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The Ethical Implications of Narrative Point of View in Dostoevsky's *The Double*

In the November 1877 entry of his *Writer's Diary*, Fedor Dostoevsky famously wrote of his short novel *The Double* (*Dvoinik*): “Повесть эта мне положительно не удалось, но идея ее была довольно светлая, и серьезнее этой идеи я никогда ничего в литературе не проводил. Но форма этой идеи повести мне не удалась совершенно.” (“I did not succeed at all with this tale, but its idea was rather lucid, and I have never treated anything in literature more serious than this idea. But I did not succeed at all with the form of this tale.”)¹ Many readers have speculated about the specific “idea” Dostoevsky was referring to, often indicating that this “idea” was the use of an alter ego or double figure to confront a protagonist with his hidden aspirations or flaws.² The issue of the tale's

¹ F. M. Dostoevsky, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridsati tomakh* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1972–1990), 26: 65. All further citations from this edition will be noted by a parenthetical reference containing the abbreviation *PSS* and the volume and page number. The quotations from *Dvoinik* included in this article are taken from the original version of the text as published in 1846. However, in almost all of the cited passages, the revised 1866 text is identical. For a detailed discussion of the changes Dostoevsky made in the 1866 version, see R. Avanesov, “Dostoevskii v rabote nad ‘Dvoinikom,’” in *Tvorcheskaia istoriia: Issledovaniia po russkoi literature: Pushkin, Griboedov, Dostoevskii, Goncharov, Ostrovskii, Turgenev*, ed. N Kir'iakovich (Moscow: Nikitiniskie subbotniki, 1927): 169–90. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are mine.

² See, for example, Konstantin Mochulsky's assessment: “From Goliadkin stem not only Dostoevsky's ‘underground men,’ but also those divided characters struggling for the integration of their personality: Versilov, Stavrogin, Ivan Karamazov” (*Dostoevsky: His Life and Work*, trans. Michael Minihan, [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967]), 50. F. Evnin, on the other hand, offers a more sociological interpretation: Goliadkin's double does not represent qualities inherent in Goliadkin himself rather manifests qualities valorized in the society around Goliadkin, and

“form,” however, has received somewhat less attention. In this paper I will examine one crucial feature of the tale’s form: Dostoevsky’s idiosyncratic handling of narrative point of view. In specific, I will be looking at the way in which Dostoevsky’s narrator presents the character Goliadkin’s emotional and psychological travails, and most importantly, how this treatment of Goliadkin might affect the *reader’s* response to Goliadkin and his plight. It is my view that Dostoevsky was experimenting with techniques for reader identification with a character, and the experiment taught him a valuable lesson, for he was never to utilize this specific technique to such a degree ever again.

In my analysis of *The Double* I will draw upon the works of several literary scholars, including Viktor Vinogradov and Mikhail Bakhtin, but I will significantly modify and extend their analyses of the novel. Noting the *narrator’s* frequent use of verbal features that are peculiar to the speech of the character Iakov Goliadkin, Vinogradov identified the following effect: “from time to time, Goliadkin himself begins to appear, hidden behind the mask of the narrator, narrating about his own adventures.”³ Similarly, Vinogradov writes that it seems that “the ‘Petersburg poem,’ at least in many of its parts, turns into a form of a story told about Goliadkin by his ‘double,’ that is, by a ‘person with his language and concepts.’”⁴ Bakhtin takes up this important insight and modifies it, identifying three voices within the tale: Goliadkin’s original voice, “uncertain” and “timid”; a second voice that Goliadkin addresses to himself, a voice that is more confident and self-satisfied (and which is primarily the voice adopted by Goliadkin’s double); and finally, an authentic “other” voice that “does not recognize Goliadkin and yet is not depicted as genuinely existing outside Goliadkin, since there are no autonomous characters in the work.”⁵ Continuing this line, Bakhtin argues that in the entire narration, “we do not find a single element that exceeds the bounds of Goliadkin’s self-consciousness, not a single word or single tone that could not have been part of his interior dialogue with himself or

Goliadkin fears being squeezed out of this society altogether. See Evnin, “Ob odnoi istoriko-literaturnoi legende (povest’ Dostoevskogo ‘Dvoinik’),” *Russkaia literature*, 1965, no. 3: 12–17.

³ V. V. Vinogradov, “K morfologii natural’nogo stilja: Opyt lingvisticheskogo analiza peterburgskoi poemu ‘Dvoinik,’” in *Izbrannye trudy: Poetika russkoi literatury* (Moscow: Nauka, 1976), 128.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 129.

⁵ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, edited and translated by Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 213 and 217.

his dialogue with his double.”⁶ Most importantly, Bakhtin follows Vinogradov’s perception that much of the novel seems to be narrated in a voice like that of Goliadkin’s double: “one gets the impression that *the narration is dialogically addressed to Goliadkin himself*, it rings in Goliadkin’s ears as another’s voice taunting him, as the voice of his double, although formally the narration is addressed to the reader.”⁷

Bakhtin’s analysis is insightful, but I don’t think the narrative situation in *The Double* is quite that straightforward. In my view, Dostoevsky creates in *The Double* a narrative figure who, although he shares some features with Goliadkin’s mocking inner voice (the voice of the double), ultimately possesses a persona of his own. Although he evinces certain affinities with Goliadkin and the double, he is ultimately a distinct figure.⁸ From the very outset of the story, the narrator’s voice displays an external perspective on events that cannot be definitively identified with Goliadkin’s own inner voice. In the opening pages of the tale, we find the narrator depicting Goliadkin’s actions from the outside, and offering independent assessments of causation and motivation. This external, evaluative point of view is conveyed through such words as “veroiatno” and “po-vidimomu,” as in these sentences: “По-видимому, и то, что он отыскал на дворе, совершенно его удовлетворило...” (PSS 1: 335) (“Apparently that which had been looking for in the courtyard satisfied him completely”); “Господин Голядкин осмотрел Петрушку кругом и, по-видимому, остался доволен” (PSS 1: 336) (“Mister Goliadkin thoroughly inspected Petrushku and, apparently, remained satisfied”).⁹

⁶ Ibid., 217.

⁷ Ibid., 217–18.

⁸ Others who share this perspective include M. F. Lomagina, who wrote in 1971 that the narrator “conducts the story from his own ideological position” (see her article “К вопросу о позиции автора в ‘Двойнике’ Достоевского,” in *Filologicheskie nauki* 14.5 [1971]: 3), and Victor Terras, who discussed the narrative voice in his 1969 monograph, *The Young Dostoevsky (1846–1849): A Critical Study* (The Hague: Mouton).

⁹ Even Vinogradov, who sees the narrative voice merging with that of Goliadkin’s double later in the story, perceives the autonomous status of the narrator in these initial scenes: “At the beginning of the poem the narrator functions as a completely detached, but very attentive, observer, who notes with curiosity the details of Goliadkin’s circumstances, his conversations and his actions. He treats Goliadkin himself completely objectively.” Vinogradov, “К морфологии natural'nogo stilja,” 136.

Similarly, the description of the dreadful weather into which Goliadkin flees after being expelled from Klara Olsufievna's party at the end of Chapter Four is provided with a scope and level of detail that does not seem to emanate from Goliadkin's own consciousness, and indeed, it seems doubtful that Goliadkin himself, in his completely distraught condition, would have been capable of such description at the time. The description begins: "Ночь была ужасная, ноябрьская, — мокрая, туманная, дождливая, снежливая, чреватая флюсами, насморками, лихорадками, жабами, горячками всех возможных родов и сортов — одним словом, всеми дарами петербургского ноября." (*PSS* 1: 355) ("The night was terrible, a November night — wet, misty, rainy, snowy, fraught with inflammations, colds, fevers, chills, and agues of every possible sort and variety—in short, with all the gifts of a Petersburg November"). The narrator pointedly tells us: "В настоящие минуты он не внимал ничему окружающему, не понимал ничего, что вокруг него делается..." (1: 356) (At such moments Goliadkin was not aware of anything around him; he didn't understand anything that was happening around him"). This view of Goliadkin and his environment emanates from a position outside of his own consciousness; it is the observation made by an external narrative figure.

Then too, at the beginning of Chapter Four, we can observe a remarkable shift in narrative tone. This is the extended passage about the splendor and magnificence of the banquet being held at Olsufy Berendeev's house. It begins:

День, торжественный день рождения Клары Олсуфьевны, единокровной дочери статского советника Берендеева, в оно время благодетеля господина Голядкина, — день, ознаменовавшийся блистательным, великолепным званым обедом, таким обедом, какого давно не видали в стенах чиновничьих квартир у Измайловского моста и около, — обедом, который походил более на какой-то пир вальтасаровский, чем на обед, — который отзывался чем-то вавилонским в отношении блеска, роскоши и приличия [...] (*PSS* 1: 348).

This day, the festive birthday of Klara Olsufievna, the only daughter of State Councillor Berendeev, who at one time was the benefactor of Mister Goliadkin, was a day marked by a dazzling, magnificent dinner party, a dinner such as had not been seen for a long time within the walls of the apartments of officials living near the Izmailov Bridge and the surrounding area; a dinner that more closely resembled Balthazar's Feast than a dinner, and gave off an air of something Babylonian with respect to its glitter, its luxuriousness, and its decorum [...]

Throughout this passage, the narrator strives to bring out all his rhetorical tools to add luster to his description of the event, and his aspiration to ascend to a higher rhetorical position is marked with a specifically *literary* connotation. As he puts it, “О, если бы я был поэт! — разумеется, по крайней мере такой, как Гомер или Пушкин; с меньшим талантом соваться нельзя — я бы непременно изобразил вам яркими красками и широкою кистью, о читатели!” (PSS 1: 348) (“Oh, would that I were a poet! — of course, a poet at least such as Homer or Pushkin; with a lesser talent it could not be attempted — I would surely paint a picture for you in bright colors and with a broad brush, o readers!”). For many readers, this passage reads as an ironic commentary on the ordinariness of the Berendeev event: the narrator’s inflated rhetoric actually serves to deflate the import of the event.¹⁰ Yet though this is surely *Dostoevsky’s* design, I am not so sure that this is the *narrator’s* intention. I think that it is possible that the narrator may be striving to transcend his status as a mundane chronicler of Goliadkin’s escapades and to ascend to a higher rhetorical position. In essence, the narrator may be replicating—or doubling—Goliadkin’s own “ambitsiia” — that desire to display a more elevated status that is demonstrated in his hiring a carriage for the day, outfitting Petrushka in fancy livery, and so on.¹¹

What is more, I think that we may see in this rhetorical outburst the narrator’s desire to soar above the dross of everyday life, and to remove himself, albeit temporarily, from the squalid and unseemly behavior of his assigned protagonist, Iakov Goliadkin. While Vinogradov finds links between this passage and the rhetorical style of Nikolai Gogol’s “The Story of How Ivan Ivanovich Quarrelled with Ivan Nikiforovich,” I think that there may be a more important link between the narrator’s attitude toward Goliadkin here and the attitude of Gogol’s narrator in *Dead Souls*

¹⁰ See, e.g., Joseph Frank, *Dostoevsky: The Seeds of Revolt, 1821–1849* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 302–3. Lomagina labels the irony in this passage “evil” (*zlaia*), and asserts that it stems from the consciousness of the narrator who knows the true worth of these gentlemen at the feast (“K voprosu,” 8–9).

¹¹ Wolf Schmid finds elements within this rhetorical passage that are reminiscent of Goliadkin’s speech and world-view (see *Der Textaufbau in den Erzählungen Dostoevskijs* [Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1973], 139–40), but despite these Goliadkin-like notes, I tend to agree with Terras that the description of that ball (among other scenes), “could not possibly have been conceived in such fashion by either Goljadkin Senior or Junior” (*The Young Dostoevsky*, 225).

toward the characters he is describing, including Chichikov. I have in mind the famous digression at the beginning of Chapter Seven when the narrator exclaims:

Счастлив писатель, который мимо характеров скучных, противных, поражающих своею печальною действительностью, приближается к характерам, являющим высокое достоинство человека [...] Великим всемирным поэтом именует его, парящим высоко над всеми другими гениями мира [...] Но не таков удел, и другая судьба писателя, дерзнувшего вызвать наружу [...] всю глубину холодных, раздробленных, повседневных характеров, которыми кишит наша земная, подчас горькая и скучная дорога... (MD, Chap. 7)

Happy is the writer who, after passing by characters that are tedious, repulsive, overwhelming in their sad actuality, is nearing characters that manifest the high dignity of man [...] A great universal poet do they style him, soaring high above all other geniuses of this world [...] Not such, however, is the lot, and different is the fate, of the writer who has dared to bring out [...] all that lurks deep within the cold, broken, workaday characters with which our earthly path, at times woeful and dreary, is beset.¹²

Clearly, Gogol's narrator feels some discomfort at having to treat lowly characters rather than lofty ones, and perhaps Dostoevsky's narrator feels something similar here. Is there some chagrin in his voice as he declares: "Обратимся лучше к господину Голядкину, единственному, истинному герою весьма правдивой повести нашей." (PSS 1: 350)

¹² N. Gogol, *Dead Souls*, trans. Bernard Guilbert Guerney (New York: Modern Library, 1965), 165–66. Cf. N. V. Gogol', *Sobranie sochinenii v devyati tomakh* (Moscow: Russkaia kniga, 1994), 5: 123. There are numerous other echoes of *Dead Souls* in *The Double*. Vinogradov lists several specific passages in which the latter work echoes the former ("K morfologii natural'nogo stilia," 117), and the editors of the *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* edition of the work find parallels between the description of the Berendeev party and the provincial ball in *Dead Souls* (see PSS 1: 486). Joseph Frank, among others, has noted that the original subtitle of the Dostoevsky work—"The Adventures of Mr. Goliadkin" ("Priklucheniia gospodina Goliadkina")—echoes the original title of Gogol's work: *The Adventures of Chichikov, or Dead Souls* (*Pokhozhdeniia Chichikova, ili Mertvye dushi*). Although Dostoevsky removed the original subtitle when he reworked the tale in the 1860s, he added a new genre designation—*poema*—which echoed the genre designation Gogol had given his novel in the 1840s.

“It would be better for us to turn to Mister Goliadkin, the only true hero of this, our very true tale” and then presents that very hero in a very strange, “чтоб не сказать более,” position (*PSS* 1: 350).

It may be significant that the bifurcation in the narrative voice from a detached chronicler to an aspiring poet occurs just before the split that occurs within Goliadkin himself. In other words, the split that overwhelms Goliadkin's world is preceded or foreshadowed by a split in the narrative consciousness where the narrator suddenly evinces a desire for a higher and loftier subject of description. From this point on, the narrator's normal tone becomes more obviously ironic and disdainful or condescending toward his hero Goliadkin. It is as if he is now disheartened to have to describe such a trivial, debased creature. More and more, as Vinogradov and Bakhtin have argued, the narrator's voice tends to take on the mocking or derisive tones of Goliadkin's second voice, that internal, self-critical voice that finds externalization in the figure of Goliadkin Junior. But I do not believe that Dostoevsky goes so far as to have his narrator's voice completely merge with that of Goliadkin or Goliadkin's double, as Vinogradov and Bakhtin would have it. I believe that although the narrator may avail himself of some elements of Goliadkin's phraseology as well as some aspects of Goliadkin Junior's mocking attitude, he maintains an independent position within the narrative.

Let us see how this works in practice by looking at one specific episode in Chapter Ten. Goliadkin Senior observes Goliadkin Junior greeting and shaking hands with other clerks at the office. Caught up in the moment, Goliadkin too shakes Junior's hand. But then Junior realizes what he has done, and he hastily pulls his hand away and adds insult to injury by assiduously wiping his hand off with a handkerchief. The narrator's description of this episode bristles with charged language. Referring to Goliadkin Senior, the narrator writes:

Но каково же было изумление, испуг и бешенство, каков же был ужас и стыд господина Голядкина-старшего, когда неприятель и смертельный враг его, неблагородный господин Голядкин-младший, заметив ошибку свою, тут же, в собственных же глазах преследуемого, невинного и вероломно обманутого им человека, без всякого стыда, без чувств, без сострадания и совести, вдруг с нестерпимым нахальством и с грубостью вырвал свою руку из руки господина Голядкина-старшего [...] (*PSS* 1: 403)

But how great was the astonishment, the frenzy, and the fury, how great was the horror and shame of Mister Goliadkin Senior when his foe and mortal enemy, the ignoble Mister Goliadkin Junior, having noticed his mistake, on the spot, before the very eyes of the persecuted and innocent man whom he had perfidiously deceived, without any shame, without any feeling, without compassion or conscience, suddenly with unbearable arrogance and coarseness tore his hand from the hand of Mister Goliadkin Senior [...]

A short time later, Goliadkin observes his rival consorting with his boss, and the narrator comments: “Но всех более, по-видимому, был рад и чувствовал удовольствия недостойный и неблагородный враг господина Голядкина.” (*PSS* 1: 406) (“But more than anyone else, it appeared, the unworthy and ignoble enemy of Mister Goliadkin felt joy and satisfaction.”)

Clearly, such epithets as these—“недостойный” (“unworthy”), “неблагородный” (“ignoble”)—reflect Goliadkin’s own negative assessment of his rival’s character. But the hyperbolic emotionalism of the rhetoric—“с нестерпимым нахальством и с грубостью” (“with intolerable arrogance and coarseness”), “без сострадания и совести” (“without compassion and conscience”)—has the effect of undercutting the seriousness of the moment through its sheer excess. The effect of this charged language is to mock the person who might be feeling the emotions it expresses. Such mockery would, of course, accord well with Goliadkin Junior’s attitude toward Goliadkin Senior. But I think that the specific formulations found in this passage cannot at this point be attributed either to Goliadkin Junior or to Goliadkin Senior (though the words may belong to the latter’s verbal store and the attitude belongs to the former’s mental orientation). Rather, they come from the narrator, and they tell us something important about the attitude of the narrator himself.

Let me explain my reasoning further. First of all, Goliadkin Senior may indeed use such charged language when mentally abusing Goliadkin Junior (“...у него и характер такой, нрава он такого игривого, скверного, — подлец он такой, вертлявый такой, лизун, лизоблюд...” [*PSS* 1: 381] [“he has such a character; he has such a tricky, foul manner--he’s such a cad, such a shifty fellow, a toady, a lickspittle”]) or even when writing a letter (“Приписываю всё сие недоразумению, гнусной клевете, зависти и недоброжелательству тех, коих справедливо могу наименовать ожесточеннейшими врагами моими [...] эти особи погибнут не иначе как от собственной неблагопристойности и

развращенности сердца” [PSS 1: 389] [“I ascribe all of this to misunderstanding, to base slander, to the envy and ill-will of those whom I may justly call my most embittered enemies [...] these individuals will perish solely through their own indecency and depravity”]). But when Goliadkin Senior uses this type of language, he does it in all seriousness. There is no irony involved. He means what he thinks and writes. And when Goliadkin Junior mocks Goliadkin Senior, he does not use the device of hyperbole or exaggeration. Either he repeats Goliadkin Senior’s words back to him with a mocking twist (“...хитрить мы будем с тобой, Яков Петрович, хитрить” [PSS 1: 376] [“We’ll use cunning, Iakov Petrovich, we’ll cunning”]) or he mocks his conduct, calling him “наш русский Фоблаз” (PSS 1: 403) (“our Russian Faublas”). In his mockery of Goliadkin Senior, Goliadkin Junior does not resort to the kind of elevated, hyper-charged rhetoric found in the passages quoted above.

What we have, then, is a special situation where the narrator uses Goliadkin Senior’s own vocabulary in reference to Goliadkin Junior, but does so with an ironic twist in a spirit akin to Goliadkin Junior’s mockery of Goliadkin Senior. Yet despite the overlap in vocabulary and spirit with the two Goliadkins, the narrator remains an independent entity who both observes Goliadkin from the outside and reports his inner thoughts, but does so in a most unflattering light.¹³ It is this disparaging narrative stance, I believe, that poses a serious problem in terms of the reader’s response to Goliadkin and the novel.

Many critics have found the overall presentation of Goliadkin’s story to be disorienting or confusing: it is not clear whether Goliadkin is entirely imagining the existence of his double. Is there someone in his environment upon whom he projects his paranoid fantasies? Is it possible that a double actually exists? The conversations that the narrator reports Goliadkin having with others (such as his co-workers or Petrushka) only

¹³ Here I disagree with Bakhtin, who declared: “In the narration too we do not find a single element that exceeds the bounds of Goliadkin’s self-consciousness, not a single word or a single tone that could not have been part of his interior dialogue with himself or his dialogue with his double” (*Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, 217). My view is closer to that of Lomagina, who finds in *The Double* “two consciousnesses— that of the narrator and that of the hero” (“К вопросу,” 8). Victor Terras also perceives that the narrator of the tale is distinct from Goliadkin and presents him in a negative light. As Terras puts it: “Now we see that Dostoevsky’s narrator is persecuting this ‘type’ with a merciless irony even in his most tragic plight” (*The Young Dostoevsky*, 229).

add to the confusion.¹⁴ I do not think, however, that this confusion is as much a problem for the reader as the fact that the dominant orientation of the narrator's discourse presents Goliadkin in such a negative light, and uses the hero's own verbal structures and mental attitudes to do so. After all, one might enjoy the sense of disorientation created by the narrator, and admire Dostoevsky's skill in having the reader share Goliadkin's own confusion. But if the *narrator* treats his main character so disdainfully, then how can the *reader* have any sympathy for him? Why would we even want to put ourselves through this experience?

This problem of reader response to the presentation of the main character has troubled readers from the moment of the novel's initial publication. Apollon Grigor'ev, for one, declared in a review in 1846 that *The Double* was "a story of madness, analyzed, to be sure, to the extreme, but nevertheless as repulsive [*otvratitel'nyi*] as a corpse" (*PSS* 1: 491). He later wrote to Gogol about the problem of the presentation of the main character: "You grasp the meaning of this monstrous creation, you are destroyed, you grow shallow, you merge with its infinitely insignificant hero—and it becomes sad for you to be a human" (*PSS* 1: 491). Faced with a potentially unsympathetic character to begin with, and then finding the narrator mocking that character in the character's own voice, the reader might readily feel an urge to turn away from Goliadkin and his trials altogether, maybe even feeling a shuddering queasiness, if not the outright revulsion described by Grigor'ev.

I think that Dostoevsky came to realize the problem he had created in fashioning a narrator who evinces this kind of mockery of his protagonist "from within" as it were. In the future, he would handle the issue of a

¹⁴ W. J. Leatherbarrow notes that "from the introduction of the double onward the reader shares Goliadkin's view of reality, a view which is conditioned by the hero's self-destructive drive and encroaching insanity" ("The Rag with Ambition: The Problem of Self-Will in Dostoevsky's 'Bednye Lyudi' and 'Dvoynik'," *Modern Language Review* 68.3 [1973]: 616). Louis Breger comments further on this identification with Goliadkin's perspective: "If we let ourselves, we feel his fear, shame, and confusion [...] It is left unclear for us because that is the way it is for Goliadkin; we are made to share the experience of someone whose sense of a unified self is crumbling" (*Dostoevsky: The Author as Psychoanalyst* [New York: New York University Press, 1989], 118). David Gasparetti adds that it is "just this experience of reader discomfort and alienation that lies at the heart of Dostoevskij's self-effacing discourse" ("*The Double: Dostoevskij's Self-Effacing Narrative*," *Slavic and East European Journal* 33.2 [1989]: 231). See also Wolf Schmid, *Der Textaufbau*, pp. 87–89 and 123–25.

narrator's relationship to (and identification with) the main character in very different ways. One way would be to reconfigure the narrator's adoption of the main character's negative self-image: instead of underscoring this self-image from an external, ironic perspective, he would turn the main character himself into the narrator, and he would manipulate this narrator-protagonist's self-awareness and self-presentation. This we find skillfully executed in the *Notes from the Underground*, where the underground man, talking about his own character, turns his own negative self-image into one of the principal themes of the work, and mocks his own foibles with biting sarcasm. (It is worth noting in this regard that Dostoevsky himself referred to Goliadkin Junior in his notebook in the 1870s as "my chief underground type ("мой главнейший подпольный тип"; PSS 1: 489).¹⁵

The second way of handling the narrator-character relationship would be to continue the close identification of the narrator with the character's emotional and psychological perspective, but to drop the mocking tone and become more neutral or even sympathetic to the character. I think we can see this well displayed in a work such as *Crime and Punishment*. Raskol'nikov can certainly be as self-critical as Goliadkin, and the narrator faithfully reproduces Raskol'nikov's inner struggles in great detail, but the narrative voice has shed the mockery that informed the charged, hyperbolic rhetoric of the narrator's discourse in *The Double*.

Bakhtin argues that the main difference between the narration in *The Double* and Dostoevsky's later narrations is that the latter "make no effort to register all the minutest movements of the hero, they are not at all long-winded, and are completely devoid of dry repetitions."¹⁶ This assertion may be partly true: we certainly do not see the high degree of repetition of a character's verbal tics that we find in the narrator's discourse in *The Double*.¹⁷ But I would argue that in many passages in Dostoevsky's later

¹⁵ A. L. Bem argues that one can find the seeds of the underground man's desire to draw a magic circle around his ego (*ia*) in Goliadkin's repeated assertion "ia sam po sebe." See Bem, "'Nos' i 'Dvoinik'" in *O Dostoevskom: Sbornik statei* (Prague: Petropolis), 3: 162.

¹⁶ Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 226.

¹⁷ Even the revised version of *The Double* reflects Dostoevsky's effort to eliminate some of the discursiveness and repetitiveness of the original. In this he was surely reacting to the criticism of the early reviewers of the piece. See, for example, the reviews cited in the editorial notes to the PSS edition of the text. Dostoevsky himself noted at the time: "Everyone speaks with one voice; that is, *our people* and the entire

novels we find abundant evidence of repetition, minute detail, and so on. Here, for example, is a passage that I found truly at random in *Crime and Punishment*:

Именно: он никак не мог понять и объяснить себе, почему он, усталый, измученный, которому было бы всего выгоднее возвратиться домой самым кратчайшим и прямым путем, воротился домой через Сенную площадь, на которую ему было совсем лишнее идти. Крюк был небольшой, но очевидный и совершенно ненужный [...] Но зачем же, спрашивал он всегда, зачем же такая важная, такая решительная для него и в то же время такая в высшей степени случайная встреча на Сенной (по которой даже и идти ему незачем) подошла как раз теперь к такому часу, к такой минуте в его жизни, именно к такому настроению его духа и к таким именно обстоятельствам, при которых только и могла она, эта встреча, произвести самое решительное и самое окончательное действие на всю судьбу его?" (PSS 6: 50–51)

...he could in no way understand or explain to himself why he, for whom it would have been most profitable, tired and worn out as he was, to return home by the shortest and most direct way, instead returned home through the Haymarket, where he had no need at all to go. The detour was not a long one, but it was obvious and totally unnecessary [...] But why, he always asked, had such an important, decisive, and at the same time highly accidental encounter in the Haymarket (where he did not even have any reason to go) come just then, at such an hour and at such a moment in his life, to meet him precisely in such a state of mind and precisely in such circumstances as alone would enable it, this encounter, to produce the most decisive and final effect on his entire fate?"¹⁸

It is not the absence of repetition or minute detail that differentiates this passage from analogous passages in *The Double*. Rather, it is the lack of the mocking, ironic tone in which the narrator presents the material that is different.

As I have already noted, Raskol'nikov certainly has the ability to criticize himself, as did Goliadkin. The key difference is that the narrator of *Crime and Punishment* does not embrace that critical attitude. And

public have found that Goliadkin is so boring and limp, so drawn out, that one can't even read it" (PSS 28.1: 119).

¹⁸ F. Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, trans. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (New York: Vintage Classics, 1993), 60.

when Raskol'nikov experiences extreme anguish or despair, this state is not conveyed to the reader in mocking tones of hyperbole and exaggeration. It is my view that the critical reaction to *The Double* proved very instructive to Dostoevsky. He took a closer look at his narrative presentation of his hero's plight, and decided not to develop further the technique he had utilized there. He now realized that narrative perspective and tone might have ethical implications. Such a perspective and such a tone could have a profound effect upon a reader's reaction to the characters whose stories are being told. If Dostoevsky wished to engage the reader's interest in (and ultimately, compassion for) his heroes, he would have to change the tone of his narrating voice. As it turns out, Dostoevsky never repeated the experiment he had conducted in *The Double*, and world literature is much the richer for it.