conception of the city as built against God’s will, and thereby doomed to destruction.⁶

⁴ Hubertus F. Jahn, ‘Myths, Urban Folklore and Local Identity in St. Petersburg’, *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*, 46.3 (2012), 388–403 (p. 390).

⁵ Marina Rabzhaeva, Vadim Semenov, ‘In Search of St. Petersburg’s Identity’, *Russian Politics and Law*, 41.4 (2003), 83–95 (p. 85).

⁶ V. N. Toporov, *Peterburgskii tekst russkoi literatury* (St Petersburg: Iskusstvo-SPB, 2003), p. 22.

Nevertheless, its population grew and the Table of Ranks, introduced in 1722 with a hierarchy of fourteen classes in three divisions – army, court, and state – which aimed ‘to replace family status with merit’, gave the city’s citizens in government service a promotional ladder to climb.⁷ Organising society as such theoretically allowed citizens to better themselves, but it also caused social envy and competition.

These status hierarchies led to the development in literature of the figure of the *malen’kii chelovek*, the little man – a lowly clerk. Unlike the ‘great man’ of Romanticism, the natural school’s ‘little man’ is a pawn in the Tsar’s game, unnoticeable among many. However, as I will show, madness allows the *malen’kii chelovek* the chance to recognise his position in life and attempt to overcome it by rebelling against the city and its creator. This capacity arises because madness, as I have shown, separates social and personal selves. The *malen’kii chelovek* is able to remove himself from the social mindset of the Table of Ranks, recognising its controlling nature. The two – the fantastic city and the *malen’kii chelovek* – overlap as ‘[t]he fantastic thus provides a perfect vehicle for reflecting the doubts, anxieties, and uncertainties of the modern world, compelling the reader to question his/her assumptions about both the nature of reality and the values of a material culture’.⁸ As in the case of maniac characters, the possibility of a fictitious reality, created internally by the mad character, lays bare all their preoccupations. These mental worlds provide the setting for ‘establishing’ an elevated and powerful I-for-myself that could not exist in the textual actual world. I will show how these fictional worlds expose the resulting anxiety of the social hierarchy’s encouragement of upward mobility. I will consider the question of perception on the part of

⁷ K. Waliszewski, ‘The Social Reform: The Table of Ranks’, *Russia, China and Eurasia*, 29.5-6 (2013), 509–517 (p. 511). Geoffrey A. Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire, 1552-1917* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), p. 154.

⁸ Ann Marie Basom, ‘The Fantastic in Gogol’s Two Versions of “Portret”’, *The Slavic and East European Journal*, 38.3 (1994), 419–437 (p. 433).

the other later in this thesis in respect of holy fools, demonstrating the effects of various views on the construction of reality when interiority is removed.

In order to explore these social anxieties, a lower standing member of society was created. The ‘home’ of the *malen’kii chelovek*, the natural school, aimed to imitate life in literature and focused on the lower classes and everyday figures. Its focus on human nature and search for subjects from all walks of life opened literature up to include the majority of society, looking for the ‘initial human substance, or essence’.⁹ For example, the sketches in Nikolai Nekrasov’s almanac *Fiziologiiia Peterburga* explore the lives of ordinary inhabitants of the city, including organ grinders and yard keepers, people who had previously been overlooked under other literary traditions.¹⁰ The natural school focused more on characters’ development through the *ocherk* form, a descriptive style non-reliant on plot, in a bid to recreate life as they saw it, rather than a purely fictional narrative. As a result, these characters were chosen to be somewhat mundane and banal. The aim was to portray nothing out of the ordinary, creating a manifesto of the urban sketch whose ‘цель – раскрыть все тайны нашей общественной жизни’.¹¹

The turn to the banal, with its low-ranking protagonists and apparent mundane events, is a stark contrast to the remarkable aspect of the fantastic associated with St Petersburg. The banal reduces the strange to the normal, incorporating it as a natural element in the work. On the other hand, the fantastic allows the reader an insight into the protagonist’s reactions to certain events, because it involves the imagination of the protagonist in a way that other elements of the natural school do not, endowing an otherwise external representation of

⁹ Jurij Mann, ‘The Natural School as a Stage in the Development of Russian Literature’, *Neohelicon*, 15.1 (1988), 89–99 (p. 94).

¹⁰ N. Nekrasov, ‘Fiziologiiia Peterburga. Chast’ vtoraiia’, in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem v piatnadtsati tomakh*, 15 vols (Leningrad: Nauka, 1989), XI, book 1, pp. 207–226.

¹¹ N. Nekrasov, ‘Fiziologiiia Peterburga. Chast’ pervaiia’, in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem v piatnadtsati tomakh*, 15 vols (Leningrad: Nauka, 1989), XI, book 1, pp. 186–194 (p. 186).

character with an internal perspective. Alongside these features, grotesque elements also play an important role. The grotesque removes the shocking element of an event by walking a fine line between comedy and horror, leaving the reader uncertain how to react. Similar to the uncanny, it evokes a feeling of something familiar yet unfamiliar, leaving the reader feeling uncomfortable as they are unsure whether to be disgusted by the events or to express pity. By including both the fantastic and the banal, authors were able to show the contrast between the external and internal perception of their characters. The reader is able to view the textual actual world from the characters' viewpoint, which is marked by a lack of concern for the oddity of the world around them. This focus highlights the reduction of identity to rank, as the reader comes to understand that everything they do and think centres on their place within society, essentially removing them from the wider world. Their one-dimensional role isolates their field of consciousness, resulting in their social interactions and general mode of living potentially being misinterpreted.

The works considered in this chapter are Pushkin's 'Mednyi vsadnik', Dostoevskii's *Dvoynik* and Gogol's 'Nos' and 'Portret' (1835). The latter depicts not a *chinovnik* protagonist, but an artist; however, like the *malen'kii chelovek*, the artist here is a citizen of St Petersburg who grapples with his status and its effects on his day-to-day life and identity.¹² By analysing the portrayal of the city I will assess the significance of literary depictions of madness for social critique, showing the impact of a faceless social environment on both identity and madness. I aim to show that it is through madness that all four protagonists recognise their lack of identity, and their necessary adherence to their role within society, resulting in a mad rebellion. As madness separates their I-for-myself and I-for-another they come to see themselves as different from their actual rank. I will also show how the

¹² I am using the 1866 revised version as this was ultimately Dostoevskii's preferred text.

unknowability of madness is reflected in the fantastic elements associated with each protagonist, lending the works a mysterious and unfinalisable aspect.

2.1 The lowly man: Three stages of madness: Pushkin and Gogol'

Pushkin's narrative poem 'Mednyi vsadnik' presents the twofold image of Peter's imperial city: magnificence combined with atrocities. Gary Rosenshield comments that, 'N. P. Antsiferov and Waclaw Lednicki have shown that the image of Petersburg in Russian literature before Pushkin was essentially positive'; reference to disasters within depictions of the city were a far cry from previous works, such as those of Petr Viazemskii.¹³ The effect that literature had on the perception of the city is highlighted by Antsiferov: 'Пушкин является в той-же мере творцом образа Петербурга, как Петр Великий - строителем самого города. Всё, что было сделано до певца «Медного Всадника», является лишь отдельными изображениями скорее идеи Северной Пальмиры, чем ее реального бытия'.¹⁴ Such disasters included the 1824 flood, which links the city with another myth – that Peter's first wife Evdokiia cursed the city to ruin. Pushkin's work 'is inextricably bound up with Peter the Great's "northern capital" and the city's mythology, known as the Petersburg myth', and the apocalyptic tones of the flood echo Evdokiia's curse.¹⁵ As V. N. Toporov states, '[п]оэма Пушкина стала некоей критической точкой, вокруг которой началась вот уже более полутора лет продолжающаяся кристаллизация особого «под-текста» Петербургского текста и особой мифологемы в корпусе петербургских мифов'.¹⁶

¹³ Gary Rosenshield, 'The Bronze Horseman and The Double: The Depoeticization of the Myth of Petersburg in the Young Dostoevskii', *Slavic Review*, 55.2 (1996), 399–428 (p. 400).

¹⁴ Antsiferov, *Dusha Peterburga*, p. 62.

¹⁵ Lillian J. Helle, 'The City as Myth and Symbol in Alexander Puškin's poem "The Bronze Horseman"', *Scando-Slavica*, 41.1 (1995), 22–40 (p. 25).

¹⁶ Toporov, *Peterburgskii tekst*, p. 23.

The poem opens with an ode to Peter and his city, but the beginning of the *povest'* acquaints us with the *malen'kii chelovek* Evgenii. The opposition emphasises that instead of grandeur, Evgenii focuses on more mundane everyday tasks and marrying his love Parasha: 'Жениться? Ну... зачем же нет?'.¹⁷ Even the poem's genres set up a twofold view of the city, helping the reader to better understand the character's position in relation to wider society. The reader is told few specifics about Evgenii, not even his surname – 'Прозванья нам его не нужно' – meaning that 'this relative lack of detail and sense of anonymity confer on Evgenii the status and function of an everyman'.¹⁸ Evgenii is not to be treated as an isolated case of madness, but rather to show the general effects of the city on the common inhabitant:

[h]istorians of the novel in Russia have rightly seen in Evgenii of *The Bronze Horseman* the prototype of a certain kind of Petersburg hero, the 'small man' [...]. In general terms, the 'malen'kii chelovek' is a loner with romantic longings or illusions, who works as a clerk or petty functionary in a large faceless bureaucracy.¹⁹

Evgenii as an anonymous inhabitant is explained partly by his lack of specific reference to his work: 'где-то служит'.²⁰ His rank as a clerk permits him to think only about work, money, and Parasha, marking him in stark contrast to Peter. Therefore, even when the river rises, his mind turns to his imminent separation from Parasha 'Дни на два, на три разлучен', he cannot comprehend the bigger picture; the small man has small thoughts.²¹

Gogol's 'Portret' presents us with the low-standing protagonist Andrei Petrovich Chartkov. Chartkov, however, is not defined as an 'everyman'; he is not a typical *chinovnik*, but rather a specific case - a poor artist indebted to his landlord. The reader is told more

¹⁷ Pushkin, 'Mednyi vsadnik', IV, p. 278.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 277. Andrew Kahn, *Pushkin's The Bronze Horseman* (London: Bristol Classical Press, 1998), p. 117.

¹⁹ Kahn, *The Bronze Horseman*, pp. 118–119.

²⁰ Pushkin, 'Mednyi vsadnik', IV, p. 277.

²¹ Ibid., p. 278.

details about his life, allowing us to understand how he is personally affected by rank and madness. He begins the story as a man whose ‘[с]тарая шинель и нещегольское платье показывали в нем того человека, который с самоотвержением предан был своему труду и не имел времени заботиться о своем наряде’.²² The reader is also told that he is a talented artist who refers to ‘fashionable artists’ as automata devoid of any individuality; he sees himself as different from those in his occupation. Whereas Evgenii is entirely focused on his love interest, the entirety of Chartkov’s life is devoted to the Romantic preoccupation of art. Thus, both Evgenii and Chartkov are constructed as poor, lowly members of society with a romantic longing – Evgenii for Parasha and Chartkov to become a great artist.

Although the genre is different, with ‘Mednyi vsadnik’ being a poem and ‘Portret’ a short story, both Pushkin and Gogol’ develop their character’s madness in stages, unfolding the descent into madness gradually, walking the reader through the process and giving insight into the causes; for Evgenii the flood onsets his first stage of madness. In ‘Mednyi vsadnik’ the flooding of St Petersburg occurs almost immediately after the introduction to Evgenii, allowing just enough information to understand that it is precisely his everyday, mundane routine and aspirations that keep him sane and ensure that he does not question his standing. Pushkin’s focus is not so much the hierarchical structure of St Petersburg, but rather Evgenii’s revolt against it. The destruction of his life plan makes him giggle inappropriately: ‘ударя в лоб рукою, | Захохотал’; ‘[t]he narrator presents his madness through his hero’s chilling outburst of laughter’.²³ The onset of madness, according to Rosenshield, is only the first of three stages of madness, each of which is caused by the destruction of an important aspect of his life: ‘Pushkin needs not only to differentiate between stages [...] of madness but

²² Nikolai Gogol’, ‘Portret’, in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 14 vols (Moscow: Nauka, 1938), III, pp. 77–137 (p. 80).

²³ Pushkin, ‘Mednyi vsadnik’, IV, p. 283. Gary Rosenshield, *Pushkin and the Genres of Madness: The Masterpieces of 1833* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), p. 97.

also to contrast the sane and mad Evgenii, for each stands in a different relationship to Peter, his city, and his mission'.²⁴ This change causes Evgenii to abandon his sane, mundane life. He no longer identifies with, or adheres to, his determined role and begins to wander. This is the point at which his I-for-myself dissociates from his I-for-another, but he is still at the mercy of St Petersburg. He may have removed his personal self from the city's hierarchy, but his social self remains firmly within the social system, albeit now much lower in status. He attempts to become 'чужд', but still cannot return to sanity as he is the everyman inhabitant of St Petersburg.²⁵ Instead, he breaks away from the city at the expense of a coherent selfhood. Soon after his departure another low-ranking man takes his place – literally his lodging – and nobody notices the loss of a petty clerk.²⁶ Evgenii, however, has lost everything: Parasha, his home, his identity.

Gogol's Chartkov also experiences madness in stages. Whereas Evgenii's madness is rooted in a tragedy, Chartkov's first stage ends up bringing him good fortune. Apparently unconcerned by the extent of his poverty, Chartkov 'невольню' stops at a shop and purchases a portrait of an unknown man with his last twenty kopecks. Gradually over the course of the evening the oddity of this portrait becomes clear to Chartkov, with its hyper-realist style making it seem like it 'не была копия с натуры, это была та странная живость, которою бы озарилось лицо мертвеца'.²⁷ The unease makes Chartkov genuinely fear the painting to the point that before going to bed he covers it with a sheet. The fear of the unreal, of a *living* painting, is the moment at which Chartkov transforms from a normal painter into a mad character. This is stressed by the inclusion of his 'dream'.

²⁴ Rosenshield, *Genres of Madness*, p. 90.

²⁵ Pushkin, 'Mednyi vsadnik', IV, p. 284.

²⁶ The ease of replacing a lowly member of St. Petersburg society is also occurs in Gogol's 'Shinel'' with the protagonist Akakii.

²⁷ Gogol, 'Portret', III, p. 88.

Unsure if he is dreaming, Chartkov sees the man step out of the portrait, drop and pick up money, and return to the painting. Consequently, both Chartkov and the reader are uncertain as to the actuality of events – does the painting come alive or is this Chartkov’s imagination? In the midst of this, Chartkov hides a roll of money dropped by the unknown man, the panic of which increases his fear of the ‘undead man’. The next day, still questioning the reality of the incident, Chartkov is portrayed as ‘полоумный’ with fear. The fear continues to haunt him throughout his day, but apparently his dream was not for nothing. When his landlord demands rent, a constable knocks the portrait and the money from the dream appears to fall from behind the frame, causing Chartkov to question his sanity: ‘не во сне ли всё это’.²⁸ The earlier uncertainty is raised again, marking the event as fantastic, but the appearance of the money seems to suggest a resolution in the supernatural.

The second stage of both protagonists’ madness comes in the form of deviation from their rank. The complete break from their sane selves demonstrates the extent to which their lowly status, and acceptance of the social system, kept them sane. The second stage of Evgenii’s madness is the turning point for his selfhood, the moment at which he deviates from the role of lawful inhabitant into a critic of Peter and his city, representing the repression of the masses. He abandons his society and wanders: ‘the madman is invariably a wanderer and a vagabond, driven from his home and alienated from his environment’, demonstrating how ‘[w]andering is not only alienation from home, it is also alienation from self, mind, and the gods’.²⁹ The idea of Evgenii being a wanderer plays into his self’s newfound absence of social grounding. By removing himself from the city he rejects the last fragment of his social self as he cuts all ties with his status, and former life. In madness he no longer wishes to be Evgenii the petty clerk, Evgenii the husband, Evgenii the grandfather,

²⁸ Ibid., p. 96.

²⁹ Rosenshield, *Genres of Madness*, p. 163, p. 99.

rejecting these titles that linked him with the city in an attempt to ‘free’ himself – his complete alienation from I-for-another. Unlike ‘Shinel’ and ‘Nos’, it is not strictly bureaucracy that drives Evgenii to madness, but rather its resulting lack of care about an individual. So, in his rebellion he must necessarily remove himself from the system in order to disassociate himself from the city.

Associations here can be made with the figure of the wandering Jew who, cursed by Christ himself, was forced to wander the Earth until the second coming.³⁰ Peter’s otherworldly status within the poem means that he would be capable of condemning Evgenii to wandering. Pushkin’s interest in the legend was reflected in his beginning a poem entitled ‘Ahasuerus’, which he eventually abandoned.³¹ Wandering can be viewed as a punishment, rather than a rebellion, meaning that even in madness he is still under Peter’s power. Evgenii’s I-for-another may simply be a slave to Peter.

The rebellion against the city shows the extent to which, even when he was sane and content, Evgenii was controlled by the Tsar; it is only in madness that Evgenii comes to realise the oppression he lives under. Bakunin’s essay ‘God and the State’ allows us to illuminate the socio-political turmoil with which Evgenii is dealing during this protest. The essay, published posthumously in 1882, is an unfinished argument against Christianity and new methods of government. Throughout his life Bakunin viewed philosophy as a type of substitute for religion, leading him to argue that man holds a divine element within himself.³² The essay highlights the connection between religion and power in Russian society but can also be used to explain the power that Peter holds in the poem as both Tsar and God and its negative consequences. Having, earlier in his life, been confronted with Hegel’s conception

³⁰ Francis Lee Utley, ‘Review of George K. Anderson, *The Legend of the Wandering Jew*’, *Modern Philology*, 66.2 (1968), 188–193 (p. 189).

³¹ Michael Wachtel, *A Commentary to Pushkin’s Lyric Poetry, 1826-1836* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2012), p. 37.

³² Walicki, *A History of Russian Thought*, pp. 118–119.

of reality, Bakunin argued that those who hate reality subsequently hate God because reality is the will of God.³³ So, they do not understand ‘the rational process at work in history’.³⁴ This idea strengthens the connection of Peter to God, as Evgenii rebels against his reality, created by Peter. Having gone abroad in 1840, Bakunin ‘came to the conclusion that what was required was not simply understanding of reality, still less reconciliation with the actual, but action with a view to transforming reality, existing social structures’.³⁵ This is when his interest in the link between God and the state became apparent as:

Bakunin came to focus his attention on the state as the chief object for destruction.

As, however, the state, in his view, could not exist without religion, and he saw church and state as united in preventing the development of freedom and equality, the church too needed to be negated.³⁶

Bakunin argues that there are three elements to humanity: the animal, the power to think, and the desire to rebel. The rebellious impulse allows man to avoid enslavement and led Bakunin to the conclusion that he cannot:

recognize a fixed, constant, and universal authority, because there is no universal man, no man capable of grasping in that wealth of detail, [...] all the branches of social life. And if such universality could ever be realized in a single man, and if he wished to take advantage thereof to impose his authority upon us, it would be necessary to drive this man out of society, because his authority would inevitably reduce all the others to slavery and imbecility.³⁷

³³ Ibid., p. 118.

³⁴ Copleston, *Philosophy in Russia*, p. 79.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 81.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 82.

³⁷ Mikhail Bakunin, ‘God and the State’, in *Mikhail Bakunin: Selected Writings*, ed. Arthur Lehning, trans. Steven Cox, Olive Stevens (London: Jonathan Cape, 1973), pp. 111–135 (p. 133).

So, for Bakunin there is no figure, not even Peter the Great, who can, or should, rule over others. The installation of such a figure, he warns, represses the masses. By looking at Bakunin's social theory the reader can see how Evgenii's rebellion could be considered necessary. Evgenii was essentially enslaved by Peter, contained within his role, and not allowed to think outside of his hierarchy. His I-for-myself was forced to equate to his I-for-another, he was only permitted to perceive himself within the hierarchy. It is not the system from which Evgenii rebels that is important, but rather the fact that he rebels. Bakunin's theory elucidates the fact that Evgenii attempts to reclaim his humanity by exercising his power to think and ability to revolt, rather than accepting his status as slave.

Moreover, references to religion in both Pushkin's poem and Bakunin's essay suggest a link between the oppressed little man figure and madness caused by the imperial city. Peter, from the outset of the poem, is presented as a Godly figure; he summoned a city from the marshes and brought forth its populace, mirroring the Creation of the Old Testament. However, the God-like Peter in the ode soon becomes its opposite; Peter, synonymous with his city, is presented as an evil anti-Christ.³⁸ Via the flood, his grand city becomes a living nightmare for Evgenii and '[w]hat began in the prologue as the creation of a myth of St. Petersburg now looks like a Last Judgement'.³⁹ So, instead of understanding Peter as a God-like creator, the reader comes to sympathise with Evgenii by comprehending the effects of the flood on the everyman. The dualistic perception of the city and its creator becomes clear as 'Peter is [now] understood as the Antichrist or a demiurge, who through an act of evil has brought about a demonic world'.⁴⁰ This image is affirmed by Evgenii's choice of insults –

³⁸ Helle, 'City as Myth', p. 27. Helle argues that Peter and his city have the same connotational value in the poem and that by referring to one, both are referenced.

³⁹ Kahn, *The Bronze Horseman*, p. 61.

⁴⁰ Helle, 'City as Myth', p. 24.

‘истукан’ and ‘кумир’ – as ‘both of these terms evoke associations of a false god, and this lends the *imperator* a heathen aspect [...] [befitting] his new anti-Christian empire’.⁴¹

Bakunin argues that ‘Christianity is precisely the religion *par excellence*, because it exhibits and manifests, to the fullest extent, the very nature and essence of every religious system, which is *the impoverishment, enslavement, and annihilation of humanity for the benefit of divinity*’.⁴² Indeed, in Bakunin’s terms, Evgenii is enslaved by Peter for the purpose of populating his city and, by making this comparison, it is possible to understand how Evgenii, realising that he is ‘enslaved’ and at Peter’s will, becomes mad when he recognises his I-for-myself as outside this system. In sanity he is denied the ability to think for himself, but once mad, Evgenii is able to distance himself from the normal, realise his oppressed status, and revolt. The only way out is to rebel against his ‘God’ – Peter.

Chartkov’s second stage of madness also relates to his place in society, but rather than rebelling against the creator himself, Chartkov is portrayed as rebelling from within, by changing his status. The money from behind the portrait brings with it the crucial turning point of the work, the moment at which Gogol’ permits Chartkov the choice to become who he wants. Like the money-obsessed maniacs considered in chapter one, Chartkov views money as a means to power. The difference here, however, is that he wishes to use this power *within* society, not to overcome it. The money offers Chartkov the opportunity to become the great artist he intends to be by clearing his debts and allowing him to live comfortably whilst he practices his art. However, almost immediately after this he purchases fashionable items: clothes, perfumes, dinners at good restaurants. He does so despite his teacher’s warning: ‘у тебя есть талант; грешно будет, если ты его погубишь. Но ты нетерпелив. [...] Смотри, чтоб из тебя не вышел модный живописец’.⁴³

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 29.

⁴² Bakunin, ‘God and the State’, p. 124.

⁴³ Gogol’, ‘Portret’, III, p. 85.

The idea of gaining status by remaining true to his own style proves to be an impossible feat. He yields to pressure from clients and becomes the ‘fashionable artist’ he so despised. Chartkov’s desire to portray a role different from the one he was given, and raise his ranking in society, leads him to ignore advice. His greed creates a moral downfall for his social self.

Everyone, Gogol’ believed, was assigned his place, his role in society, by God and as such should not deviate from it. This belief anticipates Chartkov’s outcome as:

[p]lace [...] represents for Gogol [...] a single individual’s position within, for example, Petersburg [...]. Gogol’s notion of place concerned one’s position or role in the community. In a section from *Selected Passages* (1847), Gogol writes, ‘It was not for nothing that God ordered each of us to be in the place in which he now stands’.⁴⁴

Much like Pushkin’s Evgenii, Chartkov’s deviance from his assigned role is shown to induce madness as I-for-myself separates from his I-for-another. This is only exacerbated by the fantastical nature of St Petersburg. As Kristin Bidoshi argues:

[t]his mode of relating to others, by identifying them on the basis of their appearances, social roles or other singular characteristics, reacts back upon a person’s own sense of self, and city dwellers therefore are given to acting. I believe that it is this dynamic that has affected Gogol’s sense of self, as this sense is collapsed into its manner of presentation. The hiding of true identities – the recoding of self as other (native as foreigner, foreigner as native) comprises the logic of this action.⁴⁵

So, Chartkov plays the role of this other self, this fashionable, high-ranking artist, whilst hiding his true thoughts on such artists. The form of role-playing Chartkov adopts is illuminated by the philosophy of Søren Kierkegaard in *Either/Or*:

⁴⁴ Kristin Bidoshi, ‘The Stranger in the Fictional Works of Nikolai Gogol’s “Arabesques”’, *New Zealand Slavonic Journal*, 39 (2005), 1–36 (p. 5).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

[l]ife is a masquerade, [...] and so far, no one has succeeded in knowing you; for every revelation you make is always an illusion [...]. Your occupation consists in preserving your hiding-place, and that you succeed in doing, for your mask is the most enigmatical of all. In fact you are nothing; you are merely a relation to others, and what you are you are by virtue of this relation.⁴⁶

According to Kierkegaard, selfhood must be relational; outside of this, the self is nothing. In Kierkegaard's terms, life consists of three stages: the aesthetic, the ethical, and the religious. The aesthetic is the inner world, the pursuit of pleasure; the ethical is the outer world, the recognition of ethical judgements; both of these, ideally, lead to the religious. Kierkegaard argues that if a person begins by living aesthetically, in other words for themselves by themselves, they soon despair about the limits imposed by this isolation, leading them to choose to live ethically. Living ethically allows the freedom for choice and interaction with others, but the negative effect of this is the judgement from others, which can force one to act according to these judgements, as the ethical life allows one to take control of the development of the self. However, he argues that one can go too far into these worlds, removing oneself entirely from one's true self, having either become too internalised via the aesthetic, or pandering to others' judgements via the ethical. The best option, he argues, is religion – one that Chartkov does not even recognise.

Adherence to the aesthetic would imply that Chartkov lives oblivious to the outside world, but because he is very much aware of his standing in society he lives ethically. The ethical allows him to 'choose' his life and be judged by others as '[t]he act of choosing is essentially a proper and stringent expression of the ethical. Whenever in a stricter sense there is question of an either/or, one can always be sure that the ethical is involved'.⁴⁷ However,

⁴⁶ Søren Kierkegaard, *Either/Or*, trans. Walter Lowrie, 2 vols (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1944), II, p. 163.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 170.

Chartkov goes too far into the ethical world, becoming far removed from his actual self – the talented painter. His life is consumed by the judgement of others and his I-for-another, rather than cultivating his talented, artistic self. He develops according to praise which, in keeping with his society, eventually leads him to become ‘fashionable’. By developing from one praise to the next, Chartkov forgets the long-term goal of becoming ‘talented’, evolving according to his own personal desires, and *eventually* gaining the praise of others, as his I-for-myself intended. But, by living ethically, in Kierkegaard’s terms, these judgments lead him to a choice. A resolution in the religious does not appear in Gogol’s work, demonstrating the downfall when one ventures too far into oneself or outside of oneself.

Both characters’ third and final stage of madness is occurs when they realise that they are too far removed from their original role to return to it. They are unable to reconcile their personal and social selves. Far from transforming society, Evgenii’s spontaneous ‘social revolt’ fails. The immobile and inanimate statue supposedly transforms into a living, breathing Peter upon his horse and pursues Evgenii until his death. Further demonstrating the power of the hierarchy and its oppression of Evgenii, ‘Peter, the creator of a dehumanizing and degrading bureaucratic hierarchy, pursues Evgenij, its lowest and most insignificant member, and drives him to insanity’.⁴⁸

His rebellion comes in the form of insulting the statue of Peter the Great astride a horse, which in itself has already been parodied in the earlier image of Evgenii sat upon a lion statue during the flood. This distorted reflection emphasises the link between the two characters and illustrates who actually holds the power; Evgenii can pretend to be powerful in his insults, but in reality has no power behind his rebellion, whereas Peter, representing the figure of the Antichrist, does.⁴⁹ Moreover, as Rosenshield states, Pushkin,

⁴⁸ Renate Lachmann, ‘Gogol’s Urban Imagination: St. Petersburg and Rome’, *Russian Literature*, 56.1 (2004), 243–253 (p. 246).

⁴⁹ Rosenshield, *Genres of Madness*, p. 100.

also seems to valorize Evgenii's madness. That the humble Evgenii could have threatened Peter only when he was mad points to a distinctly romantic conception of madness: only in madness can the truth break through the constraints of fear and reason and challenge the ultimate authority.⁵⁰

Through the prism of Bakunin's theory, the reader can see that Evgenii believes himself to have no choice but to question Peter and remove himself from his role in society, divorcing his personal and social selves. But Pushkin, by indirectly comparing Evgenii and Peter, prepares the reader for the conclusion that Evgenii cannot win – he can only be a pawn in Peter's game. Evgenii can attempt to take back his humanity by regaining the ability to think and the desire to revolt and to socially establish his I-for-myself, which, Bakunin states, are vital to being a 'person', but even in madness Peter is too powerful to be overcome by one *malen'kii chelovek*. Bakunin's theory, when considered in the light of an everyman, and not a Romantic hero or 'great man', seems to doom the individual to failure, unable to account for the consequences of the rebellion. Thus,

[t]he tragic theme of the poem is the opposed and irreconcilable rights of the individual and the Empire. The Bronze Emperor is the incarnation of the ambitions and aspirations of the Empire, to which are sacrificed individual lives in order that the great and unnatural city might stand and thrive. There is no attempt to veil the incompatibility of the two points of view; they stand in bold and tragic contrast.⁵¹

It is also here that the fantastic nature of the city comes into play as '[t]he borderline between illusion and reality becomes fragile in the poetic universe of the city, and the poem is linked with that part of the myth which focuses on Petersburg's phantasmagoric

⁵⁰ Rosenshield, 'Young Dostoevskii', p. 420.

⁵¹ D. S. Mirsky, *Pushkin* (New York: Dutton, 1963), p. 211.

character'.⁵² The duality of fiction, here depicted by the fantastic, highlights the similar duality inherent to madness.

Let us first consider the marvellous. Here Pushkin plays with the myth of the city to call into question the laws of his fictional world, mirroring but also exaggerating a view of the reader's world. At no point does Evgenii react in an unexplainable manner; in fact, his actions, if the reader takes the poem at face value, reading the pursuit of Evgenii by the statue of Peter as a 'real' event within the textual actual world, show the full extent to which Evgenii is repressed. He is not *allowed* to step out of his role as the *malen'kii chelovek*, and certainly not permitted to question the creator and his city without incurring his supernatural wrath. Kahn states that '[i]f we place the tale in the context of the larger tradition of the Petersburg fantastic [...] then the action is situated in a city where occult forces rather than nature seem to be in operation'.⁵³ So Evgenii is not simply insulting a statue out of frustration – 'Ужо тебе!' – but, considering the fantastic nature of the city itself, is actually threatening and questioning powerful otherworldly forces.⁵⁴ The little man is challenging the city's creator to recognise him as an individual capable of detaching himself from the hierarchy. The miraculous, evil city of St Petersburg 'brought forth by the emperor's dreams of power, produces lunacy and hallucinations in its populace'; it is presented as a place never intended to be a comfortable and convenient place to live, but rather simply as a show of Peter's power.⁵⁵ Evgenii is never capable of a genuinely successful rebellion and was doomed from the moment he recognised his personal self outside of the enforced social system.

The other inhabitants of the city, such as Parasha, are disposable and at the mercy of the city, whilst its creator is immortal, living on through a statue, continuing to rule over his

⁵² Helle, 'City as Myth', pp. 30–31.

⁵³ Kahn, *The Bronze Horseman*, p. 14.

⁵⁴ Pushkin, 'Mednyi vsadnik', IV, p. 286.

⁵⁵ Helle, 'City as Myth', p. 30.

citizens. Therefore, '[a] fateful conflict arises between the project of new state and the personal fate of an individual, who becomes the victim of this state's pretensions to power'.⁵⁶ Evgenii's recognition of his I-for-myself as outside of the social hierarchy cements his lowly status by returning him to the mercy of Peter. In fact, he actually confirms his role as a nobody, a character without personal identity and highlights the little man's need for the city's hierarchy in order to construct selfhood. Any I-for-myself that does not align with the restraints imposed on the I-for-another cannot be established in the textual actual world.

On the other hand there is the uncanny. The restriction of the seemingly supernatural event to the laws of nature would render the statue coming to life as an event occurring solely within Evgenii's mind, creating an imaginary world within the textual actual world. The uncanny is present in the familiar concept of the human figure, but its statue form provides the unfamiliar setting. The creation of this imaginary world confirms the final split of the work: between Evgenii the *malen'kii chelovek*, sane and living in the textual actual world's reality, and Evgenii the rebel: mad, and living in fantasy. This reading of the work foregrounds the psychological dimension, if Evgenii truly believes himself to be chased by Peter. Here, interiority allows us an insight into Evgenii's mind, permitting us to see the extent to which rank has affected Evgenii. He believes Peter, his city, and his hierarchy to be the ruin of his life. No matter where he goes, or what he does, he cannot speak up against the man he believes caused his downfall. Nobody helps the wandering, mad Evgenii and he is simply replaced; this understanding of him as always under Peter's power stands true. Evgenii can never escape Peter and his oppression, but he has a choice; he can either live within the system, accepting that he is at the mercy of the city, and maintain his coherent selfhood, or he can rebel, still be crushed by the system, and have no solid identity. Evgenii chooses the latter.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 30.

When considered in connection with Pushkin's 'Mednyi vsadnik', Bakunin's social theory shows the unimportance of a single individual in wider society. As Kahn states, 'the individual dreams of both Peter and Evgenii, because they are apparently separate and yet apparently linked, raise questions about the status of the individual in the context of the larger political, social and historical structure of the state'.⁵⁷ Evgenii is never given the opportunity to base his selfhood outside of the role Peter created for him or to think for himself. When he realises the restrictions of his lowly role and decides to remove himself from the state system through his revolt, he deconstructs any sense of his self. Unlike Bakunin's social reformer, Evgenii fails in his attempt to change the imperial city's class system, entirely severing any ties to St Petersburg, and cementing his identity as a nobody. He cannot use this revolt to gain the ability to live freely – a condition necessary for the human personality according to Bakunin.

However, Chartkov's third stage of madness is presented as his own fault. Time has passed and he has become the ultimate 'fashionable artist', painting the whims and fancies of those high in society in place of how he once saw fit. After many outings, orders, and publications praising him, Chartkov realises that he has lost his talent. Looking at his old paintings, reminiscing about his lost talent, he comes across the portrait of the old man and 'вспомнил, что [...] ЭТОТ СТРАННЫЙ ПОРТРЕТ, БЫЛ ПРИЧИНОЙ ЕГО ПРЕВРАЩЕНИЯ, ЧТО ДЕНЕЖНЫЙ КЛАД [...] РОДИЛ В НЕМ ВСЕ СУЕТНЫЕ ПОБУЖДЕНИЯ, ПОГУБИВШИЕ ЕГО ТАЛАНТ'.⁵⁸ The realisation that he *could* have been a real artist of talent, had he never bought the portrait, fills him with anger and 'почти бешенство готово было ворваться к нему в душу'.⁵⁹ This madness overcomes him and, coupled with envy, he begins to destroy the works of talented

⁵⁷ Kahn, *The Bronze Horseman*, p. 102.

⁵⁸ Gogol', 'Portret', III, p. 114.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 114..

artists. However, Ann Marie Basom argues that it is not the portrait itself that has caused madness but the fact that:

[t]his external evil is not, however, necessarily a supernatural (demonic) one, but could rather be attributed to society and the material values it propagates. [...] In this sense, Gogol's texts are ultimately subversive in that they present the values of society as antithetical to the human spirit.⁶⁰

Thus, Chartkov realises that he could have bettered his position in society *and* maintained his I-for-myself by adhering to his talent. Instead, he chose to abandon his personal self, and his beliefs, and pursue money and fame through a fashionable I-for-another.

Evgenii's and Chartkov's non-adherence to their given roles essentially drives them into madness. Both protagonists realise their lack of power and status within St Petersburg, aided by their poverty, and decide to change this. For Evgenii, this decision comes after the destruction of his life plan, and for Chartkov when he is offered the opportunity to change rank and become 'fashionable'. In the case of both protagonists the removal of their role is a conscious decision that eventually leads to their loss of identity and the separation of personal and social selves. They are not permitted an identity beyond their given role in society.

2.2 Doubles: Disintegration of identity: Gogol' and Dostoevskii

Evgenii and Chartkov's madness is presented in stages, demonstrating an increasing disdain for and distance from their surrounding societies through the recognition of a personal self as separate from their society. By contrast, the next two works I will consider, Gogol's 'Nos' and Dostoevskii's *Dvoïnik*, privilege the theme of hierarchy and the possibility of upward mobility within Peter the Great's Table of Ranks as a central motivator for the protagonists. The protagonists of 'Nos' and *Dvoïnik* are depicted as fully embracing

⁶⁰ Basom, 'The Fantastic', p. 433.

their social hierarchies, seeking to elevate their own status. Moreover, both works have a similar combination of the fantastic and the banal in relation to an idealised double. The state hierarchy, implemented and exploited, significantly, within the imperial capital, in both works emphasises the pressures of social standing, the importance of one's social role, and the madness that can occur as a result of its existence when upward mobility is not realised. The appearance of doubles in both 'Nos' and *Dvoinik* poses a problem for the strict binary of personal and social self considered in this thesis, but I will explore how this fragmentation of self can still elucidate the concept of the binary in general. This topic will also be explored in chapters four and five in relation to the fragmentation of holy fools and epileptic characters.

From the outset of both works it is clear that the protagonists' identity is based entirely on rank. Kovalev, the reader is told, holds the rank of '*kollezhskii asessor*' but presents himself as something he is not. In place of his specific civilian rank, Kovalev identifies with the military title of '*maior*' so strongly that the narrator addresses him as such sixty-three times.⁶¹ Peter Spycher argues that this shows that Kovalev 'is not really a human being but a conceited puppet of a certain rank'.⁶² At this point it is already clear that Kovalev has an inflated sense of self, or, at the very least, desires to be something that he is not in society. Military rank gives Kovalev a masculine identity that he strongly tries to display. Donald Fanger argues that the collective overpowers individuals in Gogol's works, reducing them to a relational value.⁶³ This simple attribution of a title sets the tone for a clash between internal and external selves based on false perception.

⁶¹ Richard Gregg, 'A la recherche du nez perdu: An Inquiry into the Genealogical and Onomastic Origins of "The Nose"', *The Russian Review*, 40.4 (1981), 365–377 (p. 373).

⁶² Peter C. Spycher, 'N. V. Gogol's "The Nose": A Satirical Comic Fantasy born of an Impotence Complex', *The Slavic and East European Journal*, 7.4 (1963), 361–374 (p. 363).

⁶³ Donald Fanger, *Dostoevsky and Romantic Realism: A Study of Dostoevsky in Relation to Balzac, Dickens, and Gogol* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 115.

Dostoevskii's *Dvoynik* also grounds the protagonist's identity in rank. Indeed, the similarities between the two works, such as the negative effects of the city on the individual, have led to the assertion that, '[t]here is no need to prove the fact that [...] the tale "The Nose," influenced Dostoevsky's *The Double: A Petersburg Poem*, since it is obvious'.⁶⁴ As with Kovalev, Goliadkin, the protagonist of *Dvoynik*, likes to think of himself as having a higher position in society than he actually holds. This is evident in the way Goliadkin handles money – an indication of power, as shown in the chapter one – as a means to feel important. He changes large notes into smaller ones, at a loss to himself and embarks on a fake shopping spree, during which he pretends to be interested in purchasing a wide variety of expensive goods. He attempts to display a more important social self, imposing a certain perception of himself upon the other.

The desire to present himself as a holder of a higher rank than he actually has permeates his entire life. His constant fear of 'revealing' himself to be of a lower rank fuels his spiralling madness. For example, near the beginning of the work he visits a doctor, but in lieu of any conversations about his obvious stress about life and titles, Goliadkin sees the visit as an opportunity to create a particular impression of himself, in his attempt to play this elevated I-for-myself into social existence. His life becomes a performance of a higher rank, even in what is supposed to be a safe and curative space – the doctor's office; he is never free from the ranking system. However, he continuously makes etiquette mistakes and:

‘поспешил поправить ошибку свою в незнании света и хорошего тона’.⁶⁵

The idea that he needs to *present* himself in a certain way echoes theories of identity being social performativity. In essence, this is the argument that identity is a social construct

⁶⁴ A. L. Bem, "The Nose" and *The Double*, in *Dostoevsky and Gogol: Texts and Criticism*, ed. and trans. Priscilla Meyer, Stephen Rudy (Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1979), pp. 229–248 (p. 229).

⁶⁵ Dostoevskii, *Dvoynik*, I, p. 114.

and our actions are dictated by the views and hierarchies forced upon us by others; society is not based upon *natural* norms, but *constructed* norms. Judith Butler argues that gender is performative, meaning that actions constitute gender, rather than gender causing the actions; biological sex does not entail socially enforced gender norms.⁶⁶ Although Butler's theory focuses on how gender is formed in society, it can be extended to look at social identity in this context as it considers identity more generally as a social construct, based on the view of the other and on relational values. Her theory includes Freudian elements, recognising the idea that identity is constructed in relation to what is considered 'normal', for example how a male *should* act rather than how he *wants* to act; his identity is recognised only when he adheres to male gender norms, giving him a 'normal male' identity.⁶⁷ Butler holds social norms and the other's perception at the heart of her theory and as the base for identity, allowing for discrepancies between a personal and social view of the self. This sheds light on how the Table of Ranks, a solely masculine hierarchy, sets a series of civilised male behaviours (for example Kovalev's role as a ladies' man and his preference for the 'masculine' military rank) which determine usefulness and perceived contribution to society. When read in conjunction with *Dvoynik*, Butler's theory suggests that Goliadkin's self is essentially performative, with rank as the fundamental value governing society's perception of him. The performance of the higher rank is what causes his 'mistakes' with the doctor, as he acts inappropriately for his supposed rank. He cannot conjoin his falsely elevated I-for-myself with his actual standing. Similarly, he later tries to attend a party in order to win over Klara Olsuf'evna, an act both related to civilised masculine behaviours and social climbing as she is Goliadkin's boss's daughter. However, Goliadkin was not invited and attempts to act

⁶⁶ Judith Butler, 'Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory', *Theatre Journal*, 40.4 (1988) 519–531 (p. 527–528).

⁶⁷ Judith Butler, 'Imitation and Gender Subordination', in *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, ed. Julie Rivkin, Michael Ryan (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2017), pp. 955–962 (p. 955).

himself into a higher-ranking individual, one who would have been invited. His performance is soon shattered with his removal from the party, society recognising him for his true rank. The break between personal and social selves causes the first appearance of his double, removing with it his sense of a unified self. His new absence of self-understanding means that Goliadkin, as he saw himself, is no more: 'Голядкин был убит, - убит вполне, в полном смысле слова'.⁶⁸

Butler's performance theory can also elucidate Kovalev, who is also represented as trying to establish his own importance in society by acting, parading himself, and referring to himself in a particular manner. These performances, however, seem to be accepted by those he interacts with, as the shopkeepers accept his 'orders' and the narrator – and, the reader is told, others in society – refer to him by the apparently higher title of '*maior*'. Thus, both protagonists' selfhood is reliant on social acceptance but madness creates a gap between his understanding of where he actually stands in society and where he believes he stands. As a result, he never has a concrete identity but rather two distinct halves which become apparent the further he is removed from society.

Having established their protagonists firmly within the fictional St Petersburg society, Gogol' and Dostoevskii both introduce the fantastic. In both of these works the fantastic element in question comes in the form of a double, who works as a symptom and a cause of the disintegration of identity. Their doubles form their I-for-myself, possibly within an additional fictional world, explicitly exposing the duality permeating both works. Kovalev's nose is his double. Despite the oddity of the event the reader is repeatedly reassured that Kovalev is not dreaming and that the nose actually did detach itself randomly from his face: '[O]н начал щупать рукою, чтобы узнать: не спит ли он? кажется, не спит'.⁶⁹ Moreover,

⁶⁸ Dostoevskii, *Dvoynik*, I, p. 138.

⁶⁹ Nikolai Gogol', 'Nos', in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 14 vols (Moscow: Nauka, 1938) III, pp. 47–76 (p. 53). Like the dead Akaki Akakievich of Gogol's "Shinel" random

Gogol' changed the title of the work from 'Son' (dream) to 'Nos' (nose), seemingly removing from the work an explanation other than a supernatural event, with the assumption that the double exists physically in the textual actual world. The reader is told to accept Kovalev's perception of reality as true, despite its opposition to the laws of the actual world.

The issue of textuality in relation to a text's truthfulness to the world of the reader is approached by George Saunders in his book *A Swim in a Pond in the Rain*. Referencing 'Nos' he argues that Gogol''s choice of *skaz* narrator, and the subsequent lack of details as to how a nose could exist as its own subject, provide the perfect conditions for creating a world that does not adhere to the laws of the reader's world, i.e. 'consensus reality'.⁷⁰ As a reader, an external viewer, we need to recognise 'the distance between [Kovalev's] reaction and what ours would have been' in order to understand the workings of Gogol''s world within 'Nos'.⁷¹ As a result of this understanding, and with textual prompts, we are persuaded to take the story at face value.

Not only does Kovalev's nose detach itself from his face but it also becomes animated, assuming a personality and rank. Upon confrontation with Kovalev, the nose simply states 'я сам по себе', asserting that they cannot be one and the same due to their different ranks, just as Kovalev could not reconcile the different ranks of his personal and social selves.⁷² Again, identity is confined to the social framework. Even Kovalev is portrayed as treating his own nose as its own person, ignoring the seeming improbability of the event, by attempting to inform the nose that it cannot hold a rank higher than his own: 'мне

Petersburgers claim to see the nose, providing the figure with an afterlife through rumours that adhere neither to the fantastic nor realistic reading of the story.

⁷⁰ George Saunders, *A Swim in a Pond in the Rain: In which Four Russians give a Master Class on Writing, Reading, and Life* (London: Bloomsbury, 2021), p. 350.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 351.

⁷² Gogol, 'Nos', III, p. 56. The phrase 'я сам по себе' is the same formula that Dostoevskii's Goliadkin uses to assert his own identity in the face of his double. This statement of individuality is used both by an original character and a double.

кажется... вы должны знать свое место'.⁷³ Even here Kovalev is still attempting to equate his social self (the nose) to his personal self (himself) but to no avail. Georges Nivat argues that '[c]e Pétersbourg *maléfique*, c'est-à-dire porteur de la malédiction de la Russie, c'est véritablement Gogol qui l'a «inventé», c'est-à-dire qui l'a vu le premier. Il est un lieu proprement *fantastique*, c'est-à-dire où l'homme *habite mal*'.⁷⁴ Kovalev shows the negative effects of hierarchy, specifically Petersburg society, on the individual. The fact that the nose has assumed a higher status than Kovalev presents two significances: it simultaneously becomes Kovalev's double and his idealised social self by gaining status in society.

Kovalev watches as a part of himself successfully establishes itself as important in society, but the double soon attempts to distance itself from the original: '[п]ри этом между нами не может быть никаких тесных отношений. Судя по пуговицам вашего виц-мундира'.⁷⁵ By removing itself from Kovalev, the nose leaves him in a predicament, as he believes it improper to parade himself as a major without his nose:

[a] man is nothing if without a nose, while the Nose has assumed the impossible social status to which Kovalev aspired. [...] [S]tatus symbols are devalued, deautomatized. The familiar is estranged, except that here part of Kovalev's self has become *other* and has assumed an independent existence on the other side of an impenetrable social boundary.⁷⁶

This exposes the fragility of Kovalev's self-perception, as the nose itself, removed from both face and body, parades as a higher rank without qualms. The nose gains identity at the expense of Kovalev, forcing him to expose his I-for-myself's social falsity.

⁷³ Gogol', 'Nos', III, p. 55.

⁷⁴ Georges Nivat, *Vers la fin du mythe russe: Essais sur la culture russe de Gogol à nos jours* (Lausanne: L'Age d'homme, 1982), p. 29.

⁷⁵ Gogol', 'Nos', III, p. 56.

⁷⁶ Efraim Sicher, 'Dialogization and Laughter in the Dark, or How Gogol's Nose was Made: Parody and Literary Evolution in Bachtin's Theory of the Novel', *Russian Literature*, 28.2 (1990), 211–233 (p. 223).

Recognising the nose as its own person, Gogol' presents social standing as constituting identity. Kovalev, not being able to 'show' himself as his desired rank, due to his missing nose, descends into madness through the loss of his personhood as 'я майор. Мне ходить без носа, согласитесь, это неприлично'.⁷⁷ By having the nose constitute a sort of double, it allows Kovalev the opportunity to be something other than his ideal, but his personality is so grounded in how he wants others to view him, his I-for-myself, not as his actual rank, that he becomes entirely consumed by reattaching the nose to maintain appearances, reconciling the two halves of his self; he does not care in the slightest how or why this event happened.

The social-personal binary of identity explored in this thesis does not perfectly align with double characters. Taking Kovalev and his nose as an example, the nose's declaration of independence suggests that although they are technically composite characters, they have two social selves (as highlighted by the difference in rank) and two personal selves. However, despite not perfectly fitting into the identity binary, 'Nos' still demonstrates the importance of the personal and the social view as the other's perception of him causes Kovalev so much stress to the point that he curates a false I-for-myself in order to influence their view.

The political philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau's work *The Social Contract*, and more specifically his concepts of *amour de soi* and *amour propre*, can help enlighten us to the importance Kovalev places on pride. Rousseau's work, written in 1762, was intended to discuss the creation of a political authority during a time of unease in French society. During this time, Rousseau believed that living in a communal environment was detrimental to its members, in that they were essentially slaves; they would be better off living in solitude, or even in a less advanced, more naturalistic state. By creating a 'social contract' Rousseau states that everyone should be equal with the same rights. This political authority, he argues,

⁷⁷ Gogol, 'Nos', III, p. 56.

should be composed of two parts: the Sovereign and the government. The Sovereign is society in general – the people involved in the contract – whereas the government is formed by a select few acting in the interest of society as a whole. However, if the government begins to act against the interest of its people then it is the duty of the Sovereign to revolt.

Rousseau states that by forming this Sovereign the people agree to remove themselves from the natural state and enter into a social contract – a method of organising society to benefit its members.⁷⁸ He argues that human beings have two natural instincts: self-preservation (*amour de soi*) and pity for others, but that, over the course of history, they have also developed *amour propre* – also a type of negative love for oneself. This new love has developed out of our relation to others within society, mainly that we constantly compare ourselves to others, and as such is an unnatural instinct, but one now deeply integrated into life. Thus:

[i]t rather has to do with oneself as the holder of a rank, position or title, oneself as someone who has a status and in having that can make claims on others (likewise in their character as ‘persons’ in this sense) to afford one consideration, deference, esteem, acknowledgement. The ‘person’ here is, if you will, the point of intersection of a highly complex play of demands and titles, of claims and positions, the obtaining of which creates and sustains the possibility of being a ‘person’ in the appropriate sense.⁷⁹

Kovalev has no pity for others, as he ‘пробрался сквозь ряд нищих старух с завязанными лицами и двумя отверстиями для глаз, над которыми он прежде так смеялся’.⁸⁰ Nor does he exhibit *amour de soi* – actions of well-being – as Kovalev is entirely consumed by *amour*

⁷⁸ James Swenson, *On Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), p. 174.

⁷⁹ N. J. H. Dent, T. O’Hagan, ‘Rousseau on Amour-Propre’, *Aristotelean Society Supplementary Volume*, 72.1 (1998), 57–75 (p. 59).

⁸⁰ Gogol’, ‘Nos’, III, p. 55.

propre, apparent in his constant comparison of himself with others. As a result, his identity is entirely relational; outside of a societal context he is nothing. His self is based on his feeling superior to others, on his *amour propre*. *Amour de soi* would be indicated by a worry about his own well-being, his loss of sensory organ, but his immediate concern for status shows us that he is entirely controlled by the vanity of *amour propre*. It is this separation of personal ideal self in pride and actual social self that causes his madness and so this:

corruption [by *amour propre*] doesn't only pervade the character of personal relationships and social processes and structures, it pervades also the psychology and self-awareness of the individual. Coming to feel that his 'person' - the figure he cuts, the differential reception he is afforded - matters above all else, an individual neglects even the elementary needs of human well-being and happiness, and transfers his sense of self-worth, the meaning and value of his being and life, to the verdict that the regard others pay him reveals in respect of the estimate of his importance they hold.⁸¹

Evaluating Kovalev through the prism of Rousseau's *The Social Contract* suggests that Gogol's protagonist indulges in the wrong kind of self-love, resulting in comparisons to others in society and reducing him almost entirely to this comparison. He is completely consumed by the social hierarchy. He is no more than his rank, which in itself is deemed entirely arbitrary by his self-promotion. The removal, or even threat of removal, of this grounding drives him to madness. Kovalev needs society in order to feel important, due to his reliance on *amour propre*, but by removing his *amour de soi* he loses a part of his humanity, reducing him to an automaton in the hierarchy. He has no personal self outside of social status.

In *Dvoynik* the fantastic occurs when his perception of himself is destroyed by being removed from the party he deemed himself worthy to attend. The reader is even informed of

⁸¹ Dent, 'Amour-Propre', p. 61.

the downward spiral about to occur with the anecdote about an aunt: ‘то же самое случилось с моей тетушкой [...]; она тоже перед смертью себя вдвойне видела...’.⁸² This condemns Goliadkin to madness upon the double’s appearance. The double, appearing after Goliadkin’s failed assertion of his I-for-myself in society, acts also as an ideal double as ‘феномен двойничества в произведениях Достоевского коренится в его попытке описания сознания человека, пытающегося сделать правильный шаг в утверждении своего личного бытия во Вселенной’.⁸³ If Goliadkin himself cannot become the person he wants in society, then his double can. It is here that the duality of fiction – in conjunction with the fantastic – comes into play. Unlike in ‘Nos’, where the reader is left to assume a supernatural reading, here it is not clear whether the double appears in the textual actual world or a fictional world within it. Freud’s analysis of the uncanny includes anecdotes of the double as a result of the ‘the defensive urge that ejects it from the ego as something alien’.⁸⁴ Goliadkin’s double is certainly aligned with his ego, but the absence of resolution begs the question of whether Goliadkin created an imaginary world in which he could establish his I-for-myself as his I-for-another via a double, whilst also recognising the inability to achieve such a feat himself.

Frank argues that ‘Golyadkin has climbed high enough on the social ladder, at least in his own estimation, to aspire to climb a bit higher; he is suffering not from grinding poverty but from “ambition”’.⁸⁵ The social climbing is done via his double. Notably, the Russian word ‘ambitsiia’ holds negative connotations, as Dal’s secondary definition defines it as

⁸² Dostoevskii, *Dvoynik*, I, p. 149.

⁸³ K. A. Barsht, ‘Dvoynoi povestvovatel’ i dvoynoi personazh v “nazakrytom dialoge” F. M. Dostoevskogo (ot “Bednykh liudei” k “Dvoyniku”)’, *Voprosy filosofii*, 2 (2014), 107–118 (p. 107).

⁸⁴ Freud, *The Uncanny*, p. 143.

⁸⁵ Joseph Frank, *Dostoevsky: The Seeds of Revolt, 1821-1849* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 300.

‘arrogance, a demand for external signs of respect and honour’, highlighting the desire for power and status.⁸⁶

Moreover, the protagonist’s gradual alienation from society is shown from Goliadkin’s point of view; the reader sees the breakdown of character from the internal perspective as the narrator eventually blends with the protagonist, leaving us with no external validation of events: ‘*The Double* is narrated by an outside observer who gradually identifies himself with Golyadkin’s consciousness and carries on the narrative in the speech-style of the character’.⁸⁷ The internalisation confuses the reader as to what is the textual objective world and what is not as they look at this world through the mad protagonist’s eyes, unsure where to draw the line between real and unreal. The reader sees how Goliadkin believes himself to be affected by others and his desperate attempt to validate himself in society unaware of his madness. The alienation is heightened with the introduction of the double, as the original Goliadkin essentially becomes useless in gaining the desired higher status. Thus:

[h]is dual self-perception illustrates the separation he feels between a socially constructed ego and an imagined higher self. That gulf is created in large part by cultural ideology, by which I mean the behaviors and conventions that define a class inaccessible to the lowly government clerk.⁸⁸

It is precisely these behaviours that he incorrectly imitates which identify him as a lower-ranking individual – in relation to where he desires to be – and alienate him. Despite these mistakes he continuously asserts that he is who he says he is: ‘Goliadkin says he is “myself by myself too; I am really myself by myself.” But that is not how selves are. One is a self

⁸⁶ Dryzhakova, ‘Madness as an Act of Defence’, p. 63.

⁸⁷ Joseph Frank, *Dostoevsky: A Writer in his Time* (Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 2012), p. 102.

⁸⁸ Lonny Harrison, ‘Apostate of the Natural School: Dostoevsky’s Narrative of Cognitive “Truth” in *The Double*’, *South Central Review*, 34.1 (2017), 1–31 (p. 18).

among others’.⁸⁹ He cannot exist solely as I-for-myself; as the duality of selves has shown, one must also have an I-for-another. However, Goliadkin, and Kovalev, are products of social hierarchy where the only thing that matters is their relative rank, so his attempt to be ‘by myself’ cannot work. He can only be himself also in relation to another.

Therefore, the double acts as a way for Goliadkin to ground himself in society as he sees fit, as a (possibly) imaginary ideal self. He splits his personality in order to ‘save’ his I-for-myself and give it a socially accepted presence. This comes in the form of his double which is able to fit social norms and perform his ‘function’, whereas Goliadkin’s madness means he is unable to do so correctly. However, this is also the point at which the binary assumed in this thesis demonstrates its limits. In the instance that Goliadkin Jr. is indeed a literal double of Goliadkin, then one character has two very distinct social selves, there are two Is-for-another. However, if the double is only a figment of Goliadkin’s imagination, as he may well exist as his own person (a reading encouraged by the other character’s reactions), then there is still only one personal self and one social self in relation to Goliadkin and he simply projects his desires outwards onto another.

The distinction between who Goliadkin actually is and who he shows himself to be can be explained through the sociologist George Mead’s theory of the self, which divides the individual into ‘I’ and ‘me’. Mead argues that the self is a social construct, reflecting the self in the other. He states that ‘[i]f one determines what his position is in society and feels himself as having a certain function and privilege, these are all defined with reference to an “I”’.⁹⁰ Thus, Goliadkin’s ‘I’ is a higher-ranking individual than in reality. However, ‘all the attitudes of others, calling for a certain response; that was the “me” of that situation, and his

⁸⁹ Gary Saul Morson, ‘Me and My Double: Selfhood, Consciousness, and Empathy in *The Double*’, in *Before they were Titans: Essays on the Early Works of Dostoevsky and Tolstoy*, ed. Elizabeth C. Allen (Boston, MA: Academic Studies Press, 2015), pp. 43–60 (p. 55).

⁹⁰ George H. Mead, *Mind, Self and Society: From the Standpoint of Social Behaviorist*, ed. Charles W. Morris (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1967), p. 174.

response is the “I”⁹¹. So, in Mead’s terms the ‘me’ is how others perceive the individual (the I-for-another) and the ‘I’ is how the individual presents themselves in relation to the ‘me’ (I-for-myself). Since Goliadkin’s ‘I’ is of a higher status than his ‘me’ the two do not match, resulting in inappropriate actions in society, such as the incidents at the doctor’s and the party. As Mead states, ‘[i]t is a process in which the individual is continually adjusting himself in advance to the situation to which he belongs, and reacting back on it’, meaning that ‘[i]t is the social process itself that is responsible for the appearance of the self’.⁹² This idea rings true for Goliadkin as he ‘lives by his reflection in another’.⁹³ But since he misjudges his position in regards to another the ‘I’, acting based on the ‘me’, responds inappropriately, meaning he does not fit in socially.

Kovalev’s and Goliadkin’s selfhoods are affected by their need for the other; their selves are based on rank, but it is primarily their rank in relation to the other that grounds them. They need to be recognised as a particular status by society, and it is the lack of this recognition that causes madness: Kovalev’s missing nose means he cannot parade himself as a ‘major’, and Goliadkin’s etiquette mistakes show his true rank. They cannot reconcile their personal and social selves.

In addition, the effect of the banal in both works emphasises the importance of rank for the protagonists. Unlike Pushkin’s ‘Mednyi vsadnik’, which romanticises madness in order for Evgenii to revolt against Peter the Great, ‘Nos’ and *Dvoinik* reduce madness to the banal, in order to show that even in extreme, and strange, circumstances their social standing is the only thing that matters. In ‘Nos’ the banal relates to the supernatural disappearance of Kovalev’s nose. He does not seem to be particularly fazed by the physiognomical issue of a missing nose, or even how it was physically possible; the only thing that matters is the

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 176.

⁹² Ibid., p. 182, p. 142.

⁹³ Bakhtin, *Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, p. 214.

inconvenience to his social act. If he has no nose he cannot function as a *'maior'*: '[t]he surprise which [...] Kovalev experience[s] is not astonishment at an apparent physical impossibility, not anxiety for bodily harm, but fear of social repercussions'.⁹⁴ Kovalev states that the nose must have *'пропал сдуру'*, meaning that he ignores other explanations in favour of labelling it as a police matter.⁹⁵ In keeping with his selfhood grounded in performance of a rank, Kovalev only bothers himself with the consequences of a missing nose for his appearance to others.

James Sloan Allen argues that Gogol' uses Kovalev to show the negative effects of city life on the individual, reducing him to an automaton as:

[t]he leading cultural critics of the nineteenth century saw social and moral life deeply affected by mundane circumstances, occupations and ideas; and they feared the destruction of all excellence and humanity [...]. They blamed this moral blindness on those slaves to respectability and complacency, whose tastes were tawdry, emotions false, aspirations inane.⁹⁶

Kovalev is exactly one of these 'slaves' in that he is represented as unable to perceive himself outside of society, as an individual human being, but rather sees himself as an actor of a particular function that equates to a rank. As this is his only consideration, 'the bizarre occurrence [of the missing nose] promptly loses itself in a life tormented by trivialities'.⁹⁷ In addition to Kovalev not being surprised by events, the reader is asked not to be shocked and not to think of it as anything more than a detached nose simply parading as a high-ranking official.⁹⁸ As Ivan Yermakov states, '[t]his fog, or the impossibility of providing a logical

⁹⁴ Sicher, 'Dialogization', p. 223.

⁹⁵ Gogol', 'Nos', III, p. 54.

⁹⁶ James Sloan Allen, 'Modernity and the Evil of Banality', *The Centennial Review*, 23.1 (1979), 20–39 (p. 21).

⁹⁷ Allen, 'Modernity and the Evil of Banality', p. 37.

⁹⁸ Henri Troyat, *Gogol* (Paris: Flammarion, 1971), p. 173.

explanation and motivation for the story, shows us the resistance to rationality which Gogol, with extraordinary skill, introduces as an active element in the story'.⁹⁹ By reducing the fantastic to the banal, the reader is able to see the extent to which characters are reduced to their 'function' in society; the only thing that matters is maintaining this.

Gogol' employs not only the banal, but also the grotesque. Like the fantastic, the grotesque requires the reader to hesitate, but this time between comedy and horror: "grotesque", denotes the coexistence of comic and horrific elements in equal parts and the sum of these parts — the absurd'.¹⁰⁰ Ani Kokobobo argues that the grotesque — '[a] style that renders the world unreliable and strange' — can be used to show that characters have no 'inner lives', only their function.¹⁰¹ As such they have no personal sense of self separate from their role in society. The reader is never sure whether to laugh at the runaway nose or to be horrified by the events, but one thing is certain: the reader has an emotional response to the events whilst Kovalev has none, as he only thinks in terms of social consequences.

The use of the banal in the face of the grotesque illustrates that the only point of the characters is to perform their 'function' within society — they are reduced to rank, but even further than that are reduced to the 'function' of that rank — like an automaton. Kovalev only cares about being able to 'function' as a '*maior*', not the physiognomical issue, or the supernatural event, of the missing nose. Rousseau's theory permits us to see that there is no *amour de soi* required by this society, because there are no personalities, only automata 'functioning'. *Amour propre* ensures that everyone 'functions' to the best of their abilities

⁹⁹ Ivan Yermakov, 'The Nose', in *Gogol from the Twentieth Century: Eleven Essays*, ed. Robert A. Maguire (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), pp. 155–198 (p. 184).

¹⁰⁰ Frances K. Barasch, *The Grotesque: A Study in Meanings* (Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 2018), p. 10.

¹⁰¹ Ani Kokobobo, *Russian Grotesque Realism: The Great Reforms and the Gentry Decline* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2018), p. 2.

with the possibility of rising through the ranks. Kovalev, therefore, is entirely removed from the natural element of the human being and is controlled only by the social.

However, as Rosenshield states, '[i]n *The Double* [...] Dostoevskii engages in a far more radical operation: he completely depoeticizes and demythologizes Peter, Peter's legacy, and Peter's victims, emptying his subject – in a sort of negative kenosis – of all mythological and sacred significance'.¹⁰² In contrast to the madness of Pushkin's Evgenii, Goliadkin's madness gives him no courage to challenge the social system, rather his madness leads to a double figure which exacerbates the disintegration of his personality. Unlike Evgenii he does not rebel, as his I-for-myself remains firmly grounded in a social hierarchy, so '[t]he pessimistic view of Petersburg that Dostoevskii creates in *The Double*, in which Peter's image and legacy are debunked [...] [shows how] the common man – the *chinovnik* – is reduced to a reflection of his own nonbeing'.¹⁰³ Even Goliadkin's double does not help to romanticise his madness. Instead it portrays the opposite of the 'typical' romantic double, as:

[i]n nineteenth-century works featuring autoscopic doubles, the double (even if it is exclusively a projection of the more negative or evil side of the self) often emerges as more interesting and venturesome – even more vital – than the original self.

Goliadkin's double, however, is the very opposite of a higher self [...]. On the contrary, Dostoevskii empties Goliadkin's madness, like madness in the Age of Reason, of all that is vital and elevating. It is a depoeticized madness as prosaic as Goliadkin himself.¹⁰⁴

Rather than romanticising Goliadkin's madness, the double only overshadows and further pushes Goliadkin into unpoetic madness. In line with Mead's theory, the double is able to respond to his reflection in the other and follow social cues, meaning that he is accepted by

¹⁰² Rosenshield, 'Young Dostoevskii', p. 400.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 405.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., pp. 421–422.

society and allowed to exist (function), whilst Goliadkin's madness, a separation of the halves of the self, condemns him to alienation.

Moreover, Jones points to 'the exploitation of the conventional romantic 'double' motif as a means of dramatizing a particular kind of internal psychological division brought about by social rejection'.¹⁰⁵ By splitting his personality to create the double, Goliadkin creates a part of himself that is able to correctly ground its selfhood in society and reaction from the other, attempting to make his disintegrating identity less traumatic. Since he himself cannot function as his assigned rank, much like Kovalev's nose, the double fulfils the 'functions' of the societal automaton that the protagonist cannot. Therefore, selfhood in the imperial city requires no humanity, no personality, but only a being that functions correctly within the rank they are given. Otherwise the I-for-myself would come to realise itself in terms outside of the limits imposed by society from which the I-for-another cannot be freed, resulting in madness. People are not individuals in the city, they are automata, each the same as the other:

[и] все эти совершенно подобные пускались тотчас же по появлении своем бежать один за другим и длинною целью, как вереница гусей, тянулись и ковыляли за господином Голядкиным-старшим, так что некуда было убежать от совершенно подобных, - так что дух захватывало всячески достойному сожаления господину Голядкину от ужаса, - так что народилась наконец страшная бездна совершенно подобных, - так что вся столица запрудилась наконец совершенно подобными.¹⁰⁶

The banal also features in *Dvoinik* in order to allude to humanity's removal from the city. Nobody appears to notice that new man in town is Goliadkin's double, calling it a

¹⁰⁵ Malcolm V. Jones, *Dostoyevsky after Bakhtin: Readings in Dostoyevsky's Fantastic Realism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 37.

¹⁰⁶ Dostoevskii, *Dvoinik*, I, p. 187.

possible ‘family resemblance’.¹⁰⁷ The dismissal of this strange occurrence highlights the fact that Goliadkin is never recognised sufficiently as an individual for others to notice if the double is the same person. Nobody seems bothered by this mysterious figure, caring only that he completes his function at work and in society in accordance to his position, a feat that Goliadkin’s I-for-myself was unable to content itself with. Rosenshield argues that:

Dostoevskii presents a radically different view of institutions. In contrast to Gogol’, he portrays the bureaucracy as an institution that has usurped the authority of human beings and now runs itself in its own interest. Elevating procedure over human feeling, treating human beings primarily in terms of function, the bureaucratic machine sees personality as expendable – at best. All Goliadkin’s doubles are equally insignificant and interchangeable. [...] They were not born that way; they are the products of Peter’s bureaucratic legacy.¹⁰⁸

Everyone, including Goliadkin, is expected to be nothing more than their function, but Goliadkin’s ‘performance’ of a higher rank, forcing him to function incorrectly, identifies him as mad and as a result alienates him. The fact that the double performs his function appropriately means that he does not mark himself as an outsider – he fits in seamlessly – so that nobody realises the oddity of his appearance. The double is a banal and meaningless copy devoid of any deeper purpose. It is a copy for copy’s sake. Allen states that banality occurs here because ‘the routine, commonplace existence was so dispiriting that no event, however bizarre, could make things much worse’.¹⁰⁹ Increasingly removed from society, Goliadkin becomes a nobody, overtaken by the correctly functioning automaton double. Therefore, the banal, in both works, deromanticises madness and shows the negative consequences of Peter’s city for the individual human personality. Anything that gets in the

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 148.

¹⁰⁸ Rosenshield, ‘Young Dostoevskii’, p. 412.

¹⁰⁹ Allen, ‘Modernity and the Evil of Banality’, p. 37.

way of performing their 'function' is a mere inconvenience, rather than a supernatural event realised for its absurdity.. Inhabitants of the Imperial city are deemed 'mad' when they do not fulfil these functions.

2.3 Conclusion

Just like maniac characters, the characters allied to the St Petersburg bureaucracy considered here show how the mad individual is contrasted to the (faceless) other. Indeed the issue is that the rebellion does not come from a place of material repression, but rather as a result of obstacles to their desires. Here again, the desire for, recognition, power and upward mobility incites madness in characters confronted with the unrealisability of such desires. As with Kierkegaard's *Either/Or* and, again, Rousseau's *The Social Contract*, the individual acts according to judgements from others. It is the importance placed on these judgements that leads to a desire to be other, or more than the existing I-for-another. It is these desires that eventually create an elevated I-for-myself which cannot be reconciled in the existing social framework, exposing the madness of the protagonists in their duality.

This will to free themselves from the constraints of social hierarchy and to impose their face in a faceless society leads to an outward-projected rebellion, as with Pushkin's Evgenii in his revolt against the Bronze Horseman. Theories that I have considered, such as Bakunin's 'God and the State' and Rousseau's 'The Social Contract' call for rebellion under the circumstance of repression, but do not account for madness or an individual rebellion, by assuming the power of the masses. Here, once again, the individual mad character is shown to be unimportant and expendable in a faceless society as soon as they cease to uphold its functioning, forcing them to recognise the distance between how they view themselves and how their society views them.

Part Two: Social Environments and Self-Other Relations: Mindsets and Performances

3. Chapter Three: The Provinces and the Self: Oppression and the Outsider

Following Peter the Great's reforms, while Imperial Russia's European cities represented sites of modernisation, reform came much later to provincial Russia, where traditional values retained a much more tenacious hold. The provincial mindset, based on traditional morals, structures, and roles, resulted in closed communities dependant on long-standing values, in stark contrast to the modernised, Europeanised cities. For example, in these traditional societies the education of women and the 'female role' were hurdles for the provincial mindset.¹ This posed a challenge as:

gender shaped key aspects of women's lives. [...] [M]ost shared virtually an identical lot in life: learning women's duties at their mother's knee, a marriage arranged by others, then childbearing, childrearing and the labour of maintaining the home and provisioning the family.²

The continuation of this repressed 'female role' serves as a reflection of the general, traditionalist mindset in the provinces. The contrast to the ever-changing cities created a dichotomy between the two, emphasised by their attitudes to gender roles and acceptance of outside influences, resulting in oppositions of city versus provincial town, progressive versus repressed female, and modern versus traditional. For literature at the time, as well as in progressive circles, this raised the 'woman question', which 'stressed women's three roles: worker, mother and housewife'.³ This debate calls into question the pre-existing outsider

¹ Christine Johanson, *Women's Struggle for Higher Education in Russia, 1855-1900* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987), p. 28.

² Barbara Engel, 'Women, the Family and Public Life', in *The Cambridge History of Russia*, ed. Dominic Lieven, 3 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), II, pp. 306–325 (p. 306).

³ Anastasia Posadskaya, 'Women as the Objects and Motive Force of Change in Our Time', in *Women in Russia: A New Era in Russian Feminism*, ed. Anastasia Posadskaya, trans. Kate Clark (London: Verso, 1994), pp. 8–13 (p. 9).

status of women in nineteenth-century Russia, marking them as other in relation to men in their established patriarchal societies. As a result of these hierarchies ‘women found themselves subordinated to men on the misogynist grounds that they were inferior to men and, as temptresses, prone to sexual impropriety’, yet women were largely forced to accept ‘male authority in the family, community, and state because their families’ survival depended on that power’.⁴

The sense of separation between tradition and modernity did not remain solely on this plane. It also included members of these ‘closed communities’ who did not conform to the traditional mould that their society demanded. This, in turn, creates insider-outsider dynamics within a society, with insiders accepting pre-determined values that outcasts rejected. A community was able to retain its set values by ostracising those who sought to live differently.

The four works that I address in this chapter – Ostrovskii’s ‘Groza’, Nikolai Leskov’s ‘Ledi Makbet Mtsenskogo uezda’ (1865), Chekhov’s ‘Palata nomer 6’, and Vladimir Odoevskii’s ‘Sil’fida’ (1837) – all feature a ‘mad’ outsider protagonist, who rejects the traditionalist mindset of their respective societies. Unlike the faceless social orders considered in part one, part two focuses on particular societies, their mindsets and how they function, with reference to a ‘faced’ society, i.e. particular characters who are representative of that society. Whereas the social pressures considered in part one concern power and social climbing, the social pressures addressed in part two relate to adherence to a role in order to remain respected in the face of society. The self-other relations considered here will highlight the fluidity of madness as it is not necessarily used in reference to a breakdown of mental

⁴ Christine D. Worobec, ‘Victims or Actors? Russian Peasant Women and Patriarchy’, in *Peasant Economy, Culture, and Politics of European Russia, 1800-1921*, ed. Esther Kingston-Mann, Timothy Mixter (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), pp. 177–206, p. 180.

state, but is used to signify ‘otherness’, ‘alienation’, as difference from the norm, be this related to mindset, moral stance, or spirituality. My analysis will highlight the importance of the gender question, demonstrating the difference in plight between the already privileged male characters seeking philosophical freedom, and the subordinated female characters seeking a more basic physical and emotional autonomy. Each protagonist has a mentality different from that of their society’s accepted norm. As with all the protagonists I have considered thus far, it is the non-identification of self in established social terms that marks these characters as different. It is this difference in self that classes them as ‘mad’. For example, Ostrovskii and Leskov’s protagonists shun the oppressive role of wife, forced upon them by society and a parent-in-law figure who becomes representative of society. This rejection of the traditional wife role leads to similar events: rejecting their husband in favour of a lover, they are recognised as an outcast by society before dying by suicide. These similarities foreground the mental pressure caused by the traditional repression of women, suggesting the eventual downfall of anyone who dares challenge these values. The only escape from oppression and into freedom, as will be shown, is in death.

Similarly, Chekhov’s and Odoevskii’s protagonists play the role of an outsider, but in relation to their philosophies. As in the case of both Katerinas, their provincial towns follow an accepted norm regarding ideologies, beliefs, and behaviour. Chekhov and Odoevskii’s protagonists choose to reject the accepted mindset of their towns in favour of a new enlightened view on life, rendering themselves outcasts. Here, too, freedom becomes a problem, as they are not permitted to think for themselves. The only possible freedom could be, and in Ragin’s case *is*, found in death. As argued in part one, madness occurs when an individual deviates from socially-accepted roles; here, however, the deviance lies not with rank, but rather with mindset.

Whereas part one of this thesis focuses on duality in relation to real and ideal selves, part two centres almost entirely on the external view and the perspective of the other. Here duality recognises the free versus the repressed self in society, the real personal self and the other's ideal self. The absence of interiority in the texts examined in part two results in a missing concrete I-for-myself. This absence permits the duality of identity, as madness is never confirmed in any of the works I assess here. Madness is simply assumed on the part of the other, as even the reader is able to know the protagonists only through their I-for-another. The lack of interior view rules out any knowledge, raising specific questions in relation to the characters: if they do not act in a particular manner, are they really mad? And if a character *acts* mad, could they actually be sane? This is where the question of unknowability will come to the fore, as literature traverses this problem in order to depict madness despite only having an external viewpoint.

3.1 The 'mad' male outsider: New philosophies: Chekhov and Odoevskii

The narrow-mindedness of provincial societies and its impact on the individual comes to the fore in Chekhov's 'Palata nomer 6' and Odoevskii's 'Sil'fida' in relation to two philosophical outsiders. The limits of these closed communities become increasingly apparent throughout the works, highlighting the struggle to withstand a collective mindset. Realising the restraints of society and its ideologies, the protagonists search for alternatives. In each case they find a sustaining philosophy, but as it is not the accepted mode of thinking, they are branded 'outcasts'. The provincial setting only exacerbates the outsider role of the 'new thinker' in their stark contrast to traditional society; the character with a greater curiosity about the world becomes the 'outcast'.

In Chekhov's 'Palata nomer 6' the provincial town in which the events take place is described as being located far away from the railroad to symbolise the town's distance from

modernisation in both structure and mentality.⁵ The railway can be seen as a symbol of modernity, reaching out from the city into the countryside. As Anne Dwyer states, ‘[t]he railroad [...] is perhaps the most powerful sign of nineteenth-century industrial modernity’ and the fact that this town is placed so far from it only exacerbates the divide between them and the modernisation affecting other parts of the country.⁶ Already, an us-versus-them dichotomy is established.

The reader is also immediately made aware of an insider-outsider mentality among the townsfolk. Those who accept society’s general philosophy are *considered* ‘sane’ and are insiders, while those who disagree are *considered* ‘mad’ and outcasts. The distinction of ‘otherness’ is what has allowed the town to remain so backward, as the consequence for disregarding the norm is to be branded ‘mad’, working much the same way that rebels against the imperial city were removed in order to maintain its social hierarchy. In provincial settings, the duality of selves – the I-for-myself and I-for-another – is presented not in terms of ideal and real selves, but rather of free and oppressed selves. Their I-for-myself desires freedom from the constraints of their societies, but their I-for-another is kept in check according to established traditions. Therefore, ignorance is the accepted norm.

People are depicted as not caring about the suffering of others, as long as they themselves are not suffering. This injustice, and the ignorance towards it, holds the possibility of driving people to insanity. In ‘Palata nomer 6’, Ivan Dmitrich ‘Gromov originally goes mad because [...] he sees the provincial town (and the world for which it is a

⁵ Anne Frydman, *A Study of the Endings of Anton Chekhov’s Short Stories*, Thesis (Ph.D), Columbia University, 1978, p. 179. The derogatory nature of this connection is highlighted in the phrase: ‘в этом маленьком, грязном городишке, за двести верст от железной дороги!’ (Anton Chekhov, ‘Palata no. 6’, in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem v tridtsati tomakh* (Moscow: Nauka, 1977), VIII, pp. 72–126 (p. 78)).

⁶ Anne Dwyer, ‘Of Hats and Trains: Cultural Traffic in Leskov’s and Dostoevskii’s Westward Journeys’, *Slavic Review*, 70.1 (2011), 67–93 (p. 70).

metaphor) in the black-and-white terms of incessant exploitation and violence'.⁷ The desire to be an insider, and the power that the group has, is represented by Dr. Andrei Efimych Ragin; he believes his job as a physician to be pointless, as suffering in some regard is inevitable, and so stops practising.⁸ As Anne Frydman highlights, 'Ragin has adopted an attitude of philosophical indifference toward suffering', rendering him one of the ignorant insiders.⁹ He appears to have no moral conscience concerning his patients, to the point that he has ceased visiting the hospital. As I will discuss later, this indifference to suffering becomes a vital part of his self.

Odoevskii's 'Sil'fida' also represents the 'mad' character as an outsider in a provincial town. Whereas Chekhov's town is represented negatively, as a distant, dark, and gloomy place, Odoevskii's provincial town is initially depicted as a 'cure' for the protagonist's spleen. However, 'Palata nomer 6' and 'Sil'fida' both represent a 'curative space', respectively the hospital and the countryside, as anything but. This revelation thus stands in stark contrast to the popular notion that life outside the city is refreshing and wholesome;¹⁰ it is not the location that makes a space 'curative' but rather the people who inhabit it. The inhabitants of the provinces are no different from those of the city in this regard. Odoevskii's protagonist Mikhail Platonovich finds this apparently preferable setting marred by its inhabitants. As with Chekhov's town, the inhabitants are ignorant and boring. Therefore, 'the hero of "The Sylphid" who flees from Moscow to the provinces discovers that

⁷ Andrew R. Durkin, 'Chekhov's Response to Dostoevskii: The Case of "Ward 6"', *Slavic Review*, 40.1 (1981), 49–59 (p. 56).

⁸ James N. Loehlin, *The Cambridge Introduction to Chekhov* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 85.

⁹ Frydman, *Study of the Endings*, p. 179.

¹⁰ As, for example, suggested by the epilogue of *Prestuplenie i nakazanie*, where leaving the city, even for prison, is represented as a form of freedom.

the provincials have all the vices of educated city dwellers, but are more frank, scoundrelly, and petty in their objectives' resulting in '[i]mmorality, ignorance, and unhappiness'.¹¹

Whereas Ragin begins the work as an insider, Odoevskii has his protagonist, Mikhail Platonovich, 'inheriting his late uncle's estate and quickly developing an ironic stance toward his new rural neighbors and their provincial sensibilities'.¹² Mikhail Platonovich is identified as an outsider from the start due to his status as a city man.¹³ Initially, this new dwelling is depicted as a new, fresh start, a place where nobody bothers themselves with philosophical questions or anything that is not required for day-to-day life. The contrast between Mikhail Platonovich and others becomes vital to the evolution of his self and how his madness is viewed, calling into question a difference between I-for-myself and I-for-another.

As with the imperial city, Ragin and Mikhail Platonovich's societies require them to accept the social norms and mindset to be considered an 'insider'. Ragin, beginning the work as a part of the crowd, comes to realise the effects of this insider-outsider mentality. Through his discussions with Gromov, a patient in ward no. 6, Ragin gradually starts to see the ignorance required to be an insider, a supposedly 'sane' citizen of the town. Ragin seeks intellectual conversation and stimulating philosophical discussions, neither of which are to be found amongst the 'sane' insiders. As Sally Wolff writes, 'Ragin seeks intellectual and social discourse and cannot find it among the purportedly sane. Here lies Chekhov's biting social commentary about the cultural decay and malnourishment that encourage mediocrity and

¹¹ Jo Ann Hopkins Linburn, 'A Would-Be Faust: Vladimir Fyodorovich Odoevsky and His Prose Fiction, 1830-1845', Thesis (Ph.D), Columbia University, 1970, p. 174.

¹² Christopher Putney, "'The Circle that Presupposes its End as its Goal": The Riddle of Vladimir Odoevskii's "The Sylph"', *The Slavic and East European Journal*, 55.2 (2011), 188-204 (p. 189).

¹³ Claire Whitehead, 'The Impact of Multiple Voice on Reader Hesitation: The Case of Vladimir Odoevskii's "The Sylph"', *Modern Language Review*, 98.2 (2003), 397-415 (p. 400).

discourage refined intellectual activity'.¹⁴ It is through his conversations with an 'outcast' that Ragin comes to see his society's intellectual limits. These restrictions mean that spiritual or intellectual questions are not raised; nobody thinks for themselves. It is through Gromov that Ragin realises that 'madness' is not necessarily negative. Gromov may suffer from persecution mania, technically making him 'mad' – and therefore an outsider according to society's rules – but he is by no means intellectually wrong. Ragin realises the importance of 'society in nurturing the physical, spiritual, and intellectual life of its members'.¹⁵

James Loehlin states that 'when focused on social concerns, Chekhov framed his stories as debates between opposed philosophical positions'.¹⁶ This is exactly how Ragin comes to understand the importance of the outsider, as 'it is Gromov who exposes Ragin's moral sloth and self-deception'.¹⁷ By reading Ragin and his 'sane' society's general outlook through the philosophy of Tolstoi and his non-resistance to evil the reader comes to understand the pitfalls of resistance, of ignorance, and see how "Ward No. 6" was Chekhov's sharpest, clearest rebuttal to Tolstoy's idea of non-resistance to evil. Chekhov had been much influenced by Tolstoy's philosophy, and his stories of the early 1890s often set up a polarization between a Tolstoyan position and its opposite'.¹⁸

Tolstoi's philosophy of non-resistance to evil involves turning the other cheek, on the basis that the Old Testament rule 'an eye for an eye' goes against the fundamental Christian principle of love established in the New Testament. In *Tsarstvo bozhie vnutri vas*, which was written as a programme of organising society to follow his conception of what he believed were genuine Christian principles, Tolstoi argues that '[и]стинное непротавление есть

¹⁴ Sally Wolff, 'The Wisdom of Pain in Chekhov's "Ward Number Six"', *Literature and Medicine*, 9.1 (1990), 134–141 (p. 140).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 134.

¹⁶ Loehlin, *Chekhov*, p. 83.

¹⁷ Frydman, *Study of the Endings*, p. 181.

¹⁸ Loehlin, *Chekhov*, p. 83.

единственное настоящее сопротивление злу. Оно сокрушает голову змия. Оно убивает и в конец истребляет злое чувство'.¹⁹ The refusal to retaliate, if it were to be adopted by all, Tolstoi argues, would eventually lead to the eradication of evil. Thus:

[Т]аким образом, если бы все соблюдали заповедь непротивления, то, очевидно, не было бы ни обиды, ни злодейства. Если бы таких было большинство, то они установили бы управление любви и доброжелательства даже над обижающими, никогда не противясь злу злом, никогда не употребляя насилия. Если бы таких людей было довольно многочисленное меньшинство, то они произвели бы такое исправительное нравственное действие на общество, что всякое жестокое наказание было бы отменено, а насилие и вражда заменились бы миром и любовью.²⁰

Chekhov's critique maintains that Tolstoi's idea would actually achieve its opposite, spreading violence, indifference, and injustice. This is highlighted by the adoption of a similar idea by the 'insiders', including, initially, Ragin. The evil of ward no. 6, and the injustice its patients face, are ignored by society. The 'outsiders' are 'mad' and so need not be considered. So while 'the Tolstoyan doctrine of passive acceptance is voiced by the torpid doctor, Andrey Yefimych Ragin, [...] a position of resistance and rebellion is taken by the articulate madman Gromov'.²¹

Gromov's position can be elucidated by examining the Christian political philosopher Nikolai Berdiaev's philosophy, which itself was developed in opposition to the Tolstoian doctrine of non-resistance to evil. Berdiaev argues that generalised philosophies do not allow for individual cases: '[н]е убий - абсолютная норма, одинаковая для всех людей, но

¹⁹ Lev Tolstoi, *Tsarstvo bozhie vnutri vas: Khristianstvo ne kak misticheskoe uchenie, a kak novoe zhizneponimanie* (Berlin: I. P. Ladyzhnikov, 1920), p. 21.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 22.

²¹ Loehlin, *Chekhov*, p. 84.

иногда человек трагически берет на себя вину убийства для того, чтобы убийства было меньше в мире и чтобы величайшие ценности были сохранены и утверждены'.²²

Berdiaev argues that Tolstoi's doctrine will make people immune to evil, allowing it to continue to exist. Therefore, 'когда люди «к добру и злу постыдно равнодушны», когда они слишком широки и снисходительны к злу и отказываются от нравственной борьбы, наступает деморализация и разложение'.²³ This point is where Chekhov permits Gromov to win the discussion. The ignorance (non-resistance) of the townsfolk does not stop the suffering of ward no. 6 but sanctions its continuation. Ragin allowed suffering to happen by not battling against the conditions of his hospital, believing that he could not prevent suffering, and neglecting his work. Like Pushkin's Evgenii in 'Mednyi vsadnik', Ragin must take a step back from his society in order to evaluate it as good or evil. If it is indeed evil, then he cannot take the path of non-resistance, and must rebel. Looking at Gromov's philosophy in the light of Berdiaev's, allows us to better understand how the former triumphs as an accepted norm is not necessarily morally right. Thus:

[н]равственное суждение совершает не личность, в свободе стоящая перед Богом, а семья, класс, партия, национальность, вероисповедание и т. п. Это не значит, что для того, чтобы нравственное суждение было правдивым, свободными и первородным, личность должна себя изолировать от всех социальных, сверхличных образований и целостей, от своей семьи, своего народа, своей церкви и т. д., но это значит, что личность должна в первородном акте своей совести отделить правду от лжи в оценках давящих ее социальных группировок.²⁴

²² Nikolai Berdiaev, *O naznachanii cheloveka* (Moscow: Respublika, 1993), p. 140.

²³ Ibid., p. 142.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 145.

Gromov's rebuttal of Ragin's philosophy, in the context of Berdiaev's rebuttal of Tolstoi's philosophy, raises questions about the insider-outsider dynamic. If society can be morally wrong, then the outcast must be right? Ragin comes to realise that just because Gromov is deemed 'mad' and an 'outsider' it does not make him morally, or philosophically, incorrect. In fact, as revealed in the discussion between Gromov and Ragin, Gromov is correct and society is wrong. The question of who is sane and who is mad is raised. Despite supposedly being 'mad', in a negative sense, '[I]ike a Shakespeare fool who speaks the most wisely, Chekhov's Gromov reasons, philosophizes, and speaks the truth.'²⁵ Chekhov uses this other to teach and develop his protagonist and to clearly present his ideas to the reader, by making them the spectator of a debate. Through their discussion, Ragin comes to see Gromov as a wise man who happens to suffer from persecution mania, rather than simply 'mad', so that 'when he talks you recognize in him the lunatic and the man'.²⁶ Gromov, being an 'outsider', is able to objectively understand society; he does not feel obliged to act in a certain way to remain a part of the crowd. Like the reader, Gromov has a distance between himself and the fictional society, allowing him to understand suffering in the same way that Berdiaev does and to see the evil caused by society's (non)actions. As a result, this provides the reader with both the subjective view of the text's society from Ragin and its contrasting objective view from Gromov, allowing them to evaluate the problem with society and blind acceptance. As Nikita Nankov argues, 'Ivan Dmitrich Gromov, a person kept in an asylum for years, is the only one who is aware of the madness of the normal world'.²⁷ In sum, only the 'mad' outsider has the objectivity to make moral judgments.

²⁵ Wolff, 'The Wisdom of Pain', p. 137.

²⁶ Rodica Frențiu, 'Anton Pavlovich Chekhov, *Ward No. 6* and Ryuunosuke Akutagawa, *Kappa*. Meditation on the Human Condition', *Studia Universitatis Babeș-Bolyai – Philologia*, 51.1 (2006), 123–130 (p. 128).

²⁷ Nikita Nankov, *A Poetics of Freedom: Anton Chekhov's Prose Fiction and Modernity*, Thesis (Ph.D), Indiana University, 2006, p. 149.

Therefore, the debate between Ragin and Gromov opens Ragin's eyes to the fact that non-resistance to evil means that others needlessly suffer. He has allowed suffering to occur by not fighting for his patients. It is here that Ragin becomes an individual rather than a sheep lost in the crowd. In so doing, his life regains meaning, but he himself comes to be considered 'mad'. However, the reader realises that madness may not be the evil it was previously thought to be. Gromov allows Ragin freedom in thought, but as a result Ragin moves from being an 'insider' to an 'outsider' as his I-for-myself becomes a philosophically-heightened individual, which his society refuses to accept. His I-for-myself is philosophically advanced whilst his I-for-another is mad.

Whereas Ragin moves from insider to outsider after his enlightenment, Odoevskii's Mikhail Platonovich begins the work as an outcast and actually further removes himself from society via his enlightenment. Odoevskii's 'Sil'fida' uses letters and journal entries to depict the fictional world from a subjective point of view, giving the reader an insight into the protagonist's mental state, but also raising questions about the validity of his perceptions and how well they correlate to the textual objective world, especially when contrasted to the later conversations between the letters' recipient and a doctor who diagnoses Mikhail Platonovich as mad. As Whitehead highlights, this causes the reader to hesitate as to which laws govern the fictional world, as we are presented with a 'multiplicity of voices' that contradict each other and are never informed of the 'hierarchy of authority between these various voices' all of which initially appear as 'rational personalities unprejudiced to a belief in anything other than the natural world', making the reader sympathetic to all voices.²⁸

Having found his uncle's stash of mystical books, Mikhail Platonovich decides to indulge himself in a spell to bring about a sylph in a vase. Several days pass and slowly, to his surprise, Mikhail Platonovich sees changes in the water before a sylph appears. Much like

²⁸ Whitehead, 'The Impact of Multiple Voice', p. 398.

Chekhov's Kovrin, Mikhail Platonovich is represented as questioning his perception, but he ultimately decides to trust his senses and his life changes from this point on. Mikhail Platonovich becomes entirely overtaken by this new spiritual world he finds himself in. He does not continue to participate in provincial society, for example, by interacting with a possible fiancée and her family. It is at this point that:

Mikhail Platonovich [...] breaks off writing to his friend and, presumably, all communication with the rest of the world. The point is clear that Mikhail Platonovich saw that he had an obvious choice to make: he has repudiated the ordinary *prosaic* life [...] in favour of whatever is to be found within the hitherto uncharted *poetic* world of the elemental spirits.²⁹

Not only is Mikhail Platonovich an outsider in that he is from the city and does not adopt the provincial way of life, he now further removes himself from that society by forgoing the physical world in favour of the spiritual. Not only are his personal and social selves different, but they exist within different realms. Whereas in part one of this thesis I posited the duality of worlds as the opposition of the real and the imaginary, here the dichotomy consists of the textual actual world (the physical) and the spiritual. This other world – in this case the spiritual realm – is available only to the protagonist, marking it as a sign of madness to society by its access to realms beyond the everyday.

In essence, it is this split between worlds that determines the insider-outsider dynamic of 'Sil'fida'. Thus:

the subjective experience of truth in Mikhail Platonovich's ecstatic vision is an articulation of the ontological predicament of modern identities – the inward gaze of the modern self. The issue is that the truth he discovers is inaccessible to the modern variety of instrumental reason. The moral and aesthetic ground that concerns him

²⁹ Putney, 'The Circle', p. 190.

exists on a spiritual plane that is suprarational, transcendent and ineffable. The modern reasoning mind, on the other hand, views transcendental metaphysics as ridiculous and incomprehensible. [...] Thus, the discovery of truth by ecstatic vision is invalid by the standards of modern discursive practice.³⁰

By opening up the spiritual world, Mikhail Platonovich permits himself access to higher truths, not available to those existing solely in the physical world of the provincial town and which are questioned by the reader not only due to their lack of mimetic relationship to the reader's world, which was seemingly established early in the text, but also by the use of language, such as the contrast between indefinite adjectives ('какое-то', 'что-то') and [specific] time stamps ('вчера', 'сегодня').³¹ Thus, not only is the fictional world split into two contrasting halves, but so too is the language and technique used to depict it.³² Much like Hoffmann's 'Der goldne Topf', the separation of the self into two distinct halves – the personal in the aesthetic world and the social in the physical – characterises the madness within this work.

Examining Odoevskii's representation of the physical world versus a higher reality in conjunction with the philosophy of St. Augustine will allow us to see how Mikhail Platonovich's actions lead him to counter the mindset of those around him. Augustine argues that the mind, as it is untouched, lives in the physical world. In Odoevskii this 'untouched mind' is represented by the provincial townsfolk, who live day-to-day unconcerned with spiritual or philosophical questions. However, this is only the starting point for the self. Augustine states that the mind requires 'divine illumination', allowing it to enter into the

³⁰ Lonny Harrison, 'Reasonable to Ridiculous: The Inward Gaze of the Modern Self in Dostoevskii and Vladimir Odoevskii', *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, 55.3-4 (2013), 343–363 (p. 355).

³¹ Vladimir Odoevskii, 'Sil'fida', in *Povesti i rasskazy* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1959), pp. 272–294 (pp. 283–284).

³² Whitehead, 'The Impact of Multiple Voice', pp. 406–407.

spiritual world and gain higher truths. He states that ‘truth in any genuine sense is not something to be expected from the bodily senses’.³³ The appearance of the sylph allows Mikhail Platonovich access to a world and truths he could not previously realise. In Augustine’s thinking, the human being is a dichotomy as body and soul are two distinct parts of the human person. But the soul is the truth from God that works under reason to control the body in the human world. The mind becomes enlightened by the divine illumination and can discover truths unavailable to those living solely in the physical world.

Augustine’s theory of divine illumination echoes Mikhail Platonovich’s ascension from the physical world into the spiritual. Yet the removal of the self from the physical world of the provincial town causes concern amongst its inhabitants – who have not experienced divine spiritual illumination – with the result that Mikhail Platonovich becomes an outsider both in a physical *and* spiritual sense. The closed nature of the town renders it unable to comprehend the other, higher spiritual world, leaving the newfound I-for-myself to classify Mikhail Platonovich as ‘mad’, not spiritually advanced.

The townsfolk, unable to understand his newfound spiritual enlightenment, believe his interactions with a spiritual creature to be a creation of the mind. Whitehead alludes to Todorov’s theory of the fantastic when she states that ‘the hesitation between natural and supernatural interpretations of events described can be accounted for, primarily, by the incompatibility of the views expressed by the different voices’.³⁴ Specifically, she highlights the use of concrete time to counter the seemingly impossible events, leaving the reader in a state of uncertainty about whether to believe the townsfolk or Mikhail Platonovich. The inability to understand one another creates ‘tension that arises from the fact that there are two possible and equally unresolvable explanations for this “event” – *either* he had an encounter

³³ Saint Augustine, *Eighty-three Different Questions*, trans. David L. Mosher (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1982), p. 41.

³⁴ Whitehead, ‘The Impact of Multiple Voice’, p. 398.

with an elemental spirit *or* he had gone insane’.³⁵ Therefore, as in ‘Palata nomer 6’, the question of who is sane and who is mad arises. If events occur as stated by Mikhail Platonovich then, for the reader, he remains sane and gains spiritual insight via his experiences, but is still perceived as ‘mad’ by his society due to their inability to comprehend higher truths. Madness here is a deviation from a common social view, not necessarily the affliction of a disease. However, if the events occur as the townsfolk believe – i.e. the sylph never actually appeared – then Mikhail Platonovich can be deemed ‘mad’ by both his society and the reader.

Rabkin argues that the fantastic can be a form of escape, particularly due to boredom, as ‘if those external ground rules are seen as a restraint on the human spirit [...] then a fantastic reversal that offers a narrative world in which these ground rules are diametrically reversed serves as a much-needed psychological escape’.³⁶ The fantastic allows Mikhail Platonovich freedom from his society. Rosenshield argues that ‘Sil’fida’ continues Odoevskii’s focus on the fine line between madness and sanity as ‘Odoevsky wrote repeatedly about the superiority of humankind’s mystical and irrational inner world and about the inextricable relation between madness and genius’.³⁷ Therefore, Mikhail Platonovich may be mad but, as with Gromov, not in a negative sense, as his experiments ‘lead him, through insanity, into a higher, spiritual world that reveals to him the true meaning of existence’.³⁸

Hence, echoing Augustine’s argument, Rosenshield highlights the need for the spiritual dimension to realise higher truths about the world that cannot be obtained purely from the physical world in which the townsfolk live. Augustine states: ‘I did not know that if it [the mind] was to share in the truth, it must be illuminated by another light, because the

³⁵ Putney, ‘The Circle’, p. 194.

³⁶ Rabkin, *The Fantastic*, p. 42.

³⁷ Gary Rosenshield, ‘Choosing the Right Card: Madness, Gambling, and the Imagination in Pushkin’s “The Queen of Spades”’, *PMLA*, 109.5 (1994), 995–1008 (p. 997).

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 997.

mind itself is not the essence of truth'.³⁹ The other light is God. Just as Chekhov constructs a social commentary about the evil of society and its attitude towards suffering, so too does Odoevskii question the nature of society. Odoevskii shows how 'the antidote to modernity's ailing condition was recovery of the Romantic ideal of the higher Self privileged with transcendent vision' by demonstrating the happiness and enlightenment that Mikhail Platonovich gains through his spiritual encounter.⁴⁰

Therefore, both Ragin and Mikhail Platonovich transcend society's ideological limitations, challenging the norms that restrict them. Their philosophical distancing from society identifies both protagonists as 'outsiders' and in turn 'mad' because they think differently to their provincial societies, regardless of whether or not they are correct. As with the protagonists examined in part one, madness occurs, or is at least assumed, when a split occurs between I-for-myself and I-for-another. However, here the personal self separates from the social self as a result not of a rebellion against a social structure, but rather against social views.

The need for society to continue unquestioned, in order to uphold its traditional, closed mindsets, forces it to destroy the 'mad' outsider. This demonstrates the strength of the collective, even when based on false or dangerous ideologies, and the power that the assignation of 'mad' can have. Regarding Chekhov's social critique, Loehlin argues that 'Chekhov did not shy away from the discussion of social ideas; he only refrained from producing conclusive solutions to social problems'.⁴¹ Despite Ragin's enlightenment, society as a whole does not change: it carries on as before in its ignorant bubble, never questioning anything. As Wolff states, this means that '[i]n this deeply ironic portrait, society [...] misjudges, condemns, incarcerates, and brutalizes those who seek more than "vulgar

³⁹ Saint Augustine, *Confessions* (London: Penguin, 1961), p. 86.

⁴⁰ Harrison, 'Reasonable to Ridiculous', p. 345.

⁴¹ Loehlin, *Chekhov*, p. 83.

triviality” [...] in discourse’ as ‘[w]hat seems insanity to some appears to be highly intelligent meditation to others; philosophy is mistaken for madness’.⁴² The townsfolk show no inclination to venture outside of their mode of behaviour and continue with their non-resistance, meaning that the enlightened – Ragin and Gromov – are victims ‘of a society generally unable to accept and sustain true intellectual life’.⁴³ This categorisation as mad confirms Ragin’s departure to ward no. 6, cementing his outsider status. Knowing how the patients are treated, and the lack of help available to stop this, due to the town’s overarching philosophy of non-resistance, Ragin realises that the only escape is through death. Unlike the death-as-escape events discussed below in relation to Ostrovskii’s ‘Groza’ and Leskov’s ‘Ledi Makbet’, Ragin’s demise comes not as a suicide, but rather a stroke.

Ragin comes to realise that he never had any freedom of thought. He was told what to think, how to act, and how to feel by his society, and was only freed from this prison by Gromov. Ragin is then deemed mad by his own society, having crossed the accepted philosophical boundary dividing the two parts of society. He does not consider himself any different, except perhaps better educated, but the other views him as ‘mad’ and treats him as such. Realising that there is no escape from this definition he dons his hospital clothes and takes to his bed. He was not allowed freedom when ‘sane’ and is now not allowed freedom when ‘mad’. He is constantly oppressed. Only in his death does he find freedom from the repression of society.

There is no such escape for Odоеvskii’s Mikhail Platonovich. Having been branded an outcast, his provincial society attempts to subsume him back into the ‘norm’. The townsfolk attempt to ‘cure’ Mikhail Platonovich in order to realign his ideas with their own as he is not allowed to think differently. This ‘cure’, however, comes ‘at the expense of his

⁴² Wolff, ‘The Wisdom of Pain’, p. 138.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

spiritual life'.⁴⁴ Whereas Ragin adhered to his new, enlightened self and escaped the oppressive other by death, Mikhail Platonovich is forced to 'kill' his enlightened self and be subjected to the oppression of the townsfolk. Although death would serve as a kind of freedom for the new spiritual Mikhail Platonovich, he is forced back into the physical, human world, the feat of which is declared to be '[п]обеда наша!' by a member of the townsfolk.⁴⁵ The rejection of different ideas and philosophies in favour of the common mode of thinking illustrates a disdain for 'otherness', so that Mikhail Platonovich loses all his individual qualities once 'cured'. He 'marries the neighbor's daughter, leads a dull, usual life and becomes drab and dull himself – like everyone else', meaning that 'he now leads that flabby and comfortable country-squire lifestyle that he had so deliberately rejected in favour of life in sylphdom'.⁴⁶ Whereas in the other works discussed in this chapter death becomes a means to obtain freedom, Odoevskii's 'Sil'fida' depicts the consequences of remaining an outsider, with no escape through death. Unable to be accepted, the outcast, if not permanently ostracised, eventually becomes subsumed back into the society that they wished to leave. This results in Ragin being literally locked up and subjected to the 'mad' identity prescribed to outsiders, and for Mikhail Platonovich it means removing his individual freedom of thought to realign his mindset with that of society, reconciling his I-for-myself and I-for-another.

3.2 The untraditional wife's Socratic death: Ostrovskii and Leskov

Whereas the male protagonists of Chekhov's 'Palata nomer 6' and Odoevskii's 'Sil'fida' are intrinsically higher up in society's hierarchy, Ostrovskii's 'Groza' and Leskov's

⁴⁴ Rosenshield, 'Choosing the Right Card', p. 997.

⁴⁵ Odoevskii, 'Sil'fida', p. 29.

⁴⁶ Simon Karlinsky, 'A Hollow Shape: The Philosophical Tales of Prince Vladimir Odoevsky', *Studies in Romanticism*, 5.3 (1966), 169–182 (p. 177). Putney, 'The Circle', p. 191.

‘Ledi Makbet Mtsenskogo uezda’ depict female protagonists who experience gender oppression within traditional social settings. Different modes of thought occur in all four works to mark the protagonists as ‘mad’ outsiders, permitting their communities to ostracise them, but while the male characters were respected before voicing their thoughts, Ostrovskii and Leskov’s Katerinas are already repressed through the status of women in their societies. Thus, the addition of their rejection of society’s behaviour removes them twice over. Viewing these two female characters from a modern-day point of view may lead us to label their actions as sane, necessary and even logical rather than mad, but I will show how the fluidity of madness can encompass even these women as its ascription is given by those in their society who view their striving to be modern women as a mad pursuit and as a type of moral madness. Hence, madness often entailed ‘trying (and [...] failing) to keep up with some external standard’ whereas sanity meant ‘being subject to judgment from the outside, and internalizing that judgment as part of your identity’ in order to act in accordance with it.⁴⁷

Both Katerinas play the wife of a merchant family. The division of Imperial Russian society into *sosloviia*, ‘official social estates or statuses, usually based on birth, that defined individual rights and duties vis-à-vis the state’, meant ‘ascription not simply into a broad category or status but also into a specific, local society’.⁴⁸ These *sosloviia* consisted of merchants, townspeople, peasants, Cossacks, nobles, and the clergy.⁴⁹ The merchantry was an estate with a reputation for being particularly traditional, leading them to form closed communities, separating themselves from the more progressive outside world. It is due to this separation from the modernising world that such a traditionalist society was able to operate

⁴⁷ Anne Lounsberry, *Life is Elsewhere: Symbolic Geography in the Russian Provinces, 1800-1917* (Ithaca, NY: Northern Illinois University Press, an imprint of Cornell University Press, 2019), p. 28.

⁴⁸ Alison K. Smith, *For the Common Good and their own Well-Being. Social Estates in Imperial Russia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 1.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

mostly uninterrupted. Thus ‘family patterns remained patriarchal in the traditional sense of the word, that is, they rested on the authority of the old over the young, as well as of men over women’.⁵⁰ Leskov and Ostrovskii, however, both had access to these communities, unavailable to many, and as such were able to portray them authentically in their respective works.⁵¹ In the treatment of their protagonists, both authors develop an insider-outsider dichotomy that suggests those who do not embrace the traditional mode of life will face ostracism. This reflects the reality and shows the disastrous mental and physical consequences, of ‘patriarchal families led by men (and sometimes women) [which] used every accessible tool to discipline, control and subjugate women to the family and community needs, often to the harm of their own interests’.⁵² But, as with the male protagonists discussed above, it is not the rank that the women desire to rid themselves of, but rather the crushing social views that restrict their freedom within the role of a merchant’s wife. However, the two works are in different genres: ‘Groza’ is a play and ‘Ledi Makbet Mtsenskogo uezda’ is a novella, portraying the heroine’s internal struggles in different manners, but both equally highlighting her position in opposition to society. The idea of women stepping out of line, and being punished, has long been portrayed in literature, for example with Lilith refusing to submit to Adam and being cast as a demon as a result. This literary trope explores the fact that ‘women are warned that if they do not behave like angels they must be monsters’.⁵³

⁵⁰ Barbara Alpern Engel, ‘Women and Urban Culture’, in *Women in Nineteenth-Century Russia: Lives and Culture*, ed. Wendy Rosslyn, Alessandra Tosi (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2012), pp. 19–40 (p. 26).

⁵¹ Lounsberry, *Life is Elsewhere*, p. 184.

⁵² Marianna G. Muravyeva, ‘Between Law and Morality: Violence against Women in Nineteenth-Century Russia’, in *Women in Nineteenth-Century Russia: Lives and Culture*, ed. Wendy Rosslyn, Alessandra Tosi (London: Open Book Publishers, 2012), pp. 209–238 (p. 237).

⁵³ Gilbert, Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, p. 53.

Ostrovskii's 'Groza' is a play set in the fictional provincial town of Kalinov. The play follows the protagonist, Katerina, who was married into the Kabanov family, and her gradual descent into madness, i.e. her alienation from social norms, and assertion of her self outside of them. Katerina is married to Tikhon Ivanovich, a merchant, yet is essentially under the tyrannical rule of his mother, Marfa Ignat'evna Kabanova. Kabanova, the matriarch of the household, is never to be questioned. Her values and beliefs constitute the old, traditional way of life where a wife should be subservient, rear children, and be humble throughout. The degrading position of the 'traditional wife' is the driving force for the play.

Ostrovskii shows us that the patriarchal values were not only reinforced by men, but were viewed by many as the only way of life. Women policed women, oppressing their own gender in order to retain a traditionalist life. Kabanova holds an enviable position since, as Christine Worobec states, 'a mother-in-law [...] held the most coveted position. As manager of domestic tasks, she supervised the work of her daughters-in-law, sisters-in-law, and children. In addition, she had the major duty of acculturating her children in village mores'.⁵⁴ Despite her gender, Kabanova 'wield[s] considerable power because of her indispensable role in maintaining the household as a social and economic unit and presenting it in a favorable light to the larger community'.⁵⁵ Women were policed from all angles, reinforcing the idea that the gender roles were simply something to accept. As the literary critic Nikolai Dobroliubov asks in his seminal article on Ostrovskii, this microcosm of life presented within the play 'показывает нам русскую жизнь, не касается отношений чисто общественных и государственных, а ограничивается семейством; в семействе же более всего выдерживает на себе весь гнет самодурства, как не женщина?'.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Worobec, 'Victims or Actors', p. 179.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 180.

⁵⁶ Nikolai Dobroliubov, 'Luch sveta v temnom tsarstve', in *Russkaia tragediia: P'esa A. N. Ostrovskogo 'Groza' v russkoi kritike i literaturovedenii*, ed. I. N. Sukhikh (Saint Petersburg: Azbuka-klassika, 2002), pp. 208–278 (p. 225).

The problem is that Katerina is portrayed as not adhering to this oppressive role expected of her. She is constantly trying to appease Kabanova with her actions and words, but her inability to accept the traditional ways means that she constantly acts inappropriately. For example, she does not wail when her husband leaves on a trip, as shown through the exchange of two minor characters: ‘Да она у вас воет когда?’ ‘Не слышать что-то’.⁵⁷ She is constantly instructed how to *act* by her mother-in-law, emphasising a performative role irrespective of her emotions. She is forced to maintain a respectable I-for-another, even if it contradicts her I-for-myself, forcing a conflict of interest between the two halves of her self. I will turn again to Judith Butler’s gender theory to explore the motivations behind Katerina’s false presentation of her self, and the pressure from society to do so. Just as Gogol’s Kovalev and Dostoevskii’s Goliadkin perform the role of a particular ranking male, so too is Katerina expected to play the role of respectable merchant’s wife. Butler states that ‘gender is in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts [proceed]; rather, it is an identity tenuously constituted in time – an identity instituted through a *stylized repetition of acts*’.⁵⁸ Therefore, Katerina does not act in this traditional manner *because* she is a woman, indeed the reverse is true. She inadvertently sticks out as other by her lack of desire to play the ‘traditional wife’ role society forces upon the woman. She highlights that women ‘were both actors in and victims of a system that provided them with rewards and punishment’.⁵⁹ It is because of this contrast to the conforming women surrounding her that, in Dobroliubov’s terms, she constitutes a ray of light in the kingdom of darkness since ‘the family was a “Realm of Darkness”, in which “despotism” bore most heavily on women’.⁶⁰ Katerina asserts her free will (her personal self) in a closed-minded society, marking her I-for-another as

⁵⁷ Aleksandr Ostrovskii, ‘Groza’, in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 12 vols (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel’stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1950), II, pp. 210–267 (p. 226).

⁵⁸ Butler, ‘Performative Acts’, p. 519.

⁵⁹ Worobec, ‘Victims or Actors’, p. 205.

⁶⁰ Engel, ‘Women and Urban Culture’, p. 315.

different from the accepted norm. Thus her eventual suicide is read by Dobroliubov as a rebellion against the ignorant society in which she lives. This ‘otherness’, however, only increases her mother-in-law’s control over the household. As Irene Zohrab explains:

Catherine can be seen as the proverbial victim of the society depicted, metaphorically ‘sacrificed’ because of her ‘otherness’. Catherine’s difference to the others is established from the outset; she is therefore suspect within that community and someone to be controlled. Within the paternalistic structure of that society the ultimate form of authority is punishment by exclusion, and the marginalisation and erosion of her humanity.⁶¹

This ‘otherness’, read as a rebellion against a repressive society, brings into question the role of the outsider as a symbol of emancipation, as although Katerina does not constantly rebel, neither does she entirely subscribe to the traditional female role that would enslave her.

Katerina, as a ray of light, presents this emancipatory, new, forward-thinking woman. Thus, as A. I. Reviakin says, ‘[в] самой общей формулировке тематический стержень «Гроза» можно определить как столкновение между новыми веяниями и старыми традициями, [...] между стремлениями угнетаемых людей к свободному проявлению своих духовных потребностей, склонностей, интересов и господствовавшими в предреформенной России общественными и семейно-бытовыми порядками’.⁶²

Leskov’s ‘Ledi Makbet Mtsenskogo uezda’ has striking parallels with Ostrovskii’s ‘Groza’ to the extent that the protagonist was purposely given the same first name: Katerina

⁶¹ Irene Zohrab, ‘Re-assessing A N Ostrovsky’s “Groza”’: From the Classical Tradition to Contemporary Critical Approaches’, *New Zealand Slavonic Journal*, 36 (2002), 302–320 (p. 307).

⁶² A. I. Reviakin, ‘Tema i ideia “Grozy”’, in *Russkaia tragediia: P’esa A. N. Ostrovskogo ‘Groza’ v russkoi kritike i literaturovedenii*, ed. I. N. Sukhikh (Saint Petersburg: Azbuka-klassika, 2002), pp. 344–353 (p. 344).

L'vovna Izmailova.⁶³ Neither protagonist has children, but this is depicted as affecting Leskov's Katerina more, cementing her disdain for the role forced upon her. Although the absence of children may be the fault of the male partner (his previous wife did not bear any children either) the blame falls on the women, highlighting the fact that the only role open to them by society is also the one denied to them by another. The boredom that she experiences, due to the limitations placed upon her, strengthens her longing for a child, almost solely in order to give her something to do rather than a loving desire for children: '[p]аз, что скука непомерная в запретном купеческом терему с высоким забором и спущенными цепными собаками не раз наводила на молодую купчиху тоску, доходящую до одури, и она рада бы, Бог весть как рада бы она была понянчиться с деточкой'.⁶⁴ She takes care of her husband, his family, and occasionally visits family friends, but beyond this has nothing to occupy her time, particularly when her husband leaves on business trips. Leskov's work poses two options to Katerina: continue to be a traditional wife and be miserable, or rebel against the role society thrusts on women, and become an outsider in the hope of gaining happiness. In other words, does she attempt to project her I-for-myself onto a world in which it is not accepted? The story's ambivalent attitude to the character and the choice that she must make are apparent from the start. As Robin Aizlewood states:

[t]he motif of imprisonment and crime is prominent from the first chapter of the story. While the opening paragraph identifies Katerina as a Lady Macbeth, the perpetrator of murder and demon figure, the rest of this chapter portrays her primarily as victim, imprisoned in the Izmailov house.⁶⁵

⁶³ Marina Tcherkashina, 'Gogol and Leskov in Shostakovich's Interpretation', *International Journal of Musicology*, 1 (1992), 229–244 (p. 239).

⁶⁴ Nikolai Leskov, 'Ledi Makbet Mtsenskogo uezda', in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridtsati tomakh*, 30 vols (Moscow: Terra, 1998), V, pp. 7–49 (p. 8).

⁶⁵ Robin Aizlewood, 'Leskov's "Ledi Makbet Mtsenskogo uezda": Composition and Symbolic Framework', *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 85.3 (2007), 401–440 (p. 414).

Both Ostrovskii's and Leskov's Katerinas play the role of oppressed wives, forced to adhere to the traditional duties of a homemaker. The female's body was subjected to the pressures of society and her husband as it was '[a] wife's responsibility to produce offspring underscor[ing] the fact that weddings transferred more than an individual between families. They also transferred [...] "rights to the bride's reproductive powers"'.⁶⁶ Not only are women depicted as subordinate to men in these societies, but a married woman is permitted even less freedom than an unmarried woman as she takes on the role of child-bearer and rearer. Both protagonists are obviously unhappy in this role, not least because they are denied the one function normally given to women in their position – motherhood – making clear to others their positions as 'outsiders'. Eventually this leads them to cement their role as other by continuing to reject repressive norms. The main focus of both of their rebellions comes in the form of an affair.

In 'Groza', the reader has already seen how Katerina does not naturally fit into the mould of a traditional wife; she does not love her husband, nor want to obey him. The feminist existentialist philosopher Simone de Beauvoir's work *Le deuxième sexe* (1949) traces the oppression of women throughout history, contrasting it to the view of men as superior. With its publication, the book was regarded as a starting point for a second wave of feminism, foregrounding the gender imbalance within society, how it was constructed, and how it could be overcome. De Beauvoir, much like Butler, argues that women are not born with the accepted social role of 'woman' engrained into them, but that it is a gender practice which is learnt. With this in mind, she argues that women do not think of themselves as 'subjects'. They are referred to as 'objects' simply because they are constantly told, according to traditional values, that '[h]e is the Subject; he is the Absolute. She is the Other'.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Worobec, 'Victims or Actors', p. 178.

⁶⁷ Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. Constance Borde, Sheila Malovany-Chevallier (London: Vintage Books, 2011), p. 26.

De Beauvoir's concern is not that these roles existed, but rather that they *continue to exist*, meaning that 'what determines women's present situation is the stubborn survival of the most ancient traditions in the new emerging civilisation'.⁶⁸ In the case of Ostrovskii's 'Groza', these values are kept in place by Kabanova, the tyrannical matriarch. De Beauvoir writes her work in the hope that there will be a new emancipatory female figure to put an end to this oppressive tradition. In 'Groza' this comes in the form of Katerina. Although her actions make no difference to the wider oppression of women, she may make a small start by ending the oppression against herself. As Zohrab argues:

the tragic heroine Catherine has come to be regarded as the quintessence of native Russian womanhood. It can be argued that Ostrovsky and Dobrolyubov have influenced the social construction of the all-suffering female victim in Russian culture, set apart and destroyed for her elemental yearning for the unattainable and the maximalist expression of her will (*volia*). Thus Catherine the tragic heroine, a saintly sinner sacrificed and thereby redeemed, has come to be seen as a prototype of corporeal femininity and alterity to be aspired to.⁶⁹

Katerina embodies de Beauvoir's rebellious woman figure by not perfectly adhering to the role placed upon her. She is a woman, but not her society's version of a woman; she asserts her I-for-myself blatantly in the face of her I-for-another. She projects a free woman onto a repressive world. She is represented as a victim, attempting, and failing, to fit into this historical, traditional role. The fact that this work is a play, forces the actress to fill in the interior gaps left by Ostrovskii. Through her words the reader understands little about her motivations, thoughts, and struggles, for which the audience must rely upon the actress's and

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 188.

⁶⁹ Irene Zohrab, 'Necessity and Freedom in Ostrovsky's *Thunder*', in *European Tragedy from Homer to Beckett: Nine Essays and an Interview*, ed. Davidson, J., Delbruck H. (Dunedin: University of Otago, 2011), pp. 91–119 (p. 92).

the director's interpretations. This reliance upon a subjective interpretation of the text produces no singular concrete view of Katerina's internal struggle, especially when coupled with the 'an external view [which] is restricted entirely to what can be materially observed'.⁷⁰ This is where the role of the other holds significance as the audience can imagine her thoughts and struggles by how she interacts with the other characters and presents herself through facial expressions, gestures and tone of voice. Katerina is mediated through the mind of the spectator. Unlike previously considered protagonists of the literature of the 1860s, whose selfhood is examined almost exclusively from the personal point of view, the disunity between the internal and external halves of Katerina's self are portrayed via the social sphere. It is the other characters' reactions and perceptions that highlight her non-alignment with society's expectations of women.

De Beauvoir's theory provides a lens through which to understand Katerina's motivation for rebellion through the limitations of the 'traditional female role'. The removal of her husband, due to a business trip, presents her with the perfect opportunity to forgo this ill-fitting, oppressive role and become de Beauvoir's 'new woman'. Katerina, still oppressed and fearful of her society, takes a risk by making full use of her newfound freedom to find a lover in Boris Grigor'evich. De Beauvoir can also shed light on Katerina's character here as:

just as the girl will sometimes take a lover to rebel against her mother or protest against her parents, disobey them, affirm herself, so a woman whose very resentment attaches her to her husband seeks a confidant in her lover, an observer who considers her a victim, an accomplice who helps her humiliate her husband.⁷¹

Katerina expresses her own free will to act as she chooses, as depicted by developing a relationship with Boris, despite her anxieties about society's reaction and punishment. She

⁷⁰ Lanser, *The Narrative Act*, p. 207.

⁷¹ De Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, p. 672.

refuses to be pressed into the mould of a traditional wife by Kabanova. The results of this defiance can be summed up by a line from Spanish dramatist Federico Garcia Lorca's play *The House of Bernarda Alba* (1945) when the matriarch states '[w]hen a daughter disobeys, she ceases to be a daughter. She becomes a kind of enemy', indicating the privileging of society's norms over the individual's feelings.⁷² How society perceives you is more important here than how you perceive yourself. Katerina rebels against this and asserts her own will through Boris, but at the expense of her inclusion into society:

[д]авно люблю. Словно на грех ты к нам приехал. Как увидела тебя, так уж не своя срала. С первого же раза, кажется, кабы ты поманил меня, я бы и пошла за тобой; иди ты хоть на край света, я бы все шла за тобой и не оглянулась бы.⁷³

Despite Katerina never being a true 'insider', Kabanova's efforts, by telling her how to act, ensured that Katerina was still accepted by society. As Dobroliubov states, '[п]редмет драмы действительно представляет борьбу в Катерине между чувством долга супружеской верности и страсти к молодому Борису Григорьевичу'.⁷⁴ Now, however, by shunning traditional values and apparently committing adultery (the extent of their relationship is never made entirely clear in the play), Katerina cements her status as a free woman and outcast.

Similarly, Leskov's Katerina rebels against this oppressive role of a traditional wife through an affair. Over the five-year period of being married to her husband she finds herself increasingly frustrated and bored. The text is written in the third-person, with the narrator occasionally having privileged access to Katerina's thoughts, but for the majority of the work the reader is separated from her interior life and, as with Ostrovskii's Katerina, it is in the social sphere that we recognise the change in her; it is through her suddenly out-of-character

⁷² Federico Garcia Lorca, *The House of Bernarda Alba*, trans. David Hare (London: Faber and Faber, 2005), p. 57.

⁷³ Ostrovskii, 'Groza', p. 248.

⁷⁴ Dobroliubov, 'Luch sveta', p. 215.

actions that the reader comes to understand that she has endured as much repression as she can. This problem can also be seen in the context of the ‘woman question’, which was gaining traction in Europe as much as in Russia in the 1860s, playing a significant role in general debates and social movements at the time that Leskov’s story was written. The utilitarian philosopher John Stuart Mill’s *The Subjection of Women* (1869), like de Beauvoir’s work, took issue with society’s treatment of women and the ‘traditional female role’, arguing for a feminist approach to social structure. Mill argues for the reconfiguration of society to allow for equality between the sexes, in order for women to contribute both intellectually and physically, on the same plane as men, essentially removing the limitations set upon women by tradition. As Mill states:

[a]ll women are brought up from the very earliest years in the belief that their ideal of character is the very opposite to that of men; not self-will, and government by self-control, but submission, and yielding to the control of others. All the moralities tell them that it is the duty of women, and all the current sentimentalities that it is their nature, to live for others; to make complete abnegation of themselves[...]. And by their affections are meant the only ones they are allowed to have – those to the men with whom they are connected.⁷⁵

In sum, the personal self must be repressed in order to allow for the restrictions imposed upon women. Leskov’s Katerina certainly adheres to this role – she submits to her husband and her father-in-law, taking care of the home and other such ‘wifely duties’, all at the expense of her own happiness. The mental consequences of an enforced patriarchy and separation from society, such as depression, will be discussed in chapter six.

⁷⁵ John Stuart Mill, *The Subjection of Women* (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1878), p. 28.

In keeping with this traditional image of a wife, Katerina is essentially confined to the home, rarely venturing outside. Mill's argument suggests that regardless of her husband's attitude towards her, Katerina is inevitably doomed to limitations due to society's traditional expectation of the woman figure. Mill states that 'however brutal a tyrant she may unfortunately be chained to – [...] though she may feel it impossible not to loathe him – he can claim from her and enforce the lowest degradation of a human being, that of being made the instrument of an animal function contrary to her inclinations'.⁷⁶ Katerina's husband sees her as an instrument, and is not stopped from doing so as '[m]en are not required, as a preliminary to the marriage ceremony, to prove by testimonials that they are fit to be trusted with the exercise of absolute power'.⁷⁷ This all changes when she decides to interact with others beyond the immediate family unit. Her rebellion and rejection of society's norms comes in the form of an affair with a worker, Sergei.

Essentially, it does not matter to Katerina that Sergei is a 'fickle philanderer', but rather that he gives her the happiness and attention she lacked.⁷⁸ The possibility that Sergei may not be the knight in shining armour he presents himself as, but rather is using her, as the reader is told he has done several times before, does not appear to cross Katerina's mind, emphasising her naivety. Using Mill's philosophy as a guide to gender roles, it shows how despite the rejection of the husband in favour of Sergei, nothing about Katerina's position changes, or can possibly change while she maintains a relationship with a male figure. Sergei, however, at least pretends to regard her differently. He opens up this new world to Katerina, once forbidden to her, of passion, people, and excitement. Sergei does not force Katerina to act, dress, or talk in a particular manner, as her merchant husband must because of their

⁷⁶ Ibid., pp. 59–60.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 65.

⁷⁸ Faith Wigzell, 'Russian Dream Books and Lady Macbeth's Cat', *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 66.4 (1988), 625–630 (p. 625).

standing in society. The lower-standing Sergei therefore gives Katerina a rush of new emotions, permitting her to forget about her oppressive position in society, in her family, and live simply as she wishes.

These emotions, however, lead Katerina to expose herself as ‘outsider’ to her husband. She reveals her affair and proceeds to throw off her marital shackles by killing her husband and father-in-law, and distancing herself from her former role. This attempt at freedom, however, does not work. As Mill states, the woman will always be a slave to the man, so in effect Katerina simply changes master from her husband to Sergei. The desire to keep Sergei and their ‘love’ seemingly knows no bounds, as Katerina engages in a string of murders, all for Sergei’s benefit. Katerina therefore becomes clouded by:

[p]assionate possessiveness [which] is [...] [a] type of love that separates people from their surroundings and is dangerous in that it can bring with it isolation and ‘suffocation’ of the lovers [...] [and] [t]he woman in her desperation to eliminate all elements standing between her and her lover is driven to the literal ‘cutting out,’ the murder of four people.⁷⁹

Sergei’s masterful hold over Katerina removes her moral compass. She casts herself in the role of an outsider not only with her rejection of society’s morality, but also with her rejection of the law. This young girl who desired freedom has been caught in the spell of another man, this time with significantly more dire consequences, with the result that:

[t]he most chilling aspect of the story is not the graphic accounts of four murders but the fact that Katerina, portrayed as a beautiful but otherwise unexceptional girl, is able to commit her acts so calmly, with little apparent remorse. There seems indeed to be no moral struggle.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Irmhild Christina Sperrle, *The Organic Worldview of Nikolai Leskov* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2002), p. 61.

⁸⁰ K. A. Lantz, *Nikolay Leskov* (Boston, MA: Twayne Publishers, 1979), p. 45.

Leskov appears to show Katerina's lack of morality during the murder of her nephew, as she instigates the killing by summoning Sergei to the scene. The idea of woman as angelic or demonic is once again raised here as the reader is informed that her thoughts were like demons, highlighting how the loss of a moral compass is perceived as madness. The idea, however, was implanted in Katerina's mind by Sergei, as he repeatedly reminds Katerina of the negative consequences of her nephew's presence. When the event comes to a head it appears to be Katerina's idea, but the possibility that the blame truly lies with Sergei's psychological tricks, in casting the boy as responsible for their potential poverty and unhappiness, is never ruled out:

[о]но точно, Катерина Ильвовна, что вам, может быть, это и совсем не в интересе, ну только для меня, как я вас уважаю, и опять же супротив людских глаз, подлых и завистливых, ужасно это будет больно. Вам там как будет угодно, разумеется, а я так своим соображением располагаю, что никогда я через эти обстоятельства счастлив быть не могу.⁸¹

Mill's understanding of the female role as a slave can enlighten us to the idea of Katerina as simply a puppet, and how she came to be so, since he states that '[t]hose who are under the control of others cannot often commit crimes, unless at the command and for the purposes of their masters'.⁸² Katerina, then, has not escaped the oppressive role of a woman and gained her freedom, as she thought, but rather has transferred her loyalties to a more morally corrupt master. Yet her desire to be seen as a free woman, and loved by Sergei, produces 'an overpowering passion [...] [that] fills Katerina's heart; nothing else matters'.⁸³

⁸¹ Leskov, 'Ledi Makbet Mtsenskogo uezda', p. 31.

⁸² Mill, *The Subjection of Women*, p. 142.

⁸³ Hugh McLean, *Nikolai Leskov: The Man and his Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), p. 148.

Ironically, it is her desire to be free *with* another that continues to imprison her; she cannot be free and with Sergei since, as Mill shows, he will always enslave her.

For both Katerinas, suicide is the final factor of their otherness. Ostrovskii's Katerina, as a result of her affair with Boris, realises that she cannot have freedom in this society. Even having rejected society's norms, she is still not allowed freedom, so the reader must understand the complexities behind her situation, which still attempt to force her into the traditional role. Hence, as Zohrab states, 'the choices that Catherine makes should be seen in the context of the complex interrelationship between her moral capacity and the female social role that is articulated in her choices'.⁸⁴ The only way for her to truly gain freedom is to remove herself from this society, which she can only achieve through death. Thus 'Ostrovsky focuses on the morally conservative nature of [...] [the provincial town], and leaves Katherine with no escape but suicide – emphasizing the oppressiveness of the situation'.⁸⁵ Katerina finds solace in the thought of her suicide, deeming it better than living in oppression. True freedom is her personal goal: '[к]уда теперь? Домой итти? Нет, мне что домой, что в могилу - все равно. Да, что домой, что в могилу!...что в могилу! В могиле лучше...'.⁸⁶ As Richard Peace states, 'Katerina is thus a truly tragic figure whose very will to freedom inexorably implies her own self-destruction'.⁸⁷ Yet, her death is not depicted as a tragedy but rather a rebellion, allowing Katerina the freedom to be her true self. She could not live freely in her oppressive society, meaning that the reader should view 'her suicide not as a tragedy, but as the *only* solution to her circumstances'.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ Zohrab, 'Ostrovsky's "Groza"', p. 315.

⁸⁵ Nelson Ó Ceallaigh Ritschel, 'In the Shadow of the Glen: Synge, Ostrovsky, and Marital Separation', *New Hibernia Review*, 7.4 (2003), 85–102 (p. 98).

⁸⁶ Ostrovskii, 'Groza', p. 264.

⁸⁷ R. A. Peace, 'A. N. Ostrovsky's *The Thunderstorm*: The Dramatization of Conceptual Ambivalence', *Modern Language Review*, 84.1 (1989), 99–110 (p. 104).

⁸⁸ Janice Marion Stinchcomb, 'Aleksandr Ostrovskii: Domestic Drama and National Identity', Thesis (Ph.D) The University of Texas at Austin, 1997, p. 161.

As with de Beauvoir's new, rebellious woman, Katerina rejects the role forced upon her by society, giving herself freedom as an outsider through death. As Janice Stinchcomb states:

Katerina is not merely another female character in the gallery of Ostrovskii's women. She is the perfect representative of a new type [of strong Russian women] in Russian literature and in Russia itself: she is a strong character with high, uncompromising ideals, who is obliged to take action, to commit the supreme self-sacrifice in the face of tyranny. Dobroliubov does not necessarily argue for Katerina to be understood as heroic as much as pure. *Гроза* presents a heroine who commits adultery, but Dobroliubov sees Katerina's sin as the predictable outcome of a strong character's brush with despotic family life.⁸⁹

Therefore, not only is Katerina's suicide predictable, but it is necessary as 'woman's language lies mute in patriarchy, and that death may be her only form of expression'.⁹⁰ This mirrors the absence of interiority in the play; the audience comes to know Katerina primarily through other characters' perceptions of her. It is through her actions that they (and we) understand her inner turmoil. Her words will therefore always be ignored, whereas her actions cannot be. She uses her death both as a rebellion against the role she was forced to play, and also as a means of freedom. This raises questions in relation to the obscured motivation for both Katerinas as not only are they silenced by society, but also in the texts; they must use their actions to express their struggles as women were not allowed to speak out by any other means.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 158.

⁹⁰ Rosalind Marsh, 'An Image of their own?: Feminism, Revisionism and Russian Culture', in *Women and Russian Culture: Projections and Self-Perceptions*, ed. Rosalind Marsh (New York: Berghahn Books, 1998), pp. 2–41 (p. 12).

In the case of Leskov's Katerina, the revelation of her oppression under Sergei comes as a shock. She believes that she has found freedom through her rejection of society in favour of Sergei, but when, during penal transport, Sergei tricks Katerina into giving up her last pair of stockings to gift them to another woman, she sees she has effectively moved from one form of imprisonment to another, and was never free. Sergei is simply her 'new' master; she does as he wants, does everything she can to please him, and is now incarcerated as a result. As in Mill's theory, Katerina needed to separate herself from society and men in general in order to gain this freedom. But now, locked away in transit to prison, society appears to have had its final say on her freedom. Her battle is now against the oppressive male figure – Sergei – not society, as with Ostrovskii's Katerina. Katerina rids herself of Sergei's rule, by choosing suicide by drowning. However, she also gains her revenge – she kills his lover. By drowning in a murder-suicide, Katerina both enforces and counters the image of water as pure, healing, and freeing, as she gains her own freedom, but denies Sergei's lover the right to live. Therefore:

[t]hese details [...] work to negate or undermine the initial symbolic association of water with freedom and life; rather than being liberated by the release of her passionate nature, Katerina is imprisoned by the train of events that flows from the headlong force and sexual possessiveness of her love, leading to death.⁹¹

By the end of the work Katerina is portrayed as realising that she has not experienced her own freedom as she has been under the rule of either her husband or her lover. What she thinks will bring her freedom only brings her a new master and prolongs her role as the subjugated woman, first as wife then as lover. Instead of becoming equal to man, as Mill's theory suggests she should, she finds freedom from the system in death as well as revenge against the man who denied her freedom. Mill's theory requires exactly that which Katerina

⁹¹ Aizlewood, 'Composition', p. 409.

rebels from: society. To establish herself as equal to man, Katerina must ensure that her society recognises this shift in mindset. Its unwillingness to do so, and clear obedience to the social norms of the repressed woman, lead her to her suicide.

The Katerinas' roles as 'woman' and 'wife' in provincial society mark them as figures to be repressed. They are expected to carry out the role of slave to their husbands without hesitation, continuing the traditional repressed female position. Both women, however, disregard these norms, choosing happiness over social inclusion through adultery. They refuse to restrict their social self for the pleasure of the other, aligning it with their I-for-myself in a bid for freedom and happiness. The revelation of this, and of the murders in Leskov's story, establishes their rejection of society's norms and casts them as 'outsiders'. By reading Ostrovskii's and Leskov's works through the philosophies of de Beauvoir and Mill, the reader can see that this traditional role is one forced upon women for no reason other than 'tradition'. In order to break with this repressive tradition there needs to be a 'new woman' who sheds the role of slave in favour of her own choices, eventually leading society to change its mindset on gender roles. Both Katerinas certainly embody this 'new woman', choosing their happiness over being an 'insider' to the extent that they make the ultimate sacrifice for freedom: death.

3.3 Conclusion

The provincial characters considered here highlight the change in focus on identity. In part one, identity was primarily presented through the I-for-myself, from an internal point of view, revealing the irreconcilability of the real and ideal selves. Here, the focus shifts to an external point of view and the construction of identity through the I-for-another. The conflict of selves here is represented as a free versus a repressed self. As with the ideal selves considered in part one, here, too, the protagonists aim to project a desired self onto their

world, in this case a self free from the oppressive nature of their societies. The lack of an imaginary world in which to escape means that in order to maintain their roles in society they must act. Their I-for-another does not have to reflect their I-for-myself, but can mask their intentions for freedom so they are considered 'sane'; sanity here is synonymous with compliance with norms rather than as the result of a correctly functioning mind.

The importance placed in these texts on the established norms in a particular society shows the effects for individuals who dare to deviate and the significance of 'madness' as a result. The I-for-myself becomes repressed in order to play the role of I-for-another in fear of expulsion. As I argued in chapter two, identity is constructed by others within society and deviance from what is perceived to be the norm for a given character in a given situation (such as a married woman in the provinces) is viewed as a sign of madness. This then allows for the peaceful maintenance of society with no fear of rebellion by essentially ostracising those who attempt to revolt. The collective's mindset ensures that everyone stays within their given roles.

The two male characters analysed in chapter three also deviate from the accepted norms of their societies, rendering them 'mad' in the eyes of the other. Here again, their rank does not particularly affect their standing in relation to their societies; their sanity is judged according to their views and mindset. The two theories considered here (Berdiaev's and St. Augustine's) indicate the significance of thinking outside of the norm in order to progress society, but by so doing the two protagonists disrupt the peacefulness (in fact, stagnancy) of their societies. By deviating from the accepted mindset, the two protagonists are depicted as ostracised and viewed as 'mad'. Characters' identities are reliant on their social roles and the views of the other. The removal of I-for-myself, or at least the lack of emphasis placed upon it, highlights the creation of identity through the lens of the other.

4. Chapter Four: Holy Folly and the Self: Identity and Interpretation

My analysis has shown how nineteenth-century Russian texts depict individual societies constructing roles to be played, which are upheld by the collective members of that society. The fear of becoming an outsider forced individuals to perform a false role deemed acceptable by society, or be outcast and relegated to treatments designed for the ‘mad’. This highlights the importance of the other’s view and I-for-another. Whereas chapter three focused on the importance of upholding a certain mindset, or at least appearing to, in order to perform an accepted social role, in this chapter I address the question of *perceptions* in relation to the figure of the holy fool. I aim to illustrate how identity and madness are constructed and understood through the lens of the faced other and the consequences of differing perceptions. As in the case of the outsiders I assessed in chapter three, the absence of an internal view in relation to the representation of holy fools creates gaps surrounding their intentions, leaving the reader to interpret the character through how they are viewed by other characters. Lanser’s study of narrator privilege demonstrates how the lack of omniscience in works featuring the holy fool serves to create the ambiguity required by such a character by creating gaps in the reader’s understanding of them.¹ It is once again this reliance on members of society and not the structure of the society itself that provides a more intimate analysis of the ‘mad’ character. It is these gaps that invite multiple views and fragment the characters as a result. As previously mentioned, this fragmentation renders the binary approach to identity and madness adopted in this thesis as restrictive. In regard to holy folly the social self is not one singular self, but is split into two: a mad person and a holy fool. The existence of this split social self will be highlighted and analysed throughout this chapter.

¹ Lanser, *The Narrative Act*, p. 4.

The figure of the holy fool holds a concrete place within history, dating back to the apostle Paul in the first century.² Known in Russian as *iurodivyi*, from the Greek meaning mad and stupid, ‘[t]he fool for Christ’s sake is a male or female person (or a hagiographical figure) often the subject of a saint’s cult, who makes a public display of his lowliness and uncleanliness’.³ The Russian association of holy folly began to gain particular popularity after the tenth century and up to the sixteenth century, when the number of saint’s days increased, as ‘[t]he holy fools became revered for their asceticism and prophetic utterances as “men of God” (*bozhie liudi*)’.⁴ The increasing social recognition of the holy fool meant that:

[i]n Eastern Orthodox Christianity the fool for Christ [...] is both a canonical saint and a social pariah. While he is an ascetic, he prefers the city’s commotion to the serenity of seclusion, constantly engaging his audiences in interactive shows, which shock them into the realization of vital truths about themselves, worldly existence and higher reality.⁵

Whereas, previously, holy folly was seen as a trait to revere, ‘[i]n the eighteenth century it was treated officially as a form of social insubordination at worst and social parasitism at best. By the nineteenth century fools were treated as mentally ill’.⁶ These developments over time forge the holy fool into a multi-faceted figure: both pious and mad, genius and idiot, historical figure and literary creation.⁷ This clash of definitions brings

² John Saward, *Perfect Fools: Folly for Christ’s Sake in Catholic and Orthodox Spirituality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 2.

³ Dana Heller, Elena Volkova, ‘The Holy Fool in Russian and American Culture: A Dialogue’, *American Studies International*, 41.1-2 (2003), 152–178 (p. 155). Hunt, ‘Holy Foolishness’, p. 2.

⁴ James H. Billington, *The Icon and the Axe: An Interpretive History of Russian Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1970), pp. 59–60.

⁵ Svitlana Kobets, ‘Folly, Foolishness, Foolery’, *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, 50.3-4 (2008), 491–497 (p. 491).

⁶ Hunt, ‘Holy Foolishness’, p. 4.

⁷ Svitlana Kobets, ‘Lice in the Iron Cap: Holy Foolishness in Perspective’, in *Holy Foolishness in Russia: New Perspectives*, ed. Priscilla Hunt, Svitlana Kobets (Bloomington, IN: Slavica Publishers, 2011), pp. 15–40 (p. 16).

together understandings from different ages, and the nineteenth-century context leads to representation through the prism of mental illness, as the most recent interpretation of holy folly. This is where suspicion begins to be expressed about the validity of holy fools' 'madness' and the fine line between madness and sanity, as their wisdom must be hidden behind a veil of lunacy. As Kobets states, 'the biggest confusion and most of the ambiguities in the assessment of nineteenth-century holy foolish phenomenology result from the fact that holy fools were venerated together with genuinely mad people'.⁸ The question of madness arises from the very nature of the holy fool: they *act* mad. If the acting is convincing enough, how can anyone distinguish their behaviour from deception? And conversely, if they are genuinely mad, can they be holy fools? Inherently '[h]oly folly is a very strange form of holiness and difficult to distinguish from [...] eccentricity or even [...] mental illness', meaning that the holy fool can be simultaneously perceived as sane and mad.⁹ As Kobets highlights, the problem is that 'extreme asceticism (which holy foolishness is) can bring about mental changes in its practitioner and that holy fools are, to some extent, mad'.¹⁰ In Bakhtin's terms, holy fools constitute 'pretenders', those who have an 'alibi for being' as they 'avoid the project of selfhood and so [try] to live without an identity of [their] own'.¹¹

Uncertainty regarding its legitimacy notwithstanding, this categorisation of 'mad' affords the holy fool no praise. Not only does it disguise their wisdom from the public, but 'madness' also protects the holy fool as it 'is also a disguise for his prophetic wisdom: he deliberately acts as a fool to prevent worship and idolatry, which can lead to pride, the most

⁸ Svetlana Kobets, *Genesis and Development of Holy Foolishness as a Textual Topos in Early Russian Literature*, Thesis (Ph.D), University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2001, p. 198.

⁹ A. Liarmakopoulos, et al., 'Holy Fools: A Religious Phenomenon of Extreme Behaviour', *Journal of Religion and Health*, 53.1 (2014), 95–104 (p. 100).

¹⁰ Kobets, *Genesis and Development*, p. 202.

¹¹ Emerson, Morson, *Mikhail Bakhtin*, p. 31.

demonical sin of mankind'.¹² As Luke's Gospel states, 'all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted'.¹³ Therefore 'madness' shields the holy fool from becoming a sinner by refusing praise, denying their exaltation. Although it is possible to openly serve God and remain humble, as for example some members of the clergy do, the holy fool humbles himself below the public in order to teach through complete humility.

In the nineteenth century the holy fool also became a literary creation, as a result of which the figure acquired new dimensions and meanings. The literary holy fool called into question this distinction between the 'madman' and the 'divinely inspired'. As Kobets highlights, this allowed 'generations of nineteenth-century writers [to] draw on [...] hagiography, iconography, and their own observations of the phenomenon of holy foolishness' in order to 'present the holy fool as a unique cultural type and at the same time endow his image with their own aesthetic and/or political agenda'.¹⁴ For example, Pushkin's 'Boris Godunov' uses a holy fool as a means to the truth when the false Tsar's claim to power is exposed.

This chapter will consider the figure of the holy fool as performative, requiring the suppression of self in order to construct identity through the other. I will argue that the holy fool forgoes their own identity, their I-for-myself, in order to become what is required by the other. The centrality of ambiguity surrounding the true self of the characters will be examined, focusing on the varying interpretations of actions by the individual other and highlighting the importance of effect rather than aim for the holy fool. These differing perceptions permit the holy fool both religious and non-religious readings. Such a duality of

¹² Nel Grillaert, 'Orthodoxy Regained: The Theological Subtext in Dostoevskij's "Dream of a Ridiculous Man"', *Russian Literature*, 62.2 (2007), 155–173 (pp. 168).

¹³ Bible, New Revised Standard Version, Luke 18:14.

¹⁴ Kobets, 'Lice in the Iron Cap', p. 26.

meanings places the audience – the other characters – at the centre of the theme of holy folly, rather than the figure themselves. I will show how the mindset of the viewer constructs the identity of the holy fool figure through the significance necessarily placed on I-for-another. The duality of worlds in the works, as with ‘Sil’fida’ in chapter three, refers to the textual physical world and the divine world. As in part one this split of worlds is open only to the protagonists – if they truly are holy fools – and it is this separation from their society that leads them to be seen as ‘mad’.

The question of integration will be paramount to understanding the role of perception and the importance of the other for the holy fool, as it will call attention to overarching characteristics vital to the figure of the holy fool, regardless of social standing. I will examine holy fools in three spheres, from the most ostracised to integrated, in order to show that whatever the holy fool’s place within a social structure, they are always viewed as other. Holy fools possess similar qualities, regardless of their involvement in society. In particular, they are all childlike in nature. Innocence allows them a different perspective on the world around them, leading them to act differently to those in their societies.

Moreover, the other projects their own thoughts onto the holy fool, demonstrating that even an unconscious action has the potential to be pious, creating a unique I-for-another. This will raise questions about the effect of social standing on interpretations of holy folly and madness. For example, how does a holy fool figure adapt to a more modernised audience, one perhaps less inclined to religious interpretation? How their oddity is perceived, as either idiotic or as a sign of wisdom, is decided by the other. Their naïveté links the holy fool to the idea of Christian perfection, as God originally made man in the state of innocence, following Him without sin. However, since the Fall, humanity must try and once again attain the state

of innocence in order to live sin free and achieve Christian perfection.¹⁵ The aim of innocence can thus appear as childlike in nature, hiding wisdom behind the curtain of ‘idiocy’.¹⁶

4.1 The ostracised holy fool: Tolstoi and Dostoevskii

The more traditional vision of holy folly – an ascetic who shuns society’s norms, consequently removing themselves from society – is represented in Tolstoi’s *Detstvo* (1852) and Dostoevskii’s *Brat’ia Karamazovy*. Tolstoi’s Grisha and Dostoevskii’s Lizaveta Smerdiashchaia exemplify that even the traditional holy fool cannot entirely remove themselves from society, due to their need for an audience and the latter’s role in the construction of the holy fool’s identity. In keeping with the tradition, they are portrayed as refusing to adhere to social norms, enacting a pious life to others through the interpretation of their actions. At its crux:

[t]he holy fool is a person who pretends that he is mad in order to save his own soul and the souls of others. He chooses to become homeless, poor, disdained and persecuted as Christ Himself was. The holy fool teaches people by means of images of sin and he tells them truth disguised behind a fool’s appearance and behaviour.¹⁷

Yet it is precisely this question of ‘foolishness’ that lies at the heart of the holy fool’s ambiguity; their actions need to be interpreted as pious in order to recognise them as a ‘holy fool’. If the audience simply sees the foolish actions as those of a ‘madman’, then the figure will neither teach nor inspire piety, but only pity.

Tolstoi’s Grisha, in line with tradition, refuses to make a home for himself. He is depicted as roaming from family to family, placing himself on the very outskirts of society.

¹⁵ Edgardo A. Colon-Emeric, *Wesley, Aquinas and Christian Perfection: An Ecumenical Dialogue* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009), p. 101.

¹⁶ Heller, Volkova, ‘The Holy Fool’, p. 156.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 154–155.

The reader is presented with Grisha through the eyes of a child (Nikolenka), whose family temporarily takes Grisha in. This perspective marks the importance of the viewer and their role in the construction of the holy fool figure as almost everything the reader learns about Grisha is filtered through the mind of the child. The child's innocence mimics that of the holy fool, linking the child's purity with a religious interpretation. Moreover, Nikolenka's lack of knowledge of social etiquette means that he perceives Grisha differently from his father, failing to understand why particular actions would be deemed 'inappropriate'. This suggests that piety lies not in Grisha's actions, but in the viewer's mind. The reader is never presented with Grisha's own thoughts or intentions, but only how he is interpreted by the other. The absence of interiority means the reader is removed from his I-for-myself to focus on the importance of I-for-another in the construction of his identity – and his madness. Bakhtin initially stated that art aimed to finalise characters, by presenting not just their actions but the whole of a character, marking them as different from the fragmented impression we have of a person in the actual world.¹⁸ However, the holy fools' reliance on the other's perception of their actions, and the removal of interiority, categorises them as ultimately unfinalisable, unknowable.

Grisha's own religiosity, signalled through his rituals, does not alter the father's perception; his own thoughts override the action, marking it as idiotic. However, Grisha is primarily represented, and therefore constructed, *through* Nikolenka. The reader's background knowledge of him is simply what the child has learned through hearsay:

[з]наю только то, что он с пятнадцатого года стал известен как юродивый, который зиму и лето ходит босиком, посещает монастыри, дарит образочки тем, кого полюбит, и говорит загадочные слова, которые некоторыми принимаются за предсказания, что никто никогда не знал его в другом виде, что он изредка

¹⁸ Emerson, Morson, *Mikhail Bakhtin*, p. 88.

хаживал к бабушке и что одни говорили, будто он несчастный сын богатых родителей и чистая душа, а другие, что он просто мужик и лентяй.¹⁹

Grisha is seen as both a mad ‘lazy’ person *and* a prophet; he is a dualistic character due to privileging the I-for-another. Therefore, Grisha’s actions are not inherently pious, but have the potential to be so. Lauren Elaine Bennett highlights Tolstoi’s apparent confirmation of Grisha as a holy fool by stating that:

Tolstoy’s depiction of Grisha contains many of the characteristics that we have come to expect of the *iurodivyi*. [...] His strange appearance is accompanied by even stranger behavior. He vigorously strikes the floor with his staff, speaks incoherently [...], and his emotional state is extremely unpredictable, changing from bellows of laughter to tears in a matter of minutes.²⁰

These odd features and behaviours serve to remove Grisha from society, stopping him from being accepted and revered. Thus, Grisha exhibits the necessary ambiguity for the holy fool figure, but without being confirmed as such by Tolstoi, he still relies on the other characters to present him as such to the reader.

Dostoevskii’s Lizaveta Smerdiashchaia also has characteristics that alienate her from society. She too is homeless, although, unlike Grisha, she is further separated from society by refusing to lodge with others. She sleeps in gardens and bathhouses, the connotations of which I will explore below. The step away from the community also distances her from the reader. The reader is not permitted an intimate perspective, as with Nikolenka and Grisha. Like Grisha her appearance supports her plight as a holy fool, rendering her ‘grotesque’. Not only does her physical look identify her as an outcast, but so does her clothing:

¹⁹ Lev Tolstoi, *Detstvo*, in *Sobranie sochinenii v chetyrnadtsati tomakh*, 14 vols (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel’stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1951), I, pp. 3–100 (pp. 17–18).

²⁰ Lauren Elaine Bennett, *The Synthesis of Holy Fool and Artist in Post-Revolutionary Russian Literature*, Thesis (Ph.D), University of Virginia, 2000, p. 108.

[д]вадцатилетнее лицо ее, здоровое, широкое и румяное, было вполне идиотское; взгляд же глаз неподвижный и неприятный, хотя и смирный. Ходила она всю жизнь, и летом и зимой, босая и в одной посконной рубашке. Почти черные волосы ее, чрезвычайно густые, закурчавленные как у барана, держались на голове ее в виде как бы какой-то огромной шапки.²¹

This grotesque presentation of Lizaveta removes the definitive label of holy fool, allowing the town members to *potentially* identify her simply as an ‘idiot’. Whereas the religious see her actions as pious, for others ‘[t]o all appearances, Lizaveta is severely retarded’.²² However, as I will discuss below, this appearance can be interpreted as a façade; as Carroll Keith argues, ‘Lizaveta is not entirely an idiot; in fact, her behavior suggests that she is, indeed, a saintly fool grotesque’.²³ Mirroring the dualistic nature of the personal and social selves, both Grisha and Lizaveta have a dualistic social self dependent on the perception of the other.

Further to their appearances, their actions are also socially inappropriate. For example, Grisha does not conform to his host family’s standard of manners and so is seated at a separate table for dinner: ‘Гриша обедал в столовой, но за особенным столиком’.²⁴ His behaviour comes across as childlike in manner, reducing him to a limited understanding of society and what is expected of him. The reduction of Grisha to a child alters *his* perception of the world, as he is placed within an adult sphere, and thus he ‘inhabits a “sphere of new perception”’. Consequently, he remains something of a *stranger* to his environment’.²⁵ Not

²¹ Fedor Dostoevskii, *Brat’ia Karamazovy*, in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridtsati tomakh*, 30 vols (Leningrad: Nauka, 1976), vol. XIV, p. 90.

²² Carroll Sue Keith, *The Saintly Fool Figure in the Fiction of Dostoevsky*, Thesis (Ph.D), The University of Texas at Arlington, 1992, p. 192.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 193.

²⁴ Tolstoi, *Detstvo*, I, p. 18.

²⁵ Liza Knapp, ‘Language and Death in Tolstoy’s *Childhood and Boyhood*: Rousseau and the Holy Fool’, *Tolstoy Studies Journal*, 10 (1998), 50–62 (p. 56).

only does Grisha render himself as an outsider by refusing to act ‘appropriately’, but he is treated as such. The problem of audience comes to the fore between Nikolenka/the mother and the father since:

[a]s a fool for Christ’s sake, Grisha, by definition or, rather, by conviction, rejects all earthly institutions and conventions, including linguistic ones, and thus embodies the antithesis [...] of all the *comme il faut* that Nikolenka’s father and his father’s representatives attempt to inflict on Nikolenka.²⁶

With no religious mindset through which to filter Grisha’s actions, the father simply sees Grisha as a common fool whose behaviour holds no higher meaning. This perception, however, is directly countered by that of his wife, who states:

трудно поверить, чтобы человек, который, несмотря на свои шестьдесят лет, зиму и лето ходит босой и, не снимая, носит под платьем вериги в два пуда весом и который не раз отказывался от предложений жить спокойно и на всем готовом, - трудно поверить, чтобы такой человек все это делал только из лени.²⁷

The mother comes to understand him as a holy fool, learning from her interpretation of his actions as a result, and seeing a meaning behind Grisha’s behaviour directly linked to her own religious beliefs. Thus, the divide between the understanding of Grisha as a holy fool and as a childlike idiot comes from the attitude of *comme il faut* expressed throughout the work. The father marks Grisha as an outcast due to his grotesque appearance and non-obedience to society’s norms, as an outcast wandering from home to home for shelter. By contrast, the mother and Nikolenka, understand the importance of Grisha’s physical presentation of himself for his role as a holy fool. They focus on the wisdom that Grisha has to impart to them via his behaviour. The contradiction of interpretations indicates that the

²⁶ Ibid., p. 53.

²⁷ Tolstoi, *Detstvo*, I, p. 20.

figure of the holy fool is constructed in the mind of the other. It is not the actions themselves that constitute a pious figure, but rather the interpretation, filtered through the viewer's own religious framework, which creates the holy fool.

Lizaveta's actions also contribute to her ostracism from society. Yet the most striking thing about her is her inability, or unwillingness, to speak. Even in a dire and scary situation she still does not speak: 'Отворив баню, он увидел зрелище [...] Лизавета Смердящая, забравшись в их баню, только что родила младенца. Младенец лежал подле нее, а она помирала подле него. Говорить ничего не говорила, уже по тому одному, что не умела говорить'.²⁸ This use of the word 'зрелище' implies an audience, the idea that even this action is not solely for her. This adds to the interpretation of her as both an 'idiot' and childlike. Lizaveta's lack of speech can be perceived as another factor in viewing her as mentally ill, or a holy fool, as the narrator interprets it here.

Throughout *Brat'ia Karamazovy*, subjective perceptions of events become central to the novel's development. Not only are there varying interpretations of Lizaveta, but also of other characters and events. For example, the incident in which Dmitrii Karamazov pulls Snegirev's beard is recounted not once for the sake of the narrative, but four times, showing us how a single action can be interpreted differently depending on the audience and the teller. With Lizaveta's actions, there is no single way to interpret the event; whether she is a lunatic or pious is dependent on the other characters who make up her audience, and the absence of interiority – and thus of an I-for-myself – forces the reader to rely upon these interpretations and, indeed, participate in them. As with Grisha, this indicates that the religiosity lies not in her actions but in her audience. She becomes a mirror of the other's personal religious orientation.

²⁸ Dostoevskii, *Brat'ia Karamazovy*, XIV, p. 89.

Here I turn to the theologian Gavin Flood's *The Ascetic Self* (2000), which focuses on asceticism within a religious context, highlighting the role of rituals and traditions in forming a sense of self. It is clear that Grisha's self relies heavily on traditions. Flood states that:

[t]he process whereby the self becomes an ascetic self, the shaping of the self in the form of tradition, the entextualisation of the body, is found in all [...] cultural locations [...]. More particularly it is found and endorsed as the highest ideal of human being by the scriptural traditions that have come to be known as 'Christianity', 'Hinduism' and 'Buddhism'.²⁹

Grisha is continuously depicted as practising the traditions of holy fools such as wearing heavy chains, inflicting pain on himself, and remaining homeless, possibly reflecting his own piety. The reader is told little else about Grisha, except how these actions are carried out and perceived. He is seen solely as these actions; any other sense of self is suppressed. Thus, he refuses to establish his I-for-myself in order to become an ascetic self in line with his explicit religiosity. Flood writes that:

the process whereby the self becomes an ascetic self must be understood as the subjective appropriation of tradition. [...] [T]hrough an act of will the self internalises the tradition and performs the memory of tradition in recalling the tradition and bringing to mind the tradition's telos. This is to perform the ambiguity of the self: the distance between intention and action and the eradication of the will through an act of will.³⁰

This is exactly what Grisha does – he creates ambiguity about his self. Flood highlights this 'gap' between performer and audience – the problem of missing intention. By removing Grisha's interiority, Tolstoi places the emphasis on effect rather than aim. Therefore, in

²⁹ Gavin Flood, *The Ascetic Self: Subjectivity, Memory, and Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 211.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 212.

keeping with the holy fool's need for indefinability, the reader can see how this lack of concrete identity can lend itself to the understanding of Grisha as a fool for Christ's sake.

Flood's theory reveals the importance of the rejection of individuality for Grisha since:

the ascetic self performs the memory of tradition and in so doing attempts to become like every other ascetic self in the tradition, this is nevertheless an act of interiorisation. But the development of interiority, a hallmark of the ascetic self, is not the development of individuality. Quite the contrary, it is an erosion of individuality through an act of will that results in ascetic practice.³¹

Thus, in order for Grisha to be a holy fool, hide his wisdom, and simultaneously act in line with Christ's teachings, he must sacrifice his personal self. Despite the missing interiority of his character, and hence the truth about his status as a holy fool, Grisha is undoubtedly portrayed as an ascetic self. He partakes in Christian rituals and traditions, becoming one of many rather than an individual. Flood's theory explicitly shows the link between religious tradition and ambiguity of the self, allowing us to understand how Grisha, irrespective of his own intentions, opens himself up to interpretation by a wanting audience. It is this need for religious guidance by the onlooker, and their own faith, that allows them to see this ascetic character as a holy fool.

Similarly, Dostoevskii's Lizaveta is also an ascetic figure who is ambiguous in her role as a holy fool. The dual interpretation of her actions reinforces the fine line between madness and saintliness. Her unfortunate upbringing at the hands of her abusive father suggests a mental illness as the root cause of her muteness and social abjection. However, the fact that she is not concretely defined as such, either by the narrator, the other characters, or her own thoughts, leaves her true identity unknown. The lack of interior view also opens her up to interpretation by onlookers, and without confirmation this is all it can ever be –

³¹ Ibid., p. 212.

interpretation. Whereas her father sees her as an idiot, as does the new governor of the province when he refuses to recognise her as a *iurodivaia*, the townsfolk, who make up the vast majority of the references to her, refer to her as holy. However, despite the volume of pious interpretations, doubt always remains. As with Grisha, Lizaveta's own intentions, or lack thereof, give way to the significance of the other. The other's view of her overtakes any understanding the reader may have of her, projecting onto her character their own religiosity.

Moreover, there is another interpretation of her character, adding a further level of ambiguity, which is demonic, again highlighting the role of women in literature as either angelic or demonic. Not only may she be an 'idiot', or a holy fool, but her association with bathhouses, and thresholds, adds a demonic aspect to her character. As Will Ryan highlights:

the places associated with popular magic and divination are bathhouses and crossroads (these are the most common), churches, cemeteries, barns, thresholds, boundaries, holes in the ice on a lake or river, hopfields. Most of these are either the reputed haunts of demonic forces or can clearly be seen to be liminal areas at which a magical other world begins.³²

Thresholds are prevalent in Russian superstition as a place to avoid as even a greeting across a threshold, such as a doorway, is thought to be unlucky.³³ One of the main things the reader is told about Lizaveta is her constant relocation; she is often seen jumping fences. Lizaveta's association with thresholds further links her to the otherworldly because '[t]hresholds were also places of magical significance. It was the place to hide spells and magical objects, both protective and malefic'.³⁴ Her connection with the demonic, however, does not end there. The birth of her child, and her own demise, in the bathhouse only

³² Will F. Ryan, *The Bathhouse at Midnight: An Historical Survey of Magic and Divination in Russia* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), p. 50.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

strengthen this demonic reading of her identity. Not only this but '[a]ccording to popular tradition [...] when Michael the Archangel drove the rebellious angels from heaven some [...] fell into barns, bathhouses and dwelling houses and became their resident goblins'.³⁵ Thus, Lizaveta having her child in the bathhouse may simply signify a nearby place for a homeless woman to keep warm, or it may highlight her connection to the demonic otherworldly. As Tatiana Novikova notes, '[t]he most common place [for birthing] was a *banya* (a bathhouse). This choice of place was determined by a belief in the spiritual "dirtiness" of a woman and a newborn at parturition'.³⁶ The newborn itself also has connections to the otherworldly as 'childbirth was a point between two worlds; it was a process of transition to the human world from beyond'.³⁷ Additionally, her child, who is given the name Pavel Smerdiakov after Lizaveta's nickname, becomes a character with his own, very apparent, demonic traits, as I will explore in chapter five.

However, Lizaveta's actions, as with her self, are devoid of any explicit reasoning. For example, the reader is told that she gives away any food that she is given, living on black bread and water alone: '[д]адут ей на базаре бублик или калачик, непременно пойдёт и первому встречному ребёночку отдаст бублик или калачик'.³⁸ This action, although an act of self-neglect, may or may not be a consciously pious action. It is possible for the reader to draw a religious conclusion from the fact that the food with which she sustains herself is that of the church. Her sustenance mimics the food eaten by the monks during the holy week: '[в] страстную же седмицу от понедельника даже до субботнего вечера, дней шесть, хлеб с

³⁵ Ibid., p. 37.

³⁶ Tatiana Novikova, 'Childbirth and Folk Orthodoxy in Russia in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries', in *Sacred Inception: Reclaiming the Spirituality of Birth in the Modern World*, ed. Marianna Delaporte, Morag Martin (London: Lexington Books, 2018), pp. 23–40 (p. 31).

³⁷ Ibid., p. 31.

³⁸ Dostoevskii, *Brat'ia Karamazovy*, XIV, p. 90.

водою точною ясти'.³⁹ Again, the other casts their own beliefs onto Lizaveta, revering her acts despite the possibility of them being unconsciously pious. This same 'charitable spirit' is also displayed in regard to money.

The question of charity in *Brat'ia Karamazovy* highlights the tension between need and pride, between life and sin. Captain Snegirev is also a poor character in need of money, but he refuses help from others out of pride. The reasoning behind particular actions does not always make for sensible decisions and '[p]sychological motivation is often surprising and even paradoxical, if measured by ordinary standards'.⁴⁰ Snegirev stands in stark contrast to Lizaveta who accepts charity from others, demonstrating her distance from the sin of pride as a holy fool would. It is notable that Alesha Fedorovich Karamazov is also very relaxed about accepting charity. Lizaveta takes these opportunities to make charitable donations of her own – either money to the church or prison or food to others. Whatever her intention the reader can view her as unconsciously pious.

The theologian Richard Valantasis' *The Making of the Self* (2008) explores the history of asceticism, with particular reference to ancient Christianity. This work allows the reader to see the extent to which Lizaveta's actions constitute the asceticism of the holy fool figure. Valantasis argues that the ascetic, like the traditional holy fool, is a person who adopts a role to give a particular performance and convey a message. He states that:

at the center of ascetical activity is a self who, through behavioral changes, seeks to become a different person, a new self; to become a different person in new relationships; and to become a different person in a new society that forms a new culture. As this new self emerges (in relationship to itself, to others, to society, to the

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 153

⁴⁰ Victor Terras, *A Karamazov Companion: Commentary on the Genesis, Language, and Style of Dostoevsky's Novel* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1981), p. 81

world), it masters the behaviors that enable it at once to deconstruct the old self and to construct the new.⁴¹

Lizaveta challenges society's norms and aims to inspire others via her actions. Her behaviour – for example, her homelessness and her donations of money, clothes, and food – and her inappropriate choice of clothing mark her as different from those she encounters in her society. The public displays pity towards her, and the interpretation of her acting out the virtue of charity inspires Christian values in those around her. Valantasis' theory, however, highlights the problem of an absence of interiority. Despite the suggestions from the townsfolk that her status as a holy fool imparts consciousness to her actions, this is never established. All the reader can be certain of is the effect of her actions, not their cause.

Valantasis states that:

[a]sceticism consists of any performance resistant to an externally projected or subjectively experienced dominant social or religious context specifically intended (almost as a cognitive impulse) and purposefully performed in order to inaugurate a new and alternative subjectivity.⁴²

As there is no access to Lizaveta's inner thoughts, the reader cannot concretely state that she acts *purposefully*. It is only by looking at her through the eyes of the pious in her society that acts appear as intentional. These actions may also be seen as purposeful by viewing her simply as an idiot, as acts of self-neglect. Either way, Lizaveta challenges the social norm. By remaining ambiguous Lizaveta suppresses her own I-for-myself, allowing herself to be freely interpreted by the other. Valantasis argues that this creation of the ascetic figure:

resides in the creation of an alternative subjectivity through intentional performances.

[...] [T]he ascetic creates more than a basic social identity or role, an articulated self,

⁴¹ Richard Valantasis, *The Making of the Self: Ancient and Modern Asceticism* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2008), p. 7.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 101.

a persona, or a personality: the ascetic constructs an entirely new agency capable of functioning in a different and resistant way to the dominant culture that defines identity, personality, and social functions from hegemonic power.⁴³

The suppression of her true self in favour of her interpreted self highlights her sacrifice for the other by allowing them their own agendas. Even as an ascetic, she, like Grisha, cannot completely remove herself from society as her performance requires an audience – perception is the key to holy folly.

In spite of these similarities between the two ostracised holy fools, they have different degrees of integration into society: Grisha imposes himself on households, Lizaveta removes herself as much as possible. Both are viewed as odd and eccentric by their societies, but Grisha's imposition, and explicit religiosity, figures him differently from Lizaveta. Grisha's willingness to be accepted into a household permits the other characters to see the complete life of the 'holy fool', whereas Lizaveta's separateness from the townsfolk implies that there are unknown aspects to her. The scrutiny of Grisha, predominantly by Nikolenka, forces a religious reading of his character onto the reader, provoking almost no sympathy for his seemingly chosen way of life. This stands in stark contrast to Lizaveta who is identified as a holy fool and pitied by society, because they do not see her close up, as Nikolenka does Grisha. Thus, the reader's interpretation of Grisha is more likely to be religious than that of Lizaveta for the simple fact that her distance from scrutiny shrouds her in mystery.

Despite these differences, both Grisha and Lizaveta seemingly cannot be functioning members of society. Their definition as pious means that even simply as an ascetic figure they have:

a network of people around them, a community that supports and sustains them, as well as a community for whom the ascetic performs his transformation. This

⁴³ Ibid., p. 103.

relational network in asceticism suggests that the individual always functions within a social and cosmic context.⁴⁴

In spite of the ambiguity surrounding their true identities, both Grisha and Lizaveta are taken care of by their communities, by those who see past their grotesque appearances and perceive them as pious. Grisha, despite the father's objections, is taken in and cared for by the mother:

[i]f Nikolai's father embodies the secular world of *comme il faut*, then his mother [...] represents an otherworldly spiritual realm, the presence of which is felt overtly and covertly in her son's narrative of his life. The holy fool Grisha [...] arrives unexpectedly on the first day of the narrative of *Childhood* and, despite the objections of Nikolenka's father, Grisha is received, fed, and lodged.⁴⁵

The mother not only perceives Grisha as pious in spite of his outward appearance, but she also interprets his behaviour as wisdom, for example by reading prophecies from his actions: '[o]н с самого того времени, как вошел в наш дом, не переставал вздыхать и плакать, что, по мнению тех, которые верили в его способность предсказывать, предвещало какую-нибудь беду нашему дому'.⁴⁶ Thus, she does not interfere with Grisha's behaviour, or dismiss it as her husband does, but simply allows him to be as he wishes, assuming her own conclusions out of pious belief. However, it is not only Grisha's behaviour that has an effect on the household, but also his words. For example, he describes a hunter setting dogs on him, but thanks the lord that he did not die. As a result, he asks that the hunter not be punished: 'говорит: «Хотел, чтобы загрызли, но бог не попустил», и просит тебя, чтобы ты за это не наказывал его'.⁴⁷ Grisha expresses forgiveness for the hunter's actions. These actions and

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 116.

⁴⁵ Knapp, 'Language and Death', p. 53.

⁴⁶ Tolstoi, *Detstvo*, I, pp. 33–34.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 19.

words demonstrate Christian teachings to the religious members of his host. The effects they have particularly on the child, are not lost, as later shown:

но впечатление, которое он произвел на меня, и чувство, которое возбудил, никогда не умрут в моей памяти. О, великий христианин Гриша! Твоя вера была так сильна, что ты чувствовал близость бога, твоя любовь так велика, что слова сами собою лились из уст твоих.⁴⁸

Lizaveta's actions are similarly respected by those who view her as pious and not simply 'idiotic'. The main Christian teaching that Lizaveta appears to manifest throughout the work is charity, which is reciprocated by those who take care of her. Despite appearing inappropriately dressed, in keeping with the tradition of the holy fool, Lizaveta is continually clothed by those around her:

многие из городских сострадательных людей [...] пробовали не раз одевать Лизавету приличнее, чем в одной рубашке, а к зиме всегда надевали на нее тулуп, а ноги обували в сапоги; но она обыкновенно, давая всё надеть на себя беспрекословно, уходила и где-нибудь, преимущественно на соборной церковной паперти, непременно снимала с себя всё, ей пожертвованное.⁴⁹

Her rejection of appropriate clothing, however, is put to good use through her charitable donations to the church. Therefore, '[i]t would seem that Lizaveta, in tradition of holy folly, refuses the charity of the rich'.⁵⁰ She always forgoes her own comfort in order to give to another. Pride plays no part in her actions.

Both Grisha and Lizaveta straddle the line between sane and mad, holy fool and idiot. The ambiguity, however, is required by a holy fool in order to hide their wisdom. In the spirit of the holy fool both Grisha and Lizaveta's actions are interpreted by the other as spiritual

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 36.

⁴⁹ Dostoevskii, *Brat'ia Karamazovy*, XIV, p. 90.

⁵⁰ Keith, *The Saintly Fool*, p. 194.

and thus inspire piety. Yet in order to carry out the time-tested rituals and traditions of the figure they must suppress their personal selves and create an ambiguous performance of identity. Flood and Valantasis' theories elucidate the selfhoods of Grisha and Lizaveta by demonstrating how they become ascetic selves, Grisha via tradition and Lizaveta via her social role, both sacrificing themselves to the ambiguity required of them. However, despite their ostracism, shunning of social norms, and piously-interpreted actions, as Flood and Valantasis' theories show, whether a conscious performer or not the holy fool requires an audience. The figure of the holy fool is constructed in the mind of the religious audience, the pious characters, without whom the idiotic actions remain exactly that – the actions of an idiot.

4.2 The semi-integrated holy fool: Mel'nikov and Leskov

In contrast with Lizaveta and Grisha, who remain predominantly outside of society, Sofronii in Pavel Mel'nikov's *Na gorakh* (1881) and Akhilla in Leskov's *Soboriane* (1872) represent the semi-integrated holy fool. They willingly interact with members of the public, but primarily within a religious context, given their positions within the church. Mel'nikov's text focuses on the lives of Old Believers and their contrast to more modern understandings of Christianity, using the character of the 'holy fool' Sofronii as a way to unite the depiction of sects. Sofronii is brought up within the monastery and throughout his life is bound to it, especially in his relation to others; he is known to others as a prophet and the vast majority of his interactions occur under this role. The title of prophet, however, is given to Sofronii at a young age as a result of his praying and inability to fit elsewhere into society, already marking him as an outsider:

[В] Княж-Хабаровой обители жил рясофорный монах. Звали его отцом

Софронием. Было ему лет за шестьдесят, а поступил он в монастырь лет десяти

либо одиннадцати, будучи круглым сиротой. [...] Целой волостью кучились мужики игумну принять убогенького в монастырь, он-де ни на что не годен, разве только что богу молиться. Сложились мужики, поклонились, и был взят в монастырь полоумный.⁵¹

From this point on it is via his religious role as a holy fool that he interacts with society. Despite this seeming integration into a religious society, his position, not as a titled member of the church, renders him an ‘outsider’ twice over. Even as a revered ‘prophet’ he is not entirely integrated into his religious society. He is, however, aware of his status, as people travel to him for a prophecy and he is in demand for his powers when in neighbouring towns. As with Grisha and Lizaveta, the problem of missing interiority persists. The reader is never told Sofronii’s motivations, meaning that they are never concretely sure of his spiritual wisdom, or aims, only his effect on the other.

Leskov’s Akhilla similarly exists primarily within a religious sphere, interacting with others in relation to his role as deacon, but is also viewed as an ‘outsider’ due to his odd behaviour. The reader is even told that he was expelled from his class ‘за «великовозрасти и малоуспешие»’ and for his ‘stupidity’.⁵² As is generally the case for institutional religious figures, Akhilla did not choose this role for himself, but rather was sent to become a deacon in another town by his bishop. His closest acquaintances, Father Zacharias Benefaktov and Archpriest Savely Tuberozov, both hold higher ranks than Akhilla and make up the other members of his new church.⁵³ Akhilla does not make friends within the church for religious reasons, but simply because these are the people whom he most admires and relates to, forming his own smaller community within the wider society from which he is unsought.

⁵¹ Pavel Mel’nikov, *Na gorakh*, in *Sobranie sochinenii v shesti tomakh*, 6 vols (Moscow: Pravda, 1963), V, pp. 67–68.

⁵² Nikolai Leskov, *Soboriane* (New York: Izdatel’stvo imeni Chekhova, 1952), p. 9

⁵³ Nikolai Leskov, *The Cathedral Clergy: A Chronicle*, trans. Margaret Winchell (Bloomington, IN: Slavica Publishers, 2010), p. 3.

While Grisha exhibits forgiveness and Lizaveta charity, Akhilla embodies love. The death of his friend proves to the reader the extent to which Akhilla cares for another as:

‘[с]мерть Савелия произвела ужасающее впечатление на Ахиллу. Он рыдал и плакал не как мужчина, а как нервная женщина оплакивает потерю, перенесение которой казалось ей невозможным’.⁵⁴ He cares even to the detriment of himself: ‘он еще, лежа в своем чулане, прежде всех задумал поставить отцу Туберовову памятник, но не в тридцать рублей, а на все свои деньги’.⁵⁵ This caring quality can be read either as Akhilla demonstrating the Christian teaching of love for one’s neighbour, or as him being unable to understand the consequences of an action. The effect is the same for both: an act that appears to be consciously caring. He sacrifices what he has worked for his entire life in either a loving, pious action or an oversight of consequences. This ambiguity, as with the ostracised holy fools, permeates the work, giving us no insight into Akhilla’s intentions; he is confirmed neither as a holy fool nor an idiot. As in the previous cases, how the reader understands Akhilla depends on how he is seen by the other. Our understanding of his identity is constructed through the I-for-another due to the lack of I-for-myself explored in the text.

The view of the semi-integrated holy fool by another is also marked by the holy fool’s childlike qualities, singling them out as different even in their religious societies. Like Grisha, Sofronii does not always talk intelligibly, making unrecognisable noises:

‘[н]еподалеку отсюда есть монастырь, Княж-Хабаров называется; живет в нем чернец Софронушка. Юродивый он, разумного слово никто от него не слышал. Иногда бывает он у нас на соборах и, придя в восторг, бог его знает какие слова говорит’.⁵⁶ These noises, appearing as a sign of idiocy to some, can be interpreted as a sign of holy folly, unintelligible to those who do not possess spiritual wisdom: ‘[н]и мычании, ни мяуканья юродов, ни их

⁵⁴ Leskov, *Soboriane*, p. 359.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 373.

⁵⁶ Mel’nikov, *Na gorakh*, V, p. 326.

неразумных слов не понимали познавшие тайну сокровенную, но верили твердо, что люди, подобные Софронушке, вместилища божественного разума и что устами их говорит сама божественная премудрость'.⁵⁷ Thus Sofronii's childlike behaviour is justified by other members of his society with regard to his religious standing; he is not entertained as 'mad'. He is *allowed* to behave like a child since he is seen as a holy fool by those around him. Simply because his odd behaviour is interpreted as religious by his society, he is permitted to integrate himself through the role of prophet, rather than facing possible rejection, and therefore removal, if he were to be viewed otherwise.

Not only is his incoherent speech made permissible by his status, but so are his actions. These actions are highly inappropriate to the point that if this religious status were taken away, they would not be permissible. Whereas Grisha and Lizaveta are depicted as outside a religious sphere, albeit in relation to religious individuals, Sofronii's position *within* the church framework influences his audience, the other characters, to interpret him religiously. This significantly reduces society's interpretation of him as an idiot by essentially enforcing the religious interpretation. However, the absence of interiority still refutes any definitive categorisation.

Despite this coerced religious view of Sofronii's selfhood, he is not an overwhelmingly positive character. As Bennett suggests, this leads to a slightly negative understanding of Sofronii's character: 'Sofronii, the *iurodivyi* in *On the Hills*, is not inscribed with the same positive air as Tolstoy's [...] characters. On the contrary, [...] he resembles a fool of the Ivan Koreisha type'.⁵⁸ Relating Sofronii to Koreisha highlights the ill-manners and inappropriate gestures made by Sofronii, as well as his exploitation by another for monetary

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 70.

⁵⁸ Bennett, *Holy Fool and Artist*, p. 112.

gain.⁵⁹ Both Sofronii and Koreisha are permitted to behave in this appalling manner simply because they are interpreted by another as ‘holy’.⁶⁰ Therefore, since the monastery receives money from members of the public to visit Sofronii, the reader is told that his actions are perceived as religious by many, as in the case of Koreisha. Yet the ambiguity remains for the reader, as this status is never confirmed. These negative connotations, even when viewed in a religious sphere, distance Sofronii from the positive attitude expressed by other characters towards Grisha and Lizaveta.

However, Sofronii’s reputation remains undamaged by any classification of idiot as childlike actions from a holy fool potentially have religious significance, for example here the mother interprets such behaviour to mean that her child will live:

[В]скочил блаженный с могилы, замахал руками, ударяя себя по бедрам ровно крыльями, запел петухом и плюнул на ребенка. Не отерла мать личика сыну своему, радость разлилась по лицу ее, стала она набожно креститься и целовать своего первенца. Окружив счастливую мать, бабы заговорили: - Будет жив паренек, будет жив, родная! Молись богу, благодари святого блаженного!⁶¹

In this way, Mel’nikov highlights the holy fool’s need for the other. The ambiguity that is necessitated by such a role often removes, or obscures, intentions. The reader, and the other characters, never concretely know whether Sofronii is pious, if his actions are ‘inspired’, or if he is a prophet. The holy fool is a status given to the person onto whom religiosity is projected. Their I-for-another is created continually in the mind of the other.

The attribution of childlike qualities to holiness thus alleviates the categorisation of ‘idiot’ for Sofronii; in the eyes of those who perceive him as a holy fool he can do no wrong.

⁵⁹ Ewa M. Thompson, *Understanding Russia: The Holy Fool in Russian Culture* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1987), p. 131.

⁶⁰ Max Fram, *The Motherland of Elephants* (978-1326231583: Lulu, 2016), pp. 217–218.

⁶¹ Mel’nikov, *Na gorakh*, V, pp. 83–84.

Even when his misbehaviour takes place within the church itself he is not reprimanded, but rather adored:

он, усевшись середь церкви на полу, принялся грызть подсолнухи и кидать скорлупами в народ. Их тщательно подбирали и прятали. В кого бросить Софронушка - тому счастье. Кто удостоился такой милости, тот отходит в сторону, давая место другим, жаждущим благодати во образе подсолнушных скорлуп.⁶²

It is here that the reader can see how deeply religious belief affects self-other relations. Since those in the church hold religious beliefs, they interpret Sofronii's actions within this framework. They show him respect despite everything. Regardless of any spiritual wisdom, Sofronii inspires love between those who revere him, as shown when some members of the public step aside and allow others to be 'praised' by Sofronii. The believers do not argue or show greed, but rather respect one another, each taking their turn. Even when he leaves the church the women define him as a prophet by posing questions about fate. Everything Sofronii does is interpreted within a religious context; those who believe him to be pious never question his validity as a holy fool. This does not necessarily reflect Sofronii's true identity, but simply reflects the onlookers own piety back to them.

Leskov's Akhilla also possesses childlike qualities, which often come to the fore via normally inappropriate actions. His childlike passion and enthusiasm often come across as inappropriate, for example with regard to his choir: '[б]ас у тебя, - говорил регент: - хороший, точно пушка стреляет; но непомерен ты до страсти, так что через эту непомерность я даже не знаю, как с тобой по достоинству обходиться'.⁶³

⁶² Ibid., p. 83.

⁶³ Leskov, *Soboriane*, p. 9.

However, the most striking example is a quarrel over bones. Varnavka, a science teacher in the village, is in possession of the skeleton of a drowned man that he wishes to clean up and use for medical purposes, refusing to bury it despite objections from the church and his own mother. Akhilla continually attempts to steal the bones in order to bury them, believing that refusing a burial is an act of sacrilege. For Varnavka the bones are just that – bones – but for Akhilla and Varnavka's mother the bones are still a person – as referring to them as 'he' emphasises – who deserves to be respected and buried in order to pass over into the afterlife. The strangest part of this interaction is that Akhilla believes there is a 'correct way' to steal bones. The exchange of bones occurs several times throughout the work, making the whole thing a continuously farcical spectacle: 'я этого сваренного Варнавкой человека останки, как следует, выкрал у него в окне и снес в кульке к себе на двор и высыпал в телегу, но днесь поглядел, а в телеге ничего нет!'⁶⁴ While Sofronii's inappropriate actions are interpreted by others as having a pious meaning, Akhilla's attempts to bury the bones expose a more explicit religious meaning: he believes that by burying the bones the person's soul can pass over. The emphasis on the ritual reveals Akhilla's religious beliefs, and the extent to which he is willing to go to adhere to them. His actions are therefore clearly religiously motivated, rather than simply a show for a religious audience. Therefore, to Varnavka Akhilla's actions are inappropriate and idiotic due to his atheistic perception of Akhilla, but to the religious, such as Varnavka's mother, Akhilla is following divine guidance to bury the bones. Even with explicit piety Akhilla is still open to interpretation, and cannot escape the view of the other.

Both Akhilla and Sofronii are guided by other, more authoritative religious figures, who reinforce the importance of rituals. It is exactly this emphasis on ritualisation that resonates with Sofronii, as his entire life has become intertwined with religious practices and

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 117.

actions taught to him from a young age. The developmental psychologist Erik Erikson's theories of the self in his works *Childhood and Society* (1950) and *Ontogeny of Ritualization in Man* (1966) explain the influence of ritualisation for a young person, and allow the reader to see how Sofronii's selfhood has been moulded into this religious holy fool. Erikson, also a psychoanalyst, focuses on the role of upbringing and the importance of an outside influence on the self via rituals and relationships. These rituals, he argues, are presented to us from birth, be they religious, social, or survival, and help us shape who we become. Sofronii was taken in by the monastery, which subsequently fulfilled the role of 'mother' and encouraged his childlike behaviour under the status of 'holy fool', cementing his status as Sofronii the fool for Christ's sake. Thus, the monastery removed any understanding of Sofronii as 'mad' as anything he did, or said, was essentially protected by the term 'holy fool'. If an action was seemingly without reason, it was not that Sofronii was not in fact a holy fool, but rather that others did not understand the piety behind the action. With the monastery encouraging behaviour in line with the figure of the holy fool, Sofronii 'watches himself' and ritualises such behaviour to the point at which it becomes a part of his self. Erikson states that 'in the ritualizations of infancy avoidances were the mother's responsibility; now the child himself is trained to "watch himself"' and hence his 'negative identity furnishes explicit images of pseudo-species which one must *not* resemble in order to have a chance of acceptance in one's own'.⁶⁵ Therefore, according to Erikson's theory, Sofronii learns the behaviour expected of him by what is deemed 'acceptable' by the other. In essence, he plays to the other, acting how he is told is 'appropriate' by the monastery. He is not allowed to develop an I-for-myself outside of the monastery's framework, essentially pandering to a preconceived I-for-another. This suggests that Sofronii's actions are intentional, but still gives us no insight into their

⁶⁵ Erik Erikson, 'Ontogeny of Ritualization in Man', *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London, Series B, Biological Sciences*, 251.772 (1966), 337–349, p. 343.

validity; the actions may simply be learnt rather than truly pious. Yet it is the other's view of him that is centralised; regardless of how Sofronii acts it is the interpretation by the other that deems him a 'holy man' or 'mad'. The truth behind his actions does not matter as it does not affect the outcome. It is hence the I-for-another that is important here.

Furthermore, the reader is told that Sofronii was found around the age of ten or eleven, placing him in what Erikson calls the 'industry versus inferiority stage'. He states that 'the *school-age* adds another element to ritualization: that of the *perfection of performance*. The elements mentioned so far would be without a binding discipline which holds them to a minute sequence and arrangement of performance'.⁶⁶ Erikson argues that during this age skills are put to use to benefit society, and the rewards and the satisfaction gained from correctly applying these skills encourage – ritualise – particular behaviours. Hence a person may 'become an eager and absorbed unit of a productive situation'.⁶⁷ This happens to Sofronii by placing him within the monastery, as it strengthens his religious ritualisation, for example, praying, and turns it into an industry which produces a religious selfhood. This is then taken advantage of by the monastery. Therefore, Sofronii is not allowed to develop on his own, but rather the monastery cultivates his identity to take on the role of holy fool; the other curates the figure of the 'holy fool' for their own gain. His audience, his society, therefore relies on the word of the monastery when perceiving Sofronii as a holy fool. In essence, they are *told* to understand Sofronii as pious, limiting their own interpretations. Sofronii's I-for-another is purposefully constructed for monetary gain by the monastery.

With regard to Akhilla, importance is placed not on his habitual relationship to others, as with Sofronii, but rather on his compassion for them. Whereas Sofronii plays the role of holy fool that he is given, and develops his selfhood through the cues and feedback he

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 345.

⁶⁷ Erik Erikson, *Childhood and Society* (London: Paladin, 1987), p. 233.

receives, the reader scarcely sees Akhilla act in reference to himself. Kierkegaard's *Works of Love* (1847) stresses the importance of love for another for a true Christian. He argues that 'Christian love is self-renunciation's love', and this is exactly how Akhilla is presented.⁶⁸ Akhilla almost never acts in favour of himself over another, always doing his utmost to aid someone else. For example, when he appears to behave in a childlike manner, stealing bones, he is not doing so for the fun of it, but rather to fulfil the liturgy. Although the other's perception of him is crucial, Akhilla's awareness of this fact is unnecessary, permitting his acts to remain uncalculated, and thus acts of true love, not for recognition. He does not choose to present himself as either a holy fool or an idiot, but simply attempts to aid the soul of the deceased. He signifies the redundancy of intention in favour of effect. In so doing, Akhilla acts out Kierkegaard's statement that 'love of one's neighbour [...] is self-renouncing love, and all self-renunciation casts out all preferential love just as it casts out all self-love'.⁶⁹ His sacrifice of everything he owns to erect a monument to his friend similarly highlights his sacrifice of self-love in favour of loving another. Akhilla's intentions are not explicit here either, the reader is never told if this act is a demonstration of piety or love, despite earlier exhibitions of his religious beliefs. To Akhilla, however, the audience does not matter and how he is perceived does not affect him; he simply wants to honour his friend. Kierkegaard states that 'everyone as an individual, before he relates himself in love to a beloved, to a friend, to lovers, to contemporaries, must first relate himself to God and the God-demand'.⁷⁰

Therefore, Akhilla fulfils Kierkegaard's conception of a true loving Christian, regardless of the piety, or lack thereof, behind his actions. This is exactly the task that the holy fool must undertake – loving the other over oneself. In order to embody the role of the

⁶⁸ Søren Kierkegaard, *Works of Love: Some Christian Reflections in the Form of Discourses*, trans. Edna Hong, Howard Hong (London: Collins, 1962), p. 65.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

holy fool Akhilla must suppress his individuality and I-for-myself, choosing to love and act for the other in order to show them how to live and be pious through his I-for-another. This intention, however, is never made explicit, the reader only sees him embody Christian ideals as the result of his actions, and not necessarily because of any wisdom. Through his self-sacrificing acts, Akhilla, whether consciously or not, follows the teachings of Christianity and simultaneously shows his community how to act for the other, despite being seen as an outsider. He may exhibit love for the other, but if this is not interpreted as such, but rather as idiotic acts, then he does not provide Christian teachings. For example, the diary portion of *Soboriane* gives us an insight into the changing attitude towards Akhilla; he begins as a good-natured new deacon and quickly, within the space of just over a month, becomes ‘cowardly’ and full of false blessings. Here the other will perceive Akhilla’s actions to be ‘mad’ and not those of a holy fool, reflecting their own mindset. Like the other characters examined thus far, Akhilla disputes neither this interpretation of overly passionate idiot, nor his religious role within the church, continuing in his actions as a deacon and allowing others to interpret him as they wish.

The inherent relation to the other comes to the fore for both Sofronii and Akhilla, as they are portrayed as willing to sacrifice themselves for the other, to take on the role of ‘saviour’. Sofronii takes on the role of holy fool curated for him by the monastery and allows them to exploit him for money: ‘[a] разве неизвестно тебе, что к отцу Софронию богомольцы частенько за благословеньем приходять. В две-то недели, сколько, ты полагаешь, обитель от того получить?’⁷¹ He surrenders his identity to the other, permitting them to shroud him in their own beliefs. He wholeheartedly takes on his role as a ‘holy fool’, allowing the other to religiously interpret his behaviour, actions and mumbling for prophecies to bring themselves joy:

⁷¹ Mel’nikov, *Na gorakh*, V, p. 77.

[к]огда мальчуган подрос, увидали монастырские поповичи, что польза из него может быть. [...] Хоть полоумных в монахи не постригают, но ради монастырской пользы его постригли и нарекли Софронием. С той поры приезжих богомольцев стало бывать помногу. Усердствующие с любовью и благоговеньем посещали блаженного Софронушку, а купчихи с дочерьми верст даже из-за двухсот и больше приезжали к нему за полезными словами и пророчествами.⁷²

Therefore, Sofronii the fool for Christ's sake exists for the sake of the other and as a construction by the other. He plays the fool for the sake of the monastery and its visitors. He must act in accordance with the rituals of the figure of the holy fool in order to be regarded as such and '[i]t also emphasizes the fact that identification of a person as a *iurodivyi* relied [...] on how that person was perceived by the community'.⁷³ Although Sofronii's identity can be curated as a holy fool by the monastery, and adhered to by Sofronii through rituals, it is entirely within the perception of the audience. If they do not hold religious beliefs they may see him simply as the lost, lonely, boy of eleven that arrived at the monastery, marking him as an idiot being exploited by the monastery, but if the viewer is religious then he becomes a prophet. Thus, as much as the monastery curates his status as a holy fool, they are at the mercy of the viewers' beliefs. Sofronii adheres to this role as he has been conditioned to do, suppressing any other personal qualities, attempting to limit the ambiguity that necessarily comes with his status for monetary gain. He lives within a restricted community, but still takes on the role of prophet needed, and desired, by those around him.

While Sofronii sacrifices himself mentally and spiritually, Akhilla does so physically. In addition to forgoing his own comfort in favour of helping others, Akhilla 'saves' his town

⁷² Ibid., p. 68.

⁷³ Bennett, *Holy Fool and Artist*, p. 113.

from the devil. The story of a devil roaming the town, stealing people's food begins to circulate, highlighting the religious beliefs, or lack thereof, of the townsfolk. For some, the devil is really haunting their town, torturing its inhabitants, while for others, it is simply a hungry person who found it easier to scare people into feeding him. The desecration of his friend's monument is the final straw for Akhilla. He waits in the cemetery for the devil to appear, prepared to kill him. He disregards his own safety and risks death: 'гладкие края канавы были покрыты ледянистой корой и выкарабкаться по ним без помощи рук было невозможно, а освободить руки значило упустить чорта. Ахилла этого не хотел'.⁷⁴ Akhilla is committed to serving the other unto his death – the ultimate self-sacrifice. Again, the reader is never told if this is a considered plan or the result of mad ill-judgement.

Therefore, both Sofronii and Akhilla exist almost solely within their religious spheres, yet retain their outsider status. The absence of interiority and the resulting ambiguity pervades these works, forcing the reader to rely on other characters' interpretations of Sofronii and Akhilla which are, in turn, filtered through their own belief system. They constantly act for the other regardless of their own will or aspirations, sacrificing their entire lives for the sake of the other. This self-sacrifice, however, can be understood either as consciously or unconsciously pious depending on how it is viewed by the other. If the audience reasons that Sofronii or Akhilla is an idiot then their inappropriate and dangerous actions can be explained as such, but if the audience believes they understand a higher meaning behind these actions, interpreting them religiously, then Sofronii and Akhilla can be categorised as a holy fool.

4.3 The integrated holy fool: Dostoevskii

⁷⁴ Leskov, *Soboriane*, p. 388.

In contrast to Sofronii and Akhilla, who remain predominantly within a religious setting, Prince Myshkin from Dostoevskii's *Idiot* (1868-1869) and Sonia from *Prestuplenie i nakazanie* are both presented as socially integrated holy fools. Through them the reader sees how the figure of the holy fool adapts to different social environments, and how they deal with new – not necessarily religious – perceptions of themselves. This adaptation of the holy fool figure, away from the strictly religious and toward a more social understanding, is what Ewa Thompson refers to as 'stylised holy fools'.⁷⁵ Thompson argues that although 'their depiction departs from canonical iconography, losing some of the features that made up the paradigm, the identification of these stylized figures as holy fools is reliant on a similarity of function and literary precedents in Russian culture'.⁷⁶ Despite this integration into society, they still appear as 'odd' in comparison to others, just like the more traditional holy fool figure. As with Grisha, Lizaveta, Sofronii, and Akhilla, their behaviour is childlike, rendering them inappropriate in certain situations, and placing them within the tradition of the holy fool. Indeed, Sonia, at eighteen, is in fact barely out of childhood.

The problem for stylised holy fools is this difference in social perception. If this new, less traditional audience of the big city does not interpret their actions within the framework of religious faith, then they may simply be passed off as an idiot. This non-religious perception is primarily a problem for Myshkin as '[a]lthough he denies it, the personality of Myshkin himself is [...] refer[red] to as his "idiocy"'.⁷⁷

This 'idiocy', however, still contains the ambiguity of holy/mad. As with Grisha, it is precisely Myshkin's childlikeness that allows him a perception of the world that others do not

⁷⁵ Thompson, *Understanding Russia*, p. 146.

⁷⁶ Aline Birzache, "'Casting Fire onto the Earth": The Holy Fool in Russian Cinema', in *Religion in Contemporary European Cinema: The Postsecular Constellation*, ed. Costica Bradatan, Camil Ungureanu (New York: Routledge, 2014), pp. 27–43 (p. 33).

⁷⁷ Elizabeth Dalton, *Unconscious Structure in "The Idiot": A Study in Literature and Psychoanalysis* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979), p. 71.

have. Through his innocence he is able to see beauty where others can only see ugliness. The connection between children and piety is highlighted by Sarah Young, who states, ‘[c]hildren, like Myshkin, have the potential to see the truth through the purity of their vision, while Christ is present as an ideal of compassion and a supreme example of suffering’.⁷⁸ The concept of knowledge through purity acknowledges Myshkin’s idiocy as a signifier of holy folly since ‘ребенок даже в самом трудном деле может дать чрезвычайно важный совет’.⁷⁹ Thus, as with the other holy fools examined here, innocence simultaneously associates Myshkin with the Christian ideal to those who are pious, and to those who are not it makes him appear simply naïve. The significance of Myshkin’s idiocy lies not in his perception of the world, but rather how others perceive him. This is because the reader is presented with ‘contradictory signals about Myshkin, making it difficult to categorize him in any straightforward manner. The very existence of opposing interpretations of the hero suggests that he is complex and impossible to define according to a single set of criteria’.⁸⁰ He is neither definitively an idiot nor divinely inspired; he too can be simultaneously both.

However, a childlike adult is not a norm in the society in which he finds himself, marking him as an outsider for others: ‘он почти как ребенок’.⁸¹ The flitting between child and adult causes a stir within his company and, as Anderson states, ‘the women around Myshkin similarly guard him as a child and “go mad” with exultation at his presence as an adult’.⁸² Myshkin continuously acts inappropriately, as he presents himself as both adult and child, enacting the behaviour of a holy fool. In this instance, however, inappropriate actions are not necessarily seen as signs of piety. As a result, ‘the main focus of the middle section of

⁷⁸ Sarah Young, *Dostoevsky’s The Idiot and the Ethical Foundations of Narrative: Reading, Narrating, Scripting* (London: Anthem Press, 2004), p. 93.

⁷⁹ Fedor Dostoevskii, *Idiot*, in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridtsati tomakh*, 30 vols (Leningrad: Nauka, 1973), VIII, p. 58.

⁸⁰ Young, *Ethical Foundations*, p. 5.

⁸¹ Dostoevskii, *Idiot*, VIII, p. 45.

⁸² Anderson, *Myths of Duality*, p. 75.

The Idiot [...] is on Myshkin's efforts to make a normal adjustment to society'.⁸³ From the outset it is clear that Myshkin does not align with the society into which he integrates himself, with he himself stating: 'я ровно ничего не знаю практически ни в здешних обычаях, ни вообще как здесь люди живут'.⁸⁴ For example, his ignorance of social norms leads him to wait in the wrong room upon arrival at the Epanchins' house, an action not dismissed even by the footman: '[Л]акей, видимо, не мог примириться с мыслью впустить такого посетителя' since 'уж князь не подходил под разряд вседневных посетителей'.⁸⁵ No higher meaning is attributed to this ill-judged act, and no religious understanding of humility is even entertained. Here, the other characters read Myshkin's action as a mistake, removing any religious connotations associating humility with holy folly, though readers may interpret this differently.

In the case of Sonia, it is her meekness that reinforces her childlike qualities, in addition to her age. As Keith argues, it is exactly this childlike meekness that creates the image of her as a fool for Christ's sake since '[h]onesty and meekness frequently characterize the female saintly fool, who is generally not as assertive as the male'.⁸⁶ Raskol'nikov even refers to her as a *iurodivaia* after a lengthy conversation about her actions and beliefs.⁸⁷ Her overtly religious beliefs, when set outright in front of her interlocutor, permit the other to entertain the idea of interpreting her actions through a religious framework previously unattainable to them. Her behaviour in front of a crowd only strengthens this perception of Sonia as a small, vulnerable child:

⁸³ Simon O. Lesser, 'Saint and Sinner - Dostoevsky's "Idiot"', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 4.3 (1958), 211–224 (p. 220).

⁸⁴ Dostoevskii, *Idiot*, VIII, p. 23.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 16, p. 17.

⁸⁶ Keith, *The Saintly Fool*, p. 129.

⁸⁷ Dostoevskii, *Prestuplenie i nakazanie*, VI, p. 248.

[т]еперь это была скромно и даже бедно одетая девушка, очень еще молоденькая, почти похожая на девочку, с скромною и приличною манерой, с ясным, но как будто несколько запуганным лицом. [...] Увидав неожиданно полную комнату людей, она не то что сконфузилась, но совсем потерялась, оробела, как маленькой ребенок.⁸⁸

However, as with Myshkin, these childlike qualities can appear highly inappropriate in the settings in which she finds herself, notably in relation to her work as a prostitute. This clash of personalities is not lost on the narrator who observes that ‘несмотря на свои восемнадцать лет, она казалась почти еще девочкой, гораздо моложе своих лет, совсем почти ребенком, и это иногда даже смешно проявлялось в некоторых ее движениях’.⁸⁹ Other characters, however, may be quick to attribute her actions – her childlikeness – to her age and personality, rather than reading them as actions of spiritual wisdom. As stylised holy fools, Myshkin and Sonia find that the everyday societies in which they live open their actions up to a multitude of interpretations, including the non-religious. The ambiguity of their true personalities runs the risk of nobody perceiving them as holy fools, especially in the more modernised societies they inhabit. To the generalised audience they may simply be ‘mad’ childlike adults, and the lack of confirmation of their true intentions and I-for-myself may resign them to this status.

Further to their inappropriate behaviour, both Myshkin and Sonia are portrayed as undertaking roles for which they are unfit, in order to aid the other. Unlike with the more ostracised holy fools considered in this chapter, these are purely social roles, with little or no connection to religion. Myshkin plays many parts within his time at the Epanchins’, none of which he is suitable for. He simply becomes a blank canvas onto which others project what

⁸⁸ Dostoevskii, *Idiot*, VIII, p. 181.

⁸⁹ Dostoevskii, *Prestuplenie i nakazanie*, VI, p. 183.

they require; his I-for-another is created anew in the mind of the other. It is here that the importance of audience perception becomes clear; they choose to see Myshkin as what they require, rather than trying to decode his identity. His I-for-myself is all but destroyed through the need for I-for-another. Jostein Børtnes argues that this suppression of Myshkin's true self is 'a kind of Bovaryism; like Emma in Flaubert's novel, [...] [Myshkin is] an embodiment of [...] heroic ideals, a role for which he is totally unfit'.⁹⁰ As long as the other characters believe he is correctly playing the role that they believe him to hold, the fact that he is 'unfit' for these roles is not important. The view of the other takes precedence over identity.

However, in being unfit for these roles Myshkin is bound to behave inappropriately, either by his inability to fit into the social mould, or his infidelity to the interpreted role. Due to the importance of the audience's interpretation of Myshkin, his actions can be understood in a variety of ways – not necessarily as he intended them – adding a new dimension to his role within the text. The mindsets through which each individual character filters Myshkin's acts create a collection of identities for Myshkin, and his refusal to concretely assert himself permits them all validity. As Evelina Mendelevich states, in *Idiot Dostoevskii* 'test[s] the possibility of ideal self-other relationships that accommodate individual will and sense of selfhood with the demands of social life and the needs of others'.⁹¹ However, the problem is that Myshkin is never in fact the other's ideal, but is simply viewed as such by the other; he sacrifices his own sense of self in order to take on what is needed by the other. He does not contradict the ambiguity surrounding him; he neither confirms nor denies his status as holy fool, 'mad', or as any other role placed upon him. He plays off of this ambiguity, sacrificing his personal self and allowing the other to interpret him as needed. Thus,

⁹⁰ Jostein Børtnes, 'Dostoevskij's *Idiot* or the Poetics of Emptiness', *Scando-Slavica*, 40.1 (1994), 5–14 (pp. 12–13).

⁹¹ Evelina Mendelevich, *Sentenced to Life: Writing the Self in Dostoevsky and James*, Thesis (Ph.D), The City University of New York, 2013, p. 112.

everything in his script is directed away from himself and towards the other. Not only is his compassion inspired by the face of the other, but more significantly, his humility exists solely in terms of its orientation towards the other, and thus demands the suppression of his own 'I'.⁹²

Myshkin exists not for himself, but for the other. He constantly allows himself to be identified as whichever role he must play for the sake of the other, permitting them to achieve their own selfhood by the suppression of his own. Therefore, once more, the role of the holy fool is to perform the role required of them, and to suppress and sacrifice their own selfhood to aid the other. Therefore:

[w]hen it comes to the inner reality of the self, one finds in the fiction of Dostoevsky [...] the [...] distinction between the 'raw' material of interior reality, the indeterminate and elusive 'I for myself,' and the 'I for another,' the social identity forged from this material through a similar process of selection and shaping. It is through 'surrender and sacrifice' of the self's essential potentiality that a distinct, meaningful identity is formed.⁹³

This meaningful identity is what is found by the other through their reading of Myshkin's actions. For example, a role Myshkin deems himself required to play is that of Nastas'ia Filippovna's fiancé. He offers her the possibility of being saved from what he has already perceived as a cruel fate with Rogozhin, by allowing her to view him as a potential suitor. From the beginning Myshkin has adapted to whichever role Nastas'ia Filippovna needed, even initially belittling his status to that of a servant:

he takes on the role of the servant she assumes him to be [...] immediately signalling to her his willingness to deny his own self in order to help her assert hers, in a

⁹² Young, *Ethical Foundations*, p. 103.

⁹³ Mendelevich, *Sentenced to Life*, p. 191.

voluntary act of kenosis. Again he deems his own position to be secondary, and allows others to direct events and project their own scripts.⁹⁴

The motif of submitting his self to Nastas'ia Filippovna continues with his performance of a dotting admirer. He ardently claims to love her, begging her to choose him over the other, ill-intentioned, suitors: '[я] ничто, а вы [...] стыдитесь да с Рогожиным ехать хотите? Это лихорадка... Вы господину Тоцкому семьдесят тысяч отдали и говорите, что всё, что здесь есть, всё бросите, этого никто здесь не сделает. Я вас... Настасья Филипповна... люблю'.⁹⁵ He allows her to assume him not only to be a suitor, but a better and more worthy one. Despite his inability to be a fiancé, let alone a husband, due to his childlike qualities, his illness, and love for Aglaia, Myshkin does not correct Nastas'ia Filippovna's reading of him. Therefore, even in his 'heroic' moments Myshkin still acts inappropriately as '[h]e chooses the woman he most pities, not the one he most loves'.⁹⁶ He is willing to sacrifice not only his self but also his happiness to take on the role required of him by the other.

Sonia does precisely the same, as in order to support her family financially she becomes a prostitute. Despite all her best efforts, her alcoholic father squanders a large portion of her earnings, and contributes nothing to his own family. Not only does Sonia sacrifice herself but, by obtaining a yellow ticket, she potentially removes the ability to become someone else. As Laurie Bernstein states:

[r]egistration meant that prostitution [...] now became a full-time career. Lack of a passport made it difficult to earn money from anything but commercial sex. Any hopes to maintain a semblance of respectability had to be abandoned when a woman entered her name on police lists.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ Young, *Ethical Foundations*, p. 99.

⁹⁵ Dostoevskii, *Idiot*, VIII, p. 138.

⁹⁶ Lesser, 'Saint and Sinner', p. 224.

⁹⁷ Laurie Bernstein, *Sonia's Daughters: Prostitutes and their Regulation in Imperial Russia* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995), pp. 48–49. However, recent research

Therefore, not only has Sonia undertaken this role to aid her family, but she has foregone her old identity as it was projected to society. She is no longer Sonia the young woman, the daughter, the care giver, but primarily Sonia the prostitute.

Sonia sheds light on a different perspective on holy fools by sacrificing herself in such a manner. As Rowan Williams argues:

Dostoevsky's fiction is often appealed to for examples of holy folly. Sonya in *Crime and Punishment* could be seen as an extreme version of the tradition of mixing with and identifying with public and notorious sinners, as she turns to prostitution in order to save her family.⁹⁸

She is portrayed as enduring a lot of judgement and suffering at the hands of her father's decisions, but never reproaches him for them. She accepts any perception of herself without argument, even when it is socially and morally to her detriment. She is always compassionate, indeed almost Christ-like in her forgiveness. As Keith states, 'Sonia's sacrifice marks her early in the novel as an embodiment of the Christly ideal of suffering for others'.⁹⁹ Although he is very aware of his failings, this does not prevent her father from taking advantage of her. He shows little regard for Sonia and does not reciprocate her compassion: '[в]от этот самый полуштоф-с на ее деньги и куплен, - произнес Мармеладов, исключительно обращаясь к Раскольникову. - Тридцать копеек вынесла, своими руками, последние, всё что было, сам видел... Ничего не сказала'.¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, he does see the good, pure heart of Sonia, exclaiming that on judgement day she will be

by Siobhán Hearne suggests that women had more flexibility about leaving sex work than Bernstein's claims suggest. See Siobhán Hearne, *Policing Prostitution: Regulating the Lower Classes in Late Imperial Russia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021).

⁹⁸ Rowan Williams, 'Holy Folly and the Problem of Representing Holiness: Some Literary Perspectives', *Journal of Orthodox Christian Studies*, 1.1 (2018), 3–15 (p. 6).

⁹⁹ Keith, *The Sainly Fool*, p. 221.

¹⁰⁰ Dostoevskii, *Prestuplenie i nakazanie*, VI, p. 20.

rewarded by God for her Christ-like qualities.¹⁰¹ Hence, her compassion, although not entirely reciprocated by her father, is not lost on him. Diane Oenning Thompson highlights this recognition of Sonia as a martyr in Marmeladov's speech in the tavern. She states that his appropriation of Holy Writ demonstrates how Christ would act in relation to Sonia as He himself walked among sinners and forgave them.¹⁰² Marmeladov, and his personal God, recognise Sonia's sacrifices in order to play the role that he, and his family, need. His religious interpretation of her actions removes the lowly social role and places her within the pious sphere, a contrary interpretation of her identity to those of the people she most commonly encounters.

George Panichas argues that, by becoming a prostitute for the sake of the other, Sonia 'dramatizes eternal suffering and eternal pity: a dimension of the secular profaning of divine wisdom, and yet its ever-present and sacrificial features of endurance'.¹⁰³ Her constant and silent sacrifice of self exposes her Christ-like qualities of forgiveness, understanding, and compassion. She, like Myshkin, never corrects any interpretation of her actions, allowing the ambiguity of her self to remain. Thus, 'before Sonya ever utters a word, her father, Raskolnikov, and Luzhin present competing identities for her ranging from a model of Christian self-sacrifice to a common prostitute'.¹⁰⁴ Her multiple identities, like the holy fools I examined previously, represent the belief system of the other characters. Those who need Christian guidance will find that she portrays exactly that, whereas to those who want her as a prostitute, her actions simply display her meek, idiotic tendencies.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 21.

¹⁰² Diane Oenning Thompson, 'Problems of the Biblical Word in Dostoevsky's Poetics', in *Dostoevsky and the Christian Tradition*, ed. Dianne Oenning Thompson, George Pattison (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 69–100 (pp. 71–73).

¹⁰³ George A. Panichas, *Dostoevsky's Spiritual Art: The Burden of Vision* (London: Routledge, 2017), p. 39.

¹⁰⁴ Elizabeth Blake, 'Sonya, Silent No More: A Response to the Woman Question in Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*', *The Slavic and East European Journal*, 50.2 (2006), 252–271 (p. 255).

Despite playing the financially necessary role of prostitute, it is clear that Sonia's 'inner self has not been degraded through prostitution'.¹⁰⁵ As a result, the reader sees two sides to Sonia: the meek child and the strong adult. Keith argues that both of these characteristics aid in the portrayal of Sonia as a holy fool as:

[s]ince Sonia is categorized as a *yurodivaya* and that the peasant psychology attributed healing powers to the *yurodivye*, this appears to be another indication that Dostoevsky wanted Sonia to appear not merely as a meek and selfless young woman who had been victimized by society, but as an individual with real spiritual power.¹⁰⁶

Therefore, as with Myshkin, Sonia suppresses her I-for-myself in order to assume the role required of her by the other, whatever that may be, allowing them to interpret her actions as they want. Her own wishes and qualities must be brushed aside in order to maintain the ambiguity of self that allows others to interpret her as they desire.

Myshkin's display of self throughout the entire work is based on the suppression of his own selfhood in order to act, to perform a role. The sociologist Erving Goffman's *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1956) discusses selfhood as a performative concept and centres on the idea of acting in a particular manner to play a certain role. He discusses the self as a social concept, drawing on the importance of perception and role playing. Goffman's theory shows us how a character like Myshkin can adapt to many an unfit role required by the other, allowing himself to be interpreted as such. Myshkin's goal, by maintaining the ambiguity about his self, and allowing the other to interpret him as they desire, is always to help the other, never for self-betterment. As Goffman states 'there will usually be some reason for him to mobilize his activity so that it will convey an impression to others which it

¹⁰⁵ Keith, *The Saintly Fool*, p. 221.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 245.

is in his interests to convey'.¹⁰⁷ This is exactly what Myshkin does. He changes his actions, tone of voice, and chooses which phrases to use to best convey the role he deems necessary to adopt. The important thing, however, is in how these actions are then understood by his audience. If Myshkin's inability to act correctly in society becomes too apparent the other may misread his actions, interpreting him as 'mad' rather than projecting the role they require onto him.

The clearest example of this suppression of selfhood is during his declaration of love for Nastas'ia Filippovna. The once humble Prince Myshkin suddenly gains an air of confidence and grandiosely announces his intentions to marry Nastas'ia Filippovna seemingly out of the blue in front of her other suitors. His behaviour is calculated in order to save her from Rogozhin. As Goffman argues:

when an individual appears before others his actions will influence the definition of the situation which they come to have. Sometimes the individual will act in a thoroughly calculating manner, expressing himself in a given way solely in order to give the kind of impression to others that is likely to evoke from them a specific response he is concerned to obtain. Sometimes the individual will be calculating in his activity but be relatively unaware that this is the case.¹⁰⁸

Therefore, the individual merely adapts themselves to achieve a particular goal. In the case of Myshkin this goal is to convince his audience that he truly is the self that he is performing, masking any glimpse of his I-for-myself in the process. He relies on his ambiguity to allow his audience to perceive him as they need, applying the role they require onto him.

¹⁰⁷ Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Anchor Books, 1959), p. 4.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

Goffman also recognises the importance of performing a self for the benefit of others, exactly as Myshkin does: ‘the individual offers his performance and puts on his show “for the benefit of other people”’.¹⁰⁹ Good-natured role playing, Goffman highlights, is engrained in all of us, even if we believe to do so out of self-interest as ‘a cynical individual may delude his audience for what he considers to be their own good, or for the good of the community, etc.’.¹¹⁰ Therefore, Goffman’s theory of the self enables the reader to see that Myshkin continually *chooses* to perform a role, using his ambiguity to alter how he is perceived by others in order to delude them, and to sacrifice his own sense of self in favour of that required by the other. Thus, in line with the holy fools previously considered, Myshkin denies his own ‘I’ in order to perform for the sake of the other. However, this is also where the integrated holy fools deviate from the ostracised and semi-integrated holy fools; Myshkin actively and consciously chooses to perform the role needed by the other, there is little ambiguity about his intentions here despite occasional interpretations of him as malign.¹¹¹ However, in order for him to play these roles, as with the other characters examined here, he must be viewed as such by his audience, the other character for whose sake he is performing. Without the confirmation of such a role in the mind of the other Myshkin is still simply an idiot.

Similarly, Sonia, in her unfit role as a prostitute, suppresses her own selfhood for the benefit of the other. The philosopher and Christian existentialist Gabriel Marcel’s *The Mystery of Being* (1900) explores the importance of the other for the construction of selfhood. Marcel argues that selfhood is not internally created, but rather externally defined by the other, stating that ‘if a legitimate answer can be finally given to the question, “Who am I?”, it

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 17.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 18.

¹¹¹ Robert Lord, *Dostoevsky: Essays and Perspectives* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1970), pp. 83–84.

cannot be given by myself, but only by somebody else'.¹¹² Sonia allows the other to define her, being categorised in whichever role the other believes her to belong. Her performance as a lowly, meek prostitute is taken advantage of by others throughout the novel, by her father, by Luzhin, and by the men that pay for her. A select few, such as Raskol'nikov and her stepmother, interpret her actions differently, reading a pious intention behind them. The inability to concretely define Sonia as one or the other displays her ardency in sacrificing her self. Marcel argues that in order for a person to sacrifice themselves they must necessarily be mad as:

[t]here is no shared ground on which common sense and the hero or martyr could meet; they are like two axes that can never intersect. In itself, sacrifice seems madness; but a deeper reflection, the secondary and recuperative reflection [...] enables us, as it were, to recognize and to approve it as a worthy madness.¹¹³

In relation to Sonia, Marcel's 'worthy madness' can be interpreted as holy folly. In this case it is in the name of Christ that Sonia sacrifices her own selfhood to take on the role required of her by the other, rendering her 'mad' in the process. Her willingness to forsake her own self out of compassion for the other, despite their lack of reciprocation and possible misinterpretation of her true self, can be elucidated by Marcel's theory as:

[s]elf-sacrifice can be confused with self-slaughter only by the man who is looking on the hero's or the martyr's act from the outside, from its material aspect merely, and who is therefore incapable of associating himself sympathetically with the inner essence of the act. On the other hand, the person who is carrying the act out has, without any doubt at all, the feeling that through self-sacrifice he is reaching self-fulfilment; given his own situation and that of everything dear to him, he realizes his

¹¹² Gabriel Marcel, *The Mystery of Being*, 2 vols (Chicago, IL: Regnery Publishing, 1950), I, p. 148.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 166.

own nature most completely, he most completely *is*, in the act of giving his life away.¹¹⁴

Thus, Sonia is neither one interpretation nor the other, she is simultaneously both. She is nothing more than what the other deems her to be. Her indefinability does not destroy her selfhood but rather becomes it. Examining Sonia's selfhood through the lens of Marcel's *The Mystery of Being* suggests she willingly welcomes hardship and judgement from her role as prostitute, despite its distance from other perceptions of her as pious, as the role is needed by the other. Without this performance her family would not survive. Thus in order to protect those that she loves she does the most compassionate thing she can and sacrifices her identity.

This compassion for the other is evident at the end of both works, during which both Myshkin and Sonia comfort a murderer in the name of forgiveness. In the case of Myshkin it is Rogozhin, Nastas'ia Filippovna's murderer, that he aids. Myshkin, through his compassion for the other, adopts his final role of companion. He ignores any wrongdoing on Rogozhin's part, including the murder, and becomes exactly what Rogozhin requires – a friend. It is 'Myshkin's self-emptying sacrifice of himself to Rogozhin' that sees him forego any previous judgment of Rogozhin, once again coming to the aid of the other.¹¹⁵ Thus:

Myshkin's relapse into idiocy appears to be just such a relinquishment of self for the sake of others. Though it costs him his sanity, Myshkin follows Christ's commandment, loving Rogozhin as he would himself, staying with him and comforting him through the night. [...] Idiocy is thus both the price Myshkin pays for this compassion and a sign to others of his imitation of Christ.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 166.

¹¹⁵ Lisa Woodson, 'Treasures in Earthen Vessels in Dostoevsky's *The Idiot*', *Russian Review*, 74.4 (2015), 624–641 (p. 638).

¹¹⁶ John Givens, 'A Narrow Escape into Faith? Dostoevsky's *Idiot* and the Christology of Comedy', *The Russian Review*, 70.1 (2011), 95–117 (p. 110).

Myshkin does not judge others as they judge him. He allows them to open up to him, projecting onto him what they need – in this instance a caring companion. Therefore, Dostoevskii's *Idiot* culminates in yet another suppression of self on the part of Myshkin. He is depicted as forgiving and compassionate and does not punish people for their actions, but aids them by assuming the role required of him at that given moment. Thus, 'the most important property of the character of Prince Myshkin is his attitude towards others'.¹¹⁷ He is I-for-another, not I-for-myself.

Sonia's compassion comes to the fore through her relationship with both her father, as discussed above, and Raskol'nikov. As with Myshkin, Sonia's final role is the compassionate companion to a murderer. From the beginning, although horrified, she recognises Raskol'nikov's need for love and repentance. She convinces him to turn himself in, starting, as best he can, to rectify his mistakes by his own accord: '[о]н сам это всё передавал слово и слово Софье Семеновне, которая одна и знает секрет, но в убийстве не участвовала ни словом, ни делом, а, напротив, ужаснулась так же, как и вы теперь. Будьте покойны, она его не выдаст'.¹¹⁸ In the moment, Sonia becomes what Raskol'nikov needs: a clear, firm, yet compassionate voice: 'к ней, Соне, к первой пришел он со своею исповедью; в ней искал он человека, когда ему понадобился человек'.¹¹⁹ She begins to guide Raskol'nikov through the process of rebirth and forgiveness via religion, engraining in him Christian teachings, and as a result 'Raskol'nikov's self-knowledge emerges [...] from his ambiguous struggles with Sonya's Christianity'.¹²⁰ Raskol'nikov perceives Sonia as a saviour attempting to make him a better person, in line with both her own explicit religious beliefs, but also

¹¹⁷ Yekaterina A. Abdrakhmanova, Taisiya T. Savchenko, 'The Problem of Love in Dostoevsky's Novel "The Idiot"', *Education and Science without Borders*, 4.8 (2013), 117–120 (p. 117).

¹¹⁸ Dostoevskii, *Prestuplenie i nakazanie*, VI, p. 377.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 402.

¹²⁰ Nina Pelikan Straus, *Dostoevsky and the Woman Question: Rereadings at the End of a Century* (London: Macmillan, 1994), p. 31

ultimately his own newfound beliefs. She moves to Siberia to follow him and continue to guide him. She rescues a completely lost, and seemingly hopeless man, and through the Christian faith potentially renews *his* selfhood: '[н]о он воскрес, и он знал это, чувствовал вполне всем обновившимся существом своим'.¹²¹ In line with every other holy fool considered here, Sonia sacrifices her own happiness and selfhood in order to help the other, whatever that may entail. She accepts all judgement and interpretations associated with these roles, even when they stand in opposition to one another.

Both Myshkin and Sonia are represented as characters that embody the traditions of the holy fool in spite of their 'stylisation' and integration. Although they may not wander the streets in rags or speak unintelligibly, sacrifice for the other remains at the centre of their roles. Unlike the other holy fools I have examined above, they adapt, jumping from social role to social role depending upon their company, but at the core the principle is the same – they exist for the other and through the other. The other characters are the crux of their performance, as their identity is constructed by the interpretations filtered through the consciousness of the other. Examining the selfhoods of Myshkin and Sonia through the theories of Goffman and Marcel shows the importance of the holy fool's audience. Not only does the holy fool depict Christian principles of charity and loving one's neighbour, but their very performance as a holy fool – the suppression of selfhood and individuality – relies on the other for interpretation and construction.

4.4 Conclusion

Like the provincial characters considered in chapter three, the holy fools considered here also present the 'mad' character in contrast to a faced society. Furthermore, the absence of an internal view necessary to depict holy fools marks a change in the duality of worlds

¹²¹ Dostoevskii, *Prestuplenie i nakazanie*, VI, p. 421.

present within the fiction. Here the external perspectives cut us off from the imaginary and show the dichotomy of the physical textual actual world and the divine/spiritual dimension. However, the other characters' inability to access this other spiritual world means that they view the protagonist as different and eventually mad. The lack of interior view is necessary here for most of the holy fools, again leaving the reader in the dark as to the protagonists' sanity, as well as their spirituality. Only assumptions about the true nature of the protagonists can be made, not verifiable statements. Hence, as with the provincial characters in chapter three, identity is created in the eyes of the other due to the missing I-for-myself.

Similarly, the holy fools play their role for the benefit of their society. They essentially remove their personal self from the equation, projecting what the other requires of them. Their selfhood is mediated through the mindset of the other which determines whether they are identified as a holy fool, whose madness is meant to pass on wisdom and inspire piety, or whether they are simply mad, without a religious cause or reason. The lack of interior view depicted in relation to holy fool figures points to missing intention, leaving the reader to interpret the character, which may only be achieved through the lens of how they are viewed by other characters. This suggests that holy fools, regardless of their social position and surroundings, are constructed the same way – they rely upon the mindset of the other to attribute piety to their actions. Without this they are simply identified as mad.

Identity here is externally created. The holy fool cannot be a self without the gaze and beliefs of the other. I-for-myself cannot exist alone and here is secondary to I-for-another. By contrast with chapters one, two and three the only thing that matters is that the vast majority of their society attributes religious meaning to their behaviour. In sum, the identity of both mad provincial characters and holy fools is constructed by the belief-system of the other instead of I-for-myself.

Part Three: Individuals and Self-Other Relations: Doubles and Love

5. Chapter Five: Epilepsy and the Self: Dostoevskii: The Divine and the Demonic

Whereas parts one and two focused on the relationship between the mad individual and the wider ‘sane’ society, here the focus shifts to the mad individual’s connection to a single ‘sane’ other, although the protagonist’s standing in society remains relevant to understanding the expectations placed upon them. Narrowing the focus will allow me to explore the significance of the other for identity in a more personal sense. Examining relationships of varying intimacy between the self and other will enable an analysis of how madness is socially defined.

For holy fool characters, the duality of worlds is revealed through their connection to the divine and their existence in the physical world. Epileptic protagonists similarly bridge the physical and spiritual worlds. However, in this case the ancient, otherworldly connotations of epilepsy encompass both the divine *and* the demonic. Indeed, just as it did for holy fools, the lack of interiority in the representation of epileptics aids this embrace of a higher and a lower world. However, here the connection to another world is not the result solely of knowledge, but as a consequence of a physical affliction.

Epilepsy is an umbrella term for many disorders involving unprovoked seizures and symptoms, such as auras, onset by a variety of triggers.¹ It encompasses a wide range of symptoms and causes.² Generally speaking there are four aetiologies of epilepsy: idiopathic

¹ Edward H. Reynolds, ‘History of epilepsy’, in *Introduction to Epilepsy*, ed. Gonzalo Alarcón, Antonio Valentin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 1–5 (p. 1).

² Carl E. Stafstrom, ‘Recognizing Seizures and Epilepsy: Insights from Pathophysiology’, in *Epilepsy*, ed. Howard P. Goodkin, John W. Miller (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2014), pp. 3–9 (p. 3).

(genetic disposition), symptomatic (caused by another disease), provoked (environmental factors), and cryptogenic (unidentified cause).³

Understandings of epilepsy changed over the centuries, with some of the earliest records dating back to 2000 BCE.⁴ The word itself comes from the Greek *epilēpsis*, ‘meaning to “take hold on” or “to seize upon”’, thereby suggesting an external force acting upon the sufferer.⁵ However, understanding of the exact nature of this force has changed, since:

for the ancient Greeks, epilepsy was a sacred disease; in the middle ages it was associated with demonic possession [...]; the era of the Enlightenment and the nineteenth century resisted the demonic interpretation and saw the rise of medicine and an empirical approach to understanding and treating the disease.⁶

Yet in nineteenth-century Russian literature, it is the religious connotations of epilepsy, rather than the clinical aspects, that are foregrounded, particularly in the writings of Dostoevskii.

Records of epilepsy predate any concrete clinical evidence of the disease as neurological in nature. As a result, it was commonly associated with the otherworldly – both divine and demonic. The extreme, involuntary convulsions that an epileptic experiences make a shocking display for onlookers, which could be interpreted within a religious framework as the human body being overtaken by a spiritual force. Symptoms such as auras can also be seen as spiritual by the sufferer, as the term ‘numinous-like auras’ suggests. These auras refer to the feeling of detachment from reality, depersonalisation, and the resulting increased

³ Renzo Guerrini, Anna Rosati, ‘What Causes Epilepsy?’, in *Epilepsy*, ed. Howard P. Goodkin, John W. Miller (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2014), pp. 15–27 (p. 15).

⁴ Lady Diana Ladino, et al., ‘Epilepsy Through the Ages: An Artistic Point of View’, *Epilepsy and Behavior*, 57 (2016), 255–264 (p. 255).

⁵ Paul Fung, *Dostoevsky and the Epileptic Mode of Being* (Oxford: Legenda, 2015), p. 4.

⁶ Brian R. Johnson, *The Art of Dostoevsky’s Falling Sick*, Thesis (Ph.D), The University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2008, pp. 4–5.

‘spirituality of experiential, personalized and atypical form, which may be distinct from traditional, culturally based religiosity’.⁷

The alternation in understandings of epilepsy as divine and epilepsy as demonic has persisted throughout history. One of the earliest known records of epilepsy, *On the Sacred Disease*, stated that ‘[e]pilepsy was called the “great disease” or “sacred disease” originating in the brain. It was sacred because a deity had sent a demon which had entered the patient’.⁸ The sense of the demonic was also present in the middle ages when ‘epilepsy came to be viewed as punishment for sinful behavior. The Christian prerogative was to exorcize the devil who had supposedly taken control’.⁹ Although also associated with Islam, as Mohammed suffered from epilepsy, the spiritual connection of epilepsy to Christianity is particularly strong.¹⁰

During the nineteenth century, within Dostoevskii’s lifetime, a new clinical understanding of the disease came to light, with the first effective drugs being introduced in 1857, around the same time that the author was formally diagnosed.¹¹ However, the line between a physical disease and madness was still unclear as ‘[i]n the early XIX century, “neuroses” encompassed epilepsy and insanity. Seizures and loss of consciousness were the defining characteristics of epilepsy’ but were often combined with the ‘mad’ elements of neuroses in diagnoses.¹² The connection between a disease and a person’s mental state has

⁷ Rima Dolgoff-Kaspar et al., ‘Numinous-like Auras and Spirituality in Persons with Partial Seizures’, *Epilepsia*, 52.3 (2011), 640–644 (p. 640).

⁸ Fung, *Epileptic Mode*, p. 4.

⁹ Ladino, ‘Epilepsy Through the Ages’, p. 255.

¹⁰ Tobias Dahlkvist, ‘The Epileptic Genius: The Use of Dostoevsky as Example in the Medical Debate over the Pathology of Genius’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 76.4 (2015), 587–608 (p. 589).

¹¹ Ivan Iniesta, ‘Epilepsy in the Process of Artistic Creation of Dostoevsky’, n. trans., *Neurología*, 29.6 (2014), 371–378 (p. 372).

¹² German E. Berrios, ‘Epilepsia e insanidade no início do século XIX – história conceitual’, *Revista Latinoamericana de Psicopatología Fundamental*, 15.4 (2012), 908–922 (p. 909). My own translation.

existed throughout history as the idea of illness as a metaphor was present with several diseases, including tuberculosis as ‘sufferers [were] sent to a “sanitorium” (the common word for a clinic for tuberculars and the most common euphemism for an insane asylum)’.¹³ Before diseases were fully understood it was common practice to view them as a consequence of a disturbed mental state and this connection continued in literature as ‘disease metaphors are used to judge society not as out of balance but as repressive’.¹⁴

This newfound perception of epilepsy as a physical disease, kept within the realm of medicine, did not entirely overshadow previous spiritual connotations, which were maintained partially through literature, including religious texts. For example, Mark’s gospel depicts a child with convulsions, foaming at the mouth, and a clenched jaw who ‘has a spirit that makes him unable to speak’.¹⁵ Jesus then banishes the spirit from the child, relieving him of his torture. Depictions of epilepsy in the bible commonly deem the ‘possessed’ to be insane (lunatics) in need of a cure.¹⁶ A wide range of non-religious literature represents the epileptic as a frightening figure, as someone to avoid. For example, Johannes Jensen’s *Stories from Himmerland* (1898) depicts an epileptic character who hides himself away from others for fear of frightening them with his condition.¹⁷ Epilepsy is a disease that affects both the sufferer and the onlooker.

Symptoms of epilepsy were not only associated with the otherworldly by spectators, but sometimes by the sufferers themselves. The aura, a peculiar feeling often presaging a fit, can involve sudden intense emotions of fear or joy, an unusual sensation in part of the body,

¹³ Susan Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1978), pp. 35–36.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 55, p. 73.

¹⁵ Bible, New Revised Standard Version, Mark 9:17-27

¹⁶ See, for example, Matthew 4:24. See also Anthony Ossa-Richardson, ‘Possession or Insanity? Two Views from the Victorian Lunatic Asylum’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 74.4 (2013), 553–575 (p. 557).

¹⁷ Peter Wolf, ‘The Epileptic Aura in Literature: Aesthetic and Philosophical Dimensions. An Essay’, *Epilepsia*, 54.3 (2013), 415–424 (p. 417).

or the feeling of déjà vu. It causes a split from reality, and can sometimes present on its own, that is, without the ensuing seizure. It is precisely this disconnection from reality that draws the epileptic into ‘another world’, commonly identified as spiritual. Therefore, symptoms of epilepsy can include the objective, the subjective, or both, and ‘[f]or the life of a person with epilepsy, this distinction is utterly important because one of the most annoying problems with epilepsy is the disruption of the continuum of self-awareness by seizures’.¹⁸ The epileptic author Margiad Evans describes the aura as the splitting of the self between consciousness and unconsciousness, and as the feeling of something powerfully demonic attempting to escape.¹⁹ The brief escape from physical reality thereby has a spiritual dimension, albeit not always positive. The pull between consciousness and unconsciousness recalls Hoffmann’s ‘Der goldne Topf’ with the physical realm common to all and the higher realm known only to a few.

It is here that I must address the epileptic literature of Dostoevskii. Known for his accurate descriptions of both objective and subjective symptoms of epilepsy in his writing, as well as advanced understanding of the medical discussions at the time, due to his relationships with leading doctors, Dostoevskii is the predominant figure in the world of epileptic literature. In clinical terms, Dostoevskii’s lack of trust in Russian doctors led him to seek consultation abroad, with specialists such as Trosseau and Ramberg, although it is unclear if these actually took place.²⁰ This medical knowledge furnishes his literary depictions of epilepsy with realistic details, but does not take away from the folkloric, spiritual elements that his literary epilepsy encapsulates. Thus, ‘the folklore of epilepsy conveyed above all a dark hint of insanity, which was specifically reinforced by much of Dostoevsky’s writing and

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 415.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 422.

²⁰ Ivan Iniesta, ‘Epilepsy in Dostoevsky’, in *Literature, Neurology, and Neuroscience: Historical and Literary Connections*, ed. Francois Boller, et al. (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2013), pp. 277–294 (p. 278).

his literary reputation'.²¹ Evans' writing, mentioned above, depicts the aura as a place of 'demonic' interruption in the self, but Dostoevskii usually associates the aura with a feeling of bliss. For example, both Myshkin, in *Idiot*, and Kirillov, in *Besy*, refer to their auras positively. It is with these subjective moments that 'Dostoevsky informs us of what happens a moment before the seizure: a premonition that something will happen or has already happened, or a fleeting illusion or moment of happiness'.²² The division between Evans' and Dostoevskii's depictions of epilepsy highlights the polarising view of epilepsy in general and its lack of definitive associations.

Dostoevskii was well-informed about the lapses in consciousness and resulting depersonalisation caused by epilepsy.²³ Both demonic and divine connotations are present in Dostoevskii's works that depict epilepsy, and he plays with this ambiguity between the conscious and unconscious, demonic and divine. As a result of this division, 'epilepsy permeates the patient's body and identity, it is inextricable from the self'.²⁴ It is owing to this lack of concrete identity that 'in the Russian tradition, epilepsy affords Dostoevsky a motif that simultaneously is implicated in the demonic and the divine; he plays with the ambiguity of this association to provoke ambivalence in the interpretation of his characters'.²⁵ Here my binary approach to madness, categorising characters as either mad or sane, will need to be nuanced as the idea of madness as a sliding scale is particularly evident with epileptics. The slipping in and out of conscious, of auras, of fits, places the characters not concretely within one category, but rather makes them move between the two. Indeed, when the characters are not experiencing symptoms they behave as sane characters. Of course, this affliction still

²¹ James L. Rice, *Dostoevsky and the Healing Art: An Essay in Literary and Medical History* (Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1985), p. 77.

²² Iniesta, 'Epilepsy in the Process of Artistic Creation', p. 374.

²³ Isotoff, Smith, 'Abnormal from Within', p. 364.

²⁴ Maria Vaccarella, 'Disembodiment and Identity in Literary Depictions of Epilepsy Surgery', *Literature and Medicine*, 33.1 (2015), 1–22 (p. 2).

²⁵ Johnson, *Dostoevsky's Falling Sickness*, p. 5.

affects their identity regarding how they are seen and how they see themselves, which will be explored in relation to the demonic and the divine.

While Prince Myshkin, in *Idiot*, is perhaps Dostoevskii's most famous epileptic character, and certainly the one who has received the most critical attention, the author introduced epilepsy into numerous other texts. 'Khoziaika' (1847), *Unizhennye i oskorblennye* (1861), *Besy*, and *Brat'ia Karamazovy* all feature an epileptic figure who links themselves to another individual due to their fragmentation of self that results from an incomplete identity. These texts depict varying elements of epilepsy, with some characters experiencing objective symptoms, such as fits, and some experiencing solely subjective aura symptoms. In the case of Nellie, in *Unizhennye i oskorblennye*, Dostoevskii informs us of the severity and varying types of fit that Nellie suffers from, how it affects those around her, and her use of powders to control the illness. In so doing, Dostoevskii evokes sympathy from the reader as he depicts the illness as an all-consuming, draining disease, removed from any sense of the relief that is often associated with auras in later works. The evocation of sympathy is used to alter the trajectory of Nellie's character arc from sufferer to saviour, as I will explore below. The reader is not, by contrast, told the extent of the illness of the other three characters considered in this chapter, but sees only a few brief moments of their experience of the disease. Kirillov, who, as will be shown, has salvific features, is depicted as experiencing only auras. Meanwhile, Dostoevskii's 'blissful' auras are removed from demonic figures, who are depicted as experiencing only the physical, painful symptoms of a fit. Even Murin's aura in 'Khoziaika' is separated from him and experienced through the 'good' character of Ordynov.

While in other texts the ambivalence of epilepsy is foregrounded, Dostoevskii also explores the link of the Christlike to epileptic auras through Myshkin in *Idiot*, whose subjective symptoms play a significant part in the presentation of his epilepsy and allow him

to distance himself from reality. Dostoevskii connects auras and the divine through Myshkin by likening him to Christ throughout the novel, styling him as ‘Prince Christ’, and ascribing him blissful auras for which he claims he would give his whole life.²⁶ Myshkin’s connection to the divine relies heavily on the other’s perception of him, marking him as a *iurodivyi*. As I argued in chapter four, his character is depicted through the eyes of the other, ascribing him the role needed by them. He is open to interpretation by the other, and willingly assumes the role they bestow upon him. However, although the characters here are also mediated through the other, by contrast, with Myshkin they pay no attention to the other characters’ interpretations of their selves, acting as they wish. In addition, Myshkin’s childlikeness is a key element of his identity that associates him with holy fools, whereas the four epileptics in this chapter are not endowed with this characteristic. Even the adolescent Nellie is presented as being adult-like. The disregard for interpretations of their selves allows the characters to act in a particular manner, unconcerned by the judgement of others, lending itself to the view of the epileptic as either divine or demonic thanks to their unknown selves.

As in the part two of the thesis, chapter five identifies a noticeable lack of interior view, forcing us to rely again on the other’s perception – on the I-for-another – to form a conception of the characters’ identity. However, I will show how in the depiction of epileptics this outward glance is mirrored by doubles. They are split, or at the very least projected, externally through another character. I will argue that unlike the characters considered previously, the split of character here is not between real and ideal selves. Nor does it represent the opposition of freedom and repression. Rather it is a combination of the known/unknown and the physical/spiritual. Doubles present a part of the self to the reader, and to the textual actual world’s society, whilst keeping the other half shrouded in mystery. The absence of interior view allows the other to project their desires and views upon the

²⁶ Dostoevskii, *Idiot*, VIII, p. 188

epileptic, possibly to their detriment. As with the holy fools considered in chapter four, epileptic characters have fragmented social selves: there is no one particular way that they are viewed. These multiple social selves will be explored in relation to how they are exploited by the other.

5.1 Identity questioned

The four epileptic characters examined here all share one particular trait: a lack of concrete identity. They are all, in some way, fragmented. There is some missing element that adds to the mystery of their existence within the works. The reasons for this vary from an absence of familial grounding to a European upbringing. Each character is missing a certain origin. Nellie, in *Unizhennye i oskorblennye*, and Kirillov, in *Besy*, both have fractured geographical foundations. Both characters are Russian by blood, yet they are not entirely Russian by nature due to their travels in Europe, and America in Kirillov's case. Nellie is actually born abroad, as her mother escapes from Russia with a lover, and continues to move around when she is still young: '[о]на за границу ушла, а я там и родилась. — За границей? Где же? — В Швейцарии. Я везде была, и в Италии была, и в Париже была'.²⁷ Moreover, her grandfather is English, further distancing her from the country in which she now finds herself: '[о]на была русская, потому что ее мать была русская, а дедушка был англичанин'.²⁸ Nellie's family is incomplete because of her father's absence since her birth and her mother actively tries to distance the pair from one another.

Kirillov's time abroad affects not only his sense of nationality, but also his ideology. In marked contrast to Shatov, with whom he is often paired and whose convictions are distinctly Slavophile in their colouring, Kirillov holds a Europeanised view of the world:

²⁷ Fedor Dostoevskii, *Unizhennye i oskorblennye*, in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridtsati tomakh*, 30 vols (Leningrad: Nauka, 1972), III, pp. 169–442 (p. 299).

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 299.

[he] is a Westerniser. He bears the imprint of Western technology (he is an engineer) and he comes to Russia from Switzerland; moreover, although he is Russian by birth, he speaks his native language in a disjointed way as though he were a foreigner.²⁹

Like Nellie, his time abroad categorises him as a foreigner and the lack of concrete foundations causes a conflict within him. The emphasis on individualism here parallels that of manic characters, whose ideas are inflated and asserted through the championing of the individual over the many. However, Kirillov's individualism is markedly different in that his idea aims to aid everyone, not just himself.

In 'Khoziaika', Murin's origins are even more uncertain. The reader is never told Murin's nationality, places he has lived, or even occupation. Rather, everything they 'know' about him is told via Katerina. These stories, however, have a folkloric atmosphere about them, seemingly taking place outside of time and space, actually adding little to our understanding of Murin's origins. Gedney highlights that 'Murin's true identity remains ambiguous. His origin is unknown, although he is known by Katerina [...] to have been a successful merchant'.³⁰ The significance of Murin's mysterious origins will be explored below.

The fourth character, Smerdiakov, in *Brat'ia Karamazovy*, is the only character examined in this chapter who has specific geographical foundations, as the reader is told where he was born, grew up, and lives. However, he nevertheless lacks concrete foundations through his uncertain family origins. He is depicted as a bastard conceived by rape and born to a lowly woman, the *iurodivaia* Lizaveta Smerdiashchaia examined in chapter four, and although most believe his father to be Fedor Pavlovich he is denied the certainty of an

²⁹ Richard Peace, *Dostoyevsky: An Examination of the Major Novels* (London: Bristol Classical Press, 1992), p. 156.

³⁰ Curtis Lester Gedney, *Epilepsy as a Pharmakon in Dostoevsky's Fiction*, Thesis (Ph.D), The University of Arizona, 1992, p. 59.

acknowledged father. His lineage is confirmed neither by the narrator nor by Fedor Pavlovich himself, despite his adopting the boy as a servant and giving him the patronymic 'Fedorovich'. The adoption of the child via the patronymic is countered by the rejection of his surname, as Fedor Pavlovich does not give the boy the Karamazov name, instead 'Федор Павлович сочинил подкидышу и фамилию: назвал он его Смердяковым, по прозвищу матери его'.³¹ This link to his mother is in turn rejected by Smerdiakov who exclaims 'без отца от Смердящей произошел'.³² Therefore, despite being taken into the Karamazov family, albeit as a servant, Smerdiakov is essentially fatherless and with the death and rejection of his mother, parentless.

As with Smerdiakov, Nellie's father's identity is suggested but never definitively confirmed. Although not unique to epileptic characters – as Dostoevskii's frequent depiction of 'accidental families' shows – fragmentation plays a major role in the selfhood of the characters examined here. They are never presented as a whole, as a definitive personage, but rather are only partially presented. Like holy fools, they are riddled with duality: they inhabit both the physical and the spiritual world, and possess an entirely unknowable I-for-myself in the face of I-for-another interpretations. As a feature of narrative technique, missing back-stories also occur in relation to other Dostoevskii characters, for example Nastas'ia Filippovna (*Idiot*), who flits in and out of the narrative, obscuring a complete picture of her identity. This technique forces us to rely on the viewpoints of other characters and, in some cases, to fill in the gaps ourselves, which, as Lanser argues, means that '[s]ometimes a text will provide us with many perspectives on a character, allowing us to piece together a view that is more authoritative than the perspective of any individual character'.³³ This absence of an omniscient narrator and interior view renders the individual as 'unknowable', constructed

³¹ Dostoevskii, *Brat'ia Karamazovy*, XIV, p. 93.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 204.

³³ Lanser, *The Narrative Act*, p. 210.

predominantly from other, possibly false, gazes, highlighting the importance of the other for the construction of the self.³⁴

Such incomplete characters epitomise Bakhtin's concept of the loophole and unfinalisability. He states that Dostoevskii's characters retain the final word for themselves as: '[a] loophole is the retention for oneself of the possibility of altering the ultimate, final meaning of one's own words'.³⁵ Indefinability, although common to Dostoevskii's characters, holds a particular significance for epileptic characters owing to the subjective element of the illness. As I state above, the disease is not singular in experience, with each individual affected differently. Therefore, without explicit detail and knowledge from the individual themselves the reader is unable to determine the complete effects of the disease and its consequences for those affected. This indefinability does, however, allow all four characters to fulfil the particular roles associated with the epileptic – the demonic or the divine – through their ability to overstep character boundaries, once again reflecting Bakhtin's conception of the self as 'extraterritorial, partially "located outside" themselves'.³⁶ The distancing from reality and the break in self associated with the epileptic allows them to bleed over into other characters when coupled with their indefinite self. Yuri Corrigan argues that this 'extended self' is used as a 'compulsion to displace elements of one's personality into others and thus to become part of a collective self' when the individual is fragmented or chooses to forget parts of their self, for example when related to past traumatic events.³⁷ Again, the reader relies on the other characters to understand the epileptic's self and the epileptic relies on the other to construct (complete) their self.

³⁴ Young, *Ethical Foundations*, p. 28.

³⁵ Bakhtin, *Dostoevsky's Poetics*, p. 233.

³⁶ Emerson, Morson, *Mikhail Bakhtin*, p. 50.

³⁷ Yuri Corrigan, *Dostoevsky and the Riddle of the Self* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2017), p. 31.

In addition, all four fragmented epileptic characters are further distanced from the reader by being shown through another. The extra barrier between reader and character decreases the certainty with which they can be defined. The absence of interiority forces us to rely solely on the I-for-another which, as I have shown, may differ entirely from the I-for-myself. For example, Nellie's age is never confirmed; varying opinions on this question, including deliberate misestimations from the brothel keeper, litter the work: '[a] по росту меньше. Ну, так она и сделает. Коли надо, скажет одиннадцать, а то пятнадцать'.³⁸ She is seen as both child and adult, as a result of her living conditions. As William Woodin Rowe explains, 'Nellie is physically childlike but forced to be mentally and emotionally mature', thus dividing her between these two periods in life, and defining her simultaneously as both.³⁹ Consequently, Rowe states that 'Nellie [...] seems both an adult and a child victim'.⁴⁰ Nellie's fragmentation due to family abandonment leads her to cut ties with the outside world, as shown through her desire for self-punishment. She does not positively consider herself in relation to the world, but rather resigns herself to the will of others, for example the brothel keeper.

In *Oneself as Another* (1992), the philosopher Paul Ricoeur focuses on the importance of narrative identity for selfhood, posing the questions: how do I present myself as a story? How do others tell the story about me? Ricoeur's theory indicates the importance of how we display ourselves and how we are perceived – a problem that Nellie struggles with due to her incompleteness of self and resignation to the will of others. Ricoeur's theory shows that the self is a self amongst others. As a result, Ricoeur attempts to move away from

³⁸ Dostoevskii, *Unizhennye i oskorblennye*, III, p. 273.

³⁹ William Woodin Rowe, *Dostoevsky: Child and Man in his Works* (London: University of London, 1968), p. 20.

⁴⁰ Rowe, *Child and Man*, p. 19.

Descartes' *cogito*, which focuses on the self as the source of selfhood, and toward a more social understanding, exposing the importance of the other to construct selfhood. Therefore:

[s]ubjectivity is always understood as a form of polysemic linguistic intersubjectivity that displaces the self as its own foundation. The self is not grounded within itself, but linked to otherness, others, and the unnamed Other, in a manner that is supposed to preclude totalisation.⁴¹

The reader can see that Nellie has no care for a sense of self when completely abandoned – after the death of both her grandfather and mother – and desires not to be seen as a sentient figure, allowing herself to be punished. She does not, and cannot, act against the brothel keeper or those who abuse her, but simply exists as an object. For this reason, Nellie remains fragmented for the majority of the story as the ‘self needs to act in order to be a self’.⁴² This recalls the protagonists of Pushkin’s ‘Skupoi rytsar’ and Dostoevskii’s ‘Gospodin Prokharchin’ who, as I examined in relation to Arendt’s theory of act-based identity, are not viewed as persons as a result of their lack of acting for other. Here, however, Nellie’s character goes one step further and denies all action for herself completely. Whereas the Baron and Prokharchin are reduced to acts according to their own desires, Nellie is reduced to an object for the acts of the other. She refuses entirely to establish anything about herself, her desires, or her thoughts.

Similarly, Smerdiakov allows us no insight into his character. There is no attempt to justify or explain his actions, even when they appear shocking to the reader, such as killing cats and acting out against those who care for him. Smerdiakov does not readily give any information about himself, forcing us to view him as an enigma.⁴³ As I will explore below, it

⁴¹ Henry Venema, ‘Oneself as Another or Another as Oneself?’, *Literature and Theology*, 16.4 (2002), 410–426 (p. 417).

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 417.

⁴³ Richard Curle, *Characters of Dostoevsky: Studies from Four Novels* (London: Heinemann, 1950), p. 212.

is only later in the story that the reader comes to understand Smerdiakov's mind, his thoughts and feelings – and that happens only once they are illuminated in relation to another.

Meanwhile, as I previously stated, everything about Murin is mediated through Katerina, who in turn is viewed through Ordynov's eyes. Murin is thus removed from the reader twice over. As such, he becomes a figure in a fairy tale, resulting in a perception of him coloured both by Katerina's interpretation of the past and Ordynov's hatred towards him. As Rabkin states, a fairy tale means that 'we trade in a host of real world perspectives'.⁴⁴ Murin links all three characters, and his fragmented personality becomes a central part of the work. As Curtis Gedney highlights, this fragmentation overflows into the very structure of the work itself, as a result of which '[t]he structural center of the novella is not any single character or event, but is dispersed across the three main characters and their interactions'.⁴⁵

The sociologist Alberto Melucci, in *The Process of Collective Identity* (1996), argues that identity does not derive from the individual alone but rather the place of the individual within a group. Examining Murin in connection to Melucci's theory highlights the importance of relationships to the story. The reader becomes acquainted with Murin through a doubled perspective and '[t]his blurring of boundaries between the characters' minds, and the uncertainty or hesitation it causes the reader, contributes significantly to the loss of distinction between the real and unreal'.⁴⁶ The reader is twice removed from any concrete truth about Murin. In this context, Melucci's concept of collective identity as 'a network of *active relationships* between actors who interact, communicate, influence each other, negotiate, and make decisions' enables us to understand the complexity of the relationships in

⁴⁴ Rabkin, *The Fantastic*, p. 33.

⁴⁵ Gedney, *Epilepsy as a Pharmakon*, p. 54.

⁴⁶ Sarah J. Young, 'Hesitation, Projection and Desire: The Fictionalizing 'as if...' in Dostoevskii's Early Works', *Modern Languages Open*, (2018), 1, 1–22 (p. 16), www.modernlanguagesopen.org/articles/10.3828/mlo.v0i0.183 [accessed March 5, 2022, 11:48].

‘Khoziaika’ and their role in building the character of Murin.⁴⁷ Murin is not constructed as a singular character, but rather one reliant on the other for identity.

Ordynov’s desire for Katerina produces a hatred towards Murin, the man he believes to be keeping them apart. The reader comes to see Katerina as a helpless love interest by viewing her through Ordynov’s consciousness, and with the added layer of her fairy tale they see Murin as her keeper. Therefore, Murin is represented as Katerina’s evil influence who makes all decisions about the pair. He keeps her ‘good’ nature in check, attempting to influence her by reading from his ‘evil’ books.

In Melucci’s theory each participant in a group is aware of their standing within it and entirely devoted to it. Hence:

a certain degree of *emotional investment* is required in the definition of a collective identity, which enables individuals to feel themselves part of a common unity. [...]

Passions and feelings, love and hate, faith and fear are all part of a body acting collectively.⁴⁸

Melucci’s argument that emotional involvement, even if unpleasant, plays a crucial role in collective identity, elucidates Katerina’s situation, explaining her inability to leave despite the unhappiness it seems to cause her. As Melucci states, when an individual partakes in a collective identity they are bound to the others, regardless of the emotions it causes them. Katerina recognises that she is bound to Murin apparently due to an obscure spiritual deal between them. Ordynov, on the other hand, is not bound to Murin via the good or evil that unites Murin and Katerina, but rather represents a passer-by who does not become emotionally invested in the group. He attempts to enter into shared identity only with Katerina but unwittingly becomes bound to Murin through her. He is only connected to

⁴⁷ Alberto Melucci, *Challenging Codes: Collective Action in the Information Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 71.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

Murin via his desire for Katerina, as their bond to one another means they cannot be separated into two distinct selves. Consequently, the reader can see how Ordynov, despite his best efforts, will never be able to bind himself solely to Katerina. Katerina is a condition of Murin's self.

As a result, Ordynov, despite his dislike for Murin, must put these feelings aside in order to enter into the collective identity, as he must necessarily bind himself to Murin in addition to Katerina. The externalisation of selves is explicitly evidenced by Ordynov's participation in Murin's epilepsy: Murin experiences the objective fit symptoms and Ordynov experiences the subjective aura symptoms. The three put aside any differences and feelings for each other becoming bound together in this grouping of selves. They are, in this moment, not individual selves, but a collective.

Moreover, as Murin does not verbally confirm anything about himself, the reader simply sees Katerina's view of him – absolving herself by reading him as she desires. Carol Apollonio highlights the dangers of a single isolated consciousness in a novel, stating that 'isolation breeds falsehood and unreality'.⁴⁹ Murin's I-for-another, as he appears to Katerina, may have no correlation to his I-for-myself and could simply be a product of Katerina's desires. Apollonio argues that Katerina's 'guilty memories about her mother (for whose death she feels responsible)' causes her to refuse reality, projecting her own, imagined history onto the world, a fairy tale into which Ordynov is lured, blinded by his love for her.⁵⁰ Thus, not only are the three intertwined in their collective identity, but they are also bound together in the narrative through the eyes of the others. Analysing the selfhoods of Katerina, Murin, and Ordynov in relation to Melucci's theory shows why Ordynov's romantic desire to 'save' Katerina from Murin may never come to fruition: their identities rely on each other.

⁴⁹ Carol Apollonio, *Dostoevsky's Secrets: Reading Against the Grain* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2009), p. 8.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

While Nellie, Murin, and Smerdiakov are depicted by their I-for-another, the presentation of Kirillov is markedly different, as due to his ideology the reader necessarily must be allowed insight into his thoughts; they are able to know his I-for-myself and the struggles that this encapsulates. But his ideology is questioned by those around him, with the vast majority categorising him as a ‘madman’.⁵¹ The inherent connection of Kirillov’s self to the question of man’s authority over his own life and the problem of free will can be elucidated through the anthropologist Ludwig Feuerbach’s *The Essence of Christianity* (1841) – a key text in the Westernisers’ development of the conception of the individual in Russian thought in the 1840s. This will, in turn, highlight the need for relation to another to construct identity as Kirillov’s sole relation to himself reduces him to an idea, as with the maniac characters in Pushkin’s ‘Skupoi rytsar’ and Dostoevskii’s ‘Gospodin Prokharchin’, removing the possibility of presenting him as a complete self.

Feuerbach explores the relationship between man and the divine, specifically the recognition of man as divine. The teachings of Feuerbach are taken to a materialist end by Chernyshevskii, who argues that once man removes God he does not gain free will but is simply a product of his surroundings. To the contrary Dostoevskii asserts that the nature of man *requires* the recognition of choice. Thus ‘to Dostoevskii [...] those who reduced the world to an exclusively material dimension and denied the existence of free will lost sight of an inalienable part of human nature and tried to confine man in a prison’.⁵² Jones states that ‘the degree to which the most radical questioning of religious claims becomes the ideological

⁵¹ Kirillov is referred to by Pyotr Stepanovich as ‘совсем сумасшедший’ (Fedor Dostoevskii, *Besy*, in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridtsati tomakh*, 30 vols (Leningrad: Nauka, 1974), X, p. 276). Marya Shatova, when talking about Kirillov, states ‘Знаю, что сумасшедший’ (Dostoevskii, *Besy*, X, p.436). Stavrogin in his letter to Darya Pavlovna says that Kirillov was ‘не в здравом рассудке’ (Dostoevskii, *Besy*, X, p. 514).

⁵² Derek Offord, ‘Dostoevskii and the Intelligentsia’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Dostoevskii*, ed. W. J. Leatherbarrow (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 111–130 (p. 119).

cornerstone of Dostoevskii's major novels' testifies to the influence of atheist philosophies and the mindset of his acquaintances.⁵³

Feuerbach's philosophy questions the role of the 'divine creator' and its effects on man, eventually concluding, as Kirillov appears to do, that God does not exist. Feuerbach argues that man *is* God, he has simply separated himself into two parts: the finite subject and the infinite object. Therefore, 'the divine being is nothing else than the human being, or, rather, the human being purified, freed from the limits of the individual man', meaning that 'religion is the disunity of man from himself'.⁵⁴ Feuerbach removes this divine being for whom mankind must act in a certain way, stating that mankind's 'true existence is thinking, loving, willing existence. That alone is true, perfect, divine, which exists for its own sake'.⁵⁵ The idea of mankind living for himself, for his own will, is precisely what Kirillov attempts to assert with his own thinking, and eventually suicide. However, the break with the common practice of religion must be accepted in order to realise man's true nature.

Without this leap of faith man will never recognise the true nature of himself.

Kirillov, like Feuerbach, argues that once humans recognise their own power over the world – the former by the assertion of free will and the latter by the unification of self – then they will be able to see that 'the personality of God is nothing else than the projected personality of man'.⁵⁶ Just as Feuerbach claims man will recognise himself *as* God, Skye Harvest Allen states that '[p]erhaps the most truly mad character is Alexei Nilyich Kirilov, who [...] is now consumed by the idea that he must kill himself in order to prove that he is, in fact, God'.⁵⁷ If

⁵³ Malcolm V. Jones, 'Dostoevskii and Religion', in *The Cambridge Companion to Dostoevskii*, ed. W. J. Leatherbarrow (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 148–174 (p. 153).

⁵⁴ Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, trans. George Eliot (London: John Chapman, 1854), p. 14, p. 32.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 224.

⁵⁷ Skye Harvest Allen, *Dostoevsky, Madness, and Religious Fervor: Reason and its Adversaries*, Thesis (Ph.D), The University of Chicago, 2008, p. 109.

Kirillov really does consider himself to be God, and is willing to kill himself to prove it, then he appears no more sane than the megalomaniacs I have previously analysed.

It is with this new realisation that man finds himself in his God that Kirillov is able to truly become happy as ‘Бог есть боль страха смерти. Кто победит боль и страх, тот сам станет бог. Тогда новая жизнь, тогда новый человек, всё новое...’⁵⁸ It is via his fragmented identity that Kirillov believes himself able to use his abandonment to realise his idea and save mankind from a false god. His I-for-myself is a saviour but his I-for-another is mad.

Therefore, not only are these epileptic characters fragmented by their lack of roots, but their connection to another also fragments them through possible misinterpretations as I-for-another. Their lack of concrete identity means that they are open to various readings by the other, but, as shown by their reluctance to challenge any interpretation, they do not care how they are seen. They can be viewed as good, bad, young or old, and it does not matter to them which. Here again they stand in contrast to Myshkin, who, as I argued in chapter four, must be viewed in a particular manner in order to fulfil the role of a holy fool. These epileptic protagonists do not explain themselves and do not desire to. They remain fragmented through a failure to care about the unity of their identity. They open themselves up to another by being an indefinite personality, allowing the other to bleed over into the undefined space of their identity, resulting in doubles.

5.2 The doubled epileptic: Fragmentation of identity

Doubles share the identity of these epileptic characters, filling a gap in the fragmented personality. Doubling ‘completes’ the selfhood of the epileptic, constructing them through another. The gap in Nellie’s foundations is exploited by another and leaves her open to doubling, permitting her, in essence, the status of family member. Chizhevsky argues that,

⁵⁸ Dostoevskii, *Besy*, X, p. 94.

through the appearance of doubles, Dostoevskii highlights the ‘problems of the fixity, reality, and security of individual existence’.⁵⁹ He presents characters not as limited, single individuals, but as relational figures. For example, Nellie’s lack of support and love around her causes Vania, and the reader, to feel sorry for her, leading him (as well as the reader) to essentially adopt her. This is only heightened by her epilepsy as ‘[t]his evocation of sympathy is the primary strategic function of Nelly’s epilepsy’.⁶⁰ Initially Nellie deals with her abandonment through self-inflicted pain and allowing others to torture her, as with the brothel keeper when Nellie exclaims ‘пусть погубит, пусть мучает [...] другие и лучше меня, да мучаются’.⁶¹ However, it is via her fits that Nellie eventually opens herself up to another; she allows Vania to care for her. Julia Kristeva argues that epilepsy serves as the blurred boundary between self and other, merging all feelings of love, hate, rejection, and desire and momentarily collapsing these distinctions.⁶² Nellie lets her guard down during her epileptic moments, forgetting to punish herself, and allowing Vania to assume a caring parental role. His intervention marks a turning point in Nellie’s life, as she changes from abandoned and unloved to cared for, and in turn changes her attitude towards herself and the world. Through his care she is awakened to a new life with a loving parental figure, despite the absence of blood relatives: ‘[В]Ы ЛЮБИТЕ МЕНЯ! [...] ВЫ ТОЛЬКО ОДИН, ОДИН!’⁶³ In Vania she gains an ‘accidental’ father. This newfound realisation gradually decreases her self-inflicted pain and allows her to channel her distress through a loving relationship. Through Vania, Nellie begins to establish her selfhood, asserting herself in the world.

⁵⁹ Chizhevsky, ‘Theme of the Double’, p. 116.

⁶⁰ Johnson, *Dostoevsky’s Falling Sickness*, p. 68. One can identify a similar function in another child epileptic in Dostoevskii’s works, Liza in *Vechnyi muzh*.

⁶¹ Dostoevskii, *Unizhennye i oskorblennye*, III, p. 282.

⁶² Julia Kristeva, ‘On the Melancholic Imaginary’, *New Formations*, 3 (1987), 5–18 (pp. 13–14).

⁶³ Dostoevskii, *Unizhennye i oskorblennye*, III, p. 296.

Her story parallels another within the same novel, that of Natasha's family. Just as Nellie's mother abandoned her family for a lover, so too does Natasha, leaving her family broken-hearted. Although Natasha's removal from her family is voluntary, unlike Nellie's, the two highlight the extreme distress that familial abandonment can cause. Thus, when the two storylines meet, a solution is suggested: Nellie 'fixes' the sense of abandonment within both families by *becoming* Natasha. Natasha's father proposes the idea that Nellie enter their household to replace his daughter: 'он вышел за мною до передней и заговорил о Нелли. У него была серьезная мысль принять ее к себе в дом вместо дочери'.⁶⁴ Nellie, still as an indefinite self at this point, is the ideal candidate to become a quasi-double of Natasha – the 'new' Natasha. Nellie is now associated with Vania, Natasha's parents, and Natasha herself forming this 'accidental family'. In his *Dnevnik pisatel'ia* for 1877 Dostoevskii writes:

случайность современного русского семейства, по-моему, состоит в утрате современными отцами всякой общей идеи, в отношении к своим семействам, общей для всех отцов, связующей их самих между собою, в которую бы они сами верили и научили бы так верить детей своих, передали бы им эту веру в жизнь.⁶⁵

This absence of a unified family unit is exactly what happens with Natasha. Her disagreement with her father over her relationship with Valkovskii's son, Alesha, results in a split, eventually leading to the addition of non-relatives into the family unit. They are bound through circumstances and outlook rather than blood. As Anna Berman states, 'Dostoevsky

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 326.

⁶⁵ Dostoevskii, 'Zhazhda slukhov i togo, chto "skryvaiut". Slovo "skryvaiut" mozhет imet' bydyshchnost', a potomu i nadobno priniat' mery zaranee. Opiat' o sluchainom semeistve', in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridtsati tomakh*, 30 vols (Leningrad: Nauka, 1983), XXV, pp. 176–181 (p. 178).

portrays the harsh realities of poverty, depravity, and families that lack the ties that traditionally bind'.⁶⁶

Likewise, Kirillov's self is open to doubling through abandonment, but in his case the question is one of divine abandonment. By fragmenting characters in different manners, Dostoevskii suggests that, '[t]he ontological instability of a personality [...] is not necessarily connected with psychological instability [...] or social instability'.⁶⁷ Kirillov's troubles stem from his unease with the existence, or absence, of a God. The fragility of selfhood means that any sense of being lost in the world can fragment identity. As with Nellie, he is open to the ideas of others. In Kirillov's case the root source of this manipulation is Stavrogin – an authoritative figure for the new wave of thinking in the novel. It is through Stavrogin that Kirillov's double is created, formed by opposing ideas. In essence, Kirillov grapples with the idea that a world without God is 'madness only', but that with so much suffering in the world how can there possibly be a benevolent God? This mystery for Kirillov results in a deficiency of reasons to live as 'если законы природы не пожалели и *Этого*, даже чудо свое же не пожалели, а заставили и *Его* жить среди лжи и умереть за ложь, то, стало быть, вся планета есть ложь и стоит на лжи и глупой насмешке'.⁶⁸ His 'atheism', however, is not as strict as it first appears. He claims that: '[ч]еловек только и делал, что выдумывал бога, чтобы жить, не убивая себя'.⁶⁹ Yet, as Konstantin Mochulsky states, 'his atheism is engendered by an enraptured love of God and the despair of divine abandonment'.⁷⁰ Not only does he operate between a dichotomy of worlds, but he is both man and saviour. Even his belief system is dualistic and unstable; he is both believer and atheist. He does not simply

⁶⁶ Anna A. Berman, *Siblings in Tolstoy and Dostoevsky: The Path to Universal Brotherhood* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2015), pp. 113–114.

⁶⁷ Chizhevsky, 'Theme of the Double', p. 117.

⁶⁸ Dostoevskii, *Besy*, X, p. 471.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 471.

⁷⁰ Konstantin Mochulsky, *Dostoevsky: his life and work*, trans. Michael A. Minihan (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967), p. 423.

accept that he does not believe in God, due to his inability to reconcile suffering with the divine, but actively mentally suffers to give up this notion of God. His inability to completely forgo a divine figure forces him to aspire to become ‘man-God’, a figure created by asserting one’s own free will upon the world – essentially ridding oneself of ties to a predetermined divinely-inspired fate. Man thus asserts his own path, in essence becoming his own God.

As is covered extensively by critics, Stavrogin’s other half, and Kirillov’s double, Shatov, counters his worldview: ‘Shatov and Kirillov represent two different attempts to resolve a religious dilemma – the contradiction between the truth of Christ and the existence of evil’.⁷¹ They each become consumed by their ideas but ‘[i]n reality, both Kirillov and Shatov are simply two emanations of the spirit of Stavrogin – each of whom accepts him from his own point of view’.⁷² Unlike Nellie, Kirillov refuses to connect himself to others, becoming overtaken by his idea. As Feuerbach’s theory shows, Kirillov’s idea leads him to relate only back to himself in a new light, not to another. This internal reflection refuses Kirillov the opportunity of overcoming his fragmentation through another, as it does Nellie. As I will explore below, Kirillov’s self-relation gains him no identity outside of his idea.

Whereas Nellie and Kirillov’s actions attempt to aid another, Murin and Smerdiakov’s doubles illustrate how the other can manipulate identity. Murin’s identity is open entirely to the other and the reader subject to Ordynov’s worldview. Young highlights the importance of the unreal, fantastic atmosphere for the story, arguing that Ordynov’s ‘lack of knowledge of events and of the inner lives of the characters introduces a process of imaginative reconstruction without which their story cannot be told’.⁷³ The reader is at the mercy of Ordynov’s increasingly delirious understanding of the world around him and thus of Katerina and Murin. Moreover, ‘Ordynov’s perception has become confused with part of

⁷¹ Peace, *Dostoevsky*, p. 217.

⁷² Chizhevsky, ‘Theme of the Double’, p. 118.

⁷³ Young, ‘Hesitation, Projection and Desire’, p. 2.

Katerina's, as a result of his delirium' leading to the intertwining of all three characters.⁷⁴ The removal of boundaries, and in Corrigan's terms 'the hero's inability to differentiate between his own inner divisions and the relationships he forms in the outside world' result in the reader being unable to tell fantasy from reality, forcing us to rely on possibly skewed views.⁷⁵

Murin is depicted as an evil figure twice over: by Ordynov for not allowing him and Katerina to be together and by Katerina for 'kidnapping' her. The lack of access to his point of view means that the reader relies on these categorisations of Murin to form his identity. Katerina's fairy-tale origin story only strengthens Ordynov's negative view of Murin as it permits him to see himself as a knight in shining armour for the damsel in distress. But the portrayal of Katerina as a victim is mediated through Ordynov's desire for her to need him and so 'the world of Katerina, the supernatural world of the folk tale, is the product of the fevered creative imagination of the Petersburg dreamer'.⁷⁶ Murin is unable to counter these definitions of 'evil' due to Ordynov's coloured perception of him. As such Ordynov's fantasies are allowed to run wild and he is 'the figure who most serves to decenter the characters' identities'.⁷⁷ Murin's identity is thus constructed through the minds of Katerina and Ordynov, not through his own assertion.

Katerina designates herself the role of damsel in distress, the good girl captured by the evil man, by classifying him as an evil captor through her story. Her good and his evil make two halves of a whole. Murin's epilepsy allows him to flow over into other characters, resulting in the double of Katerina. This is only emphasised by Ordynov, who accepts her version of the relationship. Ordynov's own desire for Katerina clouds any sense of judgment,

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 15.

⁷⁵ Yuri Corrigan, 'Amnesia and the Externalized Personality in Early Dostoevskii', *Slavic Review*, 72.1 (2013), 79–101 (pp. 88–89). W. J. Leatherbarrow, 'Dostoevsky's Treatment of the Theme of Romantic Dreaming in "Khozyayka" and "Belye nochi"', *The Modern Language Review*, 69.3 (1974), 584–595 (p. 588).

⁷⁶ Leatherbarrow, 'Romantic Dreaming', p. 588.

⁷⁷ Gedney, *Epilepsy as a Pharmakon*, p. 58.

resulting in his belief in her every word. As William Leatherbarrow states ‘[i]n Ordynov’s relationship with Katerina [...] we see how the process of allowing personal narratives derived from an isolated consciousness to invalidate external reality can lead to a love relationship being transmuted into a manipulative one’.⁷⁸ Hence:

Ордынов с момента таинственной встречи с Катериной теряет волю над собой и действует почти как лунатик. Напряженность переживаний, душою его овладевших, вызывает в нем острые приступы нервной болезни, во время которых он окончательно теряет чутье действительности. Происходит известное явление при галлюцинациях - внутренний мир переживаний проектируется вовне, как действительный мир событий.⁷⁹

Ordynov’s love for Katerina positions him as the hero of his own delirious story, rescuing his beloved from another man. It is from Ordynov and Katerina’s meeting that ‘[в] мир действительности вплетается сказочная фантазия, и перед нами оживают образы, созданные воображением Ордынова’.⁸⁰

Blinded by this love for Katerina, her fairy tale becomes Ordynov’s reality. Murin represents the evil captor, conveniently allowing Ordynov his heroic role: ‘меня испортил злой человек. — он, погубитель мой!.. Я душу ему продала...’.⁸¹ Murin’s connection to Katerina is not one that can be broken, as affirmed by her tale: ‘[о]н говорит, [...] что когда умрет, то придет за моей грешной душой... Я его, я ему душой продалась... Он мучил меня, он мне в книгах читал...’.⁸² She is bound to him through the force of his ‘evil’, posing

⁷⁸ William J. Leatherbarrow, ‘The Sorcerer’s Apprentice: Authorship and the Devil in Dostoevskii’s *Poor Folk* and “The Landlady”’, *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 83.4 (2005), 599–616 (p. 609).

⁷⁹ A. L. Bem, ‘Dramatizatsiia brenda’, in *O Dostoevskom: sbornik statei*, ed. A. L. Bem (Moscow: Russkii put’, 2007), pp. 99–131 (p. 101).

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

⁸¹ Fedor Dostoevskii, ‘Khoziaika’, in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridtsati tomakh*, 30 vols (Leningrad: Nauka, 1976), I, pp. 264–320 (p. 293).

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 293.

Ordynov's delirious mind another obstacle in his quest for love. The fact that Ordynov cannot separate himself from the situation, compelling her to join him instead of running away, reveals that '[о]н и только он один является героем повести «Хозяйка»; образ же Катерины есть лишь художественное обобщение внутреннего конфликта в душе Ордынова, только символ, раскрывающий какую-то тайну его внутреннего мира'.⁸³

However, this is not the only doubling of Murin. While his fragmented identity allows him to double with Katerina, his epilepsy also flows over into Ordynov; Murin has an epileptic fit whilst Ordynov experiences the epileptic aura. Yet this does not necessarily make Ordynov and Murin two halves of a whole, as objective and subjective symptoms of epilepsy can exist separately. Whereas Katerina's supposed goodness necessitates Murin's evil, Ordynov's subjective aura does not necessarily entail Murin's fit. These definitions of Murin as 'evil' are then strengthened by Dostoevskii's removal of blissful, divine aura from Murin and its new ascription to the 'good' Ordynov.

Murin's epilepsy therefore links him to two other individuals through the decentralisation of character, Katerina via his fragmented identity and Ordynov via epileptic symptoms. His destabilised identity permits Katerina to claim one half of Murin's self, relegating him to the 'evil' side of personality and, when coupled with her fairy tale of the past, essentially absolves her of any active part in the destruction of her family, their livelihood, and her abandonment of them. Murin not only refuses to refute this view of him but seems to actively embody it, for example with the possession of black books and the magic ability to force a gun from Ordynov's hand, allowing Ordynov to also believe in Katerina's possibly coloured version of events. It is never made clear if Murin is portrayed as a victim of unfair characterisation via Ordynov's consciousness, or if he actually embodies

⁸³ Bem, 'Dramatizatsiia breda', p. 111.

these qualities. Both explanations remain simultaneously possible, because the reader lacks exposure to Murin's I-for-myself.

The idea of the epileptic as the evil half of a whole personality is also apparent in the case of Smerdiakov. Ivan, a legitimate son of Fedor Pavlovich, becomes increasingly marked as Smerdiakov's double throughout the novel, and eventually becomes linked to him through a shared morality. This morality, at its core, can be stated as 'всё позволено'. Ivan asserts that his disbelief in God reveals man's true nature, a loss of love for others: 'чтобы человек любил человечество - не существует вовсе, и что если есть и была до сих пор любовь на земле, то не от закона естественного, а естественно потому, что люди веровали в свое бессмертье'.⁸⁴ As a result, anyone who does not believe in God or the afterlife, according to Ivan, would find evil permissible. Despite these claims Ivan does nothing particularly out of the ordinary, and this is where Smerdiakov becomes Ivan's acting moral self. As Leatherbarrow states, '[t]he demonism of Smerdiakov, and his dependency on Ivan for the moral and ideological core of that demonism, culminate in the act of parricide that he perpetrates against his natural father'.⁸⁵

Just as Murin cannot be separated from Katerina, so too is Smerdiakov's self inherently linked to Ivan. In *The Principles of Psychology* (1890), philosopher and psychologist William James separates identity into two halves: the ego and the material self. The pure ego, he argues, is the thinking core of the self, the driving force behind all actions, while the material self consists of the social, material, and spiritual. In relation to Ivan and Smerdiakov, with Smerdiakov claiming to be subject to Ivan's will, the reader can see how

⁸⁴ Dostoevskii, *Brat'ia Karamazovy*, XIV, p. 64.

⁸⁵ William J. Leatherbarrow, *A Devil's Vaudeville: The Demonic in Dostoevsky's Major Fiction* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2005), p. 163. See also Stephen Bullivant, 'A House Divided Against Itself: Dostoevsky and the Psychology of Unbelief', *Literature and Theology*, 22.1 (2008), 16–31 (p. 20).

Ivan can be identified as the thinking ego and Smerdiakov as the acting, material self. James states that the material self:

is carried on directly through [...] our desire to please and attract notice and admiration, our emulation and jealousy, our love of glory, influence, and power, and indirectly through whichever of the material self-seeking impulses prove serviceable as means to social ends.⁸⁶

These qualities can be seen in Smerdiakov when he spends his salary from Fedor Pavlovich entirely on material goods: ‘Федор Павлович положил ему жалованье, и это жалованье Смердяков употреблял чуть не в целости на платье на помаду, на духи и проч’.⁸⁷ He desires not to remove himself from his situation, get married, or improve his living conditions, but rather simply to be seen as more appealing. Moreover, power is also a significant part of Smerdiakov’s self – something he revels in is his ability to get others to do as he wishes. For example, Smerdiakov is the only person that Fedor Pavlovich trusts and listens to his every suggestion, such as hiding money in different places. Fedor Pavlovich himself appears unaware of this power dynamic, which only increases Smerdiakov’s hold over him. Additionally, Smerdiakov is able to set Dmitrii up as the murderer in the eyes of the town, suggesting he holds a certain power over the entire population. His manipulative ways are hidden behind cleverly chosen words and calculated actions, essentially forcing the town to accept certain beliefs. However, the genius lies in the fact that the power is not explicit. In fact, it is the opposite; Smerdiakov is seen as a servant, as lacking power. It is from this deception that Smerdiakov’s demonic epileptic role comes to the foreground as he plays with the town like puppets, reconfiguring the sense of morality in the novel.

⁸⁶ William James, *The Principles of Psychology*, 2 vols (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1890), I, p. 308.

⁸⁷ Dostoevskii, *Brat’ia Karamazovy*, XIV, p. 116.

The dialogue between the two half-brothers before the murder suggests that Ivan is aware that something bad will happen, that there is a possibility his father will be killed, but nonetheless he does nothing to stop or question it. As Bakhtin states, ‘through Smerdyakov Ivan’s internal rejoinder is transformed from a desire into a deed’ and the conversation between the two is actually between ‘Smerdyakov’s open and conscious will (encoded in hints) and Ivan’s hidden will (hidden even from himself)’.⁸⁸ He essentially gives his implicit consent, which causes contention over the question of responsibility.

Even if the reader views Smerdiakov not as a double of Ivan but as his demonic half, they are still linked together in the death of the father. The two other brothers (Dmitrii and Alesha) also express their desire to kill their father – though Alesha less directly – but neither accepts Ivan’s philosophy of ‘all is permitted’. They recognise their inability to reconcile their desire with the morality of their society as ‘intentions, as much as actions, constitute guilt’.⁸⁹ Smerdiakov indicates that it does not matter if Ivan believes himself to be guilty or not as the maxim ‘everyone is guilty for everything’ is relevant here. This echoes the novel’s overriding moral message of shared responsibility, advanced through the teachings of Father Zosima: ‘каждый единый из нас виновен за всех и за вся на земле несомненно, не только по общей мировой вине, а единолично каждый за всех людей и за всякого человека на сей земле’.⁹⁰

The play between good and evil permeates the work, not only in relation to Smerdiakov but also characters such as Dmitrii who, for example, chooses between stealing and returning money given to him to post by Katerina Ivanovna. The division of identity, broken down into ‘good’ and ‘evil’ parts recalls the presentation of Murin’s self and

⁸⁸ Bakhtin, *Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, p. 259.

⁸⁹ Sarah J. Young, ‘Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821-1881): “Fantastic realism”’, in *The Cambridge companion to European novelists*, ed. Michael Bell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 259–276, (p. 273).

⁹⁰ Dostoevskii, *Brat’ia Karamazovy*, XIV, p. 149.

emphasises the duality inherent in identity. Ivan does not share in Smerdiakov's epilepsy, as Ordynov does with Murin, but it plays a vital part in uniting them. Without Smerdiakov's epilepsy, and fake seizure, the murder based on the morality which unites them may not have been possible. Ivan delegates the role of 'evil half' to Smerdiakov, by accusing him of being the 'true' murderer, therefore leaving himself to be the 'good half', absolving himself of any responsibility, like Katerina in 'Khoziaika'. Smerdiakov, however, refuses to validate Ivan's deflection of guilt, forcing him to recognise the mantra that everyone is guilty for everything. The doubling here, and shared responsibility for the murder, unites them as one rather than as two distinctive halves – both are 'evil' in this sense.

Examining these epileptic characters in relation to their doubles suggests that it is through the other that their identities are completed. Nellie and Kirillov both act positively towards the other, assuming the role of saviour, aiding the other when they are in need. Nellie, through Vania, finds the love that needs to assert her own self on the world. Kirillov, however, refuses to connect with another individual; the consequences of this will be explored below. On the other hand, the epileptic can also commit evil acts against another. According to Ordynov's worldview Murin holds Katerina hostage, stopping her from running away with her rescuer. Murin makes Katerina the good, innocent victim by acting in this evil manner. Murin allows Katerina to deflect any guilt about the death of her parents and former lover. Yet it is through Katerina and Ordynov that Murin's identity is constructed. In contrast, Smerdiakov's evil actions force the other to acknowledge their own guilt. By doubling with Ivan, Smerdiakov forms a complete self. He refuses to allow Ivan to deceive himself about his involvement in his father's murder, making him recognise that everyone *is* guilty for everything, and Ivan most of all.

5.3 The epileptic as saviour

While the question of responsibility places Murin and Smerdiakov in the role of evildoer, in the case of Nellie and Kirillov the actions of another lead towards their own act of good. This then portrays them as ‘saviours’: Nellie attempts to fix broken families while Kirillov aims to rectify divine abandonment. Initially the reader sees Nellie’s attempt to mend the relationship between her mother and grandfather. Nellie acts as an intermediary between the two, although remaining entirely on her mother’s side. She is constantly used by the mother as a tool of reconciliation: ‘я написала письмо твоему дедушке, поди к нему и отдай письмо. И смотри, Нелли, как он его прочтет, что скажет и что будет делать; а ты стань на колени, целуй его и проси его, чтоб он простил твою мамашу’.⁹¹ However, these attempts do not work to improve the grandfather’s relationship with Nellie’s mother, but rather begin to build a bond between the grandfather and Nellie, which is continuously strained due to the rejection of the mother.

Nellie’s past suffering results in adoration from her newfound acquaintances and thus Vania’s request - ‘Нелли, ангел! - сказал я, - хочешь ли ты быть нашим спасением? Хочешь ли спасти всех нас? [...] Нелли! Вся надежда теперь на тебя!’⁹² Not only does she set out to fulfil the role of the family’s saviour, but she is also recognised as such: ‘[e]е нам всем бог послал в награду за наши страдания’.⁹³ Here again the female character’s connection to the divine, and/or demonic, is made explicit but this time with the added interpretation of epilepsy spanning the same dichotomy. Nellie does not act out against her society, like the provincial women in chapter three, allowing her to be viewed as an angel. Her willingness to sacrifice herself highlights a key element of female characters whose incorporation of the other leaves no space for the self, allowing her to become devoured.⁹⁴

⁹¹ Dostoevskii, *Unizhennye i oskorblennye*, III, p. 413.

⁹² Ibid., p. 406.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 429.

⁹⁴ Gilbert, Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, p. 208.

Unlike with her own family, Nellie is able to reconcile Natasha back into her own family, becoming their saving grace and possibly saving Natasha from the same unfortunate fate as Nellie's mother. The 'eureka' moment comes from Natasha's father who, upon relating to Nellie's experience, recognises the teachings in her story and exclaims: 'Наташа, где моя Наташа! Где она! Где дочь моя! — [...] — Простил! Простил! — вскричала Анна Андреевна'.⁹⁵

Nellie's ability to be viewed as a double allows for an 'accidental family'. With the temptation to 'become' Natasha, Nellie integrates herself into the family, surrounded by love from the father and even Natasha herself. In so doing she gains the trust and respect of the family who allow her narrative to elevate her to the role of saviour that she was unable to play within her own family. She attempts to stop abandonment affecting another family, giving Natasha back her grounding.

Ricoeur's theory illuminates how Nellie comes to be viewed as a saviour figure by how she asserts herself. Ricoeur explains that *how* we are viewed by the other is not necessarily fair. Nellie's fragmented identity fails in the assertion of her self, leading others to hold power over her *idem*; by allowing herself to be taken advantage of Nellie's situation echoes Ricoeur's emphasis on power which is '[a]t the heart of Ricoeur's formulation of selfhood [...] [and involves] a "spectrum" of reciprocity that purports to balance the power of self and other'.⁹⁶ Even as she begins to assert her self upon the world, Nellie falls victim to the power of others willing to profit from her fragmented identity, such as Natasha's father, who hopes to remove 'Nellie' and establish 'Natasha'. But here the importance of Ricoeur's narrative theory of self explains Nellie's coming into being through the role of saviour as 'it

⁹⁵ Dostoevskii, *Unizhennye i oskorblennye*, III, p. 420.

⁹⁶ Venema, 'Oneself as Another', p. 419.

is the identity of the story that makes the identity of the character'.⁹⁷ In her role as saviour Nellie takes control of her own story, telling others how she should be seen, as well as how she was seen by others, such as her grandfather. In essence, she forces others to recognise her self through this narrative of her life. In so doing she reestablishes an equilibrium of power by simultaneously distancing herself from Natasha and asserting her own identity, consequently saving Natasha from the same path her mother led. She forces Natasha to take responsibility for her actions.

Examining Nellie in relation to Ricoeur's theory suggests that the entirety of Nellie's life relates back to her fragmented identity, even as she asserts her self to others. Her epilepsy provokes sympathy in Vania, leading her through a series of events during which she gradually transforms from an object, refusing to act upon the world, to a self via recognition by another. Just as Arendt's conception of identity requires recognition of action by the other, so too does Ricoeur's theory explain that acting, which is recognised by the other, establishes your story (your self) in the world.

Kirillov's rise to saviour stems from his sense of divine abandonment. Nellie's role of saviour works from the outside looking in, so that she does not solve the problem by *becoming* Natasha, but bringing Natasha back into her rightful place. Kirillov, by contrast, himself *becomes* the missing piece. As shown in relation to his doubling, Kirillov believes that man must *become* a man-God to fill the missing role of God, thereby reducing himself to his idea, becoming consumed by it. This is where Kirillov's role as saviour comes into play: he will sacrifice himself in order to demonstrate to others this new life: [Н]о я заявлю своеволие, я обязан уверовать, что не верую. [...] Только это одно спасет всех людей и в

⁹⁷ Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, trans. Kathleen Blamey, (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 148.

следующем же поколении переродит физически; ибо в теперешнем физическом виде [...] нельзя быть человеку без прежнего бога никак.⁹⁸

The removal of the divine leaves man alone with himself, forcing him to assert his own free will and take control of the situation. Moreover, Kirillov asserts that doing so removes the fear of the afterlife, allowing for happiness in the present. Therefore:

[h]is theory, in brief, a theory bound up with an idealistic conception of perfectibility, is that if people were absolutely indifferent as to whether they lived or died, if the fear of death were utterly eradicated, the whole nature of mankind would change.⁹⁹

Thus people would not live in fear, but rather revel in happiness at the knowledge of their own power. This idea of happiness links to his subjective aura symptoms, during which he claims to feel something divine: '[е]сть секунды, их всего зараз приходит пять или шесть, и вы вдруг чувствуете присутствие вечной гармонии, совершенно достигнутой. Это не земное; я не про то, что оно небесное, а про то, что человек в земном виде не может перенести'.¹⁰⁰ These auras, similar to Myshkin's, allow him 'the harmonious metaphysical integration of the self with the higher spiritual reality', including metaphysical beauty, which 'consists in the harmony and tranquillity of union with the divine and all reality'.¹⁰¹

This sense of happiness cannot be reconciled with the suffering of the world under a divine creator. It is through this realisation that Kirillov devises his plan to assert his own free will in the form of suicide, and overcome this problem through becoming the man-God. As Jones states, Kirillov,

momentarily feels eternal harmony in all its fullness, [...] but it is an experience alien to a physical life in which people are tormented by pain and fear, and Kirillov sees it

⁹⁸ Dostoevskii, *Besy*, X, p. 472.

⁹⁹ Curle, *Characters of Dostoevsky*, p. 165.

¹⁰⁰ Dostoevskii, *Besy*, X, p. 450.

¹⁰¹ James P. Scanlan, *Dostoevsky the Thinker* (London: Cornell University Press, 2002), p. 150, p. 151.

as his quasi-messianic mission to sacrifice himself in order to demonstrate that if God does not exist then everything is a matter of the self-will.¹⁰²

The assertion of free will shall, according to his plan, bring about happiness. As Kirillov himself states: '[б]удет новый человек, счастливый и гордый. Кому будет всё равно, жить или не жить, тот будет новый человек. Кто победит боль и страх, тот сам бог будет. А тот бог не будет'.¹⁰³ Kirillov, like Nellie, attempts to solve his abandonment for the sake of the other – here the generalised other. He aims to solve the suffering (evil) of everyday life for everyone and replace it with the good: happiness and autonomy. He takes on the role of saviour for the other at the sacrifice of any remaining sense of self.

Examining Kirillov in relation to Feuerbach's philosophy highlights how separation between mortal and the divine has a negative effect, by subjecting him to the will of another being. However, by recognising humankind's own power, in his act of becoming its saviour, Kirillov sees the possibility of allowing others to enjoy life and revel in their own abilities. His fragmented identity means that he is able to take this leap and submit himself entirely to his idea of the man-God, saving others from the despair of divine abandonment that he felt. However, after his death nothing appears to change. No characters recognise his idea and 'sacrifice', simply understanding his action as that of a 'madman'. In essence, Kirillov does not succeed. He gains no identity as a 'man-God' – no identity as a saviour – but simply remains a fragmented personality. Feuerbach's theory stands in contrast to Ricoeur's, by relating man back to himself, not to another. Whereas Nellie was able build her identity with the help of Vania and Natasha, Kirillov's detachment does not permit him this outside help, reducing him only to his idea. When this idea does not come to fruition his identity remains

¹⁰² Malcolm V. Jones, *Dostoevsky and the Dynamics of Religious Experience* (London: Anthem Press, 2005), p. 18.

¹⁰³ Dostoevskii, *Besy*, X, p. 93.

solely as that of his idea, not of his self. He, like the action-reduced manic characters of the Baron and Prokharchin, is not a man but an idea.

5.4 The epileptic as devil

Whereas Nellie and Kirillov's fragmented personalities allow them to fulfil the role of saviour in relation to their respective abandonments, Murin and Smerdiakov can be read as evil. Katerina defines Murin as the evil captor which links him to the Devil by his connection to the otherworldly via his epilepsy and Katerina's claims that she sold her soul to Murin, that he 'owns' her. Indeed, Murin is linked to the demonic throughout the work.

As Faith Wigzell states, 'Dostoevskii combined the image of the devil with that of the village sorcerer, who was deemed to have acquired his power from the unclean force/devil. References to the unclean force, devilry, death and the color black surround Murin's image'.¹⁰⁴ His very name identifies him with the devil as 'the name "Murin" signifies a certain species of small, black devil in Old Russian demonology'.¹⁰⁵ Leatherbarrow highlights how the depiction of Murin both as a devil and a villain in a fairy tale overlap as:

[t]he association of demonic imagery with the act of narrative invention is made [...] explicit [...] because of the way the [...] tale deploys – via the hero's growing delirium – a deeply folklorized subtext, which permits more readily the import of folk-demonic motifs into a Petersburg setting.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ Faith Wigzell, 'Dostoevskii and the Russian Folk Heritage', in *The Cambridge Companion to Dostoevskii*, ed. William J. Leatherbarrow (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 21–46 (p. 27).

¹⁰⁵ Adam Weiner, *By Authors Possessed: The Demonic Novel in Russia* (Evanston IL: Northwestern University Press, 1998), p. 278.

¹⁰⁶ Leatherbarrow, 'Sorcerer's Apprentice', p. 606.

Murin is presented as ‘evil’ twice over to the benefit of Katerina and Ordynov. This role is neither confirmed nor denied by the narrator, forcing us to rely on the delirious consciousness of Ordynov. Thus:

[i]t follows, therefore, that the demonic identity ascribed to Murin is also the product of Ordynov’s creative delirium [...] . This is profoundly ironic, for the truly demonic in ‘The Landlady’ will turn out to lie [...] in the very imaginative process that allows Ordynov to attribute such wizardry to him and absorb others into a narrative of his own invention.¹⁰⁷

By contrast, Smerdiakov’s relation to the demonic comes not solely from the other but also from his origin: he was born in a bathhouse. As I previously explained in relation to his mother, Lizaveta Smerdiashchaia (pp. 173–174), Russian folklore denotes bathhouses as a place of otherworldly magic, specifically the demonic, whence evil creatures emerge.

Otto Rank’s psychoanalytic study of doubles perfectly describes Smerdiakov as the evil double of Ivan when he states:

[t]he most prominent symptom of the forms which the double takes is a powerful consciousness of guilt which forces the hero no longer to accept the responsibility for certain actions of his ego, but to place it upon another ego, a double, who is either personified by the devil himself or is created by making a diabolical pact. This detached personification of instincts and desires which were once felt to be unacceptable [...] can be satisfied without responsibility in this indirect way.¹⁰⁸

Viewing Smerdiakov as the demonic double allows Ivan to shift the responsibility for his murderous desires, underlining the importance of shared responsibility in the novel.

Bakhtin highlights the connection between Ivan and his double Smerdiakov when he states

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 609.

¹⁰⁸ Otto Rank, *The Double: A Psychoanalytic Study*, ed., trans. Harry Tucker Jr. (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1971), p. 76.

that ‘Smerdyakov gradually gains control over that voice of Ivan’s which Ivan is hiding from his own self’, unearthing Ivan’s desire for the ‘murder to occur as an inevitability of fate, not only *apart from his will*, but *in opposition to it*’.¹⁰⁹ The demonic double both confronts Ivan with the evil side of himself and enables him to conceal the evil he wishes to perpetrate. Epilepsy here also augments the depiction of Smerdiakov as evil as it helps him to carry out the murder as he fakes seizures for an alibi.¹¹⁰

The idea of Smerdiakov as an evil double is further strengthened by the appearance of Ivan’s hallucinatory devil after Smerdiakov’s suicide. Just as earlier in the novel Ivan rejected the idea of God, so too does he now reject the idea of the devil: ‘[я] думаю, что если дьявол не существует и, стало быть, создал его человек, то создал он его по своему образу и подобию’.¹¹¹ The devil appears to Ivan just after Smerdiakov’s suicide, suggesting that one evil figure is replaced with another; Ivan cannot escape his demonic companion. Just as man creates the devil in his own image, so did Ivan’s morality develop the image of Smerdiakov as evil. Ivan ‘created’ Smerdiakov the murderer with his own philosophy. The idea of Smerdiakov as a double of Ivan also appears to be confirmed in this scene when Ivan exclaims:

[Т]ы ложь, ты болезнь моя, ты призрак. Я только не знаю, чем тебя истребить, и вижу, что некоторое время надобно проработать. Ты моя галлюцинация. Ты воплощение меня самого, только одной, впрочем, моей стороны...моих мыслей и чувств, только самых гадких и глупых.¹¹²

Although talking to the hallucination of a devil, Ivan refers to it as his ‘evil side’, the role to which he condemns Smerdiakov in place of recognising his own guilt. Consequently, the

¹⁰⁹ Bakhtin, *Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, p. 247, p. 258.

¹¹⁰ Iniesta, ‘Epilepsy in the Process of Artistic Creation’, p. 376.

¹¹¹ Dostoevskii, *Brat’ia Karamazovy*, XIV, p. 217.

¹¹² Dostoevskii, *Brat’ia Karamazovy*, XV, p. 72.

demonic is connected to the ‘evil’ side of Ivan, just as with Smerdiakov. They are a part of Ivan that he does not want to acknowledge. Thus:

[a]ll the loopholes in Ivan’s thoughts, [...] all his attempts to get around the other’s words and to replace them in his soul with an affirmation of his own self, all the reservations of his conscience that serve to interrupt his every thought, his every word and experience, condense and thicken here into the completed replies of the devil. Ivan’s words and the devil’s replies do not differ in content but only in tone, only in accent. [...] The devil, as it were, transfers to the main clause what had been for Ivan merely a subordinate clause.¹¹³

Just as Smerdiakov reveals Ivan’s hidden desires, his true nature, so too does the conversation with the hallucinatory devil repeat Ivan’s own thoughts back to him; he ‘expresses and embodies Ivan’s self-consciousness’.¹¹⁴

Looking at Smerdiakov and Ivan through the prism of James’ theory allows the reader to understand them as two halves of a whole self, the thinking and the acting self. Smerdiakov’s indefinite identity lacks the calculating, thinking, concrete ego that Ivan embodies for him, and he is relegated to the acting material self. Ivan constitutes the I-for-myself through the ego and Smerdiakov the I-for-another through action. Smerdiakov’s power over others (killing cats, getting taken care of by Grigorii, Fedor Pavlovich paying for his tuition, and so on), renders him as the acting self and when given directions by his ego (Ivan) this power over another is once again asserted over Fedor Pavlovich – using tricks to get him to act as desired in order to kill him. Seeing how the two are linked in James’ theory shows how deflection of guilt is futile for both Ivan and Smerdiakov. Ivan cannot simply use his perception of Smerdiakov as ‘evil’ to rid himself of his sin, as Katerina does with Murin.

¹¹³ Bakhtin, *Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, p. 222.

¹¹⁴ Deborah A. Martinsen, *Surprised by Shame: Dostoevsky’s Liars and Narrative Exposure* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2003), p. 208.

The need for help from the other calls to the divine within the characters of Nellie and Kirillov and draws from their own fragmentation and abandonment. By contrast, the demonic epileptic becomes a sort of scapegoat for the other. Regardless of any actual evil on their part they are contrasted to a 'good' half. In René Girard's analysis, the figure of a scapegoat is a social construct, used by another to absolve themselves of any guilt, tensions, or wrongdoing. When it is advantageous to the majority a scapegoat is selected to offload sins, uniting the majority in a necessary act of violence towards the other. Signalling a figure as a scapegoat 'indicates both the innocence of the victims, the collective polarization in opposition to them, and the collective end result of that polarization'.¹¹⁵ Thus 'whoever gets forced into the role of scapegoat [...] isn't really responsible'.¹¹⁶ Therefore, the 'evil' epileptic can be understood simply as an identity constructed by the other for their own gain. In the case of Murin, he seemingly refuses to reject this definition, allowing Katerina, and subsequently Ordynov, to use him as this 'scapegoat' figure, removing any sense of responsibility from her conscience. Smerdiakov, however, accepts this definition but forces Ivan to recognise his own guilt, highlighting the evil within everyone.

5.5 Conclusion

Whereas parts one and two show that duality is the key to the inclusion, or exclusion, of the mad individual by contrasting the individual to wider society (faced and faceless), chapter five considers the 'mad' individual in relation to a single other individual in a bid to form identity. Considering the epileptic characters I have examined, the duality of identity is shown as a reflection back on the self, in the form of a double. As with previous doubles

¹¹⁵ René Girard, *The Scapegoat*, trans. Yvonne Freccero (London: Athlone, 1986), p. 39.

¹¹⁶ Robert Brooke, 'René Girard and the Dynamics of Imitation, Scapegoating, and Renunciative Identification: A Response to Richard Boyd', *Journal of Advanced Composition*, 20.1 (2000), 167–176 (p. 171).

considered, here too the phenomenon serves as a split between I-for-myself and I-for-another. The epileptic serves as the unknowable I-for-myself, whereas their counterparts are the acting I-for-another selves present in society. While previous doubles fulfilled unachievable desires, here doubles hold their other half accountable. The idea of the duality of worlds as split between the physical and the spiritual, as explored in relation to holy fools in chapter four, again rears its head concerning epileptics and the centuries old traditions of epilepsy as a divine affliction, highlighting the epileptic as 'mad' due to their connection to the divine or demonic.

The epileptic flits in and out of both society and madness, but their fragmentation allows them to be used by the other, at the expense of their I-for-myself. The divine epileptic serves to aid others, but must assert their personal self on the world in order to establish their identity, or risk destruction like Kirillov. The demonic epileptic, however, is used as a scapegoat for the questionable moral acts of others and it is precisely their fragmentation that allows them to fulfil this role.

6. Chapter Six: Depression and the Self: Love and Longing

As with epileptic figures, the depressed characters I will examine in this final chapter all relate very closely to a single other individual. However, here the other is not necessarily a double, but can be a lover, friend, or relative who forms a pure bond with the depressed. In fact, whereas the appearance of doubles signifies increasing madness, a relational connection to another implies a move towards sanity. Depression as a type of madness is similar to epilepsy in that those affected are not permanently considered to be ‘mad’, but may flit in and out of such a label. Madness here is a sliding scale and the self-other relations considered in this chapter highlight the importance of the other for sanity and identity.

Depression is a mental illness characterised by low mood, loss of interest, and a lack of self-worth. In extreme cases depressive feelings can lead to suicidal thoughts. As is the case with mania, depression as a ‘madness’ has been understood since the ancient Greeks, with the general diagnosis being referred to as ‘melancholy’. This term comes from the Greek ‘*melankholia*’ meaning black bile, linking depression with the ancient medical concept of the four humours. Black bile was believed to be a fluid produced by the kidneys and spleen that caused melancholy when an excess build-up occurred in the body. In the modern world the nineteenth-century German psychiatrist Emil Kraepelin founded a new theory about melancholy as a non-degenerative disease of the brain, encompassing several past diagnoses of melancholy into the overarching category of ‘depression’.¹ Thus, the modern clinical diagnosis of ‘depression’ was understood at the time when most of the works under consideration in this thesis were written.

Melancholy as a literary concept has also existed since ancient Greece, for example in Heliodorus of Emesa’s *Atheiopica*, but it gained particular momentum during the

¹ Clark Lawlor, *From Melancholia to Prozac: A History of Depression* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 137.

Renaissance, which has been dubbed ‘the golden age of melancholy’.² Michael MacDonald shows that the majority of characters identified as suffering from melancholy are amongst the wealthiest in society, thus giving the term a particular social status, as lower classes who portrayed similar symptoms tended to be labelled simply as ‘mopish’.³ Moreover, melancholic characters were most commonly men, thereby creating a literary type: the upper-class melancholic man. Such figures can also be seen in later works such as Chateaubriand’s *René* (1802), in which the titular character finds himself disillusioned with life, and finds no happiness in anything despite his travels around the world and participation in society. Through characters such as this, the type secured its place in Western European literary history.

The Western European melancholic type shares many similarities with the Russian literary type of the superfluous man, who also exhibits many characteristics similar to those of depression, such as inaction, alienation from society, and lack of ambitious desires. Identified with Chatskii in Griboedov’s ‘Gore ot uma’ (1823), gaining in popularity after Pushkin’s *Evgenii Onegin* (1833), and modelled on the Byronic hero, the superfluous man is a much later concept than the melancholic man. Whereas the Western European melancholic necessarily had depressive characteristics, the superfluous man could be characterised by existential boredom. In *Conformity’s Children*, Ellen Chances touches on the ambiguity of the superfluous figure, discussing the varying categorisations of a ‘superfluous’ character:⁴

² Ibid., p. 30. Erin Sullivan, *Beyond Melancholy: Sadness and Selfhood in Renaissance England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 89.

³ Michael MacDonald, *Mystical Bedlam: Madness, Anxiety, and Healing in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 151.

⁴ Ellen B. Chances, *Conformity’s Children: An Approach to the Superfluous Man in Russian Literature* (Columbus, OH: Slavica Publishers, 1978), pp. 18–19. Chances states that superfluous men have previously been categorised by their position as the ‘weak man’ versus the ‘strong female’, by their inability to fit into society and hypersensitive nature, and also by their role as a ‘liberal reformer’ who is unable to effect change in later works, such as those of Turgenev.

The non-existence of a singular definition means that there is no concrete way to identify a character as a superfluous man. It is up to the reader to decide if his characteristics, together with his boredom with life, constitute superfluity.

This chapter will discuss the role of the superfluous man in relation to the alienation of the depressive titular character in Ivan Goncharov's *Oblomov* (1859). Examining the depressive figure's relationships, I will assess the effect of alienation and the importance of the other for constituting selfhood within family, spousal, sexual, and master-worker relations. Assessing the notion of a pure form of love as a saving mechanism for depressed characters, I will argue that the *type* of self-other relation is just as important as the connection itself for selfhood.

The majority of the works I discuss here feature a prominent depressive female character, in Elena Gan's 'Ideal' (1837), Sergei Aksakov's *Semeinaia khronika* (1856), and in Tolstoi's *Anna Karenina* and *Voina i mir*. The female role is also significant in relation to a depressive male, as in *Oblomov*, *Anna Karenina* – this time with the character of Levin – and (as I discuss briefly) in Tolstoi's 'Smert' Ivana Il'icha' (1886). As I have observed, the figure of the melancholic, primarily in Western European literature, centres on a male protagonist, but in nineteenth-century Russian literature the female depressive becomes a major figure. Rosalind Marsh argues that the figure of the female depressive in Russian literature arose because, '[t]he fundamental assumptions of patriarchal ideology – the perception of woman as object, "immanence", "nature", passivity or death, as opposed to man as subject, "transcendence", "culture", activity and life, have dominated all aspects of Russian social, political and cultural life'.⁵ Indeed, the depressed female characters I consider here do not appear significantly different from the two female protagonists analysed in

⁵ Rosalind Marsh, 'Introduction: New Perspectives on Women and Gender in Russian Literature', in *Gender and Russian Literature: New Perspectives*, ed. Rosalind Marsh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 1–37 (p. 3).

chapter three, who find freedom from their repressive societies in death and who represent a ‘common female impulse to struggle free from social and literary confinement through strategic redefinitions of the self, art, and society’.⁶

The nature of the relationships in these works, including repressive features, as emphasised by Marsh, means it will also be necessary to examine the different forms of love (*eros*, *agape*, *philia*, and *storge*), in order to see the extent to which the character’s depression removes them from the other. *Agape* is ‘pure love’, a charitable, unconditional love associated with religious faith; *philia*, is an affectionate love such as friendship or ‘brotherly love’; and *storge*, an empathetic love such as familial love. *Eros*, however, constitutes a category of its own because of its passionate nature and sexual dimension. The split between pure and passionate love will become an integral distinction between depressive and non-depressive characters in terms of how they are able to relate to the figure of the other.

The question of love acquires particular significance in Russian literature through Tolstoi’s philosophy. Tolstoi’s advocacy of ‘brotherly love’ in education and life more generally is well known due to his religious writings.⁷ As Lidia Gromova-Opul’skaia states, due to his increasing religiosity, Tolstoi became removed from his family ideal, relying on the concept of brotherhood and religious love as an ideal.⁸ In the afterword to one of his later works, *Kreitserova sonata*, Tolstoi even advances the idea of brotherly love *in* marriage:

‘[и]деал христианина есть любовь к богу и ближнему, есть отречение от себя для служения богу и ближнему; плотская же любовь, брак, есть служение себе и потому

⁶ Gilbert, Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, p. xii.

⁷ Lev Tolstoi, ‘Brotherhood of Men in Education’, *Journal of Education*, 67.25 (1908), 679–681 (p. 679).

⁸ Lidia Gromova-Opul’skaia, ‘The Philosophy and Aesthetics of Brotherhood in Tolstoy’s Fiction’, in *Lev Tolstoy and the Concept of Brotherhood: Proceedings of a Conference Held at the University of Ottawa, 22-24 February 1996*, ed. Andrew Donskov, John Woodsworth (New York: Legas, 1996), pp. 5–22 (p. 10).

есть во всяком случае препятствие служению богу и людям’.⁹ In so doing, Tolstoi postulates that brotherly love has the potential to overcome *eros* entirely, permitting the couple to live a fully Christian life.

The emphasis on brotherly love brings together Tolstoi’s fictional and non-fictional texts. In his essay ‘Tolstoy’s Spirituality’ G. M. Hamburg argues that in *Tsarstvo Bozhie vnutri vas* (1893), Tolstoi depicts the common man’s contradiction: he holds ‘brotherly’ moral values, but fails to act upon these, meaning that his love for humanity is overcome by his egoistic actions.¹⁰ Thus, with works in the context of his growing religious faith, the emphasis on this ‘pure love’ becomes increasingly apparent throughout. The concept of pure love is also evident throughout other works in nineteenth-century Russia, for example, in the theme of compassion and compassionate love in the works of Dostoevskii. Edward Wasiolek argues that, for Dostoevskii, there is no fixed moral value, thus meaning that compassion is neither inherently ‘good’ nor ‘bad’, but rather is given a moral value by a person’s intent (whether it serves the ego or God).¹¹ Thus, compassionate love can be used as an opposition to a human being’s cruel acts and egoistic nature, but the manner in which this love is shown is not predetermined and may be perceived negatively or positively by the reader.

It is precisely this requirement of a pure love as the foundation for self-other relations that impacts madness. Conversely, I will contrast these relationships to impure love-based relations, to argue that in the case of depression, the *type* of connection is of the utmost concern.

⁹ Lev Tolstoi, ‘Posleslovie k “Kreitserovoi sonate”’, in *Izbrannye povesti i rasskazy*, 2 vols (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel’stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1947), II, pp. 213–225 (p. 221).

¹⁰ G. M. Hamburg, ‘Tolstoy’s Spirituality’, in *Anniversary Essays on Tolstoy*, ed. Donna Tussing Orwin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 138–158 (p. 144).

¹¹ Edward Wasiolek, *Dostoevsky: The Major Fiction* (Cambridge, MA: The M.I.T. Press, 1964), p. 56).

6.1 The female depressive and the woman question: 1830s-1850s: Gan and Aksakov

Ol'ga, the heroine of Gan's story 'Ideal', is a young woman whose education formed an integral part of her character and who has studied 'всему, исключая того, что должно служить основанием прочего', marking her as different from other girls her age.¹² Entering society through her marriage, Ol'ga becomes a young woman with a pale face and sorrowful expression.¹³ Colleen Lucey emphasizes the necessity of marriage, particularly for a dowerless bride, in a context where love and personal autonomy were typically ignored in favour of financial and social merit.¹⁴ Lucey states that '[t]he question of marital choice [...] show[s] how mothers, rather than promoting their daughters' educational development and artistic talents, push them into marriages of convenience'.¹⁵ Ol'ga's childhood education therefore contrasts her younger self to the majority of women in society and the married society woman she nevertheless has to become. Married to a man she does not love, she cannot become accustomed to society life due to her unusual upbringing. As Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar state, the female writer, and female character, aim to 'transcend the extreme images of "angel" and "monster" which male authors have generated' for women.¹⁶ In contrast to the outsider female characters considered in chapter three, with Leskov's Katerina cast in the figure of the monster and Ostrovskii's Katerina falling away from the angel she is supposed to represent, here we see the struggle from the female character's point of view, giving the reader a better understanding of the character's motives and desires.

As Nielson states, Ol'ga is in keeping with 'all of Elena Gan's main characters [who] are, like other Romantic heroes, outsiders in relation to their surroundings, by virtue of their

¹² Elena Gan, 'Ideal', in *Russkaia romanticheskaia povest' pisatelei 20-40 godov XIX veka*, ed. V. I. Sakharov (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Pressa, 1992), pp. 215–252 (p. 221).

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 221.

¹⁴ Colleen Lucey, *Love for Sale: Representing Prostitution in Imperial Russia* (Ithaca, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, an imprint of Cornell University Press, 2021), p. 112

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

¹⁶ Gilbert, Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, p. 17.

upbringing and their ideals'.¹⁷ She lives a life 'которая совершенно противоположно отвергала от себя все земные чувства и жила одной душой, [...] почти машинально исполняя обязанности, налагаемые обществом'.¹⁸ The contradiction of earthly and spiritual modes of living results in the suppression of her true, well-educated self, leading her to depression. As a result, 'это разногласие, это одиночество души усилили в ней склонность к уединению и мечтательности'.¹⁹ She is depicted as unable to form genuine relationships, alienating herself. She is never truly happy in company, only 'reconciling' herself to it. Thus, it is a lack of genuine relationships that is the root cause of Ol'ga's depression and does not allow her to establish her I-for-myself in society. In order to be in keeping with society, she suppresses herself.

Aksakov's *Semeinaia khronika* also represents depression as a lack of genuine relationships in its portrayal of family life in the provincial gentry. A significant proportion of the chronicle focuses on the joining of the ancient and noble Bagrov family line with the Zubin family, through the marriage of Aleksei Bagrov and Sof'ia Zubina. Focusing on these two families allows Aksakov to explore human nature, including significant depressive features, notably in the figure of Sof'ia Nikolaevna.²⁰ She is depicted as experiencing depression several times. Between each of these episodes, it is the adoption of a new role, a new loving relationship, that provides her with a purpose to live. Her turbulent relationships with others are clearly marked as a cause of depression when her stepmother, in a Cinderella-

¹⁷ Marit Bjerkeng Nielsen, 'The Concept of Love and the Conflict of the Individual versus Society in Elena A. Gan's *Sud Sveta*', *Scando-Slavica*, 24.1 (1978), 125–138 (p. 127). This includes Vera, a young girl with whom Ol'ga was raised. Both girls form two halves of a whole in their depiction and relation to society. In contrast to Ol'ga, Vera rejects society, choosing to live for herself in accordance with her schooling. Both women could be considered a composite character, with the depressive symptoms shared between them and coming to different conclusions: egoism and religion.

¹⁸ Gan, 'Ideal', p. 222.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 225.

²⁰ Kathryn B. Feuer, 'Family Chronicle: The Indoor Art of Sergei Aksakov', *Urbandus Review*, 2.1 (1979), 86–102 (p. 88).

style turn of events, banishes her from her familial role as daughter and forces her into the role of maid: the stepmother ‘покаялась, что дерзкая тринадцатилетняя девчонка, кумир отца и целого города, будет жить в девичьей [...] [о]на буквально сдержала свою клятву’.²¹ Much like Gan’s Ol’ga, this underlines that Sof’ia’s self needs not only a relationship, here maid to master, but a *loving* relationship.²² These relationships must be based on *storge*, without which her depression arises.

Alistair McFadyen, a theological philosopher, developed a theory of personhood that states that identity is socially obtained, arguing that it:

constructed a relational understanding of personal identity as the form of punctuation operating between oneself and others. Our personal identity is the way we relate to others [...] [and] is immediately evidenced in the formation of a ‘boundary’ between our ‘selves’ and the world.²³

Gan’s Ol’ga is portrayed as having a significant boundary between herself and the world as she fails to connect with others on a social level. She removes herself from social situations when possible, such as hiding from a ball in the bathrooms, in order not to reduce herself to the role that society expects of her. She even fails to connect with her husband, who also makes no attempt to connect to her, and cannot love him due to their different upbringings. In McFadyen’s sense, Ol’ga cannot be a person in her society as she cannot ‘relate to others’. Unlike Vera, Ol’ga cannot bring herself to follow an egoistic lifestyle. She reconciles herself to false connections with others. McFadyen’s theory suggests that Ol’ga is a social character,

²¹ Ibid., p. 94. Sergei Aksakov, *Semeinaia khronika*, in *Semeinaia khronika; Detskie gody Bagrova-vnuka; Vospominanii* (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1973), pp. 33–219 (p. 94).

²² Aksakov, *Semeinaia khronika*, p. 94.

²³ Alistair McFadyen, *The Call to Personhood: A Christian Theory of the Individual in Social Relationships* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 151.

who thrives on love for and from another, but is placed in a society that shares none of her values, rendering her depressed.

McFadyen's theory also indicates that Aksakov's Sof'ia changes in the way that she relates to others and thus cannot be the same self. Whereas Ol'ga cannot ground herself at all in her surroundings and cement her selfhood, Sof'ia is deconstructed by the stepmother's actions. McFadyen's concept of self enlightens us to the extent that Sof'ia's identity relies on the way she relates to others, not merely the fact of the relationship itself. The removal of the equality and familial aspect of her *storge*-based relationship, with her father in particular, make her depressed and undermine her sense of self.

Sof'ia's connection to others is portrayed as stronger than simply the 'relating to another' that McFadyen argues, as without the other, and even with God, to whom she relates in the form of an icon, she has not restored her original selfhood. Although God can constitute the figure of the other, this does not resolve Sof'ia's problems. When her suicide attempt failed 'признав в этом явлении чудо всемогущества божьего, она ободрилась', but still does not devote herself to religious love, instead strengthening her relationships with others.²⁴

The philosopher Nikolas Kompridis' theory of personhood also considers the self as grounded in significant relationships, arguing that 'personal identity is constituted in, and sustained through, our relations with others, such that were we to erase our relations with our significant others we would also erase the conditions of our self-intelligibility'.²⁵ This is exactly what happens to Sof'ia. Moreover, Kompridis' theory is part of a larger, modern theory of personhood exploring the role of the human in a technological era. This idea of

²⁴ Aksakov, *Semeinaia khronika*, p. 94.

²⁵ Nikolas Kompridis, 'Technology's Challenge to Democracy: What of the Human?', *Parrhesia* (2009), 8, 20–33 (p. 27), www.parrhesiajournal.org/parrhesia08/parrhesia08_kompridis.pdf [accessed March 5, 2022, 11:50].

progress and modernity resonates with the character of Sof'ia because of her role as a modern woman in a very traditional world as her 'initial literary [model] contradict[s] the "historical" [role] of' her character, and can be elucidated by Kompridis' theory.²⁶

However, when her stepmother dies, Sof'ia is reintegrated into her family, restoring her previous relationships and her sane self. No longer suppressed by her ostracism, she becomes the matriarch of the household, strengthening her previous relationships and therefore her selfhood as she 'сделался предметом всеобщего уважения и удивления. Умудренная годами тяжких страданий, семнадцатилетняя девушка вдруг превратилась в совершенную женщину, мать, хозяйку и даже официальную даму'.²⁷ At this stage it is important to stress the motherly role she begins to adopt, forming close family relationships.

Whereas Aksakov's Sof'ia manages to reground her selfhood in a renewed relationship with her father, Gan's Ol'ga believes she has rectified her situation in the form of the poet Anatolii, a man that she falsely believes embodies her spiritual ideals. It is with Anatolii, not her husband, that she falls in love; this love, however, is not an earthly love, but rather a spiritual love in keeping with her character.²⁸ Whereas the love of Aksakov's Sof'ia is characterised by *storge*, the love in question for Ol'ga better resembles the spiritual *agape*. The apparent understanding between Ol'ga and Anatolii removes her from her social prison. To begin with, the truth of the relationship is unimportant, only Ol'ga's belief is needed to remove her from her depressive state. This feeling only reinforces her belief in her upbringing and thus, Ol'ga's selfhood, as in McFadyen's theory, comes into being: she relates to another. Although Anatolii deceives Ol'ga and uses her simply as entertainment, she deems their relationship to be real, so it allows her to, momentarily, live a full life.

²⁶ Marcus C. Levitt, 'Aksakov's *Family Chronicle* and the Oral Tradition', *The Slavic and East European Journal*, 32.2 (1988), 198–212 (p. 207).

²⁷ Aksakov, *Semeinaia khronika*, p. 95.

²⁸ Gan, 'Ideal', pp. 228–229.

Nevertheless, Gan sets Ol'ga up for disappointment and deconstruction, and the story ultimately leads Ol'ga away from the false loves of society and towards religion.

Moreover, her newfound selfhood with Anatolii calls into question the role of women: '[н]о какой злой гений так исказил предназначение женщин? Теперь она родится для того, чтобы нравиться, прельщать, увеселять досуги мужчин'.²⁹ As Marit Bjerkgeng Nielsen states, '[t]he woman question forced its way into Russian social debate of the [18]30s. Like other important issues, it became the theme of many society tales'.³⁰ Although McFadyen does not comment on personhood and gender, Ol'ga's intrigue throws this concept of personhood into question, suggesting that even if women do relate to others in their society, and can therefore be considered persons in McFadyen's sense, they are still somehow limited as they are given the restrictive role of mother and/or wife. Furthermore, Ol'ga's tribulations suggest that if a woman does not fulfil these criteria, she will consider herself unhappy and incomplete. Contrasting Ol'ga to the other women in the work, in connection to McFadyen's theory, allows us to see the extent to which women in nineteenth-century Russia were restricted in their selfhoods. In order to be a sane, functioning self, women were expected to play the role of mother and/or wife and not to think differently, lest they should become like Ol'ga.

Aksakov's Sof'ia, by contrast, certainly takes on this 'womanly' role of caregiver in that she desires to look after her father. Yet she is again removed from the significant relationship with her father, due to his ill health and consequent dependence on a servant, and, as a result, 'this concrete perception of the new status of the Kalmyk leads to Sofia Nikolavna's estrangement from her dying father'.³¹ Thus, Sof'ia is twice removed from her

²⁹ Ibid., p. 231.

³⁰ Nielsen, 'The Concept of Love', pp. 126–127.

³¹ Andrew R. Durkin, *Sergei Aksakov and Russian Pastoral* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1983), p. 112.

most significant relationship in different ways. But she continues with her life and gains the new role of ‘wife’. Sof’ia’s strong character and post-depression experience make her the head of the household. Looking at Sof’ia through the prism of Kompridis’ theory allows the reader to understand how she strengthens her sense of self by forming new relationships. However, her marriage is jeopardised by the birth of her first child. Her new relationship and role as ‘mother’ are represented as so consuming that she almost loses all sense of self outside them; all previous relationships pale in comparison to the mother-child relationship. Her selfhood is now grounded in *storge*, an empathetic love, for her child. Motherhood becomes Sof’ia’s primary role, sacrificing her positions as wife and matriarch. Her love is only intensified when her child becomes increasingly sick as ‘Sof’ia Nikolaevna’s love for her firstborn is of quite exceptional intensity. All her energies, all her thoughts are absorbed by her baby girl, the loving care for whom becomes a jealously preserved monopoly’.³²

Sof’ia is portrayed as developing an unhealthy obsession with her child. As Kathryn Feuer states, Praskov’ia is ‘a child she adores and at the same time a love object who cannot, like her father, put her in a separate house’.³³ Sensing that everything is not perfect, as her baby is too sick to survive, Sof’ia sacrifices her sanity to dote over her child in the vain hope that the child will recover. This unnatural feeling can also be read as a symptom of post-natal depression, which can also include a loss of consideration for the wider world, frightening thoughts about the welfare of the child, and a persistent low mood.³⁴ Thus, although Sof’ia is depicted as experiencing depression due to the loss of a relationship, as with her father, this formation of the mother-child relationship poses a contradiction. On this occasion it is

³² Richard Gregg, ‘The Decline of a Dynast: From Power to Love in Aksakov’s *Family Chronicle*’, *The Russian Review*, 50.1 (1991), 35–47 (p. 43).

³³ Feuer, ‘Family Chronicle’, p. 98.

³⁴ Eiko I. Fried, Randolph M. Nesse, ‘Depression Sum-Scores Don’t Add Up: Why Analyzing Specific Depression Symptoms is Essential’, *BMC Medicine*, 13.1 (2015), 72–82, (pp. 72–73), [bmcmedicine.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12916-015-0325-4](https://doi.org/10.1186/s12916-015-0325-4) [accessed March 5, 2022, 11:43].

through the relationship that Sof'ia is endowed with depressive symptoms and therefore, in this instance, her identity as mother also becomes a part of the depression spectrum. Moreover, Sof'ia defines herself entirely by her role as 'mother', and the death of the infant consequently destroys the most important relationship in Sof'ia's life and with it her newfound, elevated sense of self. Of course, her relationships with her husband, her family, and her servants still remain, but because they are consumed by the love for and the relationship with her child, they are not represented as being strong enough to save her from again losing her sense of self and falling into depression. This time it is similar to her earlier episode with the loss of her relationship with her father, as she loses all sense of her surroundings and does not wish to participate in any activities. Thus, it is both the possibility of losing her child and the actual loss of the child that function to propel Sof'ia back into depression.

Ol'ga's relationship in 'Ideal' is similarly intensified then destroyed. Her earthly love soon becomes a part of her life, as she becomes increasingly infatuated with Anatolii, to the point that 'она с неизъяснимым удовольствием слушала случайные рассказы об его образе жизни, его склонностях, его привычках'.³⁵ Thus, her ideal is no longer the spiritual, lofty sense with which she was brought up, but rather 'ее идеал облекся в формы земные' as she surrenders to her love for him.³⁶ She becomes a part of the society that she considered beneath her, and her love moves from *agape* towards *eros* – an intimate love. She believes she is adhering to her original character – an outsider due to her upbringing – whereas she has, in fact, become a society woman, a social self in line with McFadyen's theory.

Moreover, Anatolii is not Ol'ga's lofty ideal in earthly form. He is simply another society man who becomes 'bored' of her. This discovery sends Ol'ga into a state of

³⁵ Gan, 'Ideal', p. 233.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 235.

‘emotional numbness’ to the extent that ‘[в]се было пусто вокруг нее; пусто, как и в ее душе’.³⁷ The destruction of this relationship means that Gan’s Ol’ga loses her sense of self, and she again is depicted as becoming an automaton in society – ‘[п]о часам, как заведенный автомат, она вставала, ложилась, ходила гулять’ – turning back into a depressive, alienated woman with no genuine relationships.³⁸ This loss of self can be explicated by the theologian Vincent Brümmer’s conception of selfhood. Brümmer affirms that ‘[n]ot only is our identity as persons bestowed on us in the love which others have for us, but our own identity is equally determined by the love which we have for others’.³⁹ Ol’ga’s ‘love’ for Anatolii is not reciprocated, and the realisation of this causes her loss of self, rendering her depressed again.

However, happening upon a chapel causes Ol’ga to consider religion, with *agape* as a consequence of this choice, and she slowly begins to align her own spiritual ideals with those of religion, finding comfort in this conversion. This discovery removes her from the dreary, depressive state in which she was living and allows her to ground a new beginning in religious faith. This new spiritual selfhood becomes Ol’ga’s new ideal, with her informing Vera that:

если женщина [...] получает характер, не сходный с нравами, господствующими в нашем свете, [...] то напрасно станет она искать вокруг себя взаимности или цели существования, достойной себя. Ничто не наполнит пустоты ее бытия [...].
Неземные привязанности могут удовлетворить ее жажду. Ее любовью должен быть спаситель.⁴⁰

With this revelation Ol’ga accepts that she was never going to find happiness through a husband or her ‘earthly ideal’; she would only ever come into being through God. This can

³⁷ Ibid., p. 249.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 249.

³⁹ Vincent Brümmer, *The Model of Love: A Study in Philosophical Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 235.

⁴⁰ Gan, ‘Ideal’, p. 252.

also be linked to McFadyen's theory to indicate how if one cannot relate to others, then one must relate to God.

Earlier in the story, when Ol'ga distanced herself from society, she did not recognise her relationship with God and as such could not constitute a person. Now, with this revelation she fulfils the second condition of McFadyen's theory of selfhood. These two conditions are that 'human persons [...] are intrinsically related to one another and to God'.⁴¹ Thus, if the real world fails to provide pure love then comfort can be found in faith. Considering McFadyen's theory of selfhood in relation to Ol'ga highlights the importance of relationships and pure love for identity; even if a character cannot connect to the world around them, as in the case of women refusing secondary roles, they can connect to God through *agape* in order to constitute personhood.

As with Ol'ga, Sof'ia is also led to God in a bid to escape her depression: '[и]сполнение христианского долга благотворно подействовало на Софью'.⁴² The ritual results in a vision of Our Lady of Iberia, after which Sof'ia kisses her icon, and is slowly restored to health. She is, however, 'тень прежней Софьи'.⁴³ Unlike Ol'ga, Sof'ia's selfhood cannot be regained through love for God, *agape*, as she requires a significant earthly relationship – *storge*. With the birth of her second child, however, this mother-child relationship is restored, and Sof'ia resumes the role of 'mother'.

The reader is given the impression that Sof'ia is much calmer with her son in comparison to her first child. She is not overly protective and adopts the role of mother with ease, conforming to a traditional view of motherhood which assumes that women are naturally meant to be nurturing mothers and wives. This subverts Sof'ia's position as the modern, progressive woman that she embodied earlier in the work, placing her in the

⁴¹ McFadyen, *The Call to Personhood*, p. 18.

⁴² Aksakov, *Semeinaia khronika*, p. 201.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 203.

traditional world that she inhabits. The idea that the second child will undermine Sof'ia's selfhood is dismissed and this new, concrete role is described as a blessing.⁴⁴ This time she understands the importance of maintaining the relationship with her child as 'она приняла за святой долг сохранением душевного спокойствия сохранить здоровье носимого ею младенца и упрочить тем его существование, - существование, в котором заключались все ее надежды, вся будущность, вся жизнь'.⁴⁵ Therefore, Aksakov's *Semeinaia khronika* represents selfhood as connection with and love for others, which can result in depression when removed. However, Sof'ia's depression also suggests, as with Gan's Ol'ga, that whether it be familial or religious, a pure love connection is the key to selfhood.

6.2 The superfluous depressive: 1850s: Goncharov

In contrast to Aksakov's Sof'ia, who is depicted as developing a sense of self through new and strengthened relationships, Goncharov's *Oblomov* focuses on a figure who is increasingly alienated throughout his life. The reader meets Il'ia Oblomov as a depressed, isolated character, whose main 'relationship' is with his servant. In keeping with the symptoms of depression, he has minimal desire to interact with others and a lack of interest in life. Oblomov is frequently cast among Russian literature's superfluous men, an idea first argued by Nikolai Dobroliubov. In his 1859 essay 'Chto takoe 'Oblomovshchina?' Dobroliubov states '[в] чём заключается главные черты обломовского характера? В совершенной инертности, происходящей от его апатии ко всему, что делается на свете. Причина же апатии заключается отчасти в его внешнем положении, отчасти же в

⁴⁴ Katherine Bowers, 'The Fall of the House: Gothic Narrative and the Decline of the Russian Family', in *Russian Writers and the Fin de Siècle: The Twilight of Realism*, ed. Katherine Bowers, Ani Kokobobo (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 145–161 (p. 147).

⁴⁵ Aksakov, *Semeinaia khronika*, pp. 214–215.

образе его умственного и нравственного развития'.⁴⁶ Coming from an anti-elitist viewpoint Dobroliubov argues that Oblomov finds no meaning in his life due not to his own fault, but to his upbringing, a glimpse of which the reader sees in his famous dream. This, Dobroliubov states, is *Oblomovshchina* - a 'disease' that effects the upper classes of society, leaving them with no care for life and no moral autonomy; they will only do what is necessary.⁴⁷ However, Goncharov himself insisted that the work explores human nature, and not Russian society at the time of writing.⁴⁸

I would argue that Oblomov is strictly neither a superfluous man nor a depressive, but has characteristics spanning both types. As Chances states:

the whole of *Oblomov* seems to be superfluity in reverse. Herzen's Belov, Turgenev's Rudin and Bazarov, and Griboedov's Chatsky do not fit into society because of their novel ideas. Here, in Goncharov's book, Oblomov is almost a parody of such superfluous heroes.⁴⁹

He embodies the qualities and standing of the superfluous man, but contradicts the energy and personality of other examples in almost every aspect. This can be seen in contrast to '[t]he hero of Pushkin's masterpiece *Eugene Onegin* [...] [who] has long been regarded as one of the earliest representatives of the superfluous man', since 'he rushes around the city "comme il faut"' but Oblomov 'is not really a part of that society [...]. His reaction to this lifestyle is a yawn of boredom'.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Nikolai Dobroliubov, 'Chto takoe Oblomovshchina?', in *Sobranie sochinenii v devyati tomakh*, 9 vols (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1962), IX, pp. 307–343 (p. 314).

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 314.

⁴⁸ Leon Stilman, 'Oblomovka Revisited', *American Slavic and East European Review*, 7.1 (1948), 45–77 (p. 57).

⁴⁹ Chances, *Conformity's Children*, p. 82.

⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 36–37.

Turgenev's Rudin also experiences this feeling of alienation in that he 'is always on his way somewhere – leaving, visiting, or moving. He has no place of his own'.⁵¹ Neither Onegin nor Rudin feels at home in society despite participating in social events and interacting with others. It is this that differentiates Oblomov most of all; he does not enter into social situations, despite numerous invitations to do so. This is an indication of the depressive qualities that separate him from 'typical' superfluous men.

However, François de Labriolle states that:

Oblomov n'est pas vraiment un paresseux, il s'intéresse à beaucoup de choses, il a des idées personnelles, il voudrait agir, être heureux, faire le bien autour de lui, mais il ne peut réussir à traduire dans les faits ses désirs, imprécis et parfois contradictoires.⁵²

These desires to act reveal that Oblomov is not simply 'bored' with life, like the superfluous man, and hint at his depressive qualities. He desires to see no one and to do nothing, but there is no sense of any existential boredom. It is his inability to accept his depression that constantly results in unmet desires, as he cannot reconcile his idea of himself as an upper-class man with his incapability to do anything. As a result:

[d]ans ses relations avec autrui, Oblomov oscille entre deux attitudes en apparence contradictoires mais qui naissent d'une même source, l'incapacité angoissante de se voir tel qu'il est vraiment. [...] Cette oscillation constante lui fait perdre tout sens de sa personnalité propre.⁵³

While superfluous men such as Rudin and Onegin are equally incapable of meaningful actions, they are depicted as participating in society and interacting with others, leading a life of leisure. By contrast, Oblomov's inability to act, and to form relationships for

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 66.

⁵² François De Labriolle, 'Oblomov n'est-il qu'un paresseux?', *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique*, 10.1 (1969), 38–51 (p. 41).

⁵³ Ibid., p. 42.

most of his life, confines him to his apartment. He is not leading the social life of the superfluous man, but the reclusive life of a depressive. The vast majority of Oblomov's time is spent with his serf, which, in its very nature, is not a natural relationship but a forced one. It is out of necessity that Zakhar interacts with Oblomov.

At this point it is clear that Oblomov's depression and alienation stop him from interacting with society, but the reader is not informed when or why this depression appeared. John Givens states that 'Oblomov is quite immune to the idea of personal advancement, finding the idea of competing with others for coveted titles to be antithetical to his sense of self and the "natural order" of life on his childhood estate'.⁵⁴ Here Goncharov permits us an insight into Oblomov's childhood via a dream, which Milton Ehre and Dobroliubov argue is the key point at which his personality is explored.⁵⁵

The reader meets a child from a wealthy family, whose mother insists on his inertness. He is not even allowed to dress himself and relies on servants – a habit that follows him into later life. This, it turns out, is the key to his depression. His passivity is a habit formed in childhood, and thus the dream 'découvre dans le passé les causes du présent et se propose de nous donner la clef d'une personnalité'.⁵⁶ His depression also began in childhood as '[к]ак только он проснется в понедельник, на него уж нападает тоска'.⁵⁷ The reader sees in this 'the story of a process of self-marginalization that, originally intended as a mechanism for self-protection, progressively gets out of control and becomes self-

⁵⁴ John Givens, 'Goncharov's *Oblomov*', *Russian Studies in Literature*, 49.4 (2013), 3–7 (p. 5).

⁵⁵ Milton Ehre, *Oblomov and his Creator: The Life and Art of Ivan Goncharov* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1973), pp. 167–168.

⁵⁶ Jean Blot, *Ivan Gontcharov: Ou, le réalisme impossible* (Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme, 1986), p. 118.

⁵⁷ Ivan Goncharov, *Oblomov*, in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem v dvadtsati tomakh*, 20 vols (St Petersburg: Nauka, 1998), IV, p. 137.

destructive'.⁵⁸ Thus, Oblomov's self is restricted from birth by his mother, which later becomes a self-enforced idleness. His overly-protective mother can be compared to Aksakov's Sof'ia. Like Oblomov's mother, Sof'ia dotes on her first child, wishing to give them the best and most caring life she possibly can. However, in Sof'ia's case this is because of the child's illness and fragility, whereas for Oblomov his mother's care *creates* an unhealthy child, forced to rely entirely on servants.

Carlo Testa argues that '[t]here was one specific philosopher in whose theories Shtol'ts's and Oblomov's – and Goncharov's – generation was steeped, who had radically criticized the fragmentation of man as incompatible with any form of modern humanism: Friedrich Schiller'.⁵⁹ Testa is referring to Schiller's *On the Aesthetic Education of Man* (1794), in which the German Idealist philosopher proposes a Kantian framework for questioning morality and the nature of the human being. Leading on from Kant's *Critique of Judgement* (1790), Schiller aims to educate mankind, with aesthetics, to become a moral individual, by starting with the beautiful itself, rather than a subjective reaction to the beautiful.⁶⁰ Schiller states that there are three impulses: form, sense, and play. The sensuous impulse places the human being psychically in the world, whereas the form impulse maintains identity over time.⁶¹ When these two impulses work in harmony with one another, Schiller argues, then the play impulse will arise, leading mankind to moral freedom and a fulfilled sense of identity.⁶² It is in reference to these *Letters* that Testa emphasises the selfhood of Oblomov:

⁵⁸ Carlo Testa, 'Goncharov's *Oblomov*: Fragmentation, Self-marginalization, Cockroaches', *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*, 28.4 (1994), 399–418 (p. 409).

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 400–401.

⁶⁰ Zvi Tauber, 'Aesthetic Education for Morality: Schiller and Kant', *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 40.3 (2006), 22–47 (p. 34).

⁶¹ Friedrich Schiller, *The Aesthetic Letters, Essays, and the Philosophical Letters of Schiller*, trans. John Weiss (Boston, MA: C. C. Little and J. Brown, 1845), p. 53, p. 55.

⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 65–66.

[w]e reach here the core of Oblomov's self-marginalizing strategy. To use the terminology articulated by Schiller in his twenty-first *Letter*, Il'ia Il'ich embodies not the 'fulfilled infinity' [...] of aesthetic freedom-from-constraint, but rather the 'empty infinity' [...] of lack-of-determination through absence.⁶³

In addition to Schiller's three impulses, he defines two conditions: empty infinity and fulfilled infinity. Empty infinity presents mankind with infinite impressions, leaving him as indeterminable, but if limits are imposed, producing a reality that mankind can rationally make sense of, he reaches the condition of fulfilled infinity in which he can conceive of himself as a person. This limit is set by a human being's rationality over the form and sensuous impulses, producing a free individual.⁶⁴

Oblomov certainly exhibits form and sensuous impulses, recognising himself as the same physical being over time, but the play drive relies on the harmonious working of both the form and the sensuous. This is not the case for Oblomov. His form impulse is overpowering, rendering him without limitations – empty infinity – and removing him from the finite concept of time. As Christine Borowec argues, time in *Oblomov* is cyclical, not linear, fuelling Oblomov's form impulse.⁶⁵ Oblomov remains the same child as in his dream, and does not progress in terms of selfhood; he is not shaped by his life and as such is indeterminate as a person. Therefore, analysis through the prism of Schiller's conception of personhood suggests that due to his upbringing, Oblomov was never capable of developing into an individual self, being limited by his lack of aesthetic education and moral development. He cannot form relationships with others as they, assumedly, have developed

⁶³ Testa, 'Goncharov's *Oblomov*', p. 409.

⁶⁴ William F. Wertz Jr., 'A Reader's Guide to *Letters on the Aesthetical*', *Fidelio*, 14.1-2 (2005), 80–104 (pp. 98–99).

⁶⁵ Christine Borowec, 'Time after Time: The Temporal Ideology of Oblomov', *The Slavic and East European Journal*, 38.4 (1994), 561–573 (p. 563).

into a ‘fulfilled infinity’, rendering him a depressive with no means to remove himself from this state.

The character Shtol'ts, Oblomov's friend who desperately tries to convince him to leave his apartment and interact with others, acts as Oblomov's opposite, emphasising the ideal that he cannot obtain – a functioning self in society, who forms meaningful relationships with others. This reveals Shtol'ts play impulse, since he grounds himself in linear time and accepts change. Even having formed a relationship with Ol'ga, thanks to the introduction from Shtol'ts, Oblomov is not able to make it last. No real connection is made between the pair, and Ol'ga soon abandons the relationship, and, with it, the rehabilitation of Oblomov. Thus '[t]he problem of “others” for Oblomov really comes to the fore in his relationship with Olga. Through her he attempts to appropriate the values of “the other”'.⁶⁶ Shtol'ts' love for Ol'ga only further emphasises the connection between Oblomov's depression and alienation; Shtol'ts was able to establish *philia* with Ol'ga, whereas Oblomov was never able to forge any loving connection. Shtol'ts and Ol'ga form a meaningful relationship, living with love for one another: ‘два существования, ее и Андрея, слились в одно русло’, whereas Oblomov's relationship, formed out of necessity rather than love, does not remove him from his depressive state, but panders to it: ‘[е]го окружали теперь такие простые, добрые, любящие лица, которые все согласились своим существованием подпереть его жизнь, помогать ему не замечать ее, не чувствовать’.⁶⁷

Oblomov's inability, throughout the majority of the novel, to form meaningful, loving relationships, prevents him from escaping his depression. His selfhood is grounded in his alienation, due to his lack of play drive, and is thus incomplete as he has a small number of relationships, but none of which are based on reciprocal love. Even the conclusion of the

⁶⁶ Richard Peace, *Oblomov: A critical examination of Goncharov's Novel* (Birmingham: Department of Russian Language and Literature, University of Birmingham, 1991), p. 37.

⁶⁷ Goncharov, *Oblomov*, IV, p. 452, p. 472.

work, in which Oblomov is represented as content in his marriage to his landlady, Agaf'ia, does not present us with an overwhelmingly loving relationship, but something more similar to kinship. However, this formation of a true relationship with another (Agaf'ia) allows Oblomov to continue in his inert manner but lessens the depressive, reclusive habits that he once held. He is still limited by his upbringing, in that he must rely on others, but the fact that this relationship is not forced allows him to be content rather than depressive. This eventually results in Oblomov's death: '[к]ак зорко ни сторожило каждое мгновение его жизни любящее око жены, но вечный покой, вечная тишина и ленивое переползание изо дня в день тихо остановили машину жизни'.⁶⁸ Reading through the prism of Schiller's *Letters* sheds light on the extent to which his upbringing shaped his selfhood; he was never able to progress into a fully-formed self, who is capable of interacting in the socially accepted normal way with others. It is only his useful relationship with Agaf'ia that allows him to escape his depression by finally forming a real bond with another, confirming his limited selfhood.

6.3 Tolstoy's conversion: 1860s-1880s: Tolstoi

The works considered above represent the trope of depression as a lack of genuine relationships with anyone, whereas in Tolstoi the other is generally represented in the form of a spouse. But the addition of a love for God is also needed in order to complete identity. Part three will continue its analysis of the role of the other and love, in relation to the depiction of depression in Tolstoy's *Voina i mir*, *Anna Karenina*, 'Smert' Ivana Il'icha', and *Kreitserova sonata* (1889). The time period that these works span allows the reader to see the progression of Tolstoi's ideas surrounding marriage, adultery, and religious faith and their connection to depressive characters. As with Aksakov's Sof'ia Nikolaevna, the reader follows Natasha

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 485.

Rostova in *Voyna i mir* as she matures from childhood to motherhood. However, unlike Aksakov's, Tolstoi's novel focuses more on the idea of historical progression than on the family per se, meaning that Natasha is a figure primarily placed in the larger context of history. Donna Tussing Orwin states that:

[h]istoricism, invented by Hegel, holds that 'everything historical is rational,' and that therefore the only absolute good is progress. To this Tolstoy responded that the only real law of progress is that of the potential for perfection that resides in each individual soul.⁶⁹

Tolstoi objected to Hegel's historicism, arguing it removed the moral autonomy of the individual, in favour of moral relativism, downplaying the role of the individual. Even before his conversion, Tolstoi believed that morality cannot be relative but that it is a universal truth by which everyone must abide. In addition, Tolstoi opposed Hegel regarding individualism. Whereas Hegel championed the existence of the individual within the social sphere, Tolstoi argued against individualism, stating a human being must join himself with another in order to live a 'true life'.⁷⁰

Of all the characters in *Voyna i mir*, Natasha Rostova's need for love marks her as different, continually focusing on potential suitors. Natasha's first ball – her entrance into society – is represented as a key moment in the development of her identity. She neglects her own preparations while helping her female relatives, indicating an ability to act for the other, but at the ball itself Natasha becomes entirely self-absorbed. This indicates that there is more than one dimension to Natasha's love, as well as her ability to love the other over herself, which becomes explicit later on in the text. As Wasiolek states, 'nothing characterizes

⁶⁹ Donna Tussing Orwin, *Tolstoy's Art and Thought, 1847-1880* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 101.

⁷⁰ Dana Villa, 'Hegel, Tocqueville, and "Individualism"', *The Review of Politics*, 67.4 (2005), 659–686 (p. 661). Walicki, *A History of Russian Thought*, p. 333.

Natasha more at the ball [...] than an intense and consuming absorption in her self'.⁷¹ Suddenly, she forgets everything else, questioning why people are not dancing with her, talking to her, looking at her. She becomes narcissistic: 'Natacha est *si heureuse* parce qu'elle est possédée par le plus profond narcissisme qui ait jamais retenti dans les pages d'un roman ou d'un journal de Tolstoi'.⁷² It is clear from the beginning that Natasha's selfhood is grounded in love. She *needs* to be loved and she revels in it; she is close to her mother and besotted with the idea of becoming someone's wife. This form of selfhood, like that of Gan's Ol'ga, can also be illuminated by Brümmer's conception as 'both our identity and our value as persons is constituted by our relations of fellowship with others, we *need* to participate in such relationships. As persons we therefore *necessarily* long both to love and to be loved'.⁷³ Natasha desires to be loved by everyone, by her mother, by Boris, by everyone at the ball.

Whereas Tolstoi leads us to the conclusion that love is an integral part of human nature in *Voina i mir*, *Anna Karenina* begins with this premise and sees the onset of depression the further removed Anna becomes from this love. The very opening sentence of the work that '[в]се счастливые семьи похожи друг на друга, каждая несчастливая семья несчастлива по-своему' becomes the key to understanding the novel as '[t]his seemingly axiomatic statement implies that there is only one form of happiness: the family'.⁷⁴ The novel features two depressive characters: Anna and Levin. Levin is a bachelor, while Anna begins the work as both wife and mother. However, there is no love between husband and wife, as is shown by the fact that Anna was strategically married to Karenin by her aunt, as well as

⁷¹ Edward Wasiolek, *Tolstoy's Major Fiction* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1978), p. 103.

⁷² Pietro Citati, *Tolstoi*, trans. Jacques Barberi (Paris: Denoël, 1987), p. 137.

⁷³ Brümmer, *Model of Love*, p. 235.

⁷⁴ Lev Tolstoi, *Anna Karenina*, in *Sobranie sochinenii v chetyrnadtsati tomakh*, 14 vols (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1952), VIII, p. 5. Harriet Murav, 'Law as Limit and the Limits of the Law in *Anna Karenina*', in *Approaches to Teaching Tolstoy's Anna Karenina*, ed. Liza Knapp, Amy Mandelker (New York, NY: Modern Language Association of America, 2003), pp. 74–82 (p. 74).

Dolly's observation: '[п]равда, сколько она могла запомнить свое впечатление в Петербурге у Карениных, ей не нравился самый дом их; что-то было фальшивое во всем складе их семейного быта'.⁷⁵ As Pozdnyshv states, in Tolstoi's later work *Kreitserova sonata*, which David Herman argues continues where *Anna Karenina* ended, 'брак без любви не есть брак, что только любовь освящает брак и что брак истинный только тот, который освящает любовь'.⁷⁶ Anna longs for love, for *eros*. Even from the beginning of the work, she is not happy, but she is not depressed. She longs for individuality, for passion, and a chance encounter with Count Vronskii gives her the opportunity to pursue this passionate love. Amy Mandelker states that:

for Anna Karenina, a victim of the oppression and dependent status of women in the nineteenth century, the pursuit of passionate love is the only action available that will liberate her from social constraints and place the life of the individual spirit above the life of the social body.⁷⁷

This view is also advanced in *Kreitserova sonata* during the discussion of women's rights and the fact that women are not typically permitted to choose their husbands. Thus they may turn to using their sexuality as a way to create *eros*, since society pressures women to favour motherhood over virginity.⁷⁸ However, as Tolstoi has already informed us of the importance of the family unit in *Anna Karenina*'s opening line, it becomes clear that '[I]e flirt d'Anna

⁷⁵ Tolstoi, *Anna Karenina*, VIII, p. 74.

⁷⁶ David Herman, 'Stricken by Infection: Art and Adultery in *Anna Karenina* and *Kreutzer Sonata*', *Slavic Review*, 56.1 (1997), 15–36 (p. 28). Lev Tolstoi, *Kreitserova sonata*, in *Sobranie sochinenii v chetyrnadtsati tomakh*, 14 vols (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1953), XII, pp. 5–78 (p. 10).

⁷⁷ Amy Mandelker, *Framing Anna Karenina: Tolstoy, the Woman Question, and the Victorian Novel* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1993), p. 162.

⁷⁸ Dorothy Green, 'The *Kreutzer Sonata*: Tolstoy and Beethoven', in *Tolstoy's Short Fiction: Revised Translations, Backgrounds and Sources, Criticism*, ed. Michael R. Katz (London: Norton, 1991), pp. 436–448 (p. 440).

avec Vronskii est un flirt avec l'abîme et le diable'.⁷⁹ Whereas Gan's Ol'ga was able to escape this repressed female role by attaining *agape*, Anna searches for it in *eros*. This is a fatal error, since '[п]оловая страсть, как бы она ни была обставлена, есть зло, страшное зло, с которым надо бороться'.⁸⁰ However, Paul Call argues that Anna's social defiance is the point at which she 'was no longer a mere social expression. She was a distinct human individual'.⁸¹ She chooses love over society, confirming her self as love-based (*eros*).

Tolstoi makes clear his disdain for Anna's rejection of family in favour of *eros*, depicting her as increasingly depressive and narcissistic the more distanced she becomes from his ideal. Anna believes her *eros* to be a pure love, refusing to accept *philia* through Vronskii's marriage proposal. As Morson argues, Anna is an extreme – all love – which, for Tolstoi, is not compatible with human nature.⁸² By being 'all love' Anna can never be satisfied, meaning that she will always require more love than she can receive and Vronskii will never be enough. Tolstoi's strong beliefs pertaining to sexual love and the family meant that he 'sees sex as a massive intrusion on a person's being and a ruthless obliteration of the sanctity of personhood. Both Anna and Vronsky feel coerced and manipulated by the other'.⁸³ Thus, not only does Anna twice abandon a family, she also embodies sexual love, with the result that, according to Tolstoi's philosophy, there can be only one road for her: destruction. This destruction manifests itself in her depression which becomes so extreme that it eventually leads her to suicide. Maria Kunz discusses the implications of this for Anna's selfhood:

⁷⁹ François Cornillot, 'Anna Karénine: Le diptyque du Ciel et de l'Enfer', *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique*, 23.3-4 (1982), 391–404 (pp. 398–399).

⁸⁰ Tolstoi, *Kreitserova sonata*, pp. 29–30.

⁸¹ Paul Call, 'Anna Karenina's Crime and Punishment. The Impact of Historical Theory Upon the Russian Novel', *Mosaic*, 1.1 (1967), 94–102 (p. 98).

⁸² Gary Saul Morson, *Anna Karenina in Our Time: Seeing More Wisely* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), p. 119.

⁸³ Wasiolek, *Tolstoy's Major Fiction*, p. 154.

Tolstoï a écrit ce roman dans une période marquée par des doutes spirituels. Il considérait la passion sexuelle de plus en plus menaçante et menant directement à la mort. Il voulait prouver par cette histoire que l'amour-passion et l'égoïsme sont inséparables.⁸⁴

These consequences soon become apparent after the birth of Annie, Anna and Vronskii's daughter. Anna, delirious post-childbirth and convinced her death is imminent, begs Karenin to forgive her by implying that it is a double that caused all the pain: '[я] все та же... Но во мне есть другая, я ее боюсь - она полюбила того, и я хотела возненавидеть тебя и не могла забыть про то, которая была прежде. Та не я'.⁸⁵

From this point on, split between two men and two children, Anna is depicted as increasingly distanced from her self, as highlighted by the incident in which she does not recognise herself in the mirror: '«[к]то это?» - думала она, глядя в зеркало на воспаленное лицо со странно блестящими глазами, испуганно смотревшими на нее'.⁸⁶ Her loss of self paradoxically makes Anna increasingly narcissistic; she continuously attempts to find herself in others as her alienation from them, particularly Vronskii, grows. Her erratic behaviour distances him, leaving her to fall deeper into depression. Morson indicates Tolstoi's emphasis on Anna's narcissism with reference to the fact that:

[h]er servant is Annushka, her daughter is Annie, and when she takes an English girl under her protection, we learn that the girl's name is – Hannah: everywhere around Anna we find Anna. Tolstoy could hardly signal her narcissism more clearly.⁸⁷

However, not only do these 'doubles' indicate her narcissism, they also represent her loss of self; she no longer understands herself as a single unity. She is no longer a mother, a wife, or

⁸⁴ Maria Judith Kunz, *La tragédie de la femme d'après G. Flaubert et L. Tolstoï: 'Madame Bovary' et 'Anna Karenine'*, Thesis (MA), McGill University Montreal, 1984, p. 71.

⁸⁵ Tolstoï, *Anna Karenina*, VIII, p. 437.

⁸⁶ Tolstoï, *Anna Karenina*, IX, p. 339.

⁸⁷ Morson, *Seeing More Wisely*, p. 66.

a lover. She is a loveless figure. As Anne Ellen Hruska states, ‘Anna begins to construct barriers not only between herself and others, but even within herself, becoming estranged from herself and splitting herself into several personalities living in disharmony with each other’.⁸⁸ Consequently, Anna subsumes those around her into her narcissistic identity.

Regarding the fragmentation of the human personality, the philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer’s 1818 work *The World as Will and Representation* becomes a relevant source, not least because of Schopenhauer’s influence on Tolstói’s philosophy more generally. He states that our principle of sufficient reason fragments the world of will, that is, the world as it appears to us. This, however, can be pushed too far to the extent that every individual thing struggles against everything else, particularly us as human beings, and that the more fragmented an individual is the more suffering they incur. This is certainly true for Anna; although unhappy with Karenin she understands herself as his wife and mother to Serezha, with Vronskii as a lover, but the birth of Annie pulls her in two directions. She is essentially wife and mother in two different households thus fragmenting her self and causing her suffering.

The World as Will and Representation was written in opposition to Kant’s metaphysics to argue that through the will it is possible to know the representation – Kant’s ‘thing-in-itself’ – since it is a different way of looking at the representation in the same reality, allowing us an understanding of the external world, by removing the need for Kant’s cause-and-effect knowledge.⁸⁹ Schopenhauer argues against Kant’s twelve categories of understanding, stating that there is only causality, which, when placed alongside time and space, allows for all human experience.⁹⁰ This is his principle of sufficient reason.

⁸⁸ Anne Ellen Hruska, *Infected Families: Belonging and Exclusion in the Works of Leo Tolstoy*, Thesis (PhD), University of California, Berkeley, 2001, p. 163.

⁸⁹ Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, ed. and trans. Christopher Janaway, et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 55.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

Schopenhauer argues that pleasure, like suffering, should be taken at face value in order to maintain harmony within the self and avoid further fragmentation.⁹¹ It is this point in particular that illuminates Tolstoi's depiction of Anna; she follows her bodily desires and becomes fragmented, leading to her depression and loss of self.

After the birth of Annie, Anna does not attach herself to another, or even to love; she refuses to return to Karenin and her son, and becomes increasingly disillusioned with Vronskii and Annie. Despite her waning love for Vronskii, her possessiveness of him increases in a desperate bid to belong; she demands unconditional love and attention despite her inability to reciprocate. Thus, any attempt to enjoy himself without her 'произвела неожиданное и несоответствующее [...] уныние в Анне'.⁹² This depressive spiral eventually leads Anna to suicide; 'Tolstoy has taken [...] Schopenhauer's point about the irrational and hence fundamentally evil nature of human individuals and made it part of a budding theology'.⁹³

Throughout his life Tolstoi underwent a slow conversion to his own form of Christianity, eventually in 1878 resolving to write moral works.⁹⁴ Later works by Tolstoi indicate the extent to which he champions love as essential to human life, including familial and religious love. For example, in *Ispoved'* (1882) Tolstoi proclaims that '[б]ез веры нельзя жить' and 'стоит мне знать о боге, и я живу; стоит забыть, не верить в него, и я умираю'.⁹⁵ Although Anna's selfhood is entwined with the concept of love, according to Tolstoi's philosophy, it is the wrong type of love. Her sexual love, *eros*, for Vronskii and inability to pursue familial or religious love causes her deconstruction as a unified, sane self.

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 381.

⁹² Tolstoi, *Anna Karenina*, IX, p. 35.

⁹³ Orwin, *Tolstoy's Art and Thought*, p. 178.

⁹⁴ Hamburg, 'Tolstoy's Spirituality', pp. 138–139.

⁹⁵ Lev Tolstoi, *Ispoved'*, in *Sobranie sochinenii v dvadtsati tomakh*, 20 vols (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1964), XVI, pp. 90–159 (p. 133, p.144).

In addition to Tolstoy's philosophy of sex and the self, the influence of Schopenhauer's views on women is also apparent. Sydney Schultze affirms this connection in that 'although her character was later modified, Anna was originally portrayed as a Schopenhauerian woman, ugly and morally inferior to the two good men she attracts and marries'.⁹⁶ Schopenhauer's conception of women, however, was not removed from the work as the juxtaposition of Anna and Levin's wife, Kitty, demonstrates. Schopenhauer's conception of women complements Tolstoy's philosophy and his ideal of family life and love within that.⁹⁷ Thus,

[t]he ideal depends on a conception of woman as a creature suited to being happy [...] bearing and raising children, tending home and hearth, appearing when needed and disappearing when in the way. Thus Tolstoy cannot afford to understand women in the way he understands men, to confront them as independent beings; his conception of the 'nature' of women is dictated by need.⁹⁸

Schopenhauer's philosophy shows the will to live for the species and hence that Tolstoy's family is essential to life, as it allows for the continuation of the species, provided that women follow the role of caregiver.⁹⁹

Tolstoy's connection between depression and lack of family that can be found in Anna is also highlighted by her opposite: Kitty. A single young girl on the verge of marriage proposals, Kitty has yet to establish herself in a loving family of her own. Much like Natasha in *War and Peace*, Kitty's selfhood is based on love, and the lack of reciprocation from Vronskii, due to Anna's appearance, causes her depression. Kitty, however, is inherently tied to the idea of marriage, and in finding a partner in Levin, her love is reciprocated. Unlike in false

⁹⁶ Sydney Schultze, *The Structure of 'Anna Karenina'* (Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1982), p. 79.

⁹⁷ Hugh McLean, *In Quest of Tolstoy* (Boston, MA: Academic Studies Press, 2008), p. 108.

⁹⁸ Gayle Greene, 'Women, Character, and Society in Tolstoy's "Anna Karenina"', *Frontiers*, 2.1 (1977), 106–125 (p. 113).

⁹⁹ Schultze, *'Anna Karenina'*, p. 78.

marriages, such as that of Karenin and Anna, Kitty and Levin become one – they truly love each other and find peace in their marriage. In a sharp divergence from the calls for equality represented by the woman question, Kitty becomes the ideal woman as she finds contentment in marriage and motherhood because ‘women exist solely for the propagation of the race and find in this their entire vocation, [...] and in their hearts take the affairs of the species more seriously than they do those of the individual’.¹⁰⁰ The male literary depiction of women as either angelic or demonic again rears its head here, with Tolstoi ascribing the two women – Anna and Kitty – these polarising roles as a consequence of non-adherence or adherence to his personal views, marking Anna’s struggle for self-definition in strong contrast to that of Gan’s Ol’ga.

Not only does Tolstoi oppose Anna to Kitty, but also to Levin. Tolstoi claimed that his book was based on ‘inner links’ and Catherine Brown states that with the couples Anna and Vronskii and Levin and Kitty ‘[t]he reader [...] is impelled to compare them precisely in order to connect them at the level of meaning, and to give substance to the term “inner link”’.¹⁰¹ Levin initially struggles with the idea of death and how to live, and poses questions ‘о значении жизни и смерти для себя самого, которые в последнее время чаще и чаще приходили ему на ум’.¹⁰² He grapples with this concept for the vast majority of the novel, attempting to figure out the meaning of life. Hruska informs us that:

[b]oth Levin and Anna strive to find ways to belong to their loved ones, to the social world, and to themselves. And the conflicting needs, as well as underlying possibilities, of these three different ways of belonging, are never truly reconcilable.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Arthur Schopenhauer, ‘On Women’, in *Essays and Aphorisms*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (London: Penguin Classics, 2004), pp. 80–89 (p. 85).

¹⁰¹ Catherine Brown, ‘Scapegoating, Double-plotting, and the Justice of *Anna Karenina*’, *The Modern Language Review*, 106.1 (2011), 179–194 (p. 186).

¹⁰² Tolstoi, *Anna Karenina*, VIII, p. 30.

¹⁰³ Hruska, *Infected Families*, p. 150.

Anna, however, due to her ever-growing narcissism, begins to attempt only to belong to herself, thus removing any relationship that may have saved her, whereas Levin eventually comes to the Tolstoian conclusion that to belong to another *is* to belong to oneself: for Tolstoi, selfhood is constituted by love for another. It is through his connection to the peasants and their way of life that he realises that living in society is not an essential part of human nature, but rather that it clouds the true meaning of life: faith. Levin finds love not only in the family, but also in religion.

Whereas ‘Anna remains the self-absorbed personality wishing the greatest possible fullness of life for herself, [...] Levin becomes a true Christian who discovers his divine self’.¹⁰⁴ Levin reflects Tolstoi’s own religious conversion, coming to the conclusion that once the finality of death is comprehended, and love for God is found, one can find happiness.¹⁰⁵ Thus, Levin’s self portrays Tolstoi’s ideal in that he obtains both familial and divine love: ‘[п]ервое время после того, как он соединился с нею и надел штатское платье, он почувствовал всю прелесть свободы вообще, которой он не знал прежде, и свободы любви’.¹⁰⁶ His selfhood is grounded in a religious understanding of the world and familial love, ultimately removing him from his depression. In *Anna Karenina*, as alluded to by the very first sentence of the novel, love is integral to human life. Whether it be in the form of the family or a relationship with God, love is the cornerstone of the work that drives Anna to suicide and spares Kitty and Levin the same fate.

In contrast, in *Voyna i mir* Natasha is depicted seeking her own value in others.¹⁰⁷ Instead of finding happiness in religion, Natasha continues to seek happiness through

¹⁰⁴ Gary Adelman, *Anna Karenina: The Bitterness of Ecstasy* (Boston, MA: Twayne Publishers, 1990), p. 140.

¹⁰⁵ Frederic Schick, *Ambiguity and Logic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 120.

¹⁰⁶ Tolstoi, *Anna Karenina*, IX, p. 35.

¹⁰⁷ Brümmer, *Model of Love*, p. 237.

romantic love, not *eros*, from potential suitors. However, a lack of reciprocation, due to her *need* for love, means that her relationship with Andrei is soon overtaken by yet another romantic relationship – her affair with Anatole. Her need for romantic love is so strong that, like Anna, she is prepared to ignore all social proprieties and her family. The deception involved in this relationship, with Anatole already being married, is similar to Gan's Ol'ga and Anatolii, in that Natasha is so desperate for love that she is prepared to forgo the truth to permit herself the idea of a relationship. However, as in Gan's story, this deception is soon uncovered and the knowledge of the lie, coupled with the destruction of this relationship, causes Natasha to fall into a depressive state. The once joyful, vivacious Natasha, now without a romantic relationship, ceases to have a reason to live, and attempts to take her own life. Although she slowly starts to recover, this lack of love still renders her depressed:

‘Наташа была спокойнее, но не веселее. [...] Как только начинала она смеяться или пробовала одна сама с собой петь, слезы душили ее: [...] слезы досады, что так, задаром, погубила она свою молодую жизнь, которая могла бы быть так счастлива’.¹⁰⁸ Tolstoi implies that doctors satisfy her psychological need for love – ‘они удовлетворяли той вечной, человеческой - в ребенке заметной в самой первобытной форме - потребности потерять то место, которое ушиблено’.¹⁰⁹ She is no longer a narcissistic self and begins to find peace of mind in faith, a feat that Anna cannot manage. As with Gan's Ol'ga and Aksakov's Sof'ia, Natasha, if only for a short while, overcomes her depression through religious love: ‘Наташа [...] вернулась от причастия, она в первый раз после многих месяцев почувствовала себя спокойною и не тяготящеюся жизнью, которая ей предстояла’.¹¹⁰ Natasha has now found Brümmer's higher conception of identity, moving

¹⁰⁸ Lev Tolstoi, *Voina i mir*, in *Sobranie sochinenii v chetyrnadtsati tomakh*, 14 vols (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literaury, 1951), VI, p. 72.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

from love for another to love for God. Yet she is still only a fragment of her earlier self; she may no longer be suicidal, but she is by no means not depressed.

Natasha continues to alienate herself from her family and others, and this lack of love is emphasised by Pierre's reintroduction into her life:

[е]е нельзя было узнать в первую минуту, как он вошел, потому что на этом лице, в глазах которого прежде всегда светилась затаенная улыбка радости жизни, теперь, когда он вошел и в первый раз взглянул на нее, не было улыбки; были одни глаза, внимательные, добрые и печально-вопросительные.¹¹¹

The suggestion that Natasha is still depressed and no longer her former, loving self challenges Brümmer's argument that relationships between humans are a model for the ideal of a relationship with God, through which we cement our identity. Despite her newfound *agape*, Natasha is still depressed, and it is only the reintroduction of *philia* that may restore her sanity. Hugh McLean argues that Maria Bolkonskaia provides an ideal model for Natasha; Maria follows *agape* until she is ready to commit to a family and *philia*, thus never once allowing herself to engage in the kind of frivolities that lead to Natasha's loss of self.¹¹² However, Natasha could never follow the same path as Maria as she is frivolous by nature; she needs to arrive at this 'ideal' through experience, allowing her to build her character and discover her selfhood and rightful place. Therefore, the reconnection with Pierre slowly brings Natasha back to her old self – 'она была такою же, какою он знал ее почти ребенком и потом невестой Андрея'.¹¹³

The maturation and return to her sane self permits Natasha to eventually, and seriously, fall in love with Pierre. This time it is not a simple desire to be married that drives the relationship, but genuine love. The return to a sane self thus suggests that, in relation to

¹¹¹ Tolstoi, *Voina i mir*, VII, pp. 222–223.

¹¹² McLean, *In Quest of Tolstoy*, p. 115.

¹¹³ Tolstoi, *Voina i mir*, VII, p. 233.

Brümmer's conception, love in *any* pure form is the key to selfhood, not necessarily solely religious love. Natasha's selfhood is constructed and deconstructed based on her relationships with, and love for, others, not God. Like Aksakov's Sof'ia, she is comforted by religious love, but it is not enough to constitute her selfhood. Hence, it is in the epilogue that Tolstoi finally brings Natasha the peace that she sought from childhood in the form of a husband and children. This Natasha, the reader is told, is a different Natasha altogether, thus implying that the trivial problems and narcissism of her youth are long gone and replaced with contentment found in family life. This leads her away from her depressive state, marking her in contrast to Anna Karenina, who refuses to be bound to family. Ruth Crego Benson states that 'Tolstoy strips Natasha of her individuality and presses her into the familiar mold of demanding wife and concerned mother'.¹¹⁴ She is no longer her egoistic, narcissistic former self, but she is also not depressed as 'Pierre and Natasha have found all but absolute love and belonging. [...] There are no barriers between their souls; they seem almost to have blended selfhoods'.¹¹⁵ Whereas the previously fickle loves for Boris and Andrei caused Natasha to fall into depression due to the non-reciprocation of love, her connection with Pierre ensures that this will not again be the case. Their mutual, pure love, their *philia*, for one another cements Natasha's selfhood and her sanity.

Tolstoi's ideal of religious love taking precedence over any other form did not lose momentum in later works. 'Smert' Ivana Il'icha' was written after Tolstoi's conversion and is one of his stories that advances a message about the need for religious faith, which frames his portrayal of the self. As with Anna, the protagonist Ivan Il'ich is initially depicted as very much integrated into society: 'Ivan Ilych had split his own person into professional and

¹¹⁴ Ruth Crego Benson, *Women in Tolstoy: The Ideal and the Erotic* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1973), p. 72.

¹¹⁵ Hruska, *Infected Families*, p. 141.

personal parts, with the former being the dominant part'.¹¹⁶ Ivan Il'ich is very conscious of his standing in society and, at the expense of his family, continually pursues job opportunities in order to give himself 'такое же легкое и приятное положение'.¹¹⁷ Thus, he did not truly live for himself in terms of morality, but rather to create a good impression on others. His primary focus is I-for-another, not I-for-myself. As Steven Feldman highlights:

Ivan Ilych was socially adaptable. He pursued his pleasures and advantages but was careful to do so within the rules and customs of the power/status system. In other words, his pursuit of pleasure was only constrained to the extent that it maximised his longer term interests. He thus had no moral autonomy because his self-esteem was dependent on external approval.¹¹⁸

At first, Ivan Il'ich appears to be a character without morals, seeking only his own social climbing, as:

[h]e never accepted that he was just a man dependent on others, on culture, on life itself. Instead of seeing himself as a link in a chain, a chain of social existence and social memory, he thought he was the chain itself, a mere hedonistic knowledge of his own life. He cared little for everything outside his self, even his family.¹¹⁹

Yet Ivan Il'ich finds no fault in his life, believing himself to live a truly good life. Reading Lavrov's *Historical Letters* allows us to decode Ivan Il'ich's self. Lavrov's populist ideology, with its roots in socialist theory, rejected absolute historical determinism.¹²⁰ As such,

¹¹⁶ Steven Feldman, 'The Professional Conscience: A Psychoanalytic Study of Moral Character in Tolstoy's *The Death of Ivan Ilych*', *Journal of Business Ethics*, 49.4 (2004), 311–328 (p. 317).

¹¹⁷ Lev Tolstoy, 'Smert' Ivana Il'icha', in *Sobranie sochinenii v chetyrnadtsati tomakh*, 14 vols (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1952), X, pp. 269–322 (p. 278).

¹¹⁸ Feldman, 'The Professional Conscience', p. 314.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 320.

¹²⁰ Alan Kimball, 'The Russian Past and the Socialist Future in the Thought of Petr Lavrov', *Slavic Review*, 30.1 (1971), 28–44 (p. 32).

[h]e did not believe in the inevitability of progress. Social advance depended on human choice and human action, and the human being, Lavrov was convinced, could not choose and pursue social goals except with the idea of freedom. Social activism and belief in freedom were inseparable.¹²¹

Lavrov argues that the upper classes of society owe a debt to ‘the people’ which they could fulfil by realising social ideals and educating the classes. He states that in order to aid society the ‘critically-thinking individual’ is needed; this requires the physical, intellectual, and moral development of the individual as well as justice in social institutions.¹²² These letters were written, it is believed, in opposition to the nihilism of Dmitrii Pisarev, whose philosophy removed the need for morality in progress.¹²³ Moreover, Lavrov states that it is the study of history that is required to implement change, not natural sciences, as was the argument of the nihilists, embodied in Turgenev’s *Ottsy i deti*, since ‘[s]cience is a product of our personal and social life, whose laws are illuminated through the study of history’.¹²⁴

However, Lavrov’s critically-thinking individual consists of three parts: the physical, the intellectual, and the moral. Without all three an individual is effectively in the position of any member of the elite who does not self-consciously examine themselves and as a result become Lavrov’s critically-thinking individual. From the outset it is clear that Ivan Il’ich’s standing in society certainly fulfils the physical and intellectual criteria of Lavrov’s critically-thinking individual, but his lack of care for others, in particular the disadvantaged, renders him unable to fulfil the third criterion of moral conscience. Therefore, Ivan Il’ich is not the critically-thinking individual, who is a part of the privileged minority aiming to help the

¹²¹ Copleston, *Philosophy in Russia*, p. 130.

¹²² Petr Lavrov, *Istoricheskie pis'ma* (Geneva: Vol'naiia russkaia tipografiia, 1891), p. 58.

¹²³ Thomas Nemeth, ‘Russian Ethical Humanism: From Populism to Neo-Idealism’, in *A History of Russian Philosophy 1830-1930: Faith, Reason, and the Defense of Human Dignity*, ed. G. M. Hamburg, Randall A. Poole (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 90–110 (p. 96).

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

disadvantaged majority, but rather belongs to the minority aiding the minority. It is not that he actively decides not to help the less fortunate, but that his lack of social conscience impedes him from realising this duty as ‘в Правоведении уже он был тем, чем он был впоследствии всю свою жизнь: человеком способным, [...] но строго исполняющим то, что он считал своим долгом’.¹²⁵ He is not portrayed as a progressive man, but a puppet of those in higher positions.¹²⁶ Both Lavrov and Tolstoi see this lack of morality, despite the former’s secular, and the latter’s religious roots, as negative. Tolstoi’s story, in the context of its religious aims, views someone who acts only for himself, not God, as morally wrong. Thus, Lavrov’s theory highlights the importance of morality for personhood.

However, in the story Tolstoi destroys this egoistic life, and with it the self, of Ivan Il’ich. This egoistic self, grounded in society, is deconstructed rapidly by illness, causing an identity crisis. He comes to consider himself outside of his social standing and thus ‘Ivan’s regeneration is only made possible once he moves away from the company of his peers and family and out of the social circles which shape his identity’.¹²⁷ Tolstoi employs this break in self in order to allow Ivan Il’ich to question his existence and how he has lived his life, providing an opportunity to live morally. He begins to focus on his I-for-myself and his morality rather than how he is seen by another.

His illness ‘forces him to concentrate on his immediate self by rendering the comforting, distracting rituals of everyday life intolerable’ and ‘[н]равственные страдания его состояли в том, что в эту ночь, глядя на сонное, добродушное, скуластое лицо Герасима, ему вдруг пришло в голову: а что как и в самом деле вся моя жизнь,

¹²⁵ Tolstoi, ‘Smert’ Ivana Il’icha’, X, p. 277.

¹²⁶ Ibid., pp. 277–278.

¹²⁷ Stephen Pope, ‘Compassion and Self-Deception: The Unity of Love and Truthfulness in Leo Tolstoy’s *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*’, *The Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics*, 19 (1999), 115–129 (p. 122).

сознательная жизнь, было «не то»'.¹²⁸ Whereas the other characters I have considered in this chapter emerge from depression with the realisation of how to live, through love, Ivan Il'ich becomes so overwhelmed by the thought that he has not done so, and did not feel the need to do so, that he falls further into depression. Thus, '[э]то-то оправдание своей жизни цепляло и не пускало его вперед и больше всего мучало его'.¹²⁹ In gaining this moral conscience, Ivan Il'ich becomes depressed due to not having lived morally before.

As with Levin and Pierre in *Voyna i mir*, who come to realise that complete freedom does not entail happiness, Tolstoi uses the figure of the peasant, Gerasim, to portray Christian love and allow the depressed to come to terms with death. Much like Levin, Gary Jahn argues, Ivan Il'ich is led slowly to this conversion to love throughout the work.¹³⁰

Ivan Il'ich's turn to God fulfils Tolstoi's concept of morality; instead of acting solely for himself, his relationship with a divine other enables him to perform morally good actions. Although this Christian morality differs from Lavrov's secular morality, the fact that Ivan Il'ich becomes aware of life outside of his own self means that he gains a social and moral perspective, which would in turn allow him to fulfil Lavrov's third and final criteria of the critically-thinking individual. Although the reader never sees him exercise any such morality, or aid the disadvantaged minority, through his epiphany he gains the potential to become a critically-thinking individual.

Thus, Ivan Il'ich's former, depression-inducing self, based on social duties, is deconstructed by the realisation of the Christian way of life. As with Levin, Ivan Il'ich's reformation of self mirrors Tolstoi's own:

¹²⁸ David Danaher, 'A Cognitive Approach to Metaphor in Prose: Truth and Falsehood in Leo Tolstoy's "The Death of Ivan Il'ich"', *Poetics Today*, 24.3 (2003), 439–469 (p. 463). Lev Tolstoi, 'Smert' Ivana Il'icha', X, p. 318.

¹²⁹ Tolstoi, 'Smert' Ivana Il'icha', X, p. 320.

¹³⁰ Gary Jahn, 'The Role of the Ending in Lev Tolstoi's *The Death of Ivan Il'ich*', *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, 24.3 (1982), 229–238 (p. 237).

[t]he terminal point of Ivan Il'ich's crisis is thus the same as that of Tolstoi's: a recognition that, paradoxically, the self is at its most perfect when it is sublimated in union with all other selves. And indeed there are striking parallels between the whole course of the fictional character's crisis and that of his author, as attested in non-fictional texts such as *Confession (Ispoved')*, 1882).¹³¹

Hence, Ivan Il'ich's selfhood is initially presented as a society-based, semi-egoistic self, however, with the realisation that this is not the morally correct way to live, he falls into depression. As with Levin and Gan's Ol'ga, his identity culminates in a religious-love based self which helps him escape his depression. Reading Lavrov alongside 'Smert' Ivana Il'icha' enables us to see the role that society plays for a human being. It allows a false perception of the self, but also invokes the need for morality. A human being does not need to progress socially in order to improve himself and prove his character, but rather must progress morally. He must find pure love and accept that anything outside of this is superfluous and possibly detrimental to his self.

6.4 Conclusion

The depressed characters considered here are all depicted in contrast to a caring individual other. As in chapters three and five, depression highlights how one character can be viewed both as in and out of society, and the psychological effects of this. For example, depressed characters tend to remove themselves from society, becoming reclusive, but when they find a genuine connection to another they gravitate towards society. The same character is therefore both mad and sane, excluded and included. Their madness, and inability to connect with others through genuine love, leads them into depression, away from society.

¹³¹ David Shepherd, 'Conversion, Reversion and Subversion in Tolstoi's *The Death of Ivan Il'ich*', *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 71.3 (1993), 401–416 (p. 405).

This removal of I-for-another and the reflection back on the self only aids madness, as is particularly evident with Tolstoi's *Anna Karenina*.

The problem of relating only to oneself is that inward reflection and a lack of pure connection to another causes narcissism, expressed through the appearance of doubles, and potentially leads to suicide. For example, by contrasting Anna to Kitty, Tolstoi suggests the former is responsible for her own actions. Kitty serves as an example of how a pure self-other connection can draw the individual out of madness and back into society. The depressive characters show that, unlike in parts one and two, the individual does not need to reconcile themselves with the whole of society, but only needs to find solace in one other human being. When this appears unachievable, as with Gan's Ol'ga, the spiritual world is called upon. The divine constitutes a pure form of love in the absence of any such human connection.

Both the epileptics and depressed characters considered in part three demonstrate how a pure self-other relation is of paramount importance. Not only does this relationship affect how the mad character is understood – both by the other characters and the reader – but it also affects the madness itself. When the other becomes acquainted with the mad individual, instead of simply projecting their own thoughts upon them, they actually come to aid them. Compassion becomes a tool for overcoming madness. The concept of madness, then, is not limited to the individual in question, but also explores and reveals the other. Madness is a lack of appropriate connection to the (textual) outside world.

Conclusion

This thesis has sought to explore the relationship between madness and self-other relations within nineteenth-century Russian literature by analysing a variety of genres from a wide range of authors and time periods. Although identity and madness in nineteenth-century Russian literature has previously been examined by multiple scholars, the analysis is typically restricted to a small number of authors or a relatively short time frame. This thesis has aimed to explore the correlation between identity and madness in a wider context, analysing works from both well-known and lesser-known authors ranging from the early 1800s to the turn of the twentieth century, in order to explore how the two concepts are related more generally and the different ways that they are depicted in literature in relation to a wide range of theoretical constructs of identity. The choice of the umbrella term ‘madness’ has been reflected in the numerous types of characters considered. The fluidity of the term is demonstrated as its use ranges from categorising characters who have broken all contact with reality, to protagonists who are connected to the spiritual realm, and those out of touch with social norms. It is precisely this fluidity that has lent the trope of madness so well to nineteenth-century Russian literature.

In all instances of ‘madness’ considered in this thesis it is the afflicted individual’s relation to another, their ‘sane’ counterpart(s), that categorises them as mad, as other. The ‘mad’ protagonist may be suffering from a physical disease, as in the case of epilepsy, a mental illness, as in the case of depression, or they may simply be an outsider who is subjected to the label of ‘madness’ as a result of their non-conformity to social mores. Regardless of the type of ‘madness’, the ‘mad’ character is other, different, unlike the rest and frequently alienated from their social context.

The binaries this implies of us versus them, sane versus mad, and the social versus the personal, have been referred to throughout this thesis, primarily under the labels of ‘I-for-

myself' and 'I-for-another' as a way of referring more generally to how a person appears to themselves (the former term), and how they appear to others (the latter). This thesis has sought to assess how a discrepancy between these two poles results in 'madness' and how this is portrayed in the literature. In order to shed new light onto these works, some of which are already well-studied, I have looked at them through the prism of various theories of identity to explore how these depictions of madness and identity relate to a wider context and how they can be used to explore what it means to be mad, what it means to be a person and how this is depicted in literature. I have analysed the works through a broad range of theories, including philosophical theories of the self, political theories of social structure and psychological theories of identity. The vast majority of these theories also consider a binary between a personal and social self, although this does not always correspond perfectly to the characters being addressed. However, where these discrepancies arise I have sought to show that they can still elucidate the general binary of identity made explicit in madness by showing what is lacking in a character's depiction, as is the case with analysing Pushkin's Baron in 'Skupoi rytsar' through the lens of Arendt, or how literature has brought about a social critique, as with Lavrov's and Tolstoi's considerations of morality. It is with this sustained analysis of literature in reference to a wider context that I have aimed to highlight the importance of the self-other relationship in relation to madness.

In order to make explicit how self-other relationships are foregrounded not only regardless of the type of madness, but also regardless of the type of relationship I have broken this thesis down into three parts, each exploring an increasingly more intimate self-other relationship in the face of madness. Part one of this thesis explores the mad self in relation to a faceless social order, essentially to a hierarchical social system that creates a desire for upward mobility and which causes the individual to constantly consider themselves in relation to unknown (faceless) others, to an institution. Part two narrows the focus to

explore the relationship between the mad self and a faced society, analysing compliance or non-compliance with social norms and how the rejection of these can result in a (possible) false label of 'mad'. Part three continues this narrowing trend to focus on the relationship between the mad self and a single faced individual, exploring the importance of love as an aid to sanity.

Part one of this thesis considered mania, exploring both monomania and megalomania in order to show how madness can be both a partial mental breakdown as well as a complete mental breakdown. In both instances it is the pull away from reality (here the textual objective world) and the inclination towards the imaginary that highlights the binary considered throughout this thesis. The characters are depicted as having a personal self, the part of them that can exist outside of reality, and a social self, the part of them that exists solely in reality. The faceless hierarchy encourages egoism, striving and individualism, which is highlighted in the texts considered in chapter one. This results in another binary: the real self and the ideal self. In some instances, I have defined the real self as equating to I-for-another and the ideal self to the I-for-myself, given that the two respectively require grounding in objective reality and no grounding in reality, meaning that it can exist solely in the imaginary, in the mind.

Madness necessarily alienates an individual from society, as mania creates a rift between the internal self, which can be altered at will, and the external self which cannot be so easily altered by the individual. The maniac's egoism, demonstrated through their striving for power and recognition, exposes this duality and results in madness. The concept of madness employed in the works I examine here strips the individual of any imposed constraints, such as particular social behaviours, and allows the authors to present the 'true' nature of their characters – egoistic. Every character analysed in this chapter conforms to this perception: the Baron and Prokharchin choose to pursue their desire of collecting money at

the expense of others, Germann, the underground man, and Raskol'nikov wish to prove themselves as more powerful than others, Akakii concentrates on his own personal gain rather than the common good, and Poprishchin, Garshin's patient, and Kovrin also consider themselves as above others. In line with Dostoevskian ideas of selfhood, these characters depict human nature as egoistic and individualistic, which is revealed to the reader through their madness.

However, the mad character is never able to cement this egoistical vision of themselves. They cannot reconcile their manic I-for-myself and I-for-another but they also cannot exist coherently in isolation. The Baron, Prokharchin, and Akakii require society in order to act, while Germann, the underground man, Raskol'nikov, and Kovrin require society in order to oppose themselves to it to become the important individual. Even delusional characters, such as Poprishchin and Garshin's patient, whose 'ideal' selves require no grounding in reality, still deem society's validation as important. Hence, the concept of identity can be illuminated by Bakhtin, as the self finds its grounding in another; identity is shown here as social. This also reflects Belinskii's argument that the tension between society and the egoistic striving of the individual needs to be reconciled, which proved highly influential for the development of Russian literature. The perception of identity through the explorations of madness in these works identifies fundamental negative consequences of madness as stemming from the inability to reconcile the personal and social selves.

Chapter two similarly focuses on the faceless social group, but here with reference to a specific hierarchy – that of nineteenth-century St Petersburg. Here I have explored the idea that within such a society an individual can only make sense of their identity in relation to their rank, and that they therefore *need* the system and the faceless other in order to give them this standing. As shown in chapter one, chapter two focuses on 'mad' individuals who are uncomfortable in their given position and aim to rectify it, as once characters are aware of

their insignificance in the state system, and are at the mercy of the city, they attempt to overcome this. For Pushkin's Evgenii, this entails an insult to the statue of Peter, for Gogol's Chartkov and Kovalev, a 'mask' that allows him to gain status, and a nose 'double' respectively, and for Dostoevskii's Goliadkin, an all too literal double.

In order to depict madness and allow the reader to possibly enter into the mind of the 'mad' character, each of the works considered in chapter two evokes the fantastic, giving two potential readings. The uncanny implies the creation of an imaginary world within the text itself, leaving us to read the protagonist as experiencing psychological issues by giving the example of hallucination as an explanation for the fantastic occurrences along with a feeling of oddity. The reader can see the extent to which rank occupies characters' minds and affects how they see the world around them. The marvellous would result in the following events: the statue of Peter coming to life to pursue Evgenii in 'Mednyi vsadnik', the portrait coming to life to inform Chartkov about the money in 'Portret', Kovalev's nose parading around town with a high rank in 'Nos', and Goliadkin's double living his ideal life in *Dvoinik*. With this reading the reader must accept the distance between the textual actual world's laws and those of their own, but it is the characters' reactions that define the oddity of the event within that world and its consequences. Although these supernatural events are varied, they all occur in relation to rank: Peter pursues Evgenii for stepping out of his role, the portrait's money allows Chartkov to become a 'fashionable artist' and gain status, and both Kovalev's nose and Goliadkin's double live their counterparts' ideal, higher-ranking lives. The creation of these two readings simultaneously depicts the characters as both mad and sane and in some instances (such as with Kovalev and Goliadkin) splits their social self into two: Kovalev may exist in the textual objective world as both a man and a nose, and Goliadkin may exist as two men. The double in each story assumes the protagonist's ideal self. But whatever the reality of the events, and the world they take place in, the effect of rank on the individual remains

clear: it oppresses and reduces characters to a role within society. Any attempt to remove this role results in alienation, madness, loss of self, and even, in Evgenii's case, death. The I-for-myself cannot ground itself in terms outside of the social hierarchy without inducing madness, as the I-for-another is necessarily bound to such restrictions.

But the dehumanisation of St Petersburg characters goes even further than this. They are reduced not only to a rank, but to the actual function of that rank, to an automaton. If they cannot function correctly as their actual rank, both at work and socially, then they are deemed mad and alienated, removing them from their rank and society altogether. The imperial city needs automata, not individual personalities.

In part one I have aimed to show how literary madness relies on the distancing between the individual's perception and the other's perception of self. Within a faceless social order the individual is constantly compared to others and encouraged to create a non-existent – higher ranking and more powerful – ideal self. It is precisely this distance between where the character currently stands and where they believe that they should stand that produces madness. It does not matter that the other is not specified, their existence simply provides a background to classify as sane in order to highlight the protagonist's madness.

Part two of this thesis narrowed this self-other relationship in order to explore a more intimate dynamic, here focusing on a faced society. In contrast to part one, part two analyses the 'mad' self in relation to a specific group of people. By focusing on the place of the 'mad' individual in relation to a faced group, my analysis has sought to show the influence of the other's perception on the designation of 'mad' and to highlight the fluidity of madness. Whereas part one aimed to show the clear split between I-for-myself and I-for-another in the face of madness, part two demonstrates that this binary is not as clear cut as it may first appear.

The reason why this binary is not as harsh as a personal self and a social self becomes clear with a faced other as there is no one single social self. How a person is perceived is mediated through the other's mind, through their beliefs, and their thoughts. It is ultimately the other's opinion that categorises the characters considered in this part as either mad or sane. One example is the idea of not fitting into that particular social group, marking the character as different and hence 'mad', which in some cases raises the question of performance and the need to pretend to fit in, in the case of the provincial characters, or the desire to appear mad, in the case of holy fools.

The 'mad' figure, as depicted in the Russian provinces in literature, underlines the negative effects of tradition. Their unwillingness to adapt to modernity closes the community off from the ever-developing cities and the wider population, creating a closed society with its own mindset. By holding on to tradition the town attempts to create a safe haven for those around them, but in so doing simultaneously restricts those who seek more. The protagonists considered in chapter three render themselves 'outsiders' by questioning the outlook of their own society. The problem for Ostrovskii's and Leskov's Katerinas (in 'Groza' and 'Ledi Makbet Mtsenskogo uezda' respectively) lies in the traditional female role in society; it is this restriction on their worldview, free will, and happiness that they seek to overcome. The parallels between the two works emphasise the provincial woman's struggle to become her own person in a controlled society. It is precisely this controlling, oppressive act of the faced collective other that forces the protagonists to attempt to assert their own humanity, leading to the downhill events of both works. They reject the other's ideal in favour of their real, personal self, standing in contrast to the characters examined in part one, particularly those in chapter one, who, to a certain degree, embrace that ideal. By examining 'Groza' and 'Ledi Makbet Mtsenskogo uezda' through the theories of Mill and de Beauvoir it is possible to see the struggle that these two modern female protagonists face as part of the long history of

female oppression. They become their own individual person by rejecting the roles placed upon them, embodying the ideals of de Beauvoir's and Mill's new woman. However, this inability to reconcile the modern woman with the traditionalist mindset of their provincial communities can, for a single figure, only be resolved by one thing: death. By choosing death over unhappiness both women are portrayed as acting on their own free will, refusing to any longer conform to the other's idea of their selfhood. They refuse to act in a particular, and false, manner in order to construct a socially accepted I-for-another, choosing to follow the desires of their I-for-myself. They are not the homemaker/wife they are expected to be, they are individual, modern women who simply wish to be acknowledged as such, but who, in the face of established social norms, are viewed as mad due to their non-conformity and are punished for it rather than praised, although as readers we may see their choices as fundamentally rational. Thus they choose to reject the gaze of the other in favour of their own understanding of their selfhood.

Chekhov's and Odoevskii's protagonists similarly find that their mindset classes them as 'mad' in their respective societies in 'Palata nomer 6' and 'Sil'fida'. They, too, seek modernity in a close-minded, traditionalist community. Set far away from the ever-modernising city, Chekhov's provincial town becomes so subsumed by its own mindset that anything that even questions the 'norm' is considered foreign, negative, and 'mad'. The lack of open-mindedness shelters the town from its own ignorance. Rather than considering other outlooks on life, such as those of Gromov, which, the reader is told, would improve the lives of those residing in this community, the provincial community persists in its traditional stubbornness. By reading the conflicting philosophies of Tolstoi and Berdiaev alongside Chekhov's story, the reader can better understand the need for open-mindedness in a traditionalist society. Here society's narrow-mindedness causes several of its members to suffer. This narrow-mindedness also calls into question the line between sanity and madness,

as Ragin's sanity is made clear to the reader through the philosophical discussions, but his rejection of society's views marks him as 'mad' in the eyes of the other characters.

In Odoevskii's story the reader also sees closed communities rejecting change. Rather than attempting to understand Mikhail Platonovich and his consequent 'newfound knowledge', the townsfolk identify him as different, ergo 'outsider' and mad. St. Augustine's theory exposes the fact that by refusing to accept, or even properly acknowledge Mikhail Platonovich's newfound mindset, his society limits itself to the physical, human world, rejecting the possibilities that could be brought about by an enlightened sense of being. Therefore, by adopting an alternative mindset, Mikhail Platonovich also becomes subject to the gaze of the collective other. Both Ragin's and Mikhail Platonovich's respective societies treat them as they see fit in order to realign them with the traditional mindset of the community. As with the Katerinas, this removes any sense of individuality that the modern-thinking protagonists held; the only way to remain the same modern self is to find solace in death, as reconciling a 'mad' modern individual with a traditionalist collective is unachievable.

In contrast to the provincial character who aims to assert their I-for-myself at the expense of being deemed 'mad', the holy fools considered in chapter four necessarily straddle the ambiguity as to whether they are or are not mad, playing with the reliance on the other's perception. As I have shown, the holy fool is a self-sacrificing figure. Their position places them in service to the other at the expense of their own selfhood, following Christ in his sacrifice for the sake of mankind. Not only does the holy fool imitate Christ in his qualities such as compassion and forgiveness, but, by being human, he or she is the link between two worlds: the human and the divine. The knowledge they subsequently possess renders them pure and can make them appear childlike and idiotic to the other. The difference in perception of everyday life renders them as an outsider no matter how well they are

integrated into society. For example, both Lizaveta Smerdiashchaia, living on the streets wearing minimal clothing, and Prince Myshkin, a man of higher status and well dressed, stand in stark contrast to those around them. They are constantly concerned for the other whether that be through giving away bread, in the case of Lizaveta, or offering to marry someone to save them from another, like Myshkin. It is precisely this ambiguity of role that allows varying interpretations. They never inform their audience of their intentions, reinforcing the reliance on the judgements that arise from the external view in many cases, and always allow the other to project a needed I-for-another onto them. Without this ambiguity the embodiment of different roles would not be possible.

As is evident with all the holy fools I have examined, they adopt the role required of them by the other, or at least allow themselves to be interpreted as such. They ‘play’ a part. The interpretation is never queried regardless of the social, moral, or mental consequences it brings; the only importance is that it is needed by the other. Thus, they all suppress their own sense of self, their I-for-myself, through their ambiguity, to undertake their performance. Nor does the narrator have privileged insight into the validity of the ascription of ‘holy fool’, leaving the reader to rely on the events themselves and the other’s interpretation of them. In the case of Grisha (‘Detstvo’) and Lizaveta, these performances are of ostracised, ‘idiotic’ children showing compassion to others, thereby showing the other a pious and caring way of life under Christ’s teachings. Sofronii (*Na gorakh*) and Akhilla (*Soboriane*) sacrifice themselves to their respective villages, with Sofronii allowing himself to be perceived as a prophet in order to bring wealth to the monastery and joy to those who visit him, and Akhilla playing the role of saviour, and protective friend, saving the town from the ‘devil’. Finally, Myshkin and Sonia Marmeladova assume various social roles, but both culminate in the performance of a compassionate companion, with Sonia eventually leading Raskol’nikov to rebirth through her Christian faith.

Therefore, in order for a character to be considered a holy fool they must allow their actions to be interpreted. This requires an audience, meaning that the holy fool cannot exist without the other. Their purpose is to influence the other through their actions, inspiring Christ-like qualities in those around them. However, the necessary uncertainty around their true identity means that it is up to the audience to read the performer's actions as pious, rather than simply idiotic. Without an audience, the performance of the holy fool makes no sense, rendering the suppression of personal selfhood meaningless. Moreover, the holy fool requires a *religious* audience in order to be seen as a holy fool, and not simply an idiot, an issue that Myshkin avoids by assuming varying social roles in reference to his modernised audience in Russia's western-facing capital St Petersburg. Just as with the other forms of madness examined, the self of the holy fool cannot exist without the other; they are constructed by the other through their belief system. As the holy fool requires multiple, and contradictory, readings of their self in order to maintain the necessary ambiguity about their true selves, the personal-social binary considered throughout this thesis is fragmented into a single personal self and multiple social selves.

Hence, the faced society places significant emphasis on the role of the other in the creation of identity and the categorisation of madness. Whereas contrasting the mad individual in relation to a faceless society heavily relied on the mad character's perception of themselves and the world around them, here the reader sees the roles reversed, looking from the outside in. By contrasting the individual to a faced society we are able to see how the harsh binary of a single I-for-myself and a single I-for-another needs to be softened in order to allow for varying interpretations on the social side. This is made explicit in relation to holy fools where they require more than one social self in order to occupy the role. However, with both the provincial characters and the holy fools, it is their contrast to an accepted social norm that marks them as mad, as outsiders, and as someone to remove from society. It is

precisely this difference in mindset that marks the characters as mad, as their personal self does not equate to how their faced society believes their social self should act.

The third and final part of this thesis narrows the scope of study again to address self-other relations between an individual and a single other. The very intimate nature of these two illnesses – epilepsy and depression – is reflected in the emphasis on personal relationships. Here again, the binary referred to throughout this thesis appears more as a general guideline than a concrete split. Characters in part three slip in and out of madness, appearing ‘sane’ when they are not having episodes and ‘mad’ when they are. However, in both instances the effects of this madness impact on how they view themselves and how others view them. Identity here extends beyond strict binaries as other characters become doubles or composite characters. In these instances, the doubles provide the works with two or more social selves.

For example, Dostoevskii’s epileptics considered in chapter five are divided against themselves. All four epileptic characters examined lack solid foundations, and are fragmented in some sense. The absence of concrete identity opens the characters up to doubling as they attempt to fill these gaps through another. Nellie (*Unizhennye i oskorblennye*) and Kirillov (*Besy*) try to rectify their abandonment, and consequently undertake the role of saviour to stop others having to endure the same pain. However, Murin (‘Khoziaika’) and Smerdiakov’s connections to another permit them to expose the ‘evil’ within the other, who attempt to absolve themselves of any wrongdoing to represent themselves as the ‘good’ half. The duality of worlds directly affects the duality of the characters, splitting them between the physical and the spiritual (either divine or demonic).

When linked to the divine, they become what the other *needs*. In *Unizhennye i oskorblennye* Natasha’s family needs to cement their bond and reintegrate their daughter and Nellie helps them do this. Kirillov believes that everyone - the generalised other - needs to

escape from pain and so helps them to do this by his assertion of free will in suicide. But when linked to the demonic they become not necessarily what the other *needs* but rather what they *desire*, for example, Ivan Karamazov needs moral guidance, but what he *wants* is his father dead. Smerdiakov's actions both fulfil Ivan's desire but also make Ivan aware of the consequences. Katerina ('Khoziaika') *needs* the truth about her past but what she *wants* is no responsibility for what happened. Murin, by acting out the 'evil' role, permits her deflection of guilt. Thus the epileptics require another to assert their own selves. As is shown by contrasting Kirillov to the three other epileptics I have examined in chapter five, they are not able fix their own fragmentation of personality by themselves. They need the aid of another, they rely on another. The epileptic, whose identity is uncertain, asserts themselves through another, taking on the role of either a divine or demonic figure based on how they entwine themselves with the other. They are unable to determine their impact on the world themselves but simply act as a moral mirror, forcing the other to be accountable for their actions and desires.

The difference in the relationship between individuals in chapter five highlights the significance of the other. Their effect on the mad character is of paramount importance. For example, Nellie becomes reclusive, suffering badly from her condition when exploited by another, but finds solace when cared for by Vania. Nellie's epileptic counterparts in the other texts, however, are used by the other for a particular purpose, and as a result they remain 'mad' and 'unknown'. The reader is forced to rely upon the other to understand these characters.

The depressive characters considered in chapter six similarly require an individual other, as is shown by their flitting in and out of depressive episodes. The differences in the relationships of the depressed characters shows how madness can be affected by love and attention from the other. Each of the depressed characters shies away from society, worsening

in their depression, due to a multitude of reasons such as the loss of a loved one, non-genuine relationships, or a non-shared morality. In any case, this depression is alleviated once the character enters into a relationship with another based solely on a pure form of love.

The figure of the depressive reveals a human need for love. Whether it be in relation to another or to God, pure love is required to stop a human being from falling into a depressive state that, if not cured, can lead to suicide. Pure love is inherent in relationships that are not founded on falsehood or bodily desires, but rather those such as *agape*, *philia*, and *storge* that are not fleeting and cannot easily be destroyed. Gan's Ol'ga, Goncharov's Oblomov, and Tolstoi's Levin and Ivan Il'ich all reveal a human's need for *agape*, relating themselves to a spiritual love and removing all possibility of falsehood in love. It is through love that all these characters' selfhoods are saved from the destructive spiral of depression, which, in the case of Tolstoi's Anna Karenina, can cause a complete loss of self.

Aksakov's Sof'ia and Tolstoi's Natasha Rostova and Kitty Shcherbatskaia are also saved from depression by their relation to another through familial love. In *Semeinaia khronika* this originally means *storge* towards Sof'ia's father, but her selfhood, grounded in relationships, then progresses to become based on *storge* for her son. This type of love also proves to be the grounding for Natasha and Kitty; for Natasha in her love for Pierre, as for Kitty and Levin. These pure, familial loves give them purpose in life. In Schopenhauer's terms they enable the continuation of the species and can thus only be good. These three heroines do not allow their natural, animalistic instincts to destroy them by pursuing *eros*, but find sanity and solace in pure love. This is the opposite of Tolstoi's Anna; she abandons her family to follow her bodily desires (*eros*) and is punished for it by the onset of depression and loss of self. Her depression causes her egoism and narcissism to surface, preventing her connection to another, in a similar fashion to that of my analysis of maniacs in chapter one, removing the ability to love and causing the loss of selfhood. Therefore, while the analysis of

maniacs in relation to selfhood reveals the human being's egoistic nature and need for another, depressive characters show that this need for another must also be a form of pure love in order to restore selfhood from madness.

By looking at how characters move in and out of this binary by flitting between sanity and madness I have sought to show that this is affected by their relationship to the other, especially in relation to the depressive characters who distance themselves from others in a depressive episode and who are drawn back into sanity when a loving relationship to another is cultivated. However, in the case that the mad character cannot create this positive relationship to another, instead reflecting only back on themselves, such as with Tolstoi's Anna and Dostoevskii's Kirillov, their madness can result in an unfortunate end. The literary trope of doubles is evident in part three with a split in identity made evident with two characters, each of which represents one half of the self, and forces the mad character to face their madness.

This gradual narrowing of analysis from faceless society to individual other has sought to demonstrate that the other is needed for identity on all levels and that it is the individual's relation to this other that impacts on their sanity. I have shown that although identity can broadly be split into a personal self and a social self, demonstrating that madness occurs when the two do not align, identity is more complex than a simple binary, as the social self can be fragmented many different ways according to who the other is and what they believe. Similarly, characters can also be considered to be 'mad' or 'sane', but madness is not a life sentence and the characters can shift in and out of madness, or becoming increasingly mad. I have aimed to show that regardless of the type of madness, or the degree to which a protagonist is perceived as mad by the reader or the other characters, it is the distance between how the other (in any form) views their reality and the social self, and how the individual views themselves and their reality, that marks a character as mad. Hence, although

identity and madness may initially seem like the most personal of concepts, they are indeed ultimately social.

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