

# UC Berkeley

## UC Berkeley Electronic Theses and Dissertations

### Title

The Psychological Novel and Science of the Brain: Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and the Narrative of Consciousness

### Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/1488321c>

### Author

Egdorf, Brian C

### Publication Date

2021

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

The Psychological Novel and Science of the Brain:  
Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and the Narrative of Consciousness

By

Brian C Egdorf

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Slavic Languages and Literatures

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Irina Paperno, Chair

Professor Lyubov Golburt

Professor Ian Duncan

Summer 2021

The Psychological Novel and Science of the Brain:  
Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and the Narrative of Consciousness

© 2021  
By Brian C Egdorf

## Abstract

### The Psychological Novel and Science of the Brain: Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and the Narrative of Consciousness

by

Brian C Egdorf

Doctor of Philosophy in Slavic Languages and Literatures

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Irina Paperno, Chair

This dissertation situates the remarkable narrative discoveries of Fyodor Dostoevsky and Leo Tolstoy in portraying the consciousness of characters within the intense discussion of the emerging science of the brain in the 1860s and 1870s, in Russia and Western Europe. How do Dostoevsky and Tolstoy respond to developments in neurophysiology, and what new techniques arise from the close engagement between literature and science? I turn to two novels, Dostoevsky's *The Idiot* (1868) and Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* (1877) and demonstrate how, responding to the contemporary debates surrounding the intervention of science into the workings of the human mind, these literary writers created their own experimental models of the psyche that are special to literature.

The dissertation first traces the discussion of the advances in neurophysiology in the 1860s and 1870s in the popular "thick journals" (which combined fiction, science, politics, and more) and specialized professional publications. In the Russian press, popular journals published original work by scientists in Russia and in Western Europe, and critics reviewed new scientific discoveries for the general audience. What is more, scientists (such as Ivan Sechenov in his groundbreaking *Reflexes of the Brain*) wrote for a popular audience and adopted a literary style. In the journals, literary critics, philosophers, psychologists, theologians, and others debated scientific ideas about the workings of the human brain. In these debates, the science of the brain clashed with religious thinking: Could "reflexes of the brain" replace the idea of the human soul and its immortality? The dissertation then turns to Dostoevsky's *The Idiot* and Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, two novels that have long been celebrated for their visionary narrative techniques. In the case of Dostoevsky's *The Idiot*, the dissertation situates this novel's narrative, especially the emergence of *style indirect libre* in Chapter 5 of Part 2, in the context of the medical understanding of epilepsy. An important parallel can be seen in the case of Gustave Flaubert, who also had epilepsy and who is known for his innovative use of *style indirect libre*. Turning to Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, I study the novel's narrative in the context of the clash between science and religion, centered on the concept of the soul. I consider the correspondence between Tolstoy and his close friend Nikolai Strakhov, especially their discussion of the concept of the soul in relation to the discoveries in brain science. I then offer close readings of the key scenes that, as I argue, offer Tolstoy's own model for the workings of the human mind.

In the Western European context, scholars working on the intersection of science and literature in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Gillian Beer, George Levine, Vanessa Ryan, Nicholas Dames, Michael Finn) have long argued that in England and France, novelists responded to scientists and, in their turn, had an influence on the development of scientific ideas. Meanwhile, narratologists have explored the special ways in which 19<sup>th</sup> century European novels developed new methods for constructing narratives of human life and representing consciousness. This dissertation shows that the Russian novelists Dostoevsky and Tolstoy competed with science to offer their own experimental models of consciousness, ones that prefigured the narrative innovations of the modernist novel.

## Table of Contents

Acknowledgements		ii
Introduction		1
Chapter One	Science of the Brain in Russian Journals	17
Chapter Two	The Split Mind and the Narrative Discoveries of <i>The Idiot</i>	80
Chapter Three	Narrative of the Mind in Tolstoy's <i>Anna Karenina</i>	127
Bibliography		182

## Acknowledgements

This project would not have been possible without the mentorship and intellectual guidance of my dissertation committee. I am especially thankful to my advisor, Irina Paperno, who believed in my close readings from my very first days at Berkeley, and whose intuition, knowledge, and passion made this project a reality from start to finish. I am indebted to Lyubov Golburt, whose close attention and careful reading of this project over many years was instrumental in bringing it to a conclusion. I am grateful to Ian Duncan who brought me to 19<sup>th</sup> century science and whose erudition helped me see a broader picture.

This project was enriched by the countless ideas, suggestions, and questions of many at Berkeley and beyond. I am thankful to Eric Naiman, whose questions have always made me think outside of the box. I would like to acknowledge Anna Muza, who has given me a deeper understanding of the Russian language and whose erudition and attention has helped me in all my work. I am grateful those who offered comments and suggestions of drafts and conference presentations of these chapters, including Yuri Corrigan, Michael Denner, Thomas Dyne, Mikhail Dolbilov, Caryl Emerson, Michael Finke, Jennifer Flaherty, Melissa Frazier, Chloë Kitzinger, Riccardo Nicolosi, Ernest Ortiz, Kathryn Pribble, Laurel Schmuck, Sasha Spektor, and Victoria Somoff. I would like to recognize the intellectual inspiration and friendship of graduate students in and out of the Slavic department, including Ashley Smiley, Maria Whittle, Sophie Lockey, Cammeron Girvin, and all the members of the Slavic Kruzhok. I would also like to acknowledge scholars who first inspired me to study Russian literature: to Marina Balina, for first introducing me to Tolstoy, and to Rimgaila Salys, for then bringing me to Dostoevsky.

This project was benefitted by the special efforts of research and support staff at Berkeley and elsewhere. I would like to thank Irina Lukka for introducing me to the joy of journal and newspaper research and making me feel at home during my séjour in Helsinki at the National Library of Finland, where she introduced me to scientific, medical, and popular journalism. I am especially grateful to Liladhar Pendse at Berkeley for always locating the most difficult to find materials and for his excellent intellectual guidance through many phases of this project. The librarians at the Russian State Library in Moscow made journal research possible, and I received expert guidance with the medical and science newspaper collections. This dissertation received much support from the Institute of Slavic and East European and Eurasian Studies at Berkeley, and I am grateful to Zachary Kelly and Jeffrey Pennington for giving me the space and time to think. I would also like to express my gratitude to the staff in the ISSA cluster at Berkeley, Moriah Van Vleet, Amanda Minafo, Seth Arnopole, and Elizabeth LaVarge-Baptista, for their support in more ways than I can count.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents, Nancy and Gerard Egdorf, who have supported me tirelessly over the years and have always been a reliable source of realism in the face of my far-off journeys beyond Illinois.

## Introduction

The problem of consciousness, and giving form to consciousness, is a central problem of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. How can one access and describe the inner workings of the mind, and how do such descriptions influence the ways in which the mind is conceptualized? How does one give form to consciousness, or subjective experience, especially when such experience lies on the margins of explicability?

Novels have long been engaged with representation of consciousness, and it would not be an exaggeration to say that in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, across Europe, the psychological novel became the dominant form of the genre. Dorrit Cohn, in her paradigm-making *Transparent Minds* (1978), claimed that a central historical task of the modern Western novel was to understand “how another mind thinks, another body feels.”<sup>1</sup> But in the process, as Cohn has demonstrated, the novel’s claim to “realism” clashed with the mysteries of consciousness, “whose verisimilitude is impossible to verify.”<sup>2</sup> Thus, it is the novel that responds to a need to give form to complex psychological experiences that seem inaccessible to the naked eye. In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century novel across Europe, narrative seems to give form and shape to complex thoughts, feelings, memories, and sensations that create an illusion of transparent minds. In the representation of consciousness, as historians of the novel have convincingly argued, lies the meaning of such narrative techniques as the seemingly omniscient third-person narrator, free-indirect discourse (*style indirect libre*), stream-of-consciousness, and more.

Some scholars of the novel and narrative have claimed that, beginning in the late-18<sup>th</sup> century (with Laurence Sterne) narrative in the novel focused on experimental ways of representing character consciousness, or subjectivity (Erich Kahler called this the “inward turn of narrative”).<sup>3</sup> Others maintain that attention to consciousness defines literature as such (such is Käte Hamburger’s thesis in *The Logic of Literature* [1973]).<sup>4</sup> Narratologists, such as Gérard Genette in his classic *Narrative Discourse* (1972), have approached the problem of the narrative of consciousness from a linguistic perspective.<sup>5</sup> One scholar, the linguist Ann Banfield, questions the wisdom of conflating fiction with speech, arguing that novels suggest a “nonequivalence of speaker and his subjectivity.”<sup>6</sup> Indeed, as Cohn reminds us, consciousness cannot be “quoted directly or indirectly, it can only be narrated” (what is more, one of “the drawbacks of the linguistic approach is that it tends to leave out of account the entire nonverbal realm of consciousness.”)<sup>7</sup> Cohn suggests that representation of consciousness in the novel is a literary (and not simply linguistic) phenomenon.<sup>8</sup>

Scholars have provided insightful analysis of concrete techniques involved with consciousness, and they focus on the overlap of the narrator and character in narrative. Novelists’

---

<sup>1</sup> Dorrit Cohn, *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>3</sup> See Erich Kahler, *The Inward Turn of Narrative* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973).

<sup>4</sup> See Käte Hamburger, *The Logic of Literature* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973).

<sup>5</sup> Gérard Genette, *Figures III: Discours du récit* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1972).

<sup>6</sup> See Ann Banfield, *Unspeakable Sentences* (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), 97.

<sup>7</sup> Dorrit Cohn, *Transparent Minds*, 11.

<sup>8</sup> Brian McHale has written on the continued relevance of Cohn’s typology in the context of the rise of cognitive narratology in the article, “Transparent Minds Revisited,” *Narrative* 20.1 (January 2012): 115-124.



ability to penetrate the workings of the character's mind has long been understood through the "omniscient" narrator who knows all and is able to offer insight into feelings, thoughts, and emotions of the character, including both conscious and unconscious mental states. Audrey Jaffe has described the "effect" of omniscience not as due to a specific narrator figure but rather as a "tension" between "a voice that implies presence and the lack of any character to attach it to."<sup>9</sup> Other methods describe the intersection of the narrator and the character, especially in relation to the representation of the character's inner mind. The technique of interior monologue, first attributed by the Russian critic Nikolai Chernyshevsky to Tolstoy's *Childhood* (*Detstvo*), seems to imitate the working of the associative mind, whether the character's mind or, as in the modernist work of James Joyce and Virginia Woolf, the author's mind.<sup>10</sup> Free-indirect discourse, or *style indirect libre*, fuses the style of the character with the narrator and author.<sup>11</sup> Overall, it could be argued that such narrative techniques arose when novelists turned to the complex task

---

<sup>9</sup> Over the years, narratologists have theorized the omniscient narrator through a more nuanced understanding of narrative perspective. Such is Genette's widely accepted concept of focalization, which can be defined as "selection or restriction of narrative information in relation to the experience and knowledge of the narrator, the characters or other, more hypothetical entities in the storyworld" (Niederhoff, Burkhard, "Focalization," *The Living Handbook of Narratology*, <https://www.hamburg.de/lhn/index.php/Focalization>, accessed July 30, 2021). Genette proposes "focalization" as a replacement for the omniscience: "[B]y focalization I certainly mean a restriction of 'field'—actually, that is, a selection of narrative information with respect to what was traditionally called omniscience" (Genette 74). Audrey Jaffe in *Vanishing Points: Dickens, Narrative, and the Subject of Omniscience* (University of California Press, 1991) speaks of omniscience as an "effect" in the novels of Charles Dickens, which she calls a "tension" between "a voice that implies presence and the lack of any character to attach it to" (4). For Robert Scholes, in this type of narration, "multiple perceptions ... coalesce into a single reality, a single truth" (273). However, this concept has come under critical debate in the past few decades. Wallace Martin characterizes omniscience as a "dumping ground" for a "wide range of distinct narrative techniques," and Jonathan Culler calls it a "fantasy" that "oppresses at the same time it obfuscates" (*Recent Theories of Narrative* 146; Culler, "Omniscience," 32).

<sup>10</sup> While usually attributed to Modernist novels of the twentieth century, interior monologue was first attributed to Tolstoy's *Detstvo* (*Childhood*) by Nikolai Chernyshevsky (see Gleb Struve, "Monologue Intérieur: The Origins of the Formula and the First Statement of Its Possibilities," *PMLA* 69 [1954]: 1101-1111). On Tolstoy and interior monologue, see also Liza Knapp, ("'Tue-la! Tue-le!': Death Sentences, Words, and Inner Monologue in Tolstoy's Anna Karenina and 'Three More Deaths.'" *Tolstoy Studies Journal* 11 [1999]: 1-19); Michel Aucouturier has also provided a comprehensive study of Tolstoy's use of the technique ("Langage Intérieur et analyse psychologique chez Tolstoj," *Revue des études slaves* 34.1 [1957], 7-14). Cohn defines this technique as a "transformation of figural thought-language into the narrative language of third-person fiction" (*Transparent Minds*, 100).

<sup>11</sup> The technique of free-indirect discourse has received considerable scholarly attention. Roy Pascal speaks of free-indirect discourse as the moment that "fuses the two voices of the character and the narrator" (26). See *The Dual Voice: Free Indirect Speech and Its Functioning in the Nineteenth Century European Novel* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1977). Banfield, through an analysis based in generative linguistics, argues that such moments mark in free-indirect discourse "the nonequivalence of speaker and his subjectivity," undercutting the notion that such sentences could be spoken by the narrator. *Unspeakable Sentences*, 17.

of representing the consciousness of characters, and they became especially prevalent in novels in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. All three examples mark moments where the subjectivity of the character and that of the narrator overlap in narrative form.

The problems of narrative and consciousness (and the unconscious) have been approached through psychoanalytic perspectives, linking narrative structure to the structure of the mind and the unconscious (Meredith Skura, Elizabeth Dalton, and Peter Brooks).<sup>12</sup> Other scholars, notably cognitive narratologists, have attempted to link the present-day scientific knowledge about how *actual* minds work with narrative, including representations of consciousness and emotions and the cognitive effect on the reader (David Herman, Alan Palmer, Blakey Vermeule, and others).<sup>13</sup>

In recent years, literary scholars have become aware that in the mid- to late-19<sup>th</sup> century in Europe, science also became increasingly interested in understanding the workings of consciousness and the brain, from both a medical (pathological) point of view and a general physiological and psychological perspective. Importantly, for science, accessing the “interior” of the psyche, as well as the relationship between the body and mind, was a practical problem that rested on new methods for exploring the workings of the brain. Scholars have shown that science and literature often worked in tandem, getting inspiration and borrowing from each other. Gillian Beer, in the groundbreaking study on evolutionary narrative in Darwin and the Victorian novel, asserted that, between literature and science, “the traffic was two-way” and that in this period “not only *ideas* but metaphors, myths, and narrative patterns could move rapidly and freely to and fro between scientists and non-scientists.”<sup>14</sup> In the case of the science of the brain, novelists responded to the ideas of scientists and also to case studies of pathological conditions, and they devised their own ideas about the workings of the mind, in part inspired by science. As scholars of the Victorian novel (Vanessa Ryan, Nicholas Dames) and the French novel (Michael Finn) have convincingly shown, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the increased interest in new techniques for the representation of consciousness of the character coincided with the intense development in brain science, marked by the cross-fertilization of ideas and models of consciousness between scientists and novelists alike.

---

<sup>12</sup> See Meredith Skura for the nexus between literary criticism and psychoanalysis in *The Literary Use of the Psychoanalytic Process* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981). Peter Brooks famously argues that narrative structure mimics the structure of the mind. See *Reading for the Plot* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984). Elizabeth Dalton applies this psychoanalytic approach in her reading of a single Russian novel, Dostoevsky’s *The Idiot*, tracing the unconscious in literary structure, arguing that “[t]he structure and the internal coherence of the literary work take shape out of this ‘proliferation in the dark’ of repressed material.” *Unconscious Structure in The Idiot* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 23.

<sup>13</sup> David Herman has turned special attention to the way in which novels take on cognitive structure, as informed by contemporary cognitive science. See *Basic Elements of Narrative* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009). Alan Palmer applies current cognitive science to ways in which characters socially interact in novels in *Social Minds in the Novel* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2010). Recently, Blakey Vermeule has studied the effect of novels on the consciousness of the reader through the lens of current-day theories of the mind. See *Why Do We Care About Literary Characters?* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010).

<sup>14</sup> Gillian Beer, *Darwin’s Plots: Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 5.

In Russia, the situation in the 1860s-1870s demonstrated a similar intense interest in the workings of the mind and brain in science and literature.<sup>15</sup> Let us recall the famous scene from the opening chapters of Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* (1877). An amicable character, Stiva Oblonsky, has been caught in adultery:

“What is this? this?” she asked, pointing to the note. And, in recalling it, as it often happens, Stepan Arkad'ich was tormented not so much by the event itself as by the way he had responded to these words from his wife. What had happened to him at that moment was what happens to people when they are unexpectedly caught in something very shameful. He had not managed to prepare his face for the position he found himself in with regard to his wife now that his guilt had been revealed. Instead of being offended, of denying, justifying, asking forgiveness, even remaining indifferent – any of which would have been better than what he did! – his face quite involuntarily (‘reflexes of the brain’, thought Stepan Arkad'ich, who liked physiology) smiled all at once its habitual, kind and therefore stupid smile. He could not forgive himself for that stupid smile. Seeing that smile, Dolly had winced as if from physical pain, burst with her typical vehemence into a torrent of cruel words, and rushed from the room. Since then she had refused to see her husband. “That stupid smile is to blame for it all,” thought Stepan Arkad'ich. “But what to do, then? What to do?” he kept saying despairingly to himself, and could find no answer (2-3).<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> Scholars of the Russian novel have drawn links between novelists and the development of brain science in the 1860s and 1870s. Such is Michael Holquist's seminal article on the intersection of Ivan Sechenov's *Reflexes of the Brain* and Ivan Turgenev's *Fathers and Children*. “Bazarov and Sechenov: The Role of Scientific Metaphor in *Fathers and Sons*,” *Russian Literature* XVI (1984): 359-374. Diane Thompson and Anna Kaladiouk draw similar lines between Dostoevsky's literary works and the general questions around methodology in the sciences. Valeria Sobol has shown how literary writers responded to scientific ideas about the brain in the context of feelings, emotions, and especially love in “In Search of an Alternative Love Plot: Tolstoy, Science, and Post-Romantic Love Narratives,” *Tolstoy Studies Journal* 19 (2007): 54-74; see also *Febris Erotica: Lovesickness in the Russian Literary Imagination* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009). Recently, Melissa Frazier has drawn important connections between the novels of sensation of Wilkie Collins and the work of Dostoevsky. “The Science of Sensation: Dostoevsky, Wilkie Collins and the Detective Novel,” *Dostoevsky Studies* 19 (2015): 7-28. Alexey Vdovin has written about the connections between Sechenov's *Reflexes of the Brain* and the genesis of Dostoevsky's *Notes from Underground* (1864) in “Dostoevskii i refleksy golovnogo mozga: ‘Zapiski iz podpol'ia’ v svete otkrytii I. M. Sechenova,” in *Russkii realism XIX veka: obshchestvo, znanie, povestvovanie*, eds. FM. Vaisman, A. V. Vdovin, I. Kliger and others (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2020), 431-451.

<sup>16</sup> For Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, I have used the translation by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (New York: Penguin, 2000), 2-3. [— Что это? это? — спрашивала она, указывая на записку. И при этом воспоминании, как это часто бывает, мучало Степана Аркадьича не столько самое событие, сколько то, как он ответил на эти слова жены. С ним случилось в эту минуту то, что случается с людьми, когда они неожиданно уличены в чем-нибудь слишком постыдном. Он не сумел приготовить свое лицо к тому положению, в которое он становился перед женой после открытия его вины. Вместо того чтоб

Stiva initially assigns blame to his predicament to his reflexive smile. A contemporary reader of Tolstoy's novel may have recognized the key concept from a treatise in physiology, Ivan Sechenov's *Reflexes of the Brain* (*Refleksy golovnogo mozga*, 1863), whose influence extended beyond the narrow circle of specialists. Moreover, Stiva's smile may remind readers of science of the reflexive smiles and laughs described by Sechenov in the first pages of his medical treatise:

The infinite diversity of external manifestations of cerebral activity can be reduced to a single phenomenon—muscular movement. Whether it's the child *laughing* at the sight of a toy, or Garibaldi *smiling* when persecuted for excessive love for his native land, or a girl trembling at the first thought of love, or Newton creating universal laws and inscribing them on paper—the ultimate fact in all cases is muscular movement (3, my emphasis).<sup>17</sup>

One could imagine another example added to this physiologist's list: “Doesn't Stiva smile when confronted by Dolly about his affair in Anna Karenina?” This extrapolation is not as strange as it may seem: it strikes the eye that, to introduce his argument, Dr. Sechenov (“Lekar' Sechenov,” as he was identified in his first published article) adopts the style and rhetoric of a novelist.<sup>18</sup> Sechenov's *Reflexes of the Brain*, first published in 1863 in *The Medical Herald* (*Meditinskii*

---

оскорбиться, отречься, оправдываться, просить прощения, оставаться даже равнодушным — все было бы лучше того, что он сделал! — его лицо совершенно невольно («рефлексы головного мозга», подумал Степан Аркадьич, который любил физиологию), совершенно невольно вдруг улыбнулось привычною, доброю и потому глупою улыбкой. Эту глупую улыбку он не мог простить себе. Увидав эту улыбку, Долли вздрогнула, как от физической боли, разразилась, со свойственной ей горячностью, потоком жестоких слов и выбежала из комнаты. С тех пор она не хотела видеть мужа. «Всею виной эта глупая улыбка», думал Степан Аркадьич. «Но что же делать? что делать?» с отчаянием говорил он себе и не находил ответа. (L. N. Tolstoi, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v 90 tomakh, akademicheskoe yubileinoe izdanie* [Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel'stvo Khudozhestvennoi Literaturi, 1928-1958], 5)]

<sup>17</sup> For translations of Sechenov's *Reflexes of the Brain*, I have used S. Belsky's *Reflexes of the Brain* (Cambridge: The M. I. T. Press, 1965), 3. [Все бесконечное разнообразие внешних проявлений мозговой деятельности сводится окончательно к одному лишь явлению — мышечному движению. *Смеется* ли ребенок при виде игрушки, *улыбается* ли Гарибальди, когда его гонят за излишнюю любовь к родине, дрожит ли девушка при первой мысли о любви, создает ли Ньютон мировые законы и пишет их на бумаге — везде окончательным фактом является мышечное движение. (Ivan Sechenov, *Izbrannye proizvedeniia: tom pervyi*, ed. Kh. S. Koshtoyanets [Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1952], 9)]

<sup>18</sup> Sechenov has been the subject of a study that analyzed his adoption of literary forms, especially metaphors, in his scientific work (especially in “Refleksy golovno mozga”). I am grateful to Maya Koretzky for providing me with her senior thesis in which she explores this idea: “Sensational Science: Ivan Sechenov's *Reflexes of the Brain* and Revolutionary Physiology, Literature and Politics of the Russian 1860s,” Undergraduate Thesis, Cornell University, 2013.

*Vestnik*) (after he attempted, but failed, to secure its publication in a so-called “thick journal” *The Contemporary* (*Sovremennik*), famous for introducing literary innovations of the time), had significant repercussions through the 1860s and 1870s for the debate about the nature of consciousness. This debate unfolded both in “thick journals” such as *The Russian Herald* (*Russkii Vestnik*) and *The Herald of Europe*, which combined fiction with politics and popular science, and in professional medical editions proper, such as *The Medical Herald*.

As the example of Tolstoy’s *Anna Karenina* begins to suggest, the novels of Dostoevsky and Tolstoy arose in a period during which the novel, with its “inward turn” in narrative, began to converge with the tremendous interest in the science of the brain. Russian scientists became centrally concerned with the physiology of the nervous system in relation to the workings of consciousness, and some, like Sechenov, wrote in a popular style that borrowed ideas and forms from other discourses, including philosophy, theology, and literature. Russian novelists, like their Western European counterparts, were aware of the intense debate about the emerging science of the brain. Focusing on the Russian case, and on the great discoveries associated with the Russian psychological novel, I will explore different ways in which science and literature overlapped in this period in Russia. I will focus not only on the two-way traffic between novelists and scientists, but also on important disagreements and the heated debate between novelists and scientists on the nature of inner life. In the end, I will argue that these close interactions, especially the intense divergence between the two, lead to important new models of consciousness in the novels of Dostoevsky and Tolstoy.

#### *Literature and Science in the West: Recent Advances in Scholarship*

In recent years, literary scholars have explored the engagement between science and literature in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, from evolutionary science to the physiology of the brain and nervous system. This trend is led by Beer, who argued that Charles Darwin’s evolutionary theory as developed in *On the Origin of Species* (1859) has been “assimilated and resisted by novelists who, within the subtle enregisterment of narrative, have assayed its powers.”<sup>19</sup> Beer demonstrates how Darwin and other scientists, who were avid readers, integrated literary models into their own writings, mimicking narrative structures of writers such as George Eliot and Charles Dickens. Likewise, Darwin’s science, especially the theory of evolution as developed in *On the Origin of Species* [1859], in turn, profoundly influenced literature. For Beer, narrative patterns act as a conduit between literature and science, as the medium through which the two disciplines influence each other. Another scholar, George Levine (*Darwin and the Novelists*), has shown that the impact of Darwin’s ideas on literature was palpable whether they agreed with Darwin or not.<sup>20</sup>

Both these scholars have had a wide ranging impact on the study of science and literature, especially the more recent turn to brain science and the psychological novel. Nicholas Dames argues in *Amnesiac Selves* (2001) that the Victorian novel, while influenced by then-contemporary scientists of the brain (Alexander Bain, Franz Josef Gall, and William Carpenter),

---

<sup>19</sup> Gillian Beer. *Darwin’s Plots*, 2. Since Beer, scholarship on the relationship of Charles Darwin to literature has taken many turns. George Levine (*Darwin and the Novelists*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988) argues that the influence of Darwin reached far beyond those who were directly exposed to his work and included novelists who were even opposed to his ideas.

<sup>20</sup> George Levine advances this argument in *Darwin and the Novelists*.

devised new models of the mind that looked ahead to discoveries in science and medicine yet to come. In this work, Dames focuses on the issue of amnesia in the novel, demonstrating that novelists in this period invented new forms of forgetting and nostalgia before the concept of amnesia was understood by science.<sup>21</sup> This leads to what he calls an “amnesiac self” that was particular to literature alone. In another study, in *The Physiology of the Novel* (2007), Dames suggests that the narrative of Victorian novels maps the structure of cognition itself.<sup>22</sup> Thus, the problem of consciousness, propelled by the advances of science, took an unexpected turn in the confines of narrative form.

In the recent book *Thinking Without Thinking in the Victorian Novel* (2012), Vanessa Ryan expands this line of inquiry by arguing that Victorian novels not only model consciousness, but that they also attempt to “train” the minds of those who read them.<sup>23</sup> Like Dames, Ryan reads 19<sup>th</sup> century psychology and brain science (William Carpenter, Thomas Laycock, Henry Maudsley, and Alexander Bain) to demonstrate how “Victorian fiction writers went beyond the question of what the mind is to explore the dynamic experience of how the mind functions.”<sup>24</sup> (1). Ryan demonstrates “how both the form of the Victorian novel and the experience of reading novels played a central role in ongoing debates about the nature of consciousness.”<sup>25</sup> Ryan is particularly interested in the emergence of “physiological psychology” and the focus on the reflexive mind. Through this look at Victorian science of consciousness, Ryan argues that novelists in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Wilkie Collins, George Eliot, George Meredith, and Henry James) “began to look seriously at nondeliberate thought, specifically at what they called ‘unconscious cerebration,’” and the novelists offered their own ways of “schooling the reflexive mind.”<sup>26</sup>

The situation in France in the 19<sup>th</sup> century developed similarly. Scholars of the French novel of the 19<sup>th</sup> century have demonstrated a similar engagement between literature and the brain science, especially the development of the idea of unconscious processes in the mind. Michael Finn, in the recent *Figures of the Pre-Freudian Unconscious from Flaubert to Proust* (2017), demonstrates links between science and literature in the understanding of the “unconscious,” with Freud as a reference point.<sup>27</sup> Importantly, he also deals with problems of the mind and consciousness in relation to medical science before Freud in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and he shows “how medicalized human duality began to show up in the fiction and in the creative theory of writers, particularly Flaubert, Maupassant and Proust.”<sup>28</sup>

These scholars have demonstrated some of the complex interactions that occurred between novelists and scientists in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, showing that the novelist had as much of a role to play in the development of science as scientists did. Furthermore, Dames and Ryan have

---

<sup>21</sup> Nicholas Dames describes how novelists in the 19<sup>th</sup> century created new ways of nostalgia in the novel that preceded the concept of amnesia as it is understood today. *Amnesiac Selves: Nostalgia, Forgetting, and British Fiction, 1810-1870* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 6.

<sup>22</sup> Nicholas Dames, *The Physiology of the Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

<sup>23</sup> Vanessa Ryan, *Thinking Without Thinking in the Victorian Novel* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012).

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>27</sup> Michael T. Finn, *Figures of the Pre-Freudian Unconscious from Flaubert to Proust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

argued that novelists often came up with innovative ways of representing the psyche that exceeded the models available to science of the brain at the time, and that they influenced Western European science and psychology.

### *Science and Literature in 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian culture*

And what about the situation in 19<sup>th</sup> century Russia? While the studies mentioned above offer potential avenues for understanding the development of the psychological novel not only in England and France, but also in Russia, it could be argued that the novels of Dostoevsky and Tolstoy engage with science in ways that both coincide with and diverge from the Victorian and French case.<sup>29</sup>

In Russia, both the psychological novel and brain science arose in the period that coincided with the Great Reforms of the 1860s, which not only led to great changes in Russian society, but also saw the expansion of scientific and philosophical teaching and research in universities, as well as more intense exchanges between Russian and European scientists.

Popular science entered culture through various institutions in Russia. Similar to some journals in England and France, Russian “thick journals” regularly published science alongside serialized literature and politics. Importantly, these “thick journals” (such as *The Russian Herald* [*Russkii Vestnik*], *Notes from the Fatherland* [*Otechestvennyye Zapiski*], *The Contemporary*, *The Herald of Europe* [*Vestnik Evropy*] and more) played a central role in the dissemination of scientific ideas to popular audiences in Russia.

---

<sup>29</sup> Besides those who have focused primarily on the science of the brain (Holquist, Frazier, Vdovin), scholars of the Russian novel have brought attention to the broad engagement between literature and science in Russia, with a special focus on the question of Darwin’s evolutionary theory. In the case of Tolstoy, Donna Tussing Orwin has demonstrated the broad influence of scientific ideas on his novels, especially developments in the physical sciences in *Tolstoy’s Art and Thought, 1847-1880* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), especially Chapter 8, “Science, Philosophy, and Synthesis in the 1870s,” 188-207. Hugh McLean considers Tolstoy’s antagonism towards Darwin’s scientific ideas in “Claws on the Behind: Tolstoy and Darwin,” *Tolstoy Studies Journal* 19 (2007): 15-32. Anna Berman has provided a comprehensive study of Tolstoy’s complicated engagement with Darwin’s theories in the recent article, “Darwin in the Novels: Tolstoy’s Evolving Literary Response,” *The Russian Review* 76 (April 2017): 331-51. In the case of Dostoevsky, scholars have discussed the important role of Darwin in his novels (Michael Katz, “Dostoevsky and Natural Science,” *Dostoevsky Studies* 9 [1988]: 63-76). Of special note is Harriet Murav’s *Holy Foolishness: Dostoevsky’s Novels and the Poetics of Cultural Critique* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992). In this work, Murav traces the emergence of medical science in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and new scientific models of pathological human behavior alongside the hagiography of the holy fool, especially in the context of Dostoevsky’s characters. Melissa Frazier has recently brought attention to Dostoevsky’s special understanding of scientific ideas, especially how he puts forward his own way of considering science in a broader concept of man. “Minds and Bodies in the World, or: Learning to Love Dostoevsky,” 19v: An Occasional Series on the 19th Century,” NYU Jordan Center for the Advanced Study of Russia, December 11, 2020, <https://jordanrussiacycenter.org/news/19v/minds-and-bodies-in-the-world-or-learning-to-love-dostoevsky/#.YQOLoy1h1-U>, accessed July 29, 2021.

In Western Europe and in Russia, popularizers of science had as much authority in the eyes of the general public as experimental scientists. Let us recall a charged moment in Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* (1866), when a "new man," Lebeziatnikov, gives Sonia Marmeladova a copy of George Henry Lewes's *Physiology of Common Life* (1859). The works of Lewes (the life partner and collaborator of the novelist George Eliot) were read by the general public in Russia and, as Gillian Beer argued in relation to the English case, such works "shared a literary, non-mathematical discourse which was readily available to readers without a scientific training."<sup>30</sup> Moreover, even works of the "hard sciences" were read by general audiences. One example is Claude Bernard's *Introduction to the Study of Experimental Medicine* (*Introduction à l'étude de la médecine expérimentale*, 1865). In France, Claude Bernard's work had an enormous influence on the creation of new methods of novel writing (in Émile Zola). Notably, Zola's essay "Le roman expérimental" appeared first in Russia, beating the French edition when it was published in the September 1879 edition of *The Russian Herald*. Zola's essay applies the experimental method of physiology, quoting extensively from Claude Bernard's *Introduction to the Study of Experimental Medicine*, arguing that novels should perform experiments and intervene in much the same way that a scientist performs scientific experiments. Even so, Russian novelists had already come up with their own "experimental" novels even in the early 1860s.<sup>31</sup>

Russia also had its own popularizers of science, who also worked as publicists in the "thick journals," which published science, politics, and serialized literature. One such literary critic, Dmitri Pisarev (1840-1868), popularized Western science in the radical journal *The Russian Word*, and it was through Pisarev's reviews that Darwin's ideas gained a large audience for the first time in Russia.<sup>32</sup> Maksim Antonovich (1835-1918), Pisarev's rival who was trained as a geologist, likewise popularized science in the 1860s, including an 1862 review of Lewes's *The Physiology of Common Life* in *The Contemporary*. Less explored by scholars, Nikolai Ivanovich Solov'ëv (1831-1874), a doctor by training and literary critic, edited the journal *The Epoch* (*Epokha*) with Dostoevsky and published articles on the relationship of brain science to art and literature in *Notes of the Fatherland*.<sup>33</sup> His articles were also found in more specialized

---

<sup>30</sup> Gillian Beer. *Darwin's Plots*, 4.

<sup>31</sup> While the experimental novel has primarily been theorized in the West European context, Irina Paperno, in her book on suicide in Dostoevsky's Russia, argues that novelists such as Dostoevsky took up their own "experiments" in novels long before Zola described his method in 1879. See Irina Paperno, *Suicide as a Cultural Institution in Dostoevsky's Russia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 125-131. See also, Irina Paperno, "La prose des années 1870—1890." *Histoire de la littérature russe*. Le temps du roman. Dir. par Efim Etkind. Paris, 2005. Most recently, Riccardo Nicolosi argues that Zola's ideas were hotly debated even before the publication of "Le roman expérimental" in 1879. Through the analysis of the work «Privalovskie milliony» ("Privalov's Millions") (1883) by D.N. Mamin-Sibiriyak, Nicolosi shows that in Russia, in the wake of Zola's essay, there emerged a trend of anti-scientific novels which challenged Zola's experimental model of fiction. Riccardo Nicolosi, "Eksperimenty s eksperimentami: Emil' Zolia i russkii naturalizm («Privalovskie milliony»)." *Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie* 134 (April 2014): 202-220.

<sup>32</sup> Alexander Vucinich, *Science in Russian Culture*, Vol. 2 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1970).

<sup>33</sup> Solov'ëv translated the lecture by Claude Bernard, "Étude sur la physiologie du cœur," delivered at the Sorbonne and published in the French journal *Revue des deux mondes*. In the



medical journals, such as *The Medical Herald*, and he was also an opponent of Pisarev's rationalist approach to science. Other authors had close personal and professional relationships with Dostoevsky and Tolstoy. One example is Nikolai Nikolaievich Strakhov (1828-1896), who worked both as a literary critic and popularizer of Western philosophical thought, and he shaped the debate around Darwin's theories throughout the 1860s and 1870s (in Strakhov's case, both Dostoevsky and Tolstoy).<sup>34</sup> Strakhov played a major role in articulating the confrontation between the concepts of the soul and the brain, not only in the two treatises *The World as Whole* (*Mir kak tseloe*, 1872) and *On the Basic Concepts of Psychology* (*Ob osnovnykh poniatiakh psikhologii*, 1878) but also in his private correspondence with Tolstoy in 1875-79.<sup>35</sup> As in Western Europe, such figures had close relationships with novelists and at the same time disseminated and debated major scientific ideas of the time.

Amazingly, several specialized scientific and medical journals were also read by non-specialists, and, in addition, they featured poems and discussed fiction writers. They also documented emerging advances in physiology and brain science, including both pathological and non-pathological cases, with special attention given to hallucinations, epilepsy, double thoughts, and even criminal cases. The medical press published both emerging advances in physiology and cases of illness. One remarkable case is the appearance of an article on Turgenev's health in the September 3, 1883, issue of *The Medical Herald* (the same journal that had two decades earlier published Sechenov's *Reflexes of the Brain*). The article documents Turgenev's late-life illness, citing the author's own diaries, diagnostic observations of his body by the famous Parisian physician Jean-Martin Charcot, and more. Remarkably, the editor of *The Medical Herald*, in a footnote to the article, conveys Turgenev's own *diagnostic* sense of his time:

Doctors from the beginning were considered to be some of the "keenest" spokesmen of our sinful intelligentsia, and they always deeply appreciated I. S. [*Ivan Sergeevich Turgenev*], the truly great diagnostician of our time.

---

essay, Bernard asserts in the opening pages that poets, novelists, and artists have long known the important influence of the heart on the psyche. The essay was translated by Solov'ev as "The Physiology of the Heart and Its Connections to the Brain," a more apt title for the burgeoning Russian interest in brain science in the 1860s. See Solov'ev's translation, *Fiziologičeskii serdtsa i otnosheniia ego k golovnomu mozgu* (St. Petersburg: Izdanie O. I. Baksta, 1867). A version of the essay had also appeared in *Notes of the Fatherland* in 1865 under the title "Serdtsse. Fiziologičeskii etiud Kloda Bernara," *Otechestvennyye Zapiski* (March 1865): 178-194. A similar article by George Henry Lewes, presumably inspired by Bernard, was reviewed in *Notes of the Fatherland*: "Serdtsse i mozg, Dzhordzha L'iuisa," *Otechestvennyye Zapiski* (November 1865): Interesy literatury i nauki na zapade, 84-92.

<sup>34</sup> For an important treatment of Strakhov's intellectual engagement with Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, including the various ways that both writers agreed and clashed with Strakhov, see Donna Orwin, "Strakhov's World as a Whole: A Missing Link Between Dostoevsky and Tolstoy." *Poetics. Self. Place. Essays in Honor of Anna Lisa Crone* (Bloomington: Slavica, 2007). Alexander Vucinich describes Strakhov's role on the popularization of Darwin in *Darwin in Russian Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

<sup>35</sup> See Irina Paperno, *Who, What Am I? Tolstoy Struggles to Narrate the Self* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014).

Turgenev also loved doctors, a guarantee of which can be found in the type of the model *country doctor*, Bazarov.<sup>36</sup>

As the author of *Fathers and Children* (1862), a novel that featured the doctor Bazarov as the main character, Turgenev gained prominence as a figure who bridged the gap between science and literature in his time. The fact that his own body and illness becomes the subject of a medical article seems only fitting.

Several distinct areas of scientific thought were popular with Russian audiences. In Russia, like in Western Europe (especially Victorian England), Charles Darwin's 1859 *On the Origin of Species*, which appeared in Russian translation in 1864, was widely read in the early 1860s. The reception of Darwinism in Russia differed in significant ways from the one in Western Europe.<sup>37</sup> While Dostoevsky and Tolstoy were opposed to Darwin's theories on moral and religious grounds, it has been argued that they incorporated elements of his theory into their novels.<sup>38</sup> However, the sensational aura surrounding the publication of Darwin's work was only one part of the complex story of the emergence of interest in science in this period.

The new developments in physiology and neurophysiology captivated general attention in this period. This was first evident in the immense interest in German "physiological materialism" in the 1860s in Russia, introduced by the works of Ludwig Büchner, Jacob Moleschott, and Karl Vogt. A reader of Turgenev's novel *Fathers and Children* will remember that Bazarov spouts the theories of Georg Büchner and carries with him a copy of *Kraft und Stoff* (which Turgenev and

---

<sup>36</sup> Translations, unless noted, are my own. [Врачи искони считались одними из самых "чутких" представителей нашей многогрешной интеллигенции и всегда глубоко ценили И. С., этого действительно великого диагноста нашего времени. Тургенев также любил медиков, порукой в этом служит созданный им тип образцового *земского врача* Базарова. (L. B. Bertenson, "Ivan Sergeevich Turgenev," *Meditsinskii Vestnik* 36 [September 3, 1883], 581)]

<sup>37</sup> Daniel Todes argues that the reception of Darwin in Russia was different. In Western Europe, Darwin's *On the Origin* (1859) was read with the backdrop of the political economic theory of Thomas Malthus, which emphasized competition not only among species but in species themselves. Todes argues that "Malthusianism reflected an atomistic and soulless ideology, rooted in British political economy and culture, that violated Russians' vision of a cohesive society in which all of its members were valued parts of the whole" (29, quoted in Berman). See Todes, *Darwin Without Malthus: The Struggle for Existence in Russian Evolutionary Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

<sup>38</sup> In the context of the Russian novel, Darwin's influence has been mostly studied in relation to Leo Tolstoy. Hugh McLean argues that Tolstoy's close relationship with Nikolai Strakhov exposed the novelist to the emerging science of evolution in the early 1860s. McLean notably shows that figures such as Sergei Rachinskii (a translator of Darwin and one of Darwin's popularizers in the Russian "thick journals") were more aware of Tolstoy's work than Tolstoy was of their science. "Claws on the Behind: Tolstoy and Darwin," *Tolstoy Studies Journal* 19 (2007): 15-32. Recently, following George Levine (*Darwin and the Novelists*), Anna Berman shows that even though Tolstoy was opposed to Darwin's theories, his novels suggest Darwin's influence in their plot structure, characters, and more. ("Darwin in the Novels: Tolstoy's Evolving Literary Response.") In the case of Dostoevsky, Michael Katz has described the novelist's diverging attitudes towards Darwin in his fiction and personal documents. ("Dostoevsky and Natural Science," 63-76).

his hero call *Stoff und Kraft*). While the historian of science David Joravsky characterizes public interest in materialist theories of the mind as a “belated importation of controversy” from the West and “dead artifacts of a bygone era,” physiological materialism, in its popular guise, left a strong impression on the Russian reading public.<sup>39</sup> Original scientific work, in particular Western and Russian physiology and neurophysiology by Claude Bernard, Ivan Sechenov, and Carl Ludwig, also appeared on the scene at this time. Physiology and neurophysiology (“hard sciences”) were debated and discussed not only in scientific circles but also among the general public, including novelists. Indeed, neurophysiology, characterized by Joravsky as the “royal road to scientific understanding of the mind,” was thought to possibly lead to a “new morality, and so to a reconstruction of society.”<sup>40</sup> One could argue that, in Russia in the 1860s and 1870s, neurophysiology had an equal, if not greater impact on public discussion of social, moral, and scientific questions of the day than Darwin.

The science of the brain and nervous system articulated many of the same concerns that would become central to the Russian psychological novel of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky: the difference between body and mind, the problem of morality and psychology, the issue of free will and determinism, and the question of the immortality of the soul. In the questions of the soul, imported Western science clashed with the culture of Russian orthodoxy and religious thought. As Alexander Vucinich notes, “In 1860-61 the conservative *Russian Messenger* [*The Russian Herald*] had published a series of articles on the incompatibility of experimental physiology with the precepts of Christian morality” (124).<sup>41</sup> Works of literature, often appearing side-by-side with such articles in the “thick journals,” likewise staged debates between experimental science and moral or spiritual concerns. Literature, while not necessarily taking one or the other side in such clashes, entered the great confrontation between science and religion.<sup>42</sup> Sechenov’s scientific ideas were interpreted through those who had read novels such as Turgenev’s *Fathers and Children*.<sup>43</sup> It would not be an exaggeration to say that the Russian novel played an enormous role in Russia in the framing of the debate about science from the 1860s to the 1870s and beyond.

### *Narrative and Science of the Brain in Dostoevsky and Tolstoy*

---

<sup>39</sup> David Joravsky, *Russian Psychology: A Critical History* (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishing, 1989), 55.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>41</sup> Alexander Vucinich, *Science in Russian Culture*, Vol. 2, 124.

<sup>42</sup> Scholars have noted the engagement of science and religion, and the role that literature played in the clash of ideas in the 1860s and 1870s. Michael Holquist argues that such a clash of science and religion occurs in Dostoevsky’s *The Idiot* (1868-9). He shows that Dostoevsky, through the character Myshkin, reworks Christ’s coming as a “problem sustained at the level of individual psychology rather than of systematic theology” (107). See Holquist, *Dostoevsky and the Novel*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977). Harriet Murav has shown how Dostoevsky responded to the clash between science and religion in *Holy Foolishness: Dostoevsky’s Novels and the Poetics of Cultural Critique*.

<sup>43</sup> Holquist offers a far-reaching interpretation of the complex relationship between science and literature in Turgenev’s *Fathers and Children* in his article, “Bazarov and Sechenov: The Role of Scientific Metaphor in *Fathers and Sons*.”

In the coming chapters, I will explore various aspects in the relationship between literature and science in the 1860s-70s in Russia, focusing predominantly on the science of the brain. I will speak about cultural institutions (such as “thick journals”) and figures who mediated between science and literature. I will also describe the two-way exchanges between science and literature, through ideas, metaphors, and myths, as well as narrative structures. To this end, I will carefully analyze Dostoevsky’s *The Idiot* (1868) and Tolstoy’s *Anna Karenina* (1877).

Narrative methods employed by Dostoevsky and Tolstoy have long been understood as a continuation of narrative’s “inward turn,” and Russian novelists began experimenting with the representation of consciousness well before the important scientific debates of the 1860s and 1870s. Nikolai Chernyshevsky, in his 1856 review of Tolstoy’s *Childhood* (*Detstvo*) and *Boyhood* (*Otrochestvo*), famously argued that Tolstoy’s narrative techniques offered a radically new way of representing “psychic processes” (it is in this review that Chernyshevsky coins the term “interior monologue,” long before it would be used to describe Joyce’s modernist work): “He is not limited to depicting the results of mental process: he is interested in the process itself, and in the subtle phenomena of inner life, which give way to one another with an extraordinary speed and inexhaustible variety.”<sup>44</sup> In light of Tolstoy’s innovative techniques developed in the 1850s, it would seem that literary models had already offered alternatives for understanding inner life, even before the important debates that would come in the decades to follow. In the Russian case, Tolstoy and Dostoevsky had already devised special techniques for giving shape to consciousness informed in part by philosophical ideas, and in the 1860s and 1870s these innovative methods would engage with the discussion and debate about brain science.<sup>45</sup>

Literary scholars who work with the Western European novel (Dames, Ryan, and Finn) argue that novelists in the 19<sup>th</sup> century took an active part in the creation of an understanding of states of consciousness. Like in Western European novels, Dostoevsky and Tolstoy demonstrated a heightened interest in the problems of consciousness and suggested alternatives to brain science, some of which were influenced by Western European philosophy.<sup>46</sup> However, the

---

<sup>44</sup> [Он не ограничивается изображением результатов психического процесса: его интересует самый процесс, – и едва уловимые явления этой внутренней жизни, сменяющиеся одно другим с чрезвычайною быстротою и неистощимым разнообразием. (Nikolai Chernyshevskii, “Detstvo i otrochestvo. Voennye Rasskazy. Sochinenie Grafa L. N. Tolstovo. Spb.” *Sovremennik*, November 1856, “Kritika,” 53-64)]

Chernyshevsky’s November 1856 review of Tolstoy appears a few months after an August 1856 review of Tolstoy in a French journal, the *Revue des deux mondes*. The French reviewer, Henri Delaveau (who describes Tolstoy as “un jeune officier, M. Le comte Tolstoï”), mentions *Detstvo* and *Otrochestvo* but mainly focuses his attention on the *Voennye Rasskazy*, coming to a stark conclusion about Tolstoy’s prose: “L’invention romanesque n’apparaît guère, on le voit, chez M. Tolstoï” [“As we see, novelistic invention did not exist at all in Tolstoy”] (786, 789). It would seem as though Chernyshevsky, if he indeed had read this review, would disagree with such an assessment. See: Henri Delaveau, “La littérature et la vie militaire en Russie,” *Revue des deux mondes* (August 15, 1856): 775-810.

<sup>45</sup> Donna Orwin has argued that it was primarily Western philosophical ideas about the mind that influenced the representation of the character’s mind in Turgenev, Dostoevsky, and Tolstoy. *Consequences of Consciousness: Turgenev, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007).

<sup>46</sup> Scholars have studied the connections between the Russian and Western European novel, especially similarities between English and French literary works. In her recent book, *Anna*

Russian case diverts from the Western European novel in important ways. As I have described, in Russia in the 1860s and 1870s, scientific theories clashed with the religious ideas, and the novels of Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, with their visionary forms of narrative, in part reacted to the intense debates between scientific, materialistic physiology on the one hand, and the religious understanding of “inner” life and the mysterious workings of the immortal soul on the other. Even as these novelists evoked the language of science, as did their Western contemporaries, they clearly aspired to model the inner workings of consciousness in ways that could not be reduced to science. In their attempt to turn the narrative inward, penetrating the mysterious workings of human consciousness, Russian novelists did not hesitate to actually use the word, and the concept, “soul,” with its theological connotations. The Russian psychological novel became a laboratory in which science clashed with religion. It would seem that in the case of both Tolstoy and Dostoevsky (if not Turgenev), the authors sided with a religious point of view, and yet these novelists offered models of the mind that are special to literature alone. It is my goal in this dissertation to demonstrate how exactly Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, in their narrative experiments, moved to turn the novel into a major instrument of penetration into the mysteries of human consciousness, or soul, replacing science and theology alike.

Turning to specific narrative techniques, I pay special attention to the third- (rather than first-) person narrative in Dostoevsky and Tolstoy. The third person, as I will argue, constituted a central way that novelists modeled the workings of the human psyche, in particular the complex relationship between internal life and the external world that could not be explained by scientific observation. Importantly, the third-person narrative mitigates the tenuous line between the “inside” and “outside” of a character, especially in the representation of different, shifting states of mind in a single individual. Likewise, I will show how the third person represents multiple perspectives in the novel and how multiple points of view, in turn, complicate the problem of consciousness (or subjectivity) in the novel. While the third person has been traditionally theorized through the guise of the single “omniscient” narrator who knows all and has access to all of the characters’ perspectives, I will show how the Russian novel challenges this view, especially in the way that the third person narrative reflects not a single voice, but rather different subjectivities embedded in narrative form.<sup>47</sup>

Needless to say, first-person accounts—internal speech (or “internal monologue”), dream narratives, inserted diaries, other written documents, and more—were used by scientists and novelists alike to access inner thought. Comparisons can be made between first-person accounts of consciousness and what appears in the novel as the third person. The first person both in case studies used by scientists (medical and other) and in literature emerges as an experimental method for the discovery of new, innovative ways of rendering consciousness.

Beyond the techniques of first- and third-person narration, Russian novelists also experimented with special situations of the pathological mind, such as double thoughts, hallucinations, spiritualist phenomena, and, in the case of Dostoevsky, moments of epileptic consciousness that famously appear in his novels. Novelists incorporated states of mind into narrative that the characters themselves would have no way to describe, and in this they echo

---

*Karenina and Others: Tolstoy's Labyrinth of Plots* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2016). Liza Knapp traces the complex links between Russian and Western European novels.

<sup>47</sup> I have presented preliminary results of such analysis in “The Multiplicity of Narrative: The Hidden Subjectivities of *Anna Karenina*.” *Tolstoy Studies Journal* 28, 2016, 29-40.

similar struggles to model the workings of pathological consciousness in medicine and psychology.

Finally, in some cases, narrative techniques in the novels of Dostoevsky and Tolstoy speak of states of mind that are impossible to model elsewhere, ones that emerge from narrative form itself. A vivid example is the narration of the mental experience of the dog Laska in Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, which, as I have argued, creates a special moment when animal and human consciousness merge in narrative form.<sup>48</sup> This growing understanding of both human and non-human consciousness complicate the representation of the mind in novels.

While my approach has benefitted from much of the work of Beer, Dames, Ryan, and Finn, my own goals are somewhat different. Thus, I ask the general questions about subjectivity and narrative predominantly (but not exclusively) in relation to the historical context of the Russian psychological novel of the 1860s and 1870s. Furthermore, the novels of Dostoevsky and Tolstoy have long been celebrated for remarkable advances in modeling the workings of consciousness and subjectivity in their complex narrative structure, which have prefigured and prepared the developments that followed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It can, and has been argued, that Modernist writers of the generations to follow were inspired by Dostoevsky and Tolstoy (Andrey Bely in Russia and Virginia Woolf in England, as well as the psychologists William James and Sigmund Freud).<sup>49</sup> In the end, this work seeks to reconcile the historical embeddedness of these novels in the period of intense development of brain science with the innovations in narrative that seem to belong more to the age yet to come.

\*\*\*

Having described the initial premises of this work, I will now briefly outline the content of the specific chapters.

Chapter One investigates the writing and publication of science in Russian professional and popular journals from the late 1850s to the 1880s. I survey the science of the brain and physiology as it appeared in both “thick journals” and in more specialized medical and natural science publications in Russia and in Western Europe. How do scientists describe the problems of consciousness, given the impossibility of observing the mind? What particular aspects of the mind become central to the conceptual work of scientists at the time? Paying attention not only to the conceptual concerns of scientists, but also to their use of narrative, I demonstrate the importance of literary forms (such as first-person documentation and letters, elementary forms of plot, and the use of metaphors) that can be found in the many publications of brain science in the journals. Of central importance in the discussion of brain science were the competing ideas about

---

<sup>48</sup> I describe the merging of dog-human consciousness in the narrative form of *Anna Karenina* in the article listed above.

<sup>49</sup> Scholars have established the influence of Dostoevsky and Tolstoy on British modernism, especially in the diaries and essays, most notably, Virginia Woolf's diaries and her essay on Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and Chekhov, “The Russian Point of View.” *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, ed. Andrew McNeillie, Vol. 4 (London: Hogarth, 1994), 181-189. Also see Galya Diment, “Tolstoy and Bloomsbury,” *Tolstoy Studies Journal* 5 (1992): 39-54. Recently, Emily Dalgarno has argued that Woolf was influenced by the Russian concept of the soul through Dostoevsky and Tolstoy. “Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, and the Russian Soul,” in *Virginia Woolf and the Migrations of Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 69-96.

the nature of the psyche in science and religion, and a central focus of the time was the question of the immortal soul in relation to discoveries in neurophysiology.

Chapter Two is devoted to Dostoevsky's novel *The Idiot*. I investigate another element of the development of science, the pathological condition of epilepsy, that not only had broad implications for scientists generally in the period, but was central to Dostoevsky's work, in particular the novel *The Idiot*. The problem of epilepsy in the context of Dostoevsky has been extensively studied by scholars, most prominently in the medical history of Dostoevsky's epilepsy written by James Rice, *Dostoevsky and the Healing Art* (1988). This study of Dostoevsky's epilepsy brings together personal documents, scientific works, and a broad conceptualization of the different materials that the writer had at his disposal throughout his life.

I take a specific look at the British neurologist John Hughlings Jackson and his concept of epileptic pathology through the use of case studies in dialogue with Dostoevsky's fiction. Jackson, known as the father of modern neurology, was interested in epilepsy not only as a particular kind of disorder, but also as a way into the function of the brain in a non-pathological sense. I look at the case studies employed by Jackson as authoritative models for the complexity of epileptic experience as understood at the time; along with these case studies in mind, I close read Chapter 5 of Part 2 of *Idiot*. While I do not claim Dostoevsky's direct knowledge of Jackson's work, I show a remarkable likeness in the narrative structure of Jackson's medical case studies and Dostoevsky's depictions of his character's experience in his novel. I claim that, for the medical case studies and, especially, for the novel, epilepsy served as material that helped to develop special narrative techniques for representing the most elusive phenomena in human consciousness. In this context, I analyze this narrative style in relation to another novelist, Gustave Flaubert, who, like Dostoevsky, is known for his innovative use of *style indirect libre* in his novels as well as his own epileptic condition.

In Chapter Three, I focus on Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*. I read the first chapters of Part 1 for their engagement with the famous debate between Ivan Sechenov and Konstantin Kavelin about the nature of human psyche and the place of science and theology in investigating consciousness, which took place in the early 1870s in the "thick journal" *The Herald of Europe*. In particular, I will show how Tolstoy's dialogue in letters with his friend Nikolai Strakhov complicated his understanding of the nature of consciousness through the discussion of the problem of the immortal soul.

In the second part of this chapter, I will demonstrate (through the reading of specific scenes) how Tolstoy's novel departs from this debate and engages in the development of his own understanding of the mind, one that reflects the debate between scientists and religious thinkers but gives rise to models of consciousness that are beyond those of both science and religion and belong to literature. Importantly, I will show how the third-person narrative in Tolstoy's novel takes on the modeling of character's subjectivity. With this in mind, I will provide close readings of three scenes of the novel that embody an enormously complex situation of subjectivity in the very narrative structure.

In this, I hope to show, lies the unique contribution of Dostoevsky and Tolstoy to the central problem of the 19<sup>th</sup> century: How to give form to consciousness.

Chapter One  
Science of the Brain in Russian Journals

*Under the Same Cover*

In early 1867, the liberal “thick journal” *Notes of the Fatherland* published an article under the curious title “A Psychological Note” (*Psikhologicheskaja Zametka*). This work was comprised of the first-person account of mental illness of a well-known Russian journalist and political activist, Vasilii Ivanovich Kel’siev (1835-1872), who had been living abroad. Unlike his other political publications, the article detailed Kel’siev’s mental illness and vivid hallucinations associated with alcohol, which he linked to his nervous system:

I laid on my back with my eyes closed, my nerves were trembling, my head was spinning. And so before my eyes various images began to rush, like usually happens in the case of a feverish state. I began to look around – there were heads, but these heads quickly changed into ugly faces. They appeared and quickly disappeared, maybe because I rubbed my eyes and rushed about, so in order not to see this horrible sight. [...] And image after image, one more disgusting than the next one and more terrible than the other, flashed before me. [...] For about maybe five minutes, I fought with them—it is known that visions and dreams occur extremely quickly: one can see a thousand images in a minute; finally, I came to my senses. [...] In fact, what were for me ugly faces would be seen as a devil to a commoner. I could understand that what I see exists only in my optic nerves, I could follow and observe the visions that appear in me but are independent—but the commoner takes everything that he sees at face value. And not only a commoner: we all do not know how to accurately determine the boundaries of the inner world with the outer ones; our body is so arranged that we get confused at every step, where begins the not-I, and where the I ends.<sup>50</sup>

---

<sup>50</sup> [[Я] лежал на спине с закрытыми глазами, нервы дрожали, голова кружилась. И вот перед глазами моими стали носиться разные образы, как обыкновенно бывает в лихорадочном состоянии. Я стал всматриваться – это были головы, но головы эти изменялись быстро в безобразнейшие рожи. Они являлись и исчезали быстро, может быть, потому, что я тер себе глаза и метался: чтоб не видеть этого отвратительного зрелища. [...] И образ за образом, один гаже другого, один страшнее другого мелькали передо мною. [...] Минут пять, может быть, боролся я с ними—известно, что видения и сны происходят чрезвычайно быстро: в минуту можно перевидать тысячу образов; наконец я опомнился. [...] В самом деле, что для меня были безобразные рожи—то, для простолюдина черти. Я мог понять, что видимое мною существует только в моих глазных нервах, я мог следить и наблюдать являющиеся во мне, но независимо от меня видения—но простолюдин все, что видит, принимает за наличные деньги. Да и не только простолюдин, мы все не умеем определить с точностью границы внутреннего мира с внешними; наш организм так устроен, что мы путаемся на каждом шагу, где начинается не я, и где кончается я. (V. P. Ivanov-Zheludkov, “Psikhologicheskaja zametka,” *Otechestvennye Zapiski* [January 1867]: 117-118)]



This first-person description of a hallucinatory and dream state of mind was written in July 1866, when Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* was being serialized in the journal *The Russian Herald* (coincidentally the very month that published the episode of Raskolnikov's delirious dream). This work was not at all uncommon for journals at the time: Russian journalists for the past several years had turned with increasing frequency to the question of brain science, publishing first-hand accounts, diaries, and other reports of pathological conditions that offered a subjective view into the phenomenon that was an object of scientific investigation. Kel'siev described his experience in scientific terms: his visions were not the result of demons or other such explanations, but they originated in the optic nerves and had a source in the pathology of the nervous system. What is more, it appeared that for Kel'siev the physiology of the body was the cause of a major philosophical dilemma: the separation of the "I" and the "non-I."

Kel'siev's diary speaks to the larger importance of brain science in the journals of the day. In Russia, in the so-called "thick journals," scientific treatises and essays, case studies, and reviews of scientific works from abroad were published alongside politics, theology, philosophy, and literature. Figures outside of science and medicine, as seen with the example of Kel'siev, made contributions, including personal documents detailing the inner experience of pathological conditions. As Sally Shuttleworth and Geoffrey Cantor recently argued in the case of Victorian England, journals in this era were "by nature more open and multi-vocal than books," and readers of these journals, where "readers and journalist [came] together in the construction of science," played an important role in the development of scientific ideas.<sup>51</sup> In such journals, literary writers worked with scientists. In Victorian England, the novelist George Eliot handled scientific publications as part of her work as assistant editor at *Westminster Review*.<sup>52</sup> More broadly, journals in Russia and Western Europe alike represented an exchange on the level of language and ideas between scientists, philosophers, and others, and, as Gillian Beer argues in her groundbreaking *Darwin's Plots*, at the time, "scientists shared a literary, nonmathematical discourse" and "drew openly upon literary, historical and philosophical material as part of their arguments."<sup>53</sup> In Russia, a similar situation emerged in both popular and professional journals, and brain science was a major focus of exchanges between science, literature, and other disciplines. Scientists, philosophers, and theologians wrote works for the general reader that discussed the workings of the mind in the context of the new developments in the physiology of the nervous system.

Works of science published in popular journals often described the physiological function of the brain in detailed reports of experiments that were more appropriate for a medical publication. In March 1872, the journal *The Russian Herald*, which serialized the novels of Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, published an article by the French physiologist Claude Bernard under the title "The Brain During Sleep [*Mozg vo vremia sna*]," detailing the observation of the live brain in a dog and in a patient with epilepsy. The article is notable for its visceral details of the functioning brain, which was visible directly to the clinician:

To observe the brain during natural sleep, in dogs, part of the bony membrane of the skull was replaced through trepanation by a watch glass tightly fitted to

---

<sup>51</sup> Geoffrey Cantor and Sally Shuttleworth, "Introduction," in *Science Serialized: Representations of the Sciences in Nineteenth Century Periodicals*, ed. Geoffrey Cantor and Sally Shuttleworth (Cambridge: The M. I. T. Press, 2004), 7.

<sup>52</sup> Vanessa Ryan, *Thinking Without Thinking in the Victorian Novel*, 60-61.

<sup>53</sup> Gillian Beer, *Darwin's Plots*, 4.

eliminate the irritating effect of the outside air. Animals can easily withstand this operation; observing their brains through this window while awake and asleep, we notice that when the dog sleeps, the brain is always paler, that a new rush of blood is constantly detected upon awakening, when brain functions resume their activity. Facts similar to those observed in animals have also been seen directly on the human brain. One person, the victim of a terrible accident on the railroad, presented a situation for such an observation. The brain was exposed on a space three inches long and six inches wide. The wounded was subject to frequent and severe seizures of epilepsy, during which the brain invariably rose. After these seizures came sleep, and the medulla gradually decreased. When the patient woke up, the brain would protrude again and come level with the outer surface of the skull.<sup>54</sup>

This case appeared alongside works of literature (this month included a translation of Wilkie Collins's novel, *Poor Miss Finch*, notable for being influenced by the contemporary discussion of brain science; it included an epileptic character). Scientists, as seen in the example of Bernard's experiment on the dog and human, had attempted to devise ways to directly observe the workings of the live brain, on the very same pages that novelists had worked to make characters' consciousness transparent to the reader.

Journals enabled figures from different disciplines to debate central topics concerning consciousness. In Russia, ideas about the human mind shared by scientists, novelists, theologians, and philosophers emerged out of a common intellectual tradition based in German idealist philosophy and the tradition of Romantic *Naturphilosophie*.<sup>55</sup> This tradition played a major role in the debates in the 1860s and 1870s around such issues as the relationship of the body and the soul, the nature of the unconscious mind, altered or hallucinatory mental states, and the status of the real and the non-real. The emergence of the science of the brain led scientists and others to confront new ideas about the workings of the human mind. Novelists, in the first

---

<sup>54</sup> [Для наблюдения мозга во время естественного сна, у собак посредством трепанирования заменяли часть костяной оболочки черепа часовым стеклом, плотно прилаженным, для устранения раздражающего действия наружного воздуха. Животные легко выдерживают эту операцию; наблюдая их мозг в это окошечко во время бдения и во время сна, замечаем, что когда собака спит, то мозг всегда бледнее, что новый прилив крови постоянно обнаруживается при пробуждении, когда мозговые функции возобновляют свою деятельность. Факты подобные тем кои наблюдаемы были на животных замечены были и прямо на человеческом мозгу. На одном человеке, жертве страшного несчастья на железной дороге, представился случай к такому наблюдению. Мозг обнаружился на пространстве трех дюймов в длину и шести в ширину. Раненый подвержен был частым и сильным припадкам эпилепсии, в продолжение коих мозг неизменно поднимался. После этих припадков наступал сон, и мозговое вещество постепенно понижалось. Когда больной просыпался, мозг выступал снова и приходил в уровень со внешнею поверхностью черепа. (Anonymous, "IV. Mозг во время сна," "Smes'," *Russkii Vestnik* 98 [March 1872]: 347-348)]

<sup>55</sup> V. V. Zen'kovsky describes the influence of German idealism in the secularization of Russian thought, especially the Russian interest in Schelling's *Naturphilosophie* and the impact of Hegel in *Istoriia Russkoi Filosofii*, Vol. 1 (Paris: YMCA Press, 1948), 125-139; 245-276.

place Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, offered their own approaches to these same questions in the works of fiction.

In the “thick” popular journals and professional press, alongside the publication of novels, scientific ideas were popularized through review articles and scientific treatises, including translations of work by Western European scientists. Popularizers included literary critics, with and without training in natural sciences, as well as philosophers and novelists. Dostoevsky published reviews of brain science in the journals he edited, *The Epoch* (*Epokha*) and *Time* (*Vremia*). Popularizers of science included figures close to Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, and Turgenev, such as the literary critic and philosopher Nikolai Nikolaevich Strakhov; the radical critics, Nikolai Alexandrovich Dobroliubov, Dmitrii Ivanovich Pisarev, Nikolai Chernyshevsky, and Nikolai Vasil’evich Shelgunov; and, in the liberal press, the literary critics Evgeny Nikolaevich Edel’son and the philosopher Mikhail Ivanovich Vladislavlev; the trained doctors Pavel Matveevich Ol’khin and Nikolai Ivanovich Solov’iev. Popularizers also translated and reviewed works on science published in West European journals, such as the French popular journal *Revue des deux mondes* and the Victorian periodicals *The Fortnightly Review* and *Westminster Review*.

It was not uncommon for novelists to directly refer to science in their novels. One important moment can be found in Dostoevsky’s *The Brothers Karamazov*. Late in the novel, in Chapter 4 of Book 11, the character Mitia Karamazov, as readers may recall, is accused of murder—a crime, lawyers argue, he committed because of his mental illness. But Mitia laments that the physiology of the brain has replaced the idea of God and the immortal soul:

“Imagine: inside, in the nerves, in the head—that is, these nerves are there in the brain... (damn them!) there are sort of little tails, the little tails of those nerves, and as soon as they begin quivering...that is, you see, I look at something with my eyes and then they begin quivering, those little tails...and when they quiver, then an image appears...it doesn’t appear at once, but an instant, a second, passes... and then something like a moment appears; that is, not a moment—devil take the moment!—but an image; that is, an object, or an action, damn it! That’s why I see and then think, because of those tails, not at all because I’ve got a soul, and that I am some sort of image and likeness. All that is nonsense! Mikhail explained it all to me yesterday, brother, and it simply bowled me over. It’s magnificent, Alyosha, this science! A new man’s arising—that I understand.... And yet I am sorry to lose God! [...] ‘But what will become of men,’ I asked [Rakitin], ‘without God and immortal life?’” (557-558).<sup>56</sup>

---

<sup>56</sup> For English translations of *The Brothers Karamazov*, I have used Constance Garnett, *The Brothers Karamazov*, ed. Ralph E. Matlaw (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1976), 557-558. [“Вообрази себе: это там в нервах, в голове, то есть там в мозгу эти нервы (ну черт их возьми!) ... есть такие этакие хвостики, у нервов этих хвостики, ну, и как только они там задрожат ... то есть видишь, я посмотрю на что-нибудь глазами, вот так, и они задрожат, хвостики-то... а как задрожат, то и является образ, и не сейчас является, а там какое-то мгновение, секунда такая пройдет, и является такой будто бы момент, то есть не момент,— черт его дери момент,— а образ, то есть предмет али происшествие, ну там черт дери — вот почему я и созерцаю, а потом мыслю...потому что хвостики, а вовсе не потому, что у меня душа и что я там какой-то образ и подобие, всё это глупости. Это, брат, мне Михаил еще вчера объяснял, и меня точно обожгло. Великолепна, Алеша, эта наука!

Mitia's description of the "quivering little tails" of nerves was quite similar to depictions of the nervous system at the time: one may only look at a work translated and published a couple of years earlier in the same journal by George Henry Lewes, who had described similar "trembling" groups of nervous tissue, suggesting that this movement led to what is known as the soul.<sup>57</sup> Mitia's fear that such quivering tails could replace God reflected a larger debate between science and religion: for many among Dostoevsky's contemporaries, scientists such as Claude Bernard or Ivan Sechenov had attempted to replace the idea of the immortal soul with the function of the brain and nervous system.

In this chapter, I will speak to how the "thick journals" and professional scientific press popularized new scientific discoveries. Many figures took part in the popularization and debate about scientific discoveries concerning the brain and the nervous system, and they shared a common language accessible to readers. In some cases, scientists wrote in a popular style, as seen in Sechenov's treatise, *Reflexes of the Brain*. The discussions about science turned to shared concerns about the basic parameters of the human condition, the nature of the body in relation to the soul, the unconscious mind, hallucinations, dreams, spiritualism, and more. The period was unique for the convergence—on the level of language, genre, metaphor, and concepts—between literature, science, philosophy, and other disciplines, enabled by journals.

### *Sechenov's Reflexes of the Brain*

In May of 1863, the "father of Russian physiology," Ivan Mikhailovich Sechenov (1829-1905), began writing an essay about the workings of reflex action in relation to the human brain, which was later published under the title *Reflexes of the Brain* in the medical journal *The Medical Herald (Meditsinskii Vestnik)*. In the words of the historian of science Daniel Todes, Sechenov's treatise made the radical claim that "psychology could be established as a science by ridding it of metaphysical concepts such as the soul and free will...by investigating psychic

---

Новый человек пойдет, это-то я понимаю... А все-таки бога жалко! [...] «Только как же, спрашиваю, после того человек-то? Без бога-то и без будущей жизни?» (F. M. Dostoevskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridtsati tomakh* [Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo "Nauka," 1976, Vol. 15], 28-29)]

<sup>57</sup> The review begins by directly quoting Lewes: "The great task of psychology, as a department of biology, is to bring all mental phenomena out of one basic process in one vital tissue. The tissue is nervous; the process consists in the grouping of nerve units. The nervous unit is trembling.' So the question of the spirit is resolved. Spirit or soul, as an agent, as a special principle or substrate of psychic phenomena, does not exist. This is an inappropriate realization of logical division, the embodiment of pure abstraction." ["Великая задача психологии, как отдела биологии, заключается в том чтобы вывести все психические явления из одного основного процесса в одной жизненной ткани. Ткань эта—нервная; процесс заключается в группировке нервных единиц. Нервная единица есть дрожание." Итак, вопрос о духе решен. Дух или душа, как деятель, как особое начало или субстрат психических явлений, не существует. Это—неуместная реализация логического деления, олицетворение чистой абстракции. ("Filosofskoe uchenie Dzhordzha Genri Luisa [Voprosy o zhizni i Dukh. Problems of Life and Mind], *Russkii Vestnik* [October 1876]: 863-864)]

phenomena as determined, physiological processes.”<sup>58</sup> The intended audience was not a scientific audience but the general reader. Sechenov had tried, and failed, to publish the work in the leading radical journal of the day, *The Contemporary*, and even when published in a medical journal, the work was read widely and sparked a large debate about the role of the brain and the nervous system in psychic life. In the words of the contemporary V. A. Mikhnevich, *Reflexes of the Brain* became “something like a gospel for our precocious materialists [who] drew from it courageous resolutions of complicated questions such as the author himself never dreamed!”<sup>59</sup>

In the years leading up to the publication of *Reflexes of the Brain*, brain physiology had been discussed in radical journals in the context of philosophical materialism. Radical critics introduced works of the Western popularizers of materialist science Ludwig Büchner, Jacob Moleschott, and Karl Vogt, advocating for a physical and chemical basis of psychic activity. One can recall Moleschott’s famous phrases, often repeated at the time: “there is no thought without phosphorus”; “the brain secretes thought like the liver secretes bile.” As the historian Alexander Vucinich argued in his classic study on Russian science, these popular materialist treatises were not true science but they nevertheless “provided the ideas necessary to challenge official ideology, orthodox religious thought, and idealistic metaphysics.”<sup>60</sup> As serious science began to offer proof for these materialist ideas through the work of Western European physiologists, such as Hermann Helmholtz and Karl Ludwig, the Russian state, which had adopted philosophical idealism as an official doctrine, began “to entrust the teaching of physiology to men who fully endorsed the doctrine of a completely separate ‘matter’ and ‘spirit,’ and who opposed all efforts to tie psychology to physiology.”<sup>61</sup> In this way, “philosophical dualism became the cornerstone of the official ideology, which viewed spiritual life as a direct emanation from divine power.”<sup>62</sup>

As a student in Moscow in the 1850s, Sechenov was interested in questions of science as well as the philosophical debates of the day. As Sechenov remembered, “[I] was plunged up to my ears in philosophical questions.”<sup>63</sup> Sechenov trained in the late 1850s and early 1860s with major Western European scientists, Helmholtz, Ludwig, and Bernard, giving the young scientist a scientific training that radical thinkers such as Chernyshevsky and Dobroliubov did not have access to. As Vucinich has noted, “Sechenov was a generation ahead of Dobroliubov and Chernyshevsky; he did share their philosophical views, but his strength was in experimental science.”<sup>64</sup> Sechenov combined the philosophical concerns of materialism and the “true science” of experimental physiology of Helmholtz and Ludwig. Todes notes that in *Reflexes of the Brain* we can see Sechenov’s “dual roles” of “ideologist” and “scientist”: “This work was both an argument for a physiological, determinist *approach* to psychology and a speculative attempt to *explain* psychic phenomena on the basis of physiological processes.”<sup>65</sup>

Michael Holquist has demonstrated in his path-breaking essay, “Bazarov and Sechenov:

---

<sup>58</sup> Daniel Todes, “From Radicalism to Scientific Convention: Biological Psychology in Russia from Sechenov to Pavlov,” Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1981, 265.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 239.

<sup>60</sup> Alexander Vucinich, *Science in Russian Culture*, Vol. 2, 122.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> Daniel Todes, “From Radicalism to Scientific Convention: Biological Psychology in Russia from Sechenov to Pavlov,” 242.

<sup>64</sup> Alexander Vucinich, *Science in Russian Culture*, Vol. 2, 123.

<sup>65</sup> Daniel Todes, “From Radicalism to Scientific Convention: Biological Psychology in Russia from Sechenov to Pavlov,” 250.

The Role of Scientific Metaphor in *Fathers and Sons*,” that literature was a major frame for Sechenov’s scientific discoveries and for their popularization in the 1860s:

In March of 1860, at the very time Turgenev was at work on *Fathers and Sons*, Sechenov began a series of lectures at the St. Petersburg Medico-Surgical Academy. These lectures produced a sensation among not only the students, but all Petersburg. As the historian M. N. Shaternikov puts it: “Both the form and the content of Sechenov’s lectures produced an immense impression, not only on the academic world, but also on intellectual society in general. [His] manner of speaking was simple and convincing; his method of exposition was absolutely new. With youthful enthusiasm and deep faith in the all-conquering power of Science and Reason [...] he spoke not only of what had already been achieved, also of what was yet to be done.”<sup>66</sup>

These lectures, attended by Turgenev, inspired several scientist characters, Bazarov in *Fathers and Sons* (1862) and Kirsanov in Chernyshevsky’s *What is to Be Done* (1863), who (like Sechenov) studied with Claude Bernard. Turgenev’s Bazarov, a medical student who espouses materialist ideas and dissects frogs, was partially modelled on Sechenov. More importantly, Holquist demonstrated how science had emerged in this period “as a *language*, as a discursive practice claiming a unique relation to truth that Turgenev will test in his fiction.”<sup>67</sup>

Sechenov’s “Reflexes of the Brain,” which appeared the year after Turgenev’s *Fathers and Children* and in the same year as Chernyshevsky’s *What is to be Done?*, is notable for its combination of ideological and scientific issues and its use of literary devices. As Maya Koretzky argues, “*Reflexes of the Brain* is not only a scientific work, but also a literary one—echoing the metaphors, language, and analogies of contemporary fiction to engage in a literary way with a wide audience.”<sup>68</sup> This scientific treatise echoes the style of *What is to be Done?* (published in *The Contemporary*): both were written in an accessible language and made direct appeals to the reader. Sechenov met Chernyshevsky as early as 1859, and their personal relationship may have sparked the scientist’s turn to a more popular style later seen in *Reflexes of the Brain*.<sup>69</sup>

The essay’s similarity to literature is seen in the first page of the treatise, when Sechenov makes a direct appeal to the reader (echoing Chernyshevsky) and turns to debates in the journals concerning body and soul:

I take it that my readers have had a chance to be present at debates concerning the substance of the soul and its dependence on the body. As a rule the debaters are a young man and an old man, if they are both naturalists, or two young men, if one

---

<sup>66</sup> Michael Holquist, “Bazarov and Sechenov: The Role of Scientific Metaphor in *Fathers and Sons*,” 366-367.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 367.

<sup>68</sup> Maya Koretzky, “Sensational Science,” 3.

<sup>69</sup> According to Kh. S. Koshtoyants, it was through Peter Ivanovich Bokov (himself a physician “prototype of Lopukhov in Chernyshevsky’s *What Is to be Done?*”) that Sechenov met Chernyshevsky in 1859-1860. See Koshtoyants, *Essays on the History of Physiology in Russia*, trans. and ed., Donald B. Lindsley (Washington, D. C.: American Institute of Biological Sciences, 1964).

of them is more preoccupied with problems of matter and the other with problems of the soul. The argument becomes really heated when the debaters are to some degree dilettantes on the subject. In this case one is usually an expert at generalizing about things which are not susceptible of generalization at all (this being a feature of the dilettante), and the audience is treated to a performance which resembles carnival fireworks on the Petersburg Islands. Bombastic phrases, broad views and bright ideas crackle and cascade like rockets. During the debate some people in the audience—young and timid enthusiasts—feel a cold shiver now and then pass down their spines, some sit with bated breath, while others are covered with sweat. But at last the performance comes to an end. Columns of fire go up into the air, burst with a sparkle and die out, leaving in the mind only dim memories of lucid phantoms. Such is the usual fate of all private debates between dilettantes. They stir the imagination of the listeners for a time, but fail to convince. We get a different picture, however, when the taste for dialectical gymnastics spreads in society. In this case the debater with a reputation of a kind easily becomes an idol. His opinions become dogmas and imperceptibly creep into literature. Anyone who has followed the intellectual development in Russia in the last decade has undoubtedly witnessed such spectacles and has observed that our society is extremely fickle in these matters (1-2, Translation adjusted).<sup>70</sup>

Sechenov acknowledges an important change: scientific ideas had “crept into literature” and debates regularly borrowed from scientific language in answering decidedly non-scientific concerns related to the philosophical and theological understanding of the soul. As Sechenov correctly characterizes these debates, they involved participants who were not specialists in science—journalists, philosophers, theologians, and novelists. Nevertheless, Sechenov carved the place of authority for himself as a scientist, and he would propose solutions to the philosophical question of the soul.

At several points, Sechenov makes appeals to ideological concerns that had been discussed in previous years in his own lectures and were of great interest to many of his readers. He mentions “philosophers” discussing the soul:

Let us [...] enter the world of phenomena engendered by the functioning of the

---

<sup>70</sup> I. M. Sechenov, *Reflexes of the Brain*, trans. S. Belsky, 1-2. [Вам, конечно, случалось, любезный читатель, присутствовать при спорах о сущности души и ее зависимости от тела. Спорят обыкновенно или молодой человек со стариком, если оба натуралисты, или юность с юностью, если один занимается больше материей, другой — духом. [...] К небу летят страшные столбы огня, лопаются, гаснут... и на душе остается лишь смутное воспоминание о светлых призраках. Такова обыкновенно судьба всех частных споров между дилетантами. Они волнуют на время воображение слушателей, но никого не убеждают. Дело другого рода, если вкус к этой диалектической гимнастике распространяется в обществе. Там боец с некоторым авторитетом легко делается кумиром. Его мнения возводятся в догму, и, смотришь, они уже проскользнули в литературу. Всякий, следящий лет десяток за умственным движением в России, бывал, конечно, свидетелем таких примеров, и всякий заметил, без сомнения, что в делах этого рода наше общество отличается большою подвижностью. (Ivan Sechenov, *Izbrannye proizvedeniia*, Vol. 1, 7)]

brain. It is generally said that this world embraces the entire psychical life; few people can be found now who would not accept this idea with greater or lesser reservations. The difference in the views of the various schools consists merely in the fact that some regard the brain as the organ of the soul, thus divorcing the latter from the former, while others declare that the soul is the product of the functioning of the brain. Not being philosophers, we shall not discuss these differences here. We, physiologists, are satisfied that the brain is an organ of the soul, i.e., a mechanism which, if brought into action by a certain cause, ultimately produces a series of external phenomena which are expressions of psychical activity (2-3).<sup>71</sup>

In another turn, Sechenov describes reflexes in relation to the question of free will, suggesting that morals have a physiological basis:

[W]e are able, for example, to stop at will our respiratory movements in any phase of their development even after expiration when the respiratory muscles are relaxed; man can also suppress screams and any other movements caused by pain, fright, etc. It is remarkable that in the latter cases, which presuppose the presence of considerable moral power in the given person, the effort of will aimed at suppressing involuntary movements externally find little or no expression at all in accessory movements; the person who remains absolutely calm and motionless in these conditions is regarded as possessing strong will power. In the face of these facts contemporary physiologists could not but admit the existence in the human body—namely, in the brain through which man's will acts—of mechanisms which inhibit reflex movement (14).<sup>72</sup>

---

<sup>71</sup> [Войдемте же, любезный читатель, в тот мир явлений, который родится из деятельности головного мозга. Говорят обыкновенно, что этот мир охватывает собою всю психическую жизнь, и вряд ли есть уже теперь люди, которые с большими или меньшими оговорками не принимали бы этой мысли за истину. Разница в воззрениях школ на предмет лишь та, что одни, принимая мозг за орган души, отделяют по сущности последнюю от первого; другие же говорят, что душа по своей сущности есть продукт деятельности мозга. Мы не философы и в критику этих различий входить не будем. Для нас, как для физиологов, достаточно и того, что мозг есть орган души, т. е. такой механизм, который, будучи приведен каким ни на есть причинами в движение, дает в окончательном результате тот ряд внешних явлений, которыми характеризуется психическая деятельность. (Ivan Sechenov, *Izbrannye proizvedeniia*, Vol. 1, 9)]

<sup>72</sup> [[М]ы можем остановить произвольно дыхательные движения во все фазы из развития, даже после выдыхания, когда все дыхательные мышцы находятся в расслабленном состоянии; воля может подавить, далее, крик и всякое другое движение, вытекающее из воли, испуга и пр. И замечательно, что во всех последних случаях, всегда предполагающих со стороны человека значительную дозу нравственной силы, усилие воли к появлению невольных движений мало или даже вовсе не выражается извне какими-нибудь побочными движениями; человек, остающийся при этих условиях совершенно покойным и неподвижным, считается более сильным. Зная все эти факты, могли ли современные физиологи не принять существования в человеческом теле – и именно в головном мозгу, потому что воля действует только при посредстве этого органа,—



Todes argues that these direct appeals to moral behavior link physiology to ideological questions in a new way: “*Reflexes of the Brain* did not merely demonstrate to psychologists that ‘it is impossible to apply physiological knowledge to the phenomena of psychic life;’ it advanced an argument for rejecting the concept of free will.<sup>73</sup>” Such appeals capture the physiological treatise’s complex origins in the ideological discussions of the 1860s: through language borrowed from these debates, Sechenov had given science a new voice in questions that extended far beyond the laboratory.

Sechenov employs several metaphors that are repeated throughout the text. He compares the brain to a machine and emphasizes the mechanical origin of the highest forms of psychic activity; furthermore, he argues that artistic thinking, spiritual experience, and emotions can be understood using mathematical formulas:

[T]he reader will readily grasp that absolutely all the properties of the external manifestations of brain activity described as animation, passion, mockery, sorrow, joy, etc., are merely results of a greater or lesser contraction of definite groups of muscles, which, as everyone knows, is a purely mechanical act. Even the confirmed spiritualist cannot but agree with this. Indeed, how can it be otherwise, when we know that in the hands of the musician a soulless instrument produces sounds full of life and passion, that stone becomes animated under the hand of a sculptor? The life-giving hands of musician and sculptor perform purely mechanical movements, which, strictly speaking, can be subjected to mathematical analysis and expressed by formulas. How, then, could they express passion in sounds and images, unless the expression were a purely mechanical act? (4)<sup>74</sup>

Sechenov suggests that science—specifically the physiological explanations of the brain—model the basic categories of understanding the mind in an entirely new way, lending credibility to the materialist approach to psychic life and artistic creation. There was no psychic experience that

---

механизмов, задерживающих отраженные движения? (Ivan Sechenov, *Izbrannyye proizvedeniia*, Vol. 1, 20-21)]

<sup>73</sup> Daniel Todes, “From Radicalism to Scientific Convention: Biological Psychology in Russia from Sechenov to Pavlov,” 261.

<sup>74</sup> [[Ч]итателю становится разом понятно, что все без исключения качества внешних проявлений мозговой деятельности, которые мы характеризуем, например, словами: одушевленность, страстность, насмешка, печаль, радость и пр., суть не что иное, как результаты большего или меньшего укорочения какой-нибудь группы мышц – акта, как всем известно, чисто механического. С этим не может не согласиться даже самый заклятый спиритуалист. Да и может ли быть в самом деле иначе, если мы знаем, что рукою музыканта вырываются из бездушного инструмента звуки, полные жизни и страсти, а под рукою скульптора оживает камень. Ведь и у музыканта и у скульптора рука, творящая жизнь, способна делать лишь чисто механические движения, которые, строго говоря, могут быть даже подвергнуты математическому анализу и выражены формулой. Как же могли бы они при этих условиях вкладывать в звуки и образы выражение страсти, если бы это выражение не было актом чисто механическим? (Ivan Sechenov, *Izbrannyye proizvedeniia*, Vol. 1, 10-11)]

was too complex for the physiologist.

The treatise alludes to several fictional cases, such as the “nervous lady,” the “tipsy horseman,” the “somnambulist who climbs roofs.” But the essay’s “true hero” (in Koretzky’s words) became a frog. Sechenov described several experiments in which frogs were decapitated, electrocuted, and treated with acid, such as the following:<sup>75</sup>

G. Berezin, assistant in the physiological laboratory of the Petersburg Academy, has found that if a frog is kept in room temperature (i.e., at 17-18°) for several hours and if its hind legs are then immersed in ice-cold water, it will immediately withdraw them. The frog feels the cold which gives an unpleasant sensation and makes a definite movement in order to get away from it. It should be pointed out that the movement is always a pronounced one—as if the frog were frightened. But if the immersion in ice-cold water is repeated after the hemispheres have been removed, the frog remains absolutely quiet. [...] Another experiment proving the existence in the frog’s brain of mechanisms which intensify involuntary movements was carried out by *Pashutin*, a student. He found that the movements of a frog in response to a touch to its skin are greatly intensified when its mid-brain is stimulated by electric current. In this case, the frog acts in exactly the same way as a man who is touched unexpectedly: it starts, bringing its muscles into play (21).<sup>76</sup>

In these two cases, Sechenov extrapolates to the hypothetical workings of the human brain what was gained in experiments on frogs. In the process, he turns to metaphor as the basis of his major claims about reflexes in the brain of humans. In the years to come, journalists would use the frog in philosophical discussions concerning the soul (to be shown later in this chapter). What originated in a scientific experiment was transformed into an emblematic image signaling the philosophical rejection of the Christian concepts of the soul and free will.

In this light, Sechenov’s description of the “nervous lady” would appear to parallel his rendition of the frog’s reflex action, recasting the human mind as functioning just like the

---

<sup>75</sup> Koretzky describes the similarities between Sechenov’s essay and Chernyshevsky’s novel, including the various characters and experiments on frogs, in “Sensational Science,” 19-20 and 23-24.

<sup>76</sup> [Г. Березин, ассистент при физиологической лаборатории здешней академии, нашел, что если продержать лягушку при комнатной температуре (т. е. при 17-18°С) несколько часов и затем опустить ее задние лапки в воду со льдом, то она очень скоро выдергивает их оттуда. Лягушка, значить, чувствует холод, он ей неприятен, и она двигается с целью избежать неприятного ощущения; и нужно заметить, что движение это бывает всегда очень сильно – лягушка как бы пугается. Если же ей отнять полушария и повторить операцию погружения лапок, то животное остается абсолютно покойным. [...] Другой опыт, доказывающий присутствие в головном мозгу лягушки механизмов, усиливающих невольные движения, принадлежит г. студ. *Пашутину*. Он нашел, что движения лягушки от прикосновения к ее коже значительно усиливаются, если раздражать ее электрическим током средние части головного мозга. При этом на ней повторяется с виду совершенно то же самое, что на человеке, до которого неожиданно дотрагиваются: лягушка вздрагивает от прикосновения всем телом. (Ivan Sechenov, *Izbrannye proizvedeniia*, Vol. 1, 27-28)]

decerebrated frog:

You are in the company, say, of a nervous lady. You warn her that you are going to bang the table, and then proceed to do so. In this case the sound acts on the auditory nerve of the lady not suddenly or unexpectedly; nevertheless, the lady starts. From this fact you can easily draw the conclusion that sudden stimulation of the sensory nerve is not an indispensable condition for the emergence of an involuntary movement, or that a nervous woman is an abnormal pathological person in whom phenomena develop reversely. However, refrain for a moment from drawing conclusions and go on with your experiment. With the lady's permission you continue to knock on the table with the same force, bringing the number of knocks to several per minute. Ultimately a stage will be reached when the knocks no longer affect the lady: she will not start any more. [...] When the lady has got used to knocks of a certain strength, you add to the strength warning the lady beforehand. She will start again. When knocks of the same strength are repeated, the reflex movements disappear again (9).<sup>77</sup>

Sechenov's "nervous lady" appears similar to the frog: she reacts to sudden stimuli by "starting" in a way that may recall the frog's jerking legs when exposed to acid. As will be seen in examples given later in this chapter, the decerebrated frog would become a popular symbol, translating an experiment in physiology into a philosophical approach to the nature of the will applicable to living people.

The publication of the treatise in 1863 caused an immediate sensation. As mentioned earlier, Sechenov originally intended to publish the essay under the title "An Attempt to Establish the Physiological Foundations of Psychic Processes" in *The Contemporary*, a popular journal that had long supported materialist philosophy. It is no surprise that the censor banned the essay's publication, instead requiring it to appear in the medical journal *The Medical Herald*, under a different name, *Reflexes of the Brain*.<sup>78</sup> As Koretzky has noted, while the censor

---

<sup>77</sup> [Дана нервная дама. Вы ее предупреждаете, что сейчас стукнете рукой по столу и стучите. Звук падает в таком случае на слуховой нерв дамы не внезапно, не неожиданно; тем не менее она вздрагивает. При виде такого факта вам может прийти в голову, что неожиданность раздражения чувствующего нерва не есть еще абсолютное условие невольности движения или что нервная женщина есть существо ненормальное, патологическое, в котором явления происходят наизворот. Удержитесь пока от этих заключений, любезный читатель, и продолжайте опыт. Стучанье по столу продолжается с разрешения дамы с прежнею силою, и теперь уже вы делаете несколько ударов в минуту. Приходит, наконец, время, когда стук перестает действовать на нервы: дама не вздрагивает более. Когда дама привыкла к стуку известной силы, усилие его, предупредивши ее, что стук усилится. Дама снова вздрагивает. При повторенных ударах последней силы отраженные движения снова исчезают. (Ivan Sechenov, *Izbrannnye proizvedeniia*, Vol. 1, 15)]

<sup>78</sup> For the publication history of *Reflexes of the Brain*, see Kh. S. Koshtoyants, *Essays on the History of Physiology in Russia*, 148-149. Holquist describes how Turgenev's novel through his depiction of Bazarov influenced the censor's decision to force the publication of *Reflexes of the Brain* in the lesser known *Meditinskii Vesnik* and led to the sale of the 1866 version of the treatise to be temporarily banned: "Bazarov and Sechenov," 372-373.

attempted to hide Sechenov's work in a medical journal, the essay was an instant success and the "censorial decision had the opposite effect—instead of damning *Reflexes of the Brain* to obscurity, its publication in *The Medical Herald* catapulted this relatively unknown periodical into almost immediate popularity. [...] These two issues sold out, and then were sold amongst the intelligentsia for increasingly large sums."<sup>79</sup> In her study of Chernyshevsky, Irina Paperno provides an example of how, even in provincial Russia, in popular speech, the phrase "reflexes of the brain" became a replacement for the word "soul." As a radical activist Leonid Panteleev reported in his memoir, "In Eniseisk a merchant's wife loved to repeat: 'Our learned professor Sechenov says that there is no soul but there are reflexes.'"<sup>80</sup>

*Reflexes of the Brain* would continue to find its way into popular debates in the years to come. In the early 1870s, on the eve of the publication of Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, Sechenov would find himself yet again involved in a philosophical debate with the philosopher and historian Konstantin Kavelin which (as I will discuss in Chapter Three) found its way into Tolstoy's novel. Penetrating journals and novels, Sechenov's ideas and images took on a life of their own far beyond the doors of the physiologist's laboratory.

### *The Body and the Soul*

At the beginning of Sechenov's *Reflexes of the Brain*, the scientist references a debate about the nature of body and soul that had become central in the journals in the 1860s and 1870s. Could science offer a replacement for the soul through the physiology of the body? For him, the answer was simple: "the brain is the organ of the soul." Not all agreed. While some scientists argued that physiology brought an end to philosophical dualism, on closer examination of science a more complex picture emerges. The historians Raymond Martin and John Barresi have argued that in this period scientists offered new models of psychic life, which were part of what they call the "naturalizing of the soul" and a departure from the philosophical dualism of German idealist philosophers, such as Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, and Schopenhauer.<sup>81</sup> In Russia, the concept of the soul [*dusha*] as separate from the body had origins both in German idealist philosophy and Orthodox theology, and science clashed not only with idealist philosophy, but also with theology, religion and the church.<sup>82</sup> As this dissertation will show, Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, who were keenly aware of these debates, developed their own way of dealing with the inner life of characters in their novels in the context of such clashes: for them, the issue of human consciousness and its representation was a religious issue as well as a scientific one.

Beginning in the late 1850s, the radical critics in the journal *The Contemporary*, Nikolai Chernyshevsky, Nikolai Dobroliubov, and Maksim Antonovich, used German materialist

---

<sup>79</sup> Maya Koretzky, "Sensational Science," 16-17.

<sup>80</sup> Irina Paperno, *Chernyshevsky and the Age of Realism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), 66.

<sup>81</sup> Raymond Martin and John Barresi, *The Rise and Fall of Soul and Self* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 201.

<sup>82</sup> David Joravsky argues that in the 1860s in Russia, the questions of science overlapped with ideological concerns in an exceptional way, and that "neurophysiology [led] to a new morality, and so to a reconstruction of society," and that "neurophysiology seemed inherently radical, for it implied the reduction of the soul to functions of the nervous system, and thus subverted the ideology that sustained the established church, autocratic state, and exploiting classes." David Joravsky, *Russian Psychology: A Critical History*, 56.

philosophy and popular physiology to refute the duality of the soul and the body. Russian radical critics believed in physiological basis for the workings of the mind, with thoughts, desires, passions, and the will explained through the science of the brain and chemical reactions in the nervous system.<sup>83</sup> This rejection of the duality of the body and soul attacked the traditional philosophical foundation of the study of psychology, known in Russian as the “science of the soul [*nauka o dushe*],” with its basis in the dualism of German idealism.<sup>84</sup> Dobroliubov, in his 1859 essay in *The Contemporary*, “The Organic Development of Man and the Connections with his Mental and Moral Development” (*Organicheskoe razvitie cheloveka v sviazi s ego umstvennoi i nravstvennoi deiatel’nost’iu*), directly confronted philosophical dualism by paraphrasing Moleschott’s *Der Kreislauf des Lebens*, asserting that “only modern science [*noveishaia nauka*] has rejected the scholastic bifurcation of man and began to consider him in his full, inextricable composition, bodily and spiritual [*telesnom i dukhovnom*], not trying to separate [*razobshchat*] them,” and seeing “in the soul [*v dushe*] precisely that force which penetrates by its own means [*pronikaet soboiu*] and animates [*odushevliaet*] the entire bodily composition of man.”<sup>85</sup> As a result, argues Dobroliubov, “science [*nauka*] no longer considers bodily activities separately from spiritual ones, and vice versa [...] the soul does not connect with the body through an external connection, is not accidentally placed in it, it does not occupy a corner in it, but merges with it [*slivaetsia s nim*]” and without this it is “impossible to imagine a living human organism.”<sup>86</sup>

With the growing focus on the brain and the nervous system as the seat of the soul, others offered a different perspective. The theologian Pamfil Iurkevich addressed the issue in his 1860 work, “The Heart and Its Connection to the Spiritual Life of Man” (*Serdtsie i ego znachenie v dukhovnoi zhizni cheloveka*). In the opening page, he described the heart (rather than the brain) as “an essential organ and the nearest seat of all forces, functions, movements, desires, feelings and thoughts of a person with all their directions and shades.”<sup>87</sup> For him, one should follow the

---

<sup>83</sup> Victoria Frede describes the adoption of materialism by Russian radical critics in “Materialism and the Radical Intelligentsia: the 1860s,” *A History of Russian Philosophy 1830-1930: Faith, Reason and the Defense of Human Dignity*, eds. G. M. Hamburg and Randall A. Poole (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 69-89. David Joravsky describes the influence of materialist ideas about the workings of the brain on the development of radical ideas in this period in *Russian Psychology*, 56-61. Daniel Todes provides a comprehensive history of materialist philosophy in journalism in this period in “From Radicalism to Scientific Convention: Biological Psychology in Russia from Sechenov to Pavlov,” 17-67.

<sup>84</sup> Raymond Martin and John Barresi describe the importance of the notion of the “soul” in German metaphysical thought in *The Rise and Fall of Soul and Self*, 171-203. Joravsky, discusses German empirical psychology in the Russian context in *Russian Psychology*, 69-82.

<sup>85</sup> Nikolai Dobroliubov, “Organicheskoe razvitie cheloveka v sviazi s ego umstvennoi i nravstvennoi deiatel’nost’iu,” in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 6 vols, Leningrad: GIKHL, 1934-1941, Vol. 3, 95. These ideas were taken from Moleschott’s *Der Kreislauf des Lebens*. Victoria Frede, “Materialism and the Radical Intelligentsia: the 1860s,” 73. For a discussion of Dobroliubov’s essay, see Todes, “From Radicalism to Scientific Convention: Biological Psychology in Russia from Sechenov to Pavlov,” 28-31.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 95-96.

<sup>87</sup> P. D. Iurkevich, *Filosofskie proizvedeniia* (Moscow: Izdatel’stvo “Pravda,” 1990), 69. [[С]ердце человеческое рассматривается как средоточие всей телесной и духовной жизни человека, как существеннейший орган и ближайшее седалище всех сил, отправлений,

words of the “sacred writers” and “compare this biblical teaching with the views on this subject that dominate in our modern science.”<sup>88</sup> Importantly, Iurkevich approached the “heart” as the site of the divine secrets that guide the soul, “inaccessible” to observation (including the scientist’s perspective): as he insisted, the sacred writers understand that “in the human soul [...] there are sides that are inaccessible to the limited means of our knowledge, [and] only the divine mind knows the secrets.”<sup>89</sup>

The debate continued. An important statement came from Chernyshevsky’s April 1860 article in *The Contemporary*, “The Anthropological Principle in Philosophy” (*Antropologicheskii printsip v filosofii*). In this article, he rejected the use of German idealist philosophy, including dualism, in depicting human life. Instead, Chernyshevsky proposed that philosophy follow the lead of scientific observation in understanding human affairs:

The principle of the philosophical view on human life with all its phenomena is the idea developed by the natural sciences about the unity of the human organism [*organizma*]; observations by physiologists, zoologists, and physicians [*medikov*] have removed any thought of dualism of man. Philosophy only sees in it that which medicine, physiology, and chemistry sees; these sciences show that there is no dualism visible in man, and philosophy adds that if a person had, other than his

---

движений, желаний, чувствований и мыслей человека со всеми их направлениями и оттенками.]

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.* To quote in full, “First of all, we will collect some passages from Scripture, from which it will be seen that this view of the sacred writers on the essence and significance of the human heart in all areas of human life is distinguished by certainty, clarity, and all signs of conscious conviction, and then we will compare this biblical teaching with the views on this subject, which dominate in our modern science.” [Прежде всего, мы соберём некоторые места из Священного писания, из которых будет видно, что это воззрение священных писателей на существо и значение человеческого сердца во всех областях человеческой жизни отличается определённою, ясною и всеми признаками сознательного убеждения, а потом сопоставим это библейское учение с воззрениями на этот предмет, которые господствуют в современной нам науке.]

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 76. To quote in full, “So, for the first time, we can see here at least a tendency towards such an explanation of phenomena, in which the essence of a larger and more significant content is not given in comparison with its phenomena available to our observation; and who, on the contrary, thinks that in the human soul, as in every creation of God, there are sides that are inaccessible to the limited means of knowledge, and he can already see the meaningfulness of biblical teaching with a deep heart, of which only the divine knows the secrets.” [Итак, на первый раз мы можем видеть здесь по меньшей мере наклонность к такому изъяснению явлений, в котором не даётся сущности большего и значительнейшего содержания в сравнении с её явлениями, доступными нашему наблюдению; и кто, напротив, думает, что в человеческой душе, как и во всяком создании Божиим, есть стороны, недоступные для ограниченных средств нашего знания, тот наперёд уже может видеть многозначительность библейского учения о глубоком сердце, которого тайны знает только ум божественный.] Valeria Sobol notes that Iurkevich, in this essay demonstrates that the “heart [...] remains the moral and spiritual source of the soul’s action” in *Febris Erotica: Lovesickness in the Russian Literary Imagination* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009), 125.

real nature, a different nature, then that other nature would certainly be revealed in something, and because it is not found in anything, and because everything that happens and manifests in a person happens according to his one real nature, then there is no other nature in him. (This proof has complete certainty.)<sup>90</sup>

For Chernyshevsky, ridding philosophy of the dualism of the “body and the soul” would allow scientists—the physiologist, zoologist, physician—to take a central role in human affairs by discarding categories that had no basis in the “real nature” of man.

Chernyshevsky’s rejection of dualism came at the same time that physiologists and psychologists in Russia and Western Europe alike were challenged with the difficult task of visualizing the complex nature of the human mind. The task proved daunting. The novelists soon entered the debate, showing that man could not live by science alone.

In Russia, psychology increasingly employed advanced methods of German psychologists who were influenced by philosophical idealism, such as Friedrich Eduard Beneke (1798-1854), Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776-1841), Ernst Heinrich Weber (1795-1878), and Karl Fortlage (1806-1881). As an academic discipline, psychology in Russia was housed in the department of philosophy, where until 1863 it was one of the few fields of philosophy allowed in educational institutions of the conservative Russian state, with its adherence to Orthodox Christianity.<sup>91</sup> But with the rise of scientific approaches to the workings of the nervous system and the brain, some authors began to reconsider psychology in the context of physiological explanations. In 1860 the populist critic Petr Lavrov, writing in the journal *Notes of the Fatherland*, examined the contemporary state of psychology as a “science of the soul” in the context of these scientific discoveries. He argued that physiology, while offering promise, had yet to advance a viable replacement for the methods of psychology:

First of all, it is necessary to clear the subject of psychology of all metaphysical speculation and then clearly raise questions: what are they, how are they different from one another, how are they transferred from one another, and how are psychic phenomena modified? how do they transform into material phenomena, how are they dependent on life processes and what influence do they have on them? which methods can serve to study these phenomena? When these questions are roughly answered by physiologists or non-physiologists, then it shows whether it is

---

<sup>90</sup> [Принципом философского воззрения на человеческую жизнь со всеми ее феноменами служит выработанная естественными науками идея о единстве человеческого организма; наблюдениями физиологов, зоологов и медиков отстранена всякая мысль о дуализме человека. Философия видит в нем то, что видят медицина, физиология, химия; эти науки доказывают, что никакого дуализма в человеке не видно, а философия прибавляет, что если бы человек имел, кроме реальной своей природы, другую природу, то эта другая природа непременно обнаруживалась бы в чем-нибудь и так как она не обнаруживается ни в чем, так как все происходящее и проявляющееся в человеке происходит по одной реальной его природе, то другой природы в нем нет. (Это доказательство имеет совершенную несомненность.) (Nikolai Chernyshevskii, “Antropologicheskii printsip v filosofii,” *Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii*, Vol. 7 [Moscow: GIKhL], 238)]

<sup>91</sup> David Joravsky, *Russian Psychology*, 92.

possible to make psychology one of the divisions of physiology, drawing the first from the physiology of nerves, or one must constitute a special equal science.<sup>92</sup>

For Lavrov, the questions at the center of psychology—the inner workings of the human mind—could not be merely answered by physiology. Science had yet to prove itself as an alternative. While he believed that it was necessary “to clear the subject of psychology of all metaphysical speculation,” if scientific observation (by the hard sciences such as physiology) were to replace psychology, science would not only need to model the workings of the nervous system, but also offer real physiological models of the will, emotions, fantasies, and more. This had yet to be accomplished.

The role of psychology in the context of the science of the brain was addressed from a theological perspective yet again by Iurkevich, in the treatise “Of the Science of the Human Soul” (*Iz nauki o chelovecheskom dukhe*), which directly responded to Chernyshevsky’s “The Anthropological Principle in Philosophy.” (A review of the whole work appeared in 1861 in *The Russian Herald*.)<sup>93</sup> In this treatise, Iurkevich turned to the question of the soul in the context of natural science, including the science of the nervous system: at this point, it was impossible to ignore the rising popularity of these ideas. To offer a contrast, he stated that a natural scientist [*estestvoispytatel’*] concentrates on “that which can be seen with one’s eyes, held with one’s hands,” and that “here science [*nauka*] only cares about defining predicates [*ob opredelenii predikatov*], and the subject [*sub’ekt*] is given to it directly before research [*dan ei neposredstvenno i prezhde issledovaniia*].”<sup>94</sup> On the contrary, with psychology, “when the psychologist asks, what is the soul [*chto takoe dusha*], here the same subject does not present

---

<sup>92</sup> [Должно прежде всего очистить предмет психологии от всех метафизических предположений и потом ясно поставить вопросы: в чем состоят, чем одно от другого различаются, как одно в другое переходят и как видоизменяются душевные явления? как они переходят в вещественные явления, как зависят от жизненных процессов и какое оказывают на них влияние? какие методы могут служить для исследования этих явлений? Когда эти вопросы будут приблизительно решены физиологами или нефизиологами, тогда само-собою окажется, можно ли будет сделать из психологии один из физиологии, слив первую с физиологией нервов, или она должна составить особую равноправную науку. (P. L. Lavrov, “Sovremennoe sostoianie psikhologii,” *Otechestvennye Zapiski* 129 [April 1860]: 52)]

<sup>93</sup> Pamfil Iurkevich, *Iz nauki o chelovecheskom dukhe* (Kiev: Trudi Kievskoi Dukhovnoi Akademii, 1860). This essay was reprinted with commentary in *Russkii Vestnik* in 1861. Anonymous, “Iz nauki o chelovecheskom dukhe,” *Russkii Vestnik* 32 (April 1861): Literaturnoe obozrenie i zametki, 79-105; *Russkii Vestnik* 33 (May 1861): Literaturnoe obozrenie i zametki, 26-59. Frede discusses this point in “Materialism and the Radical Intelligentsia: the 1860s,” 77. V. Sobol describes Iurkevich’s claims against materialism in *Febris Erotica*, 124-129. The perspective of Orthodox theology in response to the soul was also seen later in the 1860s with the publication of several articles in the conservative journal, *Russkaia Beseda*. See Ignatii (Brianchaninov D. A.), “Slovo o smerti,” *Sochineniia episkopa Ignatiia Brianchaninova* [Reprintnoe izdanie], Moscow: P. S., 1991. Ilya Vintsky’s makes an account of this debate in the context of the popularization of spiritualism in Russia in the 1860s in *Ghostly Paradoxes: Modern Spiritualism and Russian Culture in the Age of Realism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 15-16.

<sup>94</sup> Pamfil Iurkevich, *Iz nauki o chelovecheskom dukhe*, 367-368.



itself as a thing [*kak veshch'*], at which you can point to, and the soul does not open itself to observation in a ready and motionless image of a thing [*obraz veshchi*].”<sup>95</sup> While Iurkevich recognized the importance of science, he stressed that metaphysical psychology’s focus on the soul [*dusha*]—which by nature could not be observed through empirical means—was part of the foundation of the theological understanding of human life as a “science of the spirit” [*nauka o dukhe*].<sup>96</sup> This theological perspective—and the rejection of empirical methods for penetrating the human psyche, conceived as the soul [*dusha*]—emerged as a central rebuttal to the materialist interpretation of mental activity as originating in the body. The rebuttal would be also offered by novelists who grappled with the new science, including Tolstoy and Dostoevsky.<sup>97</sup>

The debate took a new turn with the 1861 translation of Lewes’s *Physiology of Common Life* (1859). This work inspired several different readings, some in direct opposition with each other. For the radical critic Antonovich, writing in *The Contemporary* in 1862, Lewes had insisted that psychology was dependent on physiology of the nervous system and brain: “Between physiology and psychology, according to Lewes, there should be the same relationship that is between chemistry and physiology.”<sup>98</sup> For Antonovich, Lewes had refuted the theological basis of the soul, a claim Lewes may have himself rejected: “Lewes does not say, like Mr. Iurkevich, that the body of a human being consists of organic substances [*organicheskikh veshchestv*] subordinate to some higher powers [*podchinennykh kakim-to vysshim silam*].”<sup>99</sup> In another article in *The Contemporary*, Chernyshevsky claimed that Lewes’s *Physiology of Common Life* welcomed the materialist approach espoused in this journal, noting that he was “in complete agreement with Lewes,” and that Lewes had proved that the nature of the soul could be unveiled by physiology.<sup>100</sup>

Iurkevich reviewed Lewes’s *Physiology of Common Life* in *The Russian Herald* in the same year. In his interpretation (which was at odds with those of Chernyshevsky and Antonovich), he repeated Lewes’s assertion about the soul, refuting the interpretation offered in *The Contemporary*: “That we shall ever penetrate the mystery of the Soul, is improbable.”<sup>101</sup> Coming from a theological perspective, Iurkevich then challenged Lewes’s physiological approach to the workings of the mind: Lewes had ignored the “intentions of the soul” seen in “our reason [*soobrazhenie*], our whim [*kapriz*], our arbitrariness [*proizvol*].”<sup>102</sup> These two

---

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 368.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 375-376.

<sup>97</sup> Zen’kovskii argues that what differentiated Iurkevich’s “anthropology” from other thinkers at the time was that thought itself was only part of man’s spiritual existence, and that the heart is the “focus of spiritual life” and this organ “is directed both toward man’s center and his periphery” and “guarantees his whole as well as his individuality and uniqueness, which is expressed in thought but in feelings and reactions” (Zen’kovskii, *A History of Russian Philosophy*, 314). For a description of Iurkevich’s Orthodox theological perspective on the debate, see also Frede, “Materialism and the Radical Intelligentsia: the 1860s,” 77-82.

<sup>98</sup> Maksim Antonovich, “Sovremennaia fiziologiia i filosofiiia,” *Sovremennik* 91 (February 1862): Otdel II: Sovremennoe obozrenie, 235.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> Nikolai Chernyshevsky, *Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii v piatnadsati tomakh*, Vol. 7, 766-767. Todes discusses the reception of Lewes by radical critics in “From Radicalism to Scientific Convention: Biological Psychology in Russia from Sechenov to Pavlov,” 34-39.

<sup>101</sup> Pamfil Iurkevich, “Iazyk fiziologov i psikhologov,” *Russkii Vestnik* 38 (April 1862): 923.

<sup>102</sup> Pamfil Iurkevich, “Iazyk fiziologov i psikhologov,” *Russkii Vestnik* 40 (August 1862): 686.

radically diverging views of Lewes's *Physiology of Common Life* were emblematic of the reception of science at the time: a single work could receive multiple, often opposing, interpretations from different disciplines and ideological camps.

As I have already described in the previous section, it was at this time that Sechenov's *Reflexes of the Brain* responded directly to the debate in the journals, asserting that the "brain is the organ of the soul." (His scientific treatise would have directly followed the exchange between the radical critics and Iurkevich had it appeared as originally intended in *The Contemporary*.) In *Reflexes of the Brain*, Sechenov had taken a sharper stance that aligned him with Antonovich, Chernyshevsky, and Dobroliubov, placing a physiologist in a philosophical debate about the nature of the soul: this scientist did not hesitate to take a side in a confrontation between science and religion.

In the coming years the debate about the soul took a new turn as Russian authors began to consider the work of the empirical psychologists in Germany, Wilhelm Wundt, Gustav Fechner, and Hermann Helmholtz, who appeared to be able to better demonstrate the inner workings of the mind by experimental means. In July of 1863, months before Sechenov would publish *Reflexes of the Brain*, a critic reviewing Wundt in the popular journal *The Library for Reading* (*Biblioteka dlia chteniia*), wrote that these new psychologists had at last offered a "way out of the pointless debates about the soul."<sup>103</sup> Others were more skeptical of empirical psychology. An anonymous reviewer in the bibliography section of the radical journal *The Russian Word* (*Russkoe Slovo*) questioned both Wundt and the materialists, hiding his position behind irony:

Obviously, Wundt never really heard of psychological experiments, and on this basis, he completely denies their existence, that is, he does exactly what the fantastic idiot-materialist does, with whom he embarks on a debate within his book. Psychological experiments are a terrible and difficult matter: in them the subject risks his reason, that is, his greatest good; it is understood that there are few hunters for such experiments. They are usually done on oneself, because one should never do them *in anima nobili*—you will fall into the nihilists, like Falloppio in the old days, Ricord, Leray, Škoda in the current day; concerning Škoda, the accusation of nihilism (*nihilismus*, even this word was used) was expressed in print. Such are the famous relatives of Bazarov!<sup>104</sup>

---

<sup>103</sup> M. Tarkhov, "O metodakh v psikhologii (Po Vundtu)," *Biblioteka dlia chteniia* (July 1863): 9-10.

<sup>104</sup> [О действительно психологических опытах Вундт, очевидно, никогда не слыхивал, и на этом основании совершенно отрицает их существование, т. е. именно поступает так, как поступает фантастический идиот-материалист, с которым он пускается в прения в своей книге. Психологические опыты—дело страшное и трудное: в них субъект рискует рассудком, т. е. величайшим своим благом; понятно, что на такие опыты находится немного охотников. Из делают обыкновенно над собой, потому что делать их *in anima nobili* нельзя,—попадешь в нигилисты, как попали Фаллопий в старину, Рикор, Лере, Шкода—в новейшее время; относительно Шкоды обвинение в нигилизм (*nihilismus*, даже слово это было употреблено) было высказано печатно. Вот какая знаменитая родня у Базарова! (Ia., P., no title [Review of the translation of Wilhelm Wundt's *Vorlesungen ueber die Menschen- und Thierseele*], *Russkoe Slovo* [October 1865]: Bibliograficheskii listok, 84)]

In this colorful retort, a bewildered Russian critic found solace in referring to a literary image: the nihilist Bazarov.

The philosopher Mikhail Ivanovich Vladislavlev (1840-1890), a friend of Dostoevsky who married his niece, wrote several articles on the recent experimental psychology. Vladislavlev argued that any experimental method in psychology was in contradiction with the Christian idea of the soul. In Dostoevsky's journal *Epokha*, Vladislavlev reviewed Wundt's *Vorlesungen ueber die Menschen- und Thierseele*, translated into Russian as *Dusha cheloveka i zhivotnykh* (*The Soul of Man and Animals*).<sup>105</sup> He rejected the authority of experimental psychology in spiritual matters, arguing that "psychology should abandon discussions on such questions as the nature of the soul and its connection with the body [*o nature dushi i sviazi ee s telom*]."<sup>106</sup> Moreover, he maintained, the "solution [*reshenie*]" of the question of the soul "is fruitless or impossible," and such work by science can "only train the mind in gymnastics" and is "more likely in the realm of fantasy [*v oblast' fantazii*]."<sup>107</sup> In another article, Vladislavlev described consciousness modeled by the empirical approach as a fragmented set of impressions, which was incompatible with the Christian notion of the soul, asking whether we even have "the right to think" [*imeem li my pravo dumat*'] that it may be possible to restore the whole on the basis of the parts ("vozmozhno[li] polnoe vosstanovlenie narushennogo vpechatleniiami ravnovesiia chastei"?).<sup>108</sup> For Vladislavlev, the sin of experimental psychologists was in that science had fatally fragmented the soul into parts.

At this time, the work of British associationist psychologists, J. S. Mill, Alexander Bain, and others, also came under scrutiny in Russian journals. These psychologists, who had a major influence on Victorian novelists (Wilkie Collins, George Eliot, and others), presented a vision of the mind as open and accessible to external observation.<sup>109</sup> Some Russian reviewers were supportive of the British psychologists. One critic in *Notes of the Fatherland* argued that, with his approach, Bain attempted to unveil the "countless elementary abilities" [*beschislennoe mnozhestvo pervonachal'nykh sposobnostei*] of the soul.<sup>110</sup> Another critic, M. M. Troitskii, wrote in *The Russian Herald* that the British inductive method offered a replacement for outdated

---

<sup>105</sup> Joravsky notes that the censor suppressed the publication of Wundt's book in Russian precisely because it included the word "soul" in the title. Joravsky, *Russian Psychology*, 93.

<sup>106</sup> Mikhail Vladislavlev, "Reformatorskiiia popytki v psikhologii," *Epokha* (September 1864): 30.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>108</sup> Mikhail Vladislavlev, "Vliianie estestvennykh nauk na psikhologiiu," *Otechestvennyye Zapiski* (January 1866): 252-253. He had described these ideas also in an earlier article on the same topic: "Materialisticheskaia psikhologiii," *Otechestvennyye Zapiski* (December 1865): 484-508.

<sup>109</sup> Raymond Martin and John Barresi describe the British associationist school in relation to the question of self and soul in *The Rise and Fall of Soul and Self*, 212-217. Todes describes the Russian reception of Bain, especially the censorship his work *Body and Mind* in Russia in "From Radicalism to Scientific Convention: Biological Psychology in Russia from Sechenov to Pavlov," 110-113. David Joravsky also describes British associationism in the Russian context in *Russian Psychology: A Critical History*, 94.

<sup>110</sup> Upon the translation of Bain's 1861 *The Study of Character* into Russian in 1866, one critic in the journal *Delo* pointed to his focus on the "main forces of the soul [*osnovnykh sil dushi*]" as observable through close analysis of psychic phenomena. Anonymous, no title [Review of the translation of Alexander Bain's *On the Study of Character*], *Delo* (August 1867): Novye knigi, 65.

German metaphysics because it relied on the analysis of evidence instead of philosophical ideas.<sup>111</sup> Others offered a more critical view. Nikolai Strakhov argued that the English associationist model of psychological observation was antithetical to the concept of the Christian soul, adding that the “formation of the soul and all of its phenomena is a wonder [*chudo*], taking place now before our eyes, and is not a long-standing fact gradually revealing [*obnaruzhivaiushchii*] its existence.”<sup>112</sup> In essence, for Strakhov—an interlocuter of Dostoevsky and Tolstoy—such “experimental” methods for observing the human mind (including the British associationists), could not penetrate the Christian soul.<sup>113</sup> In the end, the reception of British empirical psychologists offered no way to bridge the divides emerging in the Russian press.

The question of the independent nature of the soul in relation to the body reached an apex in the early 1870s with the previously mentioned debate between Sechenov and Kavelin on the pages of the liberal journal *The Herald of Europe*, which made it into Tolstoy’s *Anna Karenina* (to be discussed in Chapter Three). I will argue that, in the end, it was the novelists, Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, who attempted to bridge the gap between science and religion and provide an answer to the mysteries of human consciousness.

### *The Unconscious Mind*

States of mind inaccessible to the individual posed a special problem for science, philosophy, and psychology: how could one understand processes of the psyche that lie outside of ordinary awareness? This concern had a complex history, one rooted in literature, science, philosophy, and theology. The discussion of the unconscious mind, which emerged in the late-18<sup>th</sup> century as part of Romantic *Naturphilosophie* through the work of literary writers and philosophers alike—the “twin traditions” of psychology in the late-18<sup>th</sup> century—took a different turn with the rising interest in the automatic function of the brain and nervous system in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>114</sup>

The complex genealogy of the unconscious in Western European thought is well known. Lancelot Whyte in *The Unconscious Before Freud* (1960) traced the origins of the unconscious from German idealist philosophy to the science of the brain in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and beyond.<sup>115</sup> Henri Ellenberger in his classic *The Discovery of the Unconscious* (1970) provided the most comprehensive history of the unconscious in the context of science, literature, and philosophy

---

<sup>111</sup> M. M. Troitskii, “Uspekhi psikhologicheskoi metody v Anglii so vremen Bekona i Lokka,” *Russkii Vestnik* 67 (February 1867): 812. David Joravsky makes an account of Troitskii’s rejection of the German metaphysical tradition in favor of English psychology of J. S. Mill and others in *Russian Psychology*, 94.

<sup>112</sup> Nikolai Strakhov, *Filosofskie ocherki*, Kiev: Izdanie I. P. Matchenko, 1906: 192.

<sup>113</sup> Donna Orwin, “Strakhov’s *World as a Whole*: A Missing Link between Dostoevsky and Tolstoy.” As Irina Paperno has claimed, Tolstoy’s understanding of the soul was informed throughout the 1860s and 1870s through his personal friendship with the philosopher Nikolai Strakhov, and Strakhov’s work on the immortal soul influenced Tolstoy as seen in his diaries. Irina Paperno, *Who, What Am I? Tolstoy Struggles to Narrate the Self*, 51.

<sup>114</sup> Matthew Bell describes the “twin traditions” of philosophy and literature in German psychology in *The German Tradition of Psychology in Literature and Thought, 1700-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 224-228.

<sup>115</sup> Lancelot Law Whyte, *The Unconscious Before Freud* (New York: Basic Books, 1960).

leading up to Freud and the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>116</sup> It is safe to assume that in Russia, the discussion of the unconscious mind emerged in the 1830s through the *Naturphilosophie* of Hegel, Schelling, Fichte, and Schiller. In the 1860s and 1870s, writers in the journals popularized the new scientific ideas of the unconscious mind derived from the study of the automatic actions of the nervous system, which clashed with the philosophical understanding of the unconscious mind. It still remains to show how Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, who were aware of these discussions, responded to the diverging concepts of the unconscious mind by offering their own models in the representation of the character's psyche, models that in many ways looked forward to the understanding of the unconscious in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Since the history of the unconscious in the Russian context is relatively unexplored, I will begin my discussion of it by providing a more detailed survey of the Western European concept of the unconscious, which influenced Russian writers. In the late-18<sup>th</sup> and early-19<sup>th</sup> century, philosophy turned to the ways in which the mind worked by unseen means, and how, in contrast to the empirical philosophical understanding of the mind of Locke and Descartes, the mind could be understood as working unconsciously.<sup>117</sup> The term "unconscious" first appeared as a noun in the work of Ernst Platner, *Philosophical Aphorisms* (1776), which was influenced by Leibniz's critique of Locke's rationality and focus on perception. It was following Platner that German Romantic natural philosophy/science (*Naturphilosophie*) came to use the term "unconscious," including the novelist Jean-Paul Richter, who was Platner's student. At this time, the understanding of the unconscious became a central aspect of Romantic *Naturphilosophie*.<sup>118</sup> In Schelling's 1797 *On the Philosophy of Nature* and his 1798 *On the Soul of the World*, he described the "collective soul of the world" through the unity of the natural and the human world, and he located the "primordial Will" which is "obscure, unconscious of itself, independent of time and of any logical relations."<sup>119</sup> In *The World as Will and Representation* (1819), Schopenhauer, who would have a major influence on Tolstoy's understanding of the unconscious mind, expanded Schelling's understanding of the unconscious as present beneath all of life.<sup>120</sup>

---

<sup>116</sup> Henri Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious* (New York: Basic Books, 1970).

<sup>117</sup> Leibniz suggested that the soul could not be totally accessed and known, and he argued that that at the center of the mind one can find "small perceptions" (*petites perceptions*) that underlie mental experience. Nicholas Rand, "The Hidden Soul: The Growth of the Unconscious, 1750-1900," *American Imago* 61.3 (Fall 2004): 260.

<sup>118</sup> V. V. Zen'kovsky, *Istoriia Russkoi Filosofii*, Vol. 1, 125-139.

Rand describes the question of the unconscious mind in *Naturphilosophie* in "The Hidden Soul: The Growth of the Unconscious, 1750-1900," 260-263.

<sup>119</sup> Henri Ellenberger, "The Unconscious Before Freud," *Bulletin of the Menninger Clinic* 1.1 (January 1957): 5-6.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 6. Christopher Janaway discusses Schopenhauer's idea of the "will" and the issue of conscious and unconscious notions of the mind, including his influence on Freud in "The Real Essence of Human Beings: Schopenhauer and the Unconscious Will," *Thinking the Unconscious*, 142-143; 145-154. Sigrid McLaughlin has outlined the influence of Schopenhauer's philosophy on Tolstoy's thinking ("Some Aspects of Tolstoy's Intellectual Development: Tolstoy and Schopenhauer," *California Slavic Studies*, Vol. 5, ed. by Nicholas V. Riasanovsky and Gleb Struve (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970). Donna Orwin describes the influence of Schopenhauer on Tolstoy's thinking in the 1870s as causing a shift in the novelist's thinking in *Tolstoy's Art and Thought*, 150-170. Henry W. Pickford considers the influence of Schopenhauer

The notion of the unconscious “will” of Schopenhauer and Schelling had considerable influence on the physiologist C. G. Carus, whose 1840 *Psyche* “was the first attempt to give a really complete and objective theory of unconscious psychological life.”<sup>121</sup> Carus, who exercised a major influence on Dostoevsky, was a source for Eduard von Hartmann in his classic study of the unconscious, *The Philosophy of the Unconscious*.<sup>122</sup> In his 1869 treatise, expanded and reprinted in several subsequent editions (up to 1904), Hartmann created a popularizing compendium of diverse sources on the unconscious. In the words of one scholar, “Hartmann provided a gratifying synoptic overview and integration of natural and human sciences.”<sup>123</sup> He was widely known in Russia at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Novelists and poets in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century in Western Europe and Russia offered their own understanding of the unconscious workings of the mind. Goethe, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, E. T. A. Hoffman, J. P. F. Richter, William Wordsworth, Heinrich von Kleist, and in Russia in the 1830s and 1840s, Gogol and Dostoevsky are named in this regard. Goethe was said to have written *Sorrows of Young Werther* “unconsciously” and “like a sleepwalker.”<sup>124</sup> Schiller, in his correspondence with Goethe, had placed special emphasis on the experience of the poet, who saw the “unconscious at the heart of his conception.”<sup>125</sup> In Russia, the link between the unconscious mind and the poet had a special influence on the Russian adoption of the term. As far as I can tell, in 1835, the critic Vissarion Belinsky was one of the first to use the term “unconsciously” (*bessoznatel’no*), and it was in reference to the creative mind of Nikolai Gogol in the essay “About the Russian Story and the Stories of Mr. Gogol (‘Arabesques’ and ‘Mirgorod’)” (*O russkoi povesti i povestiakh g. Gogolia (‘Arabeski’ i ‘Mirgorod’)*), describing the

---

on Tolstoy’s thinking in this period in the context of his later works, “What is Art?” and *The Kreutzer Sonata* in his book, *Thinking with Tolstoy and Wittgenstein: Expression, Emotion, and Art* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2016). Irina Paperno highlights the special role of Schopenhauer’s philosophy in the context of Tolstoy’s letters to Strakhov in ‘*Who, What Am I?*’

<sup>121</sup> Henry Ellenberger, “The Unconscious Before Freud,” 6.

<sup>122</sup> George Gibian discusses the influence of Carus’s *Psyche* on Dostoevsky’s work in “C. G. Carus’ *Psyche* and Dostoevsky,” *The American Slavic and East European Review*, 14.3 (October 1955): 371-382.

<sup>123</sup> Sebastian Gardner, “Eduard von Hartmann’s philosophy of the unconscious,” in: *Thinking the Unconscious*, ed. Angus Nicholls and Martin Liebscher (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 175.

<sup>124</sup> Lancelot Whyte, *The Unconscious Before Freud*, 133-135; 145. Paul Bishop discusses Goethe’s important role in the understanding of the unconscious workings of the creative mind. He also demonstrates that Schiller, alongside Goethe, was instrumental in the discussion of the unconscious mind of the creative artist, which countered Schelling’s idea of the emergence of the creative activity of the poet as occurring *first* consciously and *then* unconsciously. “The Unconscious from Storm and Stress to Weimar classicism: the dialectic of time and pleasure.” *Thinking the Unconscious*, ed. Angus Nicholls and Martin Liebscher (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 28; 37.

<sup>125</sup> Paul Bishop, “The Unconscious from Storm and Stress to Weimar classicism: the dialectic of time and pleasure,” 37.

writer during the creative process as being not controlled by his will, stating that his “action [*deistvie*] is aimless [*bestsel’no*] and unconscious [*bessoznatel’no*]”.<sup>126</sup>

The discussion of the unconscious mind was not limited to philosophy and literature: in the late-18<sup>th</sup> and early-19<sup>th</sup> century, alongside the discussion of the unconscious in German idealist philosophy and literature, scientific and pseudoscientific attempts, such as mesmerism, animal magnetism, and hypnotism, emerged as methods to provide miracle cures for nervous illness by uncovering the unseen workings of the mind.<sup>127</sup> These techniques were popularized by Father Johann Joseph Gassner (1727-1779), Franz Anton Mesmer (1734-1815), A. M. J. Chastenet de Puységur (1751-1825), and Justinus Kerner (1786-1862), among others. Philosophers interested in the workings of the unconscious, including Schopenhauer and Carus, participated in mesmerist and hypnotist séances.<sup>128</sup> Hypnotism would continue to be debated and, in some cases, practiced by scientists later in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, including the French clinician Dr. Jean-Martin Charcot, who used hypnotist techniques in his treatment of hysteria.<sup>129</sup> While these scientific and pseudoscientific attempts were rudimentary in contrast to what was to come in science, figures such as Mesmer nevertheless demonstrated that the workings of the unconscious could be unveiled through experimental techniques on the body. These experiments were discussed in the decades to come, and the practice of hypnotism, mesmerism, and magnetism created situations that scientists could not explain through physiology alone.

In the 1830s, experimental scientists in Western Europe began to offer new models to explain the workings of the nervous system and the brain, specifically new discoveries in the physiology of reflexes. With these developments in science comes a new—physiological—understanding of the unconscious. Marcel Gauchet, in his study *L’inconscient cerebral* (1992), traces the emergence of the physiological origins of the unconscious mind, which became a central aspect of brain science in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and a part of a major shift in thinking from the earlier idealist psychology of the unconscious.<sup>130</sup> In the 1830s, scientists Marshall Hall (1790-1857) and Johannes Müller (1801-1858) questioned the existence of the free will and suggested that the nervous system was completely mechanical.<sup>131</sup> The British scientist Thomas Laycock (1812-1876) expanded upon the findings of Hall to relate them to the idea of unconscious action, arguing that the mechanical model of reflexes could be extended to include the brain. His essay “On the Reflex Function of the Brain” (1845), which linked spinal reflexes with the brain, was based in part on the scientific analysis of altered states of mind, including mesmerist experiments and hypnotism.<sup>132</sup> Other scientists turned to pathological cases to suggest

---

<sup>126</sup> Vissarion Belinskii, *Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii*, Vol. 1 (Moscow: Izdatel’stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1953), 288.

<sup>127</sup> Ellenberger provides a comprehensive history of the use of magnetism by Mesmer and others, especially the influence of such methods in the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century in France in *The Discovery of the Unconscious*, 53-109.

<sup>128</sup> Henri Ellenberger, “The Unconscious Before Freud,” 9.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>130</sup> Marcel Gauchet, *L’inconscient cerebral* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1992), 23.

<sup>131</sup> Gauchet describes the difference of opinion between Hall and Müller in *L’inconscient Cerebral*, 41-42.

<sup>132</sup> Gauchet speaks of Laycock’s observation of hypnotism and mesmerism in *L’inconscient cerebral*, 46-47. The rediscovery of hypnotism and mesmerism was not limited to Laycock. Michael Finn shows how in 1843, a Scottish doctor, James Braid, published a work on hypnosis that applied the science of the involuntary workings of the brain that, as Gauchet argues, was

the unconscious workings of the mind through the observation of epilepsy: the German scientist and clinician Wilhelm Greisinger demonstrated that lesions on the brain of patients suffering from epilepsy were responsible for disturbances of the mind outside of conscious control, offering further clinical evidence for the brain's automatic or unconscious activity.<sup>133</sup>

These scientific ideas—the physiological understanding of the unconscious—were readily adopted by British Victorian scientists, novelists, psychologists, and philosophers who were keenly interested in unconscious action. In 1853, William Carpenter, in his *Principles of Human Physiology*, termed such phenomena the result of “unconscious cerebration,” a concept that largely followed Laycock's model of the brain's reflexes; it was adopted by novelists and psychologists alike.<sup>134</sup> The English psychologists Herbert Spencer, Alexander Bain, and George Henry Lewes depicted the reflexive workings of the brain in their work. The idea of “unconscious cerebration” was readily absorbed into literature by novelists such as George Eliot, who depicted states of mind on the peripheral awareness (or total unawareness) in her novels.<sup>135</sup>

From my survey of the journals, I have concluded that the situation in Russia was somewhat different. The work of German and English scientists was largely absent from the Russian journals before the 1860s. Russian readers first encountered the mechanical, automatic understanding of the brain's unconscious activity in the 1860s not through the “hard” sciences but in the popularization of materialist philosophy of Büchner, Moleschott, and Vogt in the pages of the radical journal *The Contemporary*.<sup>136</sup> (I described these developments above and will now briefly relate them to the idea of unconscious action.) Chernyshevsky, in his 1860 article in *The Contemporary*, “The Anthropological Principle in Philosophy,” proposed a physiological origin of the workings of the mind, comparing human thought to the reflexes of a frightened dog who “runs by instinct, mechanically [*mashinal'no*], and not by reason [*a ne po rassuzhdeniyu*], not consciously [*ne soznatel'no*].<sup>137</sup> For Chernyshevsky, this phenomenon was also not limited to dogs: in people, he argued, one can observe “unconscious habit or unconscious movement” [*est'*

---

instrumental in having “rescued hypnotism” from being declared “charlatanism.” Michael Finn, *Figures of Pre-Freudian Unconscious from Flaubert to Proust*, 23.

<sup>133</sup> Gauchet describes Griesinger's pivotal understanding of lesions on the brain in epileptic cases in *L'inconscient cerebral*, 49-53.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>135</sup> Sally Shuttleworth argued that Lewes's model of “unconscious cerebration” can be found in the representation of the character's mind. *George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 84-91. Vanessa Ryan discusses the incorporation of “unconscious cerebration” broadly in 19<sup>th</sup> century fiction in *Thinking Without Thinking in the Victorian Novel*.

<sup>136</sup> It is especially in the context of Karl Vogt's *Letters on Physiology* [*Physiologische Briefe*] (1845-1846) which discusses the nature of “unconscious” as synonymous for reflex action. He describes the workings of “will” as the result of the “unconscious” reflexes of the nervous system. Karl Vogt, *Lettres Physiologiques* [*Physiologische Briefe*, 1845-1846] (Paris: Baillière, 1875), 472. Jakob Moleschott takes a similar point of view in the depiction of the child's early brain as working “almost unconsciously”: “L'enfant vit presque inconscient pendant les premiers mois sans se rappeler les états qu'il traverse et les choses qui agissent sur lui. Il n'y a pas dans la conscience des bêtes et celle de l'homme une différence de d'espèce, mais une différence de degré.” Jakob Moleschott, *La circulation de la vie* [*Der Kreislauf des Lebens*, 1852], trans. Dr. E. Cazelles (Paris: Germer Baillière, 1866), 184.

<sup>137</sup> Nikolai Chernyshevskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v piatnadtsati tomakh*, Vol. 7, 278.



*storona bessoznatel'noi privychki i bessoznatel'nogo dvizheniia*], separate from what is known as conscious thought.<sup>138</sup> In 1861, Dmitrii Pisarev reviewed Vogt's *Letters on Physiology* in *Russkoe Slovo* and, inspired by the materialist point of view regarding emotions, argued that feelings such as sadness, happiness, and shame could be understood as having emerged from the "excitement of the cerebral nerves [*razdrazhenie mozgovykh nervov*]."<sup>139</sup> In this sense, the "reflexive" model, as the origin of psychic experience, including the unconscious, was adopted by materialist thinkers as critique of the philosophical and theological concerns of the soul.

The translation and publication of Lewes's *The Physiology of Common Life* (as was the case with the debate about the soul, discussed above) proved an important moment in the Russian discussion of the cerebral nature of the unconscious mind. In 1862, in the journal *The Contemporary*, the radical critic Maksim Antonovich wrote a review of *The Physiology of Common Life*, in which he made the exaggerated claim that Lewes had stressed a wholly mechanical explanation of the will:

Lewes [...] asserts that animals that do not have a brain are capable of the processes of sensation and the will; that higher animals, when their brains are taken out, act voluntarily and display a marked adaptability towards a goal; that, therefore, it is difficult to distinguish actions that are voluntary from involuntary, and that in essence they are the same and all depend on known causes, and that there is nothing absolutely arbitrary in them.<sup>140</sup>

Following his own interpretation of Lewes, Antonovich argued that such experiments revealed that the difference between voluntary and involuntary workings of the brain—conscious and unconscious workings of the nervous system—to be arbitrary. Whether or not Lewes would agree with such a radical statement, his name was used to advance a particular ideological view of the human mind.

The theologian and philosopher Pamfil Iurkevich, who, as we have seen, was a central figure in the debate about the nature of the body and the soul, responded yet again to the materialist criticism and to the recent publication of Lewes's *Physiology of Common Life* in an article published in *The Russian Herald*, "The Language of Physiologists and Psychologists" (*Iazyk Fiziologov i Psikhologov*), in which he approached the issue of the unconscious. In this article, he criticized the materialist interpretation of Lewes as found in *The Contemporary*, using the colorful image of the dog and the stick (originally, from Chernyshevsky's "The

---

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 279. Such an image reappeared in literature. It caught my eye that in Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, the novelist described the workings of the unconscious mind in the comparison of the dog's reflexes to describe the violent killing of soldiers by Cossacks and muzhiks "who beat these people as unconsciously [*bessoznatel'no*] as dogs unconsciously [*bessoznatel'no*] bite to death a rabid stray dog." Leo Tolstoy, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, Vol. 12, 123.

<sup>139</sup> Dmitrii Pisarev, "Protess zhizni: Fiziologicheskie pis'ma Karla Fokhta," *Russkoe Slovo* (September 1861): Inostrannaia literatura, 14-15.

<sup>140</sup> [Льюис же утверждает, напротив, что и животные, не имеющие головного мозга, способны к процессам ощущения и воли; что высшие животные, когда головной мозг их вырезан, действуют произвольно и обнаруживают заметную приспособительность к цели; что, поэтому, трудно различить действия произвольные от произвольных, что в существе они одинаковы и все зависят от известных причин, а абсолютного произвола в них нет. (Maksim Antonovich, "Sovremennaia fiziologii i filosofii," 254-255)]

Anthropological Principle in Philosophy”): “Antonovich showed that the dog, for example, runs from the sight of a raised stick due to completely abstract, constructed considerations in a formal syllogism.”<sup>141</sup> For Iurkevich, the critics of *The Contemporary*, by interpreting Lewes in a materialist framework, had taken an extreme position in the substitution of the unconscious nature of the human soul with the reflexive action of the dog. He also criticized Lewes, arguing that the unconscious workings of the soul were simply inaccessible to scientific observation.<sup>142</sup>

The publication in the next year of Sechenov’s *Reflexes of the Brain* (discussed in detail above) appeared to align him with the materialists also on the issue of unconscious action. For Sechenov, the brain could be understood in strictly mechanical terms that were not under the control of will or conscious control, calling this organ “the most fantastical of machine in the world” [*samaia prichudlivaia mashina v mire*]. “Under certain conditions [...] the brain can act like a machine [*kak mashina*],” and as a machine, “no matter how tricky it may be [*kak by khitra ona ni byla*], can always be subject to research.”<sup>143</sup> In Sechenov’s model, thoughts emerged not out of conscious acts of the mind but were instead the result of an “illusion” created by the unconscious working of reflexes and the mechanical function of the brain.<sup>144</sup> The decerebrated frog [*obezglavennaia liagushka*]—which became a metaphor for the workings of the brain—also emerged as a central image of the unconscious action understood as a physiological phenomenon.

These ideas came under scrutiny in the next few years. In the journal *Otechestvennye Zapiski*, Evgeny Nikolaievich Edel’son, a literary critic, wrote a response to Sechenov’s “mechanical” model of the brain, “Is Man a Simple or Sentient Automaton” (*Chelovek—prostoi-li chuvstvushchii avtomat*), arguing that Sechenov’s *Reflexes of the Brain* created a model of the workings of the mind that amounted to “automaticity [*avtomatichnost’*] and aimlessness [*bestsel’nost’*]” and did not take into account the “inner conviction of man [*vnutrennee ubezhdenie cheloveka*]” and “free will.”<sup>145</sup> In one article by Mikhail Vladislavlev, “The Connection of Natural Science to Psychology” (*Vliianie estestvennykh nauk na psikhologiiu*) in the journal *Otechestvennye Zapiski*, he discussed Helmholtz’s recently published theory of “unconscious interference” and argued that what Helmholtz called “unconscious sensations” could not be understood as sensations at all, because “unconscious sensations [*bessoznatel’nye oshchushcheniia*] are the same as non-sensed sensations [*neoshchushchennye oshchushcheniia*] –

---

<sup>141</sup> [[Антонович] показал, что собака, например, убегает при виде поднятой палки вследствие совершенно отвлеченных, построенных в формальной силлогизм соображений. (Pamfil Iurkevich, “Iazyk fiziologov i psikhologov,” *Russkii Vestnik* 38 [April 1862]: 923)]

<sup>142</sup> Pamfil Iurkevich, “Iazyk fiziologov i psikhologov,” *Russkii Vestnik* 40 (August 1862): 669-670.

<sup>143</sup> Ivan Sechenov, *Izbrannye proizvedeniia*, Vol. 1, 1952, 14. Throughout *Reflexes of the Brain*, Sechenov describes the brain as a “machine” and the involuntary workings of the brain as mechanistic in nature. Translation from Sechenov, *Reflexes of the Brain*, trans. S. Belsky, 8.

<sup>144</sup> Gauchet describes Sechenov’s “illusion” of conscious thought in *L’inconscient cerebral*, 107-108.

<sup>145</sup> [Но автоматичность и бесцельность, само собою разумеется, одно и то же, или по крайней-мере никак нельзя назвать совершенно автоматичным то, что очевидно действует с выбором, а не по слепому закону чисто-механических действий. (Е---н, Е. “Chelovek—prostoi-li chuvstvuyushchii avtomat?” *Otechestvennye Zapiski* [April 1866]: 515)]

they are nothing [*nichto*].”<sup>146</sup> In another article, Konstantin Ushinskii argued that the “unconscious” phenomena studied by science to uncover the workings of the mind by figures such as Helmholtz and Fechner—the mechanical function of reflexes, the chemical nature of the brain, and the electrical impulses measured by experimental psychologists—generated a model of conscious that “we would not recognize as consciousness,” and “we would see in them only the shell form” and “not consciousness itself [*ne samoe soznanie*].”<sup>147</sup> As scientists turned to the unseen processes in the nerves as a foundation of psychic experience, some of their Russian critics argued that such models were antithetical to the “unconscious” nature of the soul, which was inaccessible to scientific observation.

A shift occurred around this time: attention now turned to pathological cases of unconscious or automatic behavior. Importantly, such case studies suggested that the division between conscious and unconscious states of mind was no longer reliable. In Russia, medical journals, *The Medical Herald (Meditsinskii Vestnik)*, *The Archive of Forensic Medicine and Public Hygiene (Arkhiv Sudebnoi Meditsiny i Obshchestvennoi Gigieny)*, *The Moscow Medical Newspaper (Moskovskaia Meditsinskaia Gazeta)* and others, turned to cases of patients exhibiting various levels of unconscious or automatic behavior in the context of pathological illness. Clinicians and scientists, including the psychiatrist Jean-Martin Charcot (1825-1893), the neurologist and epileptologist Dr. John Hughlings Jackson (1835-1911), the psychiatrist Henry Maudsley (1835-1918), and the physiologist William Carpenter (1813-1885), all published reports that appeared to offer a more complex understanding of the unconscious mind.

In this context journals discussed violent behavior and criminal activity (murder, suicide, and other violence) committed unconsciously and apart from the will of the patient. In one self-reported case, a man identified as “Official B” described how, upon waking up in the hospital after a suicide attempt, he “did not remember anything about how it had happened,” concluding that he must have committed the act unconsciously.<sup>148</sup> One case described the mental condition of the Swiss woman Marie Genre, who was reported to have poisoned nine people in 1867 in Geneva; the case was copied from a French clinician, who and in the report describing the murder and her testimony, she is described her as a “murder machine”:

“This is a murder machine and nothing else,” adds Dr. Chatelain. The fact that Genre almost always predicted the illness and death of her victims, and, apparently, did not try to distract suspicion from herself, but also seemed to provoke it, Dr. Chatelain sees ‘an expression of an irresistible and somewhat unconscious (?) attraction.’ The defendant does not hide, but acts openly, risking

---

<sup>146</sup> Mikhail Vladislavlev, “Vliianie estestvennykh nauk na psikhologiiu,” *Otechestvennye Zapiski* (January 1866): 263. In an article by Vladislavlev, who was closely linked to Dostoevsky and who contributed articles to his journal *Epokha*. One article focused on the experimental psychology and the question of the soul in relation to the workings of the unconscious mind, which largely echoed his article in *Otechestvennye Zapiski* described here. Mikhail Vladislavlev, “Reformatorskie popytki v psikhologii.” Henry Ellenberger describes Helmholtz’s theory of “unconscious interference” in “The Unconscious Before Freud,” 10.

<sup>147</sup> Konstantin Ushinskii, “Vopros o dushe v ego sovremennom sostoianii: otryvok iz pedagogicheskoi antropologii,” *Otechestvennye Zapiski* (November 1866): 75.

<sup>148</sup> Anonymous, “Sluchai skoroprekhodiashchego umopomeshatel’stva ot p’ianstva (mania transitoria a potu),” *Arkhiv Sudebnoi Meditsiny i Obshchestvennoi Gigieny* (June 1868): Sudebnaia meditsina, 48.

betraying herself; she loudly expresses her thought mechanically and instinctively. It is also necessary to pay attention the exalted consciousness of her self. She constantly accuses doctors that they are ignorant, that she knows more than them, etc.”<sup>149</sup>

In speaking of the consciousness of one’s “self”, this clinician combined the idea of the mechanical nature of the psychic action with the traditional language of human individuality. Despite the obvious evidence to the contrary (such as the patient’s refusal of help and mockery of the doctors), the clinician nevertheless described her as without any sense of will or conscious control over her actions.

The case of Marie Genre may remind readers of Dostoevsky’s character Mitia Karamazov, who, at his trial in Chapter 3 of Book 11 of *The Brothers Karamazov*, was described by a Moscow doctor as having committed the murder “almost involuntarily” and who showed similar contempt for science:

The Moscow doctor, being questioned in his turn, definitely and emphatically repeated that he considered the defendant’s mental condition abnormal in “the highest degree.” He talked at length and with erudition of “aberration” and “mania,” and argued that, from all the facts collected, the defendant had undoubtedly been in a condition of aberration for several days before his arrest, and, if the crime had been committed by him, it must, even if he were conscious of it, have been almost involuntary, as he had not the power to control the morbid impulse that possessed him. But apart from temporary aberration, the doctor diagnosed mania, which promised, in his words, to lead to complete insanity in the future. (It must be noted that I report this in my own words; the doctor made use of very learned and professional language.) “All his actions are in contravention of common sense and logic,” he continued. “Not to refer to what I have not seen, that is, the crime itself and the whole catastrophe, the day before yesterday, while he was talking to me, he had an unaccountably fixed look in his eye. He laughed unexpectedly when there was nothing to laugh at. He showed continual and inexplicable irritability, using strange words, ‘Bernard!’ ‘Ethics!’ and others equally inappropriate” (638-639).<sup>150</sup>

---

<sup>149</sup> [«Это—машина для убийства и больше ничего» прибавляет [доктор Шатлен]. В том, что Жанре почти всегда предсказывала болезнь и смерть своих жертв и, по видимому, не только не старалась отвлечь от себя подозрение, но еще как будто вызывала его, доктор Шатлен видит «выражение непреодолимого и до некоторой степени несознательного (?) влечения. Подсудимая не скрывает, а действует открыто, рискуя выдать себя; машинально, инстинктивно она громко высказывает свою мысль. Надо также обратить внимание и на ее высокое мнение и о себе и экзальтированное сознание своего я. Она беспрестанно обвиняет врачей в том, что они невежды, что она знает гораздо больше их и т.д.» (Anonymous, “Delo devitsy Marii Zhanre, obviniaemoi v deviaty otravleniakh,” *Arkhiv Sudebnoi Meditsiny i Obshchestvennoi Gigieny* [June 1870]: *Sudebnaia meditsina*, 47)]

<sup>150</sup> Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, 638-639. [Московский доктор, опрошенный в свою очередь, резко и настойчиво подтвердил, что считает умственное состояние подсудимого за ненормальное, «даже в высшей степени». Он много и умно говорил про «аффект» и «манию» и выводил, что по всем собранным данным подсудимый пред своим

Several parallels could be seen between the case of Marie Genre and that of Mitia in Dostoevsky's novel. Depicting his characters as more complex than such language would allow, Dostoevsky appeared to react to the clinical approaches propagated by science, especially in consideration of one's sense of moral responsibility.

Returning to the journals, some cases depicted religious and spiritual experience as resulting from the unconscious function of the brain. In one review of Maudsley's *Physiology and Pathology of Mind* (1867), the reviewer related the story of a patient who exhibited unconscious behavior accompanied by religious visions:

A young woman, 29 years old, had been suffering from melancholy already since the age of 22; then her condition worsened, she became indecisive, passionate, lost interest in her parents, whom she had previously loved. She complained of terrible sensations in her body; felt ill; sometimes she wrapped herself in white linen over which she put a dress. [...] In all her actions, she discovered an amazing combination of clarity of thought and unaccountability of actions. She also did not have any painful sensations. Impulsive actions did not arise from the ordinary process of consciousness but were the result of irritation of the part of the brain to which unconscious life is subordinated; her unconscious actions overpowered conscious ones; therefore, her automatic actions seemed to her the work of Satan.<sup>151</sup>

---

арестом за несколько еще дней находился в несомненном болезненном аффекте и если совершил преступление, то хотя и сознавая его, но почти невольно, совсем не имея сил бороться с болезненным нравственным влечением, им овладевшим. Но кроме аффекта доктор усматривал и манию, что уже пророчило впереди, по его словам, прямую дорогу к совершенному уже помешательству. (NB. Я передаю своими словами, доктор же изъяснялся очень ученым и специальным языком). «Все действия его наоборот здравому смыслу и логике, — продолжал он. — Уже не говорю о том, чего не видал, то есть о самом преступлении и всей этой катастрофе, но даже третьего дня, во время разговора со мной, у него был необъяснимый неподвижный взгляд. Неожиданный смех, когда вовсе его не надо. Непонятное постоянное раздражение, странные слова: „Бернар, эфика“ и другие, которых не надо». (F. M. Dostoevskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridtsati tomakh*, Vol. 15, 104-105)]

<sup>151</sup> [Молодая женщина, 29 лет, страдала меланхолией начиная уже с 22 лет; потом состояние ее ухудшилось, она сделалась нерешительною, страстною, охладела к своим родителям, которых она прежде любила. Она жаловалась на страшные ощущения в ее теле; чувствовала себя дурно; иногда она завертывалась в белое полотно, сверх которого надевала платье. [...] Во всех своих поступках она обнаруживала удивительное сочетание ясности мыслей и безотчетности действий. У нее не оказывалось также и болезненных ощущений. Импульсивные поступки не проистекали из обыкновенного процесса сознания, а были результатом раздражения части мозга, которой подчинена бессознательная жизнь; бессознательные действия у ней осиливали сознательные; поэтому автоматические ее поступки казались ей делом сатаны. (Anonymous, "Fiziologiia i patalogiia dushi. Soch. Genrikha Maudsleia [The Physiologie and Pathologie of the mind (sic.) by Henry Maudsley. London. 1867]. Chast' II. [Okonchanie]," *Arkhiv Sudebnoi Meditsiny i Obshchestvennoi Gigeny* [December 1869]: Izvestiia i smes', 3.)]

Henry Maudsley, on the basis of his analysis of pathological cases, had argued that the mind works primarily unconsciously, and in this case, the acts that appeared to be the work of Satan were instead the function of the brain. Maudsley had made a larger argument here: pathology had shown the predominant role that unconscious mental processes played in everyday experience.<sup>152</sup> Case studies, in this way, could be seen to offer a window into the psyche more generally: illness offered a glimpse into how the mind may work wholly unconsciously.

Russian journalists, reviewing Maudsley's work, took his claim—that unconscious mind dominates psychic life—as a repudiation of the metaphysical understanding of the soul. In a review of Maudsley's later work, *Body and Mind* (1871) in the popular science journal *Knowledge*, the critic argued that “[m]odern knowledge has the greatest honor [*sovremennomu znaniu prinadlezhit velichaihaia chest'*] of liberating the human spirit [*osvobozhdeniia chelovecheskogo dukha*] from the tyranny of arbitrary views [*ot tiranii proizvol'nykh vozzrenii*] of metaphysics and its whimsical cabinet theories, before which mankind has had to willingly bow.”<sup>153</sup> In response to Maudsley's understanding of the unconscious mind, the reviewer argued that, as with the “acts of the decerebrated frog [*v deistviiakh obezglavlennoi liagushki*],” with the development and education of the motor centers over time, a person's “cerebrospinal acts take on a completely mechanical character, occurring independently of the will and consciousness,” where even “in nerve cells” one finds the “ability of automatic movements.”<sup>154</sup> Here, Maudsley's theory of the workings of the unconscious mind became a proxy for the critic's clash with the metaphysical approach to the soul.

Scientists, on the other hand, began to suggest that the strict physiology of the brain could not fully account for the unconscious workings of the mind in situations of altered or pathological conditions. The physiologist William Carpenter, who had featured prominently alongside Laycock in the understanding of “unconscious cerebration” in the 1850s, offered a new take in his work, *Principles of Mental Physiology* in 1874. Analyzing cases of hypnotic experience, mesmerism, and spiritualist phenomena, he argued that *in addition* to the automatic workings of the brain, such phenomena suggested that there were other “unconscious” aspects of the mind that could not be understood merely as physiological.<sup>155</sup> In May 1875, the popular science journal *Knowledge* published a partial translation of this work under the title, “*The Physiological Explanation of a Few Spiritist Phenomena*” (*Fiziologicheskoe ob'iasnenie*

---

<sup>152</sup> Gauchet describes Maudsley's thesis about the unconscious mind in *L'inconscient cerebral*, 96-97.

<sup>153</sup> O., “Kritika. Vyvody fiziologicheskoi psikhologii. (*Body and Mind: an inquiry into their connection and mutual influence, specially in reference to mental disorders*. By Henry Maudsley. London 1870).” *Znanie* (July 1871): Kritika, 41.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, 43-44.

<sup>155</sup> Gauchet explains Carpenter's turn to the question of the unconscious and automatic nature of the mind as separate in *L'inconscient cerebral*, 57-58. In reaction to Carpenter's pronouncements, Laycock, who had been a major figure in the early science of reflexes in the 1840s, argued that Carpenter had become “a slave to the old metaphysics.” Gauchet considers Carpenter's understanding of the unconscious in relation to Thomas Laycock's criticism in *L'inconscient cerebral*, 57.

*nekotorykh iavlenii spiritizma*).<sup>156</sup> (The title evoked the spiritualist movement, which had emerged at this time and which is the focus of the next section in this chapter.) In the excerpt published in *Knowledge*, Carpenter argued that in certain states of mind, including spiritual or religious experience and states of mind in spiritualist séances, “the mind is ‘possessed’ [*um byvaet ‘pogloshchen’*] by a succession of Ideas.”<sup>157</sup> This was illustrated through several examples. In one, he included the case of the poet Coleridge, whose entire life, according to Carpenter, “was little else than a waking dream, and whose usual talk has been shown to have been the outpouring of his ‘dominant ideas.’”<sup>158</sup> In another case, taken from Sir Walter Scott’s *Life of Napoleon Buonaparte* (1825), Carpenter argued that this narrative offered a glimpse into a similar phenomenon, describing Napoleon’s “double” trains of thought:

His thoughts flowed easily and felicitously, without any difficulty to lay hold of them or to find appropriate language; which was evident by the absence of all solicitude (*miseria cogitandi*) from his countenance. He sat in his chair, from which he rose now and then, took a volume from the book-case, consulted it, and restored it to the shelf,—all without intermission in the current of ideas, which continued to be delivered with no less readiness than if his mind had been wholly occupied with the words he was uttering. It soon became apparent to me, however, that he was carrying on two distinct trains of thought, one of which was already arranged, and in the act of being spoken, while at the same time he was in advance, considering what was afterwards to be said. This I discovered by his sometimes introducing a word which was wholly out of place—*entertained* instead of *denied*, for example,—but which I presently found to belong to the next sentence, perhaps, four or five lines further on which he had been preparing at the very moment that he gave me the words of the one that preceded it.”<sup>159</sup>

Carpenter argued that in these two individuals – Coleridge and Napoleon –the mind includes not only the automatic or reflexive acts of the brain, but also wholly unconscious states that function independently of the function of reflexes. This narrative representation of Napoleon’s mind—communicated through a fiction writer, Sir Walter Scott—offered to Carpenter a penetrating

---

<sup>156</sup> An anonymous critic in *The Deed* reviewed another work by Carpenter on spiritualism in 1878: “*Mesmerizm, odelizm, stoloverchenie i spiritizm. S istoricheskoi i nauchnoi toчек zreniia. Vil’iama Karpentera. SPb.*,” *Delo* (April 1878): Novye knigi, 63-75.

<sup>157</sup> William Carpenter, “Fiziologicheskoe ob’iasnenie nekotorykh iavkenii spiritizma,” trans. by Anonymous, *Znanie* (May 1875): 27-28. For the original English, see William Carpenter, *Principles of Mental Physiology*, Vol. 1, London: Henry S. King & Co, 1876, 279-280.

<sup>158</sup> William Carpenter, “Fiziologicheskoe ob’iasnenie nekotorykh iavkenii spiritizma Uilliam Karpentera,” *Znanie* (May 1875): 30. For the original English, see William Carpenter, *Principles of Mental Physiology*, Vol. 1, London: Henry S. King & Co, 1876, 281-282.

<sup>159</sup> Carpenter takes this quotation J. G. Lockhart’s *Life of Walter Scott*, Chapter Lxxiii. William Carpenter, *Principles of Mental Physiology*, Vol. 1, 281. This excerpt was also translated and published in the journal *Znanie* under the title “The physiological explanation of a few phenomena of spiritualism.” This excerpt may have especially caught the eye on the first page, because it speaks of spiritualist phenomena as emerging in part from the “reflektivnye deistviia golovnogo mozga” (*reflex acts of the brain*). “Fiziologicheskoe ob’iasnenie nekotorykh iavlenii spiritizma Uilliam Karpentera,” 27; 29-30.

glance into the workings of the mind more broadly, one that could not be fully captured through the model of reflexes and pointed not only to an independent “unconscious” mind but to the ways that literature could model these states in narrative.

Such double states of mind were the concern of another clinician, Dr. Martin Charcot, who had a major influence on Freud’s understanding of the unconscious.<sup>160</sup> Charcot’s lectures on the use of hypnosis in the treatment of hysteria in the 1870s and 1880s had a major influence on science and popular culture, as they suggested the existence of a second personality; in the words of a scientist contemporary to Charcot, Dr. Jules Luys, “a human being [is] divided into two independent and insubordinate sub-individuals.”<sup>161</sup> This view is reflected in Charcot’s case studies, such as the following:

The patient was seated in front of a strong light source: electric, drummond, etc. And they asked her to fix her gaze at the lighted point. After a few minutes, even sometimes seconds, the patient fell into a cataleptic state [...] The patient remained with open eyes, saw and heard nothing: at least, she did not answer questions, remained oblivious to what was happening. Interesting, however, is the next feature: facial features changed according to the position given to the patient. So, if the patient is given a tragic or threatening pose, then the physiognomy takes on a correspondingly severe look. The cataleptic state lasts as long as the time the light source continues to act on the retina. [...] If a patient in this state is called loudly, then she gets up and goes, with closed or half-closed eyes, to the one calling her. She can be made to sew, read, etc. She will do all this as if in reality [*kak na iavu*].<sup>162</sup>

---

<sup>160</sup> Henri Ellenberger describes the influence of Charcot’s experiments with hypnotism on Freud in *The Discovery of the Unconscious*, 480-489.

<sup>161</sup> Michael Finn argues that the problem of the unconscious mind was largely absent from French science until the 1870s and 1880s with Charcot’s depiction of hypnosis of hysterical patients and the “doubled” states of mind in other patients. Finn notes that an early exploration of the unconscious workings of the mind can be found in the work of Maine de Biran, who in the 1860s described “two modes of existence” of psychic experience, one unconscious and the other conscious. Finn, *Figures of Pre-Freudian Unconscious from Flaubert to Proust*, 18-19.

<sup>162</sup> [Больную сажали перед сильным источником света: электрическим, друммондовым и т. п. И просили ее устремить неподвижно взгляд на светящуюся точку. Через немного минут, даже иногда секунд, больная впадала в *каталептическое* состояние [...] Больная оставалась с открытыми глазами, ничего не видит и не слышит: по крайней мере—она не отвечает на вопросы, остается чуждою тому, что происходит. Интересна, однако же, следующая особенность: выражение лица меняется соответственно придаваемой больной позе. Так, если больной дана трагическая или угрожающая поза, то и физиономия принимает соответственно суровый вид. Каталептическое состояние продолжается столь же долго, сколько времени источник света продолжает действовать на ретину. [...] Если находящуюся в этом состоянии больную позвать громко, то она встает и направляется, с закрытыми или полу-закрытыми глазами, к зовущему ее. Ее можно заставить шить, читать и пр. Все это она будет делать как на яву. (Sprimon, “Charcot. – Catalepsie et somnambulisme hysteriques provoqués. [Comte rendu par P. Richer].—*Istericheskaia katalepsiia i somnambulism, vyzyvaemye iskusstvenno*. [Progrès medical. 1878, № 51.]” *Meditinskoe Obozrenie* 11 [January 1879]: “Bolezni nervnoi systemy,” 2-3)]



As seen above, Charcot's experimental techniques—hypnotism and the use of lights to induce somnambulism or cataleptic states—offered a glimpse into the complexity of mind, which exhibited doubled and partial consciousness, mental automatism, and the overlapping of conscious and unconscious states of mind (which were under the direct control of the clinician). Moreover, Dr. Charcot's attempts to penetrate the consciousness of his patients unveiled the hidden workings of the mind in a way that blurred the boundary between the conscious and unconscious.

In the coming decades, psychologists and others would continue to debate whether there were truly “unconscious” states of mind that acted independently of the will. At the time of Charcot's famous experiments on hysterical patients, the Swiss-Russian scientist, Alexandre Herzen (whose father was the Russian publicist, philosopher, and revolutionary Alexander Ivanovich Herzen), had turned to the question of the unconscious mind. In the work *Le cerveau et l'activité cérébrale* (1887), he argued that the conscious and unconscious mind—the difference between which had been a central topic for many decades—were wholly separate, rejecting the idea that it would be necessary to choose one over the other, as Maudsley and Lewes had done in their own work:

Selon moi, à ce que Lewes et Maudsley ont chacun exagéré ce qu'il y a de vrai dans sa manière de voir et négligé ce qu'il y a de vrai dans l'autre point de vue; *en conséquence de quoi, chacun d'eux, après s'être approché tout près de la vérité, s'en est de nouveau éloigné.* La vérité est, je crois, dans la synthèse des deux opinions rivales ; elle nous enseigne, si je ne me trompe, que, quel que soit le centre actif, le conscient et l'inconscient coexistent toujours et partout, mais qu'ils prédominent tantôt l'un, conformément à un ensemble de conditions, à une loi.<sup>163</sup>

A. A. Herzen—who was influenced by Sechenov and was aware of the debate about “reflexes of the brain” in the Russian journals—argued here that the unconscious and conscious mind “coexist,” a statement that would be later echoed by Freud.<sup>164</sup> One may wonder about the influences on A. A. Herzen in his conception of the mind: had he read Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, the Russian novelists whose work engaged with the complex boundaries of the unconscious and conscious mind? Whether or not such an influence could be made certain, the debate ran its course in philosophy, psychology, and science.

Arguably, it was novelists, especially Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, who were able to chart a different course, one that looked forward to the discussion of the unconscious mind yet to come in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### *Spiritualism*

Beginning in the 1850s, a curious debate had begun in Russian journals. Phenomena associated with spiritualist séances, including talking and rapping tables, automatic or unconscious behavior under the influence of mediums, visions, hallucinations and more,

---

<sup>163</sup> Alexandre Herzen, *Le cerveau et l'activité cérébrale* (Paris: Librairie J. B. Baillière et fils, 1887), 213-214.

<sup>164</sup> Gauchet discusses Herzen in relation to Lewes Maudsley and Freud in *L'inconscient cerebral*, 96-97; 102.

challenged notions of brain physiology. It appeared that there was more to the workings of the consciousness and that special influences—perhaps heat, electricity, or some other unknown force—had a large effect on unconscious processes in the mind and body. This doctrine—which was tied to the spiritualist movement that had emerged in North America in Rochester, New York in 1848 and quickly spread to Western Europe and beyond—became a tangible presence in Russia as early as the 1850s.<sup>165</sup> These spiritualist séances were a major topic of discussion in journals, intersecting with many of the debates around the physiology of the brain. Dostoevsky, who attended séances of A. M. Butlerov, commented in his *Diary of a Writer* that the belief in spiritualism would “instantly spread like lit kerosene” among the populace if it had been forbidden to be practiced.<sup>166</sup> Major scientists, Nikolai Petrovich Vagner, Alexander Mikhailovich Bulterov, and Dmitrii Mendeleev, debated the reality of spiritualist phenomena. The debate in many ways echoed the discussion of the question of the body and the soul. In their turn, spiritualists had begun to suggest that physiology of the brain could not account for all of human experience, and that there were indeed aspects of the psyche that were inaccessible to scientific observation.

Despite the popularity of spiritualist séances in St. Petersburg and Moscow in the 1850s, the topic was rarely reported in the press due to the censorship’s restriction on such publications. (The Orthodox Church played a role in this prohibition.) Articles that did appear tended toward sharp criticism of the movement as charlatanism and pseudoscience. In 1856 in *The Contemporary*, the radical critic Nikolai Dobroliubov translated an essay criticizing spiritualism by the French positivist Émile Littré, taking the view that phenomena observed during such séances were merely fiction. Littré argued that instead of offering a glimpse into the world of the undead, a scientifically inclined mind might take a different view: “all of these seizures belong to the field of knowledge of the physician [*k oblasti poznanii medika*] [...] [H]e knows the network of nerves in the body connecting the center with the periphery and the periphery with the center [*on znaet setku nervov v tele, soediniashchuiu tsentr s okruzhnost’iu i okruzhnost’ s tsentrom*],” since the source of such phenomena “is in the nerves, the spinal cord, or the brain.”<sup>167</sup> Here, the argument followed the materialist perspective on spiritual experience: the psychic phenomena observed in the séances, like other altered states of mind, were the result of the functioning of the nervous system and nothing more.

Another article, published in *Notes of the Fatherland*, translated Alfred Maury’s work on hypnotism, where he sharply criticized the notion that hypnotic states were the result of spirits and demons. Rather such phenomena could be explained by studying the pathological conditions of the nervous system:

The lightest noise produced some kind of electrical shock to the somnambulist described by Dr. Puel. This sudden and unheard-of development of nervous sensitivity was taken for a special gift. They thought that these patients were inspired by spirits or possessed by a demon. Since the lightest impression was enough for them to feel the presence of a face or an object, since their hearing and sight spread their activity very far, they assumed that these patients were gifted

---

<sup>165</sup> Ilya Vinitzky, *Ghostly Paradoxes: Modern Spiritualism and Russian Culture in the Age of Realism*, xv.

<sup>166</sup> F. M. Dostoevskii, *Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii v tridtsati tomakh*, Vol. 22, 36.

<sup>167</sup> Émile Littré, “Govoriashchie stoly i stuchashchie dukhi,” trans. Nikolai Dobroliubov, *Sovremennik* 58 (July 1856): Otdel’ 5 (Smes’): 40.

with true clairvoyance, prophetic power. The superstitious became even more strong in their opinion, noting that these patients, during seizures, sometimes reveal an amazing power of memory and, they say, unusually clearly and easily. These people, under the influence of hallucinations and visions, usually associated with ideas that occupy them, or under the influence of strange internal sensations, tell with a forceful and inspired tone what they saw during their delirium. [...] The mental faculties are always in such a close connection with the nervous system that delirium always develops behind deep disturbances of the latter, accompanied by an extraordinary excitement of certain mental faculties.<sup>168</sup>

For Maury, a poor understanding of the nervous system had led to superstitious interpretations of certain phenomena. The effect of hypnotism on subjects was merely the result of physiological laws that had yet to be fully understood.

Others disagreed that physiology could fully explain such phenomena. In a review of spiritualist ideas in *Notes of the Fatherland*, a critic described the recent essays by French spiritualists, with special focus on an essay by the philosopher Paul Janet, “Le cerveau et la pensée,” published in *Revue des deux mondes* (Janet was the uncle of Pierre Janet, a major figure in psychoanalysis alongside Freud). The reviewer quoted Janet’s controversial position that “ether” and “heat” had an unseen influence on thinking, an idea popular with spiritualists, who rejected the notion that the brain and nervous system could explain such experience:

Without a doubt, something similar to the external flutter of ether occurs in the nerves and the brain. However, this movement, whatever it may be, is not yet light; it turned into light only at the time when I appeared in the world, and with it conscious sensations. We know how this transformation takes place, for the explanation of which it would be necessary to positively define the way of metamorphosis of the material into the immaterial. As for the hypothesis of the identity [*o tozhdestve*] of thought and movement, then the reason for it was given by this discovery, proving that heat turns into movement and vice versa. On the basis of this fact, it was concluded that the movements of the brain should be

---

<sup>168</sup> [Самый легкий шум приводил в какое-то электрическое сотрясение сомнамбулу, описанную доктором Пуэлем. Это внезапное и неслышанное развитие нервной чувствительности было принимаемо за особенный дар. Думали, что эти больные внушаемы духами или одержимы бесом. Так-как для ощущения присутствия лица или предмета с них достаточно было самого легкого впечатления, так-как слух и зрение их распространяли свою деятельность очень далеко, то допускали, что больные эти одарены истинным ясновидением, пророческой силой. Суеверы еще более укреплялись в своем мнении, замечая, что больные эти во время приступов обнаруживают иногда удивительную силу памяти и, говорят, необыкновенно ясно и легко. Люди эти, под влиянием галлюцинаций и видений, связанных обыкновенно с идеями, особенно занимающими их, или под влиянием странных внутренних ощущений, рассказывают с силой и вдохновенным тоном то, что видели они во время своего бреда. [...] Умственные способности состоят всегда в такой тесной связи с нервной системой, что за глубокими расстройствами последней всегда развивается бред, сопровождаемый чрезвычайным возбуждением некоторых душевных способностей. (Alfred Maury, “Ob estestvennom somnambulizme i gipnotizme,” trans. Anonymous, *Otechestvennyye Zapiski* [June 1861]: 368.)]

transformed into thoughts. [...] This external cause called heat, unknown to us, can under certain conditions become inaccessible to our senses and produce movement outside of us.<sup>169</sup>

Janet had argued here that unseen physical forces (“ether” and “heat”) could account for more complex shifts in thinking and emotions. It was external forces, rather than internal ones, that had to be understood at a greater level. However, such spiritualist ideas could not be accepted in the Russian journals: the critic reviewing Janet’s article rejected his notion of the external effect of heat, stating that one cannot “create a sound science of the soul [*nauka o dushe*] from these kinds of shaky supports [*nel’zia postroit’ prochnoi nauki o dushe na takikh shatkikh podporkakh*].”<sup>170</sup> For the critic, to understand the science of “heat,” one was better off reading the work of the British scientist John Tyndall than the far-fetched ideas of Janet: science had already shown a way.

Some Russian philosophers criticized spiritualism as materialism in disguise. Strakhov was a major critic of spiritualism in several articles in the 1860s and 1870s. In one essay, “The Main Feature of Thought” (*Glavnaia cherta myshleniia*) (1866), he argued, “in essence [spiritualism] is no different from materialism,” and that spiritualists merely purported that “the spirit [*dukh*] was subject to one mechanical law, and matter [*veshchestvo*] to another.”<sup>171</sup> For Strakhov, such a separation was untenable. In another essay on the experimental method of the French physiologist Claude Bernard in 1867, Strakhov paraphrased Bernard, who wrote that “there should be neither spiritualism nor materialism,” and that “these words belong to natural history which is outdated,” stating that “we will never know neither spirit [*dukh*] nor material.”<sup>172</sup> In another essay in 1870, “From the Debates about the Soul” (*Iz sporov o dushe*), Strakhov criticized a recent essay by the Polish philosopher Henryk Struve which had been printed in *The Russian Herald*, “The Independent Beginning of Psychic Phenomena” (*Samostoiatel’noe nachalo dushevnykh iavlenii*) in which Struve attempted to create a “science of the soul” based on spiritualist observations of non-material phenomena.<sup>173</sup> In Strakhov’s response in 1870, he accused Struve of copying the spiritualism of German and French thinkers (including Paul Janet), and he argued that such a basis for psychology was nothing but an

---

<sup>169</sup> [Без сомнения, в нервах и в мозгу происходит нечто подобное внешнему трепетанию эфира. Однако же, это движение, каково бы ни было оно, не есть еще свет; оно превратилось в свет только в то время, когда явилось в мире я, и вместе с ним сознаваемые ощущения. Нам известно, как совершается это превращение, для объяснения которого следовало бы определить положительно способ метаморфозы материального в нематериальное. Что касается гипотезы о тождестве мысли и движения, то повод к ней подан открытием, доказывающим, что теплота переходит в движение и наоборот. На основании этого факта заключали, что и движения головного мозга должны превращаться в мысли. [...] Эта внешняя, неизвестная нам причина, называемая теплотою, может при некоторых условиях сделаться недоступною для наших чувств и произвести вне нас движение. (Anonymous, no title [Review of Paul Janet’s *Le cerveau et le pensée*], *Otechestvennye Zapiski* 161 [August 1865]: *Interesy literatury i nauki na zapade*, 250)]

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>171</sup> Nikolai Strakhov, “Glavnaia cherta myshleniia,” in *Filosofskie Ocherki*, 91.

<sup>172</sup> Nikolai Strakhov, “Klod Bernar o metode opytov,” in *Filosofskie Ocherki*, 108.

<sup>173</sup> David Joravsky describes Struve’s dissertation and the debate that followed in *Russian Psychology*, 96.

absurdity equal to “comparing completely dissimilar objects, for example, comparing the color green with a rectangle or comparing a cup of tea with a dissertation on philosophy.”<sup>174</sup>

Some authors continued to struggle with whether these phenomena—tables turning, the power of mediums, and more—could be merely explained through science. In one article in the journal *Knowledge*, “The Real Foundation of Mystical Phenomena” (*Real'nye osnovy misticheskikh iavlenii*), the author linked spiritualist phenomena to the workings of the nervous system by turning to an unlikely example, the philosopher Schopenhauer, who had visited the séance of a clairvoyant. According to the journal, Schopenhauer concluded that the clairvoyant’s unconscious acts, which included a cataleptic trance, “[were] based on isolating the function of the brain from the function of the spinal cord,” during which “the nerves of movement are inactive and consciousness remains.”<sup>175</sup> Another case documented the experience of one spiritualist medium, A. M. Weiss, who had a vision of Marie Antoinette during her attacks and appeared to be under the influence of religious spirits. Such examples, notes this author, were proof that “the alleged ability of mediums is necessarily due to increased nervous excitement [*neobkhodimo obuslovlivaetsia usilennym nervnym vozбуzhdением*]” and nothing more, equating spiritual experience with the workings of the brain.<sup>176</sup> This depiction of spiritual experience in the context of the workings of the brain and the nervous system drew rebuke from the censor for equating (however erroneously) the spiritualist with the spiritual.<sup>177</sup>

---

<sup>174</sup> Nikolai Strakhov, “Iz sporov o dushe,” in *Filosofskie Ocherki*, 232.

<sup>175</sup> In the article, the writer describes Schopenhauer’s encounter with the clairvoyant and his conclusion that the phenomena he observes are the result of the nervous system: “Schopenhauer, in his essay ‘Uber das Willen in der Natur,’ says that he had a chance to see in Frankfurt a clairvoyant who, even without any gestures from her magnetizer, by only one gesture from her magnetizer, by only his desire, fell into a cataleptic condition; at the same time, she sometimes remained in the same position in which she sat with open eyes, but at the same time she was in a position of complete insensitivity and unconsciousness. Schopenhauer even tries to give such a phenomena a physiological explanation; he believes that they are based on the isolation of the function of the brain from the function of the spinal cord, and either the sensory and motor nerves are paralyzed and a complete cataleptic state sets in, or only the nerves of movement are inactive, and then consciousness remains.” [Шопенгауэр в своем сочинении «Uber das Willen in der Natur» рассказывает, что он имел случай видеть во Франкфурте ясновидящую, которая даже без всяких телодвижений со стороны своего магнетизера, по одному телодвижений со стороны своего магнетизера, по одному только желанию его впадала в каталептическое состояние; при этом она иногда оставалась в той же позе, в которой сидела, с открытыми глазами, но при этом была в положении совершенно нечувствительности и бессознательности. Шопенгауэр пробует даже дать таким явлениям физиологическое объяснение; он полагает, что они основываются на изолировании функции головного мозга от функции спинного, причем или и чувствительные и двигательные нервы парализуются и наступает вполне каталептическое состояние, или являются недейтельными только нервы движения, и тогда сознание остается. (К—skii, D. A., “Real'nye osnovy misticheskikh iavlenii [Sravnitel'no-psikhologicheskii ocherk],” *Znanie* [February 1871]: 149-150)]

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, 148.

<sup>177</sup> Daniel Todes described how this article received special attention of the censor who claimed the writer had offered a scientific explanation for belief. Todes, “From Radicalism to Scientific Convention: Biological Psychology in Russia from Sechenov to Pavlov,” 96-97.

A scientific explanation of spiritualism was offered in an article entitled, “Fashionable Superstition” (*Modnoe sueverie*) in the journal *Notes of the Fatherland* by the positivist Vladimir Viktorovich Lesevich (1837-1905), who reviewed a recent publication by the writer A. Sumarokov, *What is Spiritism and its Phenomena? (Chto takoe spiritizm i ego iavleniia?)* (1871).<sup>178</sup> Sumarokov had claimed that brain science had no explanation for spiritualism: “Unfortunately (!), science in general got onto too *real* a base [*nauka voobshche stala na slishkom real’nuu pochvu*],” and that “physiology, which seeks the germ of thought [*zarodysh mysl’i*] in brain cells [*v mozgovykh kletochkakh*] not only hopes to find through anatomical causes of the phenomena of our mental activity [*prichiny iavlenii nashei psikhicheskoi deiatel’nost’*], but also decides to argue that this cannot be otherwise [*chto eto byt’ inache ne mozhet*].”<sup>179</sup> Lesevich, on the other hand, argued that the medium is a pathological case who is “surrounded by hallucinations” and deserved to be instead an object of psychiatry.<sup>180</sup> As with the debate about the body and the soul, these phenomena were up to interpretation by both sides, with little possibility of bridging the gap between the two.

In the mid-1870s, the period of what is known as the “spiritualist craze,” scientists, novelists (including Dostoevsky and Tolstoy), philosophers and others contributed articles about spiritualism and depictions of séances to “thick journals.” This discussion was spurred by new claims that supported the idea that spiritualist phenomena were real and could not merely be described by turning to either physiological or psychiatric explanations. In April 1875, the journal *The Herald of Europe* published a letter by Nikolai Vagner entitled, “Letter to the Editor About Spiritism” (*Pis’mo k redaktoru po povodu spiritizma*), which reported on recent séances he attended, at which he “not only bore witness to the fact that life beyond the grave was a reality

---

<sup>178</sup> Lesevich, Vladimir Viktorovich, “Modnoe sueverie. (*Chto takoe spiritizm i ego iavleniia*, A. Sumarokova),” *Otechestvennye Zapiski* 199 (December 1871): 181-211. Ilya Vinitsky speaks of this article in *Ghostly Paradoxes*, 15.

<sup>179</sup> Lesevich, Vladimir Viktorovich, “Modnoe sueverie. (*Chto takeo spiritizm i ego iavleniia*, A. Sumarokova),” 182.

<sup>180</sup> Describing the state of mind of someone succumbing to superstition, which he likened to the state of mind during spiritualist séances: “What an abyss of wild, ridiculous, ugly ideas! And how many data for the success of these ideas: they were instilled from childhood, they managed to enter flesh and blood, penetrate to the marrow of bones, the man is knocked down, shackled, blinded [...] He died, he became a victim of a fatal struggle. His body is torn, he is surrounded by hallucinations, dazzlingly beautiful, attractively wonderful [...] He feels good among them. Now no power, it seems to him, will pull him out of his blissful state. Now, he thinks the highest degree of enlightenment has been achieved [...] In fact, he is now only a psychiatric subject!” [Какая бездна диких, нелепых, безобразных идей! И сколько данных для победы у этих идей: они внушены с детства, они успели войти в плоть и кровь, проникнуть до мозга костей; человек сбит, скован, ослеплен. [...] Он погиб, он сделался жертвой роковой борьбы. Его организм надорван, он окружен галлюцинациями, ослепительно-прекрасными, привлекательно-чудными. [...] Ему хорошо между ними. Теперь никакая сила, кажется ему, не вырвет его из блаженного состояния. Теперь, думает он, достигнута высочайшая степень просветления. [...] На самом деле, он теперь только субъект психиатрический!” (Lesevich, Vladimir Viktorovich, “Modnoe sueverie. [*Chto takeo spiritizm i ego iavleniia*, A. Sumarokova],” 185)]

but also opened up new horizons for science.”<sup>181</sup> Central to Vagner’s understanding of the spirit medium was their special mental experience during the séance, which he called “psychodynamic”:

It seemed to me that a number of spiritualist phenomena always begin with objective, completely real ones, expressed more or less definitely by knocks and table movements. [...] But what are the causes of real spiritualist phenomena? This question remained for me and remains completely dark to this day. I would very much have liked to have investigated them, but for this I did not have the means. For this purpose, as I was convinced, the presence of a medium is necessary, that is, a person whose nervous system probably has a very subtle, but nevertheless quite a strong difference from the nervous system of ordinary people and can cause all these phenomena, which I think can be called psychodynamic.<sup>182</sup>

In the case of the medium, the phenomena that the participants observed were not divorced from reality but the result of special abilities in the medium’s nervous system.<sup>183</sup> This argument offered a rebuke of the criticism of spiritualism: for Vagner, who was himself a scientist, science could not offer answers to explain what spectators felt to be completely real. What is more, these phenomena suggested a more complex model of the workings of the mind than what could be understood by science—a general belief that novelists, whether or not they agreed with spiritualists, shared.

Similarly to Vagner, Alexander Butlerov, a well-regarded chemist who held séances at his home (one of which was attended by Dostoevsky), argued in the article “Mediumistic Phenomena” (*Mediumicheskie iavleniia*) in *The Russian Herald* in 1875 that the phenomena associated with spiritualist séances may be beyond the scope of the science of the nervous system. In one example, he reported on the magnetism of one of his relatives, describing the miraculous transformation made after therapy with such methods:

One of my relatives suffered from nervous seizures, which recurred quite often and consisted of convulsions and unconsciousness. [...] Once, when the usual

---

<sup>181</sup> Nikolai Vagner, “Pis’mo k redaktoru po povodu spiritizma,” *Vestnik Evropy* 52 (April 1875): 855-875. On this article, see also Vinitsky, *Ghostly Paradoxes*, 24.

<sup>182</sup> [Мне казалось, что ряд спиритических явлений начинается всегда с объективных, совершенно реальных, выраженных более или менее определенно стуками и движениями стола. [...] Но какие же причины вызывают реальные спиритические явления? Этот вопрос остался для меня и остается до сих пор совершенно темным. Я весьма желал бы исследовать их, но для этого у меня не было средств. Для этой цели, как я убедился, необходимо присутствие медиума, т.-е. лица, которого нервная система вероятно имеет весьма тонкое, но тем не менее достаточно сильное отличие от нервной системы обыкновенных людей и может вызывать все эти явления, которые мне кажется, можно назвать психодинамическими. (Nikolai Vagner, “Pis’mo k redaktoru po povodu spiritizma,” 860)] Ilya Vinitsky describes this article in *Ghostly Paradoxes*, 24.

<sup>183</sup> Aleksandr Nikolaevich Aksakov wrote on the topic in his work, *Spiritualism and Science* (*Spiritualizm i nauka*), published in 1872 and cited in this letter. Aksakov, A. N., *Spiritualizm i nauka* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia A. M. Kotomina, 1872).

seizure occurred, this doctor was sent for. At the same time he appeared, the patient was lying on the sofa, and not far from her, at the side, I was sitting; there was no one else in the room. The doctor who had previously offered our patient in such cases the usual help of pharmacy products, this time unexpectedly acted differently. He suddenly signaled to me to remain silent, and he himself began to make magnetic passes over the patient with his hands. I was surprised, especially since I had no idea about animal magnetism, and watched what was happening with curiosity. After a few minutes, contrary to its usual course, the nervous fit subsided, the convulsions stopped, and the patient fell asleep.<sup>184</sup>

In these and other cases, Butlerov came to the following striking conclusion: such phenomena were “irresolvable through the question of the physiology of the nervous system [*nerazreshimye voprosom nervnoi fiziologii*].”<sup>185</sup>

Other scientists attacked this view. Sergei Alexandrovich Rachinskii (1836-1902), a botanist at Moscow University, wrote a sharp critique of Vagner’s letter in the journal *The Russian Herald*, entitled “About the Spiritualist Report of Mr. Vagner” (*Po povodu spiriticheskikh soobshchenii g. Vagnera*), in which he argued that spiritualist phenomena could be described as a “passionate religious craving” rather than a reliable science.<sup>186</sup> He attacked Vagner’s essay for being harmful to the public, centering on the depiction of the nervous system in relation to spiritualist phenomena, and argued that accepting the influence of dead spirits on the body was incompatible with the understanding of the physiology of the nervous system.<sup>187</sup> Rather, the study of mediumistic phenomena, in his view, should be the sole work of psychiatrists and specialists trained in nervous illness.<sup>188</sup> He argued that the work of spiritualists approached the phenomena experienced during spiritualist séances in an unscientific manner.<sup>189</sup> Rachinskii’s claim echoed those of fellow scientists, such as Dmitrii Mendeleev, who argued that there was no basis to the belief that spiritualist phenomena were the result of the complex

---

<sup>184</sup> Alexander Butlerov, “Mediumicheskie iavleniia,” *Russkii Vestnik* 120 (November 1875): 309. [Одна моя родственница страдала нервными припадками, которые возвращались довольно часто и состояли из конвульсий и беспамятства. [...] Раз, когда наступил обычный припадок, послано было за этим врачом. В то время как он явился больная лежала на диване, а недалеко от нее, в стороне, сидел я; более никого в комнате не было. Врач, предлагавший до того нашей больной, в подобных случаях, обыкновенную помощь аптечных средств, на этот раз неожиданно поступил по-другому. Он вдруг сделал мне знак сохранять тишину, а сам начал делать руками магнетические пассы над больной. Я был удивлен, тем более что не имел понятия о животном магнетизме, и с любопытством наблюдал за происходившим. Чрез несколько минут, вопреки обычному своему течению, нервный припадок ослабел, конвульсии прекратились, больная заснула.] See also Ilya Vinitsky, *Ghostly Paradoxes*, 29.

<sup>185</sup> Alexander Butlerov, “Mediumicheskie iavleniia,” 313.

<sup>186</sup> Ilya Vinitsky, *Ghostly Paradoxes*, 19.

<sup>187</sup> Sergei Rachinskii, ““Po povodu spiriticheskikh soobshchenii g. Vagnera,” *Russkii Vestnik* 117 (May 1875): 386-387. Ilya Vinitsky, *Ghostly Paradoxes*, 19.

<sup>188</sup> Sergei Rachinskii, “Po povodu spiriticheskikh soobshchenii g. Vagnera,” 398-399.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*



workings of the nervous system: rather, he said, they were the result of tricks and had no basis in science.<sup>190</sup>

Tolstoy, in *Anna Karenina*, weighed in on the debate. In Chapter 14 of Part 1, his characters Vronsky and Levin encounter a certain Countess Nordston, who brings up the subject of spiritualism. Her appearance spurs a debate between Vronsky and Levin, which closely follows the debate in the Russian journals on the scientific basis of spiritualist phenomena:

“My opinion,” answered Levin, is simply that these turning tables prove that our so-called educated society is no higher than the muzhiks. They believe in the evil eye, and wicked spells, and love potions, while we...” [...] “You don’t admit any possibility at all?” [Vronsky] asked. “Why not? We admit the existence of electricity, which we know nothing about; why can’t there be a new force, still unknown to us, which...” “When electricity was found,” Levin quickly interrupted, “it was merely the discovery of a phenomenon, and it was not known where it came from or what it could do, and centuries passed before people thought of using it. The spiritualists, on the contrary, began by saying that tables write to them and spirits come to them, and only afterwards started saying it was an unknown force.” Vronsky listened attentively to Levin, as he always listened, evidently interested in his words. “Yes, but the spiritualists say: now we don’t know what this force is, but the force exists, and these are the conditions under which it acts. Let the scientists find out what constitutes this force. No, I don’t see why it can’t be a new force, if it...” “Because,” Levin interrupted again, “with electricity, each time you rub resin against wool, a certain phenomenon manifests itself, while here it’s not each time, and therefore it’s not a natural phenomenon” (52-53).<sup>191</sup>

---

<sup>190</sup> Mendeleev discusses mesmerism in the context of spiritualism in his lecture, “Dva publichnykh chteniia o spiritizme,” given on April 24-25, 1876.

<sup>191</sup> [— Мое мнение только то, — отвечал Левин, — что эти вертящиеся столы доказывают, что так называемое образованное общество не выше мужиков. Они верят в глаз, и в порчу, и в привороты, а мы... [...] Вы совсем не допускаете возможности? — спросил он. — Почему же? Мы допускаем существование электричества, которого мы не знаем; почему же не может быть новая сила, еще нам неизвестная, которая... — Когда найдено было электричество, — быстро перебил Левин, — то было только открыто явление, и неизвестно было, откуда оно происходит и что оно производит, и века прошли прежде, чем подумали о приложении его. Спириты же, напротив, начали с того, что столики им пишут и духи к ним приходят, а потом уже стали говорить, что это есть сила неизвестная. Вронский внимательно слушал Левина, как он всегда слушал, очевидно интересуясь его словами. — Да, но спириты говорят: теперь мы не знаем, что это за сила, но сила есть, и вот при каких условиях она действует. А ученые пускай раскроют, в чем состоит эта сила. Нет, я не вижу, почему это не может быть новая сила, если она... — А потому, — перебил Левин, — что при электричестве каждый раз, как вы потрете смолу о шерсть, обнаруживается известное явление, а здесь не каждый раз, стало быть это не природное явление. (18:57)]

Levin's argument about the lack of a scientific basis for spiritualism echoed Tolstoy's own rejection of the spiritualist doctrine in his correspondence with Strakhov.<sup>192</sup> What is perhaps most important here is that through Levin, Tolstoy argued that science could not account for the spiritualist phenomena. Even so, Vronsky stresses that there is some *other* source, perhaps a different science, that could account for the turning tables and purported abilities of the medium. Levin, like Tolstoy, rejected such explanations: an "unknown force" that was both beyond science and beyond theology was impossible.

In Western Europe, a more complex picture of spiritualist phenomena began to emerge with the publication of William Carpenter's *Principles of Mental Physiology* (1874). This work was partially translated in the popular science journal *Knowledge* in 1875 under the title "The Physiological Explanation of a Few Spiritist Phenomena" (*Fiziologicheskoe ob'iasnenie nekotorykh iavlenii spiritizma*). In the excerpt, Carpenter argued that phenomena experienced during spiritualist séances—including talking tables, hallucinations, and automatic behavior—were the result of what he called "ideational states" brought about by the "reflexive actions of the brain [*reflektivnye deistviia golovnogo mozga*]." <sup>193</sup> These "ideational states" occurred not only during séances but during different states of mind, such as Napoléon's "double trains of thought," Coleridge's half-dream states, and even during spiritual experience and belief itself.<sup>194</sup> Carpenter's claims about spiritualism were made based on several séances recorded in his work and translated in the journal *Knowledge*, such as the one that involved a discussion with the rapping table about where Satan resides in Europe—a topic of theological importance:

I inquired, "Are you a departed spirit? The answer was "Yes," indicated by a rap. [...] "Do you know Satan?" "Yes." "Is he the Prince of Devils?" "Yes." "Will he be bound?" "Yes." "Will he be cast into the abyss?" Yes." "Will you be cast in with him?" "Yes." "How long will it be before he is cast out?" He rapped *ten*. "Will wars and commotions intervene?" The table rocked and reeled backwards and forwards for a length of time, as if it intended a pantomimic acting of the prophet's predictions (Isaiah xxiv., 20). I then asked "Where are Satan's headquarters? Are they in England?" There was a slight movement. "Are they in France?" A violent movement. "Are they in Spain?" Similar agitation. "Are they at Rome?" *The table literally seemed frantic.*<sup>195</sup>

Carpenter's claim about the physiological origin of spiritual experience—which included the questions about the existence of God and Satan—caused a sharp rebuke from the censor, and

---

<sup>192</sup> Vinitzky describes how Tolstoy had intended to write about spiritualism as he stated in a Letter to Strakhov in *Ghostly Paradoxes*, 19. For Tolstoy also Tolstoy's letter to Strakhov: Leo Tolstoy and Nikolaj Strakhov, *Complete Correspondence*, Vol. 1, Ottawa: Slavic Research Group, University of Ottawa, 2003, 243-244.

<sup>193</sup> William Carpenter, "Fiziologicheskoe ob'iasnenie nekotorykh iavlenii spiritizma," trans. by anonymous, *Znanie* No. 5 (May 1875): 27. For original, see Carpenter's *Principles of Mental Physiology*, 300.

<sup>194</sup> Gauchet describes Carpenter's separation of the "automatic" workings of the nervous system and the unconscious mind in *L'inconscient cerebral*, 57-59.

<sup>195</sup> William Carpenter, "Fiziologicheskoe ob'iasnenie nekotorykh iavlenii spiritizma," 47.

these articles eventually led to the journal's suspension and later closure.<sup>196</sup> Nevertheless, Carpenter's linking of spiritualist phenomena with the workings of the unconscious mind offered a serious look at what had been seen as mere trickery or charlatanism in the Russian press in the previous decades. Spiritual séances—an unlikely source for understanding of the function of the brain—appeared to offer insight into the unconscious mind in ways that scientists had yet to be able to model.

What is important is that, discussing spiritualism, respected scientists such as Carpenter had offered a new perspective on the old debate: could physiology explain all of experience, including thoughts, feelings, and spiritual life? Arguably, it was spiritualist phenomena that could challenge the strictly physiological view of psychic life that Sechenov had popularized in Russia. As Carpenter, a distinguished scientist, had argued, there was perhaps more to experience than the brain and the nervous system could account for, including wholly unconscious states of mind and spiritual experiences that appeared to be completely independent of the individual. Importantly, a way had been suggested by Carpenter, including in his response to spiritualists, for a more complex model of the workings of the mind that was not dependent on a rigid science of brain physiology. As we will soon see, Dostoevsky and Tolstoy had been hard at work on this issue on their own.

### *Hallucinations*

In January 1864, the *Military Medical Journal* (*Voenno-meditsinskii Zhurnal*), featured several recent reviews treating the issue of mental illness in relation to brain physiology. In one of these reviews, the author turned to the description of a hallucinatory state:

*Description of the disease.* At the beginning of the development of general paralysis of the insane, the basic conditions of mental activity are violated. The patient is unable to perceive vividly external impressions; he does not have a normal reproduction and combination of ideas. [...] But from time to time there are bouts of anxiety; imaginary and false sensations intensify; still-preserved ideas of greatness are perceived, but they are not protected by the patient and are not supported by his actions. Vision and hearing, in ordinary cases, do not at first have functional changes; however, by the end of the third period, in most cases hearing is dulled. Hallucinations of these feelings are not uncommon. Smell and taste are often altered. [...] In the psychological respect there is distinguished a doubled type, under which for the most part there is general paralysis: or an overestimation of one's dignity is noticed in ideas; the patient's self is replaced by another personality; ideas of greatness, the possession of untold wealth, etc. are developing.<sup>197</sup>

---

<sup>196</sup> Todes notes that this article received special attention from the censor which led to its suspension and eventual sale. Todes, "From Radicalism to Scientific Convention: Biological Psychology in Russia from Sechenov to Pavlov," 103.

<sup>197</sup> [*Описание болезни.* В начале развития общего паралича помешанных нарушаются основные условия психической деятельности. Больной не в состоянии живо воспринимать наружных впечатлений; у него нет нормального воспроизведения и сочетания идей [...] Но время от времени являются приступы беспокойства; усиливаются мнимо—и ложно-ощущения; высказываются сохранившиеся еще ложные идеи величия, но не защищаются

The source of these various phenomena—vivid hallucinations, a dual personality, and finally, paralysis—the clinician claimed to have found in the dissection of the patient’s brain: the patient’s altered states of mind were localized in the cerebral structure in an autopsy after death.<sup>198</sup> Others also claimed that hallucinatory states of mind—known for their break with reality—could be seen as emerging from the very real physical nature of the brain. Such phenomena posed a practical problem: how could science understand that which defied reality itself? In the coming pages, I will describe moments when Russian journals, both popular and professional, focused on the issue of reality in relation to hallucinations and approached it with scientific methods; I will demonstrate that this concern was directly connected to the writing and reading of literature.

This keen interest of clinical scientists in hallucinations appeared to spark new discussions in the “thick journals.” In one article in *The Russian Word*, the critic Nikolai Shelgunov described hallucinations by directly appealing to the nature of reality [*deistvitel’nost’*] and the status of the real. As he stated, “hallucinations are not an empty dream [*pustaia mechta*]; they are real feelings [*deistvitel’nye oshchushcheniia*].”<sup>199</sup> Shelgunov copied the notes of one patient, who told his doctor, “I hear voices, because I hear them [*ia slyshu golosa, potomu chto ia ikh slyshu*],” stating that these voices were “as clear as your voice” [*iasny, kak vash golos.*]<sup>200</sup> The patient then turned to the question of reality: “If I have to believe in the reality [*v deistvitel’nost’*] that you are speaking with me, then you have to let me also believe in the reality [*v deistvitel’nost’*] of the voices speaking to me.”<sup>201</sup> Such a description paralleled what clinicians published in professional journals, and many of Shelgunov’s cases had previously been found in medical publications.

In the next month, Shelgunov likened such reports to the quasi-hallucinatory states experienced while writing literature:

---

больным и не поддерживаются его действиями. Зрение и слух, в обыкновенных случаях, не представляют сначала функциональных изменений; однако к концу 3-го периода слух в большей части случаев притупляется. Галлюцинации этих чувств нередки. Запах и вкус часто бывают изменены. [...] В психическом отношении различают двойкой тип, под которым большею частью является общий паралич: или в идеях замечается переоценка собственного достоинства; я больного сменяется другою личностью; развиваются идеи величия, обладания несметным богатством и т. д. (P. Diukov, “Referat ob uspekakh psikiatrii v 1861 i 1862 g. g.,” *Voенно-meditsinskii Zhurnal* [January 1864]: 45-46)

<sup>198</sup> The clinician connected patients’ subjective experience to aspects found during dissection of the brain: “Hypertrophy of the connective tissue, both in and in the circumference of the nerve elements of the cerebral cortex; the spread of this process to neighboring parts, depending on the disturbance in blood circulation and nutrition of the brain, cause the phenomena that are described above.” [Гипертрофия соединительной ткани, как в ней, так и в окружности нервных элементов коркового вещества мозга; распространение этого процесса на соседние части, зависящее от того нарушение в кровообращении и питании мозга вызывают те явления, которые описаны выше. (*Ibid.*, 49)]

<sup>199</sup> Nikolai Shelgunov, “Bolezni chustvuiushchego organizma,” *Russkoe Slovo* (September 1864): 87.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*

In moments of creativity, the poet and the artist are likewise in a fit of heightened brain and nervous activity; hallucinatory ideas also arise in him, as in those cases when such excitement increases to the highest degree, takes on a painful character, and makes a person insane. Hoffmann, for example, gave himself up in the end to demonic forces he conjured up in the heat of fantastic delirium, to such an extent that he was really quite afraid of the ghosts of his imagination. [...] In poetic excitement, life is fuller because, together with internal contemplation, it manifests itself in external activity—a person sees, hears, lives in the world around him, and is conscious of himself. That inspiration is really a waking dream, and that hallucinations, more or less strong, play a major role in it, and can be confirmed by facts.<sup>202</sup>

Shelgunov included dozens of examples of novelists and poets in his article on pathological illness. For the poet and the artist, “in moments of creativity” [*v minuty tvorchestva*] the hallucinatory experience closely resembles pathological cases where the brain and the nervous system are active to such a degree that creative activity and illness become indistinguishable. Here, the physiology of the brain explained literary creation, especially the break from reality while writing poetry.

Reviews of scientific studies described discoveries in the understanding of hallucinations by drawing examples from the lives of writers. For instance, a review of Maudsley’s *Physiology and Pathology of Mind* (1867) described Goethe “who could arbitrarily [*po proizvolu*] create different images [*obrazy*] in front of his eyes and make them change.”<sup>203</sup> An article in the journal *The Deed*, which reviewed the work of the French medical doctor Louis-François Lélut (1804-1877) *La physiologie de la pensée* (1866), described the hallucinations of both E. T. A. Hoffmann and of an unnamed *living* writer who depicted hallucinations in his writing. The reviewer was of two minds about this unnamed novelist, who, *unlike Hoffmann*, may have not himself experienced hallucinations depicted in his writing:

The author also wrote a fantastic story, in which he described in great detail his own hallucinations that tormented him for three nights; I have no information about either his physical health or the mental state of his family, and therefore I must confine myself purely to an analysis of his literary features. It would seem that a person’s own recognition of hallucinations should be the starting point of

---

<sup>202</sup> [В минуты творчества поэт и художник находится точно также в припадке усиленной мозговой и нервной деятельности; в нем возникают тоже галлюцинационные представления, как и в тех случаях, когда подобное возбуждение усиливается в высшей степени, принимает уже болезненный характер, и делает человека безумцем. Гофман, например, отдался под конец демоническим силам, которые он вызывал в пылу фантастического бреда, до *такой* степени, что он в самом деле порядочно боялся призраков своего воображения. [...] В поэтическом же возбуждении жизнь полнее, потому что, вместе с внутренним созерцанием, она проявляется во внешней деятельности— человек видит, слышит, живет в окружающем его мире, и сознает себя. Что вдохновение есть действительно сон на яву, и что галлюцинации, более или менее сильные, играют при нем главную роль, можно подтвердить фактами. (Nikolai Shelgunov, “Bolezni chustvuiushchego organizma,” *Russkoe Slovo* [October 1864]: 37-78)]

<sup>203</sup> “Referat. Fiziologija i patologija dushi. Soch. Genrikha Maudsleia,” 10.

judgment about him; and the fact that he wrote following these ghosts it seems is in favor of some mental disorder. [...] Without denying a certain decline or disorder of mental activity, but at the same time not affirming it, since we have too little data for diagnoses, I must note that the seemingly important self-confession of the hallucinations is essentially irrelevant. This story was written, obviously, in imitation of others, invented, and so these ghosts should be looked at simply as an unfortunate joke, which is why we have no evidence in this case.<sup>204</sup>

Here, the issue of authenticity of experience came to the fore. A question arose: could novelists describe altered states of mind without experiencing them firsthand? This reviewer seems to think that a novelist needs a first-hand experience, that is, empirical data, in order to describe altered states of mind in a character.

Journalists of the day adopted the metaphor of the mechanical or automatic workings of the nervous system to describe the hallucinatory state of novelists and poets during the creative process, applying it to E. T. A. Hoffmann, Edgar Allen Poe, Samuel Coleridge, Gustave Flaubert, and Dostoevsky. One article in the radical journal *The Deed* described Hoffmann's unconscious mind during the writing process, likening the novelist to a "decerebrated frog" [*obezglavlennaia liagushka*] and stating that he was under the influence of "reflexes of the brain" (Sechenov's famous phrase):

Hoffmann, like Edgar [Allen] Poe, like Alfred de Musset, had an irresistible passion for drunkenness; like both these writers, he fell into delirium tremens, and like both of them, in this state he wrote his amazing stories; the images he created sometimes took on such a terribly real appearance that these hallucinations terrified him, and he asked his mother to sit beside him. He died, if I'm not mistaken, from a spinal cord disease; in the last moments of his life, deprived due to the paralysis in his arms, he spent nights dictating his lovely fairy tales incessantly—as if from this (may physiology forgive me this comparison!), in the

---

<sup>204</sup> [[А]втор написал тоже фантастический рассказ, в котором очень подробно описал собственные свои галлюцинации, мучившие его в течении трех ночей; я не имею никаких сведений ни о физическом его здоровье, ни о психическом состоянии его семейства, и потому должен ограничиться разбором чисто литературных особенностей его. Казалось бы, что собственное признание человека в галлюцинациях должно быть исходною точкою суждения о нем; в пользу некоторого умственного расстройства говорит по-видимому и то, что он написал вслед за этими призраками. [...] Не отрицая некоторого упадка или расстройства психической деятельности, но вместе с тем и не утверждая его, так как для диагноза у нас слишком мало данных, я должен заметить, что столь важное по-видимому собственное признание в галлюцинациях в сущности не имеет никакого значения. Рассказ этот написан, очевидно, в подражание другим, *придуман*, тогда на эти призраки должно смотреть просто, как на неудачную шутку, отчего мы в настоящем случае не имеем никаких доказательств. (De Kalonn, "Fiziologiiia mysli. [Physiologie de la pensée, par M. Lelut, Paris, 1866]," *Delo* [August 1867]: *Sovremennoe obozrenie*, 47-48)]

opposite way of the intensification of the reflexes of the brain of the decapitated frog.<sup>205</sup>

Hoffmann—a writer who had contributed to the Romantic conception of the unconscious mind alongside Goethe, Schiller, and others—was here transformed into a metaphor of the age of the cerebral unconscious, the decerebrated frog.<sup>206</sup> As in other such articles, this critic then turned to the issue of reality, linking the author’s unconscious process to the hallucinatory experience of a “frightening-real view [*strashno-real’nyi vid*],” emerging out of the same state of mind.

The link between writing, hallucinations, and the pathological condition of novelists was explored in an article that reviewed the recent work by the influential French literary critic Hippolyte Taine, *On Intelligence* (1872), which was translated by Strakhov. The reviewer described Taine’s treatment of Gustave Flaubert’s hallucinatory experience during the writing process:

Taine quotes the following remarkable passage from a letter to him of one, as he calls him, the most accurate and insightful of modern novelists: “My imagined faces, says this novelist, amaze me, haunt me, or rather, I live with them. When I described the poisoning of Emma Bovary, I had such a clear taste of arsenic in my mouth, I myself was so intoxicated that I endured two periods of indigestion, one after the other, indigestion that was very real, because after dinner I vomited.”<sup>207</sup>

---

<sup>205</sup> [Гоффман, как Эдгард (sic) По, как Альфред де-Мюссе, имел непреодолимую страсть к пьянству; как оба эти писатели, он впадал в белую горячку (*delirium tremens*), и как оба они, писал в этом состоянии свои удивительные рассказы; создаваемые им образы принимали иногда при этом до того страшно-реальный вид, что эти галлюцинации приводили его в ужас, и он просил мать свою сидеть около него. Он умер, если я не ошибаюсь, от болезни спинного мозга; в последнее время своей жизни, лишенный параличом рук, он проводил ночи, безостановочно диктуя свои прелестные сказки, -- точно будто от этого (да простит мне физиология это сравнение!), обратно тому, как у обезглавленной лягушки, рефлексы головного мозга у него усилились. (*Ibid.*, 46)]

<sup>206</sup> Frogs became a common metaphor not only for novelists, but also for their characters. Several years later, in his 1872 eulogy of Charles Dickens, George Henry Lewes used the decerebrated frog to describe the lack of complexity his Dickens’s characters. Considering the character Micawber from *David Copperfield*, Lewes writes, “one is reminded of the frogs whose brains have been taken out for physiological purposes, and whose actions henceforth want the distinctive peculiarity of organic action, that of fluctuating spontaneity. Place one of those brainless frogs on his back and he will at once recover the sitting posture; draw a leg from under him, and he will draw it back again; tickle or prick him and he will push away the object, or take one hop out of the way; stroke his back, and he will utter one croak. [...] It is the complexity of the organism which Dickens wholly fails to conceive” (George Henry Lewes, “Dickens in Relation to Criticism,” *The Fortnightly Review* 11.62 [February 1872], 148-149).

<sup>207</sup> [Тэн приводит из письма к нему одного, как он его называет, самого *точного* и *проницательного* из современных романистов, следующее замечательное место: «Мои воображимые лица, говорит этот романист, поражают меня, преследуют меня, или, вернее сказать, я живу в них. Когда я описывал отравление Эммы Бавари, я имел *во рту такой ясный вкус мышьяка*, я сам был так отравлен, что выдержал одно за другим два несварения желудка, несварения весьма реальные, так как после обеда меня рвало.»

In this case, Taine describes the complex situation in which Flaubert experienced hallucinations outside of the context of writing, while the act of writing *induced* these altered states of mind.<sup>208</sup> Such experiences were not limited to novelists: the reviewer suggests that a link between creative work and hallucinatory experience is to be seen in the theatre as well, where during certain scenes of a play by the Russian playwright Alexander Ostrovskii, Alexandre Dumas-fils, or Nikolai Gogol', we, as spectators, "for one or two minutes, completely indulge in the illusion [*на одну или на две минуты вполне предаемся иллюзии*]." <sup>209</sup> Whether reader, writer, or spectator, the creation and experience of literature offered a complex picture of the workings of the brain. Creative work, especially literary texts, had unveiled the tenuous line between reality and hallucination in a way science had not been able to show.

Other connections to literature could be found: many case studies in medical journals relating hallucinations are remarkable for their similarity to the experience of Dostoevsky's characters. To give a couple of examples, the journal *The Archive of Forensic Medicine and Public Hygiene* (*Arkhiv Sudebnoi Meditsiny i Obshchestvennoi Gigieny*) featured violent crimes (robberies and murders) that were supposedly hallucinated. In one case published in 1866, a man in Arkhangel'sk in 1865 was described as having murdered an old woman for money, a crime that the clinician believed he had hallucinated:

June 3, 1865. At night, in the second part of the city of Arkhangel'sk, a man appeared who, during the first interrogation, testified that he was a vagabond who did not remember his family origin and that, on his way to Arkhangel'sk, near the first village before Arkhangel'sk, he killed some unknown woman; during this interrogation, he became unwell (and as the bailiff explained later, he vomited from intoxication, because he came to the unit drunk and could not stand, but had to lean on something), and therefore the interrogation was postponed. [...] [H]e does not remember exactly when he set off on foot to his village, because by wasting money he had nothing to trade here for; after moving about five versts from the city; when he approached, she folded the money and hid it in her pocket; when he saw the money, then the thought came to him to take possession of it and for this to kill the old woman; with this thought, he went with the old woman further, [and] along the road he took a stick that was lying aside; in order to avoid meeting those passing along the road, he persuaded the old woman to turn off the posted road, not reaching the village of Varvarina, to the bank, along which he walked with her about three or four miles, and not far from the village Zharoviki, he hit her with the stick in his hands on the head, which caused her to fall down and die a few minutes later; at once he took the money out of her pocket, putting it in a little bag.<sup>210</sup>

---

(Anonymous, "*Ob ume o poznanii*. Soch. Ippolita Tena. Perv. s frants. pod red. N. N. Strakhova. V dvukh tomakh. SPb. 1872." Delo [August 1872]: Nove knigi, 38)

<sup>208</sup> Michael Finn discusses this episode of Flaubert's hallucinatory experience in relation to Taine in *Figures of the Pre-Freudian Unconscious from Flaubert to Proust*, 56.

<sup>209</sup> Anonymous, "*Ob ume o poznanii*. Soch. Ippolita Tena. Perv. s frants. pod red. N. N. Strakhova. V dvukh tomakh. SPb. 1872," 46.

<sup>210</sup> [3-го июня 1865 г. Ночью, во вторую часть г. Архангельска явился человек, который на первом допросе показал, что он бродяга, непомнящий родства и что, шедши в



This case of a hallucinated murder suggests parallels to Dostoevsky's novel *Crime and Punishment*, published the same year and still fresh in the minds of readers. While many circumstances are, of course, different, what is similar is the doubt: is the crime real or unreal? Like Raskolnikov, this dreamer had the idea of taking the money from an old woman. But what has actually occurred and how had this idea emerged from the depth of a person's disturbed psyche?

Another case in 1869 described a patient who had hallucinated that a large man attacked him. The doctor included an epigraph at the beginning of the report from Boileau, "Le vrai peut quelquefois n'être pas vraisemblable," since the patient had experienced a violent crime that never happened in reality:

Let us examine the conditions under which violence with robbery were allegedly committed. The sky in the evening and even at night on February 13th in St. Petersburg was perfectly clear; the streets were lit by moonlight; there were many people walking along all the streets and alleys. It is very difficult to assume that at about 8 o'clock on such an evening an adult and strong-built man, walking in a uniform cap, not far from the departure platform of the Nikolaevsk railway, was attacked, grabbed by the neck, a bag was thrown over his head, he was gagged, put in a sleigh and they drove without any outside interference. [...] It is strange that Mr. Polonsky did not put up any resistance, did not shout, submitted to the violence like a half-asleep child, meanwhile he recalled the quality of the hand that grabbed his mouth, the movement of the other hand in his pocket, the softness of the bedding in the sleigh. [...] Is it possible to assume that a healthy person could so passively submit to violence? I doubt it. [...] Hallucinations of this kind are very diverse and not uncommon.<sup>211</sup>

---

Архангельск, около первой деревни перед Архангельском убил какую-то неизвестную женщину; во время этого допроса он сделался не здоров, (и как после объяснил пристав, его рвало от опьянения, потому что в часть он явился пьяный, не мог стоять, а должен был о что-нибудь опереться) и потому допрос был отложен. [...] [Н]е помнит, отправился пешком в свою деревню, ибо по растрате денег ему уже не на что было торговать здесь; отойдя около пяти верст от города; при приближении его она сложила деньги и спрятала в кармане; когда он увидел деньги, ему тогда-же пришла мысль овладеть ими и для этого убить старуху; с этою мыслью он пошел со старухою далее, по дороге взял лежавшую в стороне палку; для избежания встречи с проходящими по дороге, убедил старуху свернуть со столбовой дороги, не доходя до деревни Варавина, на берег, по которому прошел с нею около трех или четырех верст, и не вдалеке от деревни Жаровики ударил её, имевшуюся в руках палкой, по голове, отчего она тотчас же упала и через несколько минут умерла; тотчас же вынул из кармана деньги, положенные в мешочке. (Dr. Gorodyskii, "Deistvitel'no-li krest'ianinom K. soversheno ubiistvo zhenshchiny ili pokazanie ego bylo tol'ko galliutsinatsiia?" *Arkhiv Sudebnoi Meditsiny i Obshchestvennoi Gigieny* [June 1866]: *Sudebnaia Meditsina*, II., 8-9)]

<sup>211</sup> [Разберем условия, при которых будто бы совершилось насилие с грабежом. Небо вечером 13-го февраля и даже ночью, в Петербурге, было совершенно ясное; улицы были освещены лунным светом; по всем улицам и переулкам было много гуляющих. Очень трудно предположить, что около 8-ми часов такого вечера на взрослого и крепкого по

Readers of Dostoevsky's novels may notice several places—the distinct Petersburg urban landscape, the Nikolaevsk railway station—that appeared in a critical scene in *The Idiot*, when the protagonist, Prince Myshkin, encounters Rogozhin. What followed—a violent attack by Rogozhin—was depicted in the novel as being on the verge of reality and hallucination. In the case study, the medical expert was unable to find any physical evidence of the attack, but for the victim, it was as real as any attack could possibly be. Moreover, in the case study described in the journal, the forensic specialist created different versions of a single event—in the same way as readers of Dostoevsky's novels, inspired to speculate on whether or not the character's experience was real and what could have actually occurred.

The Arkhangel'sk hallucinated murder and Polonskii's imagined violent encounter—both reported at the time Dostoevsky wrote his major novels, *Crime and Punishment* and *The Idiot*—suggest parallels between medical science and literature. Not only were hallucinations studied in the context of literary creation, but it appeared that case studies echoed scenes from literature. Importantly, both situations brought the aims of science and literature into close alignment, converging on the tenuous boundary of the real and the non-real.

### *Dreams*

In the 1860s and 1870s, scientists and novelists showed intense interest in the state of sleep and—more importantly—the nature of dreams as connected to the workings of brain and consciousness. In Russian journals, the discussion of dreams pointed to concerns science shared with literature: both brain scientists and fiction writers attempted to penetrate the workings of the mind by drawing links between dreams and the working of consciousness in the waking life. To take a look at an early example, in 1861, *The Library of Medical Science (Biblioteka Meditsinskikh Nauk)* published the work by Pavel Ol'khin entitled, “Popular Physiology,” which in large part adapted George Henry Lewes's recently translated *The Physiology of Common Life* (1859). Ol'khin argued that dreams represented the tenuous line between the conscious and unconscious function of the brain—an issue debated on the pages of journals that popularized science:

If we agree to recognize in the body two main activities, conscious and unconscious, then sleep and dreams should be attributed to the latter. For conscious activity, the assistance of the entire nervous system is necessary, which is found only in the wake person. Unconscious activity depends most of all on the

---

сложению мужчину, шедшего в форменной фуражке, недалеко от дебаркадера Николаевской железной дороги, напали, схватили его за шею, накинули на голову мешок, заткнули рот, положили в сани и повезли без всякого постороннего вмешательства... Странно, что г. Полонский не оказал никакого сопротивления, не кричал, подчинился насилию как полусонный ребёнок, между тем *припомнил* качество руки, зажимавшей ему рот, движение другой руки в его кармане, мягкость подстилки в санях. [...] Возможно ли предположить, что здоровый человек мог так пассивно подчиниться насилию? Сомневаюсь. [...] Галлюцинации и иллюзии такого рода очень разнообразны и нередки. (Diatroptov, “Prikluchenie s khudozhnikom Polonskim v sudebno-meditsinskom otnoshenii,” *Arkhiv Sudebnoi Meditsiny i Obshchestvennoi Gigeny* [June 1869]: No. 2, Sudebnaia meditsina, 49-50)]

spinal cord and nerve nodes, and the activity of these parts of the nervous system develops completely during sleep. [...] It is obvious that the activity of mental abilities, such as, for example, desire, memory, and imagination, does not fade away during sleep. But the impetus in their activity is not given by a thought or an external impression, but by a system of nodal nerves, which explains much that is mysterious and enigmatic in dreams. The latter, as we have already noted, are in no way dependent on the will and are revealed in a very special way, which is why external impressions act on the sleeping person in a completely different way than on the wake one.<sup>212</sup>

Olkhin described the dual “activities” of the brain—conscious and unconscious—and linked the origin of dreams to the unconscious function of the nervous system. Dreams and sleep, according to Olkhin, offered a suspension of the “will” during which the workings of memory, desire, and imagination are turned over to the unconscious function of the brain.

Physiologists used the experience of the dreamer in their experiments. Sechenov, in *Reflexes of the Brain*, saw the actions of the sleeping person as analogous to that of the decerebrated frog. The frog, when decapitated and rubbed with acid, “will rub for a long time,” and “similar phenomena [...] are easily observed on a sleeping person [*na sonnom cheloveke*],” where “a slight tickling of the skin of the face [...] causes him to contract muscles lying under the irritable [place].”<sup>213</sup> Such a reaction, Sechenov argued, was the result of the “machine-like nature [*mashinobraznost*] of their origin.”<sup>214</sup> In the case of dreams, Sechenov also claimed that “the sleeping person who screams or moves under the influence of dreams” exhibits the workings of “involuntary movement.”<sup>215</sup> Such a state of mind, Sechenov argued, “is, of course, as real [*stol’ko zhe real’no*] as any rational idea.”<sup>216</sup> Thus, from the perspective of the physiology of the brain, dreams originated in a real physiological process in the same way as psychic acts of conscious life.

Analogies we made between hallucinations and dreams in the context of the science of the brain. In his article, “Illnesses of the Sentient Organism” (*Bolezni chuvstvuiushchogo*

---

<sup>212</sup> [Если мы согласимся признать в организме две основные деятельности, сознательную и бессознательную, то сон и сновидения мы должны отнести к последней. Для сознательной деятельности необходимо содействие всей нервной системы, которое обнаруживается только у бодрствующего. Бессознательная деятельность зависит всего более от спинного мозга и нервных узлов, а деятельность этих частей нервной системы развивается вполне во время сна. [...] Очевидно, что деятельность душевных способностей, как напр. желания, памяти и воображения, не угасает и во время сна. Но толчок в их деятельности подает не мысль и не внешнее впечатление, а система узловых нервов, чем объясняется многое таинственное и загадочное в сновидениях. Последние, как мы уже заметили, нисколько не зависят от воли и обнаруживаются совершенно особенным образом, отчего внешние впечатления действуют на спящего совершенно не так, как на бодрствующего. (Pavel Ol’khin, *O zhiznennykh iavleniiakh v chelovecheskom tele ili populiarnaia fiziologiia, Chast’ Pervaia. Fiziologiia chuvstv*, ed. M. Khan [St. Petersburg: Biblioteka Meditsinskikh Nauk, 1861], 307-308)]

<sup>213</sup> Ivan Sechenov, *Izbrannye Proizvedeniia*, Vol. 1, 40.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*

*organizma*), Nikolai Shelgunov maintained that dreams represented a suspension of the will, describing how in sleep, the sleeper [*sonnyi*] “does not receive impressions from without, because his senses are blunted, his eyes cannot see, his nose does not smell, his ears cannot hear; but all images are created [*sozdaiutsia*] in him by his inner nervous means [*vnutrennie nervnye sredstva*].”<sup>217</sup> The result was that both the dreamer and the hallucinating person “lose consciousness of their personal self [*ia*]—either partly, or in full—and all the scenes [*kartiny*] created from imagination are taken as real [*deistvitel'nye*].”<sup>218</sup> Importantly, the existence of dreams marked not only a loss of the “will” and of the workings of the “self,” but in the process, the disruption of the very nature of reality itself, in which the brain—whether or not the images or imagined scenes were part of a pathological hallucination or merely an average dream—offered its own sense of the real, which emerged from within and seemed independent of the workings of the senses.

In the same period, the work of Alfred Maury, “Sleep and Dreams,” which would later influence Freud’s understanding of the nature of dreams, was reviewed in the journal *The Deed*. The reviewer argued that dreams emerged out of a process of the unconscious function of the different parts of the brain and the nervous system, including the spinal cord, the cerebellum, and the cerebral hemispheres, in which different parts “may encounter uneven relaxation” resulting in dream states.<sup>219</sup> The article reproduced many of Maury’s famous dream reports, such as the following description of the jumbled associations of words in the dreamer’s mind:

I reported this observation to a person I knew who answered me that he very vividly remembered a dream of the same kind. The words Jardin, Chardin et Janin so closely associated in his mind that in a dream he alternately saw: Jardin des plantes, where he met a traveler in Persia named Chardin, who gave him, to his greater surprise (I do not know if this was due to the anachronism), Jules Janin’s novel: *L’Ane mort et la femme guillotiné*.<sup>220</sup>

Apart from speculations about the physiology of the dream, this dream report featured verbal and sound associations influenced by the patient’s reading. The review thus offered different elaborations of the dream experience, the one based in science and the one based in literature.

Maury’s cases were also described in a review of Taine’s *De l’intelligence*, translated by Strakhov in 1872. While speaking of the brain, this review was interested in the blurred line between real and unreal, external and internal in dreams and hallucinations:

The dream is a real hallucination and, on the contrary, people suffering from hallucinations are very similar to sleeping people in the sense that some of their

---

<sup>217</sup> Nikolai Shelgunov, “Bolezni chuvstvuiushchego organizma,” *Russkoe Slovo* (September 1864): 94; 96.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>219</sup> Anonymous, “Novye knigi,” *Delo* (August 1867): 57-58.

<sup>220</sup> [Я сообщил об этом наблюдении одному знакомому мне лицу, которое отвечало мне, что оно весьма живо помнит сон такого же рода. Слова Jardin, Chardin et Janin. так тесно ассоциировались в его уме, что он во сне попеременно видел: Jardin des plantes, где встретил путешественника по Персии Chardin, который дал ему к его большему удивлению (не знаю, было ли это вследствие анахронизма) роман Jules Janin’a: *L’Ane mort et la femme guillotine*. (*Ibid.*, 62)]

senses are dulled and they cannot perceive external impressions with sufficient completeness. The power of images that arise in sleep is so great that we believe them completely and, of course, no one will think in a dream that he is asleep, and therefore his images are empty ghosts. When we wake up, in the first minute we are not yet able to get rid of our dreams, since the senses are just beginning to borrow impressions from the external environment and have not yet managed to bring to our consciousness a single real sensation. But little by little we come back to life; impressions crowd into our brain through all the senses and, step by step, drive out the evil despots who illegally ruled over us throughout the night; the brain is cleared of fictions and its normal activity is restored.<sup>221</sup>

The reviewer also described cases of sleepwalkers [*somnambuly*] who experienced a double life: “they do not remember anything they do in a dream and are surprised when they suddenly find themselves at night on the street or on a roof.”<sup>222</sup> In one case a sleepwalker “continued to forge suicide plans conceived by her during the previous seizure,” which offered evidence for a “psychological bifurcation.”<sup>223</sup> For these patients, the fiction of the dream existed side by side with the experience of the real world: dreams echoed the very nature of literary works with their creation of an alternate reality.

The nature of dreams, especially their relationship to hallucinatory experiences and departure from the “reality” of conscious life, was explored in the 1870s in the medical press by Western authors, Paul Radestock, Ludwig Strümpell, and others, some of whom would later influence Freud’s understanding of the unconscious.<sup>224</sup> One article in the medical newspaper *Moscow Medical Newspaper* (*Moskovskaia Meditsinskaia Gazeta*) reviewed Strümpell’s *Die Natur und Entstehung der Träume* (1874), focused on the idea of real and unreal, noting that “even the thought of the difference between the real and the not real [*o raznitse mezhdu real’nym i ne real’nym*] cannot arise in the sleeper, all seems to be reality [*vse kazhetsia deistvitel’nost’iu*],” and as in the hallucinating person, when the images “take possession of

---

<sup>221</sup> [Сон есть настоящая галлюцинация и, наоборот, люди, страдающие галлюцинацией, очень похожи на спящих в том отношении, что некоторые чувства их притуплены и не могут воспринимать с достаточной полнотой внешних впечатлений. Сила образов, возникших во время сна, так велика, что мы им верим вполне и никому, конечно, не придет на ум во сне, что он спит и потому его образы—пустые призраки. Когда просыпаемся, то в первую минуту мы еще не в состоянии отделаться от своих сновидений, так как органы чувств только что начинают заимствовать из внешней среды впечатления и не успели еще довести до нашего сознания ни одного реального ощущения. Но мало по малу мы оживаем; впечатления толпой теснятся в наш мозг чрез все чувства и шаг за шагом изгоняют злых деспотов, незаконно властвовавших над нами в течении всей ночи; мозг очищен от фикций и нормальная деятельность его восстановлена. (*Ibid.*, 44)]

<sup>222</sup> Anonymous, “*Ob ume o poznanii*. Soch. Ippolita Tena. Perv. s frants. pod red. N. N. Strakhova. V dvukh tomakh. SPb. 1872.” *Delo* (August 1872): Novye knigi, 43.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>224</sup> Freud quoted Strümpell and Radestock extensively in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), trans. and ed. James Strachey (New York: Basic Books, 2010).

him,” “he must inevitably take them for real images.”<sup>225</sup> This article described experiences in which what appeared in a dream became reality in the life of the patient later on:

Some person, F., who had for 20 years not seen the area where he had spent his early childhood, was going to go there. On the eve of his departure, he sees in a dream an unfamiliar area, meets a stranger, speaks to him and, by the way, hears his name. Arriving at the place, he recognizes the situation that he dreamed of, meets a man who is extremely similar to the one seen in the dream, only a little older, and who bears the surname he heard in the dream. It turns out that the dreamer was closely acquainted with his father and he often saw him in childhood. It also happens that in a dream, something comes to mind that we actually saw or heard in passing, without then paying attention.<sup>226</sup>

Here, dreams offer a way in which to retrieve memories in the patient and access “reality” that would have been otherwise inaccessible.

The link between dreams and waking states was explored in the work of the Russian philosopher Nikolai Iakovlevich Grot in his *Dreams, as a Subject of Scientific Analysis* (*Snovideniia, kak predmet nauchnogo analiza*) (1878). In one article in the journal *Russian Speech* (*Ruskaia Rech*), entitled “Scientific Chronicle in the Area of Psycho-Physiology: Sleep and Dreams” (*Nauchnaia khronika v oblasti psikho-fiziologii: son i snovidenie*), which surveyed the work of Grot and others on dreams, including many works in German from the period, the author also reflected on what dreams could tell us about the nature of the real.<sup>227</sup> In dreaming, the difference between reality and fantasy is impossible, how “in a dream [...] our self does not distinguish its ideas from real existence, but on the contrary accepts the former as the latter,” where it is impossible to separate “representation” from the real.<sup>228</sup> In speaking about “representation” this author came close to treating dreams by analogy with works of literature. Grot in his treatise turned to literary examples, both writers’ dreams and dreams of literary characters:

---

<sup>225</sup> B. Rozenberg, “Opyt psikhologii snovidenii,” *Moskovskaia Meditsinskaia Gazeta* No. 26 (June 29, 1874): 1080.

<sup>226</sup> [Некто F., 20 лет не видавший местности, где протекало его раннее детство, собирался туда ехать. Накануне отъезда он видит во сне незнакомую местность, встречает незнакомого человека, говорит с ним и слышит между прочим его фамилию. Приехавши на место, он узнает обстановку, которая ему снилась, знакомится с человеком, который чрезвычайно похож на виденного во сне, только немного постарше, и который носит фамилию, слышанную во сне. Оказывается, что приснившийся был близко знаком с его отцом и он в детстве часто его видал. Бывает также, что во сне приходит на память то, что мы на яву видели или слышали мимоходом, не обратив тогда особого внимания. (*Ibid.*, 1079)]

<sup>227</sup> As the review argued, “the joint activity of the higher nerve centers, during the transition to sleep, is disturbed,” and how “not all cells of these centers function, but only some,” leading to the way that “brain function decreases to that level of mental state by which dreams are expressed.” El’pe, “Nauchnaia Khronika. V oblasti psikho-fiziologii: Son i snovideniia.” *Ruskaia Rech* (January 1881): 85-86.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.

[A] thought that once passed through our consciousness, even if in a dream, can easily arise again when the necessary association has appeared. It is quite possible that the same principle of reaction explains Karamzin's prophetic dream, cited by Pogodin. During the hopeless illness of his first wife, Karamzin saw in a dream that he was standing at her dug grave, and "on the other side, Ekaterina Andreevna (whom he later married) was standing and giving him a hand through the grave." Such a dream could make a deep impression on the mind and influence the course of future events. [...] As a result of this, a number of prophetic dreams can still be explained by their conscious reaction to will through the medium of feeling, affect, and mood, although it is a pathological phenomenon. Pulcheria Ivanovna, an old world landowner, began to wither after a black cat crossed her path, mainly by virtue of faith, which is beyond doubt, even though we recognized Pulcheria Ivanovna as a morally morbid type.<sup>229</sup>

Whether or not this interpretation seemed acceptable to the contemporary reader, such arguments show that dreams—long seen as prophetic, and long the domain of fiction writers—had now entered the domain in which literature worked side by side with science, trying to explain the inexplicable.

### *Epilepsy*

Readers opening up Chapter 5 of Part 2 of Dostoevsky's *The Idiot*, serialized in *The Russian Herald* in May 1868, encountered a situation that was also found in professional medical journals. The description of Prince Myshkin's epileptic attack is remarkable in its similarity to clinical reports on the disease, especially in the details about the aura (a period just before the "falling fit") and the representation of the unconscious and semiconscious actions associated with epilepsy:

He fell to thinking, among other things, about his epileptic condition, that there was a stage in it just before the fit itself (if the fit occurred while he was awake), when suddenly, amidst the sadness, the darkness of soul, the pressure, his brain would momentarily catch fire, as it were, and all his life's forces would be

---

<sup>229</sup> [[М]ысль, однажды прошедшая чрез сознание наше, хотя бы и во сне, легко может возникнуть снова, когда явилась потребная для того ассоциация. Весьма возможно, что тем же принципом реакции объясняется и вещий сон Карамзина, приводимый Погодиным. Во время безнадежной болезни своей первой жены, Карамзин видел во сне, что стоит у вырытой могилы ее, а «по другую сторону стоит Екатерина Андреевна (на которой он после женился) и через могилу подает ему руку». Такой сон мог произвести глубокое впечатление на ум и повлиять на течение будущих событий. [...] Вследствие этого ряд вещих сновидений может быть пока объясняем и сознательной реакцией их на волю чрез посредство чувства, аффекта, настроения, хотя она и представляет собою патологическое явление. Пульхерия Ивановна, старосветская помещица, стала чахнуть, после того как черный кот перебежал ей дорогу, главным образом в силу веры, что не подлежит сомнению, хотя бы мы и признали Пульхерию Ивановну за тип болезненный в нравственном отношении. (Nikolai Iakovlevich Grot, *Snovideniia, kak predmet nauchnogo analiza* [Kiev: Tipografiia M. P. Fritsa, 1878], 63)]

strained at once in an extraordinary impulse. The sense of life, of self-awareness, increased nearly tenfold in these moments, which flashed by like lightning. His mind, his heart were lit up with an extraordinary light; all his agitation, all his doubts, all his worries were as if placated at once, resolved in a sort of sublime tranquility, filled with serene, harmonious joy, and hope, filled with reason and ultimate cause. But these moments, these glimpses were still only a presentiment of that ultimate second (never more than a second) from which the fit itself began. That second was, of course, unbearable. Reflecting on that moment afterwards, in a healthy state, he had often said to himself that all those flashes and glimpses of a higher self-sense and self-awareness, and therefore of the “highest being,” were nothing but an illness, a violation of the normal state, and if so, then this was not the highest being at all but, on the contrary, should be counted as the very lowest (225-226).<sup>230</sup>

This representation of the epileptic experience demonstrated Dostoevsky’s awareness, through his own experience with the disease and his reading of medical case studies. James Rice in his groundbreaking *Dostoevsky and the Healing Art* has already demonstrated that medical science was a major influence on the novelist’s fiction.<sup>231</sup> My survey of Russian medical newspapers and journals from the time provides additional material for the understanding of Dostoevsky’s involvement with science. Russian medical organs published many case studies and depictions of the disease, which was carefully studied by major scientists of the brain, including Thomas Laycock, Wilhelm Griesinger, Dr. John Hughlings Jackson, and Jean-Martin Charcot.<sup>232</sup> The discussion of epilepsy touched on the major themes debated in Russian journals, especially the

---

<sup>230</sup> For English translations of *The Idiot*, I have used Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky, *The Idiot* (New York: Vintage, 2003), 225-226. [Он задумался, между прочим, о том, что в эпилептическом состоянии его была одна степень почти пред самым припадком (если только припадок приходил наяву), когда вдруг, среди грусти, душевного мрака, давления, мгновениями как бы воспламенялся его мозг и с необыкновенным порывом напрягались разом все жизненные силы его. Ощущение жизни, самосознания почти удесятерилось в эти мгновения, продолжавшиеся как молния. Ум, сердце озарялись необыкновенным светом; все волнения, все сомнения его, все беспокойства как бы умиротворялись разом, разрешались в какое-то высшее спокойствие, полное ясной, гармоничной радости и надежды, полное разума и окончательной причины. Но эти моменты, эти проблески были еще только предчувствием той окончательной секунды (никогда не более секунды), с которой начинался самый припадок. Эта секунда была, конечно, невыносима. Раздумывая об этом мгновении впоследствии, уже в здоровом состоянии, он часто говорил сам себе: что ведь все эти молнии и проблески высшего самоощущения и самосознания, а стало быть и «высшего бытия», не что иное, как болезнь, как нарушение нормального состояния, а если так, то это вовсе не высшее бытие, а, напротив, должно быть причислено к самому низшему. (8:187-188)]

<sup>231</sup> This is the central argument of James Rice in his *Dostoevsky and the Healing Art: An Essay in Literary and Medical History* (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1985).

<sup>232</sup> Owsei Temkin has provided the most comprehensive history of epilepsy, including the developments in science of epilepsy in the mid- to late-19<sup>th</sup> century in *The Falling Sickness: A History of Epilepsy from the Greeks to the Beginnings of Modern Neurology* [1945] (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971).



unconscious workings of the mind, the nature of dreams and hallucinations, and the role of spiritual experience in clinical pathology. In an interesting turn, the topic was nearly absent from the “thick journals” except for Dostoevsky’s take on the subject in *The Idiot*, serialized in *The Russian Herald*. In his representation of epilepsy, Dostoevsky’s novel overlapped with medical literature, and their common concerns were not limited to epilepsy proper: contemporary clinicians had increasingly shown that epilepsy could provide a special glimpse into the workings of the brain. Importantly, this disease challenged the basic assumptions about the nature of thinking itself and prompted major scientists to reconsider their understanding of the nervous system.

While discussion of the disease did not make it into the “thick” popular journals, the professional medical press depicted the disease with special emphasis throughout the 1860s and 1870s. The topic was of intense interest in the early surveys of psychiatric literature in *The Military Medical Journal*, which reviewed dozens of works on epilepsy alongside works of brain science, including Sechenov’s *Reflexes of the Brain*.<sup>233</sup> Case studies depicted hallucinations, unconscious behavior, and other altered states of mind. It catches the eye that these case studies included reports on subjective experience, including experiences that were rare in other pathological conditions. In one case, a clinician turned to the experience of a priest who was “struck with epileptic dizziness [*byl porazhen epilepticheskim golovokruzheniim*]” but who nevertheless did not stop serving the Mass: “he sang extremely slowly and sometimes uttered incoherent words.”<sup>234</sup> In the same article, the patients were described experiencing the epileptic aura in the form of a “breeze” [*veterok*] which signaled the coming seizure (this word that was used by Dostoevsky to describe his own seizures).<sup>235</sup> Another article described a 16-year old patient who, suddenly encountering a seizure, “felt himself stricken [*razbitym*], tired [*utomlennym*], and unable to think [*nesposobnym myslit*],” which was caused, according to the clinician, by the depressed workings of cerebral arteries in the brain.<sup>236</sup>

Some cases spoke directly to the debate about the mechanical function of the nervous system as exemplified by Sechenov’s experiments on decerebrated frog in *Reflexes of the Brain*. One case presented an epileptic patient who experienced attacks of which he was at certain moments partially conscious and at others completely unconscious. Recalling Bazarov’s frogs, the clinician described “a full analogy between the experimental observations on the function of the brain spinal centers in the frog and the pathological observations in the human.”<sup>237</sup> The depiction of the patient focused on the body, with his movements recalling Sechenov’s frog:

Last year, one of the hospital attendants, Miron Tikhonov, 27 years old, of a strong physique, “had a seizure.” Having come to the ward, according to the

---

<sup>233</sup> For example, one article reviewed several recent works about the pathology of epilepsy, mentioned earlier in this chapter: Diukov, P. “Referat ob uspekhakh psikhii v 1861 i 1862 g.” *Voenno-Meditsinskii Zhurnal* (January 1864), Smes’, 61-85.

<sup>234</sup> Anonymous, “Epilepsia (iz klinich. chtenii prof. Trusso v Parizhe),” *Voenno-meditsinskii zhurnal*: (January 1862): Smes’, 3-4.

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*, 4. James Rice notes that Dostoevsky uses the term “veterok” to describe the aura before a seizure in *Dostoevsky and the Healing Art*, 7; 9-10.

<sup>236</sup> Anonymous, “K voprosu o sushchnosti epilepsii,” *Moskovskaia Meditsinskaia Gazeta* 8 (February 24, 1868): Meditsinskoe obozrenie, 75.

<sup>237</sup> P. Sklotovskii, “Primenenie faktov eksperimental’noi fiziologii k ob’iasneniiu i lecheniiu sluchaia epilepsii,” *Meditsinskii Vestnik* 16 (April 20, 1868): 145.

report on the incident, I found the patient in the following condition. He lies on the floor with his back down and seems to be trying to free himself from 6 people (4 ministers and 2 paramedics) who are holding him back: [he has] cramps in the limbs and trunk. From the patient there is the smell of vodka, there is foam at his mouth; the loss of sensitivity and consciousness is complete; the eyelids are compressed, the eyes, meanwhile, are hidden deeper than usual in the sockets; the pupils are normal. After a few seconds, the convulsions stopped, breathing became more frequent and deepened, the patient lies calmly, pinches do not cause reflexes; but the hands all the time, as before, are clenched in fists and bent at the elbows, the legs are straightened, all the muscles are tense, as if they were numb. [...] I left thinking that this would be the end of the matter. Then I found out that such a calm state lasted for about 10 minutes, after which the patient seemed to stretch and regained consciousness. What happened to him? He remembers nothing and now went to bed.<sup>238</sup>

Such detailed descriptions—but not the explanations offered by medical scientists inspired by the theory of reflex actions—could have added to Dostoevsky’s fascination with the meanings of the disease from he himself suffered (a topic for detailed discussion in the next chapter).

Some case studies suggested a more complex situation of the subjective experience of patients with epilepsy. A work reviewed in the journal *The Medical Review (Meditsinskoe Obozrenie)* in 1875 documented several cases of automatic or unconscious behavior during epileptic seizures by the Austrian physician Maximilian Leidersdorf (1816-1889).<sup>239</sup> (These cases feature similarities with Dostoevsky’s representation of the disease.) One case included the patient’s own description of her psychic experience during a seizure, linking these experiences to Peter the Great, Mohammad, Newton, and Petrarch. (Dostoevsky described Mohammad’s epileptic experience in many of his novels.) The girl’s report details her experience in the first and third person:

The girl in question, who obviously suffered from epilepsy for a long time, herself reports about what happens to her during this time: “The day before the seizure

---

<sup>238</sup> [В прошлом году с одним из госпитальных служителей, Мироном Тихоновым, 27 лет, крепкого телосложения, «случился припадок». Пришедши в палату, по докладу о случившемся, я застал больного в следующем состоянии. Он лежит на полу, спиной вниз и как будто старается освободиться от 6 человек (4 служителей и 2 фельдшеров), которые его удерживают: судороги конечностей и туловища. От больного несет водкой, у рта его пена; потеря чувствительности и сознания полная; веки сжаты, глаза как бы глубже обыкновенного спрятаны в глазницах; зрачки нормальны. Чрез несколько секунд судороги прекратились, дыхание участилось и сделалось глубже, больной лежит покойно, щипки не вызывают рефлексов; но руки все время, как и прежде, сжаты в кулаках и полусогнуты в локтях, ноги выпрямлены, все мышцы напряжены, как будто ооченели. [...] Я ушел, думая, что этим дело кончится. Потом я узнал, что такое покойное состояние продолжалось минут 10, после чего больной как бы потягивался и пришел в сознание. Что было с ним? ничего не помнит и сейчас же лег спать. (*Ibid.*, 143.)]

<sup>239</sup> Leidersdorf had met Freud in 1885. William Johnston describes Freud’s early meeting with psychiatrists such as Leidersdorf in *The Austrian Mind: An Intellectual and Social History, 1848-1938*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983, 231.

appears, I cannot describe what is happening to me: I have some flickering before my eyes, I stagger here and there and am not fully aware of myself. I can eat, drink, and work at the same time.” At this time, when the girl was in such a state, her landlady made her very indignant with various offensive insinuations. Not remembering herself, she ran out into the yard and threw a lit match into the barn, which caused a fire. The next day the accused had a seizure. From the inquiries of others, it turned out that before a seizure this girl is always in such a state that the most insignificant reason was always enough for her to become unconscious and start doing various absurdities.<sup>240</sup>

This girl was reported to have committed various acts while in an unconscious state, such as lighting a barn on fire, and, in one instance, attempting to drown herself. In this report, the patient’s inner perspective reveals one reality, while the outer point of view of her automatic behavior shows something entirely separate. This case and many others like it posed a challenge for the scientific understanding of the difference between the unconscious and the conscious mind, as well as the difference between first and third person perspectives on experience. These challenges (as I am about to show in the next chapter) were taken up by literature—first and foremost, by Dostoevsky.

In another case, a 21-year-old medical student had committed a violent attack on colleagues with a gun, and while the patient retained memory of the event, he was still deemed to have been unconscious. The clinician claimed that his recollection was merely an imprint of an experience that he had not been aware of:

Having calmed down a bit, he grabbed his head with his hands, saying, “where am I?” and staggered again. While they went to call more people, the patient disappeared. But very soon he appeared in a student’s room with a sword [*s rappirom*] in his hands and made another attack. [...] This is where the paroxysm ends. From a state of intense excitement, the patient passed into a theatrical air [*v teatral’nuu affektatsiiu*]; playing the role of a stage hero, he waved the sword, but at the suggestion of the student foreman he immediately gave up the weapon. Having dressed more decently, he followed the foreman into his room and, lighting a cigar offered to him, began to speak perfectly intelligently. At this time, he remembered that he shot at his comrades and attacked some with a sword in

---

<sup>240</sup> [Девушка, о которой идет речь и которая заведомо давно страдала эпилепсией, так сама сообщает о том, что бывает с нею в это время: «За день до появления припадка, я не могу описать, что делается со мною: у меня что-то мелькает перед глазами, я шатаюсь туда и сюда и не вполне сознаю себя. Я могу в то же время есть, пить и работать». – В это время, когда эта девушка была в таком состоянии, ее привела хозяйка ее в сильное негодование различными оскорбительными намеками. Та, не помня себя, выбежала на двор и бросила зажженную спичку в амбар, отчего произошёл пожар. На другой день у обвиняемой явился припадок. Из расспросов окружающих оказалось, что девушка эта перед припадком всегда находится в таком состоянии, что самой незначительной причины было всегда достаточно, чтобы она пришла в бессознательное состояние и стала делать разные нелепости. (Sprimon, “Prof. Leidesdorf.—Ueber epileptische Geistesstörung.—*Epileptischeskoe pomeshatel’stvo* [Medic. Jahrbücher. 2. H. p. 157],” *Meditsinskoe Obozrenie* [June 1875]: “Bolezni nervnoi systemy,” 437-438)]

his hand. He said that for some time he had been haunted by thoughts of committing murder, his hand itched to stab or strangle someone. He's glad he didn't hurt anyone. [...] Then again, he remembered about the death of his father, saying he had learned about it from a friend. On the way, he shuddered several times, pointed at one passerby, believing that he was watching him in order to kill him, and he suspected some of his comrades of the same.<sup>241</sup>

Remarking on this case, the clinician argued: "The concept of 'consciousness of action,' in the sense that the word is commonly understood, therefore, must be limited; consciousness is not yet responsibility, it does not exclude the mechanical nature of the action, and the recollection of the completed action does not prove that the perpetrator was in his right mind at the moment of action."<sup>242</sup> This case study not only challenged the basic philosophical and scientific assumptions about the distinction between conscious and unconscious experience, but also posed the problem of responsibility, with its moral and legal implications.

In the next year, the medical journal *The Medical Review* reported on a remarkable case handled by the famous clinician Richard von Krafft-Ebing. In the original German publication Krafft-Ebing emphasized that this epileptic patient experienced states of semi-consciousness that were similar to those found in literature he had been reading: "he loved reading novels, stories about knights, and was often unable to tell reading apart from" and "had often relived romantic plots at work that he had seen at the theatre."<sup>243</sup> The case, as reported in the Russian journal, described the patient reliving scenes inspired by his "romantic inclinations" in vivid detail, including a shifting sense of fantasy and reality:

---

<sup>241</sup> [Успокоившись несколько, он схватил руками свою голову, говоря: «где я?» и снова зашатался. Пока пошли звать еще людей, больной исчез. Но очень скоро он появился в комнате одного студента с рапиром в руках и сделал новое нападение. [...] Тут пароксизм кончается. Из состояния сильнейшего возбуждения больной перешел в театральную аффектацию; разыгрывая роль сценического героя, он махал рапиром, но по предложению студентского старшины тотчас отдал оружие. Одевшись поприличнее, он пошел за старшиною в его комнату и, закурив предложенную ему сигару, начал говорить совершенно разумно. В это время он помнил, что стрелял в товарищей и на некоторых нападал со шпагою в руке. Рассказывал, что уже с некоторого времени его преследовали мысли о совершении убийства, рука чесалась, чтобы заколоть или задушить кого-нибудь. Он рад, что никого не ранил. [...] Потом он опять вспомнил о смерти отца, говоря, что узнал об этом от приятеля. По дороге он несколько раз вздрагивал, указывал на одного прохожего, полагая, что тот следит за ним, чтобы убить его, заподозрил в том же некоторых товарищей. (Bernard Solomonovich Rozenberg, "Epilepticheskie formy umopomeshatel'stva i znachenie ikh dlia sudebno-psikhiatricheskoj ekspertizy," *Moskovskaia Meditsinskaia Gazeta* 24 [June 14, 1875], 783-784)]

<sup>242</sup> [Понятие «сознательность действия», в том смысле как обыкновенно понимают это слово, следовательно, должно быть ограничиваемо; сознательность не есть еще вмняемость, не исключает машинальности действия, и воспоминание о совершенном действии не доказывает, что совершивший находился в момент деяния в здравом уме. (*Ibid.*, 788)]

<sup>243</sup> Rudolf von Krafft-Ebing, *Arbeiten aus dem Gesamtgebiet der Psychiatrie und Neuropathologie*, III. Heft., Leipzig: Johann Ambrosius Barth, 1898, 24.

A 22-year-old young man of a weak physique and a nervous temperament with a hereditary disposition to epilepsy, from childhood was distinguished by romantic inclinations and an unbridled imagination. From the 19<sup>th</sup> year, epileptic seizures began to happen at irregular, rather long (several months) intervals. The patient fell unconscious and after a few minutes came to himself after a fit of convulsive sobs. The seizure was proclaimed by a vasomotor aura, which was expressed by a sensation of cold, rising from the feet to the head. From that time on, also at irregular intervals, the patient began to fall into a state that he himself characterizes as “meaningless”; his thoughts at the same time were completely confused and the patient retained only an aggregated memory of what was happening to him at that time. The harbingers of such a seizure were a dull noise in the ears and hallucinations of the sense of smell and sight (the suffocating smell of sulfur and terrible ghosts). In addition, in recent years, at times there have been seizures of a kind of clouding of consciousness, and the patient either acted in the sense of his romantic fantasies and dreams, which seemed to the patient as if “imposed” on him, or he performed unprovoked, purely impulsive actions. It so happened that at night he walked the streets in a semi-conscious state. Once he had an unprovoked idea of going to the city L. Waking up the next day, to his great amazement, in L., the patient could not understand how he got there. Recently, seizures of dullness have been combined with expansive delusions and impulsive actions; in this state, the patient took for reality his usual fantasies, the play of his heated imagination. For example, he considered himself a commander winning brilliant victories, and so on. Suddenly ceasing to dream, he immediately realized the inconsistency of his dreams with reality. And the patient had only an aggregated recollection of these seizures.<sup>244</sup>

---

<sup>244</sup> [22-летний молодой человек слабого телосложения и нервного темперамента с наследственным расположением к эпилепсии, с детства отличался романтическими наклонностями и разнузданным воображением. С 19-го года с ним стали случаться эпилептические припадки через неправильные, довольно продолжительные (в несколько месяцев) промежутки времени. Больной падал без чувств и через несколько минут приходил в себя после припадка судорожных рыданий. Припадок возвещался вазомоторной аурой, выразившейся ощущением холода, поднимавшимся с ног к голове. С этих же пор, также через неправильные промежутки времени, больной стал впадать в состояние, которое он сам характеризует как «бессмысленное»; мысли при этом совершенно спутывались и о происходящем с ним в это время больной сохранял только суммарное воспоминание. Предвестниками такого припадка являлись глухой шум в ушах и галлюцинации обоняния и зрения (удушливый запах серы и страшные призраки). Кроме того, в последние годы по временам происходили припадки своеобразного помрачения сознания, при чем больной или действовал в смысле своих романических фантазий и мечтаний, которые казались больному как бы «навязанными» ему, или же совершал ничем не мотивированные, чисто-импульсивные действия. Так бывало, что он по ночам прогуливался по улицам в полубессознательном состоянии. Раз ему пришла в голову ничем не мотивированная мысль отправиться в город L. Проснувшись на другой день, к великому своему изумлению, в L., больной никак не мог понять, как он туда попал.—В последнее время припадки помрачения сознания стали комбинироваться с экспансивным бредом и импульсивными действиями; в этом состоянии больной принимал за

Readers of Dostoevsky's *The Idiot* may recognize many similarities between the experience of Prince Myshkin and a clinical case described in a medical source. More importantly, the case and the novel drew on common concerns: How can we tell whether one's mental experience is real? What is the distinction between the various conscious, semiconscious, and unconscious states of mind? Here, the medical case, in its exploration of the shifting boundary between the real and the non-real, explicitly drew on literature and literary imagination. The stage was set for closer interaction between medical science and the novel.

---

действительность свои обычные фантазии, игру своего разгоряченного воображения, напр. считал себя полководцем, одерживающем блистательные победы, и т. п. Вдруг переставая грезить, он тотчас же понимал несоответствие своих мечтаний с действительностью. И об этих припадках у больного оставалось только суммарное воспоминание. (V. Kandinskii, "Krafft-Ebing. – Ueber epileptoide Dämmer-und Traumbestände.—*Ob epileptoidnykh sostoiianiiakh, podobnykh grezam i snovideniiam.* [Allg. Zeitschr. f. Psychiatrie, Bd. XSXXIII. Hft. 2. 1876],” *Meditinskoe Obozrenie* [August 1876]: Otdel' I, Bolezni nervnoi systemy, 107-108)]

## Chapter Two The Split Mind: Epilepsy and the Narrative Discoveries of *The Idiot*

### *Introduction*

In 1888, the British neurologist and “father” of modern neurology, Dr. John Hughlings Jackson (1835-1911), published in the journal *Brain* the first-person report of an epileptic patient which described automatic thoughts and an altered state of mind known as the “dreamy state”:

In October 1887 I was travelling along the Metropolitan Railway, meaning to get out at the fourth station and walk to a house half a mile off. I remember reaching the second station, and I then recollect indistinctly the onset of an 'aura,' in which the conversation of two strangers in the same carriage seemed to be the repetition of something I had previously known—a recollection, in fact. The next thing of which I have any memory was that I was walking up the steps of the house (about a half mile from the fourth station), feeling in my pocket for a latch-key. I remembered almost at once that I had had a petit-mal coming on at the second station, and was surprised to find myself where I was. I recollected that I had meant to reach the house no later than 12:45, and had been rather doubtful in the train whether I should be in time. I looked at my watch and found it within a minute or two of 12:45. I searched my pockets for the ticket, which was to the fourth station, found it gone, and concluded that I must have passed the third station, got out at the fourth, given up my ticket and walked on as I had previously intended, though I had no memory of anything since the second station some ten or twelve minutes previously. I imagine that I had carried out my intention automatically and without memory.<sup>245</sup>

This patient, whom Dr. Jackson called “Dr. Z,” became a paradigmatic case for a special type of epilepsy called “temporal lobe epilepsy,” which, according to Jackson, involved “double consciousness,” the experience in which the normal state of mind coexisted with the epileptic “dreamy state” and a feeling of reminiscence. Dr. Jackson may have taken the term “double consciousness” from George Eliot, who used the phrase in the short story “The Lifted Veil” (1859); Herbert Spencer used it as well.<sup>246</sup> Dr. Z, who was identified as Dr. Arthur Myers, was associated with Victorian scientists and authors such as William Whewell and William James. His brother, Frederick W. H. Myers, was a reputable philologist who wrote a book on the

---

<sup>245</sup> “On a Particular Variety of Epilepsy (‘Intellectual Aura’), One Case with Symptoms of Organic Brain Disease” [1888], *Selected Writings of John Hughlings Jackson*, Vol. 2, ed. James Taylor (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1931), 404.

<sup>246</sup> See Martin N. Raitiere, *The Complicity of Friends: How George Eliot, G. H. Lewes, and John Hughlings-Jackson Encoded Herbert Spencer’s Secret* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2012), 185-187. The term was commonplace at the time, appearing in the opening pages of Feuerbach’s *Essence of Christianity* (1841), which Eliot had translated.

unconscious.<sup>247</sup> A trained physician and a man of letters, Dr. Myers gave reliable narrative records of his experiences, including lapses in memory, displacements in space and time, automatic thoughts, and “double consciousness.” Since such reports of subjective experience were relatively uncommon in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Dr. Z’s narrative provided medical science with a rare glimpse into the epileptic mind.<sup>248</sup>

For readers of Dostoevsky’s *The Idiot*, Dr. Z’s self-report may seem to be strikingly similar to the famous scene in Chapter 5 of Part 2, in which the protagonist, Prince Myshkin, lives through a similar experience at a railway station, including memory lapses, confused thinking, and displacements in space and time. It has been noted that Dostoevsky, who suffered from epilepsy, used his own experience to describe his protagonist’s condition. What is more, Dostoevsky’s novel has long been recognized not only for its striking depiction of the epileptic mind, but also for its innovative narrative technique, including (but not limited to) *style indirect libre*, or free-indirect discourse.<sup>249</sup> It has also been shown that the character’s split subjectivity

---

<sup>247</sup> For a short biography of Myers, see David C. Taylor and Susan M. Marsh, “Hughlings Jackson’s Dr. Z: the paradigm of temporal lobe epilepsy revealed,” *Journal of Neurology, Neurosurgery, and Psychiatry* 43 (1980). Frederick W. H. Myers’s work on the unconscious was originally published in 1903 and was reviewed by William James: *Human Personality and Its Survival of Bodily Death* (New Hyde Park, N.Y.: University Books, 1961).

<sup>248</sup> On the rarity of subjective experience in case reports in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, see Jan Goldstein, “The Uses of Male Hysteria: Medical and Literary Discourse in Nineteenth Century France,” *Representations*, No. 34 (Spring, 1991), 136-137.

<sup>249</sup> Scholars have long turned to Dostoevsky’s *The Idiot*, especially Chapter 5 of Part 2, for the novel’s innovations in narrative technique. Mikhail Bakhtin’s classic study on Dostoevsky’s novels (*Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, 1963) as a part of his understanding of the novelist’s polyphonic novel. Other early critics of the novel argued that the novel’s special form was specifically tied to its thematic elements (Skaftymov, A. P. “Tematicheskaiia kompozitsiia romana ‘Idiot’,” 1924). Robin Feuer Miller’s pioneering study on narrative, *Dostoevsky and The Idiot: Author, Narrator, and Reader* (1981), maps the relationship in the novel between the implied author, the narrator, and the actual or implied reader. In particular, in Part 2 of the novel, she provides a groundbreaking reading of Dostoevsky’s adoption of the gothic mode in the famous scene of Myshkin’s epileptic fit (16-117). Roy Pascal, in his study of free indirect discourse, analyzes Dostoevsky’s special use of the technique in Chapter 5 of Part 2 alongside other 19<sup>th</sup> century novels (*The Dual Voice: Free Indirect Speech and Its Functioning in the Nineteenth Century European Novel*, 126-132). Elizabeth Dalton (*Unconscious Structure in “The Idiot”: A Study in Literature and Psychoanalysis*) approaches narrative in *The Idiot* from a psychoanalytic perspective, focusing on the relationship between the conscious and unconscious mind in the novel. She reads Chapter 5 of Part 2 through this lens (107-116), arguing, “Myshkin’s epileptic seizure [...] is the fullest dramatic revelation of the unconscious motifs at work in the book” (108). Recently, scholars have offered other ways to understand narrative in the novel. Deborah Martinsen, in *Surprised by Shame: Dostoevsky’s Liars and Narrative Exposure* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2003) focuses on the “narrative strategy” seen in the novel’s “dynamics of shame” (xiii); in the case of *The Idiot*, the narrative in the novel “consistently exposes, thematizes, and comments on the dynamics of exposure” (148). Other scholars have demonstrated the ethical questions raised by the novel’s narrative. Such is Sarah Young’s *Dostoevsky’s “The Idiot” and the Ethical Foundations of Narrative: Reading, Narrating, Scripting* (London: Anthem Press, 2004), who describes the special situation of what



during the epileptic fit was used by Dostoevsky as a metaphor for the life and death of Christ.<sup>250</sup> In more ways than one, for Dostoevsky, the experience of this pathological condition reached far beyond the aims of medical science. (And this novelist was not alone: there is a parallel case of a novelist who may have suffered from epilepsy and whose narrative experiments produced innovative techniques, Gustave Flaubert.)

---

she calls the interactive narrative “scripting” in the novel, where characters are “enacting their stories in order to provoke the other into an active rejoinder, transforming story-telling into a form of roleplay in which all the characters are participants” (17). Young pays special attention to “scripting” in Chapter 5 of Part 2 (104-105). Recently, Alexander Spektor (*Reader as Accomplice: Narrative Ethics in Dostoevsky and Nabokov*, Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2020) has considered the ethical dimension in narrative in *The Idiot*, providing the convincing argument that the “lack of narrative coherence transfers into an interpretive anxiety in the reader” (83): readers are faced with potentially unresolvable questions concerning the ethical formation of their subjectivity” (86). (See also Malcolm Jones on the question of incoherence in the narrative structure of the novel.) In this context of the reader’s culpability in reading the novel, Spektor considers the scene of Myshkin’s epileptic fit (98-101). On the question of the representation of time during the epileptic seizure, see also Olga Matich, “Time and Memory in Dostoevsky’s Novels, or Nastasya Filippovna in Absentia” (2016).

<sup>250</sup> Scholars have studied the topic of the interaction of religion and science in the context of Dostoevsky’s novels, especially *The Idiot*. Such is the focus of Michael Holquist’s provocative and still valid study of Dostoevsky and time, *Dostoevsky and the Novel* (1977), where he argues that Myshkin, through his epileptic split experience in time, “re-enacts the life-death-and-transfiguration of Christ, as if Christ were not the Messiah, but as if he were an individual” (107). (On the question of the representation of time during the epileptic seizure, see also Olga Matich, “Time and Memory in Dostoevsky’s Novels, or Nastasya Filippovna in Absentia,” *The Slavic and East European Journal* 60.3 (Fall 2016): 397-421.) Knapp similarly follows this line of thinking about Myshkin as a Christ figure in “Myshkin Through a Murky Glass, Guessingly,” in *Dostoevsky’s “The Idiot”: A Critical Companion*, ed. Liza Knapp (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1998). Harriet Murav (*Holy Foolishness: Dostoevsky’s Novels and the Poetics of Cultural Critique*) makes a convincing case to view Myshkin’s epileptic illness through medical science, but rather through the paradigm of the “holy fool” who she argues is the “site of resistance to the ‘age of positivism and science’” (8). Liza Knapp (*The Annihilation of Inertia: Dostoevsky and Metaphysics*, Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1996) considers a similar tension between science and religion as a cornerstone of Dostoevsky’s work, including *The Idiot*. Paul Fung (*Dostoevsky and the Epileptic Mode of Being*, London: Legenda, 2015) locates the moment of crisis, founded in epilepsy (as seen in the epileptic attack in Chapter 5 of Part 2), reading it as a “kind of postponement, a subjectivity which is infinitely deferred” (4). Molly Brunson has recently echoed these claims in her book, *Russian Realisms: Literature and Painting, 1840-1890* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2016), describing how, especially in the context of *The Idiot*, it is the “correlation of aesthetic and religious objectives” that “distinguishes Dostoevsky’s realism so markedly from that of his contemporaries” (163). Alyson Tapp connects the scenes with Myshkin’s epileptic fits to the overall question of the emotion of embarrassment in the novel, including the linkages between pathology and theology: “Embarrassment in *The Idiot*,” *The Slavic and East European Journal* 60.3 (Fall 2016), 422-446.

This chapter will view the depiction of epilepsy in *The Idiot* in the context of science of the brain in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, including such case studies as the patient Dr. Z. My goal is to explore the link between the narrative discoveries for which *The Idiot* has been celebrated with Dostoevsky's attempts to represent the workings of the epileptic mind, rooted in his personal experience as a patient and in his awareness of contemporary medical science. To this end, I will provide contemporary clinical cases in which physicians, using the self-reports of their patients, made attempts to represent the workings of the epileptic mind. In the end, I will show how the novelist used epilepsy in order to model the complexities of human psyche and the immortality of the human soul in the novel's narrative.

### *Dostoevsky and Epilepsy*

Dostoevsky suffered from epilepsy his entire life, as documented in letters and notebooks, including those to friends and acquaintances. Dostoevsky described his epileptic attacks in personal correspondence beginning in the 1840s and in seizure records from 1860-1880. The seizure records list dozens of attacks. Dostoevsky recorded the time and duration of each attack and, in some cases, described his experience in more detail. James Rice, in his pioneering *Dostoevsky and the Healing Art*, performed the most extensive and insightful investigation of Dostoevsky's epilepsy, including these records, in the context of the medicine of his time, and I build on and extend Rice's work by looking at the narrative representation of the mind in *The Idiot*.<sup>251</sup>

In one letter to his brother, Mikhail Mikhailovich Dostoevsky, written from Siberia on July 30, 1854, Dostoevsky speaks of "strange attacks":

I live here in isolation; I am hiding from people like usual. By the same token I was under watch for five years, and so it is my greatest pleasure to sometimes find myself alone. In general, penal servitude took a lot out of me and brought me much. I, for example, already wrote you about my illness. Strange attacks, similar to the falling sickness, and yet not like the falling sickness. Someday I will write you more about it.<sup>252</sup>

In this letter, as was common in his correspondence, he describes epileptic seizures but does not elaborate on their precise nature.

In one entry from the seizure records on January 7/19, 1870, Dostoevsky describes a "contemplative state" and "hypochondrial depression" after the initial seizure:

---

<sup>251</sup> James Rice, *Dostoevsky and the Healing Art: An Essay in Literary and Medical History*. Brian Johnson writes on the links between Dostoevsky's knowledge of epilepsy and the condition of the character Myshkin: "Diagnosing Prince Myshkin," *Slavic and East European Journal* 56.3 (2012): 377-393.

<sup>252</sup> [Живу я здесь уединенно; от людей по обыкновению прячусь. К тому же я пять лет был под конвоем, и потому мне величайшее наслаждение очутиться иногда одному. Вообще каторга много вывела из меня и много привила ко мне. Я, например, уже писал тебе о моей болезни. Странные припадки, похожие на падучую и, однако ж, не падучая. Когда-нибудь напишу о ней подробнее. (28.1:180)] Citations of Dostoevsky are from the 30-volume "Nauka" edition: *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, ed. G. M. Fridlender et. al. 30 vols. Leningrad: Nauka, 1972-1990. Unless otherwise marked, translations are my own.

An attack at 6 o'clock in the morning (the day and almost the very hour Tropman's execution [in Paris]). I wasn't aware of it, awoke after 8, with consciousness of [having experienced] an attack. Head ached, body battered. NB. (In general the aftermath of attacks, i.e. nervousness, shortness of memory, an intensified and foggy so-to-speak contemplative state [*sozersatel'noe sostoianie*] now continues longer than in former years. Formerly it would pass in three days, but now it actually takes six. Especially evenings with candles there is an objectless hypochondriacal depression [*grust'*] and a seemingly red bloody tint (not a color) on everything. Working during these days is nearly impossible. (I'm writing this note on the 6<sup>th</sup> day after the attack.) (Translation adjusted)<sup>253</sup>

Here, Dostoevsky speaks of an altered state of mind that would last days after an epileptic attack and points to visual disturbances (“a seemingly red bloody tint (not a color) on everything”). Like in another example, there is a hint that there was more to the novelist's experience than he would describe in vague terms in the letters.

In another attack in his seizure records from February 10/January 29, 1870, Dostoevsky elaborates further when he states he experienced “mystical terror”:

At three o'clock in the morning an attack of extreme severity in the hallway, while awake. I fell and banged my forehead. Completely unaware and unconscious, I yet carried the lighted candle quite safely into my room and locked the window and only then realized that I had had an attack. I awoke Anya and told her; she wept a lot when she saw my face. I began calming her when suddenly I had another attack, while awake, in Anya's room (Liuba had been taken away [with a nurse]—a quarter hour after the first. When I came to, my head ached terribly, for a long while I could not speak correctly. Anya spent the night with me. (Mystical terror in the most severe degree.) Now it is four days since the attack and my head is still not very clear.<sup>254</sup>

---

<sup>253</sup> Translated by James Rice, “Dostoevsky's Seizure Records,” *Dostoevsky and the Healing Art*, 293. [Припадок в 6 часов утра (день и почти час казни Тропмана). [Я его не слышал, проснулся в 9-ом часу, с сознанием припадка. Голова болела, тело разбито. NB. (Вообще следствие припадков, то есть нервность, короткость памяти, усиленное и туманное, как бы созерцательное состояние — продолжаютя теперь дольше, чем в прежние годы. Прежде проходило в три дня, а теперь разве в шесть дней. Особенно по вечерам, при свечах, беспредметная ипохондрическая грусть и как бы красный, кровавый оттенок (не цвет) на всем. Заниматься в эти дни почти невозможно. (Заметку пишу на 6-й день после припадка). (27:100-101)]

<sup>254</sup> Translated by James Rice, “Dostoevsky's Seizure Records,” *Dostoevsky and the Healing Art*, 293. [В три часа пополуночи припадок чрезвычайной силы, в сенях, наяву. Я упал и разбил себе лоб. Ничего не помня и не сознавая, в совершенной целости принес, однако же, в комнату зажженную свечу и запер окно, и потом уже догадался, что у меня был припадок. Разбудил Аню и сказал ей, она очень плакала, увидав мое лицо. Я стал ее уговаривать и вдруг со мной опять сделался припадок, наяву, в комнате у Ани (Любу вынесли) — четверть часа спустя после первого припадка. Когда очнулся, ужасно болела голова, долго не мог правильно говорить; Аня ночевала со мной. (Мистический страх в

In this entry, Dostoevsky depicts the unconscious act of carrying a lit candle and states that he experienced what appears to be a headache for days but provides few details. What was the true nature of his mental state during these moments? As can be seen from these three examples, Dostoevsky's seizure records do not give a complete account of his inner experience of epilepsy, and he rarely details moments that were at all similar to the manifestation of epilepsy seen in *The Idiot*. Even so, there are moments that suggest a more complex mental experience that he described in his diaries and letters. Readers are left to fill in the blanks.

Dostoevsky's friend, Sof'ia Kovalevskaia, recalled how he told a story of an epileptic attack in Siberia that appears to provide a clearer lens into his mental experience during an epileptic fit, including a religious experience:

“I felt, said F. M., “that heaven descended to earth and swallowed me. I really attained God, and was imbued with him. ‘Yes, God exists!’ I cried. And I recalled no more. All of you healthy people,” he continued, “don’t even suspect what happiness is, that happiness which we epileptic experience for a second before an attack. Muhammad avows in his Koran that he saw Paradise and was in it. All the wise fools are convinced that he is simply a liar and deceiver. But no! He does not lie! He actually was in Paradise during an attack of epilepsy, from which he suffered just as I do. I don’t know whether that blessedness lasts seconds or hours or months, but trust my word, all the joys which life can give I would not take in exchange for it!”<sup>255</sup>

If we believe Kovalevskaia, Dostoevsky may have derived a famous moment in *The Idiot*—the comparison between an altered state of the epileptic mind and Muhammad's mystical vision (which legend ascribes to epilepsy)—from his own experience as an epileptic.<sup>256</sup> While such a record was not written by the novelist himself, one wonders whether he had had an experience so similar to that of his own character.

Others who knew Dostoevsky offer further evidence for the nature of his attacks. Nikolai Strakhov, Dostoevsky's first biographer and friend who witnessed several of his epileptic attacks, makes a point to connect the novelist's mind with his literary creativity:

---

сильнейшей степени.) Вот уже четверо суток припадку, и голова моя еще очень не свежа. (27:101)]

<sup>255</sup> Translated by James Rice, *Dostoevsky and the Healing Art*, 84. [— И я почувствовал, — рассказывал Федор Михайлович, — что небо сошло на землю и поглотило меня. Я реально постиг бога и проникнулся им. Да, есть бог! — закричал я, — и больше ничего не помню. — Вы все, здоровые люди, — продолжал он, — и не подозреваете, *что* такое счастье, то счастье, которое испытываем мы эпилептики, за секунду перед припадком. Магомет уверяет в своем Коране, что видел рай и был в нем. Все умные дураки убеждены, что он просто лгун и обманщик! Ан нет! Он не лжет! Он действительно был в раю в припадке падучей, которою страдал, как и я. Не знаю, длится ли это блаженство секунды, или часы, или месяцы, но, верьте слову, все радости, которые может дать жизнь, не взял бы я за него! (S. V. Kovalevskaia, *Vospominaniia detstva, Povesti* [Moscow: Izdatel'stvo “Nauka”, 1974], 76)]

<sup>256</sup> See Jacques Cateau, *Dostoyevsky and the Process of Literary Creation* [1978], trans. from French by Audrey Littlewood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 115; n133, 473.

In [F. M.] there was revealed with extraordinary clarity a special sort of bifurcation, whereby the person gives himself up to certain quite vivid thoughts and feelings, yet preserves in his psyche an unyielding and unshakeable point, from which he looks at his own self, his thoughts and feelings. He himself [Dostoevsky] sometimes would speak of this trait, and he called it “reflection.” As a result of this psychic structure a person always retains the ability to judge that which fills his psyche; various feelings and moods can occur in the psyche without taking control of it completely, and from this deep psychic center energy is emitted that vitalizes and transfigures all the activity and all the content of the mind and creativity.<sup>257</sup>

Dostoevsky’s biographer describes Dostoevsky’s psyche in terms that are similar to clinicians’ documentation of the epileptic experience.<sup>258</sup> Moreover, an explicit connection is made by Strakhov between literary creation and the pathological state of mind. As mentioned in Chapter One, Strakhov had translated Taine’s *On Intelligence*, which included Flaubert’s letters about his epileptic seizures during the creative process, including the experience of tasting Emma Bovary’s arsenic. One may wonder whether he had the French novelist in mind when he wrote of Dostoevsky’s condition.

On the whole, Dostoevsky kept details of his subjective experience of epilepsy a secret from his physicians and family. As Rice suggests, he may have experienced hallucinations that he accepted as reality.<sup>259</sup> After Dostoevsky’s death, the nature of his illness became public knowledge through articles published by his longtime physician, Dr. Stepan Dmitrievich Yanovsky (1815-1897).<sup>260</sup> He confirmed that Dostoevsky suffered from epilepsy in a letter to the poet Apollon Nikolaevich Maikov (1821-1897), which was published in the newspaper *The New Time (Novoe Vremia)* weeks after Dostoevsky’s death in 1881. In the letter, Dr. Yanovsky describes Dostoevsky’s aura symptoms before the epileptic seizure:

He was aware of his illness and usually called it “*Kondrashaka with an aura [s veterkom—literally: ‘with a breeze’]*.” (Mark well this last word.) This [symptom]

---

<sup>257</sup> James Rice, *Dostoevsky and the Healing Art*, 60. [С чрезвычайной ясностью в нем обнаруживалось особенного рода раздвоение, состоящее в том, что человек предается очень живо известным мыслям и чувствам, но сохраняет в душе неподдающуюся и неколеблющуюся точку, с которой смотрит на самого себя, на свои мысли и чувства. Он сам иногда говорил об этом свойстве и называл его рефлексией. Следствием такого душевного строя бывает то, что человек сохраняет всегда возможность судить о том, что наполняет его душу, что различные чувства и настроения могут проходить в душе, не овладевая ее до конца, и что из этого глубокого душевного центра исходит энергия, оживляющая и преобразующая всю деятельность и все содержание ума и творчества. (N. N. Strakhov, *Biografiia, pis'ma i zametki iz zapisnoi knizhki F. M. Dostoevskogo*, ed. O. Miller [St. Petersburg, 1883], 175-76)]

<sup>258</sup> There may be more than clinical knowledge here. James Rice notes that Dostoevsky probably adopted the term “reflection” from Kant and Hegel. See *Dostoevsky and the Healing Art*, 60-61.

<sup>259</sup> See *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>260</sup> James Rice documents Dostoevsky’s special relationship with Dr. Yanovsky. See *Dostoevsky and the Healing Art*, 3-41.

served F. M., ever excessively alert for signs of illness, as the premonition of a seizure, thanks to which he would say: “I’ll manage to run to Haymarket,” i.e., to my apartment. And in essence, this is one of the characteristic symptoms of *Epilepsia*.<sup>261</sup>

Dostoevsky termed the experience before the seizure “kondrashka with a breeze,” which Rice called “Dostoevsky’s whimsical euphemism” to describe the epileptic aura.<sup>262</sup> His doctor followed his patient’s term about his pathological condition: it was the novelist’s language that offered a glimpse into the workings of his consciousness.

Yanovsky provided a more complete picture of Dostoevsky’s condition to the public in the coming years. In his memoir, “Reminiscences About Dostoevsky” (*Vospominaniia o Dostoevskom*) published in *The Russian Herald* in 1885, Dr. Yanovsky revealed that Dostoevsky experienced hallucinations as early as 1846.<sup>263</sup> He also wrote that Dostoevsky borrowed medical literature on epilepsy from his personal library.<sup>264</sup> These works may have included case studies of patients that are similar to Dr. Z’s, in particular the work of Théodore Herpin.<sup>265</sup> What is special about Dr. Yanovsky’s articles is that the pathological condition of his famous patient, as described by his personal doctor, is seen as an important fact of Dostoevsky’s life and experience as a writer.

It was not only in Dostoevsky’s time that clinicians found his condition—and the description of epilepsy in his novels—to be of interest to the medical community. Freud, who erroneously considered Dostoevsky’s epilepsy to be hysterical in origin, also linked his discussion of the writer’s illness to his literary works.<sup>266</sup> In another case, a renowned French neurologist, Dr. Théophile Alajouanine, argued that the depictions of epilepsy in Dostoevsky’s letters and seizure records point to a profound influence of illness on his creativity: “[The] experience of epilepsy and especially of a peculiar psycho-emotional aura seems to have given a particular colour to Dostoevsky’s vision and to have played an important role in his general mode of thinking and in his philosophy.”<sup>267</sup> Alajouanine’s conclusion echoes Strakhov’s impression of Dostoevsky’s psyche, adding a 20<sup>th</sup> century clinical perspective. Others have

---

<sup>261</sup> James Rice, *Dostoevsky and the Healing Art*, 7. [(Б)лезнь свою признавал и называл ее обыкновенно кондрашкой с ветерком. (Заметьте это последнее слово, оно служило мнительному до крайности Фед. Михайл. как предвозвестник припадка, вследствие чего он говорил—успею добежать до Сенной, т.е. до моей квартиры, а в сущности это есть один из характеристических признаков Epilepsii). Для меня же, как для врача, было ясно, что дорогой друг наш страдал падучею. (S. D. Yanovsky, “Bolezn’ F. M. Dostoevskogo,” *Novoe Vremia* 1793 [February 24, 1881]: 2)]

<sup>262</sup> James Rice, *Dostoevsky and the Healing Art*, 6.

<sup>263</sup> S. D. Yanovsky, “Vospominaniia o Dostoevskom,” *Russkii Vestnik* 176 (April 1885): 798.

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*, 805-6.

<sup>265</sup> Rice provides a comprehensive survey of medical science that was available to Dostoevsky, in particular the work of Dr. Théodore Herpin, whose patients described contradictory states of mind not unlike Dr. Jackson’s patient “Dr. Z.” Rice, *Dostoevsky and the Healing Art*, 165-166.

<sup>266</sup> Sigmund Freud, “Dostoevsky and Parricide,” *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. by James Strachey, London: The Hogarth Press, 1961.

For the origins of Freud’s diagnosis, see Rice, *Dostoevsky and the Healing Art*, 215.

<sup>267</sup> Théophile Alajouanine, “Dostoevsky’s Epilepsy,” *Brain* 86.2 (June 1963): 209.

pointed to Dostoevsky's influence on the understanding of the disease. Henri Gastaut, a French neurologist and epileptologist known for his studies of Flaubert and Dostoevsky, argued that Dostoevsky contributed to the symptomatology of epilepsy through his descriptions of the illness in *The Idiot*.<sup>268</sup> Given the lack of records of Dostoevsky's own inner experience of the illness, these clinicians relied primarily on the description of the experience of his characters, which may not necessarily have been something that coincided with the novelist's state of mind.

Literary scholars have made the case that what is found in the novels can be directly linked to the Dostoevsky's epilepsy. Those who have made such a connection focus on the innovations in the narrative form, rather than any particular parallel between the novelist and his characters. In his comprehensive study of Dostoevsky's epilepsy, James Rice strongly connects his literary innovations with his epileptic condition:

In every regard Dostoevsky's greatness lies not in the denial of illness but in its acceptance and mastery, and in the discovery (and invention, to be sure) of polymorphous and polyphonic values precisely within his pathological condition, which he consciously and ingeniously negotiated through art.<sup>269</sup>

Here, Rice, who was well versed in medical literature of the time, links the invention of the multiplicity ("polyphony") of consciousness for which Dostoevsky is famous (due to Bakhtin) to his epilepsy.

In the widely acclaimed study that explores the workings of Dostoevsky's creative thinking, *Dostoevsky and the Process of Literary Creation*, Jacques Catteau goes as far as to speak of a "convulsive impetus" in Dostoevsky's style:

Without giving a detailed analysis, we may note that composition and style in Dostoevsky are marked by a violent and convulsive thrust (*la poussée paroxystique*) which appears miraculously theatrical to some people while to others it is simply excessive. The style is immediately striking: Dostoevsky overwhelms the reader by his analytic clarity and psychological frenzy. Euphemisms and diminutives (especially before 1849), repetitive adjectives meaning almost the same thing, superlatives, intriguing approximations, disturbing adverbs (suddenly, sharply, too much), triple repetition of words formed from the same root, particularly characteristic of *Notes from Underground*, all these elements show a kind of rage in the writer, an obsession with the idea, which is turned in all directions and explored to the point of exhaustion, a wish to compel, almost to bully the reader into adherence.<sup>270</sup>

Even though Catteau uses "convulsion" as a metaphor (rather than a clinical category), he identifies the "frenzy" of a psychopathological condition on the level of style and language.

In the most recent study of Dostoevsky and epilepsy, entitled *Dostoevsky and the Epileptic Mode of Being* (2015), Paul Fung draws far-reaching philosophical conclusions from

---

<sup>268</sup> Henri Gastaut, "Fyodor Mikhailovitch Dostoevsky's Involuntary Contribution to the Symptomatology and Prognosis of Epilepsy," *Epilepsia* 19 (April 1978): 186-201.

<sup>269</sup> Rice, *Dostoevsky and the Healing Art*, 234.

<sup>270</sup> Jacques Catteau, *Dostoevsky and the Process of Literary Creation*, 130.

Dostoevsky's use of his epileptic experience. Noting that Dostoevsky repeatedly turns to the representation of the moment before an epileptic seizure in his novels, Fung concludes:

Dostoevsky is fascinated by this rupture, this moment of incomprehensibility. Perhaps it is because the moment is incomprehensible and outside the realm of experience that the writer becomes anxious to speak, to write and even to mythologize it. In this way, Dostoevsky's works are driven by the compulsion to represent the unrepresentable.<sup>271</sup>

According to Fung, the moment before the attack, described by Myshkin as when "time shall be no more," spurs Dostoevsky to "represent the unrepresentable." What is important here is that for Dostoevsky, epilepsy was not merely the medical condition that he would impart to his characters: rather, it was a way to offer a more complex model of human experience that went far beyond the aims of medical science in the understanding of a pathological condition.

While the novelist had largely left the experience of epilepsy out of his diaries and his letters, as we have seen from this brief survey, students of Dostoevsky, including clinical doctors, believe that stylistic features and philosophical concerns of his novels are related to his illness.

### *The Case of Gustave Flaubert*

Let's pause to speak of a parallel case, Gustave Flaubert, whose novel, *Madame Bovary* (1856) was read by Dostoevsky while he was drafting *The Idiot* in 1867.<sup>272</sup> Like Dostoevsky, Flaubert has been said to have had epilepsy.<sup>273</sup> Like Dostoevsky, Flaubert read medical literature related to his condition.<sup>274</sup> And, like Dostoevsky, Flaubert was the son of a medical doctor.<sup>275</sup> Unlike Dostoevsky, Flaubert did not give epilepsy to any of his characters. But, like Dostoevsky, he left records of his own epileptic attacks in his letters.<sup>276</sup> Flaubert's visual hallucinations and

---

<sup>271</sup> Paul Fung, *Dostoevsky and the Epileptic Mode of Being*, 19.

<sup>272</sup> Dostoevsky's wife, Anna Grigorievna Dostoevskaia, notes that Turgenev recommended Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* to Dostoevsky in 1867, calling it the "best novel of the last 10 years." See *Dnevnik* (Moscow: Novaya Moskva, 1924), July 14, 1867/July 2 or 3, 1867, 214.

<sup>273</sup> For a clinical description of Flaubert's epilepsy, see the article by the neurologist Henri Gastaut, "Gustave Flaubert's Illness: A Case Report in Evidence Against the Erroneous Notion of Psychogenic Epilepsy," *Epilepsia* 25.5 (1984): 622-637. Flaubert never mentioned the name of his nervous disorder, but he did believe that he suffered from hysteria. Jan Goldstein studies Flaubert's illness in the context of hysteria in "The Uses of Male Hysteria: Medical and Literary Discourse in Nineteenth-Century France," 134-165. Marie-Thérèse Sutterman (*Dostoïevski et Flaubert: écritures de l'épilepsie*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1993) investigates the links between these two novelists on the level of their shared experience with epilepsy.

<sup>274</sup> Flaubert read the famous treatise on hysteria by Dr. Hector Landouzy, *Traité complet de l'hystérie* (1846), for both self-diagnosis and in preparation for the novel *Salammbô* (1862). See Goldstein, "The Uses of Male Hysteria," 135-36.

<sup>275</sup> See Frederick Brown, *Flaubert: A Biography*, New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2006, 9-22.

<sup>276</sup> For Flaubert's correspondence, see *Correspondance*, 5 vols., Paris: Gallimard (Pléiade), 1973.



epileptic attacks as recorded in the letters have been linked to his novels, most recently by Michael Finn in his book, *Figures of Pre-Freudian Unconscious from Flaubert to Proust*.<sup>277</sup> Flaubert's letters were of central importance to Jean-Paul Sartre in his biography of the writer, *L'Idiot de la famille* (1972),<sup>278</sup> which was part of Sartre's larger project to create an "existential psychoanalysis" based on the biographies of two writers: Flaubert and Dostoevsky.<sup>279</sup> Sartre gave special importance to Flaubert's epilepsy, linking it to his creativity and to the special qualities of his style.

Flaubert's contemporaries discussed the novelist's pathological condition, and some made connections between writing and epilepsy. While the novelist was alive, critics in private wrote of the nature of his disorder, unsure if he suffered from epilepsy or some other condition. In the literary diary of the Goncourt brothers, they speculated on Flaubert's illness in one entry on November 1, 1860, written after they observed the novelist collapse: "Dans le chemin qui conduit au chemin de fer, Monnier me dit que Flaubert est épileptique. L'est-il? Ne l'est il pas? La chute qu'il a faite cet hiver semblerait donner raison à Monnier."<sup>280</sup> At its early stage, the novelist's medical condition attracted attention, recorded for posterity not in a medical study, but in a literary diary.

One critic, in a review of the novel *Salammbô* in *Le Figaro* in 1862, decried the style of the novel as being so erratic as requiring the name of a new genre, "le genre *épileptique*":

Le style, d'une manière générale, est d'une élégance contournée, emphatique, qui par moments produit de grands effets. Mais la recherche est incessante ; il y a volonté continuelle de peindre, de frapper le regard, d'étonner. Cela oppresse. [...] M. Flaubert, malgré toute sa vigueur, se peine et se travaille visiblement, pour dire les choses les plus naturelles du monde, avec contorsions. Avec lui, on n'arrive pas. [...] Il faut ajouter aux genres de style déjà connus et classes un genre nouveau que je propose de nommer le genre *épileptique* (4).<sup>281</sup>

While it is unclear whether the author of this review knew of Flaubert's actual condition or not (which was still a rumor among close friends at the time), some suspicion of the novelist's pathological state of mind may have reached this literary critic. The review came to the attention of the Goncourt brothers, who remarked in their *Journal*: "C'est un bruit répandu que Flaubert est épileptique: de là, le poison, une infamie! les lettres, oh, c'est là qu'on est habile dans l'art

---

<sup>277</sup> Michael Finn, *Figures of Pre-Freudian Unconscious from Flaubert to Proust*. Several other scholars also linked Flaubert's art and his illness. Chiara Pasetti argues that Flaubert's hallucinations are an inseparable aspect of his creative mind. See "Hallucinations et création littéraire chez Flaubert," *Revue Flaubert* 12 (2012), <https://flaubert.univ-rouen.fr/revue/revue6/>, accessed July 30, 2021. Marie-Christine Desmaret describes aspects of Flaubert's prose as a "counter reality" similar to hallucinations. See "Épileptiques, hystériques, marginaux, fous comme figures protéiformes de l'artiste dans l'oeuvre Flaubertienne," *Revue Flaubert* 6 (2006): <https://flaubert.univ-rouen.fr/revue/revue6/>, accessed July 30, 2021.

<sup>278</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Family Idiot* [1972], 4 vols., trans. from French by Carol Cosman (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991).

<sup>279</sup> See Sartre, *Being and Nothingness* [1943], trans. by Hazel Barnes (New York: Washington Square Press, 1992), 734.

<sup>280</sup> *Journal des Goncourt*, November 1, 1860.

<sup>281</sup> Ed. Dargez, "Le quinzaine d'un lecteur," *Le Figaro* (December 4, 1862), 3-4.

des supplices !”<sup>282</sup> Well aware of Flaubert’s mental condition, the Goncourts, who knew Flaubert personally, understood that such a connection may have been hurtful to the writer.

As mentioned earlier, the positivist philosopher and critic Hippolyte Taine in *On Intelligence (De l’intelligence, 1870)* wrote about the effect of his characters on his mental state (he could taste arsenic when Emma Bovary took the poison in *Madame Bovary*).

Even in his lifetime, critics, both sympathetic to Flaubert and critical had connected his mental condition to his writing.

The question of Flaubert’s mental state continued to emerge in descriptions of his writing in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The special relationship between Flaubert’s mind and his writing was described by Marcel Proust in the essay “Préface de ‘Tendre Stocks’” (1920):

[C]hez Flaubert, par exemple, l’intelligence, qui n’était peut-être pas des plus grandes, cherche à se faire trépidation d’un bateau à vapeur, couleur de mousses, îlot dans une baie. Alors arrive un moment où on ne trouve plus l’intelligence (même l’intelligence moyenne de Flaubert), on a devant soi le bateau qui file « rencontrant des trains de bois qui se mettaient à onduler sous le remous des vagues ». Cette ondulation-là, c’est de l’intelligence transformée, qui s’est incorporée à la matière. Elle arrive aussi à pénétrer les bruyères, les hêtres, le silence et la lumière des sous-bois. Cette transformation de l’énergie où le penseur a disparu et qui traîne devant nous les choses, ne serait-ce pas le premier effort de l’écrivain vers le style ?<sup>283</sup>

In Proust’s view, Flaubert transposes his mind into his literary work, leading to a fusion of his subjective state with the scenery.<sup>284</sup> For Proust, the condition of epilepsy had grown into a metaphor of the novelist’s literary creation, where his subjectivity had been transposed into the fictional world of his works, bridging the real-life experience and the writing process.

At this point I would like to turn to several of Flaubert’s letters that described epilepsy, including those that inspired these authors. In one written on February 1, 1844, Flaubert wrote of his experience to a close friend, Ernest Chevalier a few weeks after his first major epileptic attack:

Sache donc, cher ami, que j’ai eu une congestion au cerveau, qui est à dire comme une attaque d’apoplexie en miniature avec accompagnement de maux de nerfs que je garde encore parce que c’est bon genre. J’ai manqué péter dans les mains de ma famille (où j’étais venu passer 2 ou 3 jours pour me remettre des scènes horribles dont j’avais été témoin chez Hamard). On m’a fait 3 saignées en même temps et enfin j’ai rouvert l’œil. Mon père veut me garder ici longtemps et me soigner avec attention – quoique le moral soit bon parce que je ne sais pas ce que c’est que d’être troublé. Je suis dans un foutu état, à la moindre sensation tous mes nerfs

---

<sup>282</sup> *Journal des Goncourt*, Dec 3, 1862.

<sup>283</sup> Marcel Proust, *Contre Sainte-Beuve*, Paris: Gallimard (Pléiade), 1971, 612.

Proust argues a similar point about Flaubert’s style in an earlier essay, “À propos du ‘style’ de Flaubert.” *Ibid.*, 586-600.

<sup>284</sup> Finn, *Figures of Pre-Freudian Unconscious from Flaubert to Proust*, 61-62.

tressaillent comme des cordes à violon, mes genoux, mes épaules et mon ventre tremblent comme la feuille – Enfin, c’est là la vie, sic est vita, such is life.<sup>285</sup>

In this description, Flaubert speaks of an attack that affected his “brain” and sent him into an agitated nervous state where he experienced an altered state of mind, which he describes as “horrible scenes” without giving any further detail. Central to his experience is the changing sensations in his “nerves,” contributing to a complex awareness of his own body, which, in the end, he interprets, emphatically, as “life.”

On February 9, 1844, Flaubert wrote another letter to Ernest Chevalier, describing himself as “a dead man” (“un homme mort”):

J’ai un séton qui coule et me démange, qui me tient le cou raide et m’agace au point que j’en ai des suées. On me purge, on me saigne, on me met des sangsues, la bonne chère m’est interdite, le vin m’est défendu, je suis un homme mort. [...] J’ai horriblement souffert, cher Ernest, depuis que tu ne m’as vu et j’ai considéré combien la vie humaine était diaprée de fleurs et festonnée d’agréments. Je passerai tout l’été à la campagne, à Trouville – Je voudrais y être, je soupire après le soleil. Sais-tu jusqu’où doit aller ma tristesse et comprends-tu que je vive ?<sup>286</sup>

As in the previous letter, Flaubert stresses the shifting bodily sensations during the epileptic state. In several such self-descriptions, Flaubert interpreted the epileptic experience as the one that makes him intensely aware of both life and death.

In his biography of Flaubert, Sartre, in the spirit of existentialism, described such conditions in similar letters as the ultimate experience of the “real.” Remarkably, he compares Flaubert’s heightened awareness of life and death in an epileptic attack to the feeling of an “condemned man”:

The lightning flash [of the epileptic seizure] is the catastrophic appearance of the *real*. Someone was dreaming: I am condemned to death; he awakens in a stupor: he is condemned *for real*, it is the very morning of his execution. Gustave is like this condemned man, with the minor difference that he has the inexpressible feeling that this nightmare is not only the effect of the sentence but also, in part, its cause. If he had not dreamed that he was in prison, he might not have found himself in a real cell. This is the shock: reality takes hold in him, he feels its weight for the first time in his life.<sup>287</sup>

Whether or not Sartre was guided by the metaphor of a man condemned to death in Dostoevsky’s novel *The Idiot*, which equated the epileptic aura with a religious experience of death and resurrection, the initial material provided in Flaubert’s letters points to real-life experience that invited far reaching psychological and philosophical interpretations.

Returning to the letters, in one written on January 15, 1847, Flaubert responds to his lover Louise Colet’s report of her own hallucinations:

---

<sup>285</sup> Flaubert, *Correspondance*, Vol. 1, 203

<sup>286</sup> *Ibid.*, 204.

<sup>287</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Family Idiot*, Vol. 4, 22.

Tu me parles d'espèces d'hallucinations que tu as eues. Prends-y garde. On les a d'abord dans la tête, puis elles viennent devant les yeux. Le fantastique vous envahit, et ce sont d'atroces douleurs que celles-là. On se sent devenir fou. On l'est, on est en a conscience. On sent son âme vous échapper et toutes les forces physiques crient après pour la rappeler. La mort doit être quelque chose de semblable, quand on en a conscience.<sup>288</sup>

Perhaps a result of his own experience with such phenomena, Flaubert suggests to Colet how to observe one's mind during hallucinations. He again compares this experience to being conscious of one's own death, and he warns his friend and fellow writer that "the fantastic invades you." In his letters, Flaubert, who had observed the phenomena of epileptic seizures in his own experience, transposed what he knew for the benefit of the other.

Throughout his letters, Flaubert often mentioned hallucinations and altered states of mind, and in some cases, he linked his experience to literature. In a letter to Colet on December 27, 1852, Flaubert described his epileptic attacks in the context of reading Balzac's *Louis Lambert*:

As-tu lu un livre de Balzac qui s'appelle *Louis Lambert* ? Je viens de l'achever il y a cinq minutes ; il me foudroie. C'est l'histoire d'un homme qui devient fou à force de penser aux choses intangibles. Cela s'est cramponné à moi par mille hameçons. [...] Te rappelles-tu que je t'ai parlé d'un roman métaphysique (en plan), où un homme, à force de penser, arrive à avoir des hallucinations au bout desquelles le fantôme de son ami lui apparaît, pour tirer la conclusion (idéal, absolue) des prémisses (mondaines, tangibles) ? Eh bien, cette idée est là indiquée, et tout ce roman de *Louis Lambert* en est la préface. À la fin le héros veut se châtrer, par une espèce de manie mystique. J'ai eu, au milieu de mes ennuis de Paris, à dix-neuf ans, cette envie (je te montrerai dans la rue Vivienne une boutique devant laquelle je me suis arrêté un soir, pris par cette idée avec une intensité impérieuse), alors que je suis resté deux ans entiers sans voir de femme. (L'année dernière, lorsque je vous parlais de l'idée d'entrer dans un couvent, c'était mon vieux levain qui me remontait.) Il arrive un moment où *l'on a besoin de se faire souffrir*, de haïr sa chair, de lui jeter de la boue au visage, tant elle vous semble hideuse. Sans l'amour de la forme, j'eusse été peut-être un grand mystique. Ajoute à cela mes attaques de nerfs, lesquelles ne sont que des déclivités involontaires d'idées, d'images. L'élément psychique alors saute par-dessus moi, et la conscience disparaît avec le sentiment de la vie. Je suis sûr que je sais ce que c'est que mourir. J'ai souvent senti nettement mon âme qui m'échappait, comme on sent le sang qui coule par l'ouverture d'une saignée. Ce diable de livre m'a fait rêver Alfred toute la nuit. [...] Quel sacré livre ! Il me fait mal ; comme je le sens !<sup>289</sup>

---

<sup>288</sup> Flaubert, *Correspondance*, Vol. 1, 428.

Sartre speaks of this letter in his biography. See *The Family Idiot: Gustave Flaubert*, Vol. 4, 33-34.

<sup>289</sup> Flaubert, *Correspondance*, Vol. 2, 218-219.

Inspired by a parallel between his psychic experience and Balzac's book, Flaubert unfolds his sensations into a blueprint of a "metaphysical novel." As was the case with Dostoevsky in *The Idiot*, at the core of this imaginary novel is a mystical moment of experiencing and observing one's own death, with the soul leaving the body. Hardly a mystic, Flaubert concludes: "Quel sacré livre !"

Unlike Dostoevsky, who hardly spoke about his own epileptic attacks, Flaubert, in his letters, offered a very rich material for those who, like Proust and Finn after him, wanted to see a special mystical and creative vision in the abnormal states of mind. In another letter to Colet, on July 7, 1853, Flaubert described visual hallucinations that suggested to him a separation of the soul from the body:

Chaque attaque était comme une sorte d'hémorragie de l'innervation. C'était des pertes séminales de la faculté pittoresque du cerveau, cent mille images sautant à la fois, en feux d'artifices. Il y avait un arrachement de l'âme d'avec le corps, atroce (j'ai la conviction d'être mort plusieurs fois). Mais ce qui constitue la personnalité, l'être-raison, allait jusqu'au bout ; sans cela la souffrance eût été nulle, car j'aurais été purement passif et j'avais toujours *conscience*, même quand je ne pouvais plus parler. Alors l'âme était repliée tout entière sur elle-même, comme un hérisson qui se ferait mal avec ses propres pointes.<sup>290</sup>

He again described the sensation of being dead and a peculiar split in consciousness. Flaubert emphasizes that he was conscious throughout the episode even though he could not speak. In his epistolary report, Flaubert spoke eloquently, mixing physiological concepts with images that befit a work of literature: "So the soul was folded up entirely on itself, like a hedgehog that would hurt itself with its own spikes."

Another letter, addressed to the writer Marie-Sophie Leroyer de Chantepie on May 18, 1857, contains a vivid description of an "out-of-body" sensation. Flaubert wrote of his mental experience during epileptic attacks comparing his "self" to a ship sinking in a storm:

J'ai souvent senti la folie me venir. C'était dans ma pauvre cervelle un tourbillon d'idées et d'images où il me semblait que ma conscience, que mon moi sombrait comme un vaisseau sous la tempête. Mais je me cramponnais à ma raison. Elle dominait tout, quoique assiégée et battue. En d'autres fois, je tâchais, par l'imagination, de me donner facticement ces horribles souffrances. J'ai joué avec la démence et le fantastique comme Mithridate avec les poisons. Un grand orgueil me soutenait et j'ai vaincu le mal à force de l'étreindre corps à corps. Il y a un sentiment dont vous ou plutôt une habitude dont vous me semblez manquer, à savoir l'amour de la contemplation.<sup>291</sup>

He appealed to a fellow writer to embrace such experiences, their pain notwithstanding, in the name of "love of contemplation." In his analysis of Flaubert's epistolary reports on his epilepsy, Finn further extended their significance, describing Flaubert's "floating sensation," his "out-of-

---

<sup>290</sup> Flaubert, *Correspondance*, Vol. 2, 377.

For Finn's analysis of this letter, see *Figures of Pre-Freudian Unconscious from Flaubert to Proust*, 66-67

<sup>291</sup> Flaubert, *Correspondance*, Vol. 2, 716.

body feeling” as “accompanied by a cutting of ties” and as “rapturous.”<sup>292</sup> It comes to mind that similar descriptions can be found in Dostoevsky’s descriptions of his characters’ epileptic attacks.

Sartre (himself a writer) argues that hallucinations depicted in the letters gave Flaubert a radically different perspective on his own mind, which blended reality and visions:

Thanks to [Flaubert’s] *experiments in seeing*, he threw himself into an insane but unreal universe. In other words, he satisfied his sadistic and necrophiliac desires without risk. Although his organism was exhausted in this almost unbearable tension, and finally his nerves were shattered, these were the least of his ills; attacks, hypernervousness, but not delirium. The delirium was *before*, he made it happen *by will power*; as a result, he knows its deepest wellsprings, he no longer takes the risk of *believing* in it. The hallucinations remain “nervous” and cannot become “mental”: he has penetrated too deeply into the mechanisms of the imagination to let himself be taken in by images. No doubt they acquire a kind of consistency by the fact that they command attention. But even then they cannot utterly fool a trained dreamer.<sup>293</sup>

Mixing physiological terms with metaphors, Sartre argues that Flaubert used hallucinations as “*experiments*”—a way to train his mind for a special, penetrating vision based on images and imagination, a vision that befits a writer.

Most recently, Michael Finn suggested that during these epileptic hallucinations described in the letters, Flaubert experienced a split in his mind, and he was able to observe his own consciousness:

[W]hether consciousness is lost completely or remains, what stands out in Flaubert’s descriptions of these attacks is their inconclusiveness, the sense of wavering between aspects of one’s being, of a dual sense of plunging out of psychic control and, at the same time, of observing the plunge. In a similar movement, Flaubert, operates as both observer and participant in the imaginative scenes the writer sees before himself.<sup>294</sup>

For Finn, the hallucinatory experiences described in Flaubert’s letters places him in a situation that makes a creative writer, at once an “observer” and “participant” in the “imaginary scenes” that seem real.

Also intent on linking epileptic experience and creativity, Finn echoes Proust, who spoke of the fusion of the author’s “intelligence” and “matter” (referring to subject matter, or so it seems) to offer a model of the special “subjectivity” of a creative act:

The transfer of agency in his writing, via an incorporation of intelligence and subjectivity into external décor, derives from a rehearsal, only slightly conscious,

---

<sup>292</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

<sup>293</sup> Jean Paul Sartre, *The Family Idiot: Gustave Flaubert*, Vol. 4, 33-34.

<sup>294</sup> Finn, *Figures of Pre-Freudian Unconscious from Flaubert to Proust*, 66-67.

of some of the hallucinatory aspects of his hystero-epileptic attacks and the mind states they create.<sup>295</sup>

In Finn's interpretation of the letters, the state of mind experienced by Flaubert in an epileptic attack gave rise to a different relationship between the external and internal, a different sense of agency in writing.

While Flaubert, unlike Dostoevsky, did not depict characters with epilepsy in his novels, his readers and critics (some of whom were themselves writers) stepped in to link his personal experience to his writing and to literature, as depicted in letters complete with medical terms ("organism," "brain," "nerves," "hallucinations"). Seen as a world of whirlwind images and ideas, mystical states experienced as real, and a split sense of agency, the epileptic experience of the author was linked by critics to his style, to be found in the narrative form of his novels.

### *Style Indirect Libre*

Flaubert and Dostoevsky are linked in their use of the innovative narrative technique, *style indirect libre*, a narrative form that has been widely regarded as key for the study of narrative and the novel. It has been suggested by some scholars that there may be a parallel between the rise of this technique and the epileptic experience as described by these two writers.

Dorrit Cohn, in her paradigm-making *Transparent Minds*, argues that the technique, which she calls "narrated monologue," marks a merging of the author's and character's mind, as well as the incorporation of the narrating mind into the texture of the narrative: "[O]ne can regard the narrated monologue as the quintessence of figural narration, if not of narration itself: as the moment when the thought-thread of the character is most tightly woven into the texture of the third-person narration."<sup>296</sup> For Cohn, *style indirect libre*, or "narrated monologue" is the most direct incorporation of the thinking process into narrative form. Ann Banfield, in her book *Unspeakable Sentences*, works from the perspective of generative linguistics and turns to *style indirect libre*, which she calls 'represented speech and thought,' as a direct link to the character's way of thinking:

In represented speech and thought [...] more than content is reproduced. [...] We are given a representation of the form or 'manner' of a speech or thought. But, while the form of the representation is linguistic, in the case of represented thought, the form of *what* is represented is not.<sup>297</sup>

For Banfield, 'represented speech and thought' in literature gives linguistic form to thoughts that may not be possible in ordinary language.

---

<sup>295</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

<sup>296</sup> Dorrit Cohn, *Transparent Minds*, 111.

<sup>297</sup> Ann Banfield, *Unspeakable Sentences*, 80.

Roy Pascal, in *The Dual Voice*, gives a comprehensive look at the emergence of the style.<sup>298</sup> Pascal defines it as a “dual voice” that integrates the “raw material” of the character’s mind and “subtly fuses the two voices of the character and the narrator.”<sup>299</sup>

As we have seen, the technique has been described in ways that suggest parallels to the epileptic experience as described by Flaubert and Dostoevsky, as well as scholars of Flaubert and Dostoevsky. Albert Thibaudet prominently used the term *style indirect libre* in his 1922 essay “Le style de Flaubert.” In this essay, he also discussed the “psychology” of Flaubert’s style, and he described Flaubert’s writing in this technique as a doubled style (« le style indirect double »):

Écrire consiste à prendre un appui sur la langue parlée, à se charger de son électricité, à suivre son élan dans la direction qu’elle donne. [...] Le style indirect double, c’est le style indirect simple, plus l’écrivain. Ce seront donc seulement des gens très artistes comme La Fontaine, La Bruyère et Flaubert, qui emploieront ces tournures, issues pourtant de la langue populaire, et qui donneront la sensation de la langue parlée en épousant dans la langue parlée le mouvement qui conduit à une langue qui ne se parle pas. La psychologie du style consiste en partie en des schèmes moteurs de ce genre.<sup>300</sup>

Thibaudet’s insistence on duality and on bifurcation of the writer’s agency, on the fusion of style and writer (“the simple indirect style, plus the writer”) suggestively evokes Flaubert’s repeated descriptions of doubling experienced during an epileptic state and transposed to the process of writing.

Before Thibaudet, literary scholars and linguists also linked the style to the representation of the character’s consciousness. One such figure was the Swiss linguist Charles Bally, who coined the term *style indirect libre* in 1912 and called it a “figure of thought” [*une figure de pensée*]:

Il ne s’agit plus d’une forme grammaticale, mais d’une figure, et d’une figure de pensée; j’entends par figure une manière de concevoir et d’exprimer une représentation qui n’est pas conforme à la réalité objective ou à la “logique linguistique.”<sup>301</sup>

For Bally, *style indirect libre* is based on the workings of the mind; used in literature, it circumvents the logic of language and represents a turn away from objective reality. In 1914, a German scholar, Étienne Lorck, named the technique “*erlebte Rede*” (“experienced speech”) and

---

<sup>298</sup> Pascal describes the emergence of the term *style indirect libre* as well as its English and German equivalents, in this context. See Pascal, *The Dual Voice*, 2-33.

See also Brian McHale, “Free Indirect Discourse: A Survey of Recent Accounts,” *PTL: A Journal for Descriptive Poetics and Theory of Literature* 3 (1978): 249-287.

<sup>299</sup> Roy Pascal, *The Dual Voice*, 26.

<sup>300</sup> Albert Thibaudet, *Gustave Flaubert* [1922] (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1935), 250.

<sup>301</sup> Charles Bally, “Figures de Pensée et Formes Linguistiques,” *Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift* IV (1914): 407. Bally, who was a student of Saussure, was the first to use the term *style indirect libre*; it was first described by the Swiss linguist Adolf Tobler in 1897. See Pascal, *The Dual Voice*, 8.



argued that it involved the merging of the writer's imagination with the characters' experience. As Pascal summarizes,

[Style indirect libre] occurs [...] at those heightened moments of creativity when the writer's imagination transports him into his characters, when he surrenders to their existence and falls into a state of 'utter raptness' ('völliges Entrücktsein'), oblivious of his real environment and the world.<sup>302</sup>

This definition also recalls descriptions of Flaubert's quasi-hallucinatory experience during writing, with their moments of "rapture."

V. N. Voloshinov, a Russian critic in the Bakhtin circle linked the technique to the authors' fantasies, and while he names several authors, he says "especially Flaubert," evoking Flaubert's own description of his wavering experience of reality:

Indeed, for an artist in process of creation, the figures of his fantasies are the most real of realities; he not only sees them, he hears them, as well. He does not make them speak (as in direct discourse), he hears them speaking. And this living impression of voices heard as if in a dream can be directly expressed only in the form of quasi-direct discourse. It is fantasy's own form. And that explains why it was in the fable world of La Fontaine that the form was first given tongue and why it is the favorite device of such artists as Balzac and especially Flaubert, artists wholly able to immerse and lose themselves in the created world of their own fantasies.<sup>303</sup> (Translation adjusted)

Voloshinov points to the author's imaginative mind as the source of *style indirect libre*, and, what is more, his formulations recall the epileptic hallucinations of both Flaubert and Dostoevsky.

The linguistic analysis of the technique suggested early on that the description of a hallucinatory experience may be reflected in the syntax of *style indirect libre*. Voloshinov argues that the technique, if used in oral speech, sounds as if the speaker is hallucinating:

[Q]uasi-direct discourse is a form for the direct depiction of the experiencing of another's speech, a form for summoning up a living impression of that speech and, on that account, of little use for conveying that speech to a third person. Indeed, if quasi-direct discourse were used for that purpose, the reporting act would lose its communicative character and would make it appear as if the person were talking to himself or hallucinating. Hence, as one would expect, quasi-direct discourse is unusable in conversational language and meant only to serve aims of artistic depiction.<sup>304</sup>

---

<sup>302</sup> Pascal, *The Dual Voice*, 23. See Lorck's article, "Passé défini, imparfait, passé indéfini," *Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift* 6 (1914): 177-191.

<sup>303</sup> V. N. Voloshinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* [1930], trans. Ladislav Matejka and I. R. Titunik, New York: Seminar Press, 1973, 148.

<sup>304</sup> *Ibid.*, 147-148.

Voloshinov includes in his description an analysis of the famous epileptic scene in *The Idiot*. He argues that such discourse, when spoken aloud, reflects a deluded state of mind.

Roy Pascal suggests that, in the case of Flaubert, *style indirect libre* represents the very edges of the character's mind, which he terms "the less formed, less articulated mental processes of a character, at a stage when they have not taken a recognizably verbal shape."<sup>305</sup> As Pascal argues,

It is an even greater problem when non-articulate reactions are to be given, when we are to experience the mode in which a character sees a scene, responds to a landscape, etc. When Emma looks out of the window, we might well ask, in what sort of words and sentences can what she sees be described? What does she see of the colours of the sky, would she think of naming them? Is she sufficiently aware of what she is looking at to register it in words? There is obviously no clear prescription in such cases, and the author has to invent a language of his own.<sup>306</sup>

For Pascal, Flaubert conceived of the style in order to represent an experience that the person—the character—could not verbalize.

In the case of Dostoevsky, Pascal links the technique to the non-verbal and irrational states of the epileptic mind in *The Idiot*:

The most remarkable feature of Dostoyevsky's use of free-indirect speech is something that goes beyond what we find in earlier writers. It arises from his grasp of the peculiar nature of that self-communing that we have examined in *The Idiot*, when a character, committed to a purpose felt to be obligatory but unsure about facts, about judgements, and about tasks, is wrestling with unmastered experience. We see how his thoughts ramble, how accidental their sequence is; important insights jostle with insignificant, purposeful understanding is crossed by thoughts and generalisations that do not clarify and are to no purpose; the Prince is borne along in his search by something not quite translatable into rational terms, sometimes by meeting objects that exert a powerful attraction yet whose associations are unclear and resist formulation into words. [...] One is tempted to say that the eddies and wisps of thoughts in his head are a sort of review presided over by his unconscious will rather than by his conscious reason; but this would be incomplete. For his conscious will, conscious intentions, his rationality are all in play too, puzzling, checking, searching, combining.<sup>307</sup>

Pascal directly connects the narrative style developed in Dostoevsky's novel to the character's altered consciousness, in particular, to the representation of the Prince's unconscious mind during the epileptic aura.

In a philosophical perspective, one can see free indirect discourse as a way of momentarily stepping outside of oneself and inhabiting another position or another's voice: for a moment, the speaker is both himself and another. Seen in another perspective, this narrative technique merges the two subjectivities, the narrator's and the character's (or the observer's and

---

<sup>305</sup> Roy Pascal, *The Dual Voice*, 104.

<sup>306</sup> *Ibid.*, 104-105.

<sup>307</sup> *Ibid.*, 131.

the participant's), both situated in the text; and the author may or may not be in full control of the situation. As we have seen, for many scholars, *style indirect libre*, generally considered as one of the most significant contributions of the realistic novel, is directly rooted in the epileptic experience of Flaubert and Dostoevsky.

*Dr. Théodore Herpin*

In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, clinicians, like novelists, attempted to represent the inner workings of the epileptic mind, and some turned to diaries written by patients, in addition to clinical observations. Writers were also closely implicated into medical observation and diagnosis: some clinicians used literary accounts of psychic experience as clinical material. In their turn, writers read clinical cases that used such complex narratives. Clinicians (who relied on their patient's accounts) and novelists worked on the narrative of consciousness in close interaction. Some accounts suggest strong parallels with the representation of the mind in novels, including *style indirect libre*.

One of such clinician was Dr. Théodore Herpin (1799-1865), a French clinician whose specialty was epilepsy, practiced in Geneva and Paris and published two major works, *On the Prognosis and Curative Treatment of Epilepsy* (1852) [*Du pronostic et du traitement curative de l'épilepsie*] and *On Incomplete Episodes of Epilepsy* (1867) [*Des accès incomplets de l'épilepsie*].<sup>308</sup> This second work contains over 300 case studies, including subjective reports written by patients.<sup>309</sup> These case studies describe altered states of the mind during the epileptic aura, including double consciousness, hallucinations, and the "dreamy state."<sup>310</sup> In 1899, Dr. Jackson rediscovered the work of Dr. Herpin and described him as a "great authority" whose work closely paralleled his own, even though Dr. Herpin had been largely forgotten by clinicians.<sup>311</sup> James Rice argues that, in his turn, Dostoevsky read Dr. Herpin's 1867 work, *On Incomplete Episodes of Epilepsy*, when he was composing *The Idiot* in Geneva.<sup>312</sup>

In Dr. Herpin's first work, *On the Prognosis and Curative Treatment of Epilepsy*, he spoke of the need for well-trained patients who could observe their own consciousness:

[L'*aura epileptica*] aurait-il été mal décrit par les patients, et les observateurs auraient-ils été entraînés ainsi à d'inexactes descriptions ? Les médecins eux-mêmes n'auraient-ils point mal traduit les expressions vagues de leurs maladies ? C'est ce que nous nous sommes longtemps demandé, et nous étions fort tenté de répondre par l'affirmative, en ne consultant que nos propres observations.<sup>313</sup>

---

<sup>308</sup> Owsei Temkin, *The Falling Sickness*, 324-327.

See Théodore Herpin, *Du pronostic et du traitement curative de l'épilepsie* (Paris: J. B. Baillière, 1852) and *Des accès incomplets de l'épilepsie* (Paris: J. B. Baillière, 1867).

<sup>309</sup> See James Rice, *Dostoevsky and the Healing Art*, 163-168.

<sup>310</sup> Owsei Temkin, *The Falling Sickness*, 324.

<sup>311</sup> John Hughlings Jackson, "Epileptic Attacks with a Warning of a Crude Sensation of Smell and with the Intellectual Aura (Dreamy State) in a Patient who had Symptoms Pointing to Gross Organic Disease of the Right Temporo-Sphenoidal Lobe" [1899], *Selected Writings of John Hughlings Jackson*, Vol. 1, 471.

<sup>312</sup> James Rice, *Dostoevsky and the Healing Art*, 163.

<sup>313</sup> Théodore Herpin, *Du pronostic et du traitement curative de l'épilepsie*, 387. See also James Rice, *Dostoevsky and the Healing Art*, 164.

Dr. Herpin notes that the observation of the epileptic aura requires patients who can reliably report on the nature of their own mental experience.

In a case study from his second work, *On Incomplete Episodes of Epilepsy*, Dr. Herpin describes one patient who was unable to speak during epileptic attacks. This patient asked his mother to carefully observe his symptoms:

Le malade venait de déjeuner, il a été pris d'engourdissement, puis de contracture de la mâchoire à droite, la bouche était ouverte, il s'est levé et dirigé vers son lit accompagné de sa mère; d'abord il n'a pas pu parler; sa bouche, ainsi qu'il l'a dit plus tard, n'obéissait pas à sa volonté, il s'exprimait par signes, le côté droit de la face était en proie à des mouvements convulsifs. La patient avait toute sa connaissance. A la fin, il a pu dire brièvement et avec effort: *Tu observes, tu observes?* il désirait que sa mère pût nous rendre un comte exact de ce qui se passait.<sup>314</sup>

In this example, the patient looks to another person—an observer—as an interpreter of his experience for the clinician. This made for a complex narrative situation.

Another case, a 39-year-old captain named “M. X.,” was the son of a doctor and, according to Dr. Herpin, “gifted with the spirit of an observer”:<sup>315</sup>

Les préludes se bornent à de petits mouvements à peine sensibles, à la base de la langue, à gauche ; ils ne durent que quelques secondes. Il s'y ajoute un tremblement convulsif du côté gauche de la face. *Alors, dit le patient, il s'établit entre ma volonté et le mal une espèce de lutte qui tourne le plus souvent à mon avantage, et j'éprouve le contentement d'être délivré de mes craintes pour vingt-quatre heures.*<sup>316</sup>

The patient experienced a split state of mind (“a sort of struggle is established between my will and the evil”). The narrative contains observations by both the clinician and the patient, offering two different points of view; neither, it would seem, could separately offer a complete understanding of the epileptic attack.

In other examples, Dr. Herpin inserts the language of his patients into clinical notes in italics:

La sensation *monte au cerveau*, disent les patients; ils éprouvent une sorte d'absence, s'asseyent, restent debout ou marchent au hasard, sans se heurter; toutefois quelques-uns sortent de cet état comme d'un rêve et divaguent. L'attaque avorte au moment où, si elle se complétait, le malade serait privé de toute sensation. Dans ces vertiges il y a quelquefois des mouvements involontaires bizarres; ainsi un adulte, après le spasme du cou, au moment où il allait *perdre la tête*, comme il le disait, était forcé de faire un demi-tour sur lui-même.<sup>317</sup>

---

<sup>314</sup> Théodore Herpin, *Des accès incomplets de l'épilepsie*, 53.

<sup>315</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>316</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>317</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

In these cases, Dr. Herpin combines the patient's language with his own observations and combines two different perspectives in a complex narrative technique, akin to *style indirect libre*.

Other clinical cases focus on representing a shifting sense of reality, which also interested novelists, and some of such episodes occurred to patients in the urban environments or on a railway, as was the case with Prince Myshkin in Dostoevsky's *The Idiot*. Dr. Herpin describes the case of a doctor of law who experienced an epileptic attack on a train:

Le docteur en droit dont nous parlions plus haut, voyageant en chemin de fer, est pris d'un vertige en wagon ; il descend sans s'en apercevoir le moins du monde à une station prochaine et retrouve le sentiment de son existence en se promenant sur le quai après le départ du train ; ainsi qu'il l'apprit bientôt, les employés l'avaient vainement engagé à remonter en voiture.<sup>318</sup>

(This case describes automatic behavior similar to Dr. Z, including lapses in memory, which also played out on a train.<sup>319</sup>) Quite complex is the case that takes place in the city streets:

Pris d'un vertige en marchant dans la rue, il perd subitement le sentiment de son existence et ne le retrouve que dans une rue éloignée de plusieurs centaines de mètres de celle où il a été atteint ; il ne conserve pas le moindre souvenir du trajet ; la conscience était alors complètement abolie, et cependant il avait dû jouir de ces sens, tout au moins de la vue, puisqu'il lui est arrivé, par exemple, au printemps et vers 2 à 3 heures, de traverser le boulevard des Italiens alors encombré de voitures, et de marcher en évitant les obstacles sur des trottoirs remplis de monde. Chose singulière, une fois la connaissance perdue, il se dirigeait presque toujours en sens contraire du but de sa course. Nous pourrions multiplier les exemples de ces promenades dans Paris, à travers les lieux les plus fréquentés, par des patients chez qui toute notion du moi était complètement effacée pendant plusieurs minutes et à qui il n'arrivait aucun accident.<sup>320</sup>

In his study of Dostoevsky and medicine, James Rice compared Dr. Herpin's patient, whose epileptic attack took place in Paris, to "the movements of Raskolnikov through the streets of Petersburg."<sup>321</sup> In this case, Dr. Herpin narrates a scene that the patient could not remember. Like a novelist, he penetrates the patient's epileptic state of mind and suggests that the experience would have been pleasurable. Importantly, while in this unconscious state of mind it is unclear precisely what occurred in these moments, the city landscape becomes a map of the patient's shifting mental state. This case report seems quite similar to the novelistic representations of such episodes.

---

<sup>318</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>319</sup> Several clinicians described patients who experienced epileptic attacks in trains and at train stations. A Russian clinician, Dr. Pavel Ivanovich Kovalevskii, described case of an epileptic with "double consciousness." See M. Andruzskii and P. Kovalevskii, *Dva Sudebno-Psikhiatricheskikh Sluchaia Umopomeshatel'stva* (Kharkov: Universitetskaia Tipografiia, 1879), 18-19, 28.

<sup>320</sup> Théodore Herpin, *Des accès incomplets de l'épilepsie*, 155-156.

<sup>321</sup> Rice, *Dostoevsky and the Healing Art*, 167.

Other cases reported by Dr. Herpin directly concerned literature and the epileptic illness of writers. (As it was mentioned in Chapter One, clinicians devoted considerable attention to pathological conditions of the literary figures.) One case describes the epileptic experiences of the French gothic novelist Charles Nodier (1780-1844), though he is not named by Dr. Herpin:

Nous ne savons pas résister à la tentation d'ajouter aux observations qui précèdent une description d'attaques à début périphérique, piquante par le fait qu'elle est due à la plume de l'un des littérateurs les plus distingués de la Restauration, évidemment épileptique sans le savoir.<sup>322</sup>

Dr. Herpin took this case from Nodier's autobiographical work, *Souvenirs de la Révolution et de l'Empire*, published as a second edition in 1864. (This work documents Nodier's imprisonment in the Sainte-Pélagie prison in Paris in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, where another writer, Marquis de Sade, was also imprisoned; Nodier met him there.<sup>323</sup>) Dr. Herpin diagnosed the writer as an epileptic (even though Nodier had no idea he had epilepsy) based entirely on the interpretation of his writing. The following passage was among his evidence:

Enfin le cerveau lui-même était envahi, et c'était le temps heureux du paroxysme. Alors je perdais connaissance pendant quelques minutes, et lorsque je revenais à moi, *mes membres* étaient affranchis des liens *de fer qui les brisaient* un moment auparavant ; j'étendais sans effort mes bras assoupis, mes poumons jouaient librement dans ma poitrine. Il ne me restait de cette crise qu'un long et morne abattement sans douleur ; mais elle se renouvelait souvent, et quelquefois dans la même heure. Un guichetier de service me surprit dans un de ces accès, et je dus sans doute à sa bienveillance de voir finir la triste épreuve du secret...» Plus loin... « Cette crampe terrible dont j'ai déjà parlé me saisit tout à coup. Je n'eus que le temps de me lever (il était à table), et de tomber dans les bras de mon guichetier. Je reviens à moi au n° 6 dans ceux de Renon, que j'avais blessé en me débattant contre ses secours ; son sang inondait ma poitrine... »<sup>324</sup>

This, according to Dr. Herpin, was a description of an epileptic seizure. In this case, a clinician put such trust into the writer's ability to represent experience that a work of literature served as a basis for the diagnosis of clinical pathology of its author.

Dr. Herpin also includes a critique of Nodier's style, in his *Dictionnaire universel d'histoire et de géographie* (1858), which he describes as erratic: "On trouve dans ses écrits une sensibilité vive, mais exaltée; une imagination riche, mais bizarre; son style toujours élégant sent trop le travail."<sup>325</sup> Here, one recalls the critic who called Flaubert's style "epileptic."

---

<sup>322</sup> Théodore Herpin, *Des accès incomplets de l'épilepsie*, 60-61.

<sup>323</sup> Charles Nodier, *Souvenirs de la révolution et de l'empire*, Vol. 2 (Paris: Charpentier, 1864). For Nodier's description of his experience at the Sainte-Pélagie prison, see 28-58. See pg. 30 for the epileptic seizure quoted by Dr. Herpin's. Nodier describes the hallucination of his execution on 52-58. For an account of the meeting of the Marquis de Sade and Charles Nodier, see Simone de Beauvoir, *Faut-il brûler Sade* (Paris: Gallimard, 1955).

<sup>324</sup> Théodore Herpin, *Les accès incomplets de l'épilepsie*, 61.

<sup>325</sup> Théodore Herpin, *Des accès incomplets de l'épilepsie*, 62.

According to Dr. Herpin, Nodier's account of his prison experience includes a hallucinated scene in which Nodier is taken to be executed. (This brings to mind Flaubert, also an epileptic, who had such an experience as well. And another epileptic writer, Dostoevsky, not only endowed his hero, Prince Myshkin in *The Idiot*, with such a sensation, but made a feeling of being condemned to death into a central metaphor of his novel.)

I would add that Nodier, who was himself a keen observer of psychic experience, influenced Dostoevsky with his concept of the "double," introduced in his novel *Jean Sbogar* (1818), and Dostoevsky used Nodier's vivid descriptions of doubling in the depictions of Rogozhin and Prince Myshkin in *The Idiot*.<sup>326</sup>

#### *Dr. John Hughlings Jackson*

Like Dr. Herpin, Dr. Jackson was a clinical physician specializing in epilepsy. Like Dr. Herpin, Dr. Jackson included subjective reports of epileptic patients in his work. Samuel Greenblatt called Dr. Jackson "one of the great synthesizers of modern neurology"; his work reflected the complex world of ideas of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and his interests extended beyond brain science.<sup>327</sup> Dr. Jackson studied with leading Victorian brain scientists Thomas Laycock (1812-1876) and Dr. Charles-Édouard Brown-Séquard (1817-1894).<sup>328</sup> Dr. Brown-Séquard introduced Dr. Jackson to the ideas of the French experimental scientists François Magendie (1793-1855) and Claude Bernard (1813-1878), and Dr. Jackson applied experimental methods in his clinical practice, including during his observations of epileptic patients.<sup>329</sup> Dr. Jackson had personal relationships with Victorian thinkers such as Herbert Spencer, Alexander Bain, George Henry Lewes, and George Eliot.<sup>330</sup> Lewes influenced Dr. Jackson's ideas on the brain's automatic functions and the unconscious.<sup>331</sup> In addition to his clinical practice, Dr. Jackson worked as a prolific medical journalist, beginning in 1861. His articles regularly included case studies of epileptic patients, including subjective reports and diaries, such as Dr. Z's. Dr. Jackson's case studies focused on the epileptic attacks that involved double consciousness, the "dreamy state," and automatic thinking.<sup>332</sup>

Efforts to develop the narrative means capable of describing the complex states of consciousness involved in epilepsy were one of Dr. Jackson's enduring concerns. Like Dr.

---

For the original assessment of Nodier's style, see Marie-Nicolas Bouillet, "La Biographie Universelle," *Dictionnaire universel d'histoire et de géographie* (Paris: Librairie de la Hachette et C., 1858), 85.

<sup>326</sup> See R. Kh. Iakubova, "Romanticheskaia povest' 'Jean Sbogar' Sh. Nod'e v tvorcheskoi retseptsii F. M. Dostoevskogo," *Liberal Arts in Russia* 4.5 (2014): 378-387.

For a link between Charles Nodier's work and *Crime and Punishment*, see V. A. Nedzvetskii, *Dostoevskii: dopolneniia k kommentariu* (Moscow: Nauka, 2005), 351-356.

<sup>327</sup> Samuel H. Greenblatt, "The Major Influences on the Early Life and Work of John Hughlings Jackson," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 39 (January 1, 1965): 346.

<sup>328</sup> *Ibid.*, 347, 353, 363.

<sup>329</sup> *Ibid.*, 363-364.

<sup>330</sup> See Oswei Temkin, *The Falling Sickness*, 328-329. See also Samuel H. Greenblatt, "The Major Influences on the Early Life and Work of John Hughlings Jackson," 373.

<sup>331</sup> *Ibid.*, 370-373. See also Martin N. Raitiere, *The Complicity of Friends*, 167-170.

<sup>332</sup> Samuel H. Greenblatt, "The Major Influences on the Early Life and Work of John Hughlings Jackson," 360.

Herpin, he turned to his patient's first-person accounts, trying to combine them with the results of his own clinical observations. While Dr. Herpin, in his efforts to find adequate expression to the complexities and ambiguities of consciousness, often turned to literature and writers, Dr. Jackson also used literature, and he mused about the properties of language and the human "faculty of language."

In an early medical article from 1866, Dr. Jackson made a statement on the relationship between the mind and language: "It is probable that the so-called faculty of language 'resides' wherever mind resides, and that language is but an outward form of thought."<sup>333</sup> For Dr. Jackson, language was also the way to gain insight into the workings of consciousness—into the innermost domain of thought. Exploring this link in his clinical practice, like others in this period, he increasingly turned to the written records of epileptic patients. In one of his case studies, Dr. Jackson copied the diary of a 31-year-old man who experienced periods of unconsciousness during epileptic episodes:

20th. Unconscious? for perhaps three-quarters of an hour, remember *ordering* dinner, but not *eating*, or paying for it, but did *both*, and returned to the office, where I *found myself* at my desk feeling rather confused, but not otherwise ill; *was obliged to call at the dining-room to ask if I had been ill, and if I had had any dinner*. The answer was *no* to the former, and *yes* to the latter question (original emphasis by the patient).<sup>334</sup>

The use of italicized text suggests that, like Dr. Herpin, Dr. Jackson may have been using the words of his patient, incorporating them into his own, third-person account. Both physicians seem to have spontaneously come up with the narrative technique of *style indirect libre*, *avant la lettre*.

In other ways, too, the situation of his patients echoed the predicament of patients of Dr. Herpin. Both patients and their doctors reached for literary metaphors. One of Dr. Jackson's patients described being transported to "another world":

A man, H., aged 29, who consulted me, March 1882, began to be ill in 1873 or 1874 (he could not be more precise). He had "curious sensations," "a sort of transplantation to another world, lasting a second or so." He otherwise described them by saying that whatever he was doing at the time he (now I use his words) "imagined I have done this before, imagined I was in exactly the same position years ago." He said, too, that it was as if waking from sleep.<sup>335</sup>

This patient's experience recalls Dostoevsky's epileptic attack, when, as he told Sof'ia Kovalevskaja that he felt as if, for a moment, he was transported to paradise. (Readers of

---

<sup>333</sup> John Hughlings Jackson, "Clinical Remarks on Cases of Temporary Loss of Speech and of Power of Expression (Epileptic Aphemia? Aphrasia? Aphasia?), and on Epilepsies," *Medical Times and Gazette*, April 23, 1866, 442.

<sup>334</sup> John Hughlings Jackson, "On Temporary Mental Disorders After Epileptic Paroxysms" [1875], *Selected Writings of John Hughlings Jackson*, Vol. 1, 126.

<sup>335</sup> John Hughlings Jackson, "On a Particular Variety of Epilepsy ('Intellectual Aura'), One Case with Symptoms of Organic Brain Disease" [1888], *Selected Writings of John Hughlings Jackson*, Vol. 1, 389.



Dostoevsky would remember that such an experience received a still more elaborate description, complete with symbolic interpretation, in Dostoevsky's *The Idiot*, when it became an experience of Dostoevsky's character.)

One of Dr. Jackson's patients describes an epileptic state that overcame him while reading a book. Similarly to Flaubert (who felt his consciousness splitting in the act of writing), this patient had the sensation of doubling in the act of reading:

He describes his mental condition as comparable to that of one suddenly awakened out of a sound sleep. "He cannot catch hold of the dream, which seems to be quickly passing from him, and at the same time he cannot yet appreciate the state of unconsciousness into which he has so suddenly awakened." He writes also: "The things around me seem to be moving; and if I am reading, the book will appear to be going from me, when at once I feel as if all must be a dream, though well knowing at the same time it must be reality...through it all the fear of some impending catastrophe seems to be hanging over me."<sup>336</sup>

The doubling of consciousness into an actor and an observer, the feeling of unreality, and the sense of "impending catastrophe," all of this echoes the experiences, including the "condemned man," described both in Flaubert's letters and in Dostoevsky's novel. Both clinicians and novelists, relying on the real-life experience of epilepsy, focused on these motifs, with their far-reaching symbolic potential.

Another case described a dual state of mind during the epileptic "dreamy state"; Dr. Jackson includes quotations from their own portrayal of the disease, demonstrating the common nature of the mental condition of those with epilepsy:

One of my patients stated, as the onset of his fits, two diametrically opposite conditions of mind. He said: (1) "The ordinary operations of the mind seemed to stop;" (2) "I seem to think of a thousand different things all in a moment." He put it again thus, still making a double statement: (1) "If writing a letter, it becomes a blank; and (2) the thoughts before-mentioned come." Here there were very clearly (1) a negative state, defect of consciousness to his then surroundings; and (2) a positive state of increased consciousness, a "rising up" of formerly organised mental states. The patient next lost consciousness; then the negative state became deeper, and his dreamy state vanished.<sup>337</sup>

Dr. Jackson combines his clinical remarks with the patient's own report, and yet he appeared to have trouble depicting and explaining the duality, bifurcation, or ambiguity of mental experience.

In another case, Dr. Jackson's "highly educated" patient who underwent a similar experience suggested his own definition for it, adopted by his physician: "double consciousness."

---

<sup>336</sup> John Hughlings Jackson, "On Right or Left-Sided Spasm at the Onset of Epileptic Paroxysms, and On Crude Sensation Warnings, and Elaborate Mental States," *Brain* 3.2 (July 1, 1880): 202.

<sup>337</sup> John Hughlings Jackson, "Lectures on the Diagnosis of Epilepsy" [1879], *Selected Writings of John Hughlings Jackson*, Vol. 1, 295.

A highly educated man described his mental state as one of double consciousness. In detail he said it was “the past as if present, a blending of past ideas with present.” (Again, “a peculiar train of ideas as of reminiscence of a former life, or rather, perhaps, of a former psychologic state.” He then lost consciousness; returning consciousness was like awakening from a dream or trance; the vision vanishing in spite of every effort to retain recollection of it. He said, “Sometimes I think I have it, and then it is gone.” It may seem that the patient was reading philosophy into his symptoms, but a poor boy described the feeling “in his head” at the beginning of the seizure as if he had “two minds”—an exactly equivalent expression. I believe that the expression “double consciousness” is literally correct.<sup>338</sup>

As mentioned above, George Eliot had used the term “double consciousness” in her novels. Patients, doctors, and novelists combined efforts to describe and define mental experiences that defied expression

In one truly remarkable clinical account, Dr. Jackson directly addressed the problem of description. Attempting once again to describe “double consciousness,” he noted that the pronoun “he” could not adequately pinpoint the subject:

We must never forget this double difference when using the pronoun ‘he.’ There are two ‘he’s,’ one standing for the man before his fit, the other for the man after it. They are two different persons. Although, as we may put it, they are in the same skin, they do not look or act like the same person; they are not the same person. [...] The word ‘he’ is a highly technical term in spite of its apparent simpleness, as is evident if we consider what ‘he’ means in ‘He remembers so and so.’ ‘He’ stands in that sentence for the whole person subjectively, whilst ‘remember so and so’ stands for the whole person objectively. We might put it, as it were, diagrammically thus: ‘*He* remembers so and so,’ and ‘*He remembers so and so.*’<sup>339</sup>

Attempting to describe the bifurcation of his patient’s consciousness, the physician comes to realize the technical limitations of the third-person pronoun. An epileptic fit made it clear that a person is not always equal to himself, and the same word “he” cannot adequately describe both. What is more, how could a self-conscious person be described simultaneously from a subjective and from an objective point of view?

As we have seen, writers, Flaubert and Dostoevsky, who themselves suffered from epilepsy and underwent experiences similar to those that befell Dr. Jackson’s patients, addressed this problem through the instruments of their profession: the result was a narrative technique that fused subjective and objective perspective, making the third-person pronouns serve a double

---

<sup>338</sup> Jackson, “Lectures on the Diagnosis of Epilepsy” [1879], Vol. 1, *Selected Writings of John Hughlings Jackson*, 298. The neurologist Dr. Raitiere suggests that this “educated patient” may, in fact, be Herbert Spencer, who may have suffered from epilepsy. See *The Complicity of Friends*, 181-185.

<sup>339</sup> John Hughlings Jackson, “Remarks on Dissolution of the Nervous System as Exemplified by Certain Post-Epileptic Conditions” [1881], *Selected Writings of John Hughlings Jackson*, Vol. 2, 26-27.

duty: *style indirect libre*. Examining the parallel efforts of clinicians and their patients, we receive additional confirmation that the epileptic experience stands at the heart of these novelists' narrative innovations.

*Dr. Jackson's Patient Dr. Z*

Before we turn to literature proper, let us look in more detail at the clinical accounts of one particular patient of Dr. Jackson: a well-read and articulate physician known as Dr. Z, whose remarkable self-report was cited at the beginning of this chapter.

Dr. Z became Dr. Jackson's patient in 1880. A decade earlier, in 1870, Dr. Z (himself a medical doctor) published a personal account of epilepsy in the medical journal *The Practitioner* under another pseudonym, "Quaerens" ("the seeker"). Dr. Jackson came to regard this self-report as the first description of a "dreamy state" and epileptic "reminiscence" in medical literature.<sup>340</sup> Remarkably, in his account of his mental illness, Dr. Z cited Tennyson, Coleridge, and Dickens as authors who, apart from clinical material, had already described the sensations that he attributed to his epileptic condition:

Last year I had the misfortune to become, for the first time in my life, subject to occasional epilepsy. I well remember that the sensation above described [by Tennyson, Coleridge, and Dickens], with which I had been familiar from boyhood, had, shortly before my first seizure at a time of over-work, become more intense and more frequent than usual. Since my first attack, I have had only few recurrences of the feeling in question. On two occasions, however, it was followed next day by an epileptic seizure, and I have since treated its occurrence as an indication for immediate rest.<sup>341</sup>

Dr. Z points to these literary texts as models for conveying the altered states of mind experienced before epileptic attacks. Confronted with a difficult task to describe the inexpressible, a well-educated patient turned to literature.

When, in 1880, Dr. Jackson related this experience in his article, he quoted the patient's self-description, and he, too brought up Tennyson, Coleridge, and Dickens:

When he consulted me, February 1880, he had had eighteen severe fits (loss of consciousness, convulsion, tongue biting), and had had "many hundreds of slight attacks." The *slight* attacks which he still had when I first saw him were so slight that strangers noticed nothing wrong with him; he is never quite unconscious in them; the severest of these slight fits only "bemaze" him for a minute or two; he can go on talking. Here are epileptic attacks with defect ("bemazement"), but not with loss of consciousness. A medical friend who sees much of Quaerens [Dr. Z]

---

<sup>340</sup> John Hughlings Jackson, "On a Particular Variety of Epilepsy ('Intellectual Aura'), One Case with Symptoms of Organic Brain Disease" [1888], *Selected Writings of John Hughlings Jackson*, Vol. 1, 386.

Later, in 1899, Dr. Jackson discovered the work of Dr. Herpin which discusses the "dreamy state, recognizing him as a forgotten expert on the topic.

<sup>341</sup> John Hughlings Jackson, "A Prognostic and Therapeutic Indication in Epilepsy," *The Practitioner* 4 (May 1870): 284.

observes a little flushing in the patient's face, that he is "as if considering something," but only to his intimate friends it is known that he has any kind of seizure. [...] Quaerens quotes Tennyson, Coleridge, and Dickens about it.<sup>342</sup>

Dr. Jackson here confirms his patient's appeal to literature as a model for describing the epileptic mind.

In another self-report, Dr. Z describes a walk in London, which was similar to the city walks of Dr. Herpin's epileptic patients, in terms that anticipate Dostoevsky's description of the epileptic experiences of his character Prince Myshkin in *The Idiot*:

Again, in November 1887, after dark—about 6 p.m.—I was walking westwards in a London street, when I felt a *petit-mal* coming on of which I can remember no particulars. My intention was to walk westwards for about half a mile; my thoughts were occupied with some books I had been reading in a house which I had just left. With my return of memory (which was incomplete and indistinct I found myself in a street I did not at first recognise. I was somewhat puzzled, and looked up at the street corners for information as to the name of the street. I read the name 'P—St.' which crossed my path at right angles, and with some difficulty realised that I was walking not westwards, as I had been intending, but eastwards, along the street by which I had come, and had, in fact, retraced my steps some three hundred or four hundred yards. I felt no purpose in doing this, no aim at going anywhere in particular, and to save further difficulty, and because I was puzzled, I got into a hansom which was standing still close by me. I have no recollection of giving the driver any orders, and was in a very unreflective state. My impression is that the cab-driver drove quickly to the right house, and I distinctly remember some slight surprise I felt at his knowing the house, and at finding myself giving him a shilling, when I doubt if I could have explained where he came from. Immediately after entering the house I realised tolerably distinctly what had probably happened, and looking at my watch, I calculated that I had not lost more than five minutes by this, if so much.<sup>343</sup>

Citing his patient's self-report in his case study, Dr. Jackson added nothing, as if he accepted his remarkable patient's authority in conveying his own experience. Readers of Dostoevsky, were they to encounter this self-report, could have marveled at how close this literary-minded doctor-patient came to what was found in literature.

*A Split Mind, A Split Style: The Case of Prince Myshkin in Dostoevsky's The Idiot*

Dostoevsky's novel *The Idiot* represents epilepsy in a special case: the novel's protagonist, Prince Myshkin. I would argue that the depiction of epilepsy in this novel is parallel to cases seen in medical science as recorded by Dr. Herpin and Dr. Jackson, and that several moments suggest similarities to Flaubert.

---

<sup>342</sup> John Hughlings Jackson, "On a Particular Variety of Epilepsy ('Intellectual Aura'), One Case with Symptoms of Organic Brain Disease" [1888], *Selected Writings of John Hughlings Jackson*, Vol. 1, 388-389.

<sup>343</sup> *Ibid.*, 404.

The narration of the prince's epileptic experience begins in Chapter 2 of Part 2, when the prince arrives in St. Petersburg at the Nikolaevsk railway station and experiences a visual hallucination in the crowd:

No one met him at the station; but as he was getting off the train, the prince suddenly thought he caught the gaze of two strange, burning eyes in the crowd surrounding the arriving people. When he looked more attentively, he could no longer see them. Of course, he had only imagined it; but it left an unpleasant impression. Besides, the prince was sad and pensive to begin with and seemed preoccupied with something.<sup>344</sup>

Here, the character's mind is described as having several different impressions which seem to be simultaneous, similar to the description of Dr. Z's epileptic "dreamy state." In the crowd, the Prince sees "two strange, burning eyes" which disappear when he looks closer: "When he looked more attentively, he could no longer see them". This shift, or split in the prince's mind is represented in the narrative through *style indirect libre*: "Of course, he had only imagined it" (*Konechno, tol'ko pomereschilos'*). The narrative then shifts to an exterior perspective, stating that the Prince "seemed preoccupied with something" (*chem-to kazalsia ozabochennym*). These hallucinated eyes signal the entrance into the text of what I would call the paradox of a shifting mind, and in this case, the shift in the narrative concerns visual images and doubts to the status of the real. The dual voice of *style indirect libre* is linked to the representation of a dual, or split state of the protagonist's mind, in which differing states of the character's mind are represented in the narrative. Here, it would seem that Dostoevsky embodies the split subjectivity of the character into the very workings of the narrative.<sup>345</sup>

Other characters are aware of this split in the character's mind, described here from Lebedev's point of view:

Lebedev followed him with his eyes. He was struck by the prince's sudden absentmindedness. He had forgotten to say "good-bye" as he left, had not even

---

<sup>344</sup> Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Idiot*, translated by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (New York: Vintage, 2003), 190. All translations of *The Idiot* are taken from this edition. [Его никто не встретил в воксале; но при выходе из вагона князю вдруг померещился странный, горячий взгляд чьих-то двух глаз, в толпе, осадившей прибывших с поездом. Поглядев внимательнее, он уже ничего более не различил. Конечно, только померещилось; но впечатление осталось неприятное. К тому же князь и без того был грустен и задумчив и чем-то казался озабоченным. (8:158)]

<sup>345</sup> Corrigan, in his recent book, *The Riddle of the Self* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2017) offers a convincing reading of Myshkin's enigmatic subjectivity in the novel. Spektor has recently emphasized how it is the protagonist Myshkin's split subjectivity that implicates the reader, seen through the lens of Bakhtin's dialogism (*Reader as Accomplice*, 2020). Kate Holland makes a convincing argument about Dostoevsky's novels in the 1870s as defined by fragmentation. Myshkin's split mental experience would appear to foreground this coming turn in the novelist's work: *The Novel in the Age of Disintegration: Dostoevsky and the Problem of Genre in the 1870s* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2013).

nodded his head, which was incompatible with what Lebedev knew of the prince's courtesy and attentiveness.<sup>346</sup>

Lebedev observes changes in the prince's body and personality much in the same way that clinicians like Dr. Jackson observed their own patients.

The narrative depicts the character's inner mind as he approaches Rogozhin's apartment house on the street:

As he neared the intersection of Gorokhovaya and Sadovaya, he himself was surprised at his extraordinary agitation; he had never expected that his heart could pound so painfully. One house, probably because of its peculiar physiognomy, began to attract his attention from far away, and the prince later recalled saying to himself: "That's probably the very house." He approached with extraordinary curiosity to verify his guess; he felt that for some reason it would be particularly unpleasant if he had guessed right (204).<sup>347</sup>

The prince recognizes the house but seems not to know why: "He approached with extraordinary curiosity to verify his guess; he felt that for some reason it would be particularly unpleasant if he had guessed right." This moment, shown from the character's internal perspective, suggests that the prince is aware of the split experience of his own mind, as though his mind reacts automatically to seeing the building. This description includes not only his feelings in the moment but also a memory of the experience recalled at a later time.

In another moment inside Rogozhin's apartment, the narrative describes the prince's mind as he encounters Rogozhin's gaze:

The paleness and, as it were, the quick, fleeting spasm still had not left Rogozhin's face. Though he had invited his guest in, his extraordinary embarrassment persisted. As he was showing the prince to a chair and seating him at the table, the prince chanced to turn to him and stopped under the impression of his extremely strange and heavy gaze. It was as if something pierced the prince and as if at the same time he remembered something—recent, heavy, gloomy. Not sitting down and standing motionless, he looked for some time straight into Rogozhin's eyes; they seemed to flash more intensely in the first moment (205).<sup>348</sup>

---

<sup>346</sup> Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Idiot*, trans. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky, 203.

[Лебедев посмотрел ему вслед. Его поразила внезапная рассеянность князя. Выходя, он забыл даже сказать «прощайте», даже головой не кивнул, что несовместно было с известною Лебедеву вежливостью и внимательностью князя. (8:169)]

<sup>347</sup> [Подходя к перекрестку Гороховой и Садовой, он сам удивился своему необыкновенному волнению; он и не ожидал, что у него с такою болью будет биться сердце. Один дом, вероятно по своей особенной физиономии, еще издали стал привлекать его внимание, и князь помнил потом, что сказал себе: «Это, наверно, тот самый дом.» С необыкновенным любопытством подходил он проверить свою догадку; он чувствовал, что ему почему-то будет особенно неприятно, если он угадал. (8:170)]

<sup>348</sup> [Бледность и как бы мелкая, беглая судорога всё еще не покидали лица Рогожина. Он хоть и позвал гостя, но необыкновенное смущение его продолжалось. Пока он подводил

Here, seeing Rogozhin's face leads to a mental shift in the prince, seen through an external perspective: "it was as if something pierced the prince and as if at the same time he remembered something—recent, heavy, gloomy."

Narratologists who work on point of view routinely switch pronouns from third to first person to reveal complexities in the situation of narrative perspective. A rewriting of this sentence using first-person pronouns suggests a more complex situation of the narrative representation of the character's mind, one that bears resemblance to patient diaries published by Dr. Jackson and Dr. Herpin and to Flaubert's epileptic episodes in his letters:

As he was showing *me* to a chair and seating *me* at the table, *I* chanced to turn to him and stopped under the impression of his extremely strange and heavy gaze. It was as if something pierced *me* and as if at the same time *I* remembered something—recent, heavy, gloomy.<sup>349</sup>

This rewriting of the scene suggests a new way of understanding this epileptic moment: here, the prince *observes* a shifting, automatic, and unconscious feeling of being "pierced"; he also describes a feeling that resembles the memory of "something—recent, heavy, gloomy." What is more, Dostoevsky takes what could be the prince's epileptic diary and as if slips it underneath the novel's third person narrative, incorporating the subjectivity of the character into the narrative. This is not an example of *style indirect libre*: Dostoevsky incorporates aspects of the first-person point of view into the third person narrative.

The prince experiences a similar state of mind in front of Hans Holbein's painting, *The Body of the Dead Christ in the Tomb* in Rogozhin's house:

Over the door to the next room hung a painting rather strange in form, around six feet wide and no more than ten inches high. It portrayed the Savior just taken down from the cross. The prince glanced fleetingly at it, as if recalling something, not stopping, however, wanting to go on through the door. He felt very oppressed and wanted to be out of the house quickly (217-218).<sup>350</sup>

---

князя к креслам и усаживал его к столу, тот случайно обернулся к нему и остановился под впечатлением чрезвычайно странного и тяжелого его взгляда. Что-то как бы пронзило князя и вместе с тем как бы что-то ему припомнилось – недавнее, тяжелое, мрачное. Не садясь и остановившись неподвижно, он некоторое время смотрел Рогожину прямо в глаза; они еще как бы сильнее блеснули в первое мгновение. Наконец Рогожин усмехнулся, но несколько смутившись и как бы потерявшись. (8:171)]

<sup>349</sup> [Пока он подводил *меня* к креслам и усаживал *меня* к столу, тот случайно обернулся к *мне* и остановился под впечатлением чрезвычайно странного и тяжелого его взгляда. Что-то как бы пронзило *меня* и вместе с тем как бы что-то *мне* припомнилось – недавнее, тяжелое, мрачное.]

<sup>350</sup> [Над дверью в следующую комнату висела одна картина, довольно странная по своей форме, около двух с половиной аршин в длину и никак не более шести вершков в высоту. Она изображала Спасителя, только что снятого со креста. Князь мельком взглянул на нее, как бы что-то припоминая, впрочем не останавливаясь, хотел пройти в дверь. Ему было очень тяжело и хотелось поскорее из этого дома. (8:181)]

Here, the narrative represents another split experience: he glances at the painting, “as if recalling something” (*kak by chto-to pripominaia*). The narrative presents a double of this situation, with the description of Rogozhin in front of the painting:

Rogozhin suddenly abandoned the painting and went further on his way. Of course, absentmindedness and the special, strangely irritated mood that had appeared so unexpectedly in Rogozhin might have explained this abruptness; but even so the prince thought it somehow odd that a conversation not initiated by him should be so suddenly broken off, and that Rogozhin did not even answer him (218).<sup>351</sup>

One could ask: *what is going on inside Rogozhin?* The text represents Rogozhin from an external point of view and describes his behavior as shifting (in parallel to the shifting of the prince’s mind): “Of course, absentmindedness and the special, strangely irritated mood that appeared so unexpectedly in Rogozhin. . .” In a sense, much like the narrative depicts the prince as aware of his own split mind, Rogozhin is also described as having an unpredictable, but perceptible shift in his psyche. The epileptic experience of the prince appears, in this moment, to extend beyond the description of a single character, as though Rogozhin were his epileptic double.

In these first few chapters of Part 2, the prince’s epileptic experience presents challenges for the representation of the character’s consciousness in narrative. In these moments, the narrative describes a situation in the prince’s mind in which he is aware of conflicting and seemingly automatic, or unconscious shifts in his mind; he is able to observe these phenomena, which leads to a split in his own experience, and recalls the experience of “double consciousness” described by physicians; he experiences what seems like the “dreamy state” of reminiscence; and his mind is presented as conflicted about the status of the real. In Dostoevsky’s novel, this split experience of the character gives rise to a new way of narrating the mind, which represents the experience of multiple states of a single mind. At the core of this style are various “splits” in the narrative: the use of the “dual voice” of *style indirect libre*, the adoption of both external and internal perspective to describe the character’s mind, the transposition of epileptic experience onto other characters, and the description of memory as a spontaneous act of consciousness. These splits in the narrative amount to what can be called Dostoevsky’s new, split style of representing the mind.

#### *Myshkin in Petersburg: Epilepsy and Style Indirect Libre*

At the beginning of Chapter 5, the narrative returns to the character’s epileptic experience and describes him walking around in St. Petersburg:

The prince went out and walked mechanically wherever his eyes took him. At the very beginning of summer in Petersburg there occasionally occur lovely days—bright, hot, still. As if on purpose, this day was one of those rare days. For some

---

<sup>351</sup> [Рогожин вдруг бросил картину и пошел прежнюю дорогой вперед. Конечно, рассеянность и особое, странно-раздражительное настроение, так внезапно обнаружившееся в Рогожине, могло бы, пожалуй, объяснить эту порывчатость; но все-таки как-то чудно стало князю, что так вдруг прервался разговор, который не им же и начат, и что Рогожин даже и не ответил ему. (8:181)]



time the prince strolled about aimlessly. He was little acquainted with the city. He stopped occasionally at street corners in front of some houses, on the squares, on the bridges; once he stopped at a pastry shop to rest. Occasionally he would start peering at passersby with great curiosity; but most often he did not notice either the passersby or precisely where he was going (223).<sup>352</sup>

In a scene comparable to the experience of Dr. Z (provided at the beginning of this chapter), the narrative describes the character in an urban landscape. The prince is guided “mechanically” by his eyes alone: “the prince went out and walked mechanically wherever his eyes took him” (*kniaz' vyshel i napravilsia mashinal'no kuda glaza gliadiat*). The external perspective reveals the character walking, even though he seems unaware of what he is doing: “He stopped occasionally at street corners in front of some houses, on the squares, on the bridges; once he stopped at a pastry shop to rest.” The prince is oblivious of other people, which is also similar to the situation of Dr. Z: “most often he did not notice either the passersby or precisely where he was going.” Here we see another aspect of Dostoevsky’s model for representing the epileptic mind: the description of the exterior body or an outward form of this experience.

The narrative describes the prince’s sensations while walking:

He was tormentingly tense and uneasy, and at the same time felt an extraordinary need for solitude. He wanted to be alone and to give himself over to all this suffering tension completely passively, without looking for the least way out. He was loath to resolve the questions that overflowed his soul and heart. “What, then, am I to blame for it all?” he murmured to himself, almost unaware of his words (224).<sup>353</sup>

Here, the prince’s split mind is marked by a spontaneous emergence of feelings and thoughts, which suggest a contradictory, doubled experience: “He was tormentingly tense and uneasy, and at the same time felt an extraordinary need for solitude.” This mental split is also reflected in his spoken words: ““What, then, am I to blame for it all?” he murmured to himself, almost unaware of his words.” This moment suggests the emergence in the text of a split language; in a parallel to the “dual style” of *style indirect libre*, this moment reflects the dual state of mind in the character who is at once aware and unaware of his surroundings and his own body. Much like Dr. Herpin’s patients, who were recorded suddenly expressing strange sensations in language

---

<sup>352</sup> [Князь вышел и направился машинально куда глаза глядят. В начале лета в Петербурге случаются иногда прелестные дни — светлые, жаркие, тихие. Как нарочно, этот день был одним из таких редких дней. Несколько времени князь бродил без цели. Он останавливался иногда на перекрестках улиц пред иными домами, на площадях, на мостах; однажды зашел отдохнуть в одну кондитерскую. Иногда с большим любопытством начинал всматриваться в прохожих; но чаще всего не замечал ни прохожих, ни где именно он идет. (8:186)]

<sup>353</sup> [Он был в мучительном напряжении и беспокойстве и в то же самое время чувствовал необыкновенную потребность уединения. Ему хотелось быть одному и отдаться всему этому страдательному напряжению совершенно пассивно, не ища ни малейшего выхода. Он с отвращением не хотел разрешать нахлынувших в его душу и сердце вопросов. «Что же, разве я виноват во всем этом?» — бормотал он про себя, почти не сознавая своих слов. (8:186)]

during the epileptic experience, Dostoevsky turns to his character's spoken language to give another dimension of the character's complex state of mind.

In the next moment, the prince is described at the Tsarskoe Selo railway station a few hours later, yet again suggesting a parallel to Dr. Z's experience at the railway station when he lost his ticket:

By six o'clock he found himself on the platform of the Tsarskoe Selo railway. Solitude quickly became unbearable to him; a new impulse ardently seized his heart, and for a moment a bright light lit up the darkness in which his soul anguished. He took a ticket for Pavlovsk and was in an impatient hurry to leave; but something was certainly pursuing him, and this was a reality and not a fantasy, as he had perhaps been inclined to think. He was about to get on the train when he suddenly flung the just-purchased ticket to the floor and left the station again, confused and pensive (224).<sup>354</sup>

This passage suggests a new turn in the prince's epileptic experience, which comes with the new sensations on the train platform: "Solitude quickly became unbearable to him; a new impulse ardently seized his heart." While Dr. Z mostly alludes to several moments of unconscious, automatic behavior, Dostoevsky's text is immersed in a doubled, split experience that centers on a wavering sense of reality: "but something was certainly pursuing him, and this was a reality and not a fantasy, as he had perhaps been inclined to think." In this moment, the character's doubled experience is seemingly transposed into the voice of a narrator, who stresses that the experience is real. In this moment, the third-person narrative reflects the character's shifting mental state, in which reality and fantasy can be quickly exchanged.

After leaving the train station, the prince is described standing in the street:

A short time later, in the street, it was as if he suddenly remembered, suddenly realized, something very strange, something that had long been bothering him. He was suddenly forced to catch himself consciously doing something that had been going on for a long time, but which he had not noticed till that minute: several hours ago, even in the Scales, and perhaps even before the Scales, he had begun now and then suddenly searching for something around him. And he would forget it, even for a long time, half an hour, and then suddenly turn again uneasily and search for something (224).<sup>355</sup>

---

<sup>354</sup> [К шести часам он очутился на дебаркадере Царскосельской железной дороги. Уединение скоро стало ему невыносимо; новый порыв горячо охватил его сердце, и на мгновение ярким светом озарился мрак, в котором тосковала душа его. Он взял билет в Павловск и с нетерпением спешил уехать; но, уж конечно, его что-то преследовало, и это была действительность, а не фантазия, как, может быть, он склонен был думать. Почти уже садясь к вагон, он вдруг бросил только что взятый билет на пол и вышел обратно из воксала, смущенный и задумчивый. (8:186)]

<sup>355</sup> [Несколько времени спустя, на улице, он вдруг как бы что-то припомнил, как бы что-то внезапно сообразил, очень странное, что-то уж долго его беспокоившее. Ему вдруг пришлось сознательно поймать себя на одном занятии, уже давно продолжавшемся, но которого он всё не замечал до самой этой минуты: вот уже несколько часов, еще даже в

In this moment, the narrative describes the prince's mental experience of memory: "it was as if he suddenly remembered, suddenly realized, something very strange" (*on vdrug kak by chto-to pripomnil, kak by chto-to vnezapno soobrazil, ochen' strannoe*). Let us again turn the narrative into the first person. In this case, the narrative represents the prince's vague, spontaneous feeling of memory: "it was as if *I* suddenly remembered, suddenly realized, something very strange." This passage also represents the character's body, which automatically "turns": "several hours ago... he had begun now and then suddenly searching for something around him." The prince's awareness of his automatically turning body recurs several times over the hours: "And he would forget it, even for a long time, half an hour, and then suddenly turn again uneasily and search for something." The prince's split mind is thus represented through a description of a shifting awareness of the automatic actions of his body, movements which are linked to other sensations. With such a move, Dostoevsky transforms the description of the body into a complex way of rendering the edges of the character's mind in narrative.

The narrative then turns to various memories that emerge in prince's mind spontaneously, as if he were a spectator of his own mind (which recalls Flaubert's descriptions of his mental duality):

But he had only just noted to himself this morbid and till then quite unconscious movement, which had come over him so long ago, when there suddenly flashed before him another recollection that interested him extremely: he recalled that at the moment when he noticed that he kept searching around for something, he was standing on the sidewalk outside a shopwindow and looking with great curiosity at the goods displayed in the window (224).<sup>356</sup>

In this moment, the narrative yet again points to an experience of memory that is automatic and spontaneous: "there suddenly flashed before him another recollection that interested him extremely." The prince remembers (seemingly later) that when his body turned, he became aware of where he was standing: "he recalled that at the moment when he noticed that he kept searching around for something, he was standing on the sidewalk outside a shopwindow and looking with great curiosity at the goods displayed in the window." This moment in the narrative suggests a multiplicity of converging and spontaneous experiences, which are revealed through a complex shift from the internal to the external point of view and through a representation of the link between the body and the unconscious processes of the mind. While clinicians like Dr. Herpin and Dr. Jackson began to grapple with ways to record and describe such automatic experience, Dostoevsky, using complex manipulation of the point of view, produced such a model in a novel.

---

«Весак», кажется даже и до «Весов», он нет-нет и вдруг начинал как бы искать чего-то кругом себя. И забудет, даже надолго, на полчаса, и вдруг опять оглянется с беспокойством и ищет кругом. (8:186-187)]

<sup>356</sup> [Но только что он заметил в себе это болезненное и до сих пор совершенно бессознательное движение, так давно уже овладевшее им, как вдруг мелькнуло пред ним и другое воспоминание, чрезвычайно заинтересовавшее его: ему вспомнилось, что в ту минуту, когда он заметил, что всё ищет чего-то кругом себя, он стоял на тротуаре у окна одной лавки и с большим любопытством разглядывал товар, выставленный в окне. (8:187)]

The narrative turns to represent the character's shifting experience in front of the shopwindow, with several questions:

He now wanted to make absolutely sure: had he really been standing in front of that shopwindow just now, perhaps only five minutes ago, had he not imagined it or confused something? Did that shop and those goods really exist? For indeed he felt himself in an especially morbid mood that day, almost as he had felt formerly at the onset of the fits of his former illness. He knew that during this time before a fit he used to be extraordinarily absentminded and often even confused objects and persons, unless he looked at the with especially strained attention (224-225).<sup>357</sup>

As analogous to previous moments, the questions in the passage ("Did that shop and those goods really exist?") suggest the indecisive status of the real from the character's perspective. One could argue that Dostoevsky adapts the technique critics called *style indirect libre* for the purpose of describing the epileptic experience, in which the character is confronted with a multiplicity of sensations, beset with doubts in the reality of his experience, and challenged in his understanding of his own mind.

The prince remembers Rogozhin's eyes and experiences another shift in his mind:

He clearly recalled now that precisely here, standing in front of this window, he had suddenly turned, as he had earlier, when he had caught Rogozhin's eyes fixed on him. Having made sure that he was not mistaken (which, incidentally, he had been quite sure of even before checking), he abandoned the shop and quickly walked away from it. All this he absolutely had to think over quickly; it was now clear that he had not imagined anything at the station either, and that something absolutely real had happened to him, which was absolutely connected with all his earlier uneasiness. But some invincible inner loathing again got the upper hand: he did not want to think anything over, he did not think anything over (225).<sup>358</sup>

---

<sup>357</sup> [Ему захотелось теперь непременно проверить: действительно ли он стоял сейчас, может быть, всего пять минут назад, пред окном этой лавки, не померещилось ли ему, не смешал ли он чего? Существует ли в самом деле эта лавка и этот товар? Ведь он и в самом деле чувствует себя сегодня в особенно болезненном настроении, почти в том же, какое бывало с ним прежде при начале припадков его прежней болезни. Он знал, что в такое предприпадочное время он бывает необыкновенно рассеян и часто даже смешивает предметы и лица, если глядит на них без особого, напряженного внимания. (8:187)]

<sup>358</sup> [Он ясно вспомнил теперь, что именно тут, стоя пред этим окном, он вдруг обернулся, точно давеча, когда поймал на себе глаза Рогожина. Уверившись, что он не ошибся (в чем, впрочем, он и до проверки был совершенно уверен), он бросил лавку и поскорее пошел от нее. Всё это надо скорее обдумать, непременно; теперь ясно было, что ему не померещилось и в воксале, что с ним случилось непременно что-то действительное и непременно связанное со всем этим прежним его беспокойством. Но какое-то внутреннее непобедимое отвращение опять пересилило: он не захотел ничего обдумывать, он не стал обдумывать. (8:187)]

The narrative describes the character's body turning, which reveals Rogozhin's eyes looking at him: "he had suddenly turned, as he had earlier, when he had caught Rogozhin's eyes fixed on him." In the next moment, the narrative describes another shift in the character's mind, as the prince is suddenly convinced of the reality of his vision: "Having made sure that he was not mistaken (which, incidentally, he had been quite sure of even before checking), he abandoned the shop." The prince's spontaneous confidence suggests a new split in his mind: "he had not imagined anything at the station either, and that something absolutely real had happened to him." Here, Dostoevsky turns to a shifting experience of reality, where memories serve as reinterpretations of previous experiences.

In another episode, the narrative describes a "contemplative state" (*sozertsatel'noe sostoianie*), a term that Dostoevsky also used for his epileptic experience in his notebooks:

There was a sort of lure in his contemplative state right then. His memories and reason clung to every external object, and he liked that: he kept wanting to forget something present, essential, but with the first glance around him he at once recognized his dark thought again, the thought he had wanted so much to be rid of. He remembered talking earlier with the waiter in the hotel restaurant, over dinner, about an extremely strange recent murder, which had caused much noise and talk. But as soon as he remembered it, something peculiar suddenly happened to him again. An extraordinary, irrepressible desire, almost a temptation, suddenly gripped his whole will. He got up from the bench and walked out of the garden straight to the Petersburg side (227).<sup>359</sup>

Here, one may again recall Flaubert's epileptic experience, which, as critics suggested, was transposed into the very décor (scenery) of his novels. A similar situation appears in Myshkin's mind: and here, he is drawn not into his inner experience but to the outer world. Then, he is brought back to that inner state of mind, signaled by the phrase "sort of" (*kakaia-to*): "There was a sort of lure in his contemplative state right then" (*V tepereshnem ego sozertsatel'nom sostoianii byla dlia nego kakaia-to primanka*). The narrative then turns to a description of the prince's memory, which is linked to other spontaneous thoughts within the prince: "He remembered talking earlier with the waiter [...] But as soon as he remembered it [...] An extraordinary, irrepressible desire, almost a temptation, gripped his whole will." Drawing such a subtle connection of the body and the mind, Dostoevsky suggests a new way of representing memory in

---

<sup>359</sup> [В теперешнем его созерцательном состоянии была для него какая-то приманка. Он прилеплялся воспоминаниями и умом к каждому внешнему предмету, и ему это нравилось: ему всё хотелось что-то забыть, настоящее, насущное, но при первом взгляде кругом себя он тотчас же опять узнавал свою мрачную мысль, мысль, от которой ему так хотелось отвязаться. Он было вспомнил, что давеча говорил с половым в трактире за обедом об одном недавнем чрезвычайно странном убийстве, наделавшем шуму и разговоров. Но только что он вспомнил об этом, с ним вдруг опять случилось что-то особенное. Чрезвычайное, неотразимое желание, почти соблазн, вдруг оцепенили всю его волю. Он встал со скамьи и пошел из сада прямо на Петербургскую сторону. Давеча, на набережной Невы, он попросил какого-то прохожего, чтобы показал ему через Неву Петербургскую сторону. (8:189)]

narrative form: here, memory is linked to the unseen states of consciousness, experienced as vague sensations on the edge of awareness.

### *An Impending Attack*

In another turn, the narrative shows the prince's mind as fixated on other people, Rogozhin and Lebedev:

Here he had long been getting together with Rogozhin, close together, together in a "brotherly" way—but did he know Rogozhin? And anyhow, what chaos, what turmoil, what ugliness there sometimes is in all that! But even so, what a nasty and all-satisfied little pimple that nephew of Lebedev's is! But, anyhow, what am I saying? (the prince went on in his reverie). Was it he who killed those six beings, those six people? I seem to be mixing things up...how strange it is! My head is spinning...But what a sympathetic, what a sweet face Lebedev's elder daughter has, the one who stood there with the baby, what an innocent, what an almost childlike expression, and what an almost childlike laughter! Strange that he had almost forgotten that face and remembered it only now (228).<sup>360</sup>

This passage begins with a sentence in *style indirect libre*: "Here he had long been getting together with Rogozhin...but did he know Rogozhin?" (*Vot on dolgo skhodilsia s Rogozhinym...a znaet li on Rogozhina?*) In the middle of the passage, the narrative represents the prince's thoughts in the first person: "But, anyhow, who am I? (the prince went on in his reverie)...I seem to be mixing things up...how strange it is! My head is spinning" (*A vprochem, chto zhe ia? (prodolzhalos' mechtat'sia kniazju)...Ia kak budto smeshivayu...kak eto stranno! U menia golova chto-to kruzhitsia*). Here, the narrative slips out of *style indirect libre* and into the "stream of consciousness" technique, depicting a moment of the character's brief awareness of his own double position as both an observer and a participant in the scene. Here, Dostoevsky again transforms the narrative techniques we know as *style indirect libre* into a method for representing several simultaneous currents in the consciousness of a single character.

The narrative represents the prince's epileptic experience yet again through an external perspective, again adopting *style indirect libre*:

The prince looked at her absentmindedly, turned, and went back to his hotel. But he left looking not at all the same as when he had rung at Mrs. Filissov's door. Again, and as if in one instant, an extraordinary change came over him: again, he walked along pale, weak, suffering, agitated; his knees trembled, and a vague, lost

---

<sup>360</sup> [Вот он долго сходился с Рогожиным, близко сходились, «братски» сходились, — а знает ли он Рогожина? А впрочем, какой иногда тут, во всем этом, хаос, какой сумбур, какое безобразие! И какой же, однако, гадкий и вседовольный прыщик этот давешний племянник Лебедева! А впрочем, что же я? (продолжалось мечтаться князю) разве он убил эти существа, этих шесть человек? Я как будто смешиваю... как это странно! У меня голова что-то кружится... А какое симпатичное, какое милое лицо у старшей дочери Лебедева, вот у той, которая стояла с ребенком, какое невинное, какое почти детское выражение и какой почти детский смех! Странно, что он почти забыл это лицо и теперь только о нем вспомнил. (8:190)]

smile wandered over his blue lips: his “sudden idea” had suddenly been confirmed and justified, and—again he believed in his demon! (231, Translation adjusted.)<sup>361</sup>

Here, the prince’s internal changes are observed from the outside: “Again, and as if in one instant, an extraordinary change came over him: again, he walked along pale, weak, suffering, agitated.” The narrative then describes his body: “he walked along pale, weak, suffering, agitated; his knees trembled, and a vague, lost smile wandered over his blue lips.” These instantaneous and unconscious changes within the prince—as seen earlier in his walk in St. Petersburg—are again represented in the text from an external perspective. The prince’s hallucination of the demon is then mentioned, which suggests that the narrative yet again penetrates his mind, from an internal perspective: “again he believed in his demon!” (*on opiat’ veril’ svoemu demonu!*). (Arguably, such a moment is similar to a clinical report, in which the observer notes changes in the character’s body that help to penetrate his mind, either observing the patient exclaim, “My demon!” or exclaiming, “His demon again!” for him.)

In the next moment, the narrative yet again combines *style indirect libre* with the description of the prince’s physical symptoms, where a “cold shiver” suggests that somehow he has seen Rogozhin’s eyes (even if he is not aware of seeing them):

But had it been confirmed? Had it been justified? Why this trembling again, this cold sweat, this gloom and inner cold? Was it because he had just seen those *eyes* again? But had he not left the Summer Garden with the sole purpose of seeing them? That was what his “sudden idea” consisted in. He insistently wanted to see “today’s eyes,” so as to be ultimately certain that he would meet them *there* without fail, near that house. That had been his convulsive desire, and why, then, was he so crushed and astounded now, when he really saw them? As if he had not expected it! Yes, they were *those same eyes* (and there was no longer any doubt that they were the *same!*) that had flashed at him that morning, in the crowd, as he was getting off the train at the Nikolaevsk station; the same eyes (perfectly the same!) whose flashing gaze he had caught later that day behind his back, as he was sitting in a chair at Rogozhin’s. Rogozhin had denied it; he had asked with a twisted, icy smile: “Whose eyes were they?” (231-232).<sup>362</sup>

---

<sup>361</sup> [Князь рассеянно поглядел на нее, повернулся и потел назад в свою гостиницу. Но он вышел не с тем уже видом, с каким звонил к Филисовой. С ним произошла опять, и как бы в одно мгновение, необыкновенная перемена: он опять шел бледный, слабый, страдающий, взволнованный; колена его дрожали, и смутная, потерянная улыбка бродила на посинелых губах его: «внезапная идея» его вдруг подтвердилась и оправдалась, и — он опять верил своему демону! (8:192)]

<sup>362</sup> [Но подтвердилась ли? Но оправдалась ли? Почему с ним опять эта дрожь, этот пот холодный, этот мрак и холод душевный? Потому ли, что опять он увидел сейчас эти *глаза*? Но ведь он и пошел же из Летнего сада единственно с тем, чтоб их увидеть! В этом ведь и состояла его «внезапная идея». Он настойчиво захотел увидеть эти «давешние глаза», чтоб окончательно убедиться, что он непременно встретит их *там*, у этого дома. Это было судорожное желание его, и отчего же он так раздавлен и поражен теперь тем, что их в самом деле сейчас увидел? Точно не ожидал! Да, это были *те самые* глаза (и в том, что *те самые*, нет уже никакого теперь сомнения!), которые сверкнули на него

Dostoevsky uses *style indirect libre* to represent the split epileptic experience and depict it from several perspectives, including an indeterminate point of view: “Why this trembling again, this cold sweat, this gloom and inner cold? Was it because he had just seen those *eyes* again?” It is unclear who is speaking here. The narrative then follows the internal mind, and *style indirect libre* seems to be tied again to the character’s experience, as he reacts to seeing the eyes: “That had been his convulsive desire, and why, then, was he so crushed and astounded now, when he really saw them? As if he had not expected it! Yes, they were *those same eyes*.” Here, the narrative, linked to both the external and internal perspectives of the prince’s shifting mind, represents a multiplicity in the character, and when at times we hear the character’s voice, it sounds as if an unnamed narrator (perhaps an observing clinician?) takes on this style. This technique, arising in the description of the split epileptic consciousness of the character, seems dislocated from its original source.

The narrative returns to an earlier moment at the Tsarskoe Selo rail station:

And a short time ago, at the Tsarskoe Selo station, when he was getting on the train to go to Aglaya and suddenly saw those eyes again, now for the third time that day—the prince had wanted terribly to go up to Rogozhin and tell *him* “whose eyes they were”! But he had run out of the station and recovered himself only in front of the cutler’s shop at the moment when he was standing and evaluating at sixty kopecks the cost of a certain object with a staghorn handle. A strange and terrible demon had fastened on to him definitively, and would no longer let him go. This demon had whispered to him in the Summer Garden, as he sat oblivious under a linden tree” (232).<sup>363</sup>

Here, the narrative allows for new impressions of the prince’s mind, including a demon that had whispered to him while he was unaware: “This demon had whispered to him in the Summer Garden, as he sat oblivious under a linden tree.” These moments of unconsciousness, revealed through memory, suggest a conflicting experience of a single moment, captured, through memory, only later in the narrative.

The narrative describes the prince’s fixation on the image of Rogozhin, an image which reflects the prince’s growing epileptic disturbance, as if Rogozhin embodies that experience:

And why had he, the prince, not gone up to him now, but turned away from him as if noticing nothing, though their eyes had met? (Yes, their eyes had met! And they had looked at each other.) Hadn’t he wanted to take him by the hand and go

---

утром, в толпе, когда он выходил из вагона Николаевской железной дороги; те самые (совершенно те самые!), взгляд которых он поймал потом давеча, у себя за плечами, садясь на стул у Рогожина. (8:192-193)]

<sup>363</sup> [И князю ужасно захотелось, еще недавно, в воксале Царскосельской дороги, — когда он садился в вагон, чтобы ехать к Аглае, и вдруг опять увидел эти глаза, уже в третий раз в этот день, — подойти к Рогожину и сказать *ему*, «чьи это были глаза»! Но он выбежал из воксала и очнулся только пред лавкой ножовщика в ту минуту, как стоял и оценивал в шестьдесят копеек один предмет, с оленьим черенком. Странный и ужасный демон привязался к нему окончательно и уже не хотел оставлять его более. Этот демон шепнул ему в Летнем саду, когда он сидел, забывшись, под липой. (8:193)]



*there* with him? Hadn't he wanted to go to him tomorrow and tell him that he had called on her? Hadn't he renounced his demon as he went there, halfway there, when joy had suddenly filled his soul? Or was there in fact something in Rogozhin, that is, in *today's* whole image of the man, in the totality of his words, movements, actions, glances, something that might justify the prince's terrible foreboding and the disturbing whisperings of his demon? Something visible in itself, but difficult to analyze and speak about, impossible to justify by sufficient reasons, but which nevertheless produced, despite all this difficulty and impossibility, a perfectly whole and irrefutable impression, which involuntarily turned into the fullest conviction? (232-233).<sup>364</sup>

The narrative, in *style indirect libre*, represents several conflicted moments in the character's mind, all related to Rogozhin. In one moment, the narrative describes Rogozhin's "whole image": "Something visible in itself, but difficult to analyze and speak about [...] which nevertheless produced [...] a perfectly whole and irrefutable impression, which involuntarily turned into the fullest conviction." Here, Rogozhin's personality, as experienced by the prince, appears to him as split, as if the prince's internal state is projected onto the image of another.

The image of Rogozhin appears in a dark gateway before the seizure:

And at the moment when he set off impulsively, after a momentary pause, he was right at the opening of the gateway, right at the entrance to it from the street. And suddenly, in the depths of the gateway, in the semidarkness, just by the door to the stairs, he saw a man. This man seemed to be waiting for something, but flashed quickly and vanished. The prince could not make the man out clearly and, of course, could not tell for certain who he was. Besides, so many people might pass through there. It was a hotel, and there was constant walking and running up and down the corridors. But he suddenly felt the fullest and most irrefutable conviction that he had recognized the man and that the man was most certainly Rogozhin (233-234).<sup>365</sup>

---

<sup>364</sup> [А почему же он, князь, не подошел теперь к нему сам и повернул от него, как бы ничего не заметив, хотя глаза их и встретились. (Да, глаза их встретились! и они посмотрели друг на друга). Ведь он же сам хотел давеча взять его за руку и пойти *туда* вместе с ним? Ведь он сам же хотел завтра идти к нему и сказать, что он был у нее? Ведь отрекся же он сам от своего демона, еще идя туда, на половине дороги, когда радость вдруг наполнила его душу? Или в самом деле было что-то такое в Рогожине, то есть в целом *сегодняшнем* образе этого человека, во всей совокупности его слон, движений, поступков, взглядов, что могло оправдывать ужасные предчувствия князя и возмущающие нашептывания его демона? Нечто такое, что видится само собой, но что трудно анализировать и рассказать, невозможно оправдать достаточными причинами, но что, однако же, производит, несмотря на всю эту трудность и невозможность, совершенно цельное и неотразимое впечатление, невольно переходящее в полнейшее убеждение?.. (8:193-194)].

<sup>365</sup> [В то же время, когда он порывисто двинулся с места после мгновенной остановки, он находился в самом начале ворот, у самого входа под ворота с улицы. И вдруг он увидел в глубине ворот, в полутемноте, у самого входа на лестницу, одного человека. Человек этот как будто чего-то выжидал, но быстро промелькнул и исчез. Человека этого князь не мог

The narrative suggests that this image may be a hallucination: “The man seemed to be waiting for something, but flashed quickly and vanished.” The confirmation that it is Rogozhin also emerges from the prince’s split mind: “But he suddenly felt the fullest and most irrefutable conviction that he had recognized the man and that the man was most certainly Rogozhin.” At this point, the reader may be skeptical of the assertion that this really is Rogozhin, given the spontaneous shifts between “reality” and “fantasy.” One may ask: does he hallucinate the image of Rogozhin?

In the next moment, the narrative represents a situation in which the “real” image and the “fantasy” image of Rogozhin converge, as if the two split halves of his mind coincide:

Today’s two eyes, *the same ones*, suddenly met his gaze. The man hiding in the niche also had time to take one step out of it. For a second the two stood face to face, almost touching. Suddenly the prince seized him by the shoulders and turned back to the stairs, closer to the light: he wanted to see his face more clearly. Rogozhin’s eyes flashed and a furious smile distorted his face. His right hand rose, and something gleamed in it; the prince did not even think of stopping him. He remembered only that he seemed to have cried out: “Parfyon, I don’t believe it!” (234).<sup>366</sup>

As an embodiment of the conjoining of the two split states of the prince’s mind, the two bodies (and two parts of the prince’s double consciousness) nearly collide: “For a second the two stood face to face, almost touching.” As though seizing the opportunity to confirm his sense of reality, the prince grabs Rogozhin’s shoulders: “Suddenly the prince seized him by the shoulders and back to the stairs, closer to the light: he wanted to see his face more clearly.” Whether Rogozhin is real or not, it would seem as though the character perceives him *as if* he were a hallucination, where even what seems to be real is transformed by the character’s epileptic mind.

The scene ends with the prince’s epileptic seizure and total unconsciousness, and he lets out a horrific scream that is described as the voice of “someone else” (*kto-to drugoi*):

He had had a fit of epilepsy, which had left him very long ago. It is known that these fits, *falling fits* properly speaking, come instantaneously. In these moments the face, especially the eyes, suddenly become extremely distorted. Convulsions and spasms seize the whole body and all the features of the face. A dreadful, unimaginable scream, unlike anything, bursts from the breast; everything human

---

разглядеть ясно и, конечно, никак бы не мог сказать наверно: кто он таков? К тому же тут так много могло проходить людей; тут была гостиница, и беспрерывно проходили и пробегали в коридоры и обратно. Но он вдруг почувствовал самое полное и неотразимое убеждение, что он этого человека узнал и что этот человек непременно Рогожин. (8:194)]

<sup>366</sup> [Два давешние глаза, *те же самые*, вдруг встретились с его взглядом. Человек, таившийся в нише, тоже успел уже ступить из нее один шаг. Одну секунду оба стояли друг перед другом почти вплоть. Вдруг князь схватил его за плечи и повернул назад, к лестнице, ближе к свету: он яснее хотел видеть лицо. Глаза Рогожина засверкали, и бешеная улыбка исказила его лицо. Правая рука его поднялась, и что-то блеснуло в ней; князь не думал ее останавливать. Он помнил только, что, кажется, крикнул:—Парфен, не верю!.. (8:195)]

suddenly disappears, as it were, in this scream, and it is quite impossible, or at least very difficult, for the observer to imagine and allow that this is the man himself screaming. It may even seem as if someone else were screaming inside the man (234-235).<sup>367</sup>

As the height of the character's epileptic attack, the scream acts as a final moment in the split experience, and the character's voice itself is described as "another's."

What we have seen is by far exceeds narrative techniques accepted as the time. Depicting the mind of an epileptic character Dostoevsky transforms what critics call *style indirect libre* into complex techniques for rendering the consciousness of the character and devises a new way of representing the mind. He offers a model for depicting multiple states of consciousness, linked to the body and to the outside impressions (the cityscape and the other characters) and a spontaneous emergence of thoughts and memories. Working from his own epileptic experience and from his knowledge of contemporary medical research—and, as I tried to show—working in parallel to the contemporary medical research—the novelist incorporates the workings of the mind of an epileptic character into the very texture of the narrative, creating a technique for capturing the complexities of human consciousness.

### *Epilepsy and the Immortal Soul*

Dostoevsky's interest in epilepsy is by no means limited to its clinical and experiential aspects, and it does not stop with using epileptic experience to develop new ways to narrate the complexity of human consciousness. The theme of epilepsy also had far-reaching religious and mystical connotations, and it is part of a major allegorical plane in the novel: for the novelist, Myshkin's epileptic experience is central to the idea that the hero is a holy fool or a Christ-like figure who appears in modern Russian society at the very moment when scientific ideas have replaced the belief in God and the immortal soul: an apocalyptic moment.<sup>368</sup> Thus, behind

---

<sup>367</sup> [С ним случился припадок эпилепсии, уже очень давно оставившей его. Известно, что припадки эпилепсии, собственно самая *падучая*, приходят мгновенно. В это мгновение вдруг чрезвычайно искажается лицо, особенно взгляд. Конвульсии и судороги овладевают всем телом и всеми чертами лица. Страшный, невообразимый и ни на что не похожий вопль вырывается из груди; в этом вопле вдруг исчезает как бы всё человеческое, и никак невозможно, по крайней мере очень трудно, наблюдателю вообразить и допустить, что это кричит этот же самый человек. Представляется даже, что кричит как бы кто-то другой, находящийся внутри этого человека. (8:195)]

<sup>368</sup> Much has been written on the hero-Christ allegory in the context of apocalyptic time in the novel, in particular that Dostoevsky had tried to depict a "positively beautiful individual" in this character. Michael Holquist in *Dostoevsky and the Novel* (1977) looks at the Dostoevsky's engagement in *The Idiot* with Christology through the special temporal experience of epilepsy. In a broader perspective, Harriet Murav's *Holy Foolishness: Dostoevsky's Novels and the Poetics of Cultural Critique* (1992) examines the ways in which Dostoevsky's adoption and reinvention of the image of the holy fool from the Russian Orthodox tradition interacts with Dostoevsky's critique of reliance on the scientific paradigms (including Claude Bernard's physiology) for the understanding of human psyche. David Bethea, in *The Shape of the Apocalypse in Modern Russian Fiction* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989) considers this novel's engagement

images of Myshkin's epileptic experience stands not only a new model of the workings of the mind in narrative, but also an engagement with theological concerns that were central to Dostoevsky's thinking. The novelist transforms the theme of epilepsy into a theological concern far beyond the reach of medical science.

The scenes of Myshkin's arrival in Petersburg in the beginning of the novel may be seen as a part of a larger theme: the collision of a theological questions in a society rapidly embracing an atheistic worldview. Myshkin, as a Christ-like figure, appears in a society that has begun to reject religion, and his arrival has been read as an allegory of Christ's second coming: Christ comes to a modern society, Russia, at a time when the progress of modern ideas affects all spheres of life, including the belief in God, leading to a rise in atheism and a rejection of the belief in the immortality of the soul.

In this context, Myshkin's epilepsy signals not only a radically different way to think about the nature of consciousness, but also as a condition that reveals a higher plane of spiritual existence, with far-reaching theological implications. This is vividly shown in Chapter 5 of Part 2, when Myshkin recalls the moment just before the seizure, linking this experience with a special sense of time:

Those moments were precisely only an extraordinary intensification of self-awareness—if there was a need to express this condition in a single word—self-awareness and at the same time a self-sense immediate in the highest degree. [...] “At that moment,” as he had once said to Rogozhin in Moscow, when they got together there, “at that moment I was somehow able to understand the extraordinary phrase that *time shall be no more*” (226-227).<sup>369</sup>

The phrase “time shall be no more” comes from the Book of Revelation (Revelation 10:6; also Matthew 24: 40-41) and refers to the apocalyptic rupture of time, and it has obvious philosophical and theological connotations.

Paul Fung, in his recent book *Dostoevsky and the Epileptic Mode of Being* (2015), has described this moment as one that “interrupts lived experience, nullifying a sense of self-possession and completeness.”<sup>370</sup> As readers of the novel know well, this moment is followed by

---

with the apocalypse as a broad concern in Russian culture (62-104). See also Roger Cox, Robert Hollander, and W. J. Leatherbarrow on the apocalyptic theme in Dostoevsky's *The Idiot*.

<sup>369</sup> [Мгновения эти были именно одним только необыкновенным усилением самосознания, — если бы надо было выразить это состояние одним словом, — самосознания и в то же время самоощущения в высшей степени непосредственного. Если в ту секунду, то есть в самый последний сознательный момент пред припадком, ему случалось успевать ясно и сознательно сказать себе: «Да, за этот момент можно отдать всю жизнь!», — то, конечно, этот момент сам по себе и стоил всей жизни. [...] «В этот момент, — как говорил он однажды Рогожину, в Москве, во время их тамошних сходов, — в этот момент мне как-то становится понятно необычайное слово о том, что *времени больше не будет.*» (8:188-189)]

<sup>370</sup> Paul Fung, *Dostoevsky and the Epileptic Mode of Being* (London: Legenda, 2015), 2. Fung treats this moment in the context of his idea of the “epileptic mode of being” as a special existential and philosophical theme in the novel, see *Dostoevsky and the Epileptic Mode of Being* Chapter 3; on the apocalyptic theme, 83-86. In his Introduction, Fung provides a brief survey of authors and scholars who saw epilepsy as a special temporality, including the mystical meanings of this condition. Holquist discusses this moment, *Dostoevsky and the Novel*, 113. Dalton

a horrible scream of suffering, fall, unconsciousness, darkness, and when the character finally does recover, he emerges disoriented, depressed, and inarticulate, a state which gradually subsides as he comes back to consciousness. Michael Holquist argues in his classic study, *Dostoevsky and the Novel*, that, through moments such as these, we may liken Myshkin to Christ: “he re-enacts the life-death-and-transfiguration of Christ, *as if Christ were not the messiah, but as if he were an individual*” and “whose meaning is inner, particular.”<sup>371</sup>

Dostoevsky engages with this rupture of time not only in the scene with the epileptic seizure but broadly throughout the whole novel. Such is the overarching metaphor of the novel: the “man condemned to death.” It is introduced on the novel’s first pages: the idea of a man condemned to death is endlessly repeated by Myshkin, who inappropriately brings up the topic in drawing room conversations.<sup>372</sup> This suggests a further link of Myshkin to Christ, who lived his life as a “condemned man.” The theme of the “condemned man” can be understood as a broader metaphor of Russian society, with its embrace of atheism: if there is no God and no immortality of the soul, then, every man and the whole society has been condemned to death and is living through its last moments.<sup>373</sup> Myshkin’s experience, and his “resurrection” after the epileptic seizure back to life, thus offers an alternative to the atheistic, scientific Russian world of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that had long rejected the idea of the immortal soul.

Thus, in its treatment of epilepsy, the novel shows a double engagement, with the psychological, or clinical, and religious, or theological: in the novel’s narrative, medical science meets religion. While for clinicians at the time, epilepsy was a way of offering a more complex understanding of the mind, for Dostoevsky, it was an entry into an entirely different spiritual realm. What is at stake in this novel is not merely Dostoevsky’s engagement with the experience of epilepsy as a psychological phenomenon that calls for new ways to represent consciousness in narrative, but rather with the way that this pathological condition offers a way into the mysteries of the human soul.

---

(*Unconscious Structure in the Idiot*) considers the temporality of the epileptic seizure from a psychoanalytic perspective, especially 115-116; 133.

<sup>371</sup> Michael Holquist, *Dostoevsky and the Novel*, 107.

<sup>372</sup> Alfred Bem argues that Dostoevsky engaged with the issue of the condemned man through Victor Hugo, and that in *The Idiot* he explores Hugo’s theme on the level of its psychological and spiritual meaning: “Pered litsom smerti,” in *O Dostojevském : sborník statí a materiálů*, eds. Julius Dolansky and Radegast Parolek (Prague: Slovenská knihovna, 1972), 150-182. Knapp in *The Annihilation of Inertia* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1998) also speaks of the influence of Hugo on his thinking (66-101). See also Pevear & Volokhonsky 201; Holquist discusses this moment in *Dostoevsky and the Novel*, 113. This moment has been recently revisited by Paul Fung, who treated it in the context of his idea of the “epileptic mode of being” as a special existential and philosophical theme in the novel: *Dostoevsky and the Epileptic Mode of Being* (2015), Chapter 3; on the apocalyptic theme, 83-86.

<sup>373</sup> Mochulsky links the apocalyptic theme in *The Idiot* to the culture of the 1860s in Russia: *Dostoevsky: His Life and Work*, trans. Michael A. Minihan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), especially 357-358.

Chapter Three  
Narrative of the Mind in Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*

*Introduction*

In the opening chapter of Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, Stepan Arkad'ich Oblonsky, known as Stiva, wakes in his study after falling asleep on his couch. After recalling a pleasant dream of a lavish dinner served ““on glass tables (yes—and the tables were singing *Il mio Tesoro*,)”” Stiva is suddenly reminded of a painful situation: on the previous day his wife Dolly discovered a note from the French governess exposing his extramarital affair.<sup>374</sup> As the reader will recall, Stiva is struck not by the shame of the discovery of the affair, but by his awkward, involuntary smile in the moment of being confronted by Dolly: “Instead of being offended, of denying, justifying, asking forgiveness, even remaining indifferent—any of which would have been better than what he did! – his face quite involuntarily (‘reflexes of the brain’, thought Stepan Arkad'ich, who liked physiology) smiled all at once its habitual, kind and therefore stupid smile.”<sup>375</sup> Stiva assigns blame for his predicament not to his own transgressions but to the reflexive, mechanical function of his brain working independently from his will. In this moment, he recalls the phrase “reflexes of the brain” to describe his smile, and some readers of the novel would have recognized the title of Ivan Sechenov's 1863 treatise *Reflexes of the Brain*, a work which described the nature of cerebral reflexes of the nervous system and their influence on psychic experience. Sechenov's work had found renewed recent interest in the Russian press in the years before the serialization of Tolstoy's novel, and in the early 1870s, an intense debate had emerged on the pages of the liberal journal *The Herald of Europe* between Sechenov, a scientist and active proponent of the new physiological psychology, and Konstantin Kavelin, a liberal publicist with a keen interest in psychology and sociology. This debate centered on the role of physiology (including Sechenov's discovery of cerebral reflexes) and philosophy (and the traditional philosophical approach to human consciousness) in the study of psychology. For Stiva, Sechenov's model of “reflexes” appeared to momentarily absolve him from the moral responsibility of his careless reaction to his wife's discovery that he was unfaithful. However, in the novel this solution, grounded in science, appears to be short-lived even for the hero, when he thinks further about the matter: ““That stupid smile is to blame for it all,’ thought Stepan Arkad'ich. ‘But what to do, then? What to do?’ he kept saying despairingly to himself, and could find no answer” (3).<sup>376</sup> Calling attention to this debate about the role of physiology in psychology, Tolstoy seems to suggest that the science of the brain exemplified by Sechenov's *Reflexes of the Brain* could offer no lasting solution to the higher concerns of life.

Questions of psychology are found again in Chapter 7 of the first part of the novel, with the arrival of one of the novel's main protagonists, Konstantin Dmitrievich Levin. Levin pays a

---

<sup>374</sup> L. N. Tolstoy, *Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii*, Vol. 18, 4. Translations of Tolstoy's novel are from Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky, New York: Penguin, 2000.

<sup>375</sup> [Вместо того чтоб оскорбиться, отречься, оправдываться, просить прощения, оставаться даже равнодушным — все было бы лучше того, что он сделал! — его лицо совершенно невольно («рефлексы головного мозга», подумал Степан Аркадьич, который любил физиологию), совершенно невольно вдруг улыбнулось привычною, доброю и потому глупою улыбкой. (18:4)]

<sup>376</sup> [«Всему виной эта глупая улыбка», думал Степан Аркадьич. «Но что же делать? что делать?» с отчаянием говорил он себе и не находил ответа. (18:5)]

visit to his half-brother, Sergei Ivanovich Koznyshev, and he finds him engaged in an intense discussion with a professor of philosophy from Kharkov; the two intellectuals are discussing an important question: “Is there a borderline between psychological and physiological phenomena in human activity, and where does it lie?” For Levin (the reader is told), this debate concerned questions that had been at the center of his own thinking. The reader may have noticed that the conversation followed closely the debate in *The Herald of Europe* between Kavelin and Sechenov. Tolstoy provides a broader context and his own formulations of the main problems:

Levin had come across the articles they were discussing in magazines, and had read them, being interested in them as a development of the bases of natural science, familiar to him from his studies at the university, but he had never brought together these scientific conclusions about the animal origin of man, about reflexes, biology and sociology, with those questions about the meaning of life and death which lately had been coming more and more often to his mind. Listening to his brother’s conversation with the professor, he noticed that they connected the scientific questions with the inner, spiritual ones, several times almost touched upon them, but that each time they came close to what seemed to him the most important thing, they hastily retreated and again dug deeper into the realm of fine distinctions, reservations, quotations, allusions, references to authorities, and he had difficulty understanding what they were talking about (24).<sup>377</sup>

For Levin, “scientific conclusions” could offer little to penetrate the “inner, spiritual” questions, and his thinking on the subject paralleled Tolstoy’s understanding of the new discoveries of brain science as related to the workings of the human mind. While several chapters earlier Stiva had turned to physiology to escape from his own moral predicament, Levin, like Tolstoy himself, found the scientific approach incompatible with spiritual concerns.

Koznyshev and the professor debate whether physiology can explain mental life. In the middle of the heated discussion, the professor refers to many authorities (whose fictitious names, both Russian and German, “Pripasov,” “Wurst,” and “Knaust,” sound like brands of sausages); in response, Levin interjects with a question that perplexes the two debaters:

But here again it seemed to Levin that, having approached the most important thing, they were once more moving away, and he decided to put a question to the professor. “Therefore, if my senses are destroyed, if my body dies, there can be no further existence?” The professor, vexed and as if mentally pained by the

---

<sup>377</sup> [Левин встречал в журналах статьи, о которых шла речь, и читал их, интересуясь ими, как развитием знакомых ему, как естественнику по университету, основ естествознания, но ни когда не сближал этих научных выводов о происхождении человека как животного, о рефлексам, о биологии и социологии, с теми вопросами о значении жизни и смерти для себя самого, которые в последнее время чаще и чаще приходили ему на ум. Слушая разговор брата с профессором, он замечал, что они связывали научные вопросы с душевными, несколько раз почти подходили к этим вопросам, но каждый раз, как только они подходили близко к самому главному, как ему казалось, они тотчас же поспешно отдалялись и опять углублялись в область тонких подразделений, оговорок, цитат, намеков, ссылок на авторитеты, и он с трудом понимал, о чем речь. (18:27-28)]

interruption, turned to the strange questioner, who looked more like a barge-hauler than a philosopher, then shifted his gaze to Sergei Ivanovich as if to ask: but what can one say to that? But Sergei Ivanovich, who spoke with far less strain and one-sidedness than the professor, and in whose head there still remained room enough both for responding to the professor and for understanding the simple and natural point of view from which the question had been put, smiled and said: “That question we still have no right to answer...” “We have no data,” the professor confirmed and went on with his arguments. “No,” he said, “I will point out that if, as Pripasov states directly, sensation does have its basis in impression, we must distinguish strictly between these two concepts.” Levin listened no more and waited until the professor left (24-25).<sup>378</sup>

As Levin suggested with this interruption of the learned conversation, science, in its focus on physiology, offered no model for the inner, spiritual realm that extended beyond the life of the body.

Natural science could not explain the meaning of life and death, the mysteries of the human consciousness and the immortality of the soul. Levin’s question, enacted in many situations of the novel, suggests that literature was in a special position to offer a different perspective on the workings of the human psyche, which exceeded the possibilities of contemporary science.

In this chapter, I will show that Tolstoy offered an alternative view of the problems of consciousness debated in the “thick journals.” Like other 19<sup>th</sup> century novelists in Western Europe and in Russia, Tolstoy closely followed these debates, which often focused on the advantages and limitations of physiological psychology and the new science of the brain. His keen interest in these issues can be seen in his correspondence with his learned friend Nikolai Strakhov.<sup>379</sup> Importantly, despite his reservations about scientific explanations of the working of the human psyche, Tolstoy found it necessary to respond to science: he could not merely ignore

---

<sup>378</sup> [Но тут Левину опять показалось, что они, подойдя к самому главному, опять отходят, и он решился предложить профессору вопрос. — Стало быть, если чувства мои уничтожены, если тело мое умрет, существования никакого уж не может быть? — спросил он. Профессор с досадой и как будто умственной болью от перерыва оглянулся на странного вопрошателя, похожего более на бурлака, чем на философа, и перенес глаза на Сергея Ивановича, как бы спрашивая: что ж тут говорить? Но Сергей Иванович, который далеко не с тем усилием и односторонностью говорил, как профессор, и у которого в голове оставался простор для того, чтоб и отвечать профессору и вместе понимать ту простую и естественную точку зрения, с которой был сделан вопрос, улыбнулся и сказал: — Этот вопрос мы не имеем еще права решать... — Не имеем данных, — подтвердил профессор и продолжал свои доводы. — Нет, — говорил он, — я указываю на то, что если, как прямо говорит Припасов, ощущение и имеет своим основанием впечатление, то мы должны строго различать эти два понятия. Левин не слушал больше и ждал, когда уедет профессор. (18:28)]

<sup>379</sup> Scholars of Tolstoy have described the complex relationship between Tolstoy and Strakhov concerning the questions of science. Donna Orwin, “Strakhov’s *World as a Whole: A Missing Link between Dostoevsky and Tolstoy.*” Irina Paperno provides the most comprehensive study of Tolstoy’s correspondence with Strakhov, including the question of the soul, in “*Who, What Am I?*” 39-59.



this new attempt to define the “soul.” Through his character Levin, Tolstoy formulated the conflict in his own terms: as a conflict between natural science, on the one hand, and the inner spiritual questions about the meaning of life and death, on the other.

This chapter will consider the novel’s representation of the inner life of characters in the context of scientific debates of the time, especially the way in which Tolstoy’s models of the mind emerged from his sharp disagreement with scientific methods and conclusions. Arguably, the debates that unfolded in the journals were at the center of Tolstoy’s thinking, and he was especially interested in such issues as the nature of the unconscious or involuntary workings of the mind and brain, the definition of “soul” and the relationship between body and soul, and more. Try as he may, Tolstoy could not fully extricate himself from the scientific ideas of the time. Most importantly, what I will demonstrate is that Tolstoy’s interest in the workings of the human mind, broadly conceived, was not limited to his engagement with concepts and ideas including the concepts of the science of the brain, discussed by his characters. That interest also shaped Tolstoy’s representation of his characters’ consciousness in the form and textures of his narrative.

### *Kavelin and Sechenov*

In October 1867, Sechenov wrote a series of letters to his wife, M. A. Bokova, which concerned the debate about psychology and physiology and methods of research in physiological psychology.<sup>380</sup> Sechenov had been living in the town of Graz, Austria, conducting research on the nervous system of frogs and dogs, and he described his experiments in his letters, along with the discussion of aims and methods of psychology.<sup>381</sup> In her letters to Sechenov, Bokova had urged him to read work by Johann Friedrich Herbart, Friedrich Eduard Beneke, Alexander Bain, Herbert Spencer, and others, in order to investigate the role that a physiologist could play in the study of psychic phenomena.<sup>382</sup> Sechenov wrote that he had become so interested in psychology that the topic made him sleepless at night:

You accuse me of laziness towards psychology completely in vain. On the contrary, I am studying it extremely passionately ever since I received Bain, Herbart, Beneke, and the journal für exakte Philosophie. Thoughts about psychological questions after an evening of reading excite me so much that they often interfere with sleep.<sup>383</sup>

---

<sup>380</sup> Todes provides a summary of the correspondence with Bokova, in particular how these letters can be understood as a precursor to his later essays on psychology in response to Kavelin’s *Tasks of Psychology*. Daniel Todes, “From Radicalism to Scientific Convention: Biological Psychology in Russia from Sechenov to Pavlov,” 266-270.

<sup>381</sup> *Ibid.*, 266.

<sup>382</sup> Several articles at the time discussed the issue of empirical methods in psychology in Western Europe, but Bokova may have been inspired by a recent article by Matvei Mikhailovich Troitskii in *Russkii Vestnik* which mentioned many of the writers that she suggested Sechenov should read, such as Bain (this was one the earliest mentions of Bain in the Russian press). Troitskii, “Uspekhi psikhologicheskoi metody v Anglii so Bekona i Lokka,” published in *Russkii Vestnik* in February/March 1867.

<sup>383</sup> [В лени к психологии вы обвиняете меня совершенно напрасно. Я занимаюсь ею наоборот чрезвычайно страстно, с тех пор, как получил Бена, Гербарта, Бенеке и журнал

These concerns were not entirely new to him: Sechenov had investigated the link between psychic acts and the science of the brain in his famous essay *Reflexes of the Brain* (1863), and he had long worked on modeling the workings of the mind as the result of the function of the nervous system. In between the publication of that essay and his letters to Bokova, new work by Western European empirical psychologists, Alexander Bain, Wilhelm Wundt, and others, popularized in Russian journals, brought new attention to the question of whether psychology should be considered a natural science in its own right, alongside physiology, chemistry, and physics. At this time, psychologists began to adopt methods from the natural sciences, including physiology of the brain and nervous system, and these methods clashed with the work of those psychologists who had been trained in the practice of psychology as a branch of philosophy, including the German idealist philosophy of Kant, Hegel, Fichte, and Schelling. Sechenov's thoughts on the matter in his letters offer a starting point for what would become a major debate about the intersection of physiology and psychology, culminating in his heated debate with Kavelin in the pages of the liberal journal *The Herald of Europe* in 1872-1874. These letters also point to a recurring tension in Sechenov's thinking as he tried to develop a new language for the scientific study of psychic life. Importantly, these letters show how Sechenov himself struggled with concepts that had their origin not in science but in philosophy.

In his letters to his wife, Sechenov wrote extensively on the question of psychology, interspersing his thoughts with descriptions of his ongoing experiments on frogs and references to the earlier essay *Reflexes of the Brain*. Significantly, the terminology applied to the activity of the brain, as well as other concepts of psychology, was used metaphorically by both Sechenov and Bokova, to describe their personal feelings. When Bokova urged Sechenov to read psychology, he made it clear that he had no interest in reading psychological work by German idealist philosophers. As he wrote in one letter (October 10, 1867), he would only read a select few among German philosophers while he waited for the works of science to arrive: "Bain has not yet been sent; Beneke and Herbart did not come either; and from German philosophers I will not read anyone except these two."<sup>384</sup> In another letter (October 18), he spoke of his distrust of idealist philosophy as opposed to what he called "physiological psychology," based on observation and experimentation in the pursuit of physiological laws. Upon receiving a work of German philosophy, he wrote, "attempting to read it, I positively understood not a word. [...] I will not have the spirit [*u menia dukha ne stanet*] to study German metaphysics."<sup>385</sup> Note that despite his clear aversion to such words as "soul" and "spirit," Sechenov nevertheless liberally employed them (perhaps ironically?) to speak of his own feelings.

---

für exakte Philosophie. Размышления о психологических вопросах после вечернего чтения так волнуют меня, что мешают часто спать. (I. M. Sechenov, *Nauchnoe Nasledstvo, Tom Tretii: Ivan Mikhailovich Sechenov, Neopublikovannyye raboty, perepiska i dokumenty* [Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1956], 237)]

<sup>384</sup> [Бена все еще не прислали; Бенеке и Герbart тоже не приехали; а из немецких философ я никого не буду читать, кроме этих двух (*Ibid.*, 236)]

<sup>385</sup> [To cite this passage in full: Так как я заказывал в здешнем книжном магазине все философские книги, то на днях мне прислали Zum Ausehen (sic) такую новейшую белиберду, что я, пробуя читать, положительно не понял ни слова. И этим, как оказывается, занимаюсь стоящее время еще тьма немцев. Признаюсь откровенно — на изучение немецкой метафизики (об чем было говорено с вами), у меня духа не станет. (*Ibid.*, 237-238)]

In these letters, Sechenov stated that he planned to develop a new branch of psychology—“medical” or “physiological” psychology—that would do away with the methods and principles of German transcendental philosophy, such as the idea of the independent existence of the “soul.” In one letter, describing his excitement about a trip to meet with psychologists of the Herbart school in Leipzig, he stressed that psychology should avoid the concept of the soul entirely.<sup>386</sup>

You are right, my precious one [*moe zoloto*], this trip will be a great blessing for me, because it will bring into the circle of my brain activity [*moei mozgovoi deiatel'nosti*] those elements to which my soul [*moia dusha*] has always been striving. Moreover, whatever you say, it is still extremely pleasant to end the official activity with an act that logically follows from everything that has preceded it. You understand by this I mean my swan song—medical psychology. Since my whole soul [*dusha*] sits in it, it is clear that I can only produce in this direction. On this basis, to your question, what am I doing for myself, I answer as follows: so far, I have learned positively that a person studying psychology has nothing to look at in the German transcendentalists, that is, in Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, and that the only psychological school in Germany worth studying is the Herbart school. I am sitting over him at the present time with the greatest pleasure, because I find in his teaching a lot that is enlightening and sound; but at the same time I cannot be surprised coming across, side-by-side with the sound aspects, a naïve conviction that the metaphysical development of concepts about the soul [*poniatii ob dushe*] can create a theory of psychic development, that is, give the science of mental life roundness and completeness.<sup>387</sup>

One may first note here a glaring contradiction: in the very moment when Sechenov approaches the topic of the “naïve” concept of the soul, he himself turns to the word “soul” to describe his

---

<sup>386</sup> It is unclear whether the trip mentioned here is the same one he plans in a letter in the next week.

<sup>387</sup> [Вы правы, мое золото, эта поездка будет для меня великим благом, потому что она внесет в круг моей мозговой деятельности те элементы, к которым у меня всегда рвалась душа. Притом, что ни говорите, а закончить официальную деятельность актом, логически вытекающим из всего предшествующего, все-таки крайне приятно. Вы понимаете, что под этим я разумею мою лебединую песнь — медицинскую психологию. Так как вся моя душа сидит в ней, то понятно, что производить я могу только в этом направлении. На этом основании, на вопрос ваш, что я делаю для себя, отвечаю следующим образом: до сих пор я узнал с положительностью, что человеку, изучающему психологию, нечего заглядывать в немецких трансценденталистов, т. е. в Канта, Фихте, Шеллинга и Гегеля, и что единственная, достойная изучения психологическая школа в Германии есть школа Гербарта. Над ним я и сижу в настоящее время с величайшим удовольствием, потому что нахожу в его учении чрезвычайно много светлого и здорового; но вместе с тем не могу не удивляться, встречая, рядом с здоровыми сторонами, наивное убеждение, что метафизическим развитием понятий об душе можно создать теорию психической деятельности, т. е. придать науке о психической жизни закругленность и законченность. (*Ibid.*, 239-240)]

own feelings: he states that the trip “will bring into the circle of my brain activity those elements for which my soul has always been striving.” In this striking moment, the language of science (“brain activity”) overlaps with the transcendental (or religious) concept of the “soul,” suggesting that underlying even Sechenov’s scientific language was the familiar vocabulary of religion and metaphysics. Even describing “medical psychology,” a field based on moving beyond transcendental concepts from philosophy, he yet again turns to the metaphor of the soul, describing medical psychology as a place in which “my whole soul is sitting.” While Sechenov would not use such language in his publications on the topic, his private letters suggest that, even for the scientist, the language of science and the traditional language based on the idiom of religion and idealist philosophy, with their frequent recourse to the “soul,” had yet to be separated, neither happily coinciding, nor fully apart.

Nevertheless, in the course of this correspondence, Sechenov began drawing up concrete plans to further study “physiological psychology.” In one letter, he wrote of his intention to travel to Leipzig in the coming summer to meet with the adherents of the Herbart school of psychology.<sup>388</sup> Another plan was to write an entirely new work on the topic. In a brief outline of this project in February 1868, he stressed that psychology needed to be rethought as an experimental science and needed to discard the idea of the soul entirely.<sup>389</sup> “Metaphysics,” as

---

<sup>388</sup> Sechenov described the meeting in a letter on November 4: “With regards to psychology, I have the following plan in my head. The main representatives of the Herbart school live in Leipzig; in any case, I will have to be there (for the sake of a meeting with Ludwig), so, as you have said, you wish for physiologists to take part in the development of psychology—I am a physiologist and have such intentions; so it would please you for during my stay in Leipzig that there would be arranged systematic debates on the fundamental questions of psychology. If this thought came true, it would be extremely useful for me. But I will arrange this already for summer, 2 months before returning to Russia. Write your thoughts regarding this point.” [Относительно психологии у меня в голове есть следующий план. Главные представители Гербартовской школы живут в г. Лейпциге; там мне быть во всяком случае придется (ради свидания с Людвигом), поэтому что вот мол вы желаете, чтобы в разработке психологии принимали участие и физиологи, — я физиолог и с такими намерениями; так не угодно ли во время моего пребывания в Лейпциге устроить систематические дебаты об основных вопросах психологии. Если бы эта мысль осуществилась, было бы для меня крайне полезно. Но это я устрою уже летом, месяца за 2 до возвращения в Россию. Напишите ваше мнение и относительно этого пункта. (*Ibid.*, 240-241)]

<sup>389</sup> Sechenov described the situation in German psychology, echoing his comments from earlier letters: “So, even in Germany, a predominantly speculative country, only one school is still of the opinion that metaphysics should play a role in psychology, and this school also recognizes that metaphysics is needed only for the construction of psychological theories, in order to impart unity to the whole doctrine about the manifestation of the spirit as a unity and as roundness. For a person brought up in the spirit of the natural sciences, ever since there was no need for theories to deal with things that are positively inexplicable, such as the kind of essence is there of all psychic acts—he simply says, then, that we do not understand and cannot understand the essence of phenomena in the present time; therefore, metaphysics is useless in psychology.” [Итак, даже в Германии, спекулятивной стране по преимуществу, только одна школа придерживается еще мнения, что метафизика должна играть роль в психологии, да и эта школа признает, что метафизика нужна только для построения психологических теорий, чтобы придать всему учению о проявлениях духа единство и закругленность. Для человека, воспитанного

Sechenov wrote in sharp terms, “is useless in psychology.”<sup>390</sup> In his outline of this project, Sechenov advanced two major points. The first was that psychology should be built upon the study of mental illness, and in particular, he argued that the most immediate need for psychology with a physiological basis was the work of a psychiatrist.<sup>391</sup> His second point was that psychology should be a “natural science” following the models proposed by Alexander Bain, Herbert Spencer, and the Herbart school.<sup>392</sup> He confided in Bokova that his plans included rudimentary psychological experiments: “I will tell you a secret that in my head have begun to spin forms of psychological experiments. They are still in their nascent form, but I think they will evolve with time.”<sup>393</sup> This work would never appear, but the ideas would soon be found in his debate with Kavelin on the pages of *The Herald of Europe*. What Kavelin would never see was how Sechenov made recourse to such concepts as the “soul” in his private letters to his wife.

At the same time that Sechenov was imagining a science-based, “medical” psychology in his letters to his wife, Kavelin was writing about the intersection of physiology and psychology in his articles published in the popular press.<sup>394</sup> Kavelin’s approach to psychology was informed by his liberal, positivist worldview, which sought to transform this field into what the historian of science Daniel Todes called an “objective study of culture, social institutions, etc., as the reflection of human consciousness.”<sup>395</sup> In his essays on psychology in the 1860s, Kavelin argued that psychology was too dependent on general theories and did not pay enough attention to the precise observation of psychic data. In one essay, “Thoughts on Scientific Directions,” published in *The St. Petersburg News (Sankt Peterburgskie Novosti)* in 1865 and written as a direct response to Sechenov’s *Reflexes of the Brain*, Kavelin asserted that both “materialist” and “idealist” schools of psychology presented an inexact understanding of the mind: idealist philosophy “consisted of a dead scheme of general laws and formulas,” and materialists relied on too “general conditions, causes.”<sup>396</sup> Both were too broad to be applied to the specificities of

---

в духе естественных наук, необходимости в теориях нет с той минуты, как он имеет дело с вещами положительно необъяснимыми, какова сущность всех психических актов — он просто говорит тогда, что сущность явлений мы не понимаем и понимать в настоящее время не можем; стало быть метафизика в психологии бесполезна. (*Ibid.*, 246)]

<sup>390</sup> *Ibid.*, 246.

<sup>391</sup> *Ibid.*, 244-245.

<sup>392</sup> As he wrote to Bokova, “Psychology, according to the method of working with its material, belongs, as you know, to the sciences that are not completely established—the experimental principle still coexists for the time being with the purely speculative (as is seen, for example, the now-dominant Herbart school in Germany).” [Психология, по способу обрабатывания своего материала, принадлежит, как известно, к наукам не вполне установившимся — в ней уживаются пока еще рядом (как показывает, например, господствующая теперь в Германии школа Гербарта) опытное начало с чисто умозрительным. (*Ibid.*, 245)]

<sup>393</sup> [Сообщу Вам по секрету, что в голове у меня начинают уже вертеться формы психологических опытов. Они еще в зародышевой форме, но думаю, что со временем разовьются. (*Ibid.*, 246)]

<sup>394</sup> Daniel Todes provides a thorough study on Kavelin’s articles on psychology and his liberal positivist framework in “From Radicalism to Scientific Convention: Biological Psychology in Russia from Sechenov to Pavlov,” 219-233.

<sup>395</sup> *Ibid.*, 233.

<sup>396</sup> Konstantin Kavelin, *Sobranie Sochinenii*, Vol. 3 (St. Petersburg: Tip. M. M. Stasiulevicha, 1897-1900), 255-256. Todes (“From Radicalism to Scientific Convention: Biological

psychic life, and psychology, as a “science of the soul,” would need a foundation not only in general laws and principles, but in specific, positive facts based on the observation of psychic acts. In another article, “Contemporary German Psychology” (1868), Kavelin closely paralleled Sechenov’s characterization of German transcendental philosophy. Similarly to Sechenov, Kavelin argued that German philosophers had failed to observe the workings of the mind in any exact way: “[they] do not suspect the real, positive content of mental operations” and “transfer their human soul to transcendental space and fall into incredible fantasies.”<sup>397</sup> On the contrary, English psychologists were admirable because they were “the first to have looked at psychic facts as an object of actual scientific study.”<sup>398</sup> In contrast, the British, in Kavelin’s point of view, “do not know and do not understand the processes of the soul.”<sup>399</sup>

These articles by Kavelin formed the foundation of his thinking about psychology that would appear in *The Tasks of Psychology*, a work that he began to draft in 1868; it appeared in 1872. Sechenov would soon write a blistering response to this treatise in the pages of the same journal, *The Herald of Europe*, and the debate would then make its way into the opening chapters of Tolstoy’s *Anna Karenina*.<sup>400</sup> In this work, as he had described earlier, Kavelin offered a blueprint for psychology that combined methods of physiology and philosophy. In the opening pages, he decried the development of psychology in Russia as too dependent on the science of the brain and not focused enough on the age-old principle of the inner, independent nature of the soul. Physiologists, he argued, had prepared “rich material for psychology” but “cannot be called the researchers of mental life.”<sup>401</sup> For Kavelin, psychology should not be based in idealist or materialist philosophy alone, but should emerge as a “positive science” that reconciled new developments in physiology with the description of general principles and laws governing psychic activity.<sup>402</sup> The “soul,” in Kavelin’s view, could not be divorced from the study of the body; it required both philosophy and physiology to grasp the complexities of psychic experience in their entirety: “In psychology different phenomena are mixed, and it vacillates between philosophy and physiology.”<sup>403</sup> The “soul,” as Kavelin argued, was as “real” as the physical sensations in the nervous system: “Thousands of pieces of data show that psychic

---

Psychology in Russia from Sechenov to Pavlov”) notes that this article responded in agreement to an article in *Otechestvennye Zapiski*, “Chelovek prostoi li chustvushchii avtomat?” in which the author had criticized Sechenov’s *Reflexes of the Brain*. Todes, “From Radicalism to Scientific Convention: Biological Psychology in Russia from Sechenov to Pavlov,” 202-204.

<sup>397</sup> Konstantin Kavelin, “Nemetskaia sovremennaia psikhologiya,” *Vestnik Evropy* (January 1868): 312.

<sup>398</sup> *Ibid.*, 309-310.

<sup>399</sup> *Ibid.*, 312.

<sup>400</sup> Joravsky describes the debate between Kavelin and Sechenov as emerging as a result of debates about psychology between the two as fellow “Russian liberals.” Joravsky, *Russian Psychology*, 97. Joravsky’s comprehensive study of the debate reveals that the two had much in common intellectually in their thinking about the workings of the mind. His description of the debate can be found in *Russian Psychology*, 96-101.

<sup>401</sup> [Они готовят богатый материал для психологии, но назвать их исследователями психической жизни нельзя. (Konstantin Kavelin, *Zadachi Psikhologii* [St. Petersburg: 1872], 5)]

<sup>402</sup> Todes describes Kavelin’s work on psychology as a “positive science” in “From Radicalism to Scientific Convention: Biological Psychology in Russia from Sechenov to Pavlov,” 225-226.

<sup>403</sup> Kavelin, *Zadachi Psikhologii*, 11.

phenomena do not remain without deep action and influence not only on our body, but also on the world around a person. It follows that the soul, to which psychic phenomena are attributed, is also one of the figures in the real world [*est' odin iz deiatelei i v real'nom mire*].<sup>404</sup> In this vein, Kavelin stressed that the laws of physiology could not resolve what he saw as the contradictions between psychic experience and the nervous system, seen in the disconnect between inner thoughts, on the one hand, and sensations from outer stimuli, on the other. A science of the “soul” should, in Kavelin’s view, be built upon the understanding of the soul as separate from the body.

Asserting the independent nature of the soul did not mean that physiology was no longer needed. Quite the contrary: Kavelin argued that a psychologist should have knowledge of physiology in order to gain a more complete understanding of the workings of the mind. However, such parallels between body and soul, Kavelin argued (echoing terms that Sechenov had earlier used in his essay *Reflexes of the Brain*), should not suggest that the physiology of “reflexes”—the material conditions of the body—be seen as the sole explanation for the workings of the mind:

Materialism does not deny these facts, but explains them in its own way. That which we call mental process, in his view is a nervous or brain reflex that does not presuppose either a special mental environment or the participation of the will and is performed mechanically, as the result of external impressions and physical sensations. This assumption seems to be supported by the fact that many mental processes occur not only without any participation of the will, but even completely unconsciously. The discovery of reflexes and apparatuses that arrest reflexes sheds light on the previously dark and unknown area of involuntary movements and explained their mechanism; but we do not think that this great discovery could explain all psychic phenomena. That involuntary movements exist, that they are performed mechanically, was known long before the scientific observations of mental phenomena. The discovery of reflexes and their arresting apparatuses, as stated, only explained their mechanism, their causes.<sup>405</sup>

---

<sup>404</sup> [Таким образом, тысячи данных показывают, что психические явления не остаются без глубокого действия и влияния не только на наше тело, но и на окружающий человека мир. Отсюда следует, что душа, которой приписываются психические явления, есть один из деятелей и в реальном мире. (Konstantin Kavelin, *Zadachi Psikhologii*, 21)]

<sup>405</sup> [Материализм не отрицает всех этих фактов, но объясняет их по-своему. То, что мы называем психическим процессом, то в его глазах нервный или головной рефлекс, который не предполагает ни особой психической среды, ни участие воли и совершается механически, вследствие внешних впечатлений или физических ощущений. Это предположение как будто подкрепляется тем, что множество психических процессов совершаются не только без всякого участие воли, но даже совершенно бессознательно. Открытие рефлексов и аппаратов, задерживающих рефлекс, пролило свет на совсем до тех пор темную и непонятную область произвольных движений и объяснило их механизм; но мы не думаем, чтоб это великое открытие объяснило все психические явления. Что произвольные движения существуют, что они совершаются механически,—это было известно задолго до научных наблюдений над психическими явлениями. Открытие рефлексов и задерживающих аппаратов, как сказано, только объяснило их механизм, их причины. (*Ibid.*, 31)]

Here, Kavelin recalls the terms of Sechenov's essay, using the language of "reflexes" and the argument about the "mechanical" foundation of the brain. He thus revealed that, years later, the language of "reflexes of the brain" still exercised power over this debate. (For readers of the liberal press, such as Stiva in *Anna Karenina*, this description would have evoked Sechenov's essay.) Thus, in these statements, Kavelin did not deny the existence of the "cerebral reflexes" or even their complex influence on the workings of the mind. Nevertheless, he did not believe that physiology could offer an exhaustive model for the complex, independent workings of the inner psychic world. For Kavelin, psychology could not be built upon the foundation of brain science, since physiology offered only a parallel to the workings of the mind. Moreover, it can be argued that Kavelin was bringing to light the idea that psychology and physiology in many ways shared concepts and could not in the end be completely extricated from each other.

Sechenov recognized the implicit criticism in Kavelin's treatise and soon wrote a blistering response that was published later in the same journal, "Notes on Kavelin's Book 'The Tasks of Psychology.'" In this essay, Sechenov argued that Kavelin's model of psychology—which placed philosophy alongside physiology and maintained the independence of the soul from the body—could not be considered a scientific method for understanding the nature of psychic experience. (Yet again, we can remember his use of the word "soul" in his private letters.) Rather, Sechenov proposed that psychologists learn from the methods of the natural sciences to bolster their ideas beyond what he considered pure speculation. "If psychologists," wrote Sechenov, "lived by science [*po-nauchnomu*], then the results of their views of life would have penetrated into the public domain."<sup>406</sup> For Sechenov, Kavelin (like other psychologists trained in philosophy) "[moves] from concrete facts to general principles, the same big mistake that ruined all of philosophy."<sup>407</sup> Psychology had yet to adopt rigorous scientific methods because of its basis in philosophy: "[P]hilosophical teachings, on whose ruins we live, collapsed and left psychology an untouched science [*ostavili psikhologiiu nepochatoi naukoi*]."<sup>408</sup> The use of the "science" of physiology in the study of psychic life had the promise of renewing psychology as a field of study.

Of particular concern for Sechenov, as we have seen in his letters to Bokova, was the insistence by philosophers on the existence of the soul as an entity independent of the body and under the guidance of its own laws. Such a concept, while useful as a "guiding principle," had no place in psychology:

Keep the soul in practical life, as the noblest part of man; accept it even in science as a general ground concept, in the same way that natural scientists regard matter. Let it even be the guiding star in psychological investigations. But how is it possible to explain anything by the inexplicable! That is taking up a thing not

---

<sup>406</sup> [Если бы психологи жили по-научному, то результаты их образа жизни давно бы проникли в публику, подобно тому как в нее проникают сведения, вырабатываемые гигиеной и диететикой, хотя эти науки принадлежат тоже к крайне мало развитым. (I. M. Sechenov, *Izbrannye Proizvedeniia*, Vol. 1, 130)]

<sup>407</sup> [Теперь я постараюсь доказать [...] что г. Кавелин, переходя от конкретных фактов сразу к общим началам, впадает в ту же громадную ошибку, которая погубила всю философию. (*Ibid.*, 133)]

<sup>408</sup> [[Ф]илософские учения, на обломках которых мы живем, рушились и оставляли психологию непочатой наукой. (*Ibid.*)]



from the beginning but from the end. The moral of all this reasoning is as follows: Mr. Kavelin starts out in his philosophical system from shaky, unproven facts, and then takes the very step that has been the chief ruin of philosophy.<sup>409</sup>

Sechenov stressed that the introduction of philosophical concepts such as the “soul” in the study of psychology ran contrary to scientific methods (here, he reprised his thoughts expressed both in *Reflexes of the Brain* and in his private letters to Bokova.) For Sechenov, psychic acts emerged not independently in the “soul,” but as a result of stimulation of the nervous system. “These [psychic] acts,” as Sechenov concluded near the end of his review, “are born ... in consciousness always as a consequence, and never voluntarily [*nikogda proizvol'no*].”<sup>410</sup> For Sechenov, the methods of science would not allow for the independent existence of the soul, which he decried as merely a fiction with no basis in reality. Despite his refusal to agree with Kavelin’s approach, he nevertheless felt compelled to enter into this dialogue that concerned the question of the soul: a scientist needed to respond to philosophical ideas.

Sechenov expanded his thoughts on the topic in a second essay on psychology, “For Whom and How to Develop Psychology?” In this work, he argued that psychology must leave behind the theories of the mind developed by philosophers and should be transformed into an experimental science based on physiology. The article’s abstract, appearing at the beginning of the work, stated as much in blunt terms: “Only a physiologist can be a psychologist-analyst.”<sup>411</sup>

In the essay, Sechenov’s first task was to return to the debate about the body and the soul. For Sechenov, as a physiologist, no line could be drawn between the soul and the body, which he here recast in the language of science as “psychic phenomena” and “processes in the body”:

It is well known that in the past, the greatest minds compared the bodily and spiritual life of a person and usually found only deep differences between them and no similarities. Indeed, it was really like this: the philosophers of previous times stood—and quite rightly—in relation to psychic facts from the point of view of the vitalists in relation to phenomena of the body: but this was due to the fact that physiology did not exist at that time, and bodily phenomena were not so discerned that the analogy of some of them with mental activities could catch the eye. Now it is a different matter: physiology presents a whole series of data that establishes the relationship of mental phenomena with the so-called nervous processes in the body, purely somatic acts.<sup>412</sup>

---

<sup>409</sup> Translation from David Joravsky, *Russian Psychology*, 99.

[Оставьте душу в практической жизни как благороднейшую часть человека, принимайте ее и в науке за общее начало, подобно тому как натуралисты смотрят на материю; пусть она даже будет путеводной звездой в психологических изысканиях; но как же возможно объяснить что бы то ни было необъяснимым! Ведь это значит приниматься за вещь не с начала, а с конца. Мораль всего этого рассуждения такова: г. Кавелин выходит в своей философской системе из фактов шатких, непроверенных и делает вслед за тем тот самый шаг, который главнейшим образом погубил философию. (*Ibid.*, 139)]

<sup>410</sup> [Акты эти рождаются, следовательно, в сознании *всегда как следствие, никогда—произвольно.* (*Ibid.*, 168)]

<sup>411</sup> [“психологом-аналитиком может быть только физиолог” (*Ibid.*, 172)]

<sup>412</sup> [Известно, что в прошлом величайшие умы сравнивали телесную и духовную жизнь человека и находили обыкновенно только глубокие различия между ними, а не сходства.

For Sechenov, the division of the body and the soul no longer held up to the rigor of science, and here, unlike in his personal letters, he rendered these ideas in the language of science. His conclusion rebuked the central thesis of Kavelin's work on psychology, which, in Sechenov's view, rested on the separation of the soul and the body: "A clear border between ... the bodily, nervous acts and phenomena which are recognized by everyone as already psychic does not exist in any conceivable respect."<sup>413</sup> In this sense, by demonstrating that there was no separation between the physiology of the body and psychic activity, Sechenov asserted that physiology was the only way to model the workings of the mind. What is more, Sechenov believed that psychology rooted in physiology would have set more modest goals for the study of the nature of consciousness. The field would need to be a "science of real facts," and would need to "separate psychic realities from the psychic fictions with which the human consciousness is stuffed up to this day."<sup>414</sup> Rather than grand theories, psychologists "[must] not raise to the level of unshakeable truth anything that cannot be confirmed by rigorous experiments."<sup>415</sup> The mysteries of the workings of the mind, for Sechenov, should not lead to hypotheses that have no basis in experimental data, but should rather remain in the realm of the mysterious: "It is true that brilliant, comprehensive theories will disappear from psychology; in its scientific content, on the contrary, there will be terrible gaps; in the vast majority of cases, the laconic 'we don't know' will take the place of explanation; the essence of psychic phenomena, as far as they are expressed by consciousness, will remain in all cases without exception an impenetrable secret."<sup>416</sup> Psychology would thus be "freed...from transcendental absurdities" where the

---

Дело, действительно, было так: философы прежних времен стояли—и совершенно законно—по отношению к психическим фактам на точке зрения виталистов по отношению к явлениям тела: но это происходило оттого, что физиологии в то время не существовало, и телесные явления не были настолько расчленены, чтобы аналогия некоторых из них с психическими деятельностями могла броситься в глаза. Теперь же другое дело: физиология представляет целый ряд данных, которыми устанавливается родство психических явлений с так называемыми нервными процессами в теле, актами чисто соматическими. (*Ibid.*, 178-179)]

<sup>413</sup> [Ясной границы между заведомо соматическими, т. е. телесными, нервными актами и явлениями, которые всеми признаются уже психическими, не существует ни в одном мыслимом отношении. (*Ibid.*, 179-180)]

<sup>414</sup> [Как наука о действительных фактах она позаботится прежде всего отделить психические реальности от психических фикций, которыми запружено человеческое сознание по сие время. (*Ibid.*, 194)]

<sup>415</sup> [Как опытная наука она не возведет на степень непоколебимой истины ничего, что не может быть подтверждено строгим опытом; на этом основании и добытых ее результатах гипотетическое будет строго отделено от положительного. (*Ibid.*)]

<sup>416</sup> [Из психологии исчезнут, правда, блестящие, всеобъемлющие теории; в научном содержании ее будут, наоборот, страшные пробелы; на место объяснений в огромном большинстве случаев выступит лаконическое "не знаем"; сущность психических явлений, насколько они выражаются сознательностью, останется во всех без исключения случаях непроницаемой тайной (подобно, впрочем, сущности всех явлений на свете),—и тем не менее психология сделает огромный шаг вперед. (*Ibid.*, 194-195)]

“arbitrary and the fantastic will be replaced by the more or less likely.”<sup>417</sup> “*And all this,*” Sechenov wrote, “*can be done only by physiology.*”<sup>418</sup>

Sechenov’s responses did little to convince Kavelin, who, in his subsequent responses to Sechenov’s essays in *The Herald of Europe*, still argued that psychology must recognize the inner, independent laws in the workings of the soul, conceived as separate, yet sometimes parallel, to the physiology of the body.

Despite the disagreements expressed in a public debate on the pages of a “thick journal,” as we have seen from Sechenov’s personal letters, the larger conversation was carried out in a shared language. From the evidence of Sechenov’s correspondence, it would appear that even though in his professional writings he operated in the language of science, even for a scientist a clear dividing line between body and soul, science and philosophy had yet to be found.

I hope to have shown that the initial conversation between the characters of Tolstoy’s *Anna Karenina* was informed by and commented on the debates that unfolded at the time in popular journals. As seen both in the discussions between Sechenov and Kavelin and in the discussion at Koznyshev’s at the beginning of Tolstoy’s novel, the conflict between physiology and idealist philosophy could not find a clear resolution. Tolstoy, who obviously read the journal articles, would chart a different way to approach the “question of the soul” further in his novel. For Tolstoy, the “question of the soul” required answers formulated in a different way, from outside of science. As I will show, such an answer would be formulated in the language of literature, namely, by mobilizing the resources of narrative form.

### *Strakhov and Tolstoy Discuss the Soul*

Before we turn to the novel, let us look at Tolstoy’s private letters surrounding his work on *Anna Karenina*. In November 1875, as Tolstoy was working on the third part of his novel, he wrote to his close friend and interlocuter Nikolai Strakhov, a well-known literary critics and popularizer of philosophy. This letter posed a question that had been the subject of their letters before: what role do science and philosophy play in the understanding of the inner world of man (including the soul, will and reason)? In a letter of November 30, 1875, Tolstoy stated that science, as opposed to philosophy, had little role in understanding the inner nature of experience:

Consequently, the scientific method of correcting and redefining the concepts that make up science is inapplicable to philosophy, to that knowledge that has as its subject the soul, life, thought, joy, etc. [...] Philosophy, by its very task, cannot eliminate any aspect of the phenomena that occupy it. The very subjects that philosophy studies, — life, the soul, will, reason, are not subject to dissection, to the elimination of certain aspects. Phenomena that comprise the subject of the sciences are phenomena that we know crudely in the external world, while the

---

<sup>417</sup> [Ее обобщения и выводы, замыкаясь в тесные пределы реальных аналогий, высвободятся из-под влияния личных вкусов и наклонностей исследователя, доведивших психологию иногда до трансцендентальных абсурдов, и приобретут характер объективных научных гипотез. Лично, произвольное и фантастичное заменится через это более или менее вероятным. (*Ibid.*, 195)]

<sup>418</sup> [И все это может сделать одна только физиология, так как она одна держит в своих руках ключ к истинно научному анализу психических явлений. (*Ibid.*)]

phenomena that make up the subject of philosophy are all cognized by us in the inner world directly, and we can observe them from the inner world.<sup>419</sup>

These subjects—“life, soul, will, reason”—would become major questions in the correspondence between Tolstoy and Strakhov in the coming years, and these questions would be reflected on the pages of Tolstoy’s novel, with special focus on the issue of the soul. The basic question raised above—how can we observe experiences which can only be seen from the inside?—was one raised constantly by Tolstoy, both in his letters and in his novel. The voluminous philosophical (as they called it) correspondence between Tolstoy and Strakhov often engaged with issues related to philosophy, literature, religion, among other topics, and the discussion of the soul emerged as a central concern, formulated in relation to the contemporary debates that unfolded in the public domain, primarily in the “thick journals.” In their correspondence, Strakhov and Tolstoy grappled with the difficulties of defining the soul in a way that showed that they found little help in the approaches discussed at the time in journals.

The discussion between Tolstoy and Strakhov began with Tolstoy announcing that he was writing a work that would address “the question of the soul.” In a letter on February 14/15, 1876, Tolstoy wrote to Strakhov about his essay, “On the Soul and Its Life Outside of the Life That is Known and Understood by Us,” in which he hoped to formulate an opposition to materialist philosophy and experimental brain science (the essay remained unfinished and, in Tolstoy’s lifetime, unpublished).<sup>420</sup> In the essay, which he sent to Strakhov, Tolstoy began with criticism of materialists: one of the fundamental missteps of materialism was that the nature of living things could be understood through laws governing the material, non-living realm.<sup>421</sup> To explain the falseness of this claim, Tolstoy turned to the frog, a common example used by Sechenov, both in his famous essay *Reflexes of the Brain* and in his private letters to his wife. As Tolstoy wrote, “by exposing the frog to the touch of a red-hot wire, we will observe the effect

---

<sup>419</sup> [Следовательно, к философии, к тому знанию, которое имеет предметом душу, жизнь, мысль, радость и т. д., научный прием поправления и переопределения тех понятий, из которых состоит наука, неприложим. [...] Философия же по самой своей задаче не может устранить ни одной стороны из тех явлений, которые занимают ее. Самые предметы, которыми занимается философия, – жизнь, душа, воля, разум, не подлежат рассечению, устранению известных сторон. Явления, составляющие предмет наук, суть явления, познаваемые нами посредственно в внешнем мире, явления же, составляющие предмет философии, все познаются нами в внутреннем мире непосредственно, и мы можем наблюдать их из внутреннего мира. (Leo Tolstoy and Nikolaj Strakhov, *Complete Correspondence*, Vol. 1, 233)]

<sup>420</sup> As Tolstoy wrote in this letter, “I am also sending a letter about many things, as you will see—mainly about why there can be no materialistic philosophy and what I recognized as the source of all knowledge.” [Посылаю тоже письмо о многом, как вы увидите, – преимущественно же о том, почему не может быть материалистической философии и что я признаю источником всякого познания. (Leo Tolstoy & Nikolaj Strakhov, *Complete Correspondence*, Vol. 1, 250)]

<sup>421</sup> Paperno notes that Tolstoy’s description of life and death was inspired by Strakhov’s *World as Whole*. “Who, What Am I?”, 42.

that this touch will have on the frog alone, and not on the table on which it sits.”<sup>422</sup> For Tolstoy, the frog was not merely dead material: it acted differently. The novelist extended this argument further, arguing that materialism had nothing to say not only about living things, but specifically about the inner experience of a living being:

Materialism wants to know the soul, the essence of the life of individuals, through experiment. An experiment is undeniable when observing the movements of other animals and myself through the instrument of the senses (sight, hearing). But experiment on the senses, on sensations, cannot be done. An internal experiment is *contradictio in adjecto*. An external experiment convinces by repeating countless times that the sun shines at 2 o'clock. But I look at the sun and it is not shining (eclipse) and the feeling of darkness destroys all data of the experiment. There can be no experiment on internal cognition [*poznavaniia*]. Consequently, sensation is an instrument of cognition that is completely opposite to an experiment. This instrument of cognition is the human soul, it needs to be defined.<sup>423</sup>

While scientists had attempted to experimentally observe the workings of the mind, for Tolstoy, such experiments completely missed the idea of “internal cognition” (that is, the inner psychic activity). In contrast, to know the soul [*uznat' dushu*—and Tolstoy consistently used the word “soul” for psychic activity—this concept “must be defined” [*ego nado opredelit'*].

Further, Tolstoy offered a rudimentary definition of the soul. For him, the “soul” was located at the juncture of two poles, between the external “whole world” and the separate internal “I” [*ia*]: “The question follows: Why does the whole world fall into two parts. One, the whole world, which is accessible to me by experience, and the other, the I, which is accessible to me by sensation. This distinction is the task of defining the soul.”<sup>424</sup> In this sense, the “soul” was not to be understood primarily through the workings of the mind, the will, emotions, or any form of cognition, but a recognition that one is alive as separate from the rest of the world, and not accessible through observation. While psychologists (and materialists) located the workings of the mind in the brain, Tolstoy sought a definition that could not be limited to the workings of the

---

<sup>422</sup> [Подвергая лягушку прикосновению раскаленной проволоки, мы будем наблюдать то влияние, которое произведет это прикосновение на одну только лягушку, а не на стол, на котором она сидит (L. N. Tolstoi, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, Vol. 17, 341)]

<sup>423</sup> [Материализм хочет опытом узнать *душу*, сущность жизни индивидуумов. Опыт несомненен при наблюдении движений других животных и меня самого посредством орудия чувств (зрения, слуха). Но опыта над чувствами ощущением нельзя делать. Внутренний опыт есть *contradictio in adjecto*. Опыт внешний убеждает посредством повторения бесчисленного количества раз того, что солнце светит в 2 часа. Но я смотрю на солнце, оно не светит (затмение) и ощущение темноты разрушает все данные опыта. Для внутреннего познания не может быть опыта. Следовательно, ощущение есть совершенно противоположное опыту орудие познания. Это то орудие познания есть душа человека, его надо определить. (17:350)]

<sup>424</sup> [“Вопрос следующий: Почему весь мир распадается на две части. Одну, – весь мир, – которая доступна мне опытом, а другую, – я, которая доступна мне ощущением. Это разграничение есть задача определения души.” (17:350)]

mind (thinking): “Before all thinking,” Tolstoy wrote, “the first thing we know is that we live.”<sup>425</sup>

Here Tolstoy turned to philosophy, evoking Descartes’s formulation, *cogito ergo sum* (here, translated as “I think, because I live”). He stressed the importance of “I live”: “I don’t know to what extent Descartes’s expression is accurate: I think, therefore I live; but I know, that if I say “I know,” for sure [there is] one thing above all myself: that I live.”<sup>426</sup> For Tolstoy, the understanding of “I think because I live” turned the question of the soul (which included, but was not limited to the workings of the mind, feeling, and the will) as accessible only through lived experience of the “I.” Essentially, this was different not only from the physiological, or materialist, models of the brain but from much of philosophy as well. For Tolstoy, both science and academic philosophy were antithetical to life itself: he saw the soul—understood as the immortal soul—as inaccessible to scientific observation and experimentation, on the one hand, and to philosophical formulations, on the other.<sup>427</sup> For the “I,” the experience of one’s “life” was a key to all wisdom, including the mysteries of the soul.

Tolstoy then returned to a question found in the conversation that Levin overheard at Koznyshev’s when Levin had pointedly asked about the nature of existence after death: “Therefore, if my senses are destroyed, if my body dies, there can be no further existence?” In his essay “On the Soul,” the question of death became a barrier for Tolstoy in his attempts to define the soul, which he saw as exceeding his own bodily limits:

When life is destroyed, then for me, as an observer, there is only one derivation of life, that is, a dead matter, or such a substance whose life I do not understand. I cannot say that everything is destroyed, for there remains: 1) the abstraction of life, matter (the body), another derivation of life—offspring, and a 3rd—traces of the impact on other people. All of this is not united and incomprehensible to me.<sup>428</sup>

Similarly to Levin in *Anna Karenina*, Tolstoy argued that the issue of what happens after death could be answered neither by materialists nor by philosophers. He had stressed that the soul could be understood only by an awareness that one lives—but what about when one dies? While materialists and idealists had focused on the workings of the mind in the living body, for Tolstoy, the definition of the “soul” (here not only as the psychic activity but as “the immortal soul”) appeared to exceed the limitations of his own experience as a living person, making the task of defining the “soul” impossible.

---

<sup>425</sup> L. N. Tolstói, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, Vol. 17, 351.

<sup>426</sup> [Не знаю, в какой степени точно выражение Декарта: я мыслю, потому я живу; но знаю, что, если я скажу, я знаю несомненно одно прежде всего себя: то, что я живу.] (17:351)]

<sup>427</sup> Donna Orwin describes Tolstoy’s resistance to philosophy as part of his “antiphilosophical stance.” See “Tolstoy’s Antiphilosophical Philosophy in *Anna Karenina*,” in *Approaches to Teaching Tolstoy’s Anna Karenina*, eds. Liza Knapp and Amy Mandelker (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2003), 95-103.

<sup>428</sup> [Когда уничтожается жизнь, то для меня как наблюдателя остается одно отвлечение жизни, т. е. мертвое вещество, или такое вещество, жизнь которого я не понимаю. Я не могу сказать, что уничтожается все, ибо остается: 1) отвлечение жизни, вещество (тело), другое отвлечение жизни – потомство, и 3-е – следы воздействия на других людей. Все же это не объединено и непонятно мне. (17:352)]

Upon receiving the essay from Tolstoy, Strakhov wrote (on April 8, 1876) with praise (which he later qualified): Tolstoy's essay was "a new attempt to follow the same path on which Descartes, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, and Schopenhauer walked."<sup>429</sup> These philosophers, like Tolstoy, had "also started from themselves [*iz sebia*], from *Cogito, ergo sum*, from the self [*iz ia*], from the consciousness of will, -- and from there they derived an understanding of the rest of what exists."<sup>430</sup> For Strakhov, the strongest claims centered on the issue of "life," which he copied in his letter directly from Tolstoy's essay: "'First of all I know that I live.:' 'The main question of philosophy is: what is life? what death?'; 'Without solving this question, it is impossible to speak about the dead, not only as the foundation of the living, but in general as something existing';—these formulae of yours are strong and clear."<sup>431</sup>

He then turned attention to Tolstoy's characterizations of materialism, with which he agreed: "the materialist does not know the essence of material, and he is glad of it, he thinks that he has in his hands that same mysterious root of things that we are looking for."<sup>432</sup> While materialists had discovered the "mysterious root of things" (here, one may assume that for Tolstoy the "mysterious root" would mean here the "soul"), such a question could not be located in scientific laws but must begin in understanding the "self" (in Tolstoy's terms, "I," or the "conscious I"):

In the end, it will always turn out that the person from whom we began is the limit to which existence reaches. He is the conscious I; he alone has conscious thinking; he is the best, clearest form of will; he is the most alive thing of all living things. This circle is inevitable. Meanwhile, it is contrary to human nature, contrary to the instinctive concept of knowledge that everyone has.<sup>433</sup>

While conspicuously not using the word "soul" throughout his entire letter, it would seem as

---

<sup>429</sup> [Перечитавши опять и опять Ваше письмо 16-го февраля (как это давно!), я увидел, что кроме небольших обмолвок, должен согласиться со всем. Возражение мое будет состоять не в отрицании отдельных мыслей или самого хода рассуждений, а в том, что этот ход, по моему мнению, не может привести к тому, чего мы с Вами ищем. (*Leo Tolstoy & Nikolaj Strakhov, Complete Correspondence, Vol. 1, 256*)]

<sup>430</sup> [Ваше письмо есть новая попытка пойти по тому же пути, по которому шли Декарт, Фихте, Шеллинг, Гегель, Шопенгауэр. Они точно также начинали из себя, от *Cogito, ergo sum*, от я, от сознания воли, – и отсюда выводили понятие об остальном существующем. Ваше понимание этого же хода мыслей представляет только большую общность и конкретность, – великие достоинства. (*Ibid.*)]

<sup>431</sup> [«Прежде всего я знаю, что я живу»; «главный вопрос философии есть: что такое жизнь? что такое смерть?»; «не решив этого вопроса, нельзя говорить о мертвом, не только как об основании живого, но и вообще как о чем-то существующем»; – эти Ваши формулы удивительно сильны и ясны. (*Ibid.*)]

<sup>432</sup> [Материалист не знает сущность материи, и он этому рад, он думает, что у него в руках тот самый таинственный корень вещей, которого мы ищем. (*Ibid.*)]

<sup>433</sup> [В конце концов всегда окажется, что человек, от которого мы начали, и есть тот предел, до которого доходит сущее. Он есть сознательное я; он один обладает сознательным мышлением; он есть лучшая, яснейшая форма воли; он самое живое из всего живущего. Этот круг неизбежен. Между тем он противен природе человеческой, противен тому инстинктивному понятию о познании, которое есть у каждого. (*Ibid., 257*)]

though Strakhov had begun to follow Tolstoy's understanding of the concept, arguing that the "mysterious root of things"—often so easily described by materialists as originating in scientific laws—required a different search, one that began from within the lived experience of the "conscious mind" and would culminate in a definition of the soul.

And yet Strakhov qualified his praise of Tolstoy's philosophical reflections: "You are trying to contain your views in the formulas of general knowledge. I am certain that the results [...] will be one hundred times more impoverished than [...] your poetic meditations. Consider, for instance, whether I can place the view on life diffused in your [literary works] above what Schopenhauer or Hegel or anyone has to say about life?"<sup>434</sup> And he turned the conversation to *Anna Karenina*.

In the next year, Strakhov wrote to Tolstoy with his intention to write a work on psychology. The issue had occupied his attention with increasing frequency, through his reading of works such as Thomas Reid's *Inquiry into the Human Mind* among others.<sup>435</sup> Strakhov understood psychology in its traditional meaning, "the study of the soul," as he responded to major new developments in psychology, especially works of empirical psychologists from Western Europe such as the Herbart school in Germany and Alexander Bain in England. The work, published in the next year under the title *On the Fundamental Concepts of Psychology (Ob osnovnykh poniatiakh psikhologii)*, returned to the question of the soul along similar lines of Tolstoy's own essay. Like Tolstoy, he argued that materialism (and other empirical psychological methods common in Western Europe) had no role in modeling the workings of the mind. Importantly, Strakhov claimed that such scientists, try as they may, made speculative, unscientific claims that were far from the empirical methods that they strove to uphold.<sup>436</sup> For

---

<sup>434</sup> [Вы пытаетесь [...] привести Ваши взгляды в формулы обыкновенного знания. Я заранее уверен, что результаты, которые Вы получите будут в сто раз беднее содержания Ваших поэтических созерцаний. Посудите, например, могу ли я взгляд на жизнь, разлитый в Ваших произведениях, не ставить бесконечно выше того, что толкует о жизни Шопенгауэр, или Гегель, или кто Вам угодно? (*Ibid.*)]

This turn from philosophy to fiction has been discussed by Irina Paperno in "*Who, What Am I?*", 43.

<sup>435</sup> Tolstoy mentioned Schopenhauer's recommendation of Thomas Reid in the letter: "Maybe you will like what I write about psychology. I was knocked down by the fact that some points, which had been clear to me for a long time, are still shown in such a confused and shaky way. As if on purpose, I had read Th. Reid's *Inquiry Into the Human Mind*—an excellent book, and Schopenhauer also recommends it. It has been a long time since I felt such pleasure as from this book." [Может быть, Вам понравится то, что напишу о психологии. Меня подбило то, что некоторые пункты, давно для меня ясные, до сих пор выставляются так путано и шатко. Как нарочно, я перед этим прочитал *Th. Reid Inquiry into the human mind*, – превосходную книгу – ее рекомендует и Шопенгауэр. Давно уже я не испытывал такого удовольствия, как от этой книги.] *Leo Tolstoy & Nikolaj Strakhov, Complete Correspondence*, Vol. 1, 368.

<sup>436</sup> In the letter, Strakhov describes how such scientists had fallen into the trap of dogmatic, speculative statements in their scientific work: "Such errors are almost the most often encountered and dominate in the so-called empirical sciences. The author, having proclaimed at the beginning that speculation must be completely banished from science, and that every scientific concept and position must be obtained by experiment, according to the strict rules of induction, immediately begins to state his subject completely dogmatically, that is, gives us ready-made terms, divisions, general laws and explanations, without indicating how they were



Strakhov, scientists, in responding to the philosophical question of the soul, veered far from the scientific method, as seen most poignantly in the example of Sechenov's *Reflexes of the Brain*.

To contrast with the physiological observation of the brain, Strakhov offered his own understanding of the "soul" by describing the subjective experience available to himself alone, seen in dreams, impressions, and images:

This dream is my dream; these impressions and images belong to me; these feelings and aspirations in me are accomplished, they exist, inside of me. All of this—it is mine, all forms one sphere, which I usually call my inner world, my psychic states, mental states, sufferings, and actions. This is the realm of my soul. By soul I am here calling not some certain entity, having a certain nature, but simply myself, how much I am the owner of the subjective world I have described. All psychic phenomena, of which I am convinced of their undoubted existence, belong to me; all of them all constitute my belonging in some kind of sense; whatever they all undoubtedly belong to: there will be my soul, my I. Such is the most definite and direct meaning of Descartes's *ego cogito ergo sum*. [...] Psychic, subjective phenomena must before all be considered undeniable; therefore, the undeniable part of my existence is primarily my soul and not my body.<sup>437</sup>

Strakhov's idea here paralleled what Tolstoy had attempted in his earlier essay, where he had linked the soul with the life of the "I." Also like Tolstoy, he turned to Descartes's formulation, *ego cogito ergo sum*, and here, Strakhov translated "*cogito*" not as "I think" but as "soul," possibly an influence from Tolstoy's thinking on the subject in his essay. He also followed

---

obtained." [Подобные ошибки едва-ли не чаще всего встречаются и господствуют в так-называемых эмпирических науках. Автор, провозгласив в начале, что умозрение должно быть совершенно изгнано из науки, и что каждое научное понятие и положение должно быть добываемо путем опыта, по строгим правилам индукции, тот час-же начинает излагать свой предмет совершенно догматически, то-есть, дает нам готовые термины, деления, общие законы и объяснения, не указывая того, как они добыты, и не заботясь нимало о том, чтобы доказать правильность их добывания и невозможность никаких иных результатов. (Nikolai Strakhov, *Ob osnovnykh poniatiiakh psikhologii*," *Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnogo Prosveshcheniia* [May 1878]: 29)]

<sup>437</sup> [Этот сон—мой сон; эти представления и образы—мне принадлежат; эти чувства и стремления во мне совершаются, существуют внутри меня. Все это—мое, все образует одну сферу, которую я обыкновенно называю своим внутренним миром, своими психическими состояниями, страданиями и действиями. Это—область моей души. Душой я называю здесь пока не какое-нибудь определенное существо, имеющее определенную природу, а просто самого себя, на сколько я обладатель дованного мною субъективного мира. Все психические явления, в несомненном существовании которых я убедился, мне принадлежат; все они в каком бы то ни было смысле составляют мою принадлежность; то, чему они все несомненно принадлежат, и будет моя душа, мое я. Вот самый определенный и прямой смысл Декарта *ego cogito ergo sum*. [...] [Н]есомненными нужно прежде всего считать психические, субъективные явления; поэтому и несомненная часть моего существования есть прежде всего моя душа, а не тело. (Nikolai Strakhov, *Ob osnovnykh poniatiiakh psikhologii i fiziologii* [Kiev: Izdanie tret'e, 1904],14)]

Tolstoy's lead by arguing that one can know the soul not through the body (as materialists had argued) but through the experience of the "I" [*ia*].

Tolstoy soon replied to Strakhov with his view of the work on psychology. In a letter of May 29, 1878, Tolstoy extolled Strakhov's foundations of psychology for avoiding what he called the "falsity of the idealists and the realists," as well as defining the soul, "as if by accident."<sup>438</sup> While he agreed with Strakhov's statements about the soul, he was less sure of Strakhov's division of the soul into disparate pieces—"cognition," "feeling," and "will," parts that Tolstoy felt were arbitrary.<sup>439</sup> Nevertheless, Tolstoy felt that Strakhov had proved that philosophy would be insufficient to understand the soul.<sup>440</sup> Despite praising the erudition of Strakhov's study and his agreement on the essay's main arguments, Tolstoy, at the end of his letter, made an appeal to Strakhov to write an account of his *own* life, which was not at all a part of the essay but which Tolstoy saw as central to penetrating the soul: "In this sense, I asked you: 'what do you live by,' and you answered incorrectly, joking about the most important thing, and you said: 'I do not live.'"<sup>441</sup> For Tolstoy, psychology, as the "study of the soul," should begin in the telling of what he lives by, a task that Strakhov had yet to fulfill.<sup>442</sup>

In a later letter, Strakhov attempted to describe his mental state [*dushevnoe sostoianie*] and his soul [*dusha*] by describing how he lives:

Describe your current state of mind [*dushevnoe sostoianie*]. I am inevitably drawn into this state; one can neither expect new strength from oneself, nor even hope for a chance to act in a different and better way. The question is: what do I live by? What do I seek from myself and in what do I suppose is good, without the aspiration for which I would be ashamed to live? It seems to me that it is possible to write a curious sketch, only a very sad one. Yes, this is the reason why it is difficult for me to write memoirs: you need to keep a certain tone, and I will not

---

<sup>438</sup> "You really are only establishing the foundations of psychology, but you are the first to prove—and without polemics, without dispute, the falsity of the idealism of Kant and Schopenhauer and the falsity of materialism. It is not enough that you define the soul, as if by accident, which is the strongest and most convincing method of evidence." [Вы действительно только устанавливаете основания психологии, но вы первый доказываете – и без полемики, без спора, ложность идеализма Канта и Шопенгауера и ложность материализма. Мало этого вы доказываете душу, как будто нечаянно, что есть самый сильный и убедительный прием доказательств. (*Leo Tolstoy & Nikolaj Strakhov, Complete Correspondence, Vol. 1, 446*)]

<sup>439</sup> In the letter, Strakhov noted, "[Y]ou divide the subject into cognition, feeling, and will. For this division, knowledge is needed. And is this division correct? If we admit this division, then a lot will already be derived from it alone." [Вы делите субъект на познание, чувство и волю. Для деления нужно познание. – И верно ли это деление? Если допустить это деление, то из него одного уже будет выведено многое. (*Leo Tolstoy & Nikolaj Strakhov, Complete Correspondence, Vol. 1, 446*.)]

<sup>440</sup> *Leo Tolstoy & Nikolaj Strakhov, Complete Correspondence, Vol. 1, 446-447.*

<sup>441</sup> [В этом-то смысле я спрашивал вас: чем вы живете, – и вы неправильно, шутя о важнейшем, говорите: я не живу. (*Leo Tolstoy & Nikolaj Strakhov, Complete Correspondence, Vol. 1, 447*)]

<sup>442</sup> Paperno describes this letter and Tolstoy's criticism of Strakhov in "*Who, What Am I?*", 51-52.

find the right one. My soul is so shaken that I could write in a solemn, light, comic, or sad tone, but in a simple [tone] I cannot.<sup>443</sup>

Here, Strakhov struggled to find the words and tone to match what he called his inner “mental state” and his “soul” in the context of his lived experience, stating that his “soul” was so “shaken” that he could not find the correct form.

In the end, Strakhov had not yet defined the soul or explained it through his own experience, a difficulty he shared with Tolstoy. In many moments in their correspondence, Strakhov and Tolstoy were in part responding to a discussion about the body and the soul in debates between Sechenov and Kavelin and in many other discussions of the day. Despite Tolstoy’s especially strong distrust of science, it would appear that he had yet to find a definition of the soul that was independent of the discussion by scientists, especially the question of the inner vs. the outer, which, in his turn, Sechenov struggled to define.

The conversations that Strakhov and Tolstoy held in their correspondence have not brought a clear resolution to either the writer or the critic and philosopher. Nevertheless, this conversation provided a roadmap for similar struggles to define the soul that would be found in Tolstoy’s novel. In the end, Tolstoy did turn his attention to (borrowing Strakhov’s formula) the view of life diffused in a literary work. To reiterate, Tolstoy’s understanding of the workings of the human psyche, or human soul, was embodied in the narrative texture of his novel.

#### *The Character’s Soul in Anna Karenina*

As seen in the last section, Tolstoy and his correspondent Strakhov struggled to give a definition to the soul in their personal writings, in their letters and philosophical essays. In the novel, I will argue, the representation of the character’s soul, understood in the context of Tolstoy’s thoughts on the topic, models similar concerns by literary means. While Tolstoy (and Strakhov as well) struggled to give definition to the soul, in the novel, the representation of the soul in the character offered a more complex model than the philosophical debate. Importantly, the question of the soul in the novel departs from the discussion found in the letters and in the debates in the journals: in the novel the concept is explored not only on a thematic level, but in the representation of the character’s consciousness, that is, in the narrative form, offering a new dimension to a problem explored in the language of science, philosophy or psychology.

Early in the novel, in Chapter 10 of Part 1, we find Levin about to meet with Stiva Oblonsky after the ice-skating scene, when Levin intended to propose. Levin, still thinking about his encounter with Kitty, is distracted by memories that “fill all his soul” despite the animated world around him:

---

<sup>443</sup> [Описать свое нынешнее душевное состояние. В это состояние я загнан неизбежно; нельзя ни ждать от себя новых сил, ни даже надеяться на случай действовать в ином и лучшем роде. Спрашивается, чем я живу? Чего от себя добиваюсь и в чем полагаю то хорошее, без стремления к которому мне было бы стыдно жить? Мне представляется, можно написать любопытный этюд, только очень грустный. Да, вот причина, почему мне трудно писать воспоминания: нужно держать известный тон, а я не найду настоящего. Душа у меня так расшатана, что я мог бы написать в торжественном, в светлом, в комическом, в отчаянном—но в простом не сумею. (*Leo Tolstoy & Nikolaj Strakhov, Complete Correspondence, Vol. 1, 473.*)]

As Levin entered the hotel with Oblonsky, he could not help noticing a certain special expression, as if of restrained radiance, on the face and in the whole figure of Stepan Arkadyich. Oblonsky took off his coat and with his hat cocked passed into the restaurant, giving orders to the Tartars in tailcoats who clung to him, napkins over their arms. Bowing right and left to their joyful greetings of acquaintances who turned up there, as everywhere, he went to the bar, followed his glass of vodka with a bit of fish, and said something to the painted Frenchwoman in ribbons, lace and ringlets who was sitting at the counter, so that even this Frenchwoman burst into genuine laughter. Levin did not drink vodka, if only because this Frenchwoman, who seemed to consist entirely of other people's hair, *poudre de riz* and *vinaigre de toilette*, was offensive to him. He hastened to step away from her as from a dirty spot. His whole soul was overflowing with the remembrance of Kitty, and in his eyes shone a smile of triumph and happiness (33).<sup>444</sup>

At the beginning of the scene, the text focuses on Levin's observations of the bodies of others: we see Stiva's expression, the Tartars, a Frenchwoman with "someone else's hair." All the while, at first, there are few details about Levin's inner thoughts, feelings, and memories. This changes when Levin moves away from these distractions, "as if from a dirty place": "His whole soul was overflowing with the memory of Kitty, and a smile of triumph and happiness shone in his eyes." Importantly, it is at this moment that the text appears to shift from Levin's perspective to a view of his eyes. Rather than offering specific detail about his memories, the text presents the character's soul as full of vague recollections. At the very moment that the text describes the soul, we see a switch to a view of his body, in particular his eyes as a window to his soul.

Later in the scene, Levin again attempts to ignore the physical world around him in order to be able to focus on what is transpiring in his soul:

[Stiva] wanted Levin to be cheerful. Yet it was not that Levin was not cheerful: he felt constrained. With what he had in his soul [*dushe*], it was eerie and awkward for him to be in a tavern, next to private rooms where one dined in the company of ladies, amidst this hustle and bustle. These surroundings of bronze, mirrors,

---

<sup>444</sup> [Когда Левин вошел с Облонским в гостиницу, он не мог не заметить некоторой особенности выражения, как бы сдержанного сияния, на лице и во всей фигуре Степана Аркадьича. Облонский снял пальто и со шляпой набекрень прошел в столовую, отдавая приказания липнувшему к нему Татарам во фраках и с салфетками. Кланяясь направо и налево нашедшимся и тут, как везде, радостно встречавшим его знакомым, он подошел к буфету, закусил водку рыбкой, и что-то такое сказал раскрашенной, в ленточках, кружевах и завитушках Француженке, сидевшей за конторкой, что даже эта Француженка искренно засмеялась. Левин же только оттого не выпил водки, что ему оскорбительна была эта Француженка, вся составленная, казалось, из чужих волос, *poudre de riz* и *vinaigre de toilette*. Он, как от грязного места, поспешно отошел от нее. Вся душа его была переполнена воспоминанием о Кити, и в глазах его светилась улыбка торжества и счастья. (18:37)]

gas-lights, Tatars—it was all offensive to him. He was afraid to soil what was overflowing in his soul (35).<sup>445</sup>

In this moment, the appearance of Levin's soul in the text is marked by a feeling of disconnect between the character and the surrounding world, and this feeling emerges automatically, or unconsciously, outside of the character's direct control and as something he fears (“Он боялся запачкать то, что переполняло его душу.”)

In another moment in the scene, Levin's soul becomes visible to Stiva from an exterior point of view, the view of the body. An inner perspective of the self and an outer perspective of the other offer different insight into the soul:

He now repented with all his soul that he had begun this conversation with Stepan Arkadyich. His *special* feeling had been defiled by talk of rivalry with some Petersburg officer, by Stepan Arkadyich's suppositions and advice. Stepan Arkadyich smiled. He understood what was going on in Levin's soul (40).<sup>446</sup>

As before, Levin attempts to preserve the feeling in his soul, despite the distractions in the world around him. Stiva becomes aware of Levin's soul from an exterior perspective, reading in his body what Levin experiences as subtle mental changes. In this first scene, we are given not a total view of Levin's soul, but a continuous shift between the inner and outer perspectives, the perspective of the self and the perspective of the other, where each view offers parts of an emerging model through which to represent the character's soul. Most importantly, the novel does not rely on the character's inner mental life alone in order to give form to the soul in the narrative: here, Stiva's perspective makes Levin's soul transparent for the reader. For Tolstoy, this would closely parallel his own attempt, in his letters, to define the soul as not limited to mental experience alone. Here, the representation of Levin's experiences suggests that, by comparison with the discussion in Tolstoy's correspondence with Strakhov, a more complex situation of the soul, which remained inaccessible to Tolstoy in his philosophical formulations, began to emerge in the novel, one that involved both inner and outer perspective, both inside the “I” and outside of the “I.”

The situation of other characters offers a continuing unfolding of the novel's representation of the soul, based on the interchange of the inner and outer perspective. This is especially seen in the scenes with Kitty in Chapter 12 of Part 1. Kitty's mother recognizes the changes in Kitty's soul at a moment when Kitty herself is unable to articulate her conflicted feelings about Vronsky and Levin: “‘Never, mama, none,’ Kitty answered, blushing and looking straight into her mother's face. ‘But I have nothing to tell now. I...I...even if I wanted to, I don't know what to say or how...I don't know...’ ‘No, she can't tell a lie with such eyes,’ her mother

---

<sup>445</sup> [Ему хотелось, чтобы Левин был весел. Но Левин не то что был не весел, он был стеснен. С тем, что было у него в душе, ему жутко и неловко было в трактире, между кабинетами, где обедали с дамами, среди этой беготни и суетни; эта обстановка бронз, зеркал, газа, татар — всё это было ему оскорбительно. Он боялся запачкать то, что переполняло его душу. (18:39)]

<sup>446</sup> [Теперь он всею душой раскаивался, что начал этот разговор со Степаном Аркадьичем. Его *особенное* чувство было осквернено разговором о конкуренции какого-то петербургского офицера, предположениями и советами Степана Аркадьича. Степан Аркадьич улыбнулся. Он понимал, что делалось в душе Левина. (18:44)]

thought, smiling at her excitement and happiness. The princess was smiling at how immense and significant everything now happening in her soul must seem to the poor dear” (46).<sup>447</sup> Here, at the moment when Kitty is unable to articulate her feelings, her “soul” becomes (like Levin’s to Stiva) transparent to her mother. Yet again, the inner mind appears to offer an incomplete picture of the soul: the novel reaches outside of the character.

In the beginning of the next chapter, we find Kitty alone in her room experiencing several different feelings towards Levin, her heart beating. She looks in the mirror, and what she sees appears to parallel her mother’s exterior perspective: “Going upstairs to dress for the evening and glancing in the mirror, she noticed with joy that she was having one of her good days and was in full possession of her powers, which she needed for what lay ahead of her: she felt in herself an external calm and a free grace of movement.”<sup>448</sup> Later in Chapter 15 of Part 1, the feelings in Kitty’s soul are described in more explicit terms. In bed on a pillow [*podushka*, similar in sound to the word soul, *dusha*], Kitty remembers Levin’s face, and the text turns to the conflicted impressions “in her soul,” similar to those she experienced in front of the mirror:

When the evening was over, Kitty told her mother about her conversation with Levin, and, despite all the pity she felt for Levin, she was glad at the thought that she had been *proposed* to. She had no doubt that she had acted rightly. But when she went to bed, she could not fall asleep for a long time. One impression pursued her relentlessly. It was Levin’s face with its scowling eyebrows and his kind eyes looking out from under them with gloomy sullenness, as he stood listening to her father and glancing at her and Vronsky. And she felt such pity for him that tears came to her eyes. But she immediately thought of the one she had exchanged him for. She vividly recalled that manly, firm face, the noble calm and the kindness towards all that shone in him; she recalled the love for her and of the ones she loved, and again she felt joy in her soul [*ei opiat’ stalo radostno na dushe*] and with a smile of happiness she lay back on the pillow [*legla na podushku*]. “It’s a pity, a pity, but what to do? It’s not my fault [*Zhalko, zhalko, no chto zhe delat? Ia ne vinovata*]” she kept saying to herself; yet her inner voice was saying something else [*govorila ona sebe; no vnutrennii golos govoril ei drugoe*]. Whether she repented of having led Levin on, or of having rejected him, she did not know. But her happiness was poisoned by doubts. “Lord have mercy, Lord

---

<sup>447</sup> [Никогда, мама, никакой, — отвечала Кити, покраснев и взглянув прямо в лицо матери. — Но мне нечего говорить теперь. Я... я... если бы хотела, я не знаю, что сказать как... я не знаю... » «Нет, неправду не может она сказать с этими глазами», подумала мать, улыбаясь на ее волнение и счастье. Княгиня улыбалась тому, как огромно и значительно кажется ей, бедняжке, то, что происходит теперь в ее душе. Княгиня улыбалась тому, как огромно и значительно кажется ей, бедняжке, то, что происходит теперь в ее душе. (18:50)]

<sup>448</sup> *Ibid.*, 47. [Взойдя наверх одеться для вечера и взглянув в зеркало, она с радостью заметила, что она в одном из своих хороших дней и в полном обладании всеми своими силами, а это ей так нужно было для предстоящего: она чувствовала в себе внешнюю тишину и свободную грацию движений. (18:51)] Amy Mandelker has described similar moments of the character’s vision *Anna Karenina* in the context of Anna in “Illustrate and Condemn: The Phenomenology of Vision in *Anna Karenina*,” *Tolstoy Studies Journal* 8 (1995-1996): 46-60.

have mercy, Lord have mercy!” she kept saying to herself till she fell asleep (54-55).<sup>449</sup>

In this moment, the pillow [*podushka*] appears as an exterior manifestation of the character’s soul [*dusha*], marking a moment of internal conflict similar to her feelings earlier in the scene at the mirror. The pillow, an exterior object, offers a physical manifestation of the split between her conscious thoughts and the independent workings of her soul, seen at first from the perspective of the mother (and similar to when Stiva sees Levin’s soul). Moreover, what emerges in the text is a sound motif: the word soul [*dusha*] is embodied in the text, seen here in the word pillow [*podushka*]. Thus, language works not only through the concept (the word *dusha* is repeated several times), but also through the sound of “d” and “sh.” A split appears to emerge between Kitty’s soul and her conscious thoughts and feelings, resolved only with her repetition of the phrase “Lord have mercy.” (This split can also be seen in the previous scene, with the apparent disconnect between Kitty’s thoughts and the feeling of joy she sees in her body reflected in the mirror.)

The pillow makes appearances in the novel in several other moments of inner mental discord in the character, so that the repetition of “d” and “sh” works as a sound motif evoking the word soul [*dusha*].<sup>450</sup> In a pivotal scene in Chapter 29 of Part 1, when Anna sits in the train car intensely contemplating her nascent feeling for Vronsky, she takes out a small pillow [*podushechka*], putting it on her lap: “Still in the same preoccupied mood [*dukhe*] that she had been in all day, Anna settled herself with pleasure and precision for the journey; with her small, deft hands she unclasped her little red bag [*zaperla krasnyi meshochek*], took out a small pillow [*podushechka*], put it on her knees, reclasped the bag, and, after neatly covering her legs, calmly

---

<sup>449</sup> [Когда вечер кончился, Кити рассказала матери о разговоре ее с Левиным, и, несмотря на всю жалость, которую она испытала к Левину, ее радовала мысль, что ей было сделано предложение. У нее не было сомнения, что она поступила как следовало. Но в постели она долго не могла заснуть. Одно впечатление неотступно преследовало ее. Это было лицо Левина с насупленными бровями и мрачно-уныло смотрящими из-под них добрыми глазами, как он стоял, слушая отца и взглядывая на нее и на Вронского. И ей так жалко стало его, что слезы навернулись на глаза. Но тотчас же она подумала о том, на кого она променяла его. Она живо вспомнила это мужественное, твердое лицо, это благородное спокойствие и светящуюся во всем доброту ко всем; вспомнила любовь к себе того, кого она любила, и ей опять стало радостно на душе, и она с улыбкой счастья легла на подушку. «Жалко, жалко, но что же делать? Я не виновата», говорила она себе; но внутренний голос говорил ей другое. В том ли она раскаивалась, что завлекла Левина, или в том, что отказала, — она не знала. Но счастье ее было отравлено сомнениями. «Господи помилуй, Господи помилуй, Господи помилуй!», говорила она про себя, пока заснула. (18:59)]

<sup>450</sup> In the opening scene of the novel, Stiva rests his head on a pillow and contemplates his complicated position toward Dolly, who caught him in adultery. In another moment, there is Levin’s brother’s head propped up on a pillow (and Kitty, who is present in this scene, thinks about this pillow). Later in the novel, Kitty, thinking of her icon, does so resting her head on yet another pillow.

leaned back” (99).<sup>451</sup> As she reads, with the pillow in her lap, she begins to feel ashamed of her own feelings towards Vronsky, and the feeling of shame emerges from within:

The hero of the novel was already beginning to achieve his English happiness, a baronetcy and an estate, and Anna wished to go with him to this estate, when suddenly she felt that she must be ashamed and that she was ashamed of the same thing. But what was she ashamed of? “What am I ashamed of?” she asked herself in offended astonishment. She put down the book and leaned back in the seat, clutching the paper-knife [*razreznoi nozhik*] tightly in both hands. There was nothing shameful. She went through all her Moscow memories. They were all good, pleasant. She remembered the ball, remembered Vronsky and his enamored, obedient face, remembered all her relations with him: nothing was shameful. But just there, at that very place in her memories, the feeling of shame became more intense, as if precisely then, when she remembered Vronsky, some inner voice were telling her: “Warm, very warm, hot!” “Well, what then?” she said resolutely to herself, shifting her position in the seat. “What does it mean? Am I afraid to look at it directly? Well, what of it?” [...] She felt her nerves tighten more and more, like strings on winding pegs. She felt her eyes open wider and wider, her fingers and toes move nervously; something inside her stopped her breath, and all images and sounds in that wavering semi-darkness impressed themselves on her with extraordinary vividness. She kept having moments of doubt whether the carriage was moving forwards or backwards, or standing still. Was that Annushka beside her, or some stranger? “What is that on the armrest—a fur coat [*shuba*] or some animal? And what am I? Myself or someone else? [*I chto sama ia tut? Ia sama ili drugaia?*]” (100-101).<sup>452</sup>

---

<sup>451</sup> [Всё в том же духе озабоченности, в котором она находилась весь этот день, Анна с удовольствием и отчетливостью устроилась в дорогу; своими маленькими ловкими руками она отперла и заперла красный мешочек, достала подушечку, положила себе на колени и, аккуратно закутав ноги, спокойно уселась. (18:106)]

<sup>452</sup> [Герой романа уже начал достигать своего английского счастья, баронетства и имения, и Анна желала с ним вместе ехать в это имение, как вдруг она почувствовала, что ему должно быть стыдно и что ей стыдно этого самого. Но чего же ему стыдно? «Чего же мне стыдно?» спросила она себя с оскорбленным удивлением. Она оставила книгу и откинулась на спинку кресла, крепко сжав в обеих руках разрезной ножик. Стыдного ничего не было. Она перебрала все свои московские воспоминания. Все были хорошие, приятные. Вспомнила бал, вспомнила Вронского и его влюбленное покорное лицо, вспомнила все свои отношения с ним: ничего не было стыдного. А вместе с тем на этом самом месте воспоминаний чувство стыда усиливалось, как будто какой-то внутренний голос именно тут, когда она вспомнила о Вронском, говорил ей: «тепло, очень тепло, горячо». «Ну что же?—сказала она себе решительно, пересаживаясь в кресле.—Что же это значит? Разве я боюсь взглянуть прямо на это? Ну что же?» [...] Она чувствовала, что глаза ее раскрываются больше и больше, что пальцы на руках и ногах нервно движутся, что внутри что-то давит дыханье и что все образы и звуки в этом колеблющемся полумраке с необычайною яркостью поражают ее. На нее беспрестанно находили минуты сомнения, вперед ли едет вагон, или назад, или вовсе стоит. Аннушка ли подле нее или



As before, the pillow marks a moment when the character becomes aware of the changes in their mind. In this scene, this is visible in the involuntary emergence of the feeling of shame: is the soul responsible for these thoughts? While here the word “soul” does not appear as it does in the other scenes, we may wonder whether these spontaneous feelings may have something to do with the soul, or with Anna’s inability to see her soul—despite its latent appearance as a small pillow [*podushechka*] on her lap.

Other characters struggle with accessing not only their own soul, but the soul of others. This is seen especially in Chapter 8 of Part 2 of the novel, at the moment when Karenin (looking at objects in Anna’s boudoir) attempts to penetrate her thoughts and feelings:

Here, looking at her desk with the malachite blotter and an unfinished letter lying on it, his thoughts suddenly changed. He began thinking about her, about what she thought and felt. For the first time he vividly pictured to himself her personal life, her thoughts, her wishes, and the thought that she could and should have her own particular life seemed so frightening [*strashno*] to him that he hastened to drive it away. It was that bottomless deep into which it was frightening to look. To put himself in thought and feeling into another being was a mental act [*dushevnoe deistvie*] alien to Alexei Alexandrovich. He regarded this mental act [*dushevnoe deistvie*] as harmful and dangerous fantasizing. [...] “Questions of her feelings, about what has been or might be going on in her soul, are none of my business; they are the business of her conscience and belong to religion,” he said to himself, feeling relieved at the awareness that he had found the legitimate category to which the arisen circumstance belonged (143-144).<sup>453</sup>

In the absence of Anna, looking at her desk, Karenin at first attempts to penetrate the workings of her mind and her feelings. In a moment of his own inner conflict, Karenin slips into envisioning Anna’s inner life, almost involuntarily: “[H]is thought suddenly changed...for the first time he vividly imagined her personal life, her thoughts, her desires, and the thought that she could and should have her own special life.” He rejects this attempt: in the next moment, he sees the soul of another as not for him to assess but rather “subject to religion.” Here, Tolstoy may have disagreed with Karenin in his refusal to contemplate the feelings of the other. For Tolstoy,

---

чужая? «Что там, на ручке, шуба ли это или зверь? И что сама я тут? Я сама или другая?» (18:107)]

<sup>453</sup> [Тут, глядя на ее стол с лежащим наверху малахитовым бюваром и начатою запиской, мысли его вдруг изменились. Он стал думать о ней, о том, что она думает и чувствует. Он впервые живо представил себе ее личную жизнь, ее мысли, ее желания, и мысль, что у нее может и должна быть своя особенная жизнь, показалась ему так страшна, что он поспешил отогнать ее. Это была та пучина, куда ему страшно было заглянуть. Переноситься мыслью и чувством в другое существо было душевное действие, чуждое Алексею Александровичу. Он считал это душевное действие вредным и опасным фантазерством. [...] "Вопросы о ее чувствах, о том, что делалось и может делаться в ее душе, это не мое дело, это дело ее совести и подлежит религии", – сказал он себе, чувствуя облегчение при сознании, что найден тот пункт узаконений, которому подлежало возникшее обстоятельство. (18:152)]

seeing another's soul was as important as seeing one's own soul. For both, he relied not on psychology, but on literature. The novel shows the characters engage in introspection and observe the other. The novel also externalizes the inner feelings, projecting them onto surfaces, from mirrors and desks to pillows. In this way the novel teaches the readers how to read their own soul and the soul of the other.

Karenin's refusal to see Anna's soul is echoed in her own attempt and failure to do so for herself a few chapters later, in Chapter 11 of Part 2:

She felt that at that moment she could not put into words her feeling of shame, joy, and horror before this entry into a new life, and she did not want to speak of it, to trivialize this feeling with imprecise words. But later, too, the next day and the day after that, she found not only no words in which she could express all the complexity of these feelings, but was unable even to find thoughts in which she could reflect with herself on all that was in her soul [*v ee dushe*]. She kept telling herself: "No, I can't think about it now; later, when I'm more calm." But this calm for reflection never came; each time the thought occurred to her of what she had done, of what would become of her and what she ought to do, horror came over her, and she drove these thoughts away (150).<sup>454</sup>

From both an exterior perspective (Karenin's) and an interior one (Anna's), Anna's soul appears at this moment to be out of reach.

Karenin's situation in a later scene (Chapter 17 of Part 4) seems to suggest a solution to the predicament in which he found himself earlier (in Anna's boudoir). In the later scene, after childbirth, Karenin sits at the bedside of desperately ill Anna, and the text turns to his "mental disturbance" [*dushevnoe rasstroistvo*]. In this case, Karenin attempts to see not another's soul but rather his own. He comes to the realization that what he feels is not a disturbance, but rather the "blissful state of the soul" [*blazhennoe sostoianie dushi*]:

Alexei Alexandrovich's inner disturbance [*dushevnoe rasstroistvo*] kept growing and now reached [*doshlo*] such a degree that he ceased to struggle with it; he suddenly felt that what he had considered an inner disturbance was, on the contrary, a blissful state of soul [*dushi*], which suddenly gave him [*davshee emu*] a new, previously unknown happiness. He was not thinking that the Christian law which he had wanted to follow all his life prescribed that he forgive and love his enemies; but that joyful feeling of love and forgiveness of his enemies filled his

---

<sup>454</sup> *Ibid.*, 150. [– Ни слова больше, – повторила она, и с странным для него выражением холодного отчаяния на лице она рассталась с ним. Она чувствовала, что в эту минуту не могла выразить словами того чувства стыда, радости и ужаса перед этим вступлением в новую жизнь и не хотела говорить об этом, опошлять это чувство неточными словами. Но и после, и на другой и на третий день, она не только не нашла слов, которыми бы она могла выразить всю сложность этих чувств, но не находила и мыслей, которыми бы она сама с собой могла обдумать все, что было в ее душе. Она говорила себе: « Нет, теперь я не могу об этом думать; после, когда я буду спокойнее ». Но это спокойствие для мыслей никогда не наступало; каждый раз, как являлась ей мысль о том, что она сделала, и что с ней будет, и что она должна сделать, на нее находил ужас, и она отгоняла от себя эти мысли. (18:158)]

soul [*ego dushi*]. He knelt down and, placing his head on the crook of her arm, which burned him like fire through her jacket, sobbed like a child. She embraced his balding head, moved closer to him, and raised her eyes with defiant pride. “Here he is, I knew it! Now good-bye all, good-bye... Again they’ve come, why don’t they go away?... And do take these fur coats off me! [*Da snimite zhe s menia eti shuby!*]” The doctor took her arms away, carefully laid her back on the pillow [*na podushku*] and covered her shoulders. She lay back obediently and gazed straight ahead of her with radiant eyes (413).<sup>455</sup>

Here, the change in his soul, which brings forgiveness, appears as an involuntary act: he wholeheartedly forgives both Anna and Vronsky. At this moment, the text switches to an exterior view, showing Karenin from Anna’s point of view: “Here he is, I knew” [*Vot on, ia znala*]. Anna, resting her head on a pillow [*na podushku*], “sees” Karenin at the very moment that he becomes aware of the “blissful state of [his] soul.” (Yet again, we see here the image of a pillow [*podushka*] and the sound motif that embodies the word soul [*dusha*], carried in the words “*podushka*,” “*dushevnoe*,” “*doshlo*,” “*shuby*.”) Moreover, Anna “sees” the inner changes in Karenin while looking at his body (in a similar way, the body offered a way into the soul of Levin and Kitty).

After this scene, the reader finds Vronsky also caught in inner mental struggle over his affair with Anna and his position in relation to Karenin, in the famous scene of Vronsky’s attempted suicide in Chapter 18 of Part 4. Before the attempt on his life, the narrative describes a series of involuntary thoughts, memories, and sensations associated with his moral indecision. At the climax of this intense mental experience, when he feels he may be about to lose his mind (his “*dushevnoe rasstroistvo*”), Vronsky sees a pillow (a gift from his sister Varya), and it offers him a brief respite:

“What is this? Or am I losing my mind?” he said to himself. “Maybe so. Why else do people lose their minds, why else do they shoot themselves?” he answered himself and, opening his eyes, was surprised to see an embroidered pillow [*shituiu podushku*] by his head, made by Varya, his brother’s wife. He touched the pillow’s tassel [*kist’ podushki*] and tried to recall Varya and when he had seen her last. But to think of something extraneous was painful. “No, I must sleep!” He moved the pillow and pressed his head to it [*podvinul podushku i prizhalsia k nei golovoi*], but he had to make an effort to keep his eyes closed. He sat up abruptly.

---

<sup>455</sup> [Душевное расстройство Алексея Александровича все усиливалось и дошло теперь до такой степени, что он уже перестал бороться с ним; он вдруг почувствовал, что то, что он считал душевным расстройством, было, напротив, блаженное состояние души, давшее ему вдруг новое, никогда не испытанное им счастье. Он не думал, что тот христианский закон, которому он всю жизнь свою хотел следовать, предписывал ему прощать и любить своих врагов; но радостное чувство любви и прощения к врагам наполняло его душу. Он стоял на коленях и, положив голову на стиб ее руки, которая жгла его огнем через кофту, рыдал, как ребенок. Она обняла его плешивеющую голову, подвинулась к нему и с вызывающею гордостью подняла кверху глаза. – Вот он, я знала! Теперь прощайте все, прощайте!.. Опять они пришли, отчего они не выходят?.. Да снимите же с меня эти шубы! Доктор отнял ее руки, осторожно положил ее на подушку и накрыл с плечами. Он а покорно легла навзничь и смотрела пред собой сияющим взглядом. (18:434)]

“That is finished for me,” he said to himself. “I must think what to do. What’s left?” His thought quickly ran through his life apart from his love for Anna (417).<sup>456</sup>

At this critical moment, it is not Vronsky’s inner mind that will offer him a potential escape from his moral predicament, but rather an exterior object of sentimental value, the pillow (*podushka*) hinting at the soul [*dusha*] in its sound structure but also as the place where he lays his head with thoughts and dreams. This external object appears to underscore that the inner mind would not provide an answer to Vronsky’s moral dilemma, which extends beyond the limits of his own body and mind. (Furthermore, such externalization of the idea of the soul suggests that the soul may exist even if the character is unaware of its presence.) Importantly, in a novel known for the representation of the inner lives of its characters, it is precisely their inner mental life that provides no solution to crucial moral questions: a solution lies apart from their bodies and minds.

Later in the novel, a special situation of the soul can be found in the interactions between Levin and Kitty, in both the marriage ceremony and the birth scene. In Part 5, Chapter 4, the wedding scene, the narrative first shows Levin’s inner perspective when he observes Kitty’s face during the wedding ceremony. Here, as the character, Levin, misreads the soul of his Kitty, the text takes over to describe the feeling that is “taking place in her [Kitty’s] soul”:

And by the look in those eyes he concluded that she understood it as he did. But that was not so; she had almost no understanding of the words of the service and did not even listen during the betrothal. She was unable to hear [*slushat’*] and understand them: so strong was the one feeling that filled her soul [*ee dushu*] and was growing stronger and stronger. That feeling was the joy of the complete fulfilment of that which had already been accomplished in her soul [*v ee dushe*] a month and a half ago and throughout all those six weeks had caused her joy and torment. On that day when, in her brown dress, in the reception room of their house on the Arbat, she had silently gone up to him and given herself to him—in her soul [*v dushe ee*] on that day and hour there was accomplished a total break with her entire former life, and there began a completely different, new life, totally unknown to her, while in reality the old one had gone on. Those six weeks had been a most blissful and tormenting time for her. All her life, all her desires and hopes were concentrated on this one man, still incomprehensible to her, with whom she was united by some feeling still more incomprehensible than the man himself, now drawing her to him, now repulsing her, and all the while she went on living in the circumstances of the former life. Living her old life, she was horrified at herself, at her total, insuperable indifference [*ravnodushie*] to her

---

<sup>456</sup> ["Что это? или я с ума схожу? – сказал он себе. – Может быть. Отчего же и сходят с ума, отчего же и стреляются?" – ответил он сам себе и, открыв глаза, с удивлением увидел подле своей головы шитую подушку работы Вари, жены брата. Он потрогал кисть подушки и попытался вспомнить о Варе, о том, когда он видел ее последний раз. Но думать о чем-нибудь постороннем было мучительно. "Нет, надо заснуть!" Он подвинул подушку и прижался к ней головой, но надо было делать усилие, чтобы держать глаза закрытыми. Он вскочил и сел. "Это кончено для меня, – сказал он себе. – Надо обдумать, что делать. Что осталось?" Мысль его быстро обежала жизнь вне его любви к Анне. (18:438-439)]

entire past: to things, to habits, to people who had loved and still loved her, to her mother, who was upset by this indifference [*ravnodushiem*], to her dear, tender father, whom she had once loved more than anyone in the world. First she would be horrified at this indifference [*ravnodushie*], then she would rejoice over what had brought her to this indifference [*ravnodushiiu*]. She could neither think nor desire anything outside her life with this man; but this new life had not begun yet, and she could not even picture it clearly to herself. There was nothing but expectation—the fear and joy of the new and unknown. And now the expectation, and the unknownness, and remorse at the renouncing of her former life—all this was about to end, and the new was to begin. This new could not help being frightening [*strashno*]; but frightening [*strashno*] or not, it had already been accomplished six weeks earlier in her soul [*v ee dushe*]; now was merely the sanctifying of what had long ago been performed in her soul [*v ee dushe*] (452).<sup>457</sup>

In a passage that shifts from Levin’s external perspective to Kitty’s internal experience, the narrative describes Kitty’s mental state—or, rather, that of her soul—at the wedding ceremony. Here, the soul, out of voluntary control, emerges from within the character. Perhaps most distinctive in this description is the lack of details about Kitty’s conscious thoughts, which are replaced with the direct penetration of the narrative, in the third person, into the character’s soul. While Kitty is “unable to listen and understand” what happens around her in the external world, her feelings transpire “in her soul.” While we may expect to have access to Kitty’s thoughts, we

---

<sup>457</sup> [И по выражению этого взгляда он заключил, что она понимала то же, что и он. Но это было неправда; она совсем почти не понимала слов службы и даже не слушала их во время обручения. Она не могла слушать и понимать их: так сильно было одно то чувство, которое наполняло ее душу и все более и более усиливалось. Чувство это была радость полного совершения того, что уже полтора месяца совершилось в ее душе и что в продолжение всех этих шести недель радовало и мучало ее. В душе ее в тот день, как она в своем коричневом платье в зале арбатского дома подошла к нему молча и отдалась ему, – в душе ее в этот день и час совершился полный разрыв со всею прежнею жизнью, и началась совершенно другая, новая, совершенно неизвестная ей жизнь, в действительности же продолжалась старая. Эти шесть недель были самое блаженное и самое мучительное для нее время. Вся жизнь ее, все желания, надежды были сосредоточены на одном этом непонятном еще для нее человеке, с которым связывало ее какое-то еще более непонятное, чем сам человек, то сближающее, то отталкивающее чувство, а вместе с тем она продолжала жить в условиях прежней жизни. Живя старою жизнью, она ужасалась на себя, на свое полное непреодолимое равнодушие ко всему своему прошедшему: к вещам, к привычкам, к людям, любившим и любящим ее, к огорченной этим равнодушием матери, к милому, прежде больше всего на свете любимому нежному отцу. То она ужасалась на это равнодушие, то радовалась тому, что привело ее к этому равнодушию. Ни думать, ни желать она ничего не могла вне жизни с этим человеком; но этой новой жизни еще не было, и она не могла себе даже представить ее ясно. Было одно ожидание – страх и радость нового и неизвестного. И теперь вот-вот ожидание, и неизвестность, и раскаяние в отречении от прежней жизни – все кончится, и начнется новое. Это новое не могло быть не страшно по своей неизвестности; но страшно или не страшно – оно уже совершилось еще шесть недель тому назад в ее душе; теперь же только освящалось то, что давно уже сделалось в ее душе. (19:19-20)]

see instead the involuntary acts of the soul (the phrase “in her soul” is repeated six times, occasionally with the reflexive verbs “*sdelat'sia*” and “*sovershit'sia*.”) What is more, as in other moments in the novel, the text encodes the word “soul” (*dusha*) in the sounds “d” and “sh” repeated throughout, in the words “*ravnodushie*” (indifference), “*strashno*” (frightening) and others.

I would argue that in this moment, Tolstoy’s novel represents the soul as working independently of the character’s will and awareness, and the workings of the soul are linked to the outside world by the text itself, communicating her condition through its description as well as through its sound motif that carries the word *dusha* (soul) as encoded in the sounds (rather than concepts) of language. Moreover, in this case, the soul seems to be entirely separate from Kitty’s conscious thinking, which is altogether excluded from the text.

A similar moment occurs at another critical scene involving Kitty and Levin in Chapter 13 of Part 7, when Kitty gives birth. In this moment, Levin, unaware of himself, observes Kitty’s soul from an external perspective as he observes her body:

He hastily jumped out of bed, unaware of himself and not taking his eyes off her, put on his dressing gown, and stood there, still looking at her. He had to go, but he could not tear himself from her eyes. Not that he did not love her face and know her expression, her gaze, but he had never seen her like that. When he remembered how upset she had been yesterday, how vile and horrible he appeared to himself before her as she was now! Her flushed face, surrounded by soft hair coming from under her night-cap, shone with joy and resolution. However little unnaturalness and conventionality there was in Kitty’s character generally, Levin was still struck by what was uncovered to him now, when all the veils were suddenly taken away and the very core of her soul [*ee dushi*] shone in her eyes. And in that simplicity and nakedness she, the very one he loved, was still more visible. She looked at him and smiled; but suddenly her eyebrows twitched, she raised her head and, quickly going up to him, took his hand and pressed all of herself to him, so that he could feel her hot breath on him. She was suffering and seemed to be complaining to him of her suffering. [...] She suffered, complained and yet triumphed in these sufferings, and rejoiced in them, and loved them. He saw that something beautiful was being accomplished [*sovershalos'*] in her soul [*v dushe ee*], but what—he could not understand. It was above [*vyshe*] his understanding (707-708).<sup>458</sup>

---

<sup>458</sup> [Он поспешно вскочил, не чувствуя себя и не спуская с нее глаз, надел халат и остановился, все глядя на нее. Надо было идти, но он не мог оторваться от ее взгляда. Он ли не любил ее лица, не знал ее выражения, ее взгляда, но он никогда не видал ее такою. Как гадок и ужасен он представлялся себе, вспомнив вчерашнее огорчение ее, пред нею, какую она была теперь! Зарумянившееся лицо ее, окруженное выбившимися из-под ночного чепчика мягкими волосами, сияло радостью и решимостью. Как ни мало было неестественности и условности в общем характере Кити, Левин был все-таки поражен тем, что обнажалось теперь пред ним, когда вдруг все покровы были сняты и самое ядро ее души светилось в ее глазах. И в этой простоте и обнаженности она, та самая, которую он любил, была еще виднее. Она, улыбаясь, смотрела на него; но вдруг брови ее дрогнули, она подняла голову и, быстро подойдя к нему, взяла его за руку и вся прижалась к нему, обдавая его своим горячим дыханием. Она страдала и как будто жаловалась ему на свои

As in earlier moments, when Levin observes Kitty, the precise nature and the source of his understanding of the transformation in her soul is offered in vague terms: “Он видел, что в душе ее совершалось что-то прекрасное, но что?—он не мог понять.” As an echo from the scene from the beginning of the novel (“самое ядро ее души, светила в ее глазах”), he sees her soul reflected in her eyes. As in other scenes, the body appears to offer a vision of a soul but without a clear sense of how the character gains this understanding, as though the soul offers a transparent vision into the life of another that exceeds conscious understanding. Importantly, we are not given a totalizing vision of the soul, but rather an outline visible through the mind and body of the character as seen by another character, while neither is able to offer a full understanding.

In this light, one more moment in the novel deserves our attention, the famous scene of Levin’s conversion in his interaction with the peasants in Part 8, Chapters 11 and 12. In these scenes, Levin’s conversation with the peasant sparks his own thinking about the soul.

Levin’s participation in the harvest in Chapter 11 brings about in his mind a question that he shares with Tolstoy. “That whole day, talking with the steward and the muzhiks, and at home talking with his wife, with Dolly, with her children, with his father-in-law, Levin thought about the one and only thing that occupied him during this time, apart from farm cares, and sought in everything a link to his questions: ‘What am I? And where am I? And why am I here?’”<sup>459</sup> When inquiring about the struggles of peasants, he encounters a peasant who extols the virtues of another (while he is identified here by his patronymic, Fokanych, this peasant’s first name is Platon), who treats others well because above all he “lives for the soul”:

“Well, that’s how it is—people are different. One man just lives for his own needs, take Mityukha even, just stuffs his belly, but Fokanych—he’s an upright old man. He lives for the soul. He remembers God.” “How’s that? Remembers God? Lives for the soul?” Levin almost shouted. “Everybody knows how—by the truth, by God’s way. People are different. Now, take you even, you wouldn’t offend anybody either...” “Yes, yes, goodbye!” said Levin, breathless with excitement, and, turning, took his stick and quickly walked off towards home. A new, joyful feeling came over him. At the muzhik’s words about Fokanych living for the soul [*dlia dushi*], by the truth, by God’s way, it was as if a host of vague but important thoughts burst from some locked-up place and, all rushing towards the same goal, whirled through his head [*v ego golove*], blinding him with their light (794).<sup>460</sup>

---

страдания. [...] Она страдала, жаловалась, и торжествовала этими страданиями, и радовалась ими, и любила их. Он видел, что в душе ее совершалось что-то прекрасное, но что? -- он не мог понять. Это было выше его понимания. (19:285-286)]

<sup>459</sup> [Целый день этот Левин, разговаривая с приказчиком и мужиками и дома разговаривая с женою, с Долли, с детьми ее, с тестем, думал об одном и одном, что занимало его в это время помимо хозяйственных забот, и во всем искал отношения к своему вопросу: «что же я такое? и где я? и зачем я здесь?» (19:374)]

<sup>460</sup> [— Да так, значит — люди разные; один человек только для нужды своей живет, хоть бы Митюха, только брюхо набивает, а Фоканыч — правдивый старик. Он для души живет. Бога помнит. — Как Бога помнит? Как для души живет? — почти вскрикнул Левин.— Известно как, по правде, по Божью. Ведь люди разные. Вот хоть вас взять, тоже не

The sudden effect of the peasant's words on Levin may recall for readers other moments in the novel where the character is influenced by the soul, here seen with the thoughts "whirling in his head." Moreover, for Levin, in order to gain knowledge of the soul, one would have to learn the example of another: the question of the soul cannot be resolved by oneself alone.

In the next chapter, Levin further considers what the peasant said to him about the soul: walking along the road, he listened not to his "thoughts" but to the state of his soul. Importantly, it is in the context of meeting the peasant that Levin becomes aware of the state in his soul that had all along been present:

Levin went in big strides along the main road [*Levin shel bol'shimi shagami po bol'shoi doroge*], listening [*prislushivaia*] not so much to his thoughts (he still could not sort them out) as to the state of his soul [*k dushevnomu sostoiianiu*], which he had never experienced before. The words spoken by the muzhik had the effect of an electric spark in his soul [*v ego dushe*], suddenly transforming and uniting into one the whole swarm of disjointed, impotent, separate thoughts which had never ceased to occupy him. These thoughts, imperceptibly to himself, had occupied him all the while he had been talking about leasing the land. He felt something new in his soul and delightedly probed this new thing, not yet ever knowing what it was. "To live not for one's own needs but for God. For what God? For God. And could anything more meaningless be said than what he said? He said one should not live for one's needs—that is, one should not live for what we understand, for what we're drawn to, for what we want—but for something incomprehensible, for God, whom no one can either comprehend or define. And what then? Didn't I understand those meaningless words of Fyodor's? And having understood, did I doubt their rightness? Did I find them stupid, vague, imprecise?" (794-795).<sup>461</sup>

---

обидите человека...— Да, да, прощай! — проговорил Левин, задыхаясь от волнения и, повернувшись, взял свою палку и быстро пошел прочь к дому. При словах мужика о том, что Фоканыч живет для души, по правде, по-Божью, неясные, но значительные мысли толпою как будто вырвались откуда-то иззаперти и, все стремясь к одной цели, закружились в его голове, ослепляя его своим светом. (19:376)]

<sup>461</sup> [Левин шел большими шагами по большой дороге, прислушиваясь не столько к своим мыслям (он не мог еще разобрать их), сколько к душевному состоянию, прежде никогда им не испытанному. Слова, сказанные мужиком, произвели в его душе действие электрической искры, вдруг преобразившей и сплотившей в одно целый рой разрозненных, бессильных отдельных мыслей, никогда не перестававших занимать его. Мысли эти незаметно для него самого занимали его и в то время, когда он говорил об отдаче земли. Он чувствовал в своей душе что-то новое и с наслаждением ощупывал это новое, не зная еще, что это такое. «Не для нужд своих жить, а для Бога. Для какого Бога? И что можно сказать бессмысленнее того, что он сказал? Он сказал, что не надо жить для своих нужд, то есть что не надо жить для того, что мы понимаем, к чему нас влечет, чего нам хочется, а надо жить для чего-то непонятного, для Бога, которого никто ни понять, ни определить не может. И что же? Я не понял этих бессмысленных слов Федора? А поняв, усумнился в их справедливости? нашел их глупыми, неясными, неточными?». (19:376)]



Here, the “knowledge of the soul” is described as occurring unconsciously (“imperceptibly”) to the character himself. Most essential is that the soul is known not by reason [*um*] but through another source: “living for God.” As anticipated in the earlier scenes, the soul here emerges not through active, conscious awareness, but rather through a series of unexpected involuntary acts occurring both from within Levin and from the outside.

In the light of Tolstoy’s correspondence with Strakhov, Levin’s thoughts about the topic offer a final culmination of the question of how to understand the soul. Levin, as if directly addressing this discussion, argues that the question of why he lives (and thus the question of the soul) cannot be understood by reason: “I and all people have only one firm, unquestionable and clear knowledge, and this knowledge cannot be explained by reason—it is outside it, and has no causes, and can have no consequences. If the good has a cause, it is no longer the good; if it has a consequence—a reward—it is also not the good. Therefore the good is outside the chain of cause and effect.”<sup>462</sup> (Recall how even Sechenov puzzled about the soul, both in his private letters and in his debate with Kavelin.) For Levin, science could not offer any vision of the soul and therefore could offer no answer for the questions of life:

“I used to say that in my body, in the body of this plant and of this bug [*bukashki*] (it didn’t want to go over to that plant, it spread its wings and flew away), an exchange of matter takes place according to physical, chemical, and physiological laws. And that in all of us, along with the aspens, and the clouds, and the nebulae, development goes on. Development out of what? Into what? An infinite development and struggle?...As if there can be any direction or struggle in infinity! And I was astonished that in spite of the greatest efforts of my thinking along that line, the meaning of life, the meaning of my impulses and yearnings, was still not revealed to me. Yet the meaning of my impulses is so clear to me that I constantly live by it, and was amazed and glad when a muzhik voiced it for me: to live for God, for the soul [*dlia dushi*]” (796).<sup>463</sup>

As a culmination of the debate about the physiological explanations of the mind, which was carried on from the very beginning of the novel, the answer to the question of the soul appears to Levin not through the rational laws of science, but as “voiced” through another. Levin recasts a central concern of Sechenov and other physiologists: here, “impulses” (while Tolstoy uses the

---

<sup>462</sup> *Ibid.*, 795. [Я со всеми людьми имею только одно твердое, несомненное и ясное знание, и знание это не может быть объяснено разумом — оно вне его и не имеет никаких причин и не может иметь никаких последствий]. «Если добро имеет причину, оно уже не добро; если оно имеет последствие — награду, оно тоже не добро. Стало быть, добро вне цепи причин и следствий». (19:377)]

<sup>463</sup> [«Прежде я говорил, что в моем теле, в теле этой травы и этой букашки (вот она не захотела на ту траву, расправила крылья и улетела) совершается по физическим, химическим, физиологическим законам обмен материи. А во всех нас, вместе с осми нами, и с облаками, и с туманными пятнами, совершается развитие. Развитие из чего? во что? Бесконечное развитие и борьба?... Точно может быть какое-нибудь направление и борьба в бесконечном! И я удивлялся, что, несмотря на самое большое напряжение мысли по этому пути, мне всё-таки не открывается смысл жизни, смысл моих побуждений и стремлений. А смысл моих побуждений во мне так ясен, что я постоянно живу по нем, и я удивился и обрадовался, когда мужик мне высказал его: жить для Бога, для души». (19:378)]

word “pobuzhdeniia,” usually translated as “impulses,” one may think of Sechenov’s *Reflexes of the Brain*) cannot be revealed by science, but by the hidden workings of the soul.

In another moment in his discussion with himself, Levin describes the inability to understand the soul through reason, focusing on the issue of the “knowledge of what is good and what is bad,” a concern that lies outside the interest of science:

“I sought an answer to my question. But the answer to my question could not come from thought, which is incommensurable with the question. The answer was given by life itself, in my knowledge of what is good and what is bad. And I did not acquire that knowledge through anything, it was given to me as it is to everyone, *given* because I could not take it from anywhere.” “Where did I take it from? Was it through reason that I arrived at the necessity of loving my neighbor and not throttling him [*i ne dushit’ ego*]? I was told it as a child, and I joyfully believed it, because they told me what was in my soul [*u menia v dushe*]. And who discovered it? Not reason. Reason discovered the struggle for existence and the law which demands that everyone who hinders the satisfaction of my desires should be throttled. That is the conclusion of reason. Reason could not discover love for the other, because it’s unreasonable.” “Yes, pride,” he said to himself, rolling over on his stomach and beginning to tie stalks of grass into a knot, trying not to break them. “And not only the pride of reason, but the stupidity of reason. And above all – the slyness, precisely the slyness, of reason. Precisely the swindling of reason,” he repeated (797).<sup>464</sup>

Here, Levin articulates what Tolstoy had attempted to describe about the soul to Strakhov in their correspondence: for Levin, reason could not penetrate the mysteries of the soul, which were given by God. Furthermore, knowledge of the soul could not appear from within oneself alone: the soul only became clear to Levin after his meeting with the peasant who, speaking about another peasant (with a suggestive name Platon, evoking Plato), showed him the way. Above all, the workings of the soul—revealed to him by the words of another—still at this point had an unclear, involuntary character that was beyond his understanding, to be revealed in ways that evaded even his own attempt to put it into words. In this sense, he was left in the same position as Tolstoy in his letters to Strakhov, who similarly struggled to come up with a way to know the soul outside of the questions of science and reason (philosophy). In the novel, Tolstoy’s

---

<sup>464</sup> [«Я искал ответа на мой вопрос. А ответа на мой вопрос не могла мне дать мысль, — она несоизмерима с вопросом. Ответ мне дала сама жизнь, в моем знании того, что хорошо и что дурно. А знание это я не приобрел ничем, но оно дано мне вместе со всеми, дано потому, что я ни откуда не мог взять его.» «Откуда взял я это? Разумом, что ли, дошел я до того, что надо любить ближнего и не душить его? Мне сказали это в детстве, и я радостно поверил, потому что мне сказали то, что было у меня в душе. А кто открыл это? Не разум. Разум открыл борьбу за существование и закон, требующий того, чтобы душить всех, мешающих удовлетворению моих желаний. Это вывод разума. А любить другого не мог открыть разум, потому что это неразумно». «Да, гордость», сказал он себе, переваливаясь на живот и начиная завязывать узлом стебли трав, стараясь не сломать их. «И не только гордость ума, а глупость ума. А главное — плутовство, именно плутовство ума. Именно мошенничество ума», повторил он. (19:379)]

character, Levin, offers a way to know the soul that lies outside of his own conscious impulses and remains transparent to the world around him.

The character's soul in the novel appears, at least in part, to be reflective not only of Tolstoy and Strakhov's discussion of the topic (how to define "soul") in their private correspondence, but of the larger debate about the body and soul in science, philosophy, and psychology. Tolstoy's reflections on the complex situation of the soul in his letters appear to continue in his novel, where his idea that the soul cannot be found in psychic life alone is seen in the interplay between the inner and outer perspective, and at the moment of the character's unawareness (or partial awareness) of the workings of his soul. The novel's narrative, complete with the sound motif encoding the word soul [*dusha*], models the situation of the soul in the way that transgresses the boundaries between psychology and physiology, the inner mind and the outer body. As Ian Duncan suggested, "What seems arresting here is that the 'soul' [...] isn't just a property of someone's inner life—it's not bound to interior subjectivity, in the mode of liberal individualism; it's more like a phenomenon of a shared network or ecosystem of lives and consciousnesses vibrating together, with porous boundaries so they leak into each other (via conventional portals, such as the eyes [...] and less conventional ones)."<sup>465</sup> In a striking difference from the scientific or even psychological models, the novel's narrative shows, or models, the workings of the character's soul in a way that neither the character nor others are able to totally grasp. In this sense, Tolstoy embedded the idea of the soul in the narrative of his novel: literature has shown a different way.

### *The New Narrative of the Mind in Anna Karenina*

As already seen, the novel offered new models for the debate about the nature of consciousness from those in science, philosophy, and psychology at the time. For the rest of this chapter, I will show how, departing from this debate, the novel's techniques of representation of the character's mind involved a more complex understanding of consciousness, even though Tolstoy could not fully extricate himself from the language and concepts established in the debate with science. What is more, Tolstoy's representation of the character's mind in the novel surpasses the basic categories ordinarily used in psychology and narrative analysis alike, such as the difference between the inner and outer perspective, the distinction between the conscious and unconscious states of mind, and between body and mind. As a result, the novel's narrative offered a different form for modeling the workings of the mind, which went far beyond the ideas psychology held at the time and may suggest a new way to understand the representation of consciousness beyond Tolstoy. In the close readings of three scenes from the novel, I will show a new and complex form of narrative representation of the character's mind developed by Tolstoy. I will also show how the novel's narrative innovations extended far beyond the ideas about the nature of consciousness accepted in his time.

Tolstoy's novel has long been studied for its complex representation of the character's mind in narrative.<sup>466</sup> For the most part, scholars have focused on the central figure of the

---

<sup>465</sup> Ian Duncan, personal communication, July 22, 2021.

<sup>466</sup> Eikhenbaum notes the novel's tone as one of "cold observation from a detached point of view," arguing that it differs from *War and Peace* in its "objectivity" (*Lev Tolstoi: Semidesiatye gody* [Leningrad: Khudozhestvennaia literature, 1974], 158); see also: Turner, "Psychology, Rhetoric and Morality in *Anna Karenina*: At the Bottom of Whose Heart?" *The Slavic and East European Journal* 39.2 (Summer 1995): 261-268; George Gibian, "Two Kinds of Human

omniscient narrator who gathers many different perspectives into a cohesive whole. Indeed, it would be hard to read Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*—and many other novels from the 19<sup>th</sup> century—without the notion of a unified narrative voice. Built into the notion of a story, at least as formed by the Russian 19<sup>th</sup> century novel, is that it is something “told,” that is, uttered by one individual or several individuals (whether inside or outside the story). It is believed that the Russian 19<sup>th</sup> century novel privileges some form of a totality, uniting various voices and minds that inhabit a narrative. This impulse for unity is particularly strong with the third-person narratives, which gather many disparate subjectivities—including the representations of the characters' consciousnesses—under the umbrella of a single voice.

Reading *Anna Karenina* for the narrative of the mind, I would like to suggest that the narrative techniques employed in Tolstoy's novel cannot be adequately described as an omniscient third person voice that overlays the novel's complex modes for representation of the character's consciousness. While I will use such established narrative categories as focalization and free-indirect speech, I will try to show that there is a multiplicity in the novel's narrative that cannot be described within established categories of narrative analysis: there are multiple narratives of the mind.<sup>467</sup> Underlying what the reader may perceive as the novel's single third person narrator is the narratological effect of emerging authentic selves. Rather than being “told,” the narrative models several emergent selves, concealed by the use of third person pronouns. Unlike the techniques of free-indirect speech (or the Bakhtinian quasi-direct discourse), the narrative at times adopts the subjectivity of characters without representing direct speech. In doing so, I suggest, the third person narrative in *Anna Karenina* hides the cracks and fissures of underlying multiple subjectivities. What emerges is a form of single narrative in which disparate points of view, or subjectivities, are embedded, as if the narrative itself claims its own subjectivity. This is done primarily through the presentation of what I call acts of the mind: feeling, sensation, and thoughts, in tandem with a shifting vision of the body, become the locus through which the brokenness of narrative gains verbalization and a potential alternative form of

---

Understanding and the Narrator's Voice in *Anna Karenina*,” in *Anna Karenina*, ed. George Gibian (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1995). Scholars tend to agree that a figure like Tolstoy is always in complete control, specifically with his intricate knowledge of the moments of a character's psychology that even the character is unaware of (see Gary Saul Morson, *Anna Karenina in Our Time: Seeing More Wisely*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007, 10). On the other hand, scholars note that Tolstoy's prose incorporates a multiplicity of voices, including the character's. One example of this is Tolstoy's innovative use of interior monologue, noted first by Chernyshevsky (Struve, 1102; see also Aucouturier, Knapp). Furthermore, Justin Weir (*Leo Tolstoy and the Alibi of Narrative* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011]) has recently argued that in *Anna Karenina*, “thought [...] relies on no single language [...] but on multiple languages” (136). Gustafson (*Leo Tolstoy: Resident and Stranger* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986]) discusses complexities in the narration of a single mind, speaking of the shifting mode of consciousness in the train scene from Part 1 (see 303–312). This narrative complexity of Tolstoy's prose cannot be limited to *Anna Karenina* and to the verbal texture of narrative: Wachtel locates the generic complexity of multiple voices in his early novel *Childhood* (*The Battle for Childhood: Creation of a Russian Myth* [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990]).

<sup>467</sup> Janet Fleetwood has studied Tolstoy's use of a multiplicity of perspectives in the context of George Eliot's novels. “The Web and the Beehive: George Eliot's *Middlemarch* and Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*.” Ph.D. Dissertation, Indiana University, 1977.

wholeness. In a striking difference from the attempts to penetrate the workings of the mind in science and psychology, Tolstoy's novel, through the third-person narrative, offered a competing model of consciousness, one that nevertheless emerged from his attempts to respond to the contemporary debate.

### *The Margins of Anna's Mind*

At the beginning of Chapter 15 of Part 3, the morning after her confession to Karenin, we find Anna considering her position. Before she wakes up, we find a bodiless, inserted description of her memory, reported by the third-person narrator but nevertheless from her perspective:

Though Anna had stubbornly and bitterly persisted in contradicting Vronsky when he told her that her situation was impossible and tried to persuade her to reveal everything to her husband, in the depths of her soul she considered her situation false, dishonest, and wished with all her soul to change it. Coming home from the races with her husband, in a moment of agitation she had told him everything; despite the pain she had felt in doing so, she was glad of it. After her husband left, she told herself that she was glad, that now everything would be definite and at least there would be no falsehood and deceit. It seemed unquestionable to her that now her situation would be defined forever. It might be bad, this new situation, but it would be definite, there would be no vagueness or falsehood in it. The pain she had caused herself and her husband by uttering those words would be recompensed by the fact that everything would be defined, she thought. That same evening she saw Vronsky but did not tell him about what had happened between her and her husband, though to clarify the situation she ought to have told him (287).<sup>468</sup>

The scene above is written as if from within Anna's inner perspective, her mind, without any mention of her body. How does the narrative collect these fragments of her mind, and under what conditions do they spontaneously emerge in the text? If we replace the third person with the first person, this is what emerges: "In the depths of *my* soul *I* considered *my* situation false, dishonest, and wished with all *my* soul to change it." It seems as if Tolstoy has taken what could have been a fragment from her confessional diary and inserted it into the novel, plastering over the first-person narrative with the novel's third person.

---

<sup>468</sup> [Хотя Анна упорно и с озлоблением противоречила Вронскому, когда он говорил ей, что положение ее невозможно, и уговаривал ее открыть всё мужу, в глубине души она считала свое положение ложным, нечестным и всю душой желала изменить его. Возвращаясь с мужем со скачек, в минуту волнения она высказала ему всё; несмотря на боль, испытанную ею при этом, она была рада этому. После того как муж оставил ее, она говорила себе, что она рада, что теперь всё определится, и, по крайней мере, не будет лжи и обмана. Ей казалось несомненным, что теперь положение ее навсегда определится. Оно может быть дурно, это новое положение, но оно будет определено, в нем не будет неясности и лжи. Та боль, которую она причинила себе и мужу, высказав эти слова, будет вознаграждена теперь тем, что всё определится, думала она. В этот же вечер она увидалась с Вронским, но не сказала ему о том, что произошло между ею и мужем, хотя, для того чтобы положение определилось, надо было сказать ему. (18:303)]

In the next moment, Anna wakes up, at which point we find various thoughts and feelings described from her point of view:

When she woke up the next morning, the first thing that came to her was the words she had spoken to her husband, and they seemed so terrible to her now that she could not understand how she could have resolved to utter those strange, coarse, words, and could not imagine what would come of it. But the words had been spoken, and Alexei Alexandrovich had left without saying anything. “I saw Vronsky and didn’t tell him. Even at the very moment he was leaving, I wanted to call him back and tell him, but I changed my mind, because it was strange that I hadn’t told him at the very first moment. Why didn’t I tell him, if I wanted to?” And in answer to this question, a hot flush of shame poured over her face. She understood what had kept her from doing it; she understood that she was ashamed. Her situation, which had seemed clarified last night, now suddenly appeared to her not only not clarified, but hopeless. She became terrified of the disgrace which she had not even thought of before. When she merely thought of what her husband was going to do, the most terrible notions came to her. It occurred to her that the accountant would now come to turn her out of the house, that her disgrace would be announced to the whole world. She asked herself where she would go when she was turned out of the house, and could find no answer (287).<sup>469</sup>

Here, sharply departing from the previous paragraph, Anna, in a wake state, remembers the painful details of her confession to Karenin. Her feeling of shame instantaneously intrudes in the text through an involuntary bodily reaction seen with the flush over her face: “‘Why didn’t I tell him, if I wanted to?’ And in answer to this question, a hot flush of shame spread all over her face.” Anna appears to be arrested in the emerging feeling of shame, which arises autonomously from within her, dramatized as direct speech (interior monologue). The feeling of shame leaves Anna’s mind and body directionless, as she lies in bed without the ability to move: “She could not bring herself to look into the eyes of those she lived with. She could not bring herself to call her maid and still less go downstairs to see her son and the governess.”

---

<sup>469</sup> *Ibid.* [Когда она проснулась на другое утро, первое, что представилось ей, были слова, которые она сказала мужу, и слова эти ей показались так ужасны, что она не могла понять теперь, как она могла решиться произнести эти странные грубые слова, и не могла представить себе того, что из этого выйдет. Но слова были сказаны, и Алексей Александрович уехал, ничего не сказав. «Я видела Вронского и не сказала ему. Еще в ту самую ми нуту как он уходил, я хотела воротить его и сказать ему, но раздумала, потому что было странно, почему я не сказала ему в первую минуту. Отчего я хотела и не сказала ему?» И в ответ на этот вопрос горячая краска стыда разлилась по ее лицу. Она поняла то, что ее удерживало от этого; она поняла, что ей было стыдно. Ее положение, которое казалось уясненным вчера вечером, вдруг представилось ей теперь не только не уясненным, но безвыходным. Ей стало страшно за позор, о котором она прежде и не думала. Когда она только думала о том, что сделает ее муж, ей приходили самые страшные мысли. Ей при ходило в голову, что сейчас приедет управляющий выгонять ее из дома, что позор ее будет объявлен всему миру. Она спрашивала себя, куда она поедет, когда ее выгонят из дома, и не находила ответа. (18:303-304)]

In the next moment, the maid (Anna's double, Annushka) enters the room, and the narrative takes a new turn by representing her perspective:

The maid, who had been listening by the door for a long time, came into the room on her own. Anna looked questioningly into her eyes and blushed timorously. The maid apologized for coming in and said she thought she had heard the bell. She brought a dress and a note. The note was from Betsy. Betsy reminded her that she had Liza Merkalov and Baroness Stolz, with their admirers, Kaluzhsky and old Stremov, coming that morning for a croquet party. "Do come just to see it, as a study in manners. I'll expect you," she ended. Anna read the note and sighed deeply. "Nothing, I need nothing," she said to Annushka, who kept rearranging the flacons and brushes on the dressing table. "Go, I'll get dressed and come out. There's nothing I need." (288).<sup>470</sup>

While in the previous passage, the narrative represents Anna's solipsistic, obsessive mind, at this point, the narrative follows the maid's mind (the maid is also named Anna, or Annushka, a diminutive). Anna's blush, described before as "hot" (an internal experience), is here described from the outside, as though internally focalized through the maid: "Анна покраснела" (she *blushed*).

The shift in the narrative to the point of view of the maid marks the novel's continual slippage from one subjectivity to another, avoiding the anchoring of the text in a single subjectivity. And even after the maid leaves the room, Anna's body is still rendered in the way that the maid would have seen her:

Annushka left, but Anna did not begin to dress; she went on sitting in the same position, her head and arms hanging down, and every once in a while her whole body shuddered, as if wishing to make some gesture, to say something, and then became still again. She kept repeating: "My God! My God!" But neither the "my" nor the "God" had any meaning for her. Though she had never doubted the religion in which she had been brought up, the thought of seeking help from religion in her situation was as foreign to her as seeking help from Alexei Alexandrovich. She knew beforehand that the help of religion was possible only on condition of renouncing all that made up the whole meaning of life for her (288).<sup>471</sup>

---

<sup>470</sup> [Девушка, уже давно прислушивавшаяся у ее двери, вошла сама к ней в комнату. Анна вопросительно взглянула ей в глаза и испуганно покраснела. Девушка извинилась, что вошла, сказав, что ей показалось, что позвонили. Она принесла платье и записку. Записка была от Бетси. Бетси напоминала ей, что нынче утром к ней съедутся Лиза Меркалова и баронесса Штольц с своими поклонниками, Калужским и стариком Стремовым, на партию крокета. «Приезжайте хоть посмотреть, как изучение нравов. Я вас жду», кончала она. Анна прочла записку и тяжело вздохнула. — Ничего, ничего не нужно, — сказала она Аннушке, перестанавливавшей флаконы и щетки на уборном столике. — Поди, я сейчас оденусь и выйду. Ничего, ничего не нужно. (18:304)]

<sup>471</sup> [Аннушка вышла, но Анна не стала одеваться, а сидела в том же положении, опустив голову и руки, и изредка содрогалась всем телом, желая как бы сделать какой-то жест, сказать что-то и опять замирая. Она беспрестанно повторяла: «Боже мой! Боже мой!» Но

Anna's body, arrested by her troubled consciousness, remains nearly immobile except for her shuddering. While the maid is able to come and go, Anna is trapped both mentally and physically. The narrative texture itself, with its shifts in point of view, is left to put together the fragments of the character's consciousness, at this point working from her exterior body. In this short chapter, then, we can see a new dimension of narrative—the narrative of the mind, reaching beyond the bounds of analysis of an internal experience into an exteriority that even the character could not experience. Characters such as the maid intervene to provide their own account of events, and here the maid fills in a gap that is left by Anna's mental instability. These shifts in subjectivity continue with Anna's exclamation, "My God!", which demarcates the text's return to Anna's subjectivity. Here, it would seem that a narrator's subjectivity intervenes briefly as a bridge between the maid's mind and Anna's confused mental state ("But neither the 'my' nor the 'God' had any meaning for her"). Whether or not this is the intrusive "Tolstoy" narrator voice, the narrative nevertheless offers a different mode through which to understand what was originally witnessed by the maid (who describes her body alone). This time, the narrative switches back into a perspective influenced by Anna's own thinking.

A similar switching between Anna's inner mind and outer body is signaled in the text with her speech once again, when she comes to her senses after a period of unconsciousness:

Not only was it painful for her, but she was beginning to feel fear before the new, never experienced feeling in her soul. She felt that everything was beginning to double in her soul, as an object sometimes goes double in tired eyes. Sometimes she did not know what she feared, what she desired: whether she feared or desired what had been or what would be, and precisely what she desired, she did not know. "Ah, what am I doing!" she said to herself, suddenly feeling pain in both sides of her head. When she came to herself, she saw that she was clutching the hair on her temples and squeezing them with both hands. She jumped up and began pacing (288).<sup>472</sup>

As before, from Anna's point of view, we see a conflicted inner experience. At first this is reflected in her own feeling of doubling, as though Anna's experience reflects the nature of the narrative itself as it switches from inner to outer perspective. Then, it appears that Anna has begun to lose control of her own consciousness, marked by a series of "if" clauses and negatives,

---

ни «Боже», ни «мой» не имели для нее никакого смысла. Мысль искать своему положению помощи в религии была для нее, несмотря на то, что она никогда не сомневалась в религии, в которой была воспитана, так же чужда, как искать помощи у самого Алексея Александровича. Она знала вперед, что помощь религии возможна только под условием отречения от того, что составляло для нее весь смысл жизни. (18:304)]

<sup>472</sup> *Ibid.*, 288. [Ей не только было тяжело, но она начинала испытывать страх пред новым, никогда не испытанным ею душевным состоянием. Она чувствовала, что в душе ее всё начинает двоиться, как дwoятся иногда предметы в усталых глазах. Она не знала иногда, чего она боится, чего желает. Боится ли она и желает ли она того, что было, или того, что будет, и чего именно она желает, она не знала. «Ах, что я делаю!» сказала она себе, почувствовав вдруг боль в обеих сторонах головы. Когда она опомнилась, она увидела, что держит обеими руками свои волосы около висков и сжимает их. Она вскочила и стала ходить. (18:304-305)]



demonstrating an emerging and confusing experience. Awkwardly oscillating on the margins of Anna's mind, the narrative signals not the narrator's confusion, but rather Anna's doubled (and shifting) mental states, which seemingly conflict with each other. Finally, Anna, body and mind, begins to emerge from her troubled immobility, with a sudden feeling of pain. This move, with its emphasis on bodily sensation, frees the narrative from entrapment within Anna's confused mind, and is signaled by her exclamation and her vision of her body's exterior (here, in a moment that recalls the maid's intrusion, Anna gains a different understanding of herself through seeing her own exterior body). After a period of unconsciousness, Anna becomes aware of herself: She is now able to get up and move in a way that was impossible before. It would seem that Anna's mind, working outside of her own conscious control, frees her (and the reader) from an endless mental loop, one that formerly trapped the narrative within her solipsistic consciousness and moral indecision. In a sense, the narrative of disparate subjectivities shows not only the shifting from the mind of one character to another, but also, for Anna, a state of mind precariously balanced at the margins of consciousness that usually remains beyond narrative explicability in a novel.

After a brief encounter with her son, Anna runs outside, and suddenly her body comes to a stop:

She stopped and looked at the tops of the aspens swaying in the wind, their washed leaves glistening brightly in the cold sun, and she understood that they would not forgive, that everything and everyone would be merciless to her now, like this sky, like this greenery. And again she felt things beginning to go double in her soul. "I mustn't, I mustn't be thinking," she said to herself. "I must get ready to go. Where? When? Whom shall I take with me? Yes, to Moscow, on the evening train. Annushka and Seryozha, and only the most necessary things. But first I must write to them both" (290, Translation adjusted).<sup>473</sup>

The third person narrative represents the margins of Anna's mind, as she resists thinking, or the intrusion of her mind itself ("I mustn't, I mustn't think"), a moment that recalls Vronsky's own resistance to thoughts as he lays his head on the pillow, *podushka*. And yet even her attempt to resist her own thoughts of her moral predicament give way to a series of indecisive questions and declarations, where speech ultimately matches her inner mind and offers no alternative.

The chapter thus far has shown an intricate interplay between body and mind and between voluntary and involuntary states of consciousness. Familiar categories (such as internal focalization) seem insufficient to describe the variety of shifts from one state to the other and from one mind to the next. And while the concept of free-indirect discourse, or *style indirect libre* does capture the situation of what a character cannot put into words, it appears to not account for other techniques in this chapter, suggesting that not one technique (or even perspective) is adequate to capture the complexities of the character's mind. Furthermore, the

---

<sup>473</sup> [Остановившись и взглянув на колебавшиеся от ветра вершины осины с обмытыми, ярко блистающими на холодном солнце листьями, она поняла, что они не простят, что всё и все к ней теперь будут безжалостны, как это небо, как эта зелень. И опять она почувствовала, что в душе у ней начинало двоиться. «Не надо, не надо думать,— сказала она себе. — Надо собираться. Куда? Когда? Кого взять с собой? Да, в Москву, на вечернем поезде. Аннушка и Сережа, и только самые необходимые вещи. Но прежде надо написать им обоим». (18:306-307)]

body becomes central to depicting these shifts between one consciousness and the next (and even the various states of mind). This presentation of mind acts shows Anna's complex subjective state as both an interior and an exterior phenomenon, one that combines internal and external focalization. Tolstoy's narrative exceeds traditional modes of representing consciousness and grasps the complexity of Anna's experience. In Tolstoy's novel, not only does the third person allow for multiple subjectivities (in this chapter, Anna and her double, the maid Annushka), but it also gives rise to a modeling of heterogeneous states of a single mind in the workings of the narrative texture itself.

The chapter concludes with Anna's letters to Karenin and Vronsky, and both, importantly, are incomplete and discarded by Anna:

She quickly went into the house, to her boudoir, sat down at the desk and wrote to her husband: "After what happened, I can no longer remain in your house. I am leaving and taking our son with me. I do not know the laws and therefore do not know which of the parents keeps the son; but I am taking him with me, because I cannot live without him. Be magnanimous, leave him with me." Up to that point she wrote quickly and naturally, but the appeal to his magnanimity, which she did not recognize in him, and the necessity of concluding the letter with something touching, stopped her. "I cannot speak of my guilt and my repentance, because..." Again she stopped, finding no coherence in her thoughts. "No," she said to herself, "nothing's needed," and, tearing up the letter, she rewrote it, removing the mention of magnanimity, and sealed it (290-291).<sup>474</sup>

Here the chapter includes a letter as the exteriorized rendition of Anna's subjectivity. It would seem that here Anna's failure to get a grasp of her thoughts mirrors the narrative's struggle to adequately describe Anna's deeply conflicted mind.

Her letter to Vronsky likewise disintegrates under a similar pressure to render her thinking in written form:

The other letter had to be written to Vronsky. "I have told my husband," she wrote, and sat for a long time, unable to write more. It was so coarse, so unfeminine. "And then, what can I write to him?" she said to herself. Again a flush of shame covered her face. She remembered his calm, and a feeling of vexation with him made her tear the sheet with the written phrase into little shreds. "Nothing's necessary," she said to herself. She folded the blotting pad,

---

<sup>474</sup> [Она быстро пошла в дом, в свой кабинет, села к столу и написала мужу: «После того, что произошло, я не могу более оставаться в вашем доме. Я уезжаю и беру с собою сына. Я не знаю законов и потому не знаю, с кем из родителей должен быть сын; но я беру его с собою, потому что без него я не могу жить. Будьте великодушны, оставьте мне его». До сих пор она писала быстро и естественно, но призыв к его великодушию, которого она не признавала в нем, и необходимость заключить письмо чем-нибудь трогательным, остановили ее. «Говорить о своей вине и своем раскаянии я не могу, потому что...» Опять она остановилась, не находя связи в своих мыслях. «Нет, — сказала она себе, — ничего не надо» и, разорвав письмо, переписала его, исключив упоминание о великодушии, и запечатала. (18:307)]

went upstairs, told the governess and the servants that she was going to Moscow that day, and immediately started packing her things (291).<sup>475</sup>

Anna's shredding of the text works as a model of the struggle to fully represent the enormous complexities of the character's consciousness, particularly when the narrative is authored by the character herself. Meanwhile, the third person plasters over these shifts in consciousness and mental interruptions while demonstrating the heterogeneity of an unstable mind.

### *Within Vronsky's Mind*

Tolstoy's novel presents the minds of other characters with similar complexity. I will now close read the famous opera scene in Chapter 33 of Part 5, when Vronsky reacts to Anna's exposure and public shaming at the theatre. At the onset of the scene, the narrative provides the reader with momentary access to Vronsky's mind:

Vronsky experienced for the first time a feeling of vexation, almost of anger, with Anna for her deliberate refusal to understand her position. This feeling was intensified by his being unable to explain to her the cause of his vexation. If he had told her directly what he thought, he would have said: "To appear in the theatre in that attire and with that notorious princess is not only to acknowledge your position as a ruined woman but also to throw down a challenge to society" (543).<sup>476</sup>

Here, the narrative models Vronsky's mind through a series of intense and shifting feelings, and Vronsky imagines a dialogue with Anna that has not taken place. There is then a brief moment of quoted monologue in which Vronsky agonizes over his disbelief that she wants to expose herself to society: "But how can she not understand it, and what is going on inside her?" (543).<sup>477</sup> Next, the narrative reveals his own conflicted thoughts about Anna, which lead to two simultaneous reactions: "He felt that his respect for her was decreasing *at the same time* as his consciousness of her beauty increased" (543, emphasis mine).<sup>478</sup>

---

<sup>475</sup> [Другое письмо надо было писать к Вронскому. «Я объявила мужу», писала она и долго сидела, не в силах будучи писать далее. Это было так грубо, так неженственно. «И потом, что же могу я писать ему?» сказала она себе. Опять краска стыда по крыла ее лицо, вспомнилось его спокойствие, и чувство досады к нему заставило ее разорвать на мелкие клочки листок с на писанною фразой. «Ничего не нужно», сказала она себе и, сложив бювар, пошла наверх, объявила гувернантке и людям, что она едет нынче в Москву, и тотчас принялась за укладку вещей. (18:307)]

<sup>476</sup> [Вронский в первый раз испытывал против Анны чувство досады, почти злобы за ее умышленное непонимание своего положения. Чувство это усиливалось еще тем, что он не мог выразить ей причину своей досады. Если б он сказал ей прямо то, что он думал, то он сказал бы: «в этом наряде, с известной всем княжной появиться в театре — значило не только признать свое положение погибшей женщины, но и бросить вызов свету, т. е. навсегда отречься от него». (19:115)]

<sup>477</sup> [«Но как она может не понимать этого, и что в ней делается?» (19:115)]

<sup>478</sup> [Он чувствовал, как в одно и то же время уважение его к ней уменьшалось и увеличивалось сознание ее красоты. (19:115-116)]

In what follows, the narrative provides glimpses into Vronsky's mind. As he stops to drink cognac with his friend Yashvin, Vronsky anticipates the sound of Anna's footsteps: "The conversation about the horses interested him, but he did not forget Anna for a moment, involuntarily listened for the sound of steps in the corridor, and kept glancing at the clock on the mantelpiece" (544, translation adjusted).<sup>479</sup> At this point, this is all the reader sees of Vronsky's mind. But then the narrative shows us details of his body, which emphasize his growing irritation with Anna's decisions: "He brushed against the little table on which the seltzer water and decanter of cognac stood and almost knocked it over. He went to catch it, dropped it, kicked the table in vexation, and rang the bell" (544).<sup>480</sup> Rather than report Vronsky's thoughts, the narrative instead turns to the thoughts of the two minor characters, Yashvin and the valet. They, too, are left without a way to remedy Vronsky's aggravation: "The valet [...] glancing at his master, realized from his look that he had better keep silent; squirming, he hastily got down on the rug and began sorting out the whole glasses and bottles from the broken" (544).<sup>481</sup>

We pick up fragments of Vronsky's mind only as he enters the theater. At first there are only details of what Vronsky hears as a first layer of his consciousness:

From behind the closed door came the sounds of the orchestra's careful staccato accompaniment and one female voice distinctly pronouncing a musical phrase. The door opened to allow the usher to slip in, and the concluding phrase clearly struck Vronsky's ear. The door closed at once and he did not hear the end of the phrase or the cadenza, but he could tell by the thunder of applause behind the door that it was over" (545).<sup>482</sup>

Then, visual details arise as a second layer of Vronsky's mind:

On stage the singer, her bare shoulders and diamonds gleaming, bent over and, with the help of the tenor who held her hand, smilingly picked up the bouquets that had been awkwardly thrown across the footlights, then went over to a gentleman with glistening, pomaded hair parted in the middle (545).<sup>483</sup>

---

<sup>479</sup> [Разговор о лошадях занимал его, но ни на минуту он не забывал Анны, невольно прислушивался к звукам шагов по коридору и поглядывал на часы на камине. (19:116)]

<sup>480</sup> [Этим движением он зацепил столик, на котором стояла сель-терская вода и графин с коньяком, и чуть не столкнул его. Он хотел подхватить, уронил и с досады толкнул ногой стол и позвонил. (19:116)]

<sup>481</sup> [Камердинер [...] взглянув на барина, понял по его лицу, что надо только молчать и, поспешно извиваясь, опустился на ковер и стал разбирать целые и разбитые рюмки и бутылки. (19:117)]

<sup>482</sup> [Из-за притворенной двери слышались звуки осторожного аккомпанемента стаккато оркестра и одного женского голоса, который отчетливо выговаривал музыкальную фразу. Дверь отворилась, пропуская прошмыгнувшего капельдинера, и фраза, подходившая к концу, ясно поразила слух Вронского. Но дверь тотчас же затворилась, и Вронский не слышал конца фразы и каданса, но понял по грому рукоплесканий из-за двери, что каданс кончился. (19:117)]

<sup>483</sup> [На сцене певица, блестя обнаженными плечами и бриллиантами, нагибаясь и улыбаясь, собирала с помощью тенора, державшего ее за руку, неловко перелетавшие

What has happened within Vronsky's mind that leads to such a strict delimitation of the reporting narrative to focus on his senses?

As Vronsky enters the theater and walks down the hall, *style indirect libre* emerges from his seeing and listening: "As usual, there were the same sort of ladies in the boxes with the same sort of officers behind them; the same multi-colored women, uniforms, frock coats, God knows who they were; the same dirty crowd in the gallery; and in all this crowd, in the boxes and front rows, there were about forty *real* men and women" (545).<sup>484</sup> For a moment, Vronsky's consciousness emerges out of its limited focus on sight and sound, and his mind is represented through the standard device of free-indirect speech. He regains control by forcing his mind to focus on the "*real* men and women": "And to these oases Vronsky at once paid attention, and with them he at once entered into contact" (545).<sup>485</sup>

In yet another moment of seeing, Vronsky surveys the crowd, tracing the direction of its gaze to where Anna sits (and Vronsky avoids looking directly at her): "Vronsky had not yet seen Anna; he purposefully did not look her way. But from the direction of all eyes he knew where she was. He looked around surreptitiously, but not for her; expecting the worst, his eyes were seeking Alexei Alexandrovich" (545-546).<sup>486</sup> Here, vision is completely divorced from any kind of feeling; within this limited focus on the visual, the workings of Vronsky's mind are expressed through a camera-eye perspective of the theatre hall. Adding yet another dimension to this radical visual perspective, Vronsky takes his opera glasses out of his pocket:

Vronsky, listening with one ear, transferred his opera-glasses from the *baignoire* to the dress circle and scanned the boxes. Next to a lady in a turban and a bald old man, who blinked angrily into the lenses of the moving opera glasses, Vronsky suddenly saw Anna's head, proud, strikingly beautiful, and smiling in its frame of lace... The poise of her head on her beautiful, broad shoulders, the glow of restrained excitement in her eyes and her whole face reminded him of her exactly as he had seen her at the ball in Moscow (546).<sup>487</sup>

---

через рампу букеты и подходила к господину с рядом по середине блестящих помадой волос. (19:117)]

<sup>484</sup> [Те же, как всегда, были по ломам какие-то дамы с какими-то офицерами в задах лож; те же, Бог знает кто, разноцветные женщины, и мундиры, и сюртуки; та же грязная толпа в райке, и во всей этой толпе, в ломах и в первых рядах, были человек сорок настоящих мужчин и женщин. (19:117-118)]

<sup>485</sup> [И на эти оазисы Вронский тотчас обратил внимание и с ними тотчас же вошел в сношение. (19:118)]

<sup>486</sup> [Вронский еще не видал Анны, он нарочно не смотрел в ее сторону. Но он знал по направлению взглядов, где она. Он незаметно оглядывался, но не искал ее; ожидая худшего, он искал глазами Алексея Александровича. (19:118)]

<sup>487</sup> [Вронский, слушая одним ухом, переводил бинокль с бенуара на бель-этаж и оглядывал ложи. Подле дамы в тюрбане и плешивого старичка, сердито мигавшего в стекле подвигавшегося бинокля, Вронский вдруг увидел голову Анны, гордую, поразительно красивую и улыбающуюся в рамке кружев. Она была в пятом бенуаре, в двадцати шагах от него. Сидела она спереди и, слегка оборотившись, говорила что-то Я ш вину. Постанов ее головы на красивых и широких плечах и сдержанно-возбужденное сияние ее глаз и

Vronsky, looking through the opera glasses, finally sees Anna, presented as an emerging set of fragmented body parts. Furthermore, Vronsky's thoughts and feelings arise in tandem with this vision of the body, where his "ocularcentric" mind merges with his "feeling" mind, combining to create a new kind of vision of Anna.<sup>488</sup> In a way, Anna's image surfaces in the text at the moment when Vronsky's "seeing" and "thinking" exist as separate mental acts.

Within the confines of this constrained consciousness, Vronsky's feelings emerge as he at last sees Anna: "But his sense of this beauty was quite different now. His feeling for her now had nothing mysterious in it, and therefore her beauty, though it attracted him more strongly than before, at the same time offended him. She was not looking in his direction, but Vronsky could sense that she had seen him" (546).<sup>489</sup> Vronsky again looks in the same direction, as he attempts to interpret the unfolding scene in tandem with his feelings: "When Vronsky again looked in that direction through his opera glasses, he noticed that Princess Varvara was especially red, laughed unnaturally and kept turning to look at the neighboring box, while Anna, tapping on the red velvet with a folded fan, gazed off somewhere and did not see or want to see what was happening in that box. Yashvin's face wore the expression it had when he was losing at cards" (546).<sup>490</sup> With this accumulation of visual details, Vronsky, within his mind, describes Anna's inner feelings and thoughts, or interprets what he has seen: "Vronsky did not understand precisely what had taken place between the Kartasovs and Anna, but he understood that it had been humiliating for Anna. He realized it both from what he had seen and, most of all, from Anna's look. He knew she had gathered her last forces in order to maintain the role she had taken upon herself" (547).<sup>491</sup> One by one, clues about the state of Anna's inner mind emerge from within Vronsky's consciousness. The narrative of Vronsky's mind thus takes on a "writerly" quality, as if Vronsky is writing the scene: "And in this role of outward calm she succeeded fully. People who did not know her and her circle, and who had not heard of all the expressions of commiseration, indignation and astonishment from women that she allow herself to appear in society and appear so conspicuously in her lace attire and in all her beauty, admired the calm and beauty of this woman and did not suspect that she was experiencing the feelings of a person in

---

всего лица напомнили ему ее такую совершенно, какую он увидел ее на бале в Москве. (19:118)]

<sup>488</sup> Mandelker describes the special nature of Vronsky's vision of Anna in the novel in "Illustrate and Condemn: The Phenomenology of Vision in *Anna Karenina*," *Tolstoy Studies Journal* 8 (1995-1996): 46-60.

<sup>489</sup> [Но он совсем иначе теперь ощущал эту красоту. В чувстве его к ней теперь не было ничего таинственного, и по- тому красота ее, хотя и сильнее, чем прежде, привлекала его, вместе с тем теперь оскорбляла его. Она не смотрела в его сторону, но Вронский чувствовал, что она уже видела его. (19:118-119)]

<sup>490</sup> [Когда Вронский опять навел в ту сторону бинокль, он заметил, что княжна Варвара особенно красна, неестественно смеется и беспрестанно оглядывается на соседнюю ложу; Анна же, сложив веер и постукивая им по красному бархату, приглядывается куда-то, но не видит и, очевидно, не хочет видеть того, что происходит в соседней ложе. На лице Яшвина было то выражение, которое бывало на нем, когда он проигрывал. (19:119)]

<sup>491</sup> [Вронский не понял того, что именно произошло между Картасовыми и Анной, но он понял, что произошло что-то унижительное для Анны. Он понял это и по тому, что видел, и более всего по лицу Анны, которая, он знал, собрала свои последние силы, чтобы выдерживать взятую на себя роль. (19:119)]

the pillory” (547).<sup>492</sup> It would seem that in this chapter, Vronsky (the “writer”) relies on the limited view through opera glasses in order to “narrate” the scene of Anna’s humiliation and social fall. As a result, the narrative shows how Vronsky is at last able to understand Anna’s thinking from an act of silent observation of the scene.

Still, Vronsky remains unsatisfied, since until now his understanding and participation have been limited to vision: “Knowing that something had happened but not knowing precisely what, Vronsky felt a tormenting anxiety and hoping to find something out, went to his brother’s box” (547).<sup>493</sup> Vronsky, as though recognizing the limits of vision, walks through the theater without seeing or hearing anything: “Vronsky was not listening. He went downstairs with quick steps: he felt he had to do something but did not know what. Vexation with her for putting herself and him in such a false position, along with pity for her suffering, agitated him” (548).<sup>494</sup> As Vronsky encounters Anna in person, he returns to his earlier role in the narrative as a “writer” of her emotional state: “He felt sorry for her, and still he was vexed. He assured her of his love, because he saw that that alone could calm her now, and he did not reproach her in words, but in his soul he did reproach her. And in those assurances of love, which seemed so banal to him that he was ashamed to utter them, she drank in and gradually grew calm.”<sup>495</sup> In a sense, disciplined perception, mediated by seeing and hearing, gives Vronsky a new dimension of thought that previously remained inaccessible to him: He is now able to conceptualize Anna’s mind independently through visual and auditory clues.

It can be argued that at the end of the chapter Vronsky has received the answer to his original question (“что в ней делается?”) by working it out within his own mind. In the process, he becomes the impossible: the author of a text that was never written, one inserted into the novel through the use of a third person that seems capable of absorbing disparate subjectivities. In this chapter, the narrative is placed under the control of a character’s mind. Meanwhile, the reader—and perhaps Tolstoy himself—never notices these shifts in narrative focus, and yet, underlying the seemingly omniscient third person narrative, there emerges a seemingly independent narrative of Anna’s inner mind mediated by the narrative of Vronsky’s mind.

### *Laska and a Dog’s Mind*

---

<sup>492</sup> [И эта роль внешнего спокойствия вполне удавалась ей. Кто не знал ее и ее круга, не слышал всех выражений соболезнования, негодования и удивления женщин, что она позволила себе показаться в свете и показаться так заметно в своем кружевном уборе и со своей красотой, те любовались спокойствием и красотой этой женщины и не подозревали, что она испытывала чувства человека, выставяемого у позорного столба. (19:119)]

<sup>493</sup> [Зная, что что-то случилось, но не зная, что именно, Вронский испытывал мучительную тревогу и, надеясь узнать что-нибудь, пошел в ложу брата. (19:119)]

<sup>494</sup> [Вронский не слушал его. Он быстрыми шагами пошел вниз: он чувствовал, что ему надо что-то сделать, но не знал что. Досада на нее за то, что она ставила себя и его в такое фальшивое положение, вместе с жалостью к ней за ее страдания, волновали его. (19:121)]

<sup>495</sup> *Ibid.*, 549. [Ему жалко было ее и все-таки досадно. Он уверял ее в своей любви, потому что видел, что только одно это может теперь успокоить ее, и не упрекал ее словами, но в душе своей он упрекал ее. И те уверения в любви, которые ему казались так пошлы, что ему совестно было выговаривать их, она впивала в себя и понемногу успокаивалась. (19:122)]

While much attention has been given to the narrative of human consciousness, Tolstoy's narrative technique of disparate subjectivities also experiments with the consciousness of Levin's dog, Laska. In Chapter 12 of Part 6 the novel directly represents the mind of a dog. The chapter begins within Levin's mind:

Waking up in the early dawn, Levin tried to rouse his comrades. Vasenka, lying on his stomach, one stockinged foot thrust out, was so fast asleep that he could get no response from him. Oblonsky refused through his sleep to go so early. Even Laska, who slept curled up at the edge of the hay, got up reluctantly, lazily straightening and stretching her hind legs, first one and then the other. Levin put on his boots, took his gun and, carefully opening the creaking barn door, went out. The coachmen were sleeping by their carriages, the horses were dozing. Only one was lazily eating oats, scattering them all over the trough with its muzzle. It was still grey outside (591).<sup>496</sup>

The narrative of Levin's mind is limited here to his visual perspective, as he looks at other people while walking through the barn. Much like the other two examples in this paper, Levin's personhood cannot be separated from the text, and rather than telling, the narrative shows Levin's emergent seeing: Vasenka asleep, Oblonsky refusing to wake up, and then, finally, Laska the dog. Remarkably, these bodies are all fragmented, captured in a particular moment when Levin gets a glimpse (we see Vasenka's stomach, his stockinged foot, Laska's stretching hind legs, the horse's muzzle).

After a brief conversation with a peasant woman, the subsequent paragraph follows Levin walking to the marsh, with an emphasis on aural and visual details, presented through Levin's consciousness, in motion:

There were shocks of rye. Still invisible without the sun's light, the dew on the tall, fragrant hemp, from which the heads had already been plucked, wetted Levin's legs and his blouse above the waist. In the transparent stillness of morning the slightest sounds could be heard. A bee whizzed past Levin's ear like a bullet. He looked closer and saw another, then a third. They all flew out from behind the wattle fence of the apiary and disappeared in the direction of the marsh. The path led him straight to the marsh (592).<sup>497</sup>

---

<sup>496</sup> [Проснувшись на ранней заре, Левин попробовал будить товарищей. Васенька, лежа на животе и вытянув одну ногу в чулке, спал так крепко, что нельзя было от него добиться ответа. Облонский сквозь сон отказался идти так рано. Даже и Ласка, спавшая свернувшись кольцом, в краю сена, неохотно встала и лениво, одну за другой, вытягивала и расправляла свои задние ноги. Обувшись, взяв ружье и осторожно отворив скрипучую дверь сарая, Левин вышел на улицу. Кучера спали у экипажей, лошади дремали. Одна только лениво ела овес, раскидывая его храпом по колоде. На дворе еще было серо. (19:165-166)]

<sup>497</sup> [Это были ржаные копны. Невидная еще без солнечного света роса в душистой высокой конопле, из которой выбраны были уже замашки, мочила ноги и блузу Левина выше пояса. В прозрачной тишине утра слышны были малейшие звуки. Пчелка со свистом пули пролетела мимо уха Левина. Он пригляделся и увидел еще другую и третью. Все они



Much like the description of Levin's walk through the barn, the narrative, focalized on Levin's consciousness, models the workings of Levin's mind.

All along, Laska has been following her master, unrepresented by the narration. Now the narrative shifts to focus on the dog's body:

Laska walked beside her master, looking about and asking to run ahead. As he walked past the sleeping muzhiks and came up to the first marshy patch, Levin checked his caps and let the dog go. One of the horses, a sleek chestnut two-year-old, saw the dog, shied, tossed its tail and snorted. The others also became frightened and, splashing their hobbled legs in the water, their hoofs making a sound like clapping as they pulled them from the thick clay, began leaping their way out of the marsh. Laska stopped, looking mockingly at the horses and questioningly at Levin. Levin patted her and whistled the signal for her to start. Laska ran with a gay and preoccupied air over the bog that yielded under her (592-593).<sup>498</sup>

Levin's consciousness, as it emerges in the narrative, interprets the dog's actions through his own visual-centric ways. To Levin, Laska "looks" at horses much as a human being would look, with complexity of judgment ("looking mockingly"). Meanwhile, Levin whistles to give Laska a "signal to start." With Levin's whistle, the hunt begins, and the narrative now represents the dog's consciousness:

Running into the marsh, Laska at once picked up, amidst the familiar smells of roots, marsh grass, rust, and the alien smell of horse dung, the bird smell spread all through the place, that same strong-smelling bird that excited her more than anything else. Here and there over the moss and marsh burdock this smell was very strong, but it was impossible to tell in which direction it grew stronger or weaker. To find the direction she had to go further downwind. Not feeling her legs under her, moving at a tense gallop so that she could stop at each leap if necessary, Laska ran to the right, away from the morning breeze blowing from the east, and then turned upwind. Breathing in the air with flared nostrils, she sensed at once that there were not only tracks but *they* themselves were there, and not one but many. She slowed the speed of her run. They were there, but precisely where she was still unable to tell. She had already begun a circle to find the place when

---

вылетали из-за плетня пчельника и над коноплей скрывались по направлению к болоту. (19:166)]

<sup>498</sup> [Ласка шла рядом с хозяином, просясь вперед и оглядываясь. Пройдя спавших мужиков и поровнявшись с первой мочежинкой, Левин осмотрел пистоны и пустил собаку. Одна из лошадей, сытый бурый третьяк, увидав собаку, шарахнулся и, подняв хвост, фыркнул. Остальные лошади тоже испугались и, спутанными ногами шлепая по воде и производя вытаскиваемыми из густой глины копытами звук, подобный хлопанью, запрыгали из болота. Ласка остановилась, насмешливо посмотрев на лошадей и вопросительно на Левина. Левин погладил Ласку и посвистал в знак того, что можно начинать. Ласка весело и озабоченно побежала по колеблющейся под нею трясине. (19:166-167)]

her master's voice suddenly distracted her. 'Here, Laska!' he said, pointing in a different direction (593).<sup>499</sup>

With Levin's cue to "start," we are immersed in the narrative of Laska's emerging mind, and the profusion of smells demarcates an abrupt shift from Levin's ocularcentric consciousness to that of a dog. The narrative grapples with a dog's mind, in particular focusing on smelling rather than looking. Likewise, following the dog's subjectivity, Levin's name vanishes completely from the text, and, in keeping with the mind of the dog, he is referred only as her "master." Above, we see how Laska's smell intermingles with her experience of speed as she attempts to track down her prey. Furthermore, smell gets *stronger and stronger* for Laska, encasing the narrative into the dog's perception of the bird's smell. At the same time, Levin is never far, and he briefly interrupts the working of Laska's smelling consciousness and urges her to go a different way.

Then, Levin's consciousness appears again and complicates the narrative of Laska's consciousness:

*Their* smell struck her more and more strongly, more and more distinctly, and suddenly it became perfectly clear to her that one of them was there, behind that hummock, five steps away from her. She stopped and her whole body froze. On her short legs, she could see nothing ahead of her, but she knew from the smell that it was sitting no more than five steps away. She stood, sensing it more and more and delighting in the anticipation. Her tense tail was extended and only its very tip twitched. Her mouth was slightly open, her ears pricked up a little. One ear had got folded back as she ran, and she was breathing heavily but cautiously, and still more cautiously she turned more with her eyes than her head to look at her master. He, with his usual face but with his ever terrible eyes, was coming, stumbling over hummocks, and extremely slowly as it seemed to her. It seemed to her that he was moving slowly, yet he was running (593).<sup>500</sup>

---

<sup>499</sup> [Вбежав в болото, Ласка тотчас же среди знакомых ей запахов корнейев, болотных трав, ржавчины и чуждого запаха лошадиного помета почувствовала рассеянный по всему этому месту запах птицы, той самой пахучей птицы, которая более всех других волновала ее. Кое-где по моху и лопушкам болотным за пах этот был очень силен, но нельзя было решить, в какую сторону он усиливался и ослабевал. Чтобы найти направление, надо было отойти дальше под ветер. Не чувствуя движения своих ног, Ласка напряженным галопом, таким, что при каждом прыжке она могла остановиться, если встретится необходимость, поскакала направо прочь от дувшего с востока предрассветного ветерка и повернулась на ветер. Вдохнув в себя воздух рас ширенными ноздрями, она тотчас же почувствовала, что не следы только, а *они* сами были тут, пред нею, и не один, а много. Ласка уменьшила быстроту бега. Они были тут, но где именно, она не могла еще определить. Чтобы найти это самое место, она начала уже круг, как вдруг голос хозяина развлек ее. «Ласка! тут!» сказал он, указывая ей в другую сторону. (19:167)]

<sup>500</sup> [Запах *их* всё сильнее и сильнее, определеннее и определеннее поражал ее, и вдруг ей вполне стало ясно, что один из них тут, за этою кочкой, в пяти шагах пред нею, и она остановилась и замерла всем телом. На своих низких ногах она ни чего не могла видеть пред собой, но она по запаху знала, что он сидел не далее пяти шагов. Она стояла, всё больше и больше ощущая его и наслаждаясь ожиданием. Напруженный хвост ее был вытянут и вздрагивал только в самом кончике. Рот ее был слегка раскрыт, уши приподняты. Одно

When Laska stands up, we suddenly see what she could not: her own tail, mouth, and her ears as they prick up. The narrative demonstrates the arrival of Levin on the scene through the intrusion of his mind, which moves us out of the smelling-dog consciousness and into a visual perspective. The narrative shifts back into the dog's mind, vividly picturing Levin's face. Meanwhile, the narrative hides such shifts under the third person, emerging as a hybrid of both Laska's and Levin's minds at the end of the paragraph: "It seemed to her that he was moving slowly, yet he was running." Here, Levin's and Laska's minds briefly merge in narrative, modeling the mental cooperation between man and the flushing dog. These two minds, one that works mainly by vision and one that works mainly by smell, are united in the narrative with the singular goal of hunting for a bird.

For the rest of the chapter, the narrative returns to Levin's consciousness, and Laska's mind reemerges only in the form of quoted monologue:

"Flush it, flush it," cried Levin, nudging Laska from behind. 'But I can't flush anything,' thought Laska. "Where will I flush it from? I can sense them from here, but if I move forward, I won't be able to tell where they are or what they are." Yet here he was nudging her with his knee and saying in an excited whisper: "Flush it, Lasochka, flush it!" "Well, if that's what he wants, I'll do it, but I can't answer for myself anymore" (594).<sup>501</sup>

The appearance of Laska's quoted monologue marks the conclusion of the scenes in which the narrative represents the dog's mind. For the remainder of the chapter, the dog's consciousness is no longer represented in the third person narrative, but only in occasional moments of quoted monologue; then, the narrative moves back into Levin's mind.

With this brief moment of dog's consciousness taking over the third person narrative, the chapter demonstrates that the third person harbors the ossified remnants of Laska's emergent consciousness, and the narrative slips freely in and out of the dog's mind. The body (through the sudden emergence of Laska's exterior body in the text) acts as a signpost of the ruptures, marking transitions from one consciousness to the other. In this sense, the narrative captures one consciousness without allowing it to completely take over the narrative, and the third person allows different subjectivities to coexist.

### *Conclusion*

---

ухо заворотилось еще на бегу, и она тяжело, но осторожно дышала и еще осторожнее оглянулась, больше глазами, чем головой, на хозяина. Он, с его привычным ей лицом, но всегда страшными глазами, шел, спотыкаясь по кочкам, и необыкновенно тихо, как ей казалось. Ей казалось, что он шел тихо, а он бежал. (19:167-168)]

<sup>501</sup> [— Пиль, пиль, — крикнул Левин, толкая в зад Ласку. «Но я не могу итти, — думала Ласка.— Куда я пойду? Отсюда я чувствую их, а если я двинусь вперед, я ничего не пойму, где они и кто они». Но вот он толкнул ее коленом и взволнованным шопотом проговорил: «Пиль, Ласочка, пиль!» «Ну, так если он хочет этого, я сделаю, но я за себя уже не отвечаю теперь», подумала она и со всех ног рванулась вперед между кочек. Она ничего уже не чужала теперь и только видела и слышала, ничего не понимая. (19:168)]

All three of these textual examples demonstrate unique narrative responses to the task of representing consciousness in narrative fiction. I have attempted to expose and grasp a strange undercurrent of Tolstoy's prose, one that may not be fully captured under the umbrella concepts of omniscience, focalization, and free-indirect speech, showing how the narrative absorbs the shifting minds of different characters. What we find in Tolstoy's novel is a complex situation in narrative that in many ways parallels Tolstoy's own personal struggle to grapple with the workings of the mind in ways that transcends the accepted ideas about body and soul, the conscious and the unconscious, and even the human and the natural. Here, it would appear that Tolstoy's understanding of the workings of the mind reached beyond the limits of the "inner" mind and the "outer" body, which had been at the center of the debate among psychologists, philosophers, and scientists, as reflected in the Russian "thick journals." The three examples—Anna's inner doubling mind, Vronsky's modeling of Anna's consciousness, and the merging of Levin's and Laska's conscious experience—suggest a situation in narrative that was at once indebted to the debate while also offering a form of the mind that went far beyond science at the time and was special to literature.

A question may arise: Could it be that this complex narrative structure is under complete authorial control? In other words, is it one of Tolstoy's famous devices, aimed to shake the reader out of automated perception and habitual understanding of narrative technique? This question is best left unanswered. Narratologists today avoid the issue of authorial intention, speaking not of "devices," but of the ways that narrative in the novel, in its complex and heterogeneous texture, models the workings of the mind. What we gain from this underbelly of the third person in Tolstoy's novel is a radically different form of narrative: Filtered through human and dog consciousness, the narrative switches from one mind to another, while integrating different minds within one text. A closer look at moments in Tolstoy's novel reveals a special quality in his representation of consciousness: Tolstoy's narrative, embodying several emerging subjectivities, responds to the challenges posed by the narration of the mind, at once connected to the world of his time, and offering a new way that looked ahead.

## Bibliography

- Aksakov, A. N. *Spiritualizm i nauka*. St. Petersburg: Tipografiia A. M. Kotomina, 1872.
- Alajouanine, Théophile. "Dostoiewski's Epilepsy." *Brain* 86.2 (June 1963): 209-218.
- Andruzskii M. and P. Kovalevskii. *Dva sudebno-psikhiatricheskikh sluchaia umopomeshatel'stva*. Kharkov: Universitetskaia Tipografiia, 1879.
- Anonymous. "Delo devitsy Marii Zhanre, obviniaemoi v deviaty otravleniakh." *Arkhiv Sudebnoi Meditsiny i Obshchestvennoi Gigeny* (June 1870): Sudebnaia meditsina, 40-64.
- . "Epilepsia (iz klinich. chtenii prof. Trusso v Parizhe)." *Voенno-meditsinskii zhurnal*: (January 1862): VI. Smes', 1-9.
- . "Iz nauki o chelovecheskom dukhe. P. Iurkevicha. *Trudy Kievskoi dukhovnoi Akademii*. 1860. Knizhka chetvertaia." *Russkii Vestnik* 32 (April 1861): Literaturnoe obozrenie i zametki, 79-105.
- . "Iz nauki o chelovecheskom dukhe. P. Iurkevicha. *Trudy Kievskoi dukhovnoi Akademii*. 1860. Knizhka chetvertaia." *Russkii Vestnik* 33 (May 1861): Literaturnoe obozrenie i zametki, 26-59.
- . "K voprosu o sushchnosti epilepsii." *Moskovskaia Meditsinskaia Gazeta* 8 (February 24, 1868): Meditsinskoe obozrenie, 75.
- . "Mesmerizm, odelizm, stoloverchenie i spiritizm. S istoricheskoi i nauchnoi toчек zreniia. Vil'iama Karpentera. SPb." *Delo* (April 1878): Novye knigi, 63-75.
- . "Mozg vo vremia sna." *Russkii Vestnik* 98 (March 1872): Smes', 347-348.
- . No title [Review of Paul Janet's *Le cerveau et le pensée*]. *Otechestvennye Zapiski* 161 (August 1865): Interesy literatury i nauki na zapade, 243-256.
- . No title [Review of the translation of Alexander Bain's *On the Study of Character*]. *Delo* (August 1867): Novye knigi, 65-69.
- . "Ob ume o poznanii. Soch. Ippolita Tena. Perev. s frants. pod red. N. N. Strakhova. V dvukh tomakh. SPb. 1872." *Delo* (August 1872): Novye knigi, 31-46.
- . "Referat. *Fiziologii i patalogiia dushi*. Soch. Genrikha Maudsleia (*The Physiologie and Pathologie of the mind* [sic.] by Henry Maudsley. London. 1867). Chast' II. (Okonchanie)." *Arkhiv Sudebnoi Meditsiny i Obshchestvennoi Gigeny* (December 1869): Izvestiia i smes', 1-14.

- “Serdtsse i mozg, Dzhordzha L’iuisa.” *Otechestvenny Zapiski* (November 1865): Interesy literatury i nauki na zapade, 84-92.
- “Sluchai skoroprekhodiashego umopomeshatel’stva ot p’ianstva (mania transitoria a potu).” *Arkhiv Sudebnoi Meditsiny i Obshchestvennoi Gigieny*, Sudebnaia meditsina (June 1868): Sudebnaia meditsina, 44-53.
- Antonovich, Maksim. “Sovremennaia fiziologiiia i filosofiiia.” *Sovremennik* (February 1862): Otdel II: Sovremennoe obozrenie 227-266.
- Aucouturier, Michel. “Langage Intérieur et analyse psychologique chez Tolstoj.” *Revue des études slaves* 34.1, 1957, 7–14.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics* [1963]. Edited and translated by Caryl Emerson. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.
- Bally, Charles. “Figures de Pensée et Formes Linguistiques.” *Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift* IV (1914): 405-422.
- Banfield, Ann. *Unspeakable Sentences*. Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982.
- Beauvoir, Simone de. *Faut-il brûler Sade*. Paris: Gallimard, 1955.
- Beer, Gillian. *Darwin’s Plots: Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Fiction* [1983]. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Belinskii, Vissarion. *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*. 13 Volumes. Moscow: Izdatel’stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1953-1959.
- Bell, Matthew. *The German Tradition of Psychology in Literature and Thought, 1700-1840*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Bem, A. L. “Pered litsom smerti,” in *O Dostojevském : sborník statí a materiálů*. Edited by Julius Dolansky and Radegast Parolek. Prague: Slovenská knihovna, 1972, 150-182.
- Berman, Anna. “Darwin in the Novels: Tolstoy’s Evolving Literary Response.” *The Russian Review* 76 (April 2017): 331-51.
- Bernard, Claude. *Fiziologiiia serdtsa i otnosheniia ego k golovnomu mozgu*. Translated by Nikolai Ivanovich Solov’ëv. St. Petersburg: Izdanie O. I. Baksta, 1867.
- “Serdtsse. Fiziologicheskii etiud Kloda Bernara.” Translated by Anonymous. *Otechestvennye Zapiski* (March 1865): 178-194.
- Bertenson, L. B. “Ivan Sergeevich Turgenev.” *Meditsinskii Vestnik* 36 (September 3, 1883): 581-585.

- Bethea, David M. *The Shape of the Apocalypse in Modern Russian Fiction*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989.
- Bishop, Paul. "The Unconscious from Storm and Stress to Weimar Classicism: The Dialectic of Time and Pleasure." In *Thinking the Unconscious*. Edited by Angus Nicholls and Martin Liebscher, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, 26-56.
- Bouillet, Marie-Nicolas. "La Biographie Universelle," *Dictionnaire universel d'histoire et de géographie*. Paris: Librairie de la Hachette et C., 1858.
- Brooks, Peter. *Reading for the Plot*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984.
- Brown, Frederick. *Flaubert: A Biography*. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2006.
- Brunson, Molly. *Russian Realisms: Literature and Painting, 1840-1890*. Dekalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2016.
- Butlerov, Alexander. "Mediumicheskie iavleniia." *Russkii Vestnik* 120 (November 1875): 300-348.
- Cantor, Geoffrey and Sally Shuttleworth, "Introduction." In *Science Serialized: Representations of the Sciences in Nineteenth Century Periodicals*. Edited by Geoffrey Cantor and Sally Shuttleworth, Cambridge: The M. I. T. Press, 2004, 1-15.
- Carpenter, William. "Fiziologicheskoe ob'iasnenie nekotorykh iavkenii spiritizma." Anonymous translation, *Znanie* (May 1875): 27-61.
- Carpenter, William. *Principles of Mental Physiology*. 2 Volumes. London: Henry S. King & Co, 1876.
- Catteau, Jacques. *Dostoyevsky and the Process of Literary Creation* [1978]. Translated by Audrey Littlewood. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- Chernyshevskii, Nikolai. "Detstvo i otrochestvo. Voennye Rasskazy. Sochinenie Grafa L. N. Tolstovo. Spb." *Sovremennik*, November 1856, "Kritika," 1-24.
- *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 16 Volumes. Moscow: GIKhL, 1939-1953.
- Cohn, Dorrit. *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978.
- Corrigan, Yuri. *Dostoevsky and the Riddle of the Self*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2017.

- Cox, Roger. "Myshkin's Apocalyptic Vision." In *Between Earth and Heaven: Shakespeare, Dostoevsky and the Meaning of Christian Tragedy*, 164-91. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969.
- Culler, Jonathan. "Omniscience." *Narrative* 12.1 (2004): 22-34.
- Dalgarno, Emily. "Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, and the Russian Soul." In *Virginia Woolf and the Migrations of Language*. Cambridge: UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012, 69-96.
- Dalton, Elizabeth. *Unconscious Structure in The Idiot*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979.
- Dames, Nicholas. *Amnesiac Selves: Nostalgia, Forgetting, and British Fiction, 1810-1870*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- . *The Physiology of the Novel*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Dargez, Ed. "Le quinzaine d'un lecteur," *Le Figaro* (December 4, 1862), 3-4.
- De Kalonn, "Fiziologiiia mysli. (Physiologie de la pensée, par M. Lelut, Paris, 1866)." *Delo* (August 1867): *Sovremennoe obozrenie*, 1-48.
- Delaveau, Henri. "La littérature et la vie militaire en Russie." *Revue des deux mondes* (August 15, 1856): 775-810.
- Desmaret, Marie-Christine. "Épileptiques, hystériques, marginaux, fous comme figures protéiformes de l'artiste dans l'oeuvre Flaubertienne." *Revue Flaubert* 6 (2006). <https://flaubert.univ-rouen.fr/revue/revue6/>. Accessed July 30, 2021.
- Diatroptov, "Prikluchenie s khudozhnikom Polonskim v sudebno-meditsinskom otnoshenii," *Arkhiv Sudebnoi Meditsiny i Obshchestvennoi Gigeny* (June 1869): No. 2, *Sudebnaia meditsina*, 47-55.
- Diment, Galya. "Tolstoy and Bloomsbury." *Tolstoy Studies Journal* 5 (1992): 39-54.
- Diukov, P. "Referat ob uspekhakh psikhiiatrii v 1861 i 1862 g. g." *Voенno-meditsinskii Zhurnal* (January 1864): *Smes'*, 43-60.
- Dobroliubov, Nikolai. *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*. 6 Volumes. Leningrad: GIKHL, 1934-1941.
- Dostoevskaia, Anna Grigorievna. *Dnevnik*. Moscow: Novaya Moskva, 1924.
- Dostoevskii, F. M. *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*. Edited by G. M. Fridlender et. al. 30 Volumes. Leningrad: Nauka, 1972-1990.



- Dostoevsky, Fyodor. *The Brothers Karamazov*. Translated by. Constance Garnett. Edited by Ralph E. Matlaw. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1976.
- Dostoevsky, Fyodor. *The Idiot*. Translated by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky. New York: Vintage, 2003.
- E---n, E. [Evgeny Nikolaevich Edel'son] "Chelovek—prostoi-li chustvuyushchii avtomat?" *Otechestvennye Zapiski* (April 1866): 515-529.
- Egdorf, Brian. "The Multiplicity of Narrative: The Hidden Subjectivities of *Anna Karenina*." *Tolstoy Studies Journal* 28 (2016): 29-40.
- Eikhenbaum, Boris M. *Lev Tolstoi: Semidesiatye gody*. Leningrad: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1974.
- Ellenberger, Henri. *The Discovery of the Unconscious*. New York: Basic Books, 1970.
- "The Unconscious Before Freud." *Bulletin of the Menninger Clinic* 1.1 (January 1957): 3-15.
- El'pe, "V oblasti psiko-fiziologii: Son i snovideniia." *Russkaia Rech'* (January 1881): Nauchnaia khronika, 69-95.
- Finn, Michael T. *Figures of the Pre-Freudian Unconscious from Flaubert to Proust*. Cambridge University Press, 2017.
- Flaubert, Gustave. *Correspondance*. 5 Volumes. Paris: Gallimard (Pléiade), 1973.
- Fleetwood, Janet. "The Web and the Beehive: George Eliot's *Middlemarch* and Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*." Ph.D. Dissertation, Indiana University, 1977.
- Frazier, Melissa. "The Science of Sensation: Dostoevsky, Wilkie Collins and the Detective Novel." *Dostoevsky Studies* 19 (2015): 7-28.
- "Minds and Bodies in the World, or: Learning to Love Dostoevsky." 19v: An Occasional Series on the 19th Century. NYU Jordan Center for the Advanced Study of Russia. December 11, 2020. <https://jordanrussiacycenter.org/news/19v/minds-and-bodies-in-the-world-or-learning-to-love-dostoevsky/#.YQOLoy1h1-U>. Accessed July 29, 2021.
- Frede, Victoria. "Materialism and the Radical Intelligentsia: the 1860s." *A History of Russian Philosophy 1830-1930: Faith, Reason and the Defense of Human Dignity*. Edited by G. M. Hamburg and Randall A. Poole. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, 69-89.

- Freud, Sigmund. "Dostoevsky and Parricide." *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. Translated by James Strachey. London: The Hogarth Press, 1961, 177-196.
- . *The Interpretation of Dreams* [1900]. Translated and edited by James Strachey. New York: Basic Books, 2010.
- Fung, Paul. *Dostoevsky and the Epileptic Mode of Being*. London: Legenda, 2015.
- Gardner, Sebastian. "Eduard von Hartmann's Philosophy of the Unconscious." In *Thinking the Unconscious*. Edited by Angus Nicholls and Martin Liebscher, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, 173-199.
- Gastaut, Henri. "Fyodor Mikhailovitch Dostoevsky's Involuntary Contribution to the Symptomatology and Prognosis of Epilepsy." *Epilepsia* 19 (April 1978): 186-201.
- Gastaut, Henri. "Gustave Flaubert's Illness: A Case Report in Evidence Against the Erroneous Notion of Psychogenic Epilepsy." *Epilepsia* 25.5 (1984): 622-637.
- Gauchet, Marcel. *L'inconscient cerebral*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1992.
- Genette, Gerard. *Figures III: Discours du récit*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1972.
- Gibian, George. "C. G. Carus' *Psyche* and Dostoevsky." *The American Slavic and East European Review* 14.3 (October 1955): 371-382.
- . "Two Kinds of Human Understanding and the Narrator's Voice in *Anna Karenina*." In *Anna Karenina*. Edited by George Gibian. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1995.
- Goldstein, Jan. "The Uses of Male Hysteria: Medical and Literary Discourse in Nineteenth Century France." *Representations* 34 (Spring, 1991), 134-165.
- Gorodyskii, Dr. "Deistvitel'no-li krest'ianinom K. soversheno ubiistvo zhenshchiny ili pokazanie ego bylo tol'ko galliutsinatsiia?" *Arkhiv Sudebnoi Meditsiny i Obshchestvennoi Gigieny* (June 1866): Sudebnaia Meditsina, II., 8-20.
- Greenblatt, Samuel H. "The Major Influences on the Early Life and Work of John Hughlings Jackson." *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 39 (January 1, 1965): 346-376.
- Grot, Nikolai Iakovlevich. *Snovideniia, kak predmet nauchnogo analiza*. Kiev: Tipografiia M. P. Fritsa, 1878.
- Gustafson, Richard. *Leo Tolstoy: Resident and Stranger*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986.

- Hamburger, Käte. *The Logic of Literature*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973.
- Herman, David. *Basic Elements of Narrative*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.
- Herpin, Théodore. *Des accès incomplets de l'épilepsie*. Paris: J. B. Baillière, 1867.
- *Du pronostic et du traitement curative de l'épilepsie*, Paris: J. B. Baillière, 1852.
- Herzen, Alexandre. *Le cerveau et l'activité cérébrale*. Paris: Librairie J. B. Baillière et fils, 1887.
- Hollander, Robert. "The Apocalyptic Framework of Dostoevsky's *The Idiot*." *Mosaic* 6 (1974): 123-39.
- Holquist, Michael. "Bazarov and Sechenov: The Role of Scientific Metaphor in *Fathers and Sons*." *Russian Literature* XVI (1984): 359-374.
- *Dostoevsky and the Novel*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977.
- Holland, Kate. *The Novel in the Age of Disintegration: Dostoevsky and the Problem of Genre in the 1870s*, Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2013.
- Ia., P. No title [Review of the translation of Wilhelm Wundt's *Vorlesungen ueber die Menschen- und Thierseele*]. *Russkoe Slovo* (October 1865): Bibliograficheskii listok, 75-102.
- Iakubova, R. Kh. "Romanticheskaia povest' 'Jean Sbogar' Sh. Nod'e v tvorcheskoi retseptsii F. M. Dostoevskogo." *Liberal Arts in Russia* 4.5 (2014): 378-387.
- Ignatii (Brianchaninov D. A.) "Slovo o smerti." In *Sochineniia episkopa Ignatii Brianchaninova* [Reprintnoe izdanie], Moscow: P. S., 1991.
- Ivanov, Vyacheslav. *Freedom and the Tragic Life: A Study in Dostoevsky*. Translated by Norman Cameron. New York: Noonday, 1960.
- Ivanov-Zheludkov, V. P. [Vasillii Ivanovich Kel'siev]. "Psikhologicheskaia zametka." *Otechestvennye Zapiski* (Jan 1867): 109-127.
- Iurkevich, P. D. *Filosofskie proizvedeniia*. Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Pravda," 1990.
- "Iazyk fiziologov i psikhologov." *Russkii Vestnik* 38 (April 1862): 912-934;
- "Iazyk fiziologov i psikhologov." *Russkii Vestnik* 40 (August 1862): 661-704.
- *Iz nauki o chelovecheskom dukhe*. Kiev: Trudi Kievskoi Dukhovnoi Akademii, 1860.
- Jackson, John Hughlings. "A Prognostic and Therapeutic Indication in Epilepsy." *The Practitioner* 4 (May 1870): 284-285.

- “Clinical Remarks on Cases of Temporary Loss of Speech and of Power of Expression (Epileptic Aphemia? Aphrasia? Aphasia?), and on Epilepsies.” *Medical Times and Gazette* (April 23, 1866): 442-443.
- “On Right or Left-Sided Spasm at the Onset of Epileptic Paroxysms, and On Crude Sensation Warnings, and Elaborate Mental States.” *Brain* 3.2 (July 1, 1880): 192-206.
- *Selected Writings of John Hughlings Jackson*. Edited by James Taylor. 2 Volumes. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1931.
- Jaffe, Audrey. *Vanishing Points: Dickens, Narrative, and the Subject of Omniscience*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.
- James, William. “Phantasms of the Living” [Review of Frederick W. H. Myers’s *Human Personality and Its Survival of Bodily Death*]. *Science* 9.205S (January 7, 1887): 18-20.
- Janaway, Christopher. “The Real Essence of Human Beings: Schopenhauer and the Unconscious Will,” In *Thinking the Unconscious*. Edited by Angus Nicholls and Martin Liebscher. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, 140-155.
- Johnson, Brian. “Diagnosing Prince Myshkin,” *Slavic and East European Journal* 56.3 (2012): 377-393.
- Johnston, William. *The Austrian Mind: An Intellectual and Social History, 1848-1938*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983.
- Jones, Malcolm. *Dostoevsky after Bakhtin: Readings in Dostoevsky’s Fantastic Realism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Joravsky, David. *Russian Psychology: A Critical History*. Cambridge: Blackwell Publishing, 1989.
- K—skii, D. A. “Real’nye osnovy misticheskikh iavlenii (Sravnitel’no-psikhologicheskii ocherk).” *Znanie* (February 1871): 126-176.
- Kahler, Erich. *The Inward Turn of Narrative*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973.
- Kaladiouk, Anna. “On ‘Sticking to the Fact’ and ‘Understanding Nothing’: Dostoevsky and the Scientific Method.” *Russian Review* 65. 3 (July 2006): 417-438.
- Kandinskii, V. “Kraft-Ebing. – Ueber epileptoide Dämmer-und Traumzustände.—*Ob epileptoidnykh sostoianiiakh, podobnykh grezam i snovideniiam*. (Allg. Zeitschr. f. Psychiatrie, Bd. XXXIII. Hft. 2. 1876).” *Meditinskoe Obozrenie* (August 1876): Otdel’ I, Bolezni nervnoi systemy, 107-111.

- Koretzky, Maya. "Sensational Science: Ivan Sechenov's *Reflexes of the Brain* and Revolutionary Physiology, Literature and Politics of the Russian 1860s." Undergraduate Thesis, Cornell University, 2013.
- Katz, Michael. "Dostoevsky and Natural Science." *Dostoevsky Studies* 9 (1988): 63-76.
- Knapp, Liza. *"Anna Karenina" and Others: Tolstoy's Labyrinth of Plots*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2016.
- . *The Annihilation of Inertia: Dostoevsky and Metaphysics*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern UP, 1996.
- . "Myshkin Through a Murky Glass, Guessingly," in *Dostoevsky's "The Idiot": A Critical Companion*, Edited by Liza Knapp, Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1998.
- . "'Tue-la! Tue-le!': Death Sentences, Words, and Inner Monologue in Tolstoy's Anna Karenina and 'Three More Deaths.'" *Tolstoy Studies Journal* 11 (1999): 1-19.
- Kavelin, Konstantin. "Nemetskaia sovremennaia psikhologiiia." *Vestnik Evropy* (January 1868): 308-315.
- . *Sobranie sochinenii*. 4 Volumes. St. Petersburg: Tip. M. M. Stasiulevicha, 1897-1900.
- . *Zadachi psikhologii*. St. Petersburg: 1872.
- Koshtoyants, Kh. S. *Essays on the History of Physiology in Russia*. Translated and edited by Donald B. Lindsley. Washington, D. C.: American Institute of Biological Sciences, 1964.
- Kovalevskaia, S. V. *Vospominaniia detstva, povesti*. Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Nauka", 1974.
- Krafft-Ebing, Rudolf von. *Arbeiten aus dem Gesamtgebiet der Psychiatrie und Neuropathologie*. Volume 3. Heft., Leipzig: Johann Ambrosius Barth, 1898.
- Lavrov, P. L. "Sovremennoe sostoianie psikhologii." *Otechestvennye Zapiski* 129 (April 1860): 41-73.
- Leatherbarrow, W. J. "Apocalyptic Imagery in Dostoevsky's *The Idiot* and *The Devils*." *Dostoevsky Studies* 3 (1982): 43-51.
- Lesevich, Vladimir Viktorovich. "Modnoe sueverie. (Chto takoe spiritizm i ego iavleniia, A. Sumarokova)." *Otechestvennye Zapiski* 199 (December 1871): 181-211.
- Levine, George. *Darwin and the Novelists*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988.

- George Henry Lewes, "Dickens in Relation to Criticism," *The Fortnightly Review* 11.62 (February 1872): 141-154.
- Litré, Émile. "Govoriashchie stoly i stuchashchie dukhi," Translated by Nikolai Dobroliubov, *Sovremennik* 58 (July 1856): Smes', 24-47.
- Lorck, Étienne. "Passé défini, imparfait, passé indéfini." *Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift* VI (1914): 177-191.
- Mandelker, Amy. "Illustrate and Condemn: The Phenomenology of Vision in *Anna Karenina*," *Tolstoy Studies Journal* 8 (1995-1996): 46-60.
- Martin, Raymond and John Barresi. *The Rise and Fall of Soul and Self*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2006.
- Martin, Wallace. *Recent Theories of Narrative*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986.
- Martinsen, Deborah. *Surprised by Shame: Dostoevsky's Liars and Narrative Exposure*. Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2003.
- Match, Olga. "Time and Memory in Dostoevsky's Novels, or Nastaysa Filippovan in Absentia." *The Slavic and East European Journal* 60.3 (Fall 2016): 397-421.
- Maury, Alfred. "Ob estestvennom somnambulizme i gipnotizme." Translated by anonymous. *Otechestvennye Zapiski* (June 1861): 363-384.
- McHale, Brian. "Free Indirect Discourse: A Survey of Recent Accounts." *PTL: A Journal for Descriptive Poetics and Theory of Literature* 3 (1978): 249-287.
- . "Transparent Minds Revisited," *Narrative* 20.1 (January 2012): 115-124.
- McLaughlin, Sigrid. "Some Aspects of Tolstoy's Intellectual Development: Tolstoy and Schopenhauer." *California Slavic Studies*. Volume 5. Edited by Nicholas V. Riasanovsky and Gleb Struve. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970.
- McLean, Hugh. "Claws on the Behind: Tolstoy and Darwin." *Tolstoy Studies Journal* 19 (2007): 15-32.
- Medzhibovskaya, Inessa. *Tolstoy and the Religious Culture of His Time: A Biography of a Long Conversation, 1845-1887*. New York: Lexington Books, 2008.
- Miller, Robin Feuer. *Dostoevsky and "The Idiot": Author, Narrator, and Reader*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981.
- Mochulsky, Konstantin. *Dostoevsky: His Life and Work*. Translated by Michael A. Minihan. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967.

- Moleschott, Jakob. *La circulation de la vie* [*Der Kreislauf des Lebens*, 1852]. Translated by Dr. E. Cazelles, Paris: Germer Baillière, 1866.
- Morson, Gary Saul. *Anna Karenina in Our Time: Seeing More Wisely*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007.
- Murav, Harriet. *Holy Foolishness: Dostoevsky's Novels and the Poetics of Cultural Critique*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992.
- Myers, Frederick W. H. *Human Personality and Its Survival of Bodily Death*. New Hyde Park, N.Y.: University Books, 1961.
- Nedzvetskii, V. A. *Dostoevskii: dopolneniia k kommentariu*. Moscow: Nauka, 2005.
- Niederhoff, Burkhard. "Focalization." *The Living Handbook of Narratology*. <https://www.hamburg.de/lhn/index.php/Focalization>. Accessed July 30, 2021.
- Nodier, Charles. *Souvenirs de la révolution et de l'empire*. Volume 2. Paris: Charpentier, 1864.
- Nicolosi, Riccardo. "Eksperimenty s eksperimentami: Emil' Zolia i russkii naturalizm («Privalovskie milliony»)." *Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie* 134 (April 2014): 202-220.
- O. "Kritika. Vyvody fiziologicheskoi psikhologii. (Body and Mind: an inquiry into their connection and mutual influence, specially in reference to mental disorders. By Henry Maudsley. London 1870)." *Znanie* (July 1871): Kritika, 40-54.
- Ol'khin, Pavel. *O zhiznennykh iavleniiakh v chelovecheskom tele ili populiarnaia fiziologiiia, Chast' pervaiia. Fiziologiiia chuvstv*. Edited by M. Khan. St. Petersburg: Biblioteka Meditsinskikh Nauk, 1861.
- Orwin, Donna Tussing. *Consequences of Consciousness: Turgenev, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007.
- . "Strakhov's World as a Whole: A Missing Link Between Dostoevsky and Tolstoy." *Poetics. Self. Place. Essays in Honor of Anna Lisa Crone*. Bloomington: Slavica, 2007, 473-493.
- . "Tolstoy's Antiphilosophical Philosophy in *Anna Karenina*." In *Approaches to Teaching Tolstoy's Anna Karenina*. Edited by Liza Knapp and Amy Mandelker. New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2003, 95-103.
- . *Tolstoy's Art and Thought, 1847-1880*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.
- Palmer, Alan. *Social Minds in the Novel*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2010.

- Pascal, Roy. *The Dual Voice: Free Indirect Speech and Its Functioning in the Nineteenth Century European Novel*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1977.
- Paperno, Irina. *Chernyshevsky and the Age of Realism*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988.
- “La prose des années 1870—1890.” In *Histoire de la littérature russe. Le temps du roman*. Dir. par Efim Etkind. Paris, 2005, 789-823.
- *Suicide as a Cultural Institution in Dostoevsky’s Russia*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997.
- *Who, What Am I? Tolstoy Struggles to Narrate the Self*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014.
- Pasetti, Chiara. “Hallucinations et création littéraire chez Flaubert.” *Revue Flaubert* 12 (2012). <https://flaubert.univ-rouen.fr/revue/revue6/>. Accessed July 30, 2021.
- Pickford, Henry W. *Thinking with Tolstoy and Wittgenstein: Expression, Emotion, and Art*, Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2016.
- Pisarev, Dmitrii. “Protess zhizni: Fiziologicheskie pis’ma Karla Fokhta.” *Russkoe Slovo* (September 1861): “Inostrannaia literatura,” 1-26.
- Proust, Marcel. *Contre Sainte-Beuve*. Paris: Gallimard (Pléiade), 1971.
- Rachinskii, Sergei. “Po popodu spiriticheskikh soobshchenii g. Vagnera.” *Russkii Vestnik* 117 (May 1875): 380-399.
- Rand, Nicholas. “The Hidden Soul: The Growth of the Unconscious, 1750-1900.” *American Imago* 61.3 (Fall 2004): 257-289.
- Raitiere, Martin N. *The Complicity of Friends: How George Eliot, G .H. Lewes, and John Hughlings-Jackson Encoded Herbert Spencer’s Secret*. Bucknell University Press: Lewisburg, 2012.
- Rice, James. *Dostoevsky and the Healing Art: An Essay in Literary and Medical History*. Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1985.
- Rozenberg, Bernard Solomonovich. “Epilepticheskie formy umopomeshatel’sтва i znachenie ikh dlia sudebno-psikhiatricheskoi ekspertizy.” *Moskovskaia Meditsinskaia Gazeta* 24 (June 14, 1875): 779-789.
- “Opyt psikhologii snovidenii.” *Moskovskaia Meditsinskaia Gazeta* 26 (June 29, 1874): 1073-1080.



- Ryan, Vanessa. *Thinking Without Thinking in the Victorian Novel*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012.
- Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Being and Nothingness* [1943]. Translated by Hazel Barnes. New York: Washington Square Press, 1992.
- *The Family Idiot* [1972]. Translated by Carol Cosman. 4 Volumes. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991.
- Scholes, Robert, James Phelan, and Robert Kellogg. *The Nature of Narrative* [1970]. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Sechenov, Ivan. *Izbrannye proizvedeniia*. Edited by Kh. S. Koshtoyanets. 2 Volumes. Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1952; 1956.
- *Nauchnoe Nasledstvo, Tom tretii: Ivan Mikhailovich Sechenov, Neopublikovannye raboty, perepiska i dokumenty*. Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1956.
- *Reflexes of the Brain*. Translated by S. Belsky. Cambridge: The M. I. T. Press, 1965.
- Shelgunov, Nikolai. "Bolezni chustvuiushchego organizma." *Russkoe Slovo* (September 1864): 83-138.
- Shelgunov, Nikolai. "Bolezni chustvuiushchego organizma." *Russkoe Slovo* (October 1864): 37-78.
- Shklovsky, Viktor. *Theory of Prose*. Dalkey Archive Press, 1991.
- Shuttleworth, Sally. *George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Science*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.
- Skaftymov, A. P. "Tematicheskaia kompozitsiia romana 'Idiot.'" In *Tvorcheskii put' Dostoevskogo. Sbornik Statei*. Edited by N. L. Brodskii. Leningrad: Seiatel', 1924, 131-86.
- Sklotovskii, P. "Primenenie faktov eksperimental'noi fiziologii k ob'iasneniiu i lecheniiu sluchaia epilepsii." *Meditinskii Vestnik* 16 (April 20, 1868): 143-145.
- Skura, Meredith. *The Literary Use of the Psychoanalytic Process*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981.
- Sobol, Valeria. *Febris Erotica: Lovesickness in the Russian Literary Imagination*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009.
- "In Search of an Alternative Love Plot: Tolstoy, Science, and Post-Romantic Love Narratives." *Tolstoy Studies Journal* 19 (2007): 54-74.

- Spektor, Alexander. "From Violence to Silence: Vicissitudes of Reading (in) *The Idiot*." *Slavic Review* 72.3 (Fall 2013): 552-572.
- . *Reader as Accomplice: Narrative Ethics in Dostoevsky and Nabokov*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2020.
- Sprimon, "Prof. Leidesdorf.—Ueber epileptische Geistesstörung.—*Epileptisches pomeshatel'stvo* (Medic. Jahrbücher. 2. H. p. 157)." *Meditsinskoe Obozrenie* (June 1875): Bolezni nervnoi systemy, 437-444.
- Stadlin, A. "Filosofskoe uchenie Dzhordzha Genri Luisa (Voprosy o zhizni i Dukh. Problems of Life and Mind.). *Russkii Vestnik* 125 (October 1876): 843-870.
- Strakhov, N. N. *Biografiia, pis'ma i zametki iz zapisnoi knizhki F. M. Dostoevskogo*. Edited by O. Miller. St. Petersburg, 1883.
- . *Filosofskie ocherki*. Kiev: Izdanie I. P. Matchenko, 1906.
- Sutterman, Marie-Thérèse. *Dostoïevski et Flaubert: écritures de l'épilepsie*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1993.
- Struve, Gleb. "Monologue Intérieur: The Origins of the Formula and the First Statement of Its Possibilities." *PMLA* 69 (1954): 1101-1111.
- Taylor, David C. and Susan M. Marsh. "Hughlings Jackson's Dr. Z: the paradigm of temporal lobe epilepsy revealed." *Journal of Neurology, Neurosurgery, and Psychiatry* 43 (1980): 758-767.
- Tapp, Alyson. "Embarrassment in *The Idiot*." *The Slavic and East European Journal* 60.3 (Fall 2016), 422-446.
- Tarkhov, M. "O metodakh v psikhologii (Po Vundtu)." *Biblioteka dlia chteniia* (July 1863): 1-68.
- Temkin, Owsei. *The Falling Sickness: A History of Epilepsy from the Greeks to the Beginnings of Modern Neurology*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994.
- Thibaudet, Albert. *Gustave Flaubert* [1922]. Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1935.
- Thompson, Diane Oenning. "Poetic Transformations of Scientific Facts in *Brat'ja Karamazovy*." *Dostoevsky Studies* 8 (1987): 73-91.
- Todes, Daniel. *Darwin Without Malthus: The Struggle for Existence in Russian Evolutionary Thought*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

- “From Radicalism to Scientific Convention: Biological Psychology in Russia from Sechenov to Pavlov.” Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1981.
- Tolstoi, L. N. *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*. Edited by V. G. Chertkov. 90 Volumes. Moscow and Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1928-1958.
- Tolstoy, Leo. *Anna Karenina*. Translated by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky. New York: Penguin, 2000.
- Tolstoy, Leo and Nikolaj Strakhov, *Complete Correspondence*. Edited by A. Donskov. 2 Volumes. Ottawa: Slavic Research Group, University of Ottawa, 2003.
- Troitskii, M. M. “Uspekhi psikhologicheskoi metody v Anglii so vremen Bekona i Lokka.” *Russkii Vestnik* 67 (February 1867): 788-831.
- Turner, C. J. G. “Psychology, Rhetoric and Morality in *Anna Karenina*: At the Bottom of Whose Heart?” *The Slavic and East European Journal* 39.2 (Summer 1995): 261-268.
- Ushinskii, Konstantin. “Vopros o dushe v ego sovremennom sostoianii: otryvok iz pedagogicheskoi antropologii.” *Otechestvennye Zapiski* (November 1866): 74-98.
- Vagner, Nikolai. “Pis'mo k redaktoru po povodu spiritizma.” *Vestnik Evropy* 52 (April 1875): 855-875.
- Vdovin, Alexey. “Dostoevskii i refleksy golovnoho mozga: ‘Zapiski iz podpol'ia’ v svete otkrytii I. M. Sechenova.” In *Russkii realism XIX veka: obshchestvo, znanie, povestvovanie*. Edited by M. Vaisman, A. V. Vdovin, I. Kliger and others. Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2020, 431-451.
- Vermeule, Blakey. *Why Do We Care About Literary Characters?* Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010.
- Vinitsky, Ilya. *Ghostly Paradoxes: Modern Spiritualism and Russian Culture in the Age of Realism*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009.
- Vladislavlev, Mikhail. “Materialisticheskaia psikhologiiia.” *Otechestvennye Zapiski* (December 1865): 484-508.
- “Reformatorskiiia popytki v psikhologii.” *Epokha* (September 1864): 1-82.
- “Vliianie estestvennykh nauk na psikhologiiu.” *Otechestvennye Zapiski* (January 1866): 249-270.
- Vogt, Karl. *Lettres Physiologiques [Physiologische Briefe]*. Paris: Baillière, 1875 [1845-1846].

- Voloshinov, V. N. *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* [1930]. Translated by Ladislav Matejka and I. R. Titunik. New York: Seminar Press, 1973.
- Vucinich, Alexander. *Darwin in Russian Thought*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988.
- *Science in Russian Culture*. 2 Volumes. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1970.
- Wachtel, Andrew Baruch. *The Battle for Childhood: Creation of a Russian Myth*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990.
- Weir, Justin. *Leo Tolstoy and the Alibi of Narrative*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011
- Whyte, Lancelot Law. *The Unconscious Before Freud*. New York: Basic Books, 1960.
- Woolf, Virginia. "The Russian Point of View." *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*. Edited by Andrew McNeille. Volume. 4. London: Hogarth, 1994. 181-189.
- Yanovsky, S. D. "Bolezn' F. M. Dostoevskogo." *Novoe Vremia* 1793 (February 24, 1881): 2-3.
- "Vospominaniia o Dostoevskom." *Russkii Vestnik* 176 (April 1885): 796-819.
- Young, Sarah. *Dostoevsky's "The Idiot" and the Ethical Foundations of Narrative: Reading, Narrating, Scripting*. London: Anthem Press, 2004.
- Zen'kovsky, V. V. *Istoriia Russkoi Filosofii*. 2 Volumes. Paris: YMCA Press, 1948.