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Shakespearean Fools in Dostoevsky: Toward an Ethics of Love

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by

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ABSTRACT

Shakespearean Fools in Dostoevsky: Toward an Ethics of Love

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Shakespearean Fools in Dostoevsky: Toward an Ethics of Love, examines the connection between Shakespeare's tragic fools and Dostoevsky's "predatory" (*khishchniki*) and holy fools (*iurodivye*). It charts how the transition from clown to wise fool in Dostoevsky's novels is mediated by his reception of the metamorphosis the figure of the fool undergoes in Shakespeare's work. In this transition, the "superfluous" fool (Russian intellectuals uprooted from the country in the 1840s) transforms into the "demonic" fool (ruthless Westernized revolutionaries of the 1860s) and finally into the holy fool, which this project argues is Dostoevsky's ultimate, ethical response to these earlier types. The dissertation begins by comparing the Western and Eastern fool and proceeds thematically, structurally, and literary-historically. Shakespeare and Dostoevsky both employ a familiar figure to identify and filter moral-ethical issues, and by putting these fools and their functions in dialogue, it seeks an understanding of the fools' aesthetic-ethical purpose beyond their immediate historical and literary contexts. This comparative study of Shakespeare's and Dostoevsky's fools contends that a focus on Dostoevsky's ethics of active love (*deatel'naia liubov'*) and love as suffering

(*umilenie*) provides a window into Shakespeare's fools' care as performance. Dialectically addressing the evolution of the similarities and contradictions that arise in and between these authors' fools, a new scholarly avenue emerges from a transcultural understanding of Dostoevsky's and Shakespeare's developing ethics as an ethics of love opposed to rational egoism, a popular philosophical position in Russian nineteenth-century intellectual circles and a nascent perspective in Shakespeare.

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The great revelation perhaps never did come. Instead, there were little daily miracles, illuminations, matches struck unexpectedly in the dark.

—Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*

INTRODUCTION

Beyond his many references to the dramatist in his letters, notes, and novels, Dostoevsky illustrated, quite literally, the lifelong interest Shakespeare held for him at critical moments in his life and work, when he drew Shakespeare's portrait in his manuscript for *Demons*.[1] Dostoevsky's fascination with the bard and his inquiry into the latter's "accursed questions" began when only a teenager. In his letter to his brother Mikhail from January 1, 1840, the nineteen-year-old Dostoevsky praises authors like Homer, Byron, and Pushkin, and singles out Shakespeare and Schiller as poets who "presented the correct sketch of man" (*PSS* 28:68)[2]. Although Dostoevsky read Shakespeare's sonnets and comedies, his overall interest lay in the tragedies, as he looked to Shakespearean suffering heroes for answers to the new philosophical, political, and ethical conundrums which Dostoevsky saw as a result of intellectual exchange with Europe, an interaction that shocked and shaped the literary and cultural movements in Russia.[3]

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[1] НИОР РГБ, Ф. 93, карт. 1, карт. 3, ед. Хр. 4, № 4, л. 1. See also Konstantin Barsht, Risunki i kalligrafia F.M. Dostoevskogo, pp. 65-70, for portrait analysis and the possible sources of the image. According to Barsht, the likeliest source is G.E. Opiz's portrait of Shakespeare which Dostoevsky could have seen in a Petersburg salon. Dostoevsky's drawing, like Opiz's painting, is of a left-side profile of Shakespeare.

[2] For Dostoevsky's works and correspondences, I am using the complete works, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridtsati tomakh* (Leningrad: Academy of Sciences USSR, 1972–1990) (Dostoevsky [1972] 1990), henceforth noted as *PSS*, followed by a volume and page number. Some volumes, such as volume 28, are composed of additional books, hence the notation, 28:1 or 28:2. I will be using parenthetical in-text citations and not footnotes when quoting from Shakespeare and Dostoevsky's works. Translations from the Russian are mine except otherwise noted. For the transliteration of Russian words, I follow the Library of Congress system without diacritics; I use the *-y* and not *-ii* adjectival ending for proper names, e.g., "Dostoevsky" and not "Dostoevskii." The soft sign and the umlaut are omitted in proper names, and the *-ë* is transliterated as *-yo*, e.g., Alyona, not Alëna, and Sofia rather than Sof'ia. All quotes from Shakespeare are from Folger Shakespeare Library (Shakespeare 1992), https://shakespeare.folger.edu

[3] The first mention of Shakespeare is in Alexander Sumarokov's poem, "Epistola o stikhotvortsve" (1748). In the eighteenth century, Shakespeare penetrated into Russia in French and German translations. Jean-François Ducis' translations acted as primary sources for later Russian translations. Nikolai Gnedich's 1808 Russian translation of Lear is based off of Ducis's translation. The same year also saw a translation of Othello by Ivan

"For Dostoevsky," writes N.V. Zakharov, "Shakespeare was already a 'Russian' writer."[4] This opinion is incontestable in view of the cult of Shakespeare in Russia especially for the generation of the 1840s (among whom are such prominent figures as Alexander Pushkin, Mikhail Lermontov, Ivan Goncharov, Ivan Turgenev, Alexander Herzen, and Fyodor Dostoevsky himself) which was responsible for making Shakespeare fashionable among the educated. In one of the essays published in his magazine, *Time* (Vremia) Dostoevsky argues that European (by this, he mainly means French and German) society has so far underappreciated Shakespeare, who was known only to scholars and intellectuals. As a contrast to this alleged position of neglect, Dostoevsky presents Russia as the only worthy heir to the Shakespearean word, which had entered the "flesh and blood of Russian society" (*PSS* 19:17). Shakespeare's characters' search for meaning in a rapidly changing world where everything is at stake attracted Dostoevsky's investigative mind, particularly because of their complex understanding of themselves and others as players on a stage, representative in Shakespeare of the whole Elizabethan and Jacobean worldview. To Dostoevsky, Shakespeare was not only of his own time, for he saw in the dramatist's familiar follies characteristic of the Russian people as well, and as such, Dostoevsky's Shakespeare was to provide him with answers to Russia's schismatic identity, the wide gap between the intelligentsia and the common people [*narod*] and the sub-schisms within the intelligentsia itself, oscillating between different variants of Westernism and Populist ideologies.

Vel'iaminov, and in 1811 Stepan Viskovatov translated Hamlet. More translations followed in the later decades. For a full list see N.V. Zakharov, "Shekspir v Rossii" http://www.world-shake.ru/ru/Encyclopaedia/3672.html

[4] N.V. Zakaharov, " 'Shekspirism' Dostoevskogo: vvedenie k problem," available http://w-shakespeare.ru/library/shekspirovskie-chteniya-2006-28.html

Dostoevsky viewed this division as deeply problematic and dangerous.[5] After all, Dostoevsky considered Shakespeare "a prophet sent by God to reveal to us the mystery of man, of the human soul" (*PSS* 11:237). The politically- and ideologically-saturated decade of the 1860s, which fomented moods of revolution and spawned advocates for social utilitarianism, left Hegelianism, and variants of positivism with sources in France, Germany, and England, shattered Dostoevsky's conservative utopian vision of Russia, whose special destiny was to lead all other nations.

The religiopolitical idea of Moscow as a spiritual center for Christianity, or "Third Rome," was first advertised by a fifteenth-century monk, Filofei of Pskov, and was later resuscitated in the Slavophile rhetoric of the nineteenth century.[6] Dostoevsky, himself a proponent of this all-encompassing idea, believed in Russia's potential, a country he saw in need of rebirth and renewal. The new word would ring true to people's ears and pull them out of the relentless ideological machine fueled by revolutionaries and idealogues who operated on the maxim of means justifying the ends and thrived on Western philosophical ideas. Among the popular ideologies of Russian intellectuals of the time were, significantly, Ludwig Feuerbach's deification of humanity as a "Man-god" and Max Stirner's glorification of the ego. This study focuses on the self-corrosion of Dostoevsky's problematic and ambivalent heroes and how their inward self-laceration draws on contemporary political positions like these, which Dostoevsky believed stemmed from weak moral and ethical roots.

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[5] For a detailed history on the political and ideological trends in Russia, see Andrzej Walicki, *A History of Russian Thought: From the Enlightenment to Marxism*, trans. by Hilda Andrews-Rusiecka (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1979).

[6] For more on this topic, see Katerina Clark, *Moscow, the Fourth Rome* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011).

Hence, the argument of this study endeavors to show that the problems of Dostoevsky's heroes are not merely historically specific but concerned with ethical questions like those posed by Shakespeare's tragic and tragi-comic heroes. The magnification of contemporary issues made Dostoevsky consider it his imperative to ring the bells of conscience and guide Russia onto the right path, and on this journey toward better possibilities, Shakespeare was going to give him a hand in understanding the root of unethical thoughts and deeds and the suppression of affect.

The purpose of Dostoevsky's lifelong engagement with Shakespeare went beyond mere emulation. Dostoevsky was seeking a solution to human, and not exclusively Russian issues. At the same time, however, his Slavophilic tendencies—especially in the winter of his life when he associated himself with such Slavophiles as Ivan Kireevsky, Aleksei Khomiakov, and Konstantin Aksakov—shifted his focus to finding specifically Russian solutions. Dostoevsky believed he was attempting to solve the riddle put forth by Shakespeare, but he understood that being dedicated to a riddle and solving it, were two entirely different ways of being. The former is philosophizing; the latter offers final answers. Last words and finalizability, however, did not interest Dostoevsky as much as asking questions and knowing the stakes. He writes to Vsevolod Soloviev in July of 1876, "I have never allowed myself in my writings to follow my *certain* convictions to their end, to say the *very last word*" (*PSS* 29:2:101). To him, a human being remained an enigma, an idea at which he arrived as early as in 1839 when he writes to his brother, "[t]he enigma must be solved," to which he adds, as if looking forward to the portrait of himself as a great artist of indeterminacy, "and if you spend your life at it, don't say that you've wasted your time; I

occupy myself with this enigma because I wish to be a human being" (*PSS* 28:63). For Dostoevsky, Shakespeare's plays were the ideal vessel through which to transmit ethical concerns about crime, immorality, rebellion against God, and absurdity. This reverence for Shakespeare can, nonetheless, at times be seen as discontent with Shakespeare, especially with Shakespeare's tragic endings when considered as a type of finalizability. Suicide, martyrdom, revenge, and motivelessly malign actions run directly counter to Dostoevsky's program of renewal. If Dostoevsky had been given the option of rewriting Shakespeare's endings, perhaps he would have, and to an extent, he did. Dostoevsky borrows the medium and the message from Shakespeare, stylizing both according to his own talents and unique understanding of different types of issues, follies, inclinations, and motivations, all of which he thought could only be countered with active empathy and care, in other words, with love.

Shakespeare's theater and the form of the play as nursery for the dialogic in literature find their place in Dostoevsky's novels, "a genuine polyphony of fully valid voices," as Mikhail Bakhtin refers to the singularity of Dostoevsky's novels.[7] Bakhtin's singling out of Dostoevsky as one of the inventors of plurality of voices, however, has left some scholars dissatisfied. Among the most notable critics to return to the question of polyphony in Dostoevsky is A.V. Lunacharsky, who in his essay, "On Dostoevsky's 'Multi-voicedness'," raises the question of polyphony in Shakespeare. Lunacharsky states, "I allow myself to radically disagree with Bakhtin, precisely on the example of Shakespeare. [. . .] Shakespeare

[7] Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, ed. and trans. Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 67.

is polyphonic to the extreme."[8] Lunacharsky's further assessment, "Dostoevsky's novels are in fact magnificently staged dialogues," is appropriate considering Dostoevsky's style. Though the characters speak in prose, their intricately philosophical and long-winded monologues have the quality of Shakespearean soliloquies. His novels are therefore dramatic novels, a qualification which did not escape Virginia Woolf, whose review of Dostoevsky's novels in terms of their theatricality is quite apt, "We open the door and find ourselves in a room full of Russian generals, the tutors of Russian generals, their step-daughters and cousins, and crowds of miscellaneous people who are all talking at the tops of their voices about their most private affairs."[9] His adoption of unpopular styles is partly why the fervid critic Vissarion Belinsky who had once hailed Dostoevsky as a rising star, deeming his first novel, *Poor Folk* as belonging to the Naturalist School in the style of Nikolai Gogol, detested Dostoevsky's phantasmagoric novel *The Double*. The literal split of *The Double*'s main character, Goliadkin, one of the earliest manifestations of Dostoevsky's polyphony, baffled readers who were not ready for the fantastic, nor artistic experimentation and psychological explorations of the personality schism, a technique tuned to its highest pitch in Shakespeare.

Dostoevsky's adaptation of Shakespeare's motif of doubles, despite caustic criticism, was the novelist's first step in appropriating the dialogic as the primary form of all his major novels. Like Shakespeare, Dostoevsky was simultaneously interested in the visibility of action as the manifestation of subterranean issues, the contrast between what seems and what

[88] A.V. Lunacharsky, "O 'mnogogolosnosti' Dostoevskogo," was first published in the journal Novyi mir, 1929, No. 10, http://lunacharsky.newgod.su/lib/ss-tom-1/o-mnogogolosnosti-dostoevskogo/

[9] Virginia Woolf, "The Russian Point of View," first published in journal, *The Common Reader*. Now available, https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/w/woolf/virginia/w91c/chapter16.html

appears, and the psychic drama reflective of political and cultural problems internalize by characters. The present study concerns itself with these complexities and how the two authors explore and comment on the dialectical relationship between human beings, between aspects of the self, and between self and other. I argue that Dostoevsky adopts Shakespearean elements of spectacle, including voice, props, motifs of doubling, loud inner monologues, and like Shakespeare, holds a mirror to society as he actively searches for possible paths in navigating life's riddles. Thus, the two authors' works resemble life manuals laying out the poetics of existence and offering a window onto the process of presenting social issues in the form of these riddles, followed by the acknowledgment that certain solutions are worth the pursuit. The medium of literature, however, is insufficient on its own to effectively filter sociopolitical and moral-ethical issues through art, a fact of which Shakespeare and Dostoevsky are aware. They both use a common phenomenon recognized by all, a familiar and often revered figure who has a license to speak, the identifier of problems, the riddler and the riddle-solver. Enter: Fool.

At first glance, the reader is disoriented by the large gallery of fools in Shakespeare and Dostoevsky, hence, I focus on a specific type of fool—the ethical fool—which I argue is what the evolution of foolishness in the two writers points toward. *Shakespearean Fools in Dostoevsky* is not a comprehensive study of the authors' oeuvres, but rather focuses on works where their treatment of foolishness and active love is particularly engaging and significant. Dostoevsky and Shakespeare each develop a system of representing fools over time. This study deals with the representations of fools that appear in each author's more mature works, and how in both cases, the system of fools encompasses an abstract level of the archetype as

well as concrete or localized variants of the cultural and literary fool. The authors problematize such archetypes and existing morphologies of fools. In my comparative morphology, I attempt not to lose sight of the fact that Shakespeare was, for Dostoevsky, part of a still nascent literary heritage in nineteenth-century Russia.[10] The unique systems of fools in each writer have separately provided points of departure for successful studies, but so far not a comparative one. Other studies, however, remain invaluable in tracing other parallels between Shakespeare and Dostoevsky. Among these, Roger L. Cox's *Between Heaven and Earth: Shakespeare, Dostoevsky, and the Meaning of Christian Tragedy* explores the question of good and evil within the Christian context of Shakespeare's nominally Anglican England and Dostoevsky's Orthodox Russia. Although the phenomenon of holy foolishness is not explored in Cox's work, it nonetheless offers indirect insight into reading Shakespeare through Dostoevsky's holy fools. Karen Stepanian's more recent study, *Shakespeare, Bakhtin, and Dostoevsky: Heroes and Authors in Great Times*, discusses polyphony and tragedy in these three authors' works, directions that my work also explores. The reader interested primarily in holy foolishness in Dostoevsky is advised to consult Harriet Murav's *Holy Foolishness: Dostoevsky's Novels and the Poetics of Cultural Critique*, a seminal work which focuses on Dostoevsky's holy fools in his four main novels.[11]

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[10] For a detailed view of the theory and the processes of world literature, see Dionýz Ďurišin, *Theory of Interliterary Process*, trans. by Jessie Kocmanová and Zdenek Pistek (Bratislava: Slovak Academy of Sciences, 1989).

[11] Although not on the character of the fool or foolishness, these studies are invaluable in tracing other parallels between Shakespeare and Dostoevsky: M. P. Alekseev, et al, eds, *Shekspir i russkaia kul'tura XIX veka* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1988) is a collection of studies put together by scholars at Pushkinsii Dom, among whom, Iu.D. Levin, pinpoints links between Shakespeare and Dostoevsky. See also, Roger L. Cox's *Between Heaven and Earth: Shakespeare, Dostoevsky, and the Meaning of Christian Tragedy* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969); Robert Belknap, "Shakespeare and the Possessed," in *Dostoevsky Studies* 5 (1984): 63-69, offers a concise comparison between Shakespeare's Hamlet, Henry IV and Dostoevsky's Demons. See, K.A. Stepanian, *Shekspir, Bakhtin, i Dostoevsky: geroi i avtory v bol'shom vremeni* (Moscow: Global Kom, 2016);

Hence, the concern of this book is how the fools in Shakespeare and Dostoevsky are collaborative in their form and function across time and space. Such a common yet enigmatic phenomenon as the fool, endowed with rich cultural, political, religious, and literary force, opens a new window onto this literary relationship and confronts the slew of problems and anxieties that each writer brings to the fore. Situating the literary fool within contemporary contexts generates a specific interliterary web, and as a complex representational concept, it leads to the sources of transformation and renewal, underscoring the nuances of why England and Russia required recourse to a phenomenon as old as the fool. As such, I am not only concerned with the formal dimensions of the fool in these two writers, but also with the fool as the paradigm of a wider reality, more than a mere transitory localism or an accidental shift.

In this study, I have endeavored to reconstruct the evolution of foolishness based on the ethical need the authors foreground, thus, the change of focus from clowns, buffoons, and rogues to the wise and ethical fool.[12] The first part of my argument is to deal with how the two writers develop their own way of looking at the world, which reflects the transformation in their fools. As the authors' ethical priorities change, so do their fools' who become less comically oriented, turning into figures who can ponder the "accursed questions" and attempt to live actively *with* others. Already in clowns like Feste from *Twelfth Night* and Touchstone from *As You Like It*, we sense a melancholy, suffering fool, far removed from the more archetypal, rustic clown of the early comedies. Dostoevsky and his fools manifest a similar

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Maurice Hunt's comparative study, *The Divine Face in Four Writers: Shakespeare, Dostoyevsky, Hesse, and C.S. Lewis* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2015) is on Christian and classical prototypes of the divine face that find their expressions in the four writers. See Harriet Murav, *Holy Foolishness: Dostoevsky's Novels and the Poetics of Cultural Critique* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1992).

[12] On the cultural context of the wisdom of the fool in Shakespeare's Entland, see Robert Hillis Goldsmith, *Wise Fools in Shakespeare* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania University Press, 1968).

arc. The ethical fools in both writers bear more on their backs, so to speak, by dwelling actively in care, which I use interchangeably with phrases such as "active love" and "active empathy." What both authors' ethical fools share, is their sense of responsibility and attunement to the other. While in Shakespeare the fool dwells poetically but also secularly, in Dostoevsky, the fool's word (*Slovo*) is tied to Christ's gospel. In both however, the fool's word is communal and closer to the original understanding of *logos*, from the Indo-European root, *leg*, one of the meanings of which is "to bind together."

While this study makes use of the history of the fool in each context, it is not a history of the fool, but a study of a certain type of fool who has a specific function in Shakespeare and Dostoevsky. While in Dostoevsky, the ethical fools are share some characteristics with holy fool types and are stylized version of the Russian archetype espoused with cultural and religious connotations, [13] in Shakespeare, the fool is not exactly a holy fool, since holy foolishness is a phenomenon that flourished in the East and not in the West, but there are studies that base Shakespeare's characters on the economy of salvation.[14] In English, we use "holy fool" and "holy foolishness" when referring to *iurodivyi* and *iurodstvo*, respectively.

[13] *Slovar' drevnerusskogo iazyka* [Dictionary of Medieval Russian Language] defines *iurodivyi* as "mad, crazy, fool from birth; the people consider the holy fools to be people of God, often finding in senseless deeds their deep sense, even in premonition or a prediction; the church also recognizes fools for Christ's sake, for the sake of accepting the humble face of foolishness; but in the ecclesiastical significance, the holy fool is sometimes stupid, unreasonable, foolhardy." A. Sobolevsky in *Zhurnal ministerstva narodnogo prosveshcheniia* [Journal of the Ministry of Education] (May 1894) claims that texts before the end of the fourteenth century give only the form with the initial 'u.'

[14] Sarah Beckwith, *Shakespeare and the Grammar of Forgiveness* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011) analyzes the nature of forgiveness (or as she calls it, the "rites" of forgiveness), penance, and repentance in select Shakespeare plays. See also Sara J. Pyle, *Mirth and Morality in Shakespeare's Holy Fools*, Volume 33 in *Studies in British Literature* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1998) characterizes some Shakespearean fools as holy fools. See also Sean Benson, *Shakespearean Resurrection: The Art of Almost Raising the Dead* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2009) for a more technical explanation of Shakespeare's use of Christian themes.

However, lexically, *iurod* does not connote holiness: *iu-* is a privative prefix and *rod-* means birth, generation.[15] The word itself changed in the eleventh century, from *ourod* to *iurod* (*urodivyi* or *urod* in Church Slavonic), and in the seventeenth century, there were already two meanings with the same root: *urod* meaning degenerate, and *iurod* was associated with foolishness or madness.[16] The phenomenon goes through moments of popularity and decline in the medieval period, withstanding abuses and the *ukazi,*[17] to be reinvented in the popular imagination of late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Russia. While the Greek word *salos* was used to describe holy fools, the oldest Slavic renditions of *bui* and *buiak*, meaning "stupid," were also often used to refer to all kinds of people with eccentric behavior. The *iurodivye* were also called "fools for Christ's sake," inspired by Paul's "We *are* fools for Christ's sake, but ye *are* wise in Christ; we *are* weak, but ye *are* strong; ye *are* honourable, but we *are* despised." [18] Paul indicates that the followers of the way speak real wisdom that is misrecognized or misunderstood as foolishness by the world. These variations reflect the fluidity of the fool, a concept that continuously transformed, while preserving some of its

[15] *Slovar' sovremennogo russkogo literaturnogo iazika* tom xvii [Dictionary of Modern Russian Literary Language volume xvii] (Moscow, 1965) defines the word *iurodivyi* as "blessed ascetic-madman or one who takes the form of a madman and, who, in the opinion of religious people, has the gift of prophecy." *Slovar' drevnerusskogo iazika* [Dictionary of Medieval Russian Language] defines *iurodivyi* as "mad, crazy, fool from birth; the people consider the holy fools to be people of God, often finding in senseless deeds their deep sense, even in premonition or a prediction; the church also recognizes fools for Christ's sake, for the sake of accepting the humble face of foolishness; but in the ecclesiastical significance, the holy fool is sometimes stupid, unreasonable, foolhardy]. A. Sobolevsky in *Zhournal ministerstva narodnogo prosveshchenia* [Journal of the Ministry of Education] (May 1894) claims that texts before the end of the fourteenth century give only the form with the initial "u."

[16] See Sergey Ivanov, *Holy Fools in Byzantium and Beyond*, trans. Simon Franklin (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2006).

[17] Ukazi were the proclamations of Peter the Great. Ewa M. Thompson, in "The Archetypes of the Holy Fool in Russian Literature" in *Canadian Slavonic Papers / Revue Canadienne des Slavistes* 15.3 (1973): 245-273, elaborates on these events, showing that iurodstvo outlasted this "no-nonsense" proclamations (251). Thompson notes that the only people who were never questioned about not joining the army at a time of severe drafts, were the *iurodivye*, and that these excuses were largely not abused, as in, people did not pretend to be *iurodivye* to avoid going to the army. This, according to Thompson, indicates the seriousness in regard to *iurodstvo.*

[18] 1 Corinthians 4:10, *The Holy Bible: Authorized King James Version*.

initial characteristics: eccentricity both in behavior and attire, scandalous attitude, agitation, asceticism, unconcerned with means of living, prophecy, piety, and irrationality.

Because Shakespeare and Dostoevsky ascribe the label fool to a great number of their characters, I will be using Apollon Grigoriev's general categorization of "meek" and "predatory" types to compartmentalize them.[19] This is not an attempt to portray the fools as dualistic, but to understand their leanings since the categories are blurred in both authors. From destructive pride to meekness, from amorality to active care, Shakespeare and Dostoevsky apply the term fool to a wide variety of their characters, or in the absence of this label, gesture toward the fool's other typologies. In terms of further categorization, those who have studied the fool have generally taken one of the two following approaches (sometimes both): historical and/or archetypal.[20] The medieval distinctions of "natural" and "artificial" or performative are also utilized by both Shakespeare and Dostoevsky as a general category distinction.[21] Another point is that the terms "clown," "jester," "holy fool" or other variations of the fool will not be used interchangeably since they do not mean the same thing, nor do they have the same exact functions in Shakespeare and Dostoevsky. There is no consensus in the fool/clown literary canon about the usage of these terms; some scholars have used the terms interchangeably, while others have differentiated between them. In the English context,

[19] See the section on Apollon Grigoriev's commentary on Dostoevsky's types in N.T. Ashimbaeva and Vera Biron, *Literaturno-memorial'nyi muzei Dostoevskogo* [Literary-Memorial Museum of Dostoevsky] (St Petersburg: Serebrianyi vek, 2006.)

[20] John H. Towsen's groundbreaking work, *Clowns* (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1976) traces the clown in multiple societies (not only in Western civilization). Equally impressive is the work of William Willeford's *The Fool and His Scepter* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1969) is a study that takes a Jungian approach to the fool, explaining it as an ahistorical phenomenon, folly being an essential aspect of human nature.

[21] Before clinical psychology, the mentally ill have been considered as "natural" fools.

those who use the terms synonymously trace clowning to its rustic origins, noting the Elizabethan stage merry-maker's similarities with the ancient and medieval buffoon.[22]

The uncategorizability of the fool is also conspicuous in the English setting.[23] Donald Perret in his study of the French soties and morality plays, furnishes a possible explanation for this lack of categorization regarding the fool. Perret dissects the etymology of *sot* and *fol*, concluding that "sot is a wise but benign fool, a clown (or clod), a jester, and an acrobat whose purpose on stage is to reveal and ridicule the madness of the world. The folly that he performs is sottise, or foolishness." Perret writes, "The fol tends to be a dangerous, malicious character whose purpose is to personify the vices of the moral and social order."[24] Other scholars define *sot* silly and foolish, while conflating *folie* with madness.[25] Sure enough, the

[22] See Olive Mary Busby, *Studies in the Development of the Fool in the Elizabethan Drama* (Oxford University Press, 1923).

[23] Although the fool's origins are somewhat hazy, the figure appears in ancient forms of drama, as well as in medieval morality plays of the fifteenth century, and continues to thrive during the Tudor period unlike the mystery plays that express God's eternal truth and his plan for humanity. The morality drama, also known as moral interludes, was not subject to the official censures and ecclesiastical criticism in the 1560s and 1570s against representation unlike the medieval mystery cycles. This detour of historical analysis is necessary to really understand the source of the stage fool in order to claim the fool in Shakespeare, "Shakespearean." Elizabethan dramatists combine their knowledge of the existing sources to create a fool that is the culmination of that which has come before it. Michael O'Connell astutely notes that there is, however, the "problem" of geography: John Lyly, George Peele, and Thomas Kyd were Londoners where there is no record of the mystery cycles except from the 1380s, and Christopher Marlowe was from Canterbury, which after the fifteenth century, did not welcome any of the cycles. In Norwich, where Greene grew up, the plays were discontinued before he was old enough to comprehend them. Thomas Heywood was born ten years after Shakespeare. Ben Jonson and Thomas Dekker, too, were Londoners, and so we are left with the Bard to be the Elizabethan dramatist who was highly likely to have witnessed these massive pageants that were the Corpus Christi mystery cycles. Stephen Greenblatt, *Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2004) situates Shakespeare in the context of the bard's presumed childhood. In the sixteenth century, players would perform the entire Bible in one day in short segments, and in other times, they would focus more on specific stories. These traveling pageants were so extravagant that they attracted people from other towns. The towns would also generate great revenue due to the fame of these performances, and this is probably one of the reasons why they were not forbidden sooner. It is possible that little Will attended these pageants that came to town, bringing with them all the trappings and excitement of a festival.

[24] Perret 412; 413.

[25] What is also significant in these assertions that will later support the wise fool/fool differentiation is that the "wise" fool is also a jester. Cathleen T. McLoughlin in her historical analysis, *Shakespeare, Rabelais, and the*

court fools have also been referred to as "court jesters." We speak, for instance, of Edward IV's jester, Scogan.[26] The most obvious distinction between the fool and the clown is their language and the latter's slapstick style of humor, which in comparison to the wise fool, might seem uncouth. Robert Armin, an actor in the Lord Chamberlain's Men, who performed clown roles on Shakespeare's stage, carefully draws a line between himself and the clown. Distancing himself from the clowns who have preceded him (William "Will" Sommers, Richard Tarlton, William "Will" Kempe), in his *Quips upon questions*, Armin discards the role: "Go too, hee's gone, and in his bodyes stead, / His name will live long after he is dead."[27] Bakhtin, too, differentiates between the fool and the clown: "the flippant and debasing dictums of the clown [. . .] who brings the conversation down to a strongly emphasized bodily level of food, drink, digestion, and sexual life."[28] In England, clowns have largely remained separate from the story's main plot. One theory suggests that because clowns were largely opposed to nobility, as a result, they were considered uncouth to represent or even parody the aristocracy.[29] The transformation of the English clown to Shakespeare's stage fool is largely attributed to Armin and his careful observation of the changing tastes of the noble patrons. But this is only one side of story.

Comical- Historical (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2000) discusses the influences of the French drama on English theater.

[26] Goldsmith in *Wise Fools in Shakespeare* speaks of the connection between the medieval wandering minstrels and jesters: "merging of the professional jester with the licensed fool gave rise to a new species—the artificial fool or court jester. The fusion must have taken place as early as the twelfth century" (7). This is also the time period that draws a distinction between the "natural" and "artificial" fools.

[27] Robert Armin, *Quips upon questions*, E3.31-32 in William Jewell, *The Golden Cabinet of True Treasure* (London: John Crosley, 1612; Ann Arbor: Text Creation Partnership, 2011), 167, http://name.umdl.umich.edu/A04486.0001.001.

[28] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 20.

[29] Dana E. Aspinall, "Robert Armin" in *Fools and Jesters in Literature, Art, and History: A Bio-bibliographical Sourcebook*, ed. Vicki K. Janik (Greenwood Press, 1998), 45.

It is not the purpose of this study to provide a historical overview to show how the various types share, or derive from, a common "ancestor," for this link has long since been established. [30] In Dostoevsky, archetypal attributes are used subtly and sparingly to characterize specific characters as fool-like or gesture toward the idea of foolishness in relation to that character. There are also those types of fools seen as without merit. The eccentricity or shocking behavior this kind of *iurodivyi* exerts is not for the sake of social protest, nor does it have any ethical imperatives. Dostoevsky does not choose these types to act as spokespersons for moral-ethical questions, nor are they representative of a tradition for which the public showed a penchant in the nineteenth century. Over time, the holy fool's extreme behavior dissipates, and the holy fool becomes less "extravagant" and more prophetic.[31] Dostoevsky's unsympathetic attitude toward fools that strongly resemble the medieval wandering types is representative of the decline and unpopularity of such holy fools during his time, eccentrics who would abide in society without any apparent piety, wisdom, or meekness. For Dostoevsky and for the intelligentsia, eccentricity alone was no longer a sufficient cause for reverence.[32] Dostoevsky nostalgically looks back to the bold holy fool of

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[30] See Ewa M. Thompson, in "The Archetypes of the Holy Fool in Russian Literature" in *Canadian Slavonic Papers / Revue Canadienne des Slavistes* 15.3 (1973): 245-273, who carefully traces the various types of the holy fool: *strannik* (wanderer), starets (elder, monk), buffoon, jester, *durachok* (idiot), *blazhennyi* (God's fool). Thompson shows how some of these figures who are sometimes categorized under one umbrella, iurodivyi, can at times be indistinguishable. Thompson, however, focuses on the *blazhennyi* type to draw parallels between Gnosticism and the *blazhennyi* fool who was already familiar to the Russian religious mind.

[31] Ivanov, p. 407.

[32] Eccentricity is a rather general term: an eccentric could be a severely insane individual or someone with mental disabilities. Thompson talks about the treatment and attitude toward such "eccentricity" in Russia by emphasizing that in in the nineteenth century in Russia there were unwritten rules about who was considered insane or sane: "Russian society tended to display tolerance and even approval of the irrational behavior of holy fools" (48). Although "westernizers" tried to introduce European-style psychiatric clinics and care in Russia, and "compiled statistics and wrote reports" these efforts were met with resistance. "In both Muscovite and Imperial Russia," says Thompson, "majority of people resisted the imposition of foreign taxonomy on their own" (48). This is was the case with my town's iurodivyi, Liova, whom we did not consider to be insane, but

the past who had license to castigate authority figures without punishment at a time when holy fools were feared and revered even by the mightiest, and when it was considered a form of social protest.[33]

Shakespeare's and Dostoevsky's ethical fool, I argue, identify and filter moral-ethical issues, and by putting these fools and their functions in dialogue, I seek an understanding of the fools' aesthetic-ethical purpose beyond their immediate historical and literary contexts. In my comparative study of Shakespeare's and Dostoevsky's fools, I contend that a focus on Dostoevsky's ethics of active love (*deatelnaia liubov'*) and love as suffering (*umilenie*) also provides a window into Shakespeare's fools' care as performance. I submit that dialectically addressing the evolution of the similarities and contradictions that arise in and between these authors' fools, a new scholarly avenue emerges from a transcultural understanding of Dostoevsky's and Shakespeare's developing ethics as an ethics of love opposed to rational

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rather forward in his remarks, and aggressive with people he did not like. Thompson makes a crucial point about the notion of mental illness in Russia: those who were known to have paranormal "abilities" (whether feigned or not), were not considered to be insane. According to Thompson, there was a social consensus about the concept of sanity and insanity, and it seems that those who would speak blunt truths whether political or moral, and also those persons who were prophetic, or claimed to have a connection with other "worlds" and "truths" were not seen as mentally unstable. Peter the Great tried to get rid of the fluidity of such taxonomy, but failed in three edicts. One of his edicts was against the klikushi, a certain type of iurodivyi who would let out shrieks as a sign of a communication with other worlds. These edicts were unsuccessful, and as Thompson puts it, "the two taxonomies coexisted in an uneasy symbiosis" (49).

[33] Alexander Pushkin's Boris Godunov, for instance, captures this moment in time. The aggression of Pushkin's holy fool, unlike that of Simyon, has a specific purpose—to uncover folly in others. Nikolka the play's iurodivyi, voices uncomfortable truths about the tsar, Boris Godunov, who the narod believes is a usurper, and the murderer of the young tsarevich Dmitri. Nikolka dares to point a finger at Godunov in the presence of the people gathered outside St Basil's Cathedral in Moscow. Nikolka, like his medieval prototype, wears an iron cap. The stage direction reads, "Iurodivyi enters, wearing an iron cap and draped with chains, surrounded by boys." [Входит юродивый в железной шапке, обвешанный веригами, окруженный мальчишками,] 89. During Pushkin's time, this sort of daring behavior was no longer the norm. But the scene finds its parallels in the vitae and tales of the sixteenth century. Pushkin's play and the tales capture the fluidity of the "holy fool" phenomenon. The tsars' and Pushkin's sympathetic ("sympathetic" because the author does not ascribe to Nikolka degrading terms such as "stupid," or "simpleton") attitude is different from that of the boyars. It is the boyars who call Nikolka a durak (stupid) in their disapproval of the latter's forwardness. Pushkin here gives us a glimpse of a character who was very much part of the narod's conscience and its voice.

egoism, a popular philosophical position in Russian nineteenth-century intellectual circles and a nascent perspective in Shakespeare.

My research methodology relies upon literary, theatrical, medical, archival, and intellectual historiographic materials. Chapter 1 of this study, "House of Fools: Sowing Seeds" explores the variegated categorizations of foolishness in Shakespeare's and Dostoevsky's early works. The chapter offers a comparative reading of Dostoevsky's *Notes from the Dead House* and select comedies and tragicomedies of Shakespeare, archetypal elements in these early fools and the necessity of ethical transformation. Chapter 2, "Fool as a Schismatic: The Hamlet Question," puts a finer point on Hamlet's oscillation, on nineteenth-century Russian reinterpretations of Hamlet, the intellectual movements of the 1840s and 1860s, and cultural translation. It is a reader's reception study of Shakespeare's Hamlet and Dostoevsky's Rodion Raskolnikov from Crime and Punishment, and the difficulty of the discernment between ethical and non-ethical choices. My third chapter, "Female Fools: Gender Reversals," focuses on gender and disability in Shakespeare's plays and Dostoevsky's novels from a cross-cultural perspective, exploring the function female fools critical of the rigorous taxonomizing toward eccentricity and "madness" play. The chapter investigates attempts to identify physical traits of the female figures, which would make perceived madness or hysteria overtly visible and the evidence from the scientific community within these two cultures that those with mental disability or perceived madness and deviancy should be incarcerated and othered to ease social anxieties. The *coda*, "'The very heart of the whole': Fool as a Hero" is a recapitulation of the dialectical synthesis that both Shakespeare and Dostoevsky strive to achieve in their later work

through a new figure whose practical care and active empathy-in-the world do not contradict the archetypal attributes the authors ascribe this persona.

The fools in Shakespeare and in Dostoevsky, while embodying some archetypal characteristics, are also actively defying them, establishing a distance between themselves as newly stylized figures and the fools of the past. The reconfigured fools in Shakespeare and Dostoevsky therefore have a constantly evolving function, that is continuously being defined and redefined, as the fools both wittingly and unconsciously attempt to rid of archetypal baggage in order to seem more modern and give weight to their words and deeds. The fool's ambivalence in both writers' works is part of the fool's function, a character who does not have to be labeled as such in order to be performing the function of the fool. This study argues that the ethical fools' behavior is more "natural" and less feigned or "artificial," meaning, they are what they seem to be. This transparency is crucial to the ethical fool's function in Shakespeare and Dostoevsky, as they are often represented as genuine teachers of care. As such, they cannot be artificially performing ethics; it must come from the heart, gradually, but without feigning.

CHAPTER 1: HOUSE OF FOOLS: SOWING SEEDS

And perhaps his fool's cap I only imagined,

This clown simply wasn't wearing one.

—Vladimir Visotsky, "To Yengibarov from the Audience"

With Shakespeare in Mind

Dostoevsky's involvement in the Petrashevsky Circle, a secret group in St. Petersburg representative of the philosophical and political Left in the 1840s, was a prelude to his evolution as an artist. In the morning of April 23, 1849, Tsar Nikolai I's gendarmes arrested the members of the group, including Dostoevsky, on charges of conspiracy and preliminarily imprisoned them at the Peter and Paul Fortress to await the tsar's verdict. The arrest was part of Nikolai I's ongoing efforts in curtailing any effort in independent thought and sympathies for revolutions erupting in different parts of Europe, which he viewed as a threat to his absolute power. A few months before the infamous mock execution of December 22, 1849 at Semionovsky Square, Dostoevsky wrote to his brother, Mikhail, thanking him for the books he had received: "I am particularly thankful for the Shakespeare" (*PSS* 28:179). Shakespeare was fresh on his mind on the arduous journey to katorga in Omsk and perhaps nourished Dostoevsky as he sat for long hours in the open sledge, enduring the frosty winter air and the constant clinking of the chains on his feet.

Born out of his ordeals, Dostoevsky's semi-autobiographical novel, *The Notes from the House of the Dead*, published seven years after his release from prison in 1854, is more

than a study in human nature. It is the seedbed of Shakespearean fools. The world of the *Dead House* is the world of reversals and the carnivalesque within the confining walls of prison, where the fool's theatricality and performance of laughter act as subversive tools. Mikhail Bakhtin attributes freedom and license to carnival, whether in Roman Saturnalia or in medieval Feast of Fools, as he contrasts similar festivals with "gloomy" official systems of oppression which he describes as "eternal," "immovable," "absolute," and "unchangeable."[34] It is not entirely surprising that the *Dead House* is Dostoevsky's most fool-heavy novel in terms of its various typologies, since fools have known to be most popular in times of trouble, operating within systems of power as licensed critics of society. "[T]hrough all the stages of historic development," writes Bakhtin, "feasts were linked to moments of crisis, of breaking points in the cycle of nature or in the life of society and man. Moments of death and revival, of change and renewal always led to a festive perception of the world."[35] Dostoevsky's celebration of his years of ordeal and Shakespeare's theater as a space for renewal are the changes that crises necessitate. Anselm Haverkamp has called Shakespeare's theater "a visible space between the spheres of politics and law" which "opened up a new perspective on normativity."[36] Shakespeare's subtle addressing of political issues, especially, or Dostoevsky's participations in secret literary circles attests to the extremes of officialdom and tyranny. Stephen Greenblatt in his influential *Shakespearean Negotiations* studies Shakespeare's plays in view of Queen Elizabeth's massive police apparatus that relied on the

[34] Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 83.
[35] *Ibid*., 9.
[36] Anselm Haverkamp, *Shakespearean Genealogies of Power: A Whispering of Nothing in Hamlet, Richard II, Julius Caesar, Macbeth, The Merchant of Venice, and The Winter's Tale* (London: Routledge, 2011), 22, discusses the role of latency in Shakespeare's theater.

theatrics of power and its audience's feelings of terror and fear. Greenblatt writes, "As in theater, the audience must be powerfully engaged by this visible presence and at the same time held at a respectful distance from it."[37] Likewise, Nikolai I's spectacular intimidation and torture tactics, pogroms and decrees do not give a lesser impression of this monarch's iron fists. The execution of the Earl of Essex in 1601 and Nikolai I's mock execution of the Petrashevtsy in 1849 are historical parallels divided by space and time that speak to each other in their expression of absolute power in the form of staged lessons. Dostoevsky had a taste of the theatricals of power when he stood on that day bound to a pole awaiting his execution by the firing squad. The last-minute reversal of the verdict, the dance with death and the person on the scaffold are unsurprisingly recurring topics and images in Dostoevsky's work. Both Dostoevsky's and Shakespeare's fools were born out of necessity, but it is the authors' and their fools' unconventional approach to circumstance that makes them eccentrics in the eyes of those who would cast them as deviants.

Dostoevsky, like Shakespeare, utilizes the fool to dramatize power structures, its hierarchically-ordered participants and observers in order to foreground moral-ethical issues which then raise questions about crime and punishment, pain and suffering. "One might even have been astonished," thinks the narrator in the *Dead House*, Alexander Petrovich Gorianchikov, "watching these untrained actors, and reflected involuntarily on how much energy and talent goes to waste in our Mother Russia" (*PSS* 4:128). In the four years under constant observation, Dostoevsky himself thought to have penetrated the marrow of the Russian mind through his careful gaze. "I lived into their lives;" he writes to Mikhail, "it

[37] Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations*, 64.

seems as if I know them really well. [. . .] What miraculous people!" (*PSS* 28:1:172). Parody and laughter in the face of power are not sufficient enough for the author who wanted more than symptomatic treatments, thus his new reconstruction of the fool figure and foolishness as wisdom needed to do more in revealing harmful personalities and tendencies and countering those traits with active deeds. Only then there could be any hope for regeneration and a large-scale renewal for the individuals that make up the masses. Because the *Dead House*, as an early work, is only an exercise in this direction, some fools remain within their traditional role of the jester, as mere entertainers. In order to sketch out his own figure of the fool, Dostoevsky outlines the individual stories, actions, and behaviors of the convicts using various Shakespearean fools and their functions as schemata.

Shakespeare's vibrant fools furnished him with the necessary learning tools within prison where Dostoevsky scrutinized and reevaluated human behavior and motivations, including his own. The incarcerated men in Omsk, including Dostoevsky, were not allowed to have any books except the Bible, a fact that for an avid reader like Dostoevsky was hard to fathom, so he placed the burden of education on memory to prompt creativity. "I won't even try to tell you what transformations were undergone by my soul, my faith, my mind, and my heart in those four years," Dostoevsky writes to Mikhail upon his release in 1854 (*PSS* 28:1:62). Like Dostoevsky, his narrator, Alexander Petrovich Gorianchikov, whose last name means "suffering," encounters a wide range of personality types, from predatory to meek, mad to sane, artificial to natural, a spectrum already familiar to Dostoevsky from

Shakespeare's typologies of fools.[38] The *Dead House* is a collection of seemingly disparate stories of individuals who are connected through their shared space and criminality. But aside from their "official" roles as transgressors, they can be categorized under the large umbrella of "fool." All the main characters are referred to at some point or other by "fool" or by its variants, such as "clown," "buffoon," "jester," "holy fool," and "pantomime." Like acting troupes from Shakespeare's day, Dostoevsky's house of fools is a traveling body of actors that moves in a series of spectacles in the novel's four major scenes: the bathhouse, the feast of Christmas, theater, and the prison hospital which doubles as a psychiatric ward. Though the prisoners are not professional actors nor are they in a play where the Dramatis Personae would indicate them as "official" fools, like Shakespearean fools, they are malleable figures. They double as incarcerated men and fools and perform various roles. A jester, for instance, is sometimes in the role of pantomime or is a stage buffoon in the novel's theater scene or outside of it. Similar to the differentiation between "murderers on impulse and murderers by profession" (*PSS* 4:11), the novel's fools are also at times dichotomous—natural and artificial. While such distinctions are due to each author's own cultural and literary understanding of the fool, they both come to it through the motif of doubling.

Parodic Doubles

A technique as old as the fool, the rudimentary understanding of doubling rests on the recycling of actors, using the same actor for different roles. The prisoner-fool pair doubles as

[38] The appeal of Shakespeare behind bars is not a new phenomenon. Rob Pensalfini, *Prison Shakespeare: For These Deep Shames and Great Indignities* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016) traces Shakespeare play performances in prisons back to over two centuries ago, first recorded in the late eighteenth century in Australia. Pensalfini's findings reveal that studies about the benefits of Prison Shakespeare programs as rehabilitative and therapeutic are only a recent development.

character-actor in a manner more thematic, however, than pragmatic. [39] Dostoevsky's experimentations with his fool types and their various functions in the *Dead House* are among his first steps in recreating a Shakespearean wise fool, and in this case, it is remarkably in a prison setting which acts as a microcosm for Russia. Dostoevsky frequently uses the prison population as a double for the so-called *narod*. In the beginning the narrator only sees inhumanity and incivility in his fellow incarcerated men, which at the end of the novel changes its tune into a lesson in educability. Considering Dostoevsky's own view of his prison experiences as a lesson in his own ethical directions. Already in that sledge on his way to Omsk, Dostoevsky viewed his suffering as part of his moral-ethical education, "I froze to the marrow, and could scarcely thaw myself in the warm rooms at the stations. It was a miracle: the journey recovered me completely" (*PSS* 28:1:168). He turned his suffering into an exercise in redemption and renewal.

[39] King and fool pairing is historically among the most popular, as audiences have greatly appreciated the spectacle of the fool mocking or impersonating a powerful figure. Even kings and emperors have appreciated the humor of reversals and have played along. Alexander and Diogenes, Hal and Falstaff in *Henry IV Part I*, Boris Godunov and Nikolka in Pushkin's *Boris Godunov*, Ivan the Terrible and Nikolai are among the many famous pairings. Even if some of their stories are apocryphal, the persistence of this technique of the fool speaks to the fool's boldness and versatility. William Willeford, *Fool and His Scepter*, 33, explains our fondness and tolerance of the fool through what he calls the "mechanism of 'projection' by which we see in the fool our own foolish tendencies," whereby we too become fools. This duality, Willeford explains, is not just in terms of fool and non-fool, but also the of fool's doubling with his or her own self, conspicuous in the medieval jester who carried a bauble made of a replica of the fool's head or the ventriloquist's dummy. One of Holbein's illustrations in the first print of Erasmus' *In Praise of Folly* a work crucial to the development of the Shakespearean fool, is a succinct representation of this idea: the fool wearing his cap looks straight into his bauble, creating the illusion of mirror, a motif adopted from Sebastian Brant's *Ship of Fools*. What is intriguing in the mirror image is that the image in the mirror (not the one looking in) has his tongue sticking out at the viewer. The representation of the self in the mirror is rather unexpected and requires the viewer to look again. This action incites serious self-reflection. Towsen, the collector of great and "foolish" anecdotes from all over the world, in his *Clowns*, 24, recounts a story about Seneca, who disapproving of his wife's choice of getting a fool, declares to her that if he, in fact, wanted to waste his time looking at a fool, he would just look in the mirror. The anecdote also implies the doubling of author and fool.

The major scenes of the *Dead House* compartmentalize the fools and their performances spatially, ritualistically, and theatrically. The narrator depicts the first scene, the bathhouse as infernal, "I thought we had come into Hell. Imagine a room some twelve paces in length and the same in breadth, into which was packed what might perhaps be upwards of a hundred men, [. . .] Steam that half blinded the eyes, soot, filth, a press so thick that there was nowhere to put one's foot down" (*PSS* 4:98), where laughter might seem to be an unexpected reaction: "The whole place roared with shouting and laughter, to the accompaniment of a hundred chains dragging on the floor" (*PSS* 4:99). The naked bodies "scarlet from the steam" (*PSS* 4:98), the incarcerated men engaging in a cultural ritual and beating themselves with birch-twigs for health purposes is the carnivalesque.[40] In this rare occasion of washing oneself, the bathhouse stands outside of officialdom, and no matter how hellish in its portrayals, it cannot be commensurate with routine and everydayness, which for the narrator are the truly monstrous as explained by Alexander Petrovich: "But if he were compelled, for example, to pour water from one bucket into another and back into the first again, grind sand, or laboriously transfer a heap of soil from one place to another and back again, the prisoner, I think, would hang himself after a few days, or commit a thousand more crimes, choosing any way of escape, even death" (*PSS* 4:20). The Russian *bania* is tied to Christian holidays, which explains why the prisoners are given bath before Christmas. Dostoevsky, however, interlaces Dantesque images of hell with baptism, and singles out Isaiah Fomich, a Jewish convict, who is often "roaring with laughter" and "in a strident,

[40] For the ritualistic aspects of the Russian *bania*, see Dale Pesmen, *Russia and Soul* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), especially Chapter 5, "The Baths: A Celebration for Soul and Body," which also includes testimonials from visitors to a *bania* in Omsk.

crazy voice [. . .] shrilled out his aria" (*PSS* 4:99). Fomich is likely modeled on Shakespeare's Shylock, "a miser with a hooked nose," as E.E. Stoll ungenerously puts it in his 1911 essay, which popularized the notion of Shylock as a comic villain. Shylock is often referred to as "villain," "villain Jew," and "devil" by the play's Christians, and is often the subject of mockery throughout *The Merchant of Venice*. Shakespeare poses Shylock's suffering as one of perception. Similarly, Dostoevsky Fomich's Semitic features and his religious ritual of prayer are exaggerated through the limited narrative voice which adapts to the perception of other characters who view Fomich as an eccentric and a fool, hence, as the "other." Fomich's attempt at recreating his traditional garb within the prison walls, for instance, is seen as signs of foolishness in the eyes of the largely Orthodox Christian prison population of the novel.

Shylock and Fomich, as intertextual and cross-cultural doubles, complicate the role of the fool as a clown since they are not officially clowns, but merely seen as clown types. Nor is this role self-imposed on their part. Shylock undergoes a much harsher treatment because he does not possess a so-called "fool's license," therefore, his otherness is amplified, a separation that reflects the reality of Jewish people in Shakespeare's England. Fomich, on the other hand, whose unusual appearance and demeanor in the *Dead House* is entertaining to the others, earns the label of the fool, which also entails the ambivalent "perks" that come with such license: "On both his arms he fastened phylacteries and on his head, right on his forehead, he bound a certain little wooden box, which made him look as though he had some sort of queer horn projecting from his forehead. [. . .] He read his [prayers] in a sing-song voice, shouted, spat, turned himself round, made sweeping and comical gestures" (*PSS* 4:95).

The double entendre of the "wooden box" as a kippot and the fool's coxcomb is not to be missed. Fomich's other ways of unconsciously participating in foolishness include his singing voice, which identifies him as a Shakespearean fool from the comedies whose trade largely consists of song and dance. In the role of the fool, Fomich "began to chant his triumphant prophecy straight into the major's face, waving his arms meanwhile" (*PSS* 4:96). Fomich's odd-seeming prayers and chants, his attire, and beliefs substantiate his role as a holy fool type, a figure easily recognizable to the majority Russian prison population of the novel. Due to this categorization, Fomich's foolishness allows for impunity: "The major was dumbfounded; but at last, snorting with laughter, he called him a fool to his face" (*PSS* 4:96). Like a fool who has license to speak, Isaiah Fomich defies the caricature and villainous major, the all-seeing "eight-eyes," as he is often referred to by the incarcerated, and is not punished for his misconduct.

Ambiguous Categorization

What primarily characterize Shylock and Fomich as fool types is their defiant behavior, whether through laughter or other acts of reversal, as well as the authors' sympathies. In Shylock's case, these are most prevalent in his humanitarian speech,

> […] I am a Jew. Hath
> not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs,
> dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with
> the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject
> to the same diseases, healed by the same means,
> warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as
> a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed?
> if you tickle us, do we not laugh? if you poison
> us, do we not die? (3.1.57-65)

Here Shakespeare is making a commentary on the racial prejudices against Jews in England during his time. Shylock's message and his role as a suffering fool is however complicated by his desire to avenge his abusers. He is often referred to as the "devil" in the play, while Fomich is considered to be a clown type with a seemingly diabolical roaring laughter whose main role as an entertainer has been designated for him by other characters. In Shakespeare's play, it is both the characters and the Shakespearean audience who laugh at Shylock and his misfortunes because they believe he deserves his punishment and plight. Shakespeare does not completely categorize Shylock as a fool, but nonetheless gives him the hallmarks of the fool. Shylock's speech is anatomical and is focused on body parts, a characteristic of the medieval clown whose entertainment relied on bodily humor, what Bakhtin calls, "the lower body stratum."[41] Studies on clowns and fools have so far avoided focusing on the fool's function and technique, but are rather, either on the audience's reaction, specifically laughter, or on theories of comedy.[42]

Scientific studies have not devoted much time to tickling, either, which is an ancient stimulus for laughter. The main source of stimulus in primates and toddlers is tickling. Tickling, like the fool's interaction with the audience, is dialogical. One is unable to tickle oneself, but one is able to laugh at oneself. It requires the other. In his seminal study of laughter, *Laughter: A Scientific Investigation*, Robert R. Provine writes, "Tickle [. . .] is the product of a social interaction between a tickler, the person or thing administering the

[41] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 21.
[42] Jon Davison, *Clown: Reading in Theatre Practice* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), raises this question by looking at theories of comedy (Oliver Double) and theories of laughter (in Ken Dodd, Sigmund Freud, et al.) to show that theories do not explain why the fool does what the fool does.

stimulus, and the tickle, the person being stimulated. Just as social interactions are the key to understanding the tickling, tickling is essential to understanding the associated social vocalization of laughter."[43] It is important that Shylock's speech is directed at Salarino, one of the "Christian fools with varnish'd faces" (2.5.34). The feeling is mutual, as each sees the other as a fool, though it is important as to what type of a fool. Possibly modeled after the Vice figure in medieval mystery plays, Shylock is familiar and comical to the audience, but not necessarily to the characters on the stage. Salanio feels threatened by Shylock: "Let me say 'amen' betimes, lest the devil cross my prayer, / for here he comes in the likeness of a Jew" (3.1.20-21). The audiences found the figure of the devil entertaining in the live action at the moment when he was being chased away from the stage as punishment. The Vice and hilarity conjoin in function in the 1567 moral interlude, *The Life and Repentance of Mary Magdalene*, a play where scholars of Tudor drama have extensively scrutinized the hybrid nature of the Vice and the stage clown. The Vice here, named Infidelity, cites Horace and quotes in Latin. Such plays, although moralizing in their nature, do not usually extend moral characteristics to their Vice character. This is not the case in *Magdalene*. Two other plays important in this regard are *Respublica* (1553) and *Satire of the Three Estates* (1540?), which show the development of the Vice as a complex character. Just the title of Ben Jonson's 1616 play, *The Devil is an Ass*, displays the changed attitudes toward this once-petrifying figure. To show the historical reality of Jews in England, Shakespeare changes the innocuous fate of Vices and devils from the mystery plays by writing a tragi-comic character with archetypal attributes of the Vice, who in Shakespeare's play has a harsher ending, a religious

[43] Provine, 76.

conversion, and the confiscation of his earnings. Shylock, like Fomich, is not killed off at the end as he belongs to the ambivalent category of the fool who is also supposed to be simulatenously comical as a descendant of the Vice figure. Dostoevsky's sympathy for Fomich is in the descriptions of Fomich's outward appearance, "the unforgettable and supremely blissful face of Isaiah Fomich" (PSS: 136), which is also Dostoevsky's way of gesturing at Fomich's holy foolishness, a type revered by Dostoevsky and the *narod* for its meekness. At the same time however, Fomich, like Shylock is a comical figure, "how comical," and "how laughable that man was!" (*PSS* 4:92). Comedy, however, is *perceived* comedy in both cases, related to their strangeness and unconscious ability to amaze and startle.

Unlike Shylock who is often aware of his theatrics and performativity, Fomich is presented to be a "natural" fool, meaning, his comedic behavior and outpourings are not intentional or part of his performative "act": "There was in him a most comical mingling of *naïveté*, stupidity [*glupost'*], sharpness, impudence, artlessness, timidity, boastfulness, and effrontery" (*PSS* 4:93). Dostoevsky uses *glupost'* to emphasize that while meekness can be considered silliness, it is not stupidity [*durachestvo*]. In the case of the latter, eccentric behavior as indecorous excess was not perceived as exemplary. The excess in Shylock lies in his craftiness which gives the other characters an additional motive to see Shylock as a "predatory" type. In the play, excess is in terms of artifice, and Portia's warning "scant this excess!" (3.2.115) is not just directed at Bassanio. Fomich's excess is in terms of appearance and extravagant behavior characterized not by guile, but by sudden changes in his disposition: "But suddenly, in the midst of the most violent sobs, he would begin to laugh

and read in a sing-song drawl and a voice now movingly triumphant, now weak from excess joy" (*PSS* 4:95). The abrupt shifts in behavior are the archetypal vestiges of the medieval holy fool. The suddenness is supposed to be synonymous with impulses and triggers which in the holy fool's case were understood to be divinely ordained, the holy fool being considered as someone that has been touched by God. Acting upon impulse categorized them as "natural" fools and eccentrics, those who arrive at truth intuitively.

The Grotesque Body

To the extent that Dostoevsky's fools are Shakespearean, they are Western, but also Eastern in that they have aspects of the Eastern holy fool archetype. When all the incarcerated men are grouped in the Dantesque bathhouse, they are described by the narrator as "ugly heads," who uses the word "*urodlivye*" for "ugly," which is based on the etymology of the holy fool [*iurodivye*]. Dostoevsky combines *urodlivost'* (degeneration) and *iurodstvo* (holy foolishness) to draw out the fool's eccentricity both in terms of physical appearance and behavior. The narrator sits in the back in the theater scene to observe the fools' physiognomies: "Everybody was bareheaded and from the right side every head presented a shaven surface to me" (*PSS* 4:123). One of the scientific trends during this time in Russia dictated that physiology determined psychology, a notion which found its proponents among Dostoevsky's contemporaries like Nikolai Ogarev whose strict physiological determinism was influenced by an eminent Russian physiologist Ivan Sechenov and his work, *Reflexes of the Brain*. The Petrashevsky members especially believed that as part of nature, human beings are able to scientifically explain their behavior by understanding their bodies. Sympathies to positivist trends in European thought penetrated Russia and to the

Petrashevsky Circle through Dostoevsky's friend and himself a Petrashevsky member, Valerian Maikov who avidly read Comte, Littre, and Mill. The outward eccentricity of Dostoevsky's fool, either related to disability or odd attire, reflects and draws out the fool's eccentricity in behavior, but these types of fools are often meek characters, as in, their physiology does not determine their psychology as the time's scientific theories would dictate. Theories of degeneration in nineteenth-century Russia were closely tied with Russia's national image:

> Degeneration was increasingly seen as more than just a social condition of the poor, a biological force that was the cause of crime, destitution, and disease. In Germany and Russia, where G.W.F. Hegel's (1770-1831) philosophy of history had caused much hand-wringing about national identity, the notion that both societies were not quickly deteriorating into psychopaths, perverts and criminals caused great consternation. Degeneration was not associated with treatment but with the identification of deviance and immoral behavior.[44]

In the *Dead House*, Dostoevsky instead makes "predatory" behavior visible and easily through deeds and not through disability, perceived at the time as "degeneration." Aristov, one of the characters who constantly mocks everyone and who does not have any identifiable "eccentric" features is "the grossest and most bestial" because he is a "moral Quasimodo." For Dostoevsky, physical disability does not extend to behavior, but rather, one's immoral or unethical deeds are degenerative and hinder ethical growth and regeneration.

Dostoevsky's interest in disability is reflected also in his doodles in the manuscripts of his novels which often include strangely shaped heads. He was fascinated by eccentricity, which is part of the fool's function as someone who creates spectacle, a figure who is

[44] Frederick H. White, *Degeneration, decadence and disease in the Russian fin de siècle: Neurasthensia in the life and work of Leonid Andreev* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), 29.

supposed to shock and startle. A popular sixth-century Byzantine saint Symeon the Holy Fool, who is believed to have walked to the village from the desert with a dead dog tied to his waste, is venerated by the Russian Orthodox church for his startling behavior and looks as the perfect embodiment of Paul's "fools for Christ's sake" phenomenon. The fool brings people out of the stagnation of normativity and convention, making those on the receiving end to question the status quo. In the portrayal of oddity, the genre of the novel allows Dostoevsky for physical descriptions of the fool which in Shakespeare are incorporated in the minimal stage directions and dialogue. The narrative voice allows for ample descriptions of Dostoevsky's fools' appearance and behavior; however, it is only the "natural" ones that get the author's sympathies. Their eccentricity is reflected through their appearance, but it is posed as a positive. Baklushin, who is a type of a fool in the *Dead House* is a "simple-hearted face, quite handsome, but with a wart on it" (*PSS* 4:99), and Skuratov, "one of those self-appointed jesters [*veselchik*], or rather clowns, who seemed to consider themselves bound to try to cheer up their sullen comrades and who, of course, got nothing in return but abuse?" (*PSS* 4:71) is a "striking-looking fellow with a large wart on his cheek and a highly comical expression on his face" (*PSS* 4:73). Petrov who belongs to the meek category, has a "softly submissive lisp" but a "rather sweet smile" (*PSS* 4:79). They are eccentric and meek simultaneously. Petrov is the narrator's favorite fool type, who in a Christ-like gesture washes the narrator's feet in the bathhouse where biblical themes of rebirth and renewal adorn and override the prisoners' plight. The external appearance of perceived excess as disability (*urodlivost'*) categorizes Petrov as a fool, "[H]e had a rather pleasant, pale face with wide cheekbones, a bold glance, small white teeth set close together, and a perpetual

pinch of snuff inside his lower lip" (*PSS* 4:82), while his humility places him definitively within the holy fool, and specifically, on the path to Dostoevsky's ethical fool category. Dostoevsky reverses our understanding of such concepts as re-generation and de-generation, and defies limiting and strictly defined categories. At the same time, he is redefining what it means to be a holy fool, and new possibilities of understanding eccentricity. Dostoevsky is not interested in the holy fool archetype in itself without any stylization, much like Shakespeare in his later comedies seems no longer to be interested in the rogue clown but the wise and affective fool, whose empathy is ambivalent due to perceived category error. The authors' fools' transformation might also signal their own changing worldview and alterations to their moral-ethical codes which their fools reflect.

Ritualistic Reversals: The Bathhouse

In the *Dead House*, meekness and kindness as "natural" categories are meant to be shocking when coexisting with heinous deeds, all of which are qualities exhibited by the incarcerated men most of whom have committed murder. Characters like Petrov, for instance, take care of the narrator at every turn. In the *bania*, the narrator informs, "Petrov rubbed me all over with soap. 'And now I'll wash your little feet,' he added in conclusion" (*PSS* 4:99). Here Dostoevsky uses the diminutive for feet to indicate that Petrov is treating the narrator as a child which subverts the powerful position of the inquisitive observer (narrator) to the role of the observed and acted upon, and in turn taxonomizes the narrator within the meek, child-like category. The bathhouse as a place of ritual magnifies Petrov and the narrator's biblical interaction, while the slime and dirt of this space categorizes them as ritual clowns who have been generally associated with mud, urine, feces, and the like. The

ritual clown breaks taboos and gains power by creating an environment outside the norm. The bathhouse is supposed to be a place where steam and birch-twig beatings are supposed to make one feel reborn, but here the degrading and uncomfortable conditions created by the officials in cramming the prisoners into a small and dirty space is in a way a profanation of the sacred which Petrov is reversing through the incorporation of the biblical ritual amidst hell, where sacred and the profane coexist. The similarities found between Shakespeare and Dostoevsky's fools and the hilarity of the saints and ritual clowns, or even the fool's meek-like status reinforces the notion of the fool as a figure able to cross boundaries. Shakespeare and Dostoevsky's fools, however, are not saints, but they do at times border the sacred in a secular setting.

Ritualistic Reversals: Christmas

The bathhouse is the perfect prelude to the Feast of Christmas where the process of renewal continues which in turn allows even the predatory types the chance for regeneration. Dostoevsky here underscores the contagious nature of charity and the importance of ritual. Dostoevsky's house of fools is a space of officialdom, but in order to subvert it, the prisoners must become less predatory and more meek-like, and this case, more giving. It is a subversion of a subversion. Dostoevsky, through his narrator, recreates a personal experience from when he returned to prison after a long day of manual labor to magnanimize the importance of the gesture of giving. Merging the authorial and narratorial registers, Dostoevsky writes,

> Coming toward me were a mother and her daughter, a little girl about ten years old […] the little girl blushed and whispered to her mother, who immediately stopped, found a quarter kopeck in her purse and gave it to her daughter. The little girl ran after me . . . . 'Here, poor man, take this kopeck in Christ's name,' she cried, running

> round in front of me and thrusting the copper into my hand. [. . .] I kept the piece of money carefully for a long time. (*PSS* 4:19)

The money is a step in helping the other, an exemplary act that signifies Christian pity as love (*caritas*). It is also significant that the act is connected to the child, a figure who is almost sanctified and has a special spiritual status in Dostoevsky's life and work. The child sees beyond official and societal labels and has an unparalleled status in Christ's teachings. The Christmas scene provides the necessary atmosphere of ritual and charity for Dostoevsky to prove that even his most predatory types are capable of releasing the inner child in spontaneous acts of care, and are able to then imitate this in an act of personal responsibility and attunement: "Besides his inborn reverence for the solemn religious festival, the prisoner was unconsciously aware that by this observance of the day he brought himself into contact with all the world, that consequently he was not altogether an outcast, a lost soul, a piece of flotsam, and that even in prison things were the same as among real people" (*PSS* 4:105). It is a time for reflection, memories, to show oneself in a new light, different from the person that was, carrying oneself outside the bounds of the quotidian life of prison. They are even given new clothes which further establishes the motif of this infernal baptism. Dostoevsky's biographer, Joseph Frank, discusses the Christian aspects of humanitarianism and philanthropy in Russian culture, which Dostoevsky thought were "embodied in the instinctive moral reflexes of the much-despised and denigrated Russian peasant."[45] Their childlike qualities are further emphasized in this scene. Outside of prison, disarray is the subverting element, but within its walls, reversal requires decorum. In Shakespeare, the

[45] Joseph Frank, *A Writer in His Time*, 237.

Forest is outside officialdom, where the dark desires and anxieties are foregrounded. Forest is a place of reversal, where the carnivalesque dwells. Here the prisoners' decorousness and innocence are outside their "normal" behaviors: "even the idlers and revelers tried to preserve their dignity" (*PSS* 4:105). Contemplation and responsibility are the showcased behavior in this ritualistic atmosphere, where laughter has no place: "It was as if laughter was prohibited" (*PSS* 4:105). As if the jester and clown types transform into pious and meek fools.

The motif of reversal is also continued through symbolic subversions. The birch twigs and other wooden tools of punishment are transformed into a wooden cross which the prisoners "kiss […] with genuine piety" and into an icon in front of which they pray (*PSS* 4:109). Instead of running the gauntlet, they are playing balalaikas and guitars and singing songs which reestablishes their positions as Shakespearean fools. This Christmas scene does not allow for the merry songs that Skuratov the jester sings earlier in the novel, "I wasn't there when they married me off, / For I was down at the mill" (*PSS* 4:70), which is funny and is supposed to instigate laughter. The songs in the Christmas scene have a somber tone, and the narrator notices that the prisoners revise the endings of existing songs to make them sadder. To "The house of this bride / Is garnished and swept" is added the grotesque imagery, "Cobwebs swept from the walls / Went into the pies" (*PSS* 4:110). It is a more realistic portrayal of the prisoners' experiences within the appropriate setting. For a more striking and solemn effect some songs are not sung in a choir, but as the narrator states, "by a single voice;" for instance, "My eyes will never see that land / The land where I was born" (*PSS*

4:111), brings the prisoners out of their merry-making mood, transporting them back into their wretched realities.

There is a dream-like quality to the Christmas renewal and its aftereffects: "Through the darkness we could see from the small window of our barrack, plastered with snow and ice, that in both kitchens bright fires were blazing in all six stoves, where they had been laid before dawn" (*PSS* 4:107). It is a reminder that the prisoners are still in infernal darkness. Even the smallest element of charity among the prisoners, "a gift to a beggar from a beggar out of his last small store" (*PSS* 4:108), emphasizes the significance of care and giving in hard times. But this does not guarantee a complete renewal, and the fools who are waiting for a change in their lot, do not get it. Petrov, "was still waiting for something which must inevitably happen, something extraordinary, festive and joyous. [. . .] But nothing special happened or came under his eyes except drunkenness and senseless brawling" (*PSS* 4:111). The narrator thinks that this "was comical, too, but somehow I felt full of sadness and pity for all of them" (*PSS* 4:111). The point is not absolution, but the small ethical gestures which build a community of care and empathy for fellow sufferers despite their criminality. Like Shakespeare, Dostoevsky conjoins merriment and sorrow in an effort to move toward a more tragic fool.

Ritualistic Reversals: Theater as Ritual

In the theater scene of the *Dead House*, Dostoevsky's fools more strongly resemble the fool from the Shakespearean performative fool especially from the late comedies. The novel in this scene is a novel-drama both in its utilization of the medium (theater) and technique (the dialogue) that also additionally incorporates meta-theater. The prisoners

choose to stage comedies and farces on the stage as a more desired form of entertainment among the prison population. They acquire all kinds of costumes, props, the curtain and build the stage essentially out of nothing. There is a sense of shared determination to create spectacle. The authority figures are equally in agreement. The prisoners establish a program for the schedule of the plays with the aim of producing popular theater. The narrator gives a laconic history of theater and how it is provincial in origin, but how it was also preserved among Moscow's nobility, who, like the Elizabethans, had private theater companies among their serfs. Likewise, theater in Shakespeare's childhood and in his early career was staged for a popular and not an upper-class audience. The class distinction in the prisoners' theater is as apparent as it was in Shakespeare's Globe, divided between the groundlings and the nobility who sat in the upper tiers. The dynamic between the classes have not changed much even in the later indoor theater, the Blackfriars, where Shakespeare moved his performances. Some nobles, known as gallants, sat right on the stage as a show of status to showcase their unparalleled shiny apparel which finds its echoes in the *Dead House* when Petrov assures the narrator that "[he] should be allowed to occupy one of the best places" because "[he] is richer than the others" (*PSS* 4:120), for the "gallant" seats are reserved "for the highest personages of officers' rank" (*PSS* 4:121). The audience (the prisoners who are not acting) are still "literally sitting on top of others" (*PSS* 4:121) and "in the back rows the people clustered one on top of the other" (*PSS* 4:122) as they were in the bathhouse scene.

The determined fool, Baklushin, himself a jester, wears multiple hats as he busies himself with the stage directing and costume management and production, while supervising others in several successful performances. The theater here is all it is supposed to be, a strong

commentator on the times, behaviors, vices, virtues, and all in between. It is outside the bounds of officialdom, of ordinary life. And what a perfect place to do theater, inside of a prison, the epitome of authority and power. While in the Christmas scene they are given new clothes after their bath, here, the atmosphere of renewal is created by prisoners' stage costumes. They become other on stage. They perform *Philatka and Miroshka*, a popular vaudeville which was first performed in St Petersburg either in 1831 or 1832. Seeing this performance, the narrator, and one assumes also Dostoevsky, is more than content with the performance. "I assert positively that both actors that played the part in the capitals played it worse than Baklushin" he writes (*PSS* 4:124). The play's female character is performed by a male prisoners. The gender-bending in Shakespeare's time, women's roles generally performed by boy actors was due to restrictions on women in theater because the theater was a place promiscuity and unseemly behavior. It was also utilized as a technique for comedies.[46] In both cases, however, the actors make the best of their situations within officialdom. Sirotkin plays one of the female characters and Ivanov is in the role of Lady Bountiful. "Sirotkin dressed as a girl, was charming" (*PSS* 4:125), observes the narrator, and to everyone's "general satisfaction" (*PSS* 4:125). Dostoevsky asks the ultimate question at the end of this performance, "There was no criticism; how could there be?" (*PSS* 4:125). This is also a question for the audience, and what makes reversal possible and why reversals are necessary significantly in this theater in Omsk. It is also important to note that this was the only theater in Omsk at this time. The audience consists of different authority figures who

[46] For a study of the dramatic structure and comedic patterns of actor substitution, see Thomas F. Van Laan, *Role-playing in Shakespeare* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978).

participate in this spectacle by simply being there. Their presence is precisely what makes the subversions possible, since most of the staged plays in the *Dead House* are about the fool's response to power. Dostoevsky realizes the opportunity to look in the face of power and say what he wants. Of course, we shall not forget, the fool is at the center here.

The power dynamic in a dialogical tale of reversal is most obvious in the next production, *Kedril the Glutton*, about a servant tricking his master, which was also unsurprisingly staged by the Bolshevik soldiers under Lenin for its master-servant connotations. Dostoevsky's familiarity with Shakespeare's *Henry IV* is apparent in this performance. The servant, Kedril, is a gluttonous buffoon based on the character of Falstaff who is in turn based on the Vice of Gluttony from mysteries. Kedril is a glutton but also a trickster, as he hides his guile "that [his master] shall not notice his tricks" (*PSS* 4:127). Shakespeare's young prince Hal comments on Falstaff's love of food, "Unless hours were cups of / sack, and minutes capons" (1.2.7-8), which is echoed in Kedril's craftiness in acquiring more food, as "he hides under the table and takes the chicken with him" (*PSS* 4:127). In a Faustian twist, the master makes a bargain with the devil and when the hour comes, the evil spirits take Kedril's master to hell. The performance of the devils on stage requires additional creativity which the prisoner-actors resolve by white sheets that cover the actors' bodies and lanterns appearing on top of their heads to provide a dramatic effect. Not versed in theological matters, the devil is represented differently in the popular imagination, which the narrator, who is a nobleman, does not quite understand, "Why the lanterns, why the scythe, why devils in white" (*PSS* 4:127). In this important moment when Kedril has a chance to save his master, Kedril is at his most relaxed: "[he] has other fish to fry. This time

he has taken the bottle and a plate and even the bread as well under the table" (*PSS* 4:127), which recalls Falstaff "Fast asleep behind the arras, and / snorting like a horse" (2.5.548-49) after he has had too much to eat and drink. As an observer, the narrator's main focus is the effect of the play on the audience. Laughter is the effective element here: "Another roar of laughter" (*PSS* 4:126). The prisoners enjoy this reversal of power, when the evil master is defeated.

Dostoevsky here also utilizes the motif of doubles and role-playing from Shakespeare's *Henry IV Part 1*, from the scene when Hal and Falstaff perform a king/fool reversal in the tavern. The tavern audience is equally amused. The Hostess in "trickling tears" (2.4.404) of laughter, exclaims, "O Jesu, this is excellent sport, i' faith!" (2.4.403). The foolish Kedril unlike Falstaff however, does not care for his master and has a happier ending, and it is not surprising that the prisoners find this reversal of faith amusing: "[H]e motioned towards his nincompoop of a master, was greeted with uncontrollable laughter by the spectators" (*PSS* 4:127). "The devils have taken my master! . . . " (*PSS* 4:127). "The spectators' delight knew no bounds" (PSS: 194). The narrator notices that Isaiah Fomich too is "apparently transformed, from the moment the curtain rose, into nothing but eyes and ears and a naïve and avid expectation of wonders and delights" (*PSS* 4:123) and Aley, one of the three Daghistani brothers and the meekest of them all, looks on to the stage with "childlike joy" (*PSS* 4:123). Justice is served, and Dostoevsky's authorial commentary which elevates the common peasants as natural teachers from whom the intelligentsia must learn and emulate comes out more strongly after the performances, "Our wiseacres cannot teach the people very much. I will even maintain that, on the contrary, they ought to learn from them"

(*PSS* 4:122). Dostoevsky's political commentary and the newly developed Populist movements of "go to the people" and Dostoevsky's own belief that the intellectuals should rather learn from the common people finds its parallels with Falstaff, the tavern fool, teaching Hal all the craft he needs to become Henry V. There is also a more elaborate parallel here between the two authors, for both are successful writers from humble origins. Dostoevsky could only hope as he always did that his work would transform his readers as well. Perhaps in many ways he wanted to become for his people what Shakespeare was for the later generations. In prison he already thought he got the insider's view into the Russian soul of the ordinary people. One foot in St Petersburg's intelligentsia circles and one in the *narod*, Dostoevsky was sure he could synthesize this large schism between the learned and the peasants and fix moral follies through a new type of a fool. If the actions of his ethical fool could transform the coarsest and most predatory natures, then he was ready to explore it more and utilize it for his later works.

Shakespeare's and Dostoevsky's fools are versatile in their types and functions. Dostoevsky includes a pantomime in the theater scene, who is absent from the Elizabethan stage. Originally an ancient model from Greco-Roman comedies which disappeared in the middle ages and only reappeared again in Italian commedia dell'arte, the pantomime is unique in its silent performance which is usually accompanied by music. It is possible that the pantomime's silent technique is derived from ancient dramatic dances described by Xenophon which Hamlet's "Mousetrap" utilizes. Even so, in the sixteenth century, the pantomime was more popular in France than in England, with its earliest known performance in 1570 in Paris. *Pantomimus* means an imitator of all who generally mimicked current

events.[47] In Dostoevsky the pantomime is a solo performer of a tragi-comic act, more similar to the French pantomime. In the East, especially on the Soviet stage where censorship was at its peak, the pantomime had an unparalleled appeal.[48] The prisoners end the theatricals and this section of the book with "the last pantomime, of a fantastic nature, ended with a ballet" (*PSS* 4:129) in a performance which is essentially a spiritual ritual of resurrection of a corpse "[dancing] in a very peculiar manner, like Hindu" (*PSS* 4:129). Here as well Dostoevsky incorporates an instance of regeneration both in the performance but also in terms of audience's enjoyment. Even if it is a silent performance, the performer is still a speaker since there is discourse between the audience and the performer. Bakhtin considers the speaker in discourse as a moral agent. "The enormous significance of the motif of the speaking person," Baktin writes, "is obvious in the realm of ethical and legal thought and discourse."[49] The trajectory of certain motifs in Dostoevsky makes his works perfect candidates for Bakhtin's coordination of the novels within moral philosophy: "All fundamental categories of ethical and legal inquiry and evaluation refer to speaking persons precisely as such: conscience (the 'voice of conscience', the 'inner word'), repentance (a free admission, a statement of wrongdoing by the person himself), truth and falsehood, being liable and not liable, the right to vote and so on."[50] These "novelistic" elements (especially those in the ethical realm), the

[47] For the origins of pantomime and its reappearance in a new form on the English and French stage, see M. Willson Disher, *Clowns & Pantomimes* (New York: Benjamin Bloom, 1968).
[48] Leonid Yengibarian, a famous Soviet pantomime, in an interview on Russian TV, RTR, once said, "a fool is someone who can do anything." This speaks to the pantomime's versatility and adaptability, as a dancer, imitator of emotion and action.
[49] Mikhail Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel," in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by Mikhail Bakhtin*, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, ed. Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 349.
[50] *Ibid*.

internal conflict intensified by the voice of conscience, is also present in Shakespeare. How often we come across the problem of confession, the call of conscience, and the internal schism in Shakespeare's plays, and the frequency with which the fool is the utterer of non-coercive moral judgments. Additionally, in terms of form, the dialogic relationship within one's self defines the fundamentals of soliloquy. When two forces are in conflict, it is the job of conscience to attempt to achieve self-command and impartiality. While *logos* in Stoic philosophy is "reason," in Shakespeare and Dostoevsky it is relationality. When the moral-agent mechanism fails within the conflicted consciousness of some characters in Shakespeare's plays and Dostoevsky's novels, we get an externalized moral agent, who almost always happens to be the character of the fool. This is why the pairings almost always include the fool. Dostoevsky again stresses the fool's function as not only a speaker against power, but also a healer of sorts, a physician on stage who brings people together and whose medicine is laughter:

> Everybody was somehow unusually pleased, what might almost be called happy, and they all went to sleep, not as on any other night, but almost with a quiet spirit—and whence did it come? It was, nevertheless, no dream of my imagination. It was true and real. These poor creatures had only to be allowed to live for a tiny space in their own way, to enjoy themselves as ordinary people do, to pass one little hour from prison routine—and their moral nature was changed, even if only for a few minutes. (*PSS* 4:129–30)

The few minutes of absolute joy and contentment become a leitmotif in Dostoevsky's major novels. If only for a moment, for even one minute, a predatory fool was as aware and attuned as the ethical and meek fool, then that attests to the goodness within. Dostoevsky writes to Mikhail in 1854, "Believe me, there were among them deep, strong, and beautiful natures,

and it often gave me great joy to find gold under a rough exterior" (*PSS* 28:1:172). The "gold" to be revealed needed the right triggers and more specifically, the fool's *logos*.

The narrator's commentary during and after the performances shows what the theater has revealed, the convicts' ability to be something other than what they are seen in the eyes of authority. It is a criticism of Russia, its institutions, and its penal system, "One might even have been astonished, watching these untrained actors, and reflected involuntarily on how much energy and talent goes to waste in our Mother Russia, sometimes almost fruitlessly, in bondage and the bitter lot of the unfortunate" (*PSS* 4:128). The prison is representative of a nation suffocating its children. It is also not coincidental that the convicts are referred to as children in this theater scene as well in phrases like "the prisoners rejoiced like children;" "began to laugh good-naturedly;" "In one word, they were children, absolute children, even though some of them were children forty years old" (*PSS* 4:118). When all quiets down after the performances, the prisoners are brought back into reality, into the world of chains, sighing, and pale faces: "[N]ow I heard a groan from somewhere and somebody heavily flung out an arm with a clash of fetters. Another started in his sleep and began to talk, and the old man on the stove prayed for all 'Orthodox Christians'; I could hear his quiet, rhythmical, long-drawn-out 'Oh Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy upon us!" (*PSS* 4:130). The fools' sorrows and sighs here echo Feste's melancholy utterings, preparing the reader for an even more suffering fool, the mad fool.

Ritualistic Reversals: Madness as Spectacle

We meet the madman in the fourth spectacle of the novel, in the so-called psychiatric ward, which is part of the prison. Madness as folly here is largely part of the fool's technique.

Dostoevsky's fascination with mad-like or mad-seeming states is reflected in scenes of the *Dead House* where the line between madness and sanity, feigned and unfeigned behaviors abound in a deliberate attempt to blur boundaries, concepts Shakespeare explores in his tragedies through Hamlet's acts of "madness," Ophelia's mad-like state, and Lear's mad-like behhavior out in the heath, discussed in chapters 2 and 3. It is unsurprising that Count de Vogue famously called Dostoevsky the "Shakespeare of the lunatic asylum." Dostoevsky here is experimenting with what works as the most efficient way of drawing out his most ethical and credible fools. Like laughter, madness is a powerful tool of reversal. The ward thus acts as a stage where mad-like actors perform their madness as a symptom of state of affairs that can no longer be tolerated. The theater, much like the ward, was the only one in Omsk where civilians and prisoners with mental issues were admitted. In reality too, until the beginning of the twentieth century, Omsk did not have a separate mental asylum. The setting itself, just like theater and the bathhouse is a space for renewal and regeneration, but with a more reinforced element of death, disease, and decay. In the ward we get the gruesome descriptions of dead bodies, mental degradation, where the theme of regeneration seems to have no place. Folly and madness here are the author's cry against the savage treatment of the prisoners through the fools we encounter.

In nineteenth-century Russia, there were several categories of madness: madness as unreason; psychological attitudes toward madness that is trying to counteract cultural conceptions of madness as a curse, and thus trying to establish it as a treatable illness; Romantic view of madness, as in, writing against the Age of Reason, which again looks at madness as the locus of the irrational and non-rational forces expressing higher insight (if not

prophecy); anti-Romantic view which is skeptical of the Romantic view on madness, and sometimes even mocks this view.[51] The word itself "*s uma*" means to be out of reason (*razum*) or engage in unreasonable behavior. The mad fool, always stands outside what is reasonable, and whatever is reasonable is familiar or official. Dostoevsky here investigates different triggers of "unreason," anything that makes someone mad or makes him perform madness. The narrator, like Dostoevsky is distrustful of the medical community and evaluations of madness, "I know that my words may seem paradoxical, especially in view of the general mistrust of all the Russian common people for medical science and outlandish drugs" (*PSS* 4:142). Foucault, inspired by Dostoevsky, whom he quotes in his epigraph to *History and Madness*,[52] is also distrustful of the scientific community in its neutralization of madness for its own ends, viewing madness as a mental illness or as mere glitches in the brain. This approach, Dostoevsky thought, would only lead to patchwork. Dostoevsky's mad fool criticizes the medical profession: "[T]hey have lost all love of humanity. For loving-kindness, gentleness, human sympathy, are often more important to the patient than any medicine" (*PSS* 4:142). Dostoevsky does not separate madness and pain, and in one of the "Hospital" sections begins with the discussion of corporal punishment. It is also here where we meet the authority figures as fools like Officer Zherebiatnikov who enjoys punishing while "laughing, laughing, helpless with laughter" (*PSS* 4:149) which categorizes him as a "natural" fool albeit predatory. He cannot help but enjoy exerting pain on the flaying body.

[51] See Gary Rosenshield, *Pushkin and the Genres of Madness: The Masterpieces of 1833* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2003).
[52] The quote is from Dostoevsky's *Diary of a Writer*, "It is not by confining one's neighbor that one is convinced of one's own sanity."

The fool's role is complicated here since we have "natural" predatory fools and "natural" meek fools, as well as performing/artificial predatory fools who think they are merely doing job. The predatory and meek binary is also extended to authority figures where a kind-hearted Lieutenant Smekalov is juxtaposed with an almost caricaturely evil Zherebiatnikov. The objective correlative for this binary here is pain which becomes its own character in this section, omnipresent in every performance of madness. Some prisoners are in the hospital because they were severely flogged after running the gauntlet. Some are there because they are considered "mad," and some are there because they can afford to perform their madness through bribery. The madmen in the ward bitterly mock the extreme forms of punishment, to a point of ridicule: "They said, however, that the punishment would be light—only *five hundred* altogether" (*PSS* 4:134). Dostoevsky's italics emphasize the absurdity of the treatment of these tortured bodies. The fools are often quietly bearing their physical pain. Like the pantomime, the fools here do not speak much but perform their pain instead. The eccentricity of the fool here is carried out in the descriptions of the dead bodies: "They helped him remove his shirt. It was terrible to see that long, long body with its arms and legs wasted to mere bone, and ribs as distinctly as a skeleton's" (*PSS* 4:140). The emaciated body of the fool shocks even when dead, and it is this shock that insinuates contempt for the system. Yorick's skull in the graveyard scene has a similar effect on Hamlet. As the prince holds the skull of "a fellow / of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy," (5.1.191-92) he is reminded of better times, of a clown fool who entertained by gifting his audiences with laughter, which in a way makes him feel more contempt for the present "rotten" affairs that he, as a suffering fool, has to endure in pain. We should not forget that Hamlet's last words

include pain, when he tells Horatio, "And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain / To tell my story" (5.2.383-84). The fool's story here is not a merry one, but it must go on.

The focus on the physical body of the fool is an ongoing motif in Shakespeare and Dostoevsky where the fool, even when silent, speaks. This speaks to the fool's larger function as a revealer, unconcealer. The quiet but still startling fool does not even have to speak to shock. In Dostoevsky, as in Shakespeare, this note is struck with anatomical precision. The human body in the *Dead House*, is a prop especially when the narrator is giving detailed descriptions of the prisoners' skulls in the bathhouse and theater scenes as well. The grotesque body, which is an-all-too often appearance in the hospital, constantly reappears in Dostoevsky. In the Idiot, the consumptive Ippolit, and his discussion with Prince Myskin about the wasted body of Christ in Holbein's painting, "Christ in the Tomb," because suffering in Dostoevsky is not cloaked and it is supposed to be redemptive, an idea which has a special place in the Eastern Christianity. Once Dostoevsky establishes the prisoners' meekness in the previous sections, their extreme suffering in the hospital section is supposed to be seen in terms of Christ's suffering and the suffering of the just. The purpose of the mad fools however are not only to depict their own suffering but to reveal the underlying causes of suffering. As Foucault asserts, "[m]en would have to wait [. . .] —until Dostoevsky and Nietzsche—for Christ to regain the glory of his madness, for scandal to recover its power as revelation, for unreason to cease being merely the public shame of reason."[53] The presence of suffering does not undermine the mad fool's revelatory function, but sketches out how like in

[53] Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, trans. Richard Howard (Random House, Inc., 1965), 79.

the teachings of the Fathers in the East, virtue is cultivated in companion with misery. A ray of hope is present even in the most gruesome descriptions, "Meanwhile the dead face was stiffening, a ray of sunlight played over it; the mouth was half open and two rows of white, young teeth gleamed between the thin lips curled back against the gums. [The sergeant] seemed struck by the sight of that wasted body" (*PSS* 4:141). Dostoevsky is rejecting beautiful romantic notions of death, as like Shakespeare, he presents eccentricity, deviation, folly, and madness as unique experiences but also as utterly human.

In the works discussed, inherent madness is not the same as methodically performed madness. One of the novel's mad fools, Alexander, right before he runs the gauntlet, performs some kind of an illness to dodge his punishment: "I fooled them twice more; when it came to the third thousand I could only stand one before I fainted, as for the fourth, every stroke went through me like a knife. [. . .] I fooled them again, because I fainted again" (*PSS* 4:145). The reader is hardly applauding his skills in performance, but instead thinking, what drives him to a point where he *has* to perform? The other madmen however see him as a skillful actor who has tricked the authorities. Feigning madness is another way of magnifying failure which is part of the clown's stage technique. The prisoners who feign are entertained by "natural" mad fools: "We were glad to see even lunatics who were brought in for examination. The ruse of feigning madness in order to escape punishment was occasionally resorted to by condemned men" (*PSS* 4:145). The prisoners however are not the only ones who are performing tricks. The authority figures are as well. There is a trickster major whose "little tricks were even remembered with amusement and pleasure. He had not many of these tricks, however: he had not enough artistic invention. In fact, he had one joke

and one alone" (*PSS* 4:151) but with that one joke he makes sure the prisoners could bear their punishment, as laughter came to their rescue. As a contrast, there is also a predatory type of authority figure, almost a caricature encapsulation of evil, who demands unearned respect from the prisoners and wants them to beg for mercy: "'your honor,' (cries the wretch), 'spare me, be a father to me, make me remember you in my prayers for a thousand years, don't destroy me, have mercy on me!" (*PSS* 4:148). The lieutenant listens and savors the prisoner's entreaties, because the creature has recognized his own wretchedness in front of power and authority. Mercy here is not based on pity but is the manifestation of absolute power. Here also, Dostoevsky distinguishes between two kinds of executioners, those who are executioners by choice and those who consider it their art. The first kind likes seeing the prisoners beg for their lives: "A man who is being punished absolutely must shriek and beg for mercy. [. . .] and when the victim refused to shriek one officer whom I knew, and who in other respects might perhaps be considered a kindly man, took it as a personal insult" (*PSS* 4:155). In this Dostoevsky's oeuvre, it is not a given rule that methodical foolishness does not receive author's sympathies, while "natural" foolishness does. This distinction only becomes a leitmotif in Dostoevsky's later novels.

The narrator, a fool among many, initially appears in the hospital due to an illness, prolongs his stay after recovery by feigning his illness. As a witness to the suffering madmen who are admitted to the hospital daily, the narrator focuses his attention not on madness as a mental degeneration but on pain. Dostoevsky himself was occupied pain and punishment. "I have begun discussing corporal punishment and various people who carried out these interesting duties [. . .] I remember how I suddenly began to probe eagerly into all the

details of these new phenomena, listen to the talk and stories of other prisoners, ask them questions, and try to arrive at a conclusion" the narrator thinks (*PSS* 4:152). He ponders the act of corporal punishment and notices that for some it is a duty while for others it is enjoyment. The narrator's interests also conflated with Dostoevsky's own preoccupation with the mind of the man who knows he that in matters of minutes he is going to be executed. It is hard not to see the clear authorial intent in these lines: "I wanted, among other things, to acquire a firm grasp of all the degrees of sentence and execution [. . .] I was trying to picture to myself the state of the mind of a man going to his punishment. At this point there descends on the condemned man an agonizing and purely physical terror, involuntary and irresistible, which completely overwhelms his moral nature" (*PSS* 4:152). The body to mind affect here is overwhelming. "About the pain I asked many questions" (*PSS* 4:153), he continues. No matter how hard the narrator tries to understand another's pain to come to some kind of a theory about the feeling of pain, he remains dissatisfied: "But whomever I asked, I could not get an answer that satisfied me. It burns, it scorches like fire—this was all I could learn, the only answer I received. It burns, that's all. [. . .] I asked Miretsky. 'It is very painful,' he answered, 'and it feels like fire; it is as if your back were being roasted over a very hot fire'" (*PSS* 4:154). Each person's pain is as different as each person's skull, and Dostoevsky understood this. The shame and humiliation inherent in being inflicted with pain to Dostoevsky was an interesting phenomenon. Each prisoner lives silently in pain, and act as if it does not hurt because extravagant displays of pain would mean that they are prisoners who have been acted upon. Those who are performing their madness are the ones who no longer know how to tolerate their pain and conditions.

The predatory fools, like the executioner, perform the art of execution: "Of course a living man is not a machine; he flogs because he must, but he also may be carried away sometimes; nevertheless, although the flogging may give him satisfaction, he hardly ever feels any personal hatred for his victim" (*PSS* 4:156). The theatricals of exerting pain is the reversal of causing laughter; it requires an audience, and as the narrator observes, "[A]t that moment [the executioner] is an actor; his audience is filled with wonder and dismay and it is certainly not without some pleasure [*ne bez naslazhdeniia*] that he cries out to his victim, before the first stroke, the familiar and ominous words: 'Hold tight, I'm going to flay you!' It is difficult to conceive to what extent human nature may be perverted" (*PSS* 4:157). The executioner does not only enjoy inflicting pain, but is also savoring [*naslozhdatsia*] it, which is much more perverse. The presence of an audience magnifies his feelings of grandiosity, and "Perhaps the very showiness and theatricality of the circumstances in which they appear before the public on the scaffold facilitate the development of some haughtiness in them" (*PSS* 4:156). Dostoevsky was most interested in the feelings of both the voluntary executioner and the involuntary victim, the "mystic terror" that the latter goes through in the mere seconds before death. Both actors are explored through the mechanics of pain, and even the executioner, the narrator observes, "takes pains for the sake of his art" (*PSS* 4:156).

The Larger Responsibility: Care

What Dostoevsky is asking is the larger responsibility of pain. A society which can look at executions and extreme forms of punishment with indifference will produce so-called "madmen," whether madness is a form of escape or as the result of not tolerating plight and pain. "In short," the narrator, surmises, "the right given to one man to inflict corporal

punishment on another is one of the ulcers of society, one of the most powerful destructive agents of every germ and every budding attempt at civilization, the fundamental cause of its certain and irretrievable destruction" (*PSS* 4:155). At first glance, Dostoevsky's concern with corporal punishment at the time of his writing the *Dead House* seems "out of date," since there were many reforms during Alexander II, and people thought that extreme forms of punishment were a thing in the past. But as Bruce F. Adams has investigated, the Penal Reform Law of 1863 strongly restricted the practice of corporal punishment, but it did not abolish it. "[The title of the law]," writes Adams, was carefully chosen to contain no reference to the abolition of corporal punishment. Apparently the State Council shared the fear that abolition of most corporal punishment would be perceived as the abolition of all punishment."[54] To Dostoevsky, this is an issue of ethics which cannot be ameliorated by protests and revolutions. In fact, to do so would mean to try to mend ulcers with patches. The narrator, and, one assumes, Dostoevsky, asserts, "Revolutions are not so speedily accomplished. It is too little, far too little, to recognize one's own guilt and ancestral sin; one must wean oneself completely from it. And this cannot so soon be done" (*PSS* 4:155). The first step of course is to understand that there is a problem and portray the problem, a stance the author takes with the *Dead House*.

Dostoevsky's plan of renewal is certainly large-scale which he could only accomplish with the realization that there needs to be change in the moral and ethical spheres. In a draft of a letter to his publisher, M.N. Katkov, Dostoevsky writes in 1865, "the punishment meted

[54] Bruce F. Adams, *The Politics of Punishment: Prison Reform in Russia, 1863–1917* (Northern Illinois University Press, 1996), 33.

out by the law to the criminal deters the criminal far less than the lawgivers think, because he himself must require it morally" (*PSS* 28:2:137). The prison experiences made Dostoevsky more aware of the ills of his society. Shakespeare assisted him in this journey of analysis, scrutiny, and categorization, and made him ask the important question, *what is most important*? In his letter to Mikhail in 1854, Dostoevsky writes, "What *is* the most important*?* What was the most important to me in the recent past" he writes to Mikhail upon his liberation from prison in 1849 (*PSS* 28:1:167). And then immediately adds that "this sheet is far too small" to convey that. So he writes a novel instead. It is a step in the ethical configuration of his fool. Laying all the fools bare to see what works in terms of the larger responsibility and his project of renewal. It is a large project indeed and *Dead House* is only the beginning. At the end of the novel, Dostoevsky writes, "The fetters fell away" (*PSS* 4:232). The chains are symbolic of Dostoevsky's own prejudices that he leaves behind, his former assumptions about his *narod* and its most "bestial" types, that they are incapable of feeling and kindness. But even more importantly, it is his discovery of paradise within, an ethical stance which he so firmly grips onto in all of his novels. The novel is also of one fool's journey, Dostoevsky's own into "freedom, a new life, resurrection from the dead," (*PSS* 4:232), a leitmotif that becomes even stronger as the author applies it to his most predatory fools of his later novels.

Evolution of the Fool: From Archetypal to "Real"

Dostoevsky's arc, the move toward a more ethical fool figure rather than a mere buffoon, a jester, or a clown, mirrors Shakespeare's attitude toward his clowns. Dostoevsky's foundational fools in the *Dead House* are all child-like, which is Dostoevsky's way of

underscoring their meekness and innocence. Childishness is also closely related to the fool's main function, the natural inclination or willingness to speak when it is inappropriate, experiment, evolve, and play. Ecstatic outbursts and "open expressions" in the novel is extended to the most unexpected characters who simultaneously exhibit harmful attitudes. The character of Petrov is more childlike than others, and he and the narrator are friends. At some point, Petrov is asking the narrator a chain of questions, which the narrator relates to his childlike curiosity: "All these, of course, were simply explosions or eruptions in which the whole of his nature revealed itself in a flash" (*PSS* 4:84). "His conversation," the narrator notes, "is as strange as himself" (*PSS* 4:84) which Alexander Petrovich characterizes in terms of excess: "With such people it sometimes happens that they stand out large and clear in their true colors at the moment of some sudden general movement or upheaval and thus attain their full activity at one bound" (*PSS* 4:87). The sudden, childlike speech is one of the major functions of the fool, an intuitive and uncontrolled burst of emotion.

Strangeness in the *Dead House* is extended to patterns of speech as is the case with Shylock's speech patterns, resembling child-like repetition: "let him look to his bond: he was wont to / call me usurer; let him look to his bond: he was / wont to lend money for a Christian courtesy; let him / look to his bond" (3.1.46-50) and "fourscore ducats at a sitting! / fourscore ducats!" (3.1.110-11). Shylock values his own puns as signs of his dexterity, while he entirely ignores other characters' jokes. Like the early buffoon of the Elizabethan stage, Shylock constantly interrupts others but is himself not interrupted. He performs both childishness and linguistic dexterity through repetition, a circularity which Simon Palfrey and Tiffany Stern interpret as Shylock's shield of privacy, a space where no one can interrupt

him. [55] To the audience this might have a comedic effect because it can be seen as childish but to Shylock this is clever. Shylock, for instance, is not gullible, but he is methodically ignoring Antonio upon the latter's entrance. Bassanio feels compelled to ask, "Shylock, do you hear?" while Shylock in his aside has already noted Antonio's appearance on stage. Shylock holds the power as long as he remains within this circularity that is itself a license to speak in a scene that is supposed to be comical as long as Shylock consciously ignores Antonio and Bassanio. Petrov's repetitiveness however stems from his childlike curiosity about the world, hence further situating him within the meek, non-feigning category. Both fools speak uninterruptedly, albeit with different reasons, motivations, and effects.

Gradually, the clown receives more functions in both authors which enhances the differences between the so-called "natural" and "artificial" fools. This division is most obvious in Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream* where the mischievous Puck and a more innocuous fool, Bottom interact with other characters in the Forest of Arden. Bottom's coxcomb is his donkey head, and his speech is almost always indirect, focusing on existence in general in the style of philosophical and poetic ruminations, "Man is but an ass" (4.1.216) and "man is but a patched fool" (4.1.219) but only after he has an ass's head, which makes his character strange and awful even to the other characters. Quince yells, "O monstrous! O strange!" (3.1.105) upon Bottom's entry. Bottom's magical transformation in the hands of the Forest's monarchs and Puck is real in the parameters of the play, and his antics are not part of his character's conscious performance. In this sense, Bottom is a "natural" fool. His

[55] See Simon Palfrey and Tiffany Stern, *Shakespeare in Parts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), especially Chapter 11, "The Battle for the Cue-Space: The Merchant of Venice" for an interesting analysis on Shylock's speech patterns in terms of language, syntax, and cues.

intertextual double in the *Dead House* is Shapkin, a prisoner with "extremely long, prominent ears" (*PSS* 4:162) which the reader finds out are a result of his encounter with authority (a policeman pulled his ears), a detail his fellow incarcerated men find amusing. In clowning, the performer's mechanics often include a failure or a deliberate fall on the stage. In both of these characters, such failure is integrated within their physical characteristics as oddities caused by abuse. The fool's license often saves him, but also makes him vulnerable. Shapkin's strange look, like Bottom's, substantiates his eccentricity, but also raises questions about the nature of authority and how far it goes for the sake of comedy and entertainment. His name, "Shapkin," comes from the word *shapka* which means "cap" or "hat." Shapkin's story mirrors Bottom's adventures with his fellow mechanicals Quince, Flute, Snout, and Starveling which in Dostoevsky are the "General Cuckoo's army," with Shapkin as a member. Like Shakespeare's mechanicals, they have comical names, as established in a dialogue between Shapkin, his friends, and the police captain whom they end up mocking:

> Then he says to one of the others, "Who are you?"
> ' "Clear out, your worship."
> ' "Is that what they call you, Clear out?"
> ' "Yes, your worship, that's it."
> ' "All right, you're Clear out. And you?" [. . .]
> ' "I'm after him, your worship."
> ' "What's your name?"
> ' "That's my name, I'm after him! your worship."
> ' "And who called you that, you rascal?"
> ' "It was good people named me, your worship. There are *some* good people in the world, your worship, you know." (*PSS* 4:163)

The major who is portrayed as a villain, is not representative of "*some* good people," and yet he finds this dialogue entertaining, "stood there and laughed," instead of punishing them (*PSS* 4:164). This is because he considers Shapkin and his friends as fools who are merely

doing their "job." Shapkin carefully notes that at "another time [the major] might push your teeth out" (*PSS* 4:164). Foolishness is again subversive when fools are in their roles or are considered to have "license." It is difficult to know whether Shapkin is a "natural" or artificial fool when it comes to his actions. His appearance is odd, but his actions are ambiguous in terms of the natural/artificial binary. The dichotomies are blurred, which is a prerequisite for the construction of the new fool, as the Dostoevskian fool is often both as a jester and holy fool type. The narrator also observes that Shapkin is "a quiet and sensible fellow, who always spoke with a kind of straight-faced, secret humor, that made some of his stories very funny" (*PSS* 4:162). The meek and sensible fools are juxtaposed with the "predatory" types and confront them with affect, and as such, act as exemplars in empathy. In both Shakespeare and Dostoevsky the meek type of fool provides the necessary moral-ethical compass for which the characters with ambivalent ethics are shown to strive.

Evolution of the Fool: From Clown to Wise Fool

Dostoevsky's fools' arc from archetypal to ethical mirrors Shakespeare's clown's transformation from entertainer and to an inquisitive fool who is ethically and morally attuned. Shakespeare and Dostoevsky are navigating the morass of fools, in trying to figure out the right balance between their sources and their own creative additions. Such negotiations are especially evident in Shakespeare's later comedies, *Twelfth Night* and *As You Like* where the official clowns (those identified as such in the play) question their roles and ponder their own significances. "Foolery, sir, does walk about the orb like the sun; it shines everywhere," proclaims Feste (*Twelfth Night*, 3.1.38-39). Feste's response to Viola

echoes Erasmus' "All places swarm with fools."[56] Throughout the play, Feste, although holds the title of "clown" is redefining what kind of a fool he is or wants to be. Here, too, as in Dostoevsky's novel, the fool's "job" is brought up in relation to fool's speech. Feste is a "corrupter of words," and despite his title as "clown" in the dramatis personae, other characters always refer to him as the "fool," both in conversation and in their asides. While in *The Merchant*, it is the contemporary audience that considers Shylock as a comic figure, here, the characters and audience have similar reactions to the fool. Official titles lose their significance as they become continuously redefined and reconstructed. For instance, "Here comes the fool, i' faith," says Andrew; Viola's opinion of the fool is equally supportive of this notion: "This fellow is wise enough to play the fool" (3.1.36; 59). Curio's "Feste the jester, [. . .] a fool that the Lady Olivia's father took much delight in" adds another layer to the idea of distinction, drawing a line between the clown and the fool, the former more prevalent in the country setting while the latter was a jester in opulent houses.

Shakespeare's constructions continue with Touchstone in *As You Like It*, where Rosalind combines the term to refer to Touchstone as "the clownish fool" (1.3.28), whereas Touchstone is seemingly only content with the title, "fool": "Ay, now am I in Arden, the more fool I" (2.4.14). Upon seeing the shepherd, Corin, Touchstone places the rustic man within a category: "Holla, you clown!" (2.4.62), and Rosalind draws the line: "Peace, fool, he's not thy kinsman" (2.4.63). Touchstone and Rosalind understand the terms "clown" and "shepherd" to be synonymous, and they use it so. *As You Like It*, more so than *Twelfth Night*, plays with the differences of the two terms. Touchstone, the "clown," as he is sometimes

[56] Erasmus, *In Praise of Folly* (Reeves & Turner, 1876/The Project Gutenberg EBook, 2009).

referred to in the stage directions, is adamantly proposing a hierarchical distinctio. He calls Corin, the shepherd, not by his name, but merely by the term, "shepherd," informing him that although the "[the shepherd's] life is a good life; but in respect that it is a shepherd's life, it is naught [. . .] but in respect that it is not in the court, it is tedious" (3.1.13-18). Touchstone draws from the definition of the clown as the country bumpkin, the rustic and uncouth, who is a "most shallow man!" and impudently tells Corin: "[T]hou art raw" (3.1.62; 69). The clown or the shepherd is thus seen here as unfit to be commensurate with the wise fool, in that the former lacks "good manners," and that "courtesy would be uncleanly if courtiers were shepherds" (3.1.39; 47). Corin does not seem to object to these stinging remarks, admitting, "You have too courtly a wit for me" (3.1.67).

Touchstone is not only entertained by the simplicity of the shepherd clowns' demeanor and language, "It is meat and drink to me to see a clown" (5.1.10), but he also recognizes their differences in attire as well. Dana E. Aspinall explains, "Their appearances in 'russet jerkin and breeches, country boots, and buttoned cap' denoted English country life, including a boorish vitality that derived its humor from 'the unfailing well of the countryman's coarseness, his self-satisfaction'."[57] A similar account of the fool is found in Ben Jonson's *Every Man Out of His Humor* where the author describes Carlo Buffone as "a public, scurrilous, and profane Jester; that (more swift than Circe) with absurd similes will transform any person into deformity" ("The Characters of the Persons"). Fools or court jesters were recognizable by their spectacles, their motley. Although not always the case, since "many fools even dressed like ordinary courtiers," more often than not, court fools

[57] Aspinall, "Robert Armin," 45.

"wore a more distinctly multicolored costume, which included a cap with bells and either horns or donkey ears. A bauble with a carved replica of the fool's head was a popular prop."[58] Pyle in her study pays special attention to the ass's ears as part of the fool's dress, for "asses' ears worn by the medieval friars on their hoods correspond to the kind of ears Jesus calls his disciples to have for those who hear and live out God's word."[59] This is not to claim that the fools in comedies are "holy," but that the vestiges of the traditional garb of the clown are carried on to the Elizabethan and Jacobean stage.[60] When Jacques is defining what a "worthy fool" is in front of Duke Senior, he says, "Motley's the only wear" and "O that I were a fool! / I am ambitious for a motley coat" (*AYLI*, 2.7.34; 42-43). The court or the domestic fool is also believed to have been "bald or he wore his hair shorn like a monk's."[61] Jacques associates motley with Touchstone, and uses the word as a nominative noun: "Will you be married, motley?" (3.3.72). Jacques later grafts the definition of motley-as-attire with motely representing the states of the mind; "[T]his is the motely-minded gentleman," someone who is "as good at anything," Jacques speaks of Touchstone, an assertion with which Touchstone does not disagree (5.4.41; 102-103). Feste who says he "wears no motley in [his] brain," if we understand "motley" to mean "multicolored" in this instance, conveys

[58] Towsen, 21; 16-17, claims that the most common items of apparel during a medieval New Year's celebration called The Feast of Fools was the peaked hood and the two donkey's ears. This celebration is similar to Kalends and Saturnalia of ancient Rome. This is was celebrated in various locations in Europe. One of the celebrations is also called Feast of the Ass (assinaria festa).
[59] Pyle 226.
[60] Towsen claims that the most common items of apparel during a medieval New Year's celebration called The Feast of Fools was the peaked hood and the two donkey's ears. This celebration is similar to Kalends and Saturnalia of ancient Rome celebrated in various locations in Europe. One of the celebrations is also called Feast of the Ass (*assinaria festa*) (16-17).
[61] Goldsmith, *Wise Fools in Shakespeare*, 1. Shakespeare does not explicitly state this. Goldsmith bases his conclusions of the attire and look of the fool on existing studies that have drawn inferences from various paintings of the time, as well as from the literature that makes such assertions directly.

that he is not a happy fool, if motley is identified with the entertaining clown, thus a happy clown. This fool is neither a clown, nor a madman, but one "[who] shall look to the madman" (1.5.53; 132-33). Shakespeare here hints at the fool's added function as a guide. In the *Dead House*, Dostoevsky also utilizes this function. One of the characters notes that "[Skuratov] used to lead blind beggars about" and that "[t]his was his only trade" (*PSS* 4:72), which is followed by, "Everybody round Skuratov rocked with laughter" (*PSS* 4:72), a motif explored in Chapter 3 in relation to *King Lear.* In a similar vein, Petrov guides the narrator in the bathhouse scene, "Having washed me, he delivered me, with the same ceremony as before, that is, with the support of his arm and with elaborate precautions at every step" (*PSS* 4:99).

These fools make others laugh, but they are also often the butt of the joke, both in terms of their actions, words, and dress. In *Twelfth Night*, Toby welcomes Feste by calling him an "ass," but this could also mean "fool" and not necessarily refer to dress (2.2.17). Feste dissociates himself from the funny, country bumpkin clown, and so do the other characters: Malvolio, in his dislike for the fool, says, "I saw him [. . .] with an ordinary fool that has no more brain than a stone [. . .] no better than the fools' zanies" (1.5.81; 85). Malvolio draws on an older tradition, the Italian commedia dell'arte.[62] The "zanni" is "[a]lways of humble station, sometimes a rascal, sometimes a dunce [. . .] his main function was to rouse laughter, to entertain at all costs,"[63] or as Manfred Pfister calls it, the excessive, "intempestive laughter," that which "rises from an organ that lies below the diaphragm,

[62] A unique development in the history of theater (1550-1750) that flourished in Italy—a long-lasting carnival featuring clowns, jesters, entertainers, and artists who imitated the comic-servant in Terence and Plautus' comedies, the Atellan farces in Rome. Literally meaning "comedy of actors' guild," this hugely popular improvised comedy included masked guests and players, zanni (servants) who performed acrobatics and comic lazzi (actions) (Forti-Lewis 146).

[63] Olive Mary Busby, *Studies in the Development of the Fool in the Elizabethan Drama*, 29.

namely the spleen."[64] Feste, however, does not think of himself as a bawdy or entertaining fool since he thinks that "job" rather belongs to Malvolio, as he is the butt of the joke throughout the play. Maria's conversation with Toby is revealing of this idea: "If you desire the spleen, and will laugh yourself into stitches, follow me. Young gull Malvolio is turned heathen" (3.2.62-63). Feste is different. Olivia recognizes Feste's grim humor and wit, calling him a "dry fool" (1.5.37). She also notes that Feste's "fooling grows old, and people dislike it," in a way, reminding Feste that they are characters in a comedy where there is only room for "belly laughter" fools and slapstick (1.5.106). Similarly, Rosalind seeks a fool that would "make [her] merry" shunning Jacques' dark humor and philosophical ruminations (4.1.26).

But Feste continues his demeanor as a new type of fool, more inquisitive and sensitive, that he himself is constructing. His melancholic music joins the music of the play, unraveling a lucid, self-aware character with a controlled purpose—to assess and reveal the follies of others—who is a reminder that the everlasting feast, the joy that he provides through his dry humor has its limits and that the world of officialdom at times has its claims. Songs in Shakespeare are moments for pausing, contemplating, and reflecting about where the plays is and where it might yet go. Many scholars have suggested that Shakespeare's decision of giving Feste a considerable number of songs had to do with Armin being a skilled singer, but it might also have to do with the fact that a festive atmosphere requires song and dance. The word, "jester," like "clown" and "fool," is equally rich. The archaic definition of

[64] Manfred Pfister, *A History of English Laughter: Laughter from Beowulf to Beckett and Beyond* (Rodopi, 2022), 175. Pfister follows Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621). Also, Bakhtin's term, "belly laugh" comes from, as Bakhtin puts it in *Rabelais and His World*, the "bodily lower stratum" (311).

jester as a "professional reciter of romances," is useful in understanding the "jester" or *gester* as a singer of tales. In his *Hous of Fame*, Chaucer mentions these singers of tales, "Of alle maner of minstrales, / And gestiours that tellen tales / Bothe of weping and of game" (3.1197-99). Feste and Touchstone are not only jesters, but they are artificial fools, employed comedians to perform at rich households. The prisoners in the *Dead House* "employ" a similar jester, Skuratov, whose main purpose is to entertain. These kinds of fools were no longer interesting to Shakespeare and Dostoevsky's audiences in the authors' late period. There is even, as the narrator of the *Dead House* notes, "some degree of contempt" toward the "cheerful ones" (*PSS* 4:72). The audiences demanded a different type of fool.

In the novel, Dostoevsky works with, natural and artificial, as in non-performative, as in "natural," and performative types that are also in Shakespeare. The narrator's commentary about the non-performative fools is that they are taken advantage of and are generally not respected: "The man who allowed himself to be treated with ceremony, the good-natured man without artifices, was instantly subjected to humiliation" (*PSS* 4:73). This has been the case with the medieval holy fools in Russia who have been subject to constant abuse. But this is not the only issue. The non-performative aspect of the fool makes the fool the point of ridicule and therefore makes the fool's word not credible. The performative fools are more esteemed in the *Dead House* than "natural" fools. The prisoners often engage in battles of rhetoric, and "the man who could argue down or shout down his opponent was highly esteemed and all but applauded like an actor" (*PSS* 4:25). Even though abused, the meek holy fool was generally revered in the East because of connotations of sanctity. Shakespeare's dislike of this kind of a fool had a lot to do with the clown's content of humor

which largely consisted of jokes about natural bodily functions. Thus, Shakespeare refuses to put a plain clown on the stage without giving his fool multiple coxcombs to wear. These later fools are multifaceted, witty, and are in full command of their faculties. They sing, dance, trick, teach. Feste's songs are too lachrymose to suggest festivity and joy. The carpe diem song for Toby (*TN*, 2.3), the song about death for the Duke (*TN*, 2.4), the "I am gone, sir" song for Malvolio (*TN*, 4.2), and the gloomy song of childhood in the end of the play are not lightly humored. Interestingly, Feste shares more similarities with the "unofficial" fool Jacques than Touchstone who is the "official" fool in *As You Like It*. One could easily substitute "fool" with "fellow" in Rosalind's "They say you are a melancholy fellow" (*AYLI*, 4.1.3) when she addresses Jacques. Besides, "fool" would make the sentence's rhythm iambic pentameter, whereas "fellow" adds an extra syllable. It is more fitting if Jacques is a fool. Adding individualism to the character of the fool, Jacques claims that he is not imitating anyone in his "humorous sadness" and despite his melancholy's eclectic nature, "compounded of many simples, extracted of many objects," it is still, a melancholy that is entirely his own, as in "natural" (*AYLI*, 4.1.18; 15-16). One of the most famous and compelling speeches in literature belongs to Jacques which deserves to be quoted in full:

> All the world's a stage,
> And all the men and women merely players;
> They have their exists and their entrances,
> And one man in his time plays many parts
> His acts being seven ages. At first, the infant,
> Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms.
> Then the whining schoolboy, with his satchel
> And shining morning face, creeping like snail
> Unwillingly to school. And then the lover,
> Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad
> Made to his mistress' eyebrow. Then a soldier,
> Full of strange oaths and bearded like the pard,

> Jealous in honor, sudden and quick in quarrel,
> Seeking the bubble reputation
> Even in the cannon's mouth. And then the justice,
> In fair round belly with good capon lined,
> With eyes severe and beard of formal cut,
> Full of wise saws and modern instances;
> And so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts
> Into the lean and slippered pantaloon,
> With spectators on nose and pouch on side;
> His youthful hose, well saved, world too wide
> For his shrunk shank, and his big manly voice,
> Turning again toward childish treble, pipes
> And whistles in his sound. Last scene of all,
> That ends this strange eventful history;
> Is second childishness and mere oblivion,
> Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything. (*AYLI*, 2.7.146-73)

Jacques speaks poetically about life, embedding his soliloquy with humor and gloom, mirth and sorrow, existence and mortality, youth and old age, history and politics. A human being's maturity here also signifies the fool's gradual maturity. The fool, as Jacques says, "plays many parts" on stage, while he is in the state of transformation. The "mewing" and "puking" child is the bawdy clown with bodily humor that is metamorphosing into a wise fool who "plays his part," but nonetheless preserves his childishness. The fool is a mirror of life, reflecting our follies, mirth, and sadness on the stage.

Despite his ardent desire to be the fool, as evidenced in his "Invest me in my motley, give me leave / To speak my mind, and I will through and through / Cleanse the foul body of th' infected world," Jacques is already that for which he shows much penchant (*AYLI*, 2.7.58). "It is my only suit," says Jacques referring to the motley although it is clear that he wears no physical motley. The Duke Senior considers him as an already-licensed fool, "for thou thyself hast been a libertine" (*AYLI*, 2.7.45; 65). Jacques is a fool, and Feste is a fool, but so is Touchstone, and so are those whom these licensed fools call fools because of their

striking follies. The ancient and medieval fools that haunt the stage of Shakespeare's Globe and Dostoevsky's house of fools, get newer motleys and fool's caps to be worn which makes the fool a multifaceted character. The fools are perhaps some sort of "very strange beasts," as Jacques describes them, "which in all tongues are called fools" (*AYLI*, 5.4.36-37)? The fool jokes; the fool sings; the fool reveals; the fool speaks in the face of power when no one else does; the fool "cleanse[s] the foul body" like a physician; the fool gives, variations all present in Shakespeare and Dostoevsky.

It the fool's earlier stages in Shakespeare and Dostoevsky, laughter does not only act as a form of escape or relief in trying times, but as a subtle technique to foreground major issues of the time. Shakespeare explorations of the mind or Dostoevsky's narrator's psychoanalytic approach to other prisoners has earned the former the label of "inventor of the human," and the latter, the epithet of "psychologist" which Nietzsche confidently ascribed to the novelist. But Dostoevsky never really thought of himself as a psychologist, but as a realist in a "deeper sense," as he writes to his friend and poet Apollon Maikov on December 23, 1868 (*PSS* 28:2:329). He thought he was tackling real problems, foregrounding real anxieties, just like Shakespeare was using the theater to stage real issues, a bold activity which eventually led to the closing of theaters in England in 1642. The fool is a figure of resistance who brings to the stage repressed political and social anxieties.

CHAPTER 2: FOOL AS A SCHISMATIC: THE HAMLET QUESTION

...the basic fact of the human will, its horror vacui: it needs a goal—and it would rather will nothingness than not will.

—Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*

To leap to where one is no more is to retreat to where one is yet to be.

—Elliot R. Wolfson, *Unveiling the Veil of Unveiling*

The Superfluous Man

Dostoevsky was a translator, but not of Shakespeare. He read *Hamlet* (and Shakespeare's other works) in French translation and in Nikolai Ketcher's prose and Andrei Kroneberg's verse translations in Russian, but never in English. His translation of Hamlet, the character, is not a linguistic *translatio* but a canvassing of poetic kinship meant to make a political statement. Walter Benjamin speaks of such kinship between languages, the "unfathomable, the mysterious, the 'poetic'" which a poet, who is himself a translator, could tease out and carry over.[65] In a letter to his brother Mikhail from 9 August 1838, Dostoevsky expresses his anguish about Hamlet: "How terrible! How petty is man! Hamlet! Hamlet!" (*PSS* 28:1:50). This should not be viewed as Dostoevsky's disappointment with Shakespeare's craft in writing Hamlet, since for Dostoevsky, Shakespeare "presented the correct sketch of man"

[65] Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator," in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, 1913-1926*, vol. 1, ed. Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings, 253 (The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996), 253.

(*PSS* 28:1:68),[66] but as a prelude to Dostoevsky's jeremiad against the Russian intelligentsia's reinterpretations and cultural appropriation of Hamlet. "Hamlet" became synonymous with the wandering Russian intellectual type prevalent in Aleksandr Pushkin's *Evgeny Onegin* (1833), re-popularized in subsequent decades by such figures as Mikhail Lermontov, Aleksandr Herzen, Ivan Goncharov, and Ivan Turgenev.[67] What resonated with the Russian intelligentsia was Hamlet as an outsider within his native Denmark, never quite managing to belong to either Elsinore or Wittenberg. The intrinsically nomadic Russian spirit pronounced in Russian *belles lettres* crystalized in the concept of the "superfluous man" [*lishnii chelovek*], which Turgenev's *Diary of the Superfluous Man* (1850) portrays as the Westernized educated liberal who, even though he loves humanity abstractly, is nonetheless unable to benefit it in any concrete way due to the stagnation in Russian life at the time. The generation of the thirties and forties saw a common, tragic fate in Hamlet's so-called "inaction." The fiery critic, Vissarion Belinsky exclaimed, "'Hamlet!' Do you even understand the meaning of that word? —it is lofty and deep: it is the human life, it is the human being, it is you, I, and every one of us."[68] Turgenev, too, three decades later in the essay, "Hamlet and Don Quixote" (1860), proclaims, "Almost everyone finds his own features in Hamlet."[69] Scoffing at such cultural translations of Hamlet, Nikolai Mikhailovsky,

[66] By this point Dostoevsky had read Nikolai Polevoi's 1837 prose translation of *Hamlet*, and it is possible that he also saw a production of the same translation staged in Moscow's Bolshoi Theater with Pavel Mochalov in the role of Hamlet.

[67] On Shakespeare's popularity in Russia, see Nikolai Zakharov, *Shekspirism russkoi klassicheskoi literatury: tezarusnyi analiz* (Moscow: International Academy of Sciences, 2008). On the "cult of Shakespeare" as a philological concept, see Yury Stepanov, *Konstanty: Slovar' russkoi kul'tury* (School of "The Languages of Russian Culture," 1997).

[68] Vissarion Belinsky, "Gamlet, drama Shekspira. Mochalov v roli Gamleta," in *Sobranie sochinenii v trekh tomakh*. T. I Moscow: OGIZ, GIKHL, 1948. http://az.lib.ru/b/belinskij_w_g/text_1180.shtml

[69] Ivan Turgenev, "Gamlet i Don-Kikhot." In *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem v tridtsati tomakh* (Nauka, 1980). http://az.lib.ru/t/turgenew_i_s/text_0240.shtml

a nineteenth-century literary critic, in an 1882 essay, writes, "In a word, Hamlet, not by the depth or vastness of his mind, breeds little Hamlets and—forgive me for getting ahead of myself—Hamletized piglets."[70] Eleanor Rowe, in identifying these Hamlet types, or "caricatures," in nineteenth-century Russian writing, underscores the gradual decline in the romanticization of Hamlet by the 1860s. "Romantic idealism," Rowe writes, "was clearly out of fashion and even a frequent object of scorn. Hamlet continued to be associated with lofty thoughts and noble longings, but he was felt to be useless to society, like Turgenev's Nezhdanov."[71] Dostoevsky sensed a danger in this drift and in the simultaneous rise of radicalism of Hamlet-like figures, or as Rowe refers to them, "rodent types," in Nikolai Chernyshevsky's and his disciples' works that laid claim to Hamlet's intellectual superiority but lacked his pained moral conscience.[72]

For Dostoevsky, Hamlet's wavering inner voice was a window into interpreting the figure of the nihilistic Russian radical, an extreme version of Hamlet that thrived within the schismatic decade of the sixties. The times echo the seventeenth century's Raskol, the split between the official church and the Old Believers or the *raskolniki*. The two main intellectual camps in Russia in the first half of the nineteenth century, the Westernizers and the Slavophiles, in their own way, tried to synthesize what they saw as Russia's schismatic

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70 Nikolai Mikhailovsky, "Gamletizirovannye porosiata" (1882), http://az.lib.ru/m/mihajlowskij_n_k/text_0310.shtml

71 Eleanor Rowe, *Hamlet: A Window on Russia,* (New York University Press, 1976), 85.

72 Dostoevsky's fears were soon realized when the head of the clandestine social revolutionary organization, "The People's Vengeance," Sergei Nechaev, attained a special warrant from an unwitting Mikhail Bakunin, who often traveled to Paris in the 1860s to absorb Paris's revolutionary air. Bakunin's endorsement of the spurious *Alliance Révolutionnaire Europeénne, Comité Général* allowed Nechaev to advocate his anarchic and self-serving revolutionary methods in Paris and later, in St. Petersburg. In 1869, Nechaev orchestrated the murder of a university student, I.I. Ivanov for disagreeing with his extreme tactics.

personality, the former through Western ideas and the latter by calling on the masses to go back to their roots and embrace traditional values. The goal in each case was integrality, whether it was achieved on a large scale via finding a common denominator with the West, or on a more conservative level through various nationalist movements. Either, when taken to its extremes, troubled Dostoevsky, so much so that he used his novels as warnings against various types of absolutism which he believed widened the abyssal gap between the various intelligentsia circles. Even more so than "Hamlet the wanderer" revered by the earlier generation, the prince's schismatic personality, his hyperconscious undulation between various performative states that either demand the exercise of conscience or the absence of it, resonated with Dostoevsky and inspired his attempts to understand Hamlet as the "man of the sixties" in his own discordant times. Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, written during the politically saturated decade, therefore, is a translation of a translation[73] that takes the type to task.

Dostoevsky's agenda for his most schismatic type born out of the decade, Rodion Romanovich Raskolnikov, inspired by Hamlet's antics, ambiguous bursts of madness, and seeming nihilism, is best explained by a careful look at the link between Shakespeare's hero and the Russianized version of him that ultimately transforms into the superfluous man of the forties and fifties and only later metamorphoses into the anarchic superman of the sixties, or

[73] Sarah Maitland, *What is Cultural Translation?* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), E-book, acknowledges and defines the abstruse concept of cultural translation and the debates surrounding it in translation studies. According to Maitland, "Translation […] is about infinite cultural production" (33). Maitland discusses the invocation of the term "cultural translation" as belonging to two camps: "those that view translation as a form of rewriting (of an anthropological, symbolic or cultural community) and those that view it as a form of 'transposition' (in which foreign interpretive horizons, artefacts, texts and people are relocated into a new locale" (23).

as otherwise known, the "man of the sixties." The type showcased the folly Dostoevsky detested most—cynicism that hardens one against the ability to love and hold anything sacred. At first glance, it may seem like for Dostoevsky, Hamlet's problem is his indecision—"To know that one single effort of the will would suffice to demolish that veil," as Dostoevsky puts it in his letter to Mikhail in 1838 (*PSS*, 28:1:50), the question of "Hamlet's delay," as it is known, still dominating Shakespeare studies today, but a closer look at the letter shows a concern not for Hamlet's will or lack thereof, but his *malodushie*, the literal translation of which, "small-souled," is better fitted for this context than just translating it as "cowardice." Within a paragraph, Dostoevsky draws out the thing that he thought corrupted his own society, "encrusting" over all that is positive and beautiful. He writes,

> This earth seems to me a purgatory for divine spirits who have been assailed by sinful thoughts. I feel that our world has become one immense Negative, and that everything noble, beautiful, and divine, has turned itself into a satire. If in this picture there occurs an individual who neither in idea nor effect harmonizes with the whole—who is, in a word, an entirely unrelated figure—what must happen to the picture? It is destroyed and can no longer endure. (*PSS* 28:1:50)

Dostoevsky's superman-like figures actively change shells [*obolochki*] and, therefore, not only do they stifle their own ethical possibilities, but also tarnish the harmony of the future "world-picture" [*obraz*], a recurring word in Dostoevsky. In that these characters are often conscience-stricken, they articulate Dostoevsky's belief in second chances and renewal, the lesson that he took away from his careful reading of the New Testament while in a Siberian katorga. He did not lose sight of the apocalyptic vision of the Book of Revelations, and his copious notes on the margins of the copy of the New Testament

given to him by the wives of the Decembrists while he was in prison, speak to Dostoevsky's hopes for the future. Dostoevsky's schismatics are solitary figures whose egotism and carelessness for the other are in constant disaccord with the ethical potential Dostoevsky gives them. In a seminal essay on Dostoevsky and Shakespeare, Pumpiansky examines the parallel motivations of each character desiring to be the agent of his own fate.[74] Pumpiansky's argument, briefly, is that Hamlet and Raskolnikov are trapped in their author's plot and subconsciously know it, hence, their aspiration to craft their own plots. Dostoevsky's looking back to Hamlet through Raskolnikov represents looking forward, a preventative measure of sorts meant as a warning against Hamlet-like types claiming to be misunderstood by the world and the people around them and taking matters into their own hands. Dostoevsky draws out a thread linking Hamlet and Raskolnikov: their love as an abstraction stemming from a superior sense of self that battles with their love of the neighbor.

Mikhail Bakhtin, in his *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, argues that "Dostoevsky always represents a person on the threshold of a final decision, at a moment of *crisis*, at an unfinalizable—and *unpredeterminable*—turning point for his soul."[75] We see the roots of a man on the threshold as early as in Dostoevsky's *The Double*, where the protagonist, Goliadkin, is literally split into two people with radically different personalities. Raskolnikov's dualism reflects the author's deep awareness of, and involvement with, the schismatic intellectual culture of the time, torn between Western

[74] L.V. Pumpiansky, *Dostoevsky i antichnost'* (VOL'FILA, 1922), 16.
[75] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 61.

ideals that leaned toward secular humanism and Slavophile views that stressed the importance of faith and the people's spiritualism. Dostoevsky encapsulates the two extremes within Raskolnikov, whose last name, Raskolnikov, means "schism" and his first name, Rodion, can be translated as "kin," "clan," "humankind," or "race," but the closest analogue is the Latin *gens* or the Greek *γένος* [genus]. *Rod* is a highly charged word in the Russian language; it is also the root of the words *rodit'sia* [to be born], *roditel'* [parent], *rodina* [homeland] *rodnik* [spring], *rodovoi* [labor or ancestors], *narod* [the people]. *Rod* suggests re*gen*eration. The young university student acutely aware of the current philosophical trends of his time, wants to prove to himself that "people are divided into two classes, the 'ordinary' and the 'extraordinary'" (*PSS*, 6:199) and that he himself belongs in the second camp. Through Raskolnikov, Dostoevsky filters the ideas of Nikolai Chernyshevsky, a disciple of the Petrashevsky Circle and its members' views on Enlightenment.[76] Chernyshevsky, however, had his own take on social relations, which leaned toward naturalism manifested in biological materialism. Raskolnikov's battle with himself precisely when he is actively trying to save a drunk young girl from Svidrigailov's lascivious pursuit, culminates in the triumph of Raskolnikov's Darwinian inner voice, "Why did I take it on myself to interfere? Was it for me to help? Have I any right to help? Let them eat one another alive—what is it to me?" (*PSS*, 6:42). The physiological rationale here of the survival of the fittest is what Chernyshevsky advocated in his 1863 novel, *What Is to Be Done?* Raskolnikov's maneuvering through

[76] Dostoevsky attended the Petrashevsky Circle meetings, a decision which cost him four years in a Siberian katorga.

Chernyshevsky's theory of rational egoism, which claimed that a human being's guiding principle is egoism, was Dostoevsky's way of showing that extreme forms of positivist and naturalist trends do not leave much room for moral conscience and intuition.

Since Dostoevsky's time, critics have scrutinized Raskolnikov's plight as a downtrodden student, who lives in Haymarket square of St. Petersburg, in a "tiny cage of about six feet" which "suited the state of Raskolnikov's soul" (*PSS* 6:25), leading him to commit a crime. Dmitry Pisarev, a prominent critic and himself a man of the sixties, after reading *Crime and Punishment*, immediately published an essay titled, "Fight for Life" (1867) which masks Raskolnikov's self-serving actions from a realist's perspective. Pisarev goes as far as to argue that "if it was possible to uplift Raskolnikov by giving him happy news and by sending him money, then, it may not be too difficult to assume that the seed of his illness was not in his brain, but in his pocket."[77] Nikolai Berdiaev, a Russian philosopher, on the other hand, calls Raskolnikov "a child of darkness" and a precursor to much more destructive personality types in Dostoevsky, such as Ivan Karamazov in *The Brothers Karamazov* and Nikolai Stavrogin in *Demons*, who, instead of "[putting] forward problems and riddles" like Raskolnikov, "are themselves these problems and riddles."[78] Like Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, where the question of the validity of the Ghost's claims riddles and torments Hamlet's conscience, Dostoevsky's novel from the very beginning sets up a riddle for Raskolnikov to solve, to prove to himself that he is a Napoleon who can cross the line of morality and kill

[77] Dmitry Pisarev, "Bor'ba za zhizn ('Prestuplenie i nakazanie' F.M. Dostoevskogo. Dve Chasti, 1867 g.)," in *Vospominaniia i isseldovaniia o tvorchestve F.M. Dostoevskogo*, vol. 4, 419 (DirectMedia, 2015).
[78] Nikolai Berdiaev, "Chelovek," in *Mirosozertsanie Dostoevskogo*, para. 2 (YMCA Press, 1923). http://www.vehi.net/berdyaev/dostoevsky/02.html

without feeling remorse. Both Hamlet's and Raskolnikov's serious approach to finding solutions to the riddle involve varieties of performance that are riddling to other characters, and on a narrative and dramatic level, such methods upend the protagonists into the realm of trickery. They are jesters juggling multiple personalities whose methods formulate mistrust in others and fuel their desire to find answers no matter the cost. Upon receiving his mother's letter, which reveals the circumstances of his sister, Dunia's, courtship with a petty government official Petr Petrovich Luzhin in a way that is supposed to persuade Raskolnikov that the couple's union is the best way out of their financial troubles, Raskolnikov simultaneously expresses disgust and triumph over catching the nuances of his mother's supposed "trickery" toward him. While Raskolnikov thinks himself a master of riddles, he does not like to be tricked himself. "No, mama, no Dunia, you will not deceive me!" (*PSS* 6:34) is a position Raskolnikov firmly holds on to, and later reiterates in an inner monologue, "What kind of a jest is this? What is the key to the riddle?" (*PSS* 6:37). Raskolnikov's suspicions toward others from the very start of the novel are microfibers which Dostoevsky weaves into the central dynamic of indeterminateness that is at the core of Raskolnikov's attitude toward life, people, and ethics.

The Oracle of the "Or"

The question of the nature of truth takes on various forms in *Hamlet* and *Crime and Punishment* and is often expressed through indecisive rhetoric and the conjunction, "or," prevalent in Hamlet's famous "To be or not to be" soliloquy, which Raskolnikov adopts. Speech as performance has a different flavor in *Hamlet* due to its dramatic structure and genre expectations, as it is not immediately clear whether Hamlet is genuine in his turbulent

doubts or whether his famous speech is only the beginning of his madness-as-performance routine, for he is well aware he is being carefully watched by those he is trying to trick. In Dostoevsky's novel, however, the "or" monologues continue through narrative commentary, further solidifying Raskolnikov's schism:

> It was clear that now the time had come, not to languish in passive suffering, arguing that questions were insoluble, but to act, to act now and with speed. He must decide on something or other, come what might, or…'Or renounce life altogether!' he exclaimed suddenly in a frenzy—'submit obediently to destiny, as it is, and stifle everything within oneself, renouncing every right to act, to live, or to love!' (*PSS*, 6:39)

Dostoevsky underscores Raskolnikov's split personality through sudden changes in his behavior. On a syntactical level, the word "suddenly" [*vdrug*] often recurs in *Crime and Punishment* connoting a sudden awakening, which for Dostoevsky belongs to the domain of intuitive truth. Raskolnikov's sister confirms her brother's schism between the heart and the head: "He is asking forgiveness and making friends again, as though it was part of his job, or as though he had got a lesson by heart" (*PSS* 6:173). In *Hamlet*, the suddenness of action is the centrifugal force, beginning with a "leprous distilment" that with a "sudden vigor" corrupts, according to the Ghost, his "smooth body" (1.5.71, 75, 80). In *Spectres of Marx*, Derrida speaks of the Ghost as a specter whose repetitive return "[e]ach time is the […] is the event itself."[79] The suddenness in both Hamlet and Raskolnikov partakes of the two character's decision to the event. For Hamlet, this is the Ghost, and for Raskolnikov, the two murders he commits and the yet-to-be event of crossing the line of morality or will such a transgression into nothingness by willing to

[79] Jacques Derrida, *Spectres of Marx*, 31 (Routledge, 1994/2006), E-book.

acknowledge he must not. According to Derrida, Hamlet's indecision has to do with the notion that waiting is essential to experience. Especially in a time of crisis and when "time is out of joint," one attends to specters of the past. Derrida writes,

> Whether he knows it or not, Hamlet is speaking in the space opened up by this question—the appeal of the gift, singularity, the coming of the event, the excessive or exceeded relation to the other—when he declares "The time is out of joint." And this question is no longer dissociated from all those that Hamlet apprehends as such, that of the specter-Thing and of the King, that of the event, of present-being, and of what *there is to be*, *or not*, what there is *to do*, which means *to think*, to make do or to let do, to make or to let come, or to give, even if it be death.[80]

As the audience grapples with the ambiguities surrounding the Ghost's presence, Hamlet suddenly becomes aware of the Ghost's mission for him. His sudden behavioral changes are aligned with his agenda and precipitate the haphazard deaths at the end of the play. Raskolnikov's moments of connection to nature, for instance, "He was drinking the water from a stream which flowed babbling beside him" is interrupted with "All at once he distinctly heard a clock strike" (*PSS* 6:58). At another instance, an overslept Raskolnikov upon awakening, shocking by the six hours that have passed, exclaims, "Heavens! How could I?" (*PSS* 6:116), referring perhaps both to the past murders which are the repeated event, and the unrealized desire to acknowledge to himself that he has acted immorally. Either way, he continuously thinks he is out of time. For both Hamlet and Raskolnikov time being out of joint is the condition of possibility for the event.

Before each work's appropriate ending, Shakespeare and Dostoevsky show each character's degrees of adaptivity and the logic behind their performances. Like fools on the

[80] *Ibid*., 48.

stage, the Danish prince and Dostoevsky's want-to-be-Napoleon believe they can successfully expose others' masks and follies through differentiating between appearances and realities. Hamlet and Raskolnikov occupy themselves with other characters' seeming gestures. "That *seems* is magnificent above all!—and Dunechka is going to marry that *seems*!" (*PSS* 6:35) exclaims Raskolnikov upon reading his mother's letter. Hamlet's similar distrust for Gertrude, who encourages him "to let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark" (1.2.71) and "If it be/Why seems it so particular with thee?" (1.2.77–78), is conspicuous in Hamlet's play with the word "seems," where he proposes that unlike pretenders, he does not seem, but is "Seems," madam? Nay, it is. I know not 'seems'" (1.2.79) Hamlet tells the distressed queen. The veneer of social niceties vexes Hamlet. "They fool me to the top of my bent" (3.2.414), he expresses in an aside. Although Hamlet and Raskolnikov elevate themselves above others, thinking they are the only ones capable of comprehending the riddle set upon them, they nonetheless engulf others in their quests. Their oracle of the "or" takes on a paradigmatic significance and establishes them as fool-like characters who move between worlds, stages, and selves in order to startle, rearrange, criticize, or manipulate the performance arena. Dostoevsky's schismatics are dramatic figures whose movement between inner monologues, soliloquies, and fervent public declarations mimics the characteristics of drama.

Situated Historically

The filtration of Renaissance awareness of the human experience through Hamlet's multidimensionality finds its parallels in Raskolnikov's extreme attunement to the psychic drama unfolding in his double selves. The prismatic dispersions of beings, however, in

Raskolnikov are largely based on a forced rationale. The radical democrats of the 1860s intellectual circles quickly arriving at Feuerbach's "man-god" idea that was to steal back from God the grandeur that once belonged to the human being, was a departure from Hegelian dialectical view of history to which the 1840s intellectuals, including Dostoevsky, ascribed. The idea for the "man of 1860s" like Chernyshevsky and his disciples was that since a human being is in charge of his own fate, an appeal to human reason then must dictate an autonomous morality. Raskolnikov is an extreme example of one who wants to rationalize conscience and turn it into a simple arithmetic. Like Hamlet, Raskolnikov's doubts are not about the details of the execution of the murder plan and its validity, but his own will, "No, I shall not do it, I will not do it! Grant that there is no element of doubt in all those calculations of mine, grant that all the conclusions I have come to during the past month as clear as daylight, as straightforward as arithmetic, all the same I shall never summon up enough resolution to do it" (*PSS* 6:50), when in a moment of shift, he tells himself that "[he] could kill that damned old woman and rob her, without a single twinge of conscience" (*PSS* 6:54). The driving force behind both heroes' actions is a clearly marked mission, the Ghost's authoritative council to which Hamlet responds,

> Haste me to know 't, that I, with wings as swift
> As meditation or the thoughts of love,
> May sweep to my revenge (1.5.35-7)

and Raskolnikov's desire to prove that he is not a louse. Through the power of the will he wants to know that he is able to overstep ethical boundaries, and as he puts it to Sonia, "I . . . I wanted to *have the courage*, and I killed . . . I only wanted to dare" (*PSS* 6:321). The means justify the end motif, which both Hamlet and Raskolnikov espouse and blind reverence to the

established objective couched in rational egoism, foment notions of absolute license in both characters, which is essentially despotism.

The Prison House of Solipsism

Feeling and empathy are actively pushed to the margins of the psyche as Hamlet and Raskolnikov cross-examine their own narratives, and as a result, leads to abstractions and distancing from the rest of the world. They choose to stand alone in a self-imposed bubble that soon enough would burst in a tragic realization of that very detachment. Hamlet alone receives the "commandment" which he resolutely states "[. . .] all alone shall live / Within the book and volume of my brain, / Unmixed with baser matter" (1.5.109). And while he has dear friends, like Horatio and Ophelia, who readily avail themselves to Hamlet's needs, the distance remains. At times Hamlet considers himself more intellectually superior to his peers. "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio," Hamlet utters, "Than are dreamt of in your philosophy. But come" (1.5.187, 188). Horatio is often seen as not on the same intellectual level as Hamlet, for Hamlet himself treats him as such. Unsurprisingly, in a play where Hamlet dominates speech, we do not get the chance to expose the dedicated friend's complexity. The innocuous Polonius whom Hamlet considers a "tedious old fool" (2.2.236), vexes him with prolixity. And his scornful conversation with Ophelia about honesty, speaks to his self-aggrandizement and militaristic dedication to his exclusive knowledge of the riddle.

> HAMLET Ay, truly, for the power of beauty will sooner transform honesty from what it is to a bawd than the force of honesty can translate beauty into his likeness. This was sometime a paradox, but now the time gives it proof. I did love you once.
> OPHELIA Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

HAMLET You should not have believed me, for virtue
cannot so inoculate our old stock but we shall
relish of it. I loved you not.
OPHELIA I was the more deceived.
HAMLET Get thee to a nunnery. (3.1.121-31)

Hamlet is a trickster.

It is not only Hamlet's malleable performances and role-play, "As I perchance hereafter shall think meet / To put an antic disposition on" (1.5.191-92), that align him with the figure of the fool, but also the etymological nuances of "Amleth" in Shakespeare's source, Saxo Grammaticus. "Amleth" comes from the Icelandic *Amlóði*, meaning, "fool."[81] The function of the fool is closely linked to Hamlet's madness, which the character exploits as a theme by conjuring the topic of mortality and sketching out the motif of the "mad lover." It is Ophelia who first develops the narrative of Hamlet's madness by telling Polonius of Hamlet's visit to her in a state of frenzy, which Polonius immediately interprets to the parental unit of monarchs as,

Your noble son is mad.
"Mad" call I it, for, to define true madness,
What is 't but to be nothing else but mad? (2.2.99-101).

In *Gesta Danorum*, not only Amleth is in disguise, but also, Ophelia, who is his accomplice. It is also quite unlikely for Hamlet to genuinely behave like the sonnet-lover, as the genre of revenge tragedy does not usually focus on the courtly love motif. Hamlet's madness is agenda-based, and as far as Claudius is concerned, "Though this be madness, yet there is /

[81] Henry Harrison, *Surnames of the United Kingdom: A Concise Etymological Dictionary*, vol. 1 (The Morland Press, LTD., 1918), 184.

method in 't" (2.2.223-24). Hamlet's madness is definitive, rather than factual, and from a literary point of view, as Robert de Beaugrande states, "[at] stake ultimately is therefore not the 'essence of madness,' but the criteria whereby any society views departures from its standards of conception and conduct as a mental (not merely a moral) breakdown."[82] In the play's world, madness is folly, as it is performative within a highly political context. Hamlet's act of critique of the "rotten" state of Denmark (both the country and the king) is as dangerous as the licensed fool's role on the stage was a speaker of truth. Some fools have done the job with much caution, while others have been banished or put to death for crossing the line.[83] Claudius certainly senses the "method" of Hamlet's madness, which is the prince's "license" to uncover and critique false pretenses that conceal the "foul and most unnatural murder" (1.5.31). The all-licensed fool in Elizabethan and Jacobean England was not really free to say it all, even if he saw it all. Clever fools, nonetheless, could generally evade censures, and Hamlet manages to do just that until Claudius's suspicions solidify enough to send Hamlet to England and plot his murder. The King expresses his concerns about this unlicensed fool's odd behavior to Gertrude and comic relief fools like Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, whom Hamlet easily tricks both in language games and pursuits, that "There's matter in these sighs; these profound heaves / You must translate; 'tis fit we understand them" (4.1.1-2). "Translation," however, does not come easily to others, for Hamlet's

[82] Robert de Beaugrande, "Literary Theories and the Concept of Madness," in *Dionysus in Literature: Essays on Literary Madness* (Bowling Green state University Popular Press, 1994), 3.
[83] In *Clowns*, Towsen recounts an anecdote about a wise fool, Marot, a sixteenth-century jester, who "when walked alongside the king, the sovereign told him he could not bear having a fool on his right-hand side. 'Is that so?' replied Marot, as he moved to the left of the king, 'I can bear it very well'" (29). The mock role-changes in the plays play on the idea of the doubles. The audience then wonders who the real fool is.

methodical madness and foolery paint a schismatic personality whose doubling selves battle each other.

Even though Dostoevsky's concern was, as he says, Hamlet's soul "so utterly oppressed by woe," (*PSS* 28:1:4), his ability to relate to Hamlet's inner disaccord manifests itself in Raskolnikov's mad-like behavior. Raskolnikov not only acts as a madman, but his appearance suggests madness incarnate: "[T]here was something very strange about him; his eyes had an almost rapturous shine, they seemed to hold both intelligence and good sense but gleams of something like madness showed in them as well" (*PSS* 6:12). Though Dostoevsky presents Raskolnikov's madness as only at times methodical, he closely interrelates psychological and physiological states of being. The physical space of "[the] dreadful little cupboard" where Raskolnikov resides matures "the thought of *it*" while his brooding over "it," seems to be the cause of his physical ailments when "[h]is nervous trembling seemed to have turned into a fever" (*PSS* 6:45). The limited narrator reiterates the notion that physiology determines psychology, at a time when eccentric behavior, including madness or (holy) foolishness, was frequently subjected to medical evaluation. Writing against pure rationalism and medical materialism, Dostoevsky's point was to counter the positivist philosophy of Russian physiologist, I.M. Sechenov and those he influenced. Like Sechenov, his disciples, Nikolai Ogaryov and Dmitri Pisarev "rejected free will as an idealistic superstition and attempted to replace the 'fatalism of predestination' by the 'fatalism of cause and effect'."[84] Dostoevsky's letters during the writing period of *Crime and Punishment*,

[84] Andrzej Waliciki, *A History of Russian Thought: From the Enlightenment to Marxism*, trans. Hilda Andrewa-Rusiecka (Stanford University Press, 1979), 182.

including one to his publisher M.N. Katkov from the *Russian Messenger* in 1865, by contrast, restate that the "[novel] is a psychological account of a crime" when "the psychological process of the crime develops" before the protagonist commits the murder (*PSS* 28.2.136). Although Dostoevsky attended the Petrashevsky meetings only a few times in the 1840s, their psychologizing of human nature still influenced his ideas. The generation of the 1840s, including Belinsky, Herzen, and Dostoevsky, considered the physiological determinism of the 1860s generation as a vainglorious attempt to stifle the free will and curtail any feelings of duty to one's fellow human beings. Herzen's influential *Letters on Free Will* (1868) especially struck a nerve with the intelligentsia since it underscored the wide ideological gap between the two generations. In his response to his son, Alexander Jr., who was a famous physiologist, Herzen writes,

> At all periods, man seeks his autonomy, his liberty and though pulled along by necessity, he does not wish to act except according to his own will; he does not wish to be a passive gravedigger of the past or an unconscious midwife of the future; he considers history as his free and indispensable work. [. . .] Moral liberty is thus a psychological, or if one wishes, an anthropological reality.[85]

Raskolnikov's inner disaccord taps into the heart of the times to present the peril of life attempted to be lived within the strict parameters of determinism.

Dostoevsky does not allow his conflicted hero to ride the naturalist train without any emotional stops. The novel thus portrays a series of fluctuations in the mind of the "greenhorn," (as Raskolnikov often tries to disprove himself to be, but rather proves to be)

[85] Alexander Herzen, "Pismo o svobode voli," in *Sochineniia v dvukh tomakh*, vol. 1 (Nauka, 1986), 529. I have used Joseph Frank's translation from *Dostoevsky: The Stir of Liberation, 1860-1865* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 327(n).

torn between trendy ideologies of the time and his conscience. In a letter to her son, Raskolnikov's mother expresses her fears in this vein: "I am afraid, in my heart, that you too may have been affected by the fashionable modern unbelief" (*PSS* 6:34). Sergei Belov suggests that Raskolnikov's struggle is "between the conscience protesting against the bloodshed and reason justifying the bloodshed."[86] The premise of Dostoevsky's "man on the threshold" leitmotif is indirectly set up by the novel's "old fool," Sergei Marmeladov, who in his drunken state tells Raskolnikov that he is "seek[ing] the company of a man of feeling and education" (*PSS* 6:12). The battle between Raskolnikov's cultivated reason and his untamable conscience only intensifies after this encounter. Shakespeare uses a similar thematic technique with Polonius, the "tedious old fool," whose advice to Reynaldo, "By indirections find directions out" (2.1.73), signals the audience the underlying premise of Hamlet's riddles and trickery rather than being actually directed to a much less significant character. The projects that these shape-shifting characters have taken on, require them to dwindle on the threshold, whether it is between performative masks or cosmic questions. Almost every time Hamlet mentions heaven, it is in the collective phrase, "heaven and earth." His sense of making things just are not perverse, but he knows that their execution and end result will be. Everyone who is caught between him and Claudius's games, "Between the pass and fell incensèd points / Of mighty opposites" (5.2.68-9), has a tragic end. And on a larger scale, Hamlet feels himself trapped between "earthly" matters like revenge and those heaven would approve. As a man who is soon to cross the line, Hamlet

[86] Sergei V. Belov, "The History of the Writing of the Novel," in "Essays in Criticism" in F.M. Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, ed. George Gibian, Norton Critical Edition, 3rd ed. (W.W. Norton & Company, 1989), 491.

asks Ophelia, “What should such fellows as I do crawling / between earth and heaven?” (3.1.138-39). His methodical performances are not mere jests devised to trigger the courtly crowd of Denmark to cast off their masks of “seeming” and acknowledge their own follies, but Hamlet’s own way of navigating his inner crisis and soul caught in a turmoil.

Nature and Scientific Progress, Affirmation and Denial

Dostoevsky approaches the question of dualism from a different angle. Calculations and resoluteness get overpowered with feeling and sympathy every time Raskolnikov is around nature and people who are in need of his help, despite his constant rationalization about being repulsed by company. As the novel progresses, Raskolnikov’s feelings become more abstract even toward his mother, sister, and only friend: “The thought occurred to him that it was when they were absent that he really loved them” (*PSS* 6:175). At a point when his friend Razumikhin presses Raskolnikov on the growing distance that Raskolnikov creates between himself and others, Raskolnikov detestably responds, “can’t you see that I don’t want your kindness? [. . .] Surely I’ve shown you clearly enough today that you annoy me, that I’m . . . sick of you!” (*PSS* 6:130). And when the cook, Nastasia, enquires about his “work,” Raskolnikov replies with utmost seriousness that his “work” is pure “thinking” (*PSS* 6:26) rather than interacting with others. The perpetually defamiliarizing stance, however, has not always been Raskolnikov’s prerogative. He tells Nastasia that he once tutored children, which he no longer wishes to do, as “[it] is very badly paid” (*PSS* 6:27), a response that later proves insincere through Raskolnikov’s disregard for money, whether his mother’s or the pawnbroker’s. In an epimonic scene which appears in Dostoevsky’s other works in varied forms, Raskolnikov throws away the twenty-kopek piece a peasant woman and her

young daughter give him as charity upon thinking that he is homeless. The scene is based on Dostoevsky's personal experience in Siberia, which almost word-for-word is repeated in a familiar circumstance in the *Dead House*, where Garianchikov receives a kopek in Christ's name. Instead of keeping the money, Raskolnikov gets rid of it only to "feel that he had in that moment cut himself from everybody and everything, as if with a knife" (*PSS* 6:90). What Dostoevsky establishes here is more than the actions of a rational egoist who considers the fruits of labor and charity from others as acts of pity, but more subtly, a character who on an intermittently spiritual level, is associated with children.

The authorial inclination to bring Raskolnikov to the level of childish innocence and holy foolish meekness is in conflict with Raskolnikov's predatorial disposition. The medieval holy fool's reception in society was a curious aspect of the holy fool's character; the figure was either revered or feared on the grounds that such an individual was touched by God. Raskolnikov's subconscious gestures to return to childhood are not only rooted in such cultural phenomena, but also speak to Dostoevsky's high esteem for children, a feeling that might have been cultivated by Dostoevsky's love for the Gospels since childhood. In a letter to N.D. Fonvizina on February 20, 1854, Dostoevsky voices his credo:

> to believe that nothing is more beautiful, profound, sympathetic, reasonable, manly, and more perfect than Christ; and I tell myself with a jealous love not only that there is nothing but that there cannot be anything. Even more, if someone proved to me that Christ is outside the truth, and that in reality the truth were outside of Christ, then I should prefer to remain with Christ rather than with the truth. (*PSS* 28:1:143)

Raskolnikov's positivist "truth" is not the same as the word of the Gospel.[87] His battle between his doubling selves partially rests on the prototype of the holy fool who due to his nonresistant nature was often taken advantage of in the spirit of "voluntary suffering," which had become venerated since Nestor the monk wrote the *vita* of Boris and Gleb, the childlike princes whose martyrdom acted as a reason for their canonization by the Russian Church. Raskolnikov's character, adhering to the dictates of the mind and not the heart, misinterprets the Orthodox idea of atonement through suffering as a brooding over his purely theoretical formula of new morality, which the novel translates as madness. The famous dream of the beaten mare, which perhaps inspired Nietzsche's tale of the Turin horse, takes place when Raskolnikov keeps relapsing into abstractions. It portrays Raskolnikov's conscience in the form of a child, who wanders to the town where "there was not a single tree anywhere, except for a little wood very far away" (*PSS* 6:46). The child witnesses the beating of the old nag and its gruesome murder. Raskolnikov wakes up "panting and sweating" and in "some sort of fever" from "such a horrible dream" (*PSS* 6:50). The dream briefly catches Raskolnikov's conscience, but after a month of maturation, he rationalizes his idea and "almost mechanically" kills Alena Ivanovna with one strike of the axe. The reader gets a detailed description of the victim's body and her "blood [forming] a pool on the floor" (*PSS* 6:64). Then the scene follows Raskolnikov's second unplanned murder, Alena's sister, Lizaveta's, whose skull Raskolnikov splits, "open from the top of the forehead almost to the crown of the head" (*PSS* 6:65). Both events recall Mikolka from Raskolnikov's dream who

[87] Significant to this discussion is the verse, "Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me" (Mark 9:36-37).

after brutally beating the mare across the eyes, kills her with an axe. Nonetheless, glimmers of light appear at moments when Raskolnikov is intrepid like a child. After his confession to Sonia, for the first time Raskolnikov communicates his fears to another, with a childish smile which is categorically different from the strange and bitter angry smile he fashions in the beginning of the novel, while his mind foments the deed. When in Sonia's company, he speculates her transgression instead, concluding that "[s]urely it would be better, a thousand times better and wiser, to plunge into the water and end it all" (*PSS* 6:247). But at a moment of clarity, Raskolnikov understands that Sonia would rather suffer the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" for one reason alone— *they, those children* who rely on her for basic sustenance. Raskolnikov is not willing to comprehend the bounds of Sonia's *caritas* and instead postulates that Sonia's disregard of the self is a sign of madness. In the sense of "madness" as abnormal behavior that can be self-destructive, Sonia's "madness" greatly differs from Raskolnikov's performative madness and hypnogogic hallucinations.

The symptoms of Raskolnikov's madness are isolation and confusion. Robert de Beaugrande conjectures that "'Neurosis' (or 'madness' or 'insanity') should be defined not merely as some syndrome or trauma brought on by a specific biographical incident (a special case the orthodox Freudians assumed to be the general one), but as a refusal of awareness, a denial of occasions for learning, knowing and evolving."[88] Raskolnikov shuts every open door offered to him to entirely focus on his principle of overstepping all restrictions without the call of conscience. Therefore, Pisarev's deterministic justification of the poor student's actions who commits crime to save himself from hunger does not hold. Pisarev, among

[88] Beaugrande, "Literary Theories and the Concept of Madness," 9.

others, was influenced by August Comte's *Course of Positive Philosophy* whose work made waves in Russia in the 1840s and 50s and got filtered through the discourse of the 1860s nihilism. Comte presents his study of the development of human intelligence in the following three stages: the "Teleological, or fictitious; Metaphysical; or abstract; and the Scientific, or positive" where the first stage is the point of departure; the second is a transitory period, and the third is a "fixed and definitive state."[89] In his conjectures of phenomena, Comte argues that as the mode of "unknown quantities" (i.e. the supernatural) form into the "known," Absolute notions are discarded where "[r]easoning and observation are the means of this knowledge."[90] Raskolnikov turns this into an active practice and tries to discard conscience as something non-definitive that belongs to the metaphysical realm. He even scoffs at his mother and sister's sensitivities to others, by referring to them "as Schilleresque beautiful souls" who "up to the very last minute [. . .] see people through rose-colored spectacles; up to the very last moment they hope for good and not evil" (*PSS* 6:37). Raskolnikov, as well as Dostoevsky's contemporaries, try to explain Raskolnikov's madness as "anomie" (Durkheim's coinage), which is madness defined as the alienation from society caused by the class struggle. In his *Division of Labor in Society*, a work highly influenced by Comte's positivism, *É*mile Durkheim speaks of "anomy" as "abnormal form[s] where the division of labor does not produce solidarity."[91] George Simpson, in his preface to Durkheim's work, traces the etymology of anomie to the Greek *ἄνομος* (*anomos*), which means "without

[89] Auguste Comte, 2000. *The Positive Philosophy of August Comte*, translated by Harriet Martineau. Vol. 1. Kitchener, Canada: Batoche Books, 2000. First published 1896, 28. https://socialsciences.mcmaster.ca/econ/ugcm/3ll3/comte/Philosophy1.pdf
[90] *Ibid.*
[91] Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society*, trans. George Simpson (The Free Press of Glencoe, Illinois, 1933), 353.

[Divine] law."[92] Moral law and divine (Christ's) truth, for Dostoevsky, however, were one and the same, and the slew of philosophical and theoretical "truths" that permeated into the Russian mind in the nineteenth century did not hold much appeal if they privileged pure rationalism over feelings and intuition and deviated from the Word. The reason Raskolnikov gives to Sonia as to why he killed Alena Ivanovna, "to provide myself for the university," quickly shifts from rational egoism to utilitarian socialism, "I only killed a louse, [. . .] a useless, vile, pernicious louse" to (*PSS* 6:319). Both of these reasons, as Raskolnikov confesses, are not representative of the truth. "There is much evidence in our newspapers," writes Dostoevsky to Katkov in 1865, "about the unusual instability of ideas which impel people to terrible acts" (*PSS* 28:2:137). In another letter to Katkov a year later, Dostoevsky opens with "All nihilists are socialists" and continues his tirade against the corrupters of youth:

> Fourier was convinced that all it will take is to build one phalanstery and the whole world will immediately be covered by phalansteries; those are his own words. And our Chernyshevsky said that he only needed to talk to the people for a quarter hour and immediately he would convince them to convert to socialism. Moreover, in out poor little defenseless Russian boys and girls, there is one more, eternally persisting, fundamental point upon which socialism will base itself for a long time to come: enthusiasm for the good, and the purity of their hearts. (*PSS* 28.2.154)

Dostoevsky gives his reader a warning in the form of a young man whose head is filled with theories that push him onto the edge of the abyss. For an author who mourned Hamlet's immoral choices and his tragic end, Dostoevsky's poetics required a Hamlet with second chances.

[92] *Ibid*., ix.

In *Hamlet*, Shakespeare only intensifies Hamlet's solipsism, which Dostoevsky translates into the Russian context through varying Christian and pagan elements. The question of Raskolnikov's religious faith comes up in the novel without any strong affirmations on his part. The reader gets a faint glimpse into the question of Raskolnikov's (un)belief through his mother's letter where she writes, "Do you pray to God, Rodia, as you used to, and do you believe in the mercy of our Creator and Redeemer?" (*PSS* 6:34) And again, the question is raised in Raskolnikov's encounter with Sonia in their discussion of God when Sonia asks, "What should I do without God?" to which Raskolnikov replies maieutically, "And what does God do for you in return?" (*PSS* 6:278) despite showing great interest in the story of Lazarus which Sonia reads to him from the New Testament. The fact that Dostoevsky's foolish types have overlapping Christian and pagan associations speaks to the author's *dvoeverie* or "dual faith," Russian medieval spirituality prevalent in Russia even today. Christian features of Dostoevsky's fools do not contradict their pagan or even gnostic aspirations. On the contrary, their spiritual attributes put them in a familiar setting and set the stage for the reawakening and the raising of the fallen.

To Raskolnikov, who intuitively succumbs to nature's positive forces, earth itself is a restorative and necessary element for one's emotional homeostasis even if he evades it. The pagan features of earthly nourishment, however, do not find a pedestal in *Hamlet*. Here Shakespeare does not capitalize on nature as the material world, but rather on nature as a person's constitution[93], which is not influenced by the earth's environment:

[93] A now-obsolete entry for "nature" (in usage from 1385-1836) in the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines it as, "The power or force which is fundamental to the physical and mental functioning of a human being." Another

O heart, lose not thy nature; let not ever
The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom.
Let me be cruel, not unnatural. (3.2.426-28)

Hamlet is willing to go as far as cruelty, but not murder, which would be "unnatural." He would instead only "speak daggers, [. . .] but use none" (3.2.429). His pernicious attitude toward "rotten Denmark," even if predominantly directed toward Claudius, concocts a visionless world-picture that could only end in tragedy. Earth to Hamlet seems "a sterile promontory" (2.2.322) sullied by "a foul and pestilent congregation of vapors" (2.2.326) and "[. . .] an unweeded garden / That grows to seed. Things rank and gross in nature / Possess it merely" (1.2.139-41). Earth as a reawakening force cannot figure in Hamlet's universe, for he does not separate earth from its people. His question to the gravedigger, "How long will a man lie i' th' earth ere he rot?" (5.1.168), identifies the sole function of the earth, which is to rot the flesh. Dostoevsky drops the bleakness of Hamlet's outlook through the reversal of environmental attitudes that reflects his character's moral compass and to some extent, influences it.

In the descriptions of Raskolnikov's dreamy walks, the city itself is painted as a two-headed alien but simultaneously familiar beast that recapitulates the drama of Raskolnikov's split conscious. Dostoevsky's St. Petersburg is a Gogolian "city of mists and white nights, a ghost town whose pulse beats to a faster tempo, a symbol of the forces that had swept from

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one from 1390-1992, reads, "The inherent dominating power or impulse in a person by which character or action is determined, directed, or controlled."

the West and destroyed the peaceful life of 'Holy Russia'."[94] The hustle and bustle of St. Petersburg's Haymarket Square where every movement is characterized by unhealthy ambition, reminded Dostoevsky too much of capitalistic and rationally driven London and Paris where new discoveries in science and technology claimed arrival at final truths. Its geographical proximity to Western Europe, St. Petersburg absorbed European values that were to suppress any of its remaining folkish features. Events around the failed revolution of 1848 in France and Herzen's cooperation with anarchist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon in Paris provided a new window through which ideas traveled eastward. Herzen's political truths echoed in Russia even under the censors and were hardly music to Dostoevsky's ears. In order to denounce firsthand the dangerousness of these ideas, disseminated by the French and Russian socialists in Paris, Dostoevsky took a trip in 1862 to the city of "Baal," as he refers to Paris in his *Winter Notes*. Remembering London, while in Paris, which he notes "is much the same," Dostoevsky observes,

> the immense town, forever bustling by night and by day, as vast as an ocean, the screech and howl of machinery, the railway built above the houses (and soon to be built under them) the daring of enterprise, the apparent disorder which in actual fact is the highest form of bourgeois order, the polluted Thames, the coal-saturated air, the magnificent squares and parks, the town's terrifying districts such as Whitechapel with its half-naked, savage and hungry population, the City with its millions and its world-wide trade, the Crystal Palace, the World Exhibition . . . (*Winter*, 44-45)

Joseph Paxton's massive glass and iron structure, the Crystal Palace, which housed the World Exhibition of 1851[95] to Dostoevsky was representative of Babylon, "some prophecy," he says, "out of the Apocalypse being fulfilled before your very eyes" (*Winter*, 45).

[94] Walicki, *A History of Russian Thought: From the Enlightenment to Marxism*, 310-11.
[95] Dostoevsky here refers to the 1862 Exhibition, which was on an even larger scale.

Dostoevsky begins *Crime and Punishment* with a familiar picture that opens up in front of Raskolnikov, who is almost repulsed by the stir and stench of the city:

> The heat in the streets was stifling. The stuffiness, the jostling crowds, the bricks and mortar, scaffolding and dust everywhere, and that peculiar summer stench so familiar to everyone who cannot get away from St. Petersburg into the country, all combined to aggravate the disturbance of the young man's nerves. The intolerable reek from the public houses, so numerous in that part of the city, and the sight of the drunken men encountered at every turn, even though this was not a holiday, completed the mournfully repellent picture. An expression of the deepest loathing passed across the young man's delicate features. (*PSS* 6:6)

In no way St. Petersburg, with its swarming crowds and limiting ideological leanings that Dostoevsky thought corrupted young minds, could be representative of the New Jerusalem. Peter Petrovich Luzhin, whom Raskolnikov despises and who although not a murderer, is one of the proponents of the Crystal Palace. An irreversible egoist, Luzhin's amoral character gets revealed through several conversations that mirror Raskolnikov's attempts at crossing the line. "'Love your neighbor' and I acted on it," asks Luzhin rhetorically, "what was the result?" His reply is a nod to Chernyshevsky's *What Is to Be Done*?:

> The result was that I divided my cloak with my neighbor and we were both half-naked, for according to the Russian proverb: "If you run after two hares, you will catch neither." Science, however, says: love yourself first of all, for everything in the world is based on personal interest. (*PSS* 6:116)

Science and economic progress without moral codes is merely a stagnant puddle (the root of the name Luzhin, *luzha*, means puddle). Through various imperfect doubles to his main character, Dostoevsky not only puts Raskolnikov, but an entire idea, on trial. Dostoevsky's fears were soon realized when the head of the clandestine social revolutionary organization, "The People's Vengeance," Sergei Nechaev, attained a special warrant from an unwitting Mikhail Bakunin, who often traveled to Paris in the 1860s to absorb Paris's

revolutionary air. Bakunin's endorsement of the spurious *Alliance Révolutionnaire Europeénne, Comité Général* allowed Nechaev to advocate his anarchic and self-serving revolutionary methods in Paris and later, in St. Petersburg. In 1869, Nechaev orchestrated the murder of a university student, I.I. Ivanov for disagreeing with his extreme tactics. Dostoevsky returns to this contemporary case in his *Demons*. But as he notes in "One of Today's Falsehoods," an article entry in his *Diary*,

> My Nechaev character is, of course, unlike the actual Nechaev. I wanted to pose the question and, as clearly as possible, provide an answer to it in the form of a novel: how is it possible in out changing and astonishing society of today to have not a Nechaev but *Nechaevs*, and how does it happen that these Nechaevs eventually acquire their own Nechaevists? (*PSS* 21:125)

Raskolnikov is only a preamble to a cleverer and more ruthless Stavrogin and his cast of Nechaevs in *Demons*, who represent the full maturation of the "man of the 1860s" and his unethical codes.

Raskolnikov's escape from the city to pockets of nature within the city enforce intermittent sensory awareness and attunement to nature that positively affect his conduct. George Gibian in his study of water symbolism in *Crime and Punishment*, notes that "water is to Dostoevsky a symbol of rebirth and regeneration" and a life-giving force for the positive characters (or characters who get the chance to become positive) and is detested by the negative characters.[96] Svidrigailov's character, for instance, who could be considered a Coleridgean "motiveless malignity," for whom Dostoevsky has no final awakening in store, before his suicide, "heavy clouds began to pile up overhead, there was a clap of thunder"

[96] George Gibian, "Traditional Symbolism in *Crime and Punishment*," in "Essays in Criticism" in F.M. Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, ed. George Gibian, Norton Critical Edition, 3rd ed. (W.W. Norton & Company, 1989), 527.

(422). In the novel's pagan overtones, the "clap of thunder" can be associated with Perun, the Slavic pagan god of thunder, who punishes sins by striking the sinful with lightening. Svidrigailov's associations with nature differ from Raskolnikov's intuitive attraction to it. The greenery at Petrovsky Park make Svidrigailov uncomfortable, and when thinking of the Little Neva River, "he seemed to feel cold again, as he had then, standing above the water" (*PSS* 6:384). The baptismal nature of rebirth through water is at play in *Crime and Punishment*, which Dostoevsky complicates by adding the pagan idea of "rebirth" (*rod*) in *Rod*ion Raskolnikov's brief moments of regeneration when around nature. When out walking by the Little Neva, Raskolnikov "took a particular interest in the flowers and looked at them the longest of all" (*PSS* 6:45). He walks to Petrovsky Island and "turn[s] into some bushes, let[s] himself fall to the ground, and [is] asleep at once" (*PSS* 6:45). The contrast between his apartment, where madness ensues, and nature, is that the latter setting evokes feelings of empathy. The folklorist, Andrei Siniavsky points out that the earth worship, although pagan in its origin, was an expression of love of God and its creation, and a custom still widespread in the nineteenth century.[97] People would usually expiate their sins by asking forgiveness from *Mat' Zemlia* (Mother Earth) and kissing it. At the end of the novel, Raskolnikov, like nature's guilty child, "knelt in the middle of the square, bowed to the ground, and kissed its filth with pleasure and joy. He raised himself and bowed down a second time" (*PSS* 6:45). This paganistic expression of kissing earth as a way of asking for its forgiveness is closely

[97] In one spiritual verse, Siniavsky notes, Mother Earth complains to God: "How she does weep and grieve, / Mother Damp Earth before the Lord: / It's hard on me, Lord, to stand under people, / It's harder still to hold people, / Sinful, lawless people" (173).

associated with the behavior of the holy fools who preferred to walk around naked to be in closer contact with the earth's hidden forces, which for the later holy fools for Christ's sake (*iurodivye Khrista radi*) meant deemphasizing worldly ways and materials. When passing the Yusupov Gardens, Raskolnikov imagines "the construction of tall fountains," a comforting thought that makes him "not frightened at all," which he brusquely dismisses as "irrelevant thoughts" (*PSS* 6:60). Dostoevsky found animistic expressions in the Bible and sought ways of conjoining pagan and Orthodox belief systems. In his personal copy of the New Testament given to him by the wives of the Decembrists in Siberia that he held dear during his four-year sentence, Dostoevsky underlined with a pencil a part of the verse, "The Holy Spirit and the bride say, 'Come!' And the person who hears should say, 'Come!' Anyone who is thirsty should come. Anyone who wants to take the free gift of the water of life should do so" (Rev. 22:17). The emphasized section reads, *beri vodu zhizni darom* ("take the gift of the water of life freely").[98]

The battle between mind and spirit [*dusha*] accentuates Raskolnikov's movement between polarities of being and signal a possibility of change. His observations of the Palace and the dome of the cathedral, two places with differing visions, are part of the "picture" [*kartina*] reflected in his opposing views:

> He stood for a long time gazing steadily into the distance; this spot was particularly familiar to him. A hundred times, while he was at the university, had he stopped at this very place, usually on his way home, to fix eyes on the truly magnificent view and wonder each time at the confused and insoluble [*nerazreshimomu*] sensation it woke in him. An inexplicable chill always breathed on him from the superb panorama, for him a deaf and voiceless spirit [*dukhom*] filled the splendid picture

[98] Thanks to the ASEEES Dissertation Research Grant, I was able to do archival research at НИОР РГБ Dom Pashkova, Moscow, and closely look at Dostoevsky's copy of the New Testament, Gosposda Nashego Iisusa Khrista Novyi Zaviat', ф. 93/1 N5в.1.

> [*kartina*]. . . Each time he marveled at his gloomy and mysterious impression, and then, mistrustful of himself, deferred consideration of the riddle to some future time. (*PSS* 6:90)

Raskolnikov is attracted to a world-picture that does not exclude feeling but occasionally embraces it in its sudden "voicelessness" and mysteriousness. Dostoevsky here uses *dusha*, which can be translated as "spirit," "soul," "harmony," or "feeling" to counteract Raskolnikov's rational thinking that constantly demands a highly formulaic and explainable reality. Dostoevsky's consumptive socialist, Ippolit Terentev in *The Idiot*, is a Raskolnikovian instantiation, a "giftless fool" as he himself puts it, who is obsessed with concrete and determinable images. More extreme in his views than Raskolnikov, the emaciated young nihilist's essay, "A Necessary Explanation!" which he reads before his unsuccessful suicide, has an epigraph fit for a rational egoist: *Après moi le deluge*. Ippolit's quite literal obsession with Meyer's wall outside his house is a nod to a material reality that can be explained scientifically. "That cursed wall!" he says, "But all the same it is dearer to me than all of Pavlovsk's trees" (*PSS* 8:326) is a leitmotif in Dostoevsky's later novels. Real progress in the world-picture would include Raskolnikov or any of Dostoevsky's "condemned" heroes to truly feel the gravity of their deeds and atone for it. Justice would not be served when Raskolnikov confesses to murder, but when he genuinely feels like he has failed his own moral conscience in loving his neighbor. Dostoevsky gives the reader varied degrees of immorality and amorality in having the two murderers, Raskolnikov and Svidrigailov meet, where Raskolnikov's impression of Svidrigailov is that "this is a madman" (*PSS* 6:221). Even worse than Luzhin's stagnant puddle, Svidrigailov's (un)vision is a "bathhouse in the country, black with soot, with spiders in every corner, and that that is

the whole of eternity" (*PSS* 6:221). Unlike the infernal bathhouse in the *Dead House* with its baptismal scenes of regeneration, Svidrigailov's imagined "eternity" is grotesquely hopeless. Even Raskolnikov is repulsed by it, and "at this monstrous [*bezobrazom*] answer a chill seized upon Raskolnikov" (*PSS* 6:221). Dostoevsky's use of *bezobrazom*, often translated as "monstrous" or "hideous," literally means "imageless" or "visionless." Having Raskolnikov defamiliarize from his self and look at a more destructive and amoral version of himself, is one of the many preliminary steps of getting him closer to embracing old morality.

Moments of hesitation speak to Raskolnikov's inner religiosity which is not completely veiled over by his uncompromising reason. Such an instance precedes the carnage, when Raskolnikov notices the "enormous case of icons" on the wall of the apartment, when "he longed suddenly to abandon the whole affair and go away" (PSS 6:63). The veneration of icons is deeply rooted in the Russian religious mind, and their presence in Dostoevsky's novels is constitutive either of the character's faith or transgression. According to Harriet Murav,

> The icon painter never paints what is before him at a given moment or what he imagines a given moment to have been in the past. [. . .] An icon depicts what has come before and what is to come after: every icon, in some sense, is about the alpha and the omega. The icon, or the image is thought of as being made possible by the making visible of the image of the Father, that is, by the incarnation of Jesus. The icon, an incarnation of an incarnation, like its original, recapitulates creation and salvation, the beginning and the end.[99]

The fact that the icon Raskolnikov notices belongs to holy fool-like Sonia, who has given it to Lizaveta, adds yet another layer of significance in the series of triggers Raskolnikov gets as bells to his conscience. When Raskolnikov is dreaming about his childhood, the reader

[99] Murav, *Holy Foolishness: Dostoevsky's Novels and the Poetics of Cultural Critique*, 132.

learns that "he loved this church and the old icons" (*PSS* 6:46). Pavel Florensky, the renowned Russian theologian and early iconographer, in his *Reverse Perspective* explores the various peculiarities of icons, which is considered that house's spiritual center. "[T]he composition," he writes, "is constructed as if the eye were looking at different parts of it, while changing its position" (204). Raskolnikov's discomfort upon coming across the icon that watches him from every direction, triggers a moment of spiritual attunement and guilt. Furthermore, the icon's reverse perspective, "a characteristic of that other, spiritual space: the further away something is, the bigger it is; the closer it is, the smaller (Florensky 239), thematically represents the optics of Raskolnikov's transgression; the more time passes, the louder Raskolnikov's moral conscience becomes. As the mold of its spiritual owner, the icon is the witness of that person's inner life. Once the owner of the icon, Lizaveta, is dead, the icon, in a way finds itself a new "host," Raskolnikov. As a silent witness, the icon checks the constitution of Raskolnikov's spirit and makes its way back to the transgressor at the end of the novel.

Yorick Usurped

A search for a particular outstanding performance by either Hamlet or Raskolnikov can only get one so far in underscoring the performative value of these characters. Rather than standing as sole episodes, their performances are linked clusters, the structure of which is continuously prodded by its antistructure. Acting in the role of a madman or a trickster requires reversals of order. Both characters adopt the carnivalesque function of reversal of order for the purpose of fulfilling their appropriate missions. In Hamlet's case, the "officialdom" speculates his various masks, as it considers the motive of disguise to pose

dangers to its dark secret. His foolery, therefore, is appropriately responsive to other characters' speculations of his masks. Hamlet's façade, however, is at its thinnest in the graveyard scene. He appears less bewildered, less distraught by the burden of being on the threshold. Robert Bell summarizes Hamlet's calm in this scene rather beautifully: "His tone shifts from acerbic rancor and self-lacerating egocentricity to bemused equanimity" (108). The rare stillness is a direct result of Hamlet's encounter with the dead court jester, Yorick. It is not often when Shakespeare provides stage directions in his plays, thus, "[*Takes the skull*]" is particularly significant, as it is a cataclysmic reversal of progress and the cycle of life. Instead of looking forward, Hamlet, triggered by his jester's skull, looks back to better times and to a more desired father figure than the vengeance-stricken Ghost. He muses, "Alas, poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio—a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy. He hath bore me on his back a thousand times, and now how abhorred in my imagination it is! My gorge rises at it" (5.1.190-94). The scene displays Hamlet's admiration for the fool's craft and function and establishes the significance of Yorick to Hamlet. The tangible skull of Yorick is more amicable to him than the many "seeming" figures that surround him. While Hamlet's sincerity is established through affect, it is not without structural changes in language that sustain it. In his more unruffled state, Hamlet retorts to a less controlled form of speech, moving from his customary use of verse to prose.

The dead jester is the only licensed fool in *Hamlet*, a point that is significant in lieu of Shakespeare's other fools, who are usually doubled with a specific non-fool to allow for the reversal motif (Lear/Fool; Hal/Falstaff; Olivia/Feste; Rosalind/Touchstone, and so forth). The absence of a "professional" fool in *Hamlet* is not a lack, as it complicates Hamlet's

performative aspects and aligns him with the character of the (absent) fool. Hamlet's multidimensionality in speech and behavior are characterized by having to take on the role of the fool. It is nonetheless burdensome not to have a fool as a double who would speak veracious truths with the motive of guiding Hamlet, as is the case in *Lear*, for instance, where the Fool's function is to reproach Lear to a point of enlightenment. Hamlet's descriptions of Yorick and his yearning for a fool transforms into a projective identification in one of his most honest speeches. It is as if Hamlet is describing himself:

> Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now? your gambols? your songs? your flashes of merriment that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one now to mock your own grinning? Quite chapfallen? Now get you to my lady's chamber, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favor she must come. Make her laugh at that. (5.1.190-202)

Hamlet's emotional bond with the dead Yorick is curious considering his vexation with the living "tedious old fool" Polonius, who, like Yorick, can be representative of the once-disruptive clown that entertained audiences with his jolted performance and at times unwanted verbosity. It is Shakespeare's way of triggering the audience's stage memory to mark the differences between old jesters and his newly configured (wise) fool. While Polonius, with his prolixity and yet occasional erudition, is an amalgamation of the old and the new, Yorick is representative of the old clown that was identified by his "gibes," "gambols," "song," and "flashes of merriment" (5.1.196, 197), which were later considered much too disruptive for an audience that demanded a more serious fool. Gertrude's scolding remark to Polonius, "More matter with less art" (2.2.103) speaks to a general exhaustion that audiences felt for the clown before the appearance of the Elizabethan wise fool on the stage.

Similarly, Hamlet's irritation with disruptions in theater speaks to the changing attitudes toward fools and their functions:

> O, reform it altogether. And let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them, for there be of them that will themselves laugh, to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too, though in the meantime some necessary question of the play be then to be considered. That's villainous and shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it. (3.2.40-47)

Critics have generally looked positively on the replacement of the disruptive clown, as different times and audiences demand different attitudes and performances. Hamlet is a fool not despite of navigating the perilous line between foolery as a station braced by his "crafty madness" (3.1.8), as Guildenstern puts it, and his rare moments of candidness, but in spite of his altered states of consciousness that is part of the main function of the fool.

The graveyard scene in *Hamlet* is not a place where customary expressions in conventional grief are displayed. As if in a suspended liminal phase between childhood and death, it is here that Hamlet achieves what Martin Buber called "community," and which Victor Turner termed "communitas" in his *Ritual Process*. "For communitas has an existential quality;" writes Turner, "it involves the whole man in his relation to other whole men. [. . .] Communitas has also an aspect of potentiality; it is often in the subjunctive mood" (129). Turner is essentially ritualizing Buber's "I-Thou" preposition, which unlike Buber's "I-It," establishes the world of relation. Except in this scene, "communitas" or the "I-Thou" is not in relation to others, but to oneself. Hamlet's schism is less pronounced when he momentarily abandons performative alacrity. Hamlet gazing at the skull is gazing at himself from the outside in, without feeling the need to conceal his non-calculative self with the guise of active performance. It is an idea embedded in the belief of human intellect's

capabilities of deep self-reflection of Renaissance humanism. One of Holbein's illustrations in the first print of Erasmus' *In Praise of Folly*, which may have influenced Shakespeare's thought, is a succinct representation of this idea: the fool, wearing his cap is looking straight into his bauble. Another illustration portrays a fool looking in the mirror (a motif adopted from Sebastian Brant's *Ship of Fools*).[100] What is intriguing about the image in the mirror is that it is sticking its tongue out to its viewer. The humorous representation of the self in the mirror has an element of surprise to it, as it requires the viewer to look again to reconfirm the mocking image. As such, it incites serious self-reflection on the part of the onlooker as to who the fool might be. Although Hamlet does not literally stick his tongue out to those he tricks, his unswerving stratagems are representative of this image. Hamlet's repeated exposure to the mirror image of himself as the trickster with his tongue out is the mode whereby Hamlet gains fluency in himself both as the viewer and the mirrored reflection. Dostoevsky uses the same old clowning technique with Raskolnikov, who, in the company of others that are reading about and discussing the murder case in a tavern, gets irritated by the

[100] Shakespeare's wise fool is also undoubtedly influenced by Sebastian Brant's The Ship of Fools which was translated into English in 1498. One major difference is that Brant's fool is not a stage fool, but it is predominantly a secular fool. In the section, "Contempt of Eternal Joy," the one of Brant's fools says, "Why I love temporal things alone, / And scorn the Everlasting One?" (43.epilogue). The question mark is Brant's shield against ecclesiastical criticism. His satire differentiates between wise and moronic fools. In the Ship of Fools, the fool "shows all men he's far from wise" (34.6). This sounds like Socrates in Apology—the phrase that is often translated, "I know that I know nothing." One translation reads, "this ignorance which thinks that it knows what it does not, must surely be ignorance most culpable" (Trans. Cooper, et. al 29b). Socrates is not only talking about knowledge/knowing here; the word "know" is the Greek *εἰδέναι,* which is related to οἶδα, meaning to "behold," to "conceive," "to be aware." In his wisdom, or maybe because of it, the fool remains an outcast: "Fools often travel very far / Yet never learn just where they are" (The Ship of Fools, 24.11-12). Brant's fool also realizes that "Death will leave no man behind" (85.8), but the difference in the two authors is that Brant distinguishes between the sinners and the virtuous: "The sinner's death is never blest" (85.62). Each section of Brant's work preaches against various vices and worldly possessions, which is not the case in Shakespeare.

fact that others are not privy to his secret, and "suddenly felt the urge to 'stick out his tongue.' An occasional shiver ran down his spine" (139). There is a sense of unease that comes with claiming the role of the fool as it not only requires knowledge that makes trickery possible, but also knowledge of oneself.

Hamlet's reverential speech to the skull is an address to Hamlet himself as a representation of the figure of the fool, and at the same time, it is Hamlet's esteem of a worthy opponent in folly—death, which is the ultimate trickster. In his analysis of one of Alfred Kubin's paintings that portrays death dressed as a fool, William Willeford explains,

> According to a late medieval conceit, Death, himself a fool, makes fools of us all. Here Death has appropriated the fool's costume, bauble, and cap and drags off the lump that wore them. The old conceit and this modern picture both imply that the fool survives his own death: abandoning the prima material of the human image, the fool enters the dimension in which Harlequin once led a horde of ghosts. A similar form of immortality is implied when the circus clown jumps to his feet after having been hit over the head with a sledge hammer.[101]

In the trickster paradigm, from the biblical, "The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools is in the house of pleasure (Ecc 7:4) to Stoic memento mori, to medieval mysteries and tribal rituals, death is a paradoxically positive figure. Hamlet knows that despite his antic disposition and his ability to trick fools like Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, and Polonius, death that sits on the "antic throne"[102] is the one sticking its tongue out to everyone, including Hamlet. In a contiguous space where wisdom, folly, and death are intertwined, such dichotomies as wise/fool, king/fool, noble/commoner, mad/sane break.

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[101] Willeford, *The Fool and His Scepter*, 92.

[102] Richard II says, "[. . .] within the hollow crown / That rounds the mortal temples of a king / Keeps death his court; and there the antic sits" (Shakespeare, *Richard II,* 3.2.160-62).

> Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth to dust; the dust is earth; of earth we make loam; and why of that loam whereto he was converted might they not stop a beer barrel?
> Imperious Caesar, dead and turned to clay,
> Might stop a hole to keep the wind away.
> O, that that earth which kept the world in awe
> Should patch a wall t' expel the winter's flaw! (*Hamlet*, 5.1.216-23)

Hamlet has no fool as a guide, but captured within this quintessential image—[*taking the skull*]—of direct relationality, is Hamlet doubling with Yorick, death, and trickery itself, in the same way Lear comes to see himself in the Fool, or "Lear's shadow," as the Fool puts it (1.4.235), and in mad Tom. Shakespeare also utilizes the motif of doubling in the same scene in Hamlet's comical exchange with the gravedigger, who is a fool-like figure. Their conversation includes laconic responses where the gravedigger delivers punchlines one after another.

> GRAVEDIGGER Of all the days i' th' year, I came to 't
> that day that our last King Hamlet overcame
> Fortinbras.
> HAMLET How long is that since?
> GRAVEDIGGER Cannot you tell that? Every fool can
> tell that. It was that very day that young Hamlet
> was born—he that is mad, and sent into England.
> HAMLET Ay, marry, why was he sent into England?
> GRAVEDIGGER Why, because he was mad. He shall
> recover his wits there. Or if he do not, 'tis no great
> matter there.
> HAMLET Why?
> GRAVEDIGGER 'Twill not be seen in him there. There
> the men are as mad as he.
> HAMLET How came he mad?
> GRAVEDIGGER Very strangely, they say.
> HAMLET How "strangely"?
> GRAVEDIGGER Faith, e'en with losing his wits.
> HAMLET Upon what ground?
> GRAVEDIGGER Why, here in Denmark. I have been
> sexton here, man and boy, thirty years.
> HAMLET How long will a man lie i' th' earth ere he rot?

> GRAVEDIGGER Faith, if he be not rotten before he die
> (as we have many pocky corses nowadays that will
> scarce hold the laying in), he will last you some
> eight year or nine year. A tanner will last you nine
> year.

Hamlet is not the one doing the fooling here but rather facilitates foolery. The brisk smoothness of the conversation suggests familiarity and a sense of kinship, a balance between the two characters. A technique different than the motif of madness prevalent in his soliloquies, Hamlet here proves that he can still joggle between different modes of foolery.

Catching Conscience

The emotional burden that comes with performing the role of the fool with the intent of unconcealing other characters' follies takes a toll on Hamlet's conscience, as it requires him to push others to a point of confession that does not require direct confrontation. In *King Lear*, for instance, Poor Tom disguises himself as a madman to hold Gloucester's hand and guide him to a point of ethical enlightenment, without directly confronting him. What is different in *Hamlet*, however, is that Hamlet's vengeance veils over his ethical imperative, a decision that festers in his soul and further contributes to the personality split. Before the performance of the play-within-the-play in front of the audience, among whom are Claudius and Gertrude, Hamlet unveils his motive, to bring discomfort to the "[r]emorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindles villain" (2.2.592) by imitating the details of the murder that the Ghost laid out for him. Hamlet's intent goes beyond a mere instigation of unease; "[t]he play's the thing" he says, "Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the King" (2.2.616; 617). And yet, Hamlet does not take the King's discomfort as a sign of guilty conscience, and instead keeps persuading himself that Claudius's unease is insincere. Hamlet brushes off

Ophelia's remark, "The King rises," with a, "What, frighted with false fire?" (3.2.271; 272). Horatio is half convinced of Claudius's discomfort, "Half a share," (3.2.305) while Hamlet wants Claudius's incensed disposition to confirm the Ghost's revelations: "O good Horatio, I'll take the ghost's word for a thousand pound. Didst perceive?" (3.2.312-13). Horatio is not privy to Hamlet's intent of catching Claudius's conscience, and to Hamlet's question of "Didst perceive?" Horatio responds, "I did very well note him" (3.2.296). Hamlet's initial plan, one which he discusses with Horatio, is to

> […] Give him heedful note,
> For I mine eyes will river to his face,
> And after we will both our judgments join
> In censure of his seeming. (3.2.86-9)

It is almost as if Hamlet is not there to catch the conscience of the King but to prove that Claudius is not as good a trickster as he is. Christoph Menke speaks of the "fruitlessness" of trying to acquire knowledge of others' intentions in *Hamlet*. But if we consider Luther's idea that conscience is the mirror of the soul[103], then Hamlet's assurance of the King's erratic behavior and later "distempered" (3.2.328) and "with choler" (3.2.330) states are markers of his guilt. Through "Mousetrap" Hamlet has only exposed Claudius's guilt but not any inkling of moral obligation to do the right thing, which begs the question, whether Hamlet equates "conscience" with "guilt" since he wants Horatio to observe Claudius precisely for external manifestations of guilt. As a well-trained Lutheran student from Wittenberg, it is plausible

[103] Luther, however, as many before him, differentiates between good and bad consciences.

that Hamlet employs the idea of "conscience" mirroring the soul, and therefore, succeeds in catching Claudius's conscience.[104]

The other alternative is that Hamlet does not think that it is conscience that Claudius displays in his incensed state.[105] Claudius uses the word "conscience" as a binding principle when he tells Laertes during their arrangement of the fencing scheme, "Now must your conscience my acquaintance seal" (4.7.1). Conscience is a standard that an individual is measured against, a witness to deviations from the standard and a judgment of righteousness. Both know that they are going to be breaking the law, and each knows that the other is deviating from the law. Conscience for Cicero and for the later Stoics like Seneca is awareness that accompanies one's own actions or those of others. "A good conscience," says

[104] The word, "conscience" has a long history. The Romans called it *conscientia*; the early Christians appropriated the term; the Protestants adopted the early Christian usage with some alterations. The religious ambiguities of the Renaissance are reflected in Shakespeare's play, making it several interpretations plausible. Many scholars have drawn parallels between the Greek word *syneidesis* (*συνείδησις*) and Christian conscience, with a somewhat common (and general) definition of self-knowledge. *The Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*) defines "conscience" as "The internal acknowledgement or recognition of the moral quality of one's motives and actions; the sense of right and wrong as it regards things for which one is responsible; the faculty or principle which judges the moral quality of one's actions or motives." The prefix *con* ("in common" or "together with") and *scientia* (knowledge) imply that conscience is knowledge of oneself, and also knowledge held together with others. Consequently, conscience is interior, but also exterior; it is attuned to what others are doing or have done. The *OED* also defines "good conscience" as "a generally or legally agreed sense of what is right or just." Another *OED* definition, which is more in line with Luther's view of the term, is, "A person's inmost thought or feelings; a person's mind or heart."

[105] The Latin word *conscientia* was a widely used concept in Roman persuasive oratory and legal pleading well before the Christians adopted it. Cicero is known to weave in "conscience" into his logical arguments in defense of his clients and in his condemnation of the guilty. Cicero (like Luther) differentiates between good and bad consciences: those who have good conscience are acquitted and those with bad conscience are punished for they have offended the public standards. In his *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, Cicero speaks of conscience as a witness and guide that makes one bound to the law: "For Subsequent Behaviour we investigate the signs which usually attend guilt or innocence. 'The prosecutor will, if possible, say that his adversary, when come upon, blushed, paled, faltered, spoke uncertainly, collapsed, or made some offer — signs of a guilty conscience. If the accused has done none of these things, the prosecutor will say his adversary had even so far in advance calculated what would actually happen to him that he stood his ground and replied with the greatest self-assurance — signs of audacity, and not of innocence. The defendant's counsel, if his client has shown fear, will say that he was moved,' not by a guilty conscience, but by the magnitude of his peril; if his client has not shown fear, counsel will say that he was unmoved because he relied on his innocence" (v 8-vi-9, 72).

Seneca, “wishes to come forth and be seen of men; wickedness fears the very shadows” (Moral Letters to Lucilius, XCVII, 12).[106] Considering the influence of the Roman understanding of conscience on Shakespeare, it is plausible that in trying to catch Claudius’s “bad conscience,” Hamlet is really catching his own. If Hamlet considers conscience to be only an internal judge, then what Claudius displays cannot be conscience externalized. Hamlet is not thus trying to catch Claudius’s conscience as he claims, for he is already convinced of Claudius’s guilt, and his earlier epithet of Claudius as a “kindless villain,” (2.2.608-609), as in, “unnatural,” echoes the Ghost’s repeated phrase, “unnatural murder” (1.5.31). The only other two instances where the word “unnatural” appears is in Horatio’s final speech when he recounts the sanguinary events of the play’s ending, and in Hamlet’s soliloquy where he expresses he would rather be “cruel” but “not unnatural” (3.2.428). Hamlet’s conscience plays tricks on him, weakening the disguise of a mission-driven vengeful madman who feels as if he has more in common with Claudius than Yorick. But Hamlet’s agenda has no room for an emotive hero who cannot immediately step over the line, hence, Hamlet’s “Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,” (3.1.91). Hamlet is envious of the player who weeps for Hecuba, whereas he, “a rogue and peasant slave” (2.2.577) who has more reason to “drown the stage with tears” (2.2.589) must restrain himself lest he catches his own conscience and fails in his mission.

Aside from consistently identifying with the same epithets he ascribes to Claudius, when speaking about “The Mousetrap,” Hamlet aligns his “soul” with Claudius’s, “Your

[106] https://www.docdroid.net/SpwJztN/seneca-moral-letters-to-lucilius-v8-pdf

Majesty and we that have free souls, it touches us not" (3.2.265-66). It certainly has a satirical ring to it, but on a pathological level, Hamlet doubles with his "mighty opposite":

> Am I a coward?
> Who calls me "villain"? breaks my pate across?
> Plucks off my beard and blows it in my face?
> Tweaks me by the nose? gives me the lie i' th' throat
> As deep as to the lungs? Who does me this?
> Ha! 'Swounds, I should take it! For it cannot be
> But I am pigeon-livered and lack gall
> To make oppression bitter, or ere this
> I should have fatted all the region kites
> With this slave's offal. Bloody, bawdy villain!
> Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless
> villain!
> O vengeance!
> Why, what an ass am I! (2.2.598-611)

The ambiguity of these lines showcases Hamlet's tormented conscience, as it is not immediately clear whether Hamlet refers to himself or to Claudius at instances where he does not use a personal pronoun. Dostoevsky's pining in his letter to Mikhail about Hamlet's languishing soul speaks to Dostoevsky's deeper understanding of Hamlet's schismatic spirit caught between his willingness to either follow the Ghost's word to vengeance or to let his conscience dictate his actions. In Claudius's soliloquy about his unsuccessful repentance, which Hamlet does not hear, the King considers his soul "caught," but not by Hamlet. He uses the phrase, "O limed soul, that struggling to be free" (3.3.68) where "limed" means "to smear (twigs or the like) with bird-lime, for the purpose of catching birds."[107] Claudius momentarily catches his own conscience,

> How smart a lash that speech doth give my conscience!
> The harlot's cheek, beautied with plast'ring art,
> Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it

[107] *OED.*

Than is my deed to my post painted word.
O heavy burden! (3.1.49-54)

Claudius, however, prays without faith in God's pardon, "Yet what can it when one cannot repent?" (3.3.65-6), and even more importantly, "My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent" (3.3.44). In Dostoevsky's ethical-moral universe, Claudius's prayer would be considered a moment in moral awakening against which any punishment—legal, natural or unnatural—loses its poignancy because the accused had already realized his moral predicament.

Dostoevsky and Shakespeare operate on similar ethical grounds where the focus is on active engagement with one's own conscience. Raskolnikov's sacrificial sister, Dunia's statement, "Words are not deeds" (30) and Claudius's "Words without thoughts never to heaven go" (3.3.103), are proverbial concepts that rather than preaching what *ought to be* state what *is not*. Both formulae indicate the significance of the active mind and deed:

SHAKESPEARE: WORDS ≠ THOUGHTS => THOUGHTS = active

DOSTOEVSKY: WORDS ≠ DEEDS => DEEDS = active

The differences in the two propositions lie in their theological nuances. In Shakespeare, serious self-reflection has redeeming qualities. The verse, "Repent for the kingdom of heaven has come near" (NRV, Matt. 4:17), neither in the Vulgate nor in Erasmus's 1519 translation gives any examples of what "repent" entails in terms of elaborate actions. The same verse in Dostoevsky's copy of the New Testament is *pokaitesia,* which means "confession" or "penitence." Dostoevsky treats his young man's act of "thinking," which Raskolnikov considers his "job," satirically, as nothing more than mere words the raw youth has adopted from popular ideas of the time, whereas Raskolnikov's sudden, intuitive self-reflections are accentuated through their instigation of Raskolnikov's good deeds, and vice versa. Every

time Raskolnikov helps someone in need, reason abandons him, and he feels the force of life. After giving the Marmeladov family the last of his twenty rubles, "he was in a fever again, but unconscious of the fact, and full of a strange new feeling of boundlessly full and powerful life welling up in him, a feeling which might be compared with that of a man condemned to death and unexpectedly reprieved" (159-160). Dostoevsky's own highest value of Christianity, the ethic of Christian charity is what characterizes the "deed." Dostoevsky translates amplified individualism in *Hamlet* into the Eastern Orthodox context and also into a version of the Slavophile concept of the commune (*obshchina*), where each person is in harmony with others through charity. [108] This was also Dostoevsky's response to the individual Ego that was foundational to so many of the theories of the time, which Dostoevsky's apocalyptic vision deemed as extremely dangerous to the young generation's still-budding morality.

The fool of Shakespeare's tragedies and later comedies often seems to serve as a memento mori, a reminder that all things pass away, that the human animal is alone and naked before a silent universe. We are fools if we forget this, says the fool. Yet equally we are fools if we remember it: for a good reason must he who in the midst of life speaks of death be, of all things, a fool. The wisdom of the fool then leads to nihilism. Hamlet's "Now I am alone" (2.2.576) is more than a stage direction embedded in speech, and Raskolnikov's "soul" that is "tormentingly conscious of a dreary feeling of eternal loneliness and estrangement" (*PSS* 6:87) is more than a transitory caprice. They are cognitively aware of

[108] "Spiritual community of many jointly living people" is the definition of *obshchina* in S. I. Ozhegov y N.I. Shvedova, *Tolkovy Slovar' Russkogo Iazika*.

their maladjusted roles as conscience-stricken murderers on the one hand, and fools whose function demands loneliness, on the other. Dostoevsky's novel takes a different approach to this burden through various interventions to Raskolnikov's foolery that are meant to lead him to the path of righteousness. Raskolnikov's disinclined visit to his friend Razumikhin and his raging madness after he crosses Razumikhin's literal and figurative threshold, marks the first of the many instances where Raskolnikov seeks the company of someone with strong morals. Razumikhin offers Raskolnikov a translation opportunity of a few articles on Rousseau's *Confessions*, which Raskolnikov translates as an act of pity and storms out of Razumikhin's apartment. To Razumikhin's baffled "What the devil did you come for, anyhow?" Raskolnikov responds with, "I don't want . . . translations . . . " (*PSS* 6:89). Raskolnikov is repulsed by the idea that his endeavor to prove that he is extraordinary and able to cross the threshold like a Napoleon, is unoriginal. Reiterating the idea that Raskolnikov is a copycat and victim of contemporary ideological standpoints that other young educated individuals also embrace is Dostoevsky's way of denouncing them. He does this first through Razumikhin's jeremiad against Raskolnikov's condescension and estrangement:

> Listen to me. Let me tell you, people your sort are all, down to the last man, babblers [*boltunishki*] and braggarts! If the slightest thing goes wrong, you make as much fuss as a hen cackling over an egg! Even there you aren't original, but steal from your authors. There isn't a sign of independent existence in you! You're made of candle-grease and you have buttermilk in your veins for blood! I don't trust a single one of you! Your first concern in any circumstance is how not to resemble a human being. (*PSS* 6:130)

Dostoevsky's use of the diminutive, *boltunishki*, weakens Raskolnikov's word which he considers as an indispensable truth and deems it as an unserious emulation of a theory-driven young man. In his second strike, Razumikhin revisits the motif of translation which he

conflates with Raskolnikov's foolery (*durachestvo*): "So if you weren't a fool [*durak*], an utter, a confounded fool [*durak*], a translation from the original—look Rodia, I admit you're an intelligent chap, but you are a fool! [*durak*]" (*PSS* 6:130). Razumikhin utilizes both "words are not deeds" and "words are not thoughts" propositions as ways of differentiating between different types of fools. Raskolnikov is the parodied version of a wise fool, thus, *durak* (stupid), and not *shut* (jester), idiot (semi-sacred/mystical), or *iurodivyi* (holy fool). Dostoevsky's Hamlet, a "soul [. . .] so utterly oppressed by woe," translated into a Raskolnikov, is a parody of a parody, for Hamlet himself is a translation of the infinite jester, and as translations go, meanings get lost.

In Shakespeare, as a result of his communication with the dead jester, who is a positive father figure, Hamlet momentarily returns to an unmasked self that a venomous plan had obscured, and in Dostoevsky, Raskolnikov receives Porfiry Petrovich, as a trigger to shock his theory-concealed conscience. Dostoevsky's careful choice in names, "Porfiry" to recall Porfiry Uspensky (1804-1885), a theologian and a *starets*, and "Petrovich" to align him with Saint Peter, establishes the dedicated detective as an apostle of truth and a holy fool-like figure. Porfiry's patient attempts to debunk Raskolnikov's algorithmic ideas on the nature of crime and new morality that allows for a crime, "to cross over" (*prestuplenie*) as the novel's title reiterates, are also Dostoevsky's way of establishing Porfiry Petrovich as a father figure for Raskolnikov. Porfiry's first impression of Raskolnikov, who visits the seasoned detective with Razumikhin, is that of a reckless youth. The parent-child relationship is established when Raskolnikov is in his trickster mode, slyly taunting Razumikhin and "struggling violently to subdue his hilarity" and Razumikhin, who is Raskolnikov's polar opposite, is

"waving his arm and bringing down with a crash and a jingle a small round table on which stood a glass of tea" upon their entry to Porfiry's apartment. To this display of youthful impropriety, Profiry responds cheerfully, but nonetheless, authoritatively, "Why wreck the furniture, gentlemen? You are damaging government property" (*PSS* 6:210). When Raskolnikov later gets a friendly invite to the police station to chat with Porfiry, the detective refers to Raskolnikov as either "Rodion Romanovich" or "my dear chap," using *batiushka* (twenty-nine times in this scene) as an endearing term which means "old man."

Raskolnikov's extreme irritation with Porfiry, however, is due to his assumption that there might be another wise fool in the picture, an inconvenience which Raskolnikov thinks he can mend by improving his own performance. The thought that he is not the only one who sticks his tongue out to others, is an unwanted interruption to his theory and façade. "Suddenly, with an openly mocking expression," Raskolnikov observes, "[Porfiry] screwed up his eyes as if he were winking" (*PSS* 6:212). The narrator quickly adds that "[p]erhaps, however, this was only Raskolnikov's imagination" but then again, "[a]t any rate there had been something, and Raskolnikov could have sworn he had been winked at, God only knew why" (*PSS* 6:212). Raskolnikov's desire to outperform this unsought trickster makes Raskolnikov visibly anxious when at the police station he recalls how the pawned objects that are now recovered were dear to him: "here [Raskolnikov] turned quickly back to Razumikhin, trying hard to make his voice tremble" (*PSS* 6:213) and later in the same scene thinking, "I am playing a sick man" (*PSS* 6:216). Porfiry's agenda is "by indirections find directions out," while laughing intermittently as he subtly interrogates Raskolnikov. Porfiry's idiosyncratic speech patterns (adding an "s" sound to his words, e.g. сюда-*с*, вот-*с*, так-*с*,

точно-*с*, успеем-*с*) and "rather short and stout" figure, "his fat, round, rather snub-nosed, dark-skinned face" (*PSS* 6211) simultaneously establish him as an amalgamation of Shylock and Falstaff, two of Dostoevsky's favorite Shakespearean fool-like tragi-comic characters, while also looking back to holy-fool like characters like Petrov, from the *Dead House*.

> Porfiry Petrovich himself accepts the role of the fool, albeit with reservations:
>
> 'You still think that I'm jesting [*shutochki*] harmlessly,' Porfiry began again, growing more and more cheerful, ceaselessly giggling with pleasure, and once more circling round the room. 'Well, of course, you're right. God created me with such a figure that the only ideas I arouse in other people are comical ones; I'm a buffoon; but I'll tell you something, and I'll repeat it: you, my dear Rodion Romanovich (excuse an old man), are still a young man, in your first youth, so to speak, and therefore you esteem the human intellect above all things, like all young people. Abstract reasoning and the play of wit tempt you astray. (*PSS* 6:288)

The passage recalls the stark distinctions Hamlet draws between himself and old fools like Polonius and Yorick, and his aggravation by dated clownish performances, only here it is in the reverse—the "old" fool, Porfiry draws a line between himself and a new fool like Raskolnikov who is a disciple of callow foolishness. Therefore, "old" and "young" become arbitrary characteristics here since even at thirty-five years old, Porfiry Petrovich represents untarnished moral law, which the fashionable new morality of the 1860s, as Konstantin Mochulsky maintains, forms into a "new strong individual [. . .] endowed with 'animal-like cunning,' unheard-of boldness, a will to live and diabolical pride" (504). Dostoevsky's preferred technique of the sacralization of the prophane, however, which happens quickly in this passage—"God created me with such a figure" and Porfiry's, "you still think I'm jesting harmlessly,"—equivocate Profiry's role as a buffoon or a jester. The ambiguities surrounding the use of different epithets of folly, while Porfiry "[circles] round the room" like a clown on the stage, are indications of Dostoevsky's awareness of the different types of fools and the

care he takes in ascribing a specific function to his fool-like figures. Porfiry differs from Dostoevsky's "all-licensed" buffoon, Fyodor Karamazov in the *Brothers Karamazov*, for instance, in that Fyodor's buffoonery is not a positive trait, even if it is conspicuous. "I am an inveterate buffoon from birth" Fyodor Karamzov states in the chapter, "The Old Buffoon" (*BK*, 41). Like Elizabethan stage clowns, such as Will Kempe or Richard Tarlton, or medieval Russian holy fools, Fyodor Karamazov's function only rests in startling and taunting the audiences. To Pëtr Alexandrovich's question, "Why are you playing the fool?" Fyodor Karamazov responds with, "I play the fool, Pëtr Alexandrovich, to make myself agreeable," which is paradoxical, for his performances largely rely on the element of shock: "So that the buffoonery shown by Fyodor Pavlovich, the lack of reverence for the place he was in, amazed and bewildered the spectators, or at least some of them" (*BK*, 41-42). What differentiates Porfiry Petrovich from Fyodor Pavlovich is the former's strong sense of moral responsibility and his role as a guide.

The variety of labels attached to Porfiry do not definitively place him within a specific category of fool, but he nonetheless performs the functions of each sub-category. To the motely of Porfiry's tentative titles, "buffoon" (*bufon*) and "jester" (*shut*), Raskolnikov adds yet another—"pulcinella [*polishinel*']" (295)—the carnival fool of commedia dell'arte. Porfiry's role, however, as Yorick's absent-presence for Hamlet, extends beyond the familiar categories of foolishness as entertainment; Dostoevsky shapes this variable fool into his newly reconfigured fool with which he experimented six years before, in the *Dead House*, in a recurring maneuver of ethical (re)formation. As such, this fool's function falls under the same umbrella Dostoevsky situates his holy fool-like characters, who while participating in

the archetype of the holy fool, also incorporate secular features of the Shakespearean wise fool. Dostoevsky's still-developing ethical configuration of fool assumes pagan elements as necessary ethical gestures for the betterment of those who need a hand. Porfiry who only refers to Raskolnikov as "Rodion Romanovich," like Sonia Marmeladova, believes in the regeneration of *Rod*ion that is delayed by the *raskolnik* (schismatic) nature of his personality. The water symbolism, with its associations to pagan belief and the mighty Slavic god, Rod, are embedded in Porfiry's advice to Raskolnikov during his three meaningful encounters with the troubled youth. "Rodion Romanovich!" the concerned investigator exclaims, "My dear chap! You'll drive yourself mad like this, I assure you. Ah! Drink some. Even if it's only a sip, do drink some water!" (290). Raskolnikov, however, still under the spell of his theory, which assumes that he can rationalize morality, rejects regeneration, albeit with hesitation: "Raskolnikov began to raise [the glass of water] mechanically to his lips, but then recollected himself and set it on the table with distaste" (291). Raskolnikov's regeneration becomes a possibility because those who assume responsibility for it do not give up.

Profiry does not forsake his role as a fool-guide and instead propels Raskolnikov toward life-giving forces, "Now you need only air, air, air!" (389). His advice extends beyond detective duties, consistently moving Raskolnikov's wavering spirit into the realm of paganism. "It is not time that matters, but you yourself," advises Porfiry, "Become a sun, and everybody will see you. The first duty of the sun is to be the sun" (389). The Slavic star-god, Solntse ("sun"), the goddess of joy and water, in Eastern Orthodoxy has been Christianized as John the Baptist, one of whose attributes is being on the threshold between Old and New

Covenants, giving a sermon to the "clean" Jews and the "unclean" pagans.[109] Intimations of *dvoeverie* (dual faith) in Dostoevsky's holy fool-like characters affect "predatorial" inclinations and systematically re-order redeemable characters' concealed ethical inclinations that intermittently raise their head. At the same time, Dostoevsky's ethical fools' propensity toward Eastern Orthodox notions of atonement through suffering is fused with their pagan attributes, also reflected in Porfiry's statement:

> You see I am convinced that you will 'resolve to accept your suffering;' you don't believe my word now, but you will come to the same conclusion yourself. Because suffering, Rodion Romanovich, is a great thing; don't look at the fact that I am fat myself, that doesn't matter; I still know, and don't laugh at this, that there is an idea in suffering. (*PSS* 6:390)

Porfiry encourages Raskolnikov to see the wisdom in his words that may have been obscured by his buffoonish attributes of "fat" and "laughter." It is Porfiry's way of reversing Dunia's proverbial statement, "words are not deeds," in ascribing activity to the "word" that triggers *philanthropia*. Porfiry's statement also mirrors Sonia's earlier advice to Raskolnikov, "Accept suffering and achieve atonement through it—that is what you must do" (*PSS* 6:355), during Raskolnikov's third visit to Sonia. And in his look back to the suffering Sergei Marmeladov's quest for a "man of feeling and education," Porfiry defines Dostoevsky's ethical fool: "I am a man who has developed as far as he is capable, that is all. A man, perhaps, of feeling and sympathy" (*PSS* 6:389). In a tripartite network of leitmotifs that are circuitously reinstated scene after scene, Dostoevsky's, as Shakespeare's evolving ethical

[109] *Tolkovanie Fiofilakta Bolgarskogo na Evangelie ot Matfeia Arkhivnaia kopia*, 14 Jan. 2009, Wayback Machine.

fools redefine their functions as moral guides or instigators of the call of conscience, the authors' refutation of the amoral.

Activity and Ambivalence

In lieu of the schismatic's wavering conscience as a constant work in progress, plot endings do not offer solace to readers who seek finalization in *Hamlet* or *Crime and Punishment*. Shakespeare kills most in *Hamlet* in what seems like a haphazard ending to the play, and Dostoevsky punishes Raskolnikov by sending him to a prison in Siberia. The novel's "Epilogue" reveals a man wavering on the threshold, a *raskolnik*, who is still capable of questioning the method of atonement, "what did all that hardship and suffering matter to him?" (*PSS* 6:464), while at the same time being open to the possibility that "[Sonia's] feelings, her aspirations" can become his (*PSS* 6:464). In a Heideggerian framework of the call of conscience, although at times not present-at-hand, conscience is *there*, revealing itself as a call. In a scenario when something calls, a possible hearing could be expected. According to Heidegger who in *Being and Time* formulates this idea, "Our understanding of the appeal unveils itself as our wanting to have a conscience [*Gewissenhaben-wollen*]."[110] This understanding does not come if Dasein is lost in the publicness and the idle talk of the "they," in that "it *fails to hear* [*überhört*] its own Self in listening to the they-self."[111] The call interrupts the "listening away to the 'they'," and, more importantly, "[t]he possibility of its thus getting broken off lies in its being appealed to without mediation [. . .] arousing[ing] another kind of hearing."[112] The "they" in Dostoevsky's and Shakespeare's schismatic

[110] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 270/314.
[111] *Ibid.*, 271/315.
[112] *Ibid.*, 271/316.

protagonists is the alienated self unable to recognize itself fully. Despite Heidegger's claim that the call should not be interpreted as a heroic leap toward authenticity, the referents to the "call"—the "breaker," the "interrupter," "the momentum of a push," "abrupt arousal," "the summoner," "the power of conscience"—are far from indiscriminate.[113] Macquarrie and Robinson's note on "summoning" becomes significant in regard to possible "heroism."[114] "Must not courage [. . .] attune the disposition here?" writes Heidegger in the *Notebooks*.[115] And again, he adds, "Dasein must be projected out from and in the τολμα ["courage"] of the disclosive questioning of the essence."[116] Wanting to be brought back, "choosing to make this choice" and "deciding for a potentiality-for-Being and making this decision from one's own Self" are choices in themselves.[117] "Wanting to have a conscience," Heidegger reiterates, "is [. . .] an understanding of oneself in one's ownmost potentiality-for-Being."[118] Both Dostoevsky and Shakespeare pose the question of concealed conscience as one lostness (in time and words). In Heidegger's rendering of Dasein's "wanting" and choice, there lie self-governance and self-mastery. Heidegger would not approve of the terminology, but the idea that not all Dasein "want," or "push" or get "aroused" to this "higher level of performance" is not to be utterly ruled out. Heidegger hints at the "ability" of different

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[113] *Ibid.,* 271.
[114] *Ibid*., footnote 1, "The verb '*an*rufen' ('appeal') means literally 'to call *to*'; 'einen *auf* etwas anrufen' means 'to call to someone and call him *to* something'. Similarly '*auf*rufen' ('summon') means 'to call *up*'; 'einen *zu* etwas *auf*rufen' means 'to call someone *up to* something which he is to do', in the sense of challenging him or 'calling' him to a higher level of performance."
[115] Martin Heidegger, *Reading Heidegger's Black Notebooks (1931-1938),* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2016), 17, E-book.
[116] *Ibid*., 82. Also, see Caputo, 56, who speaks of Heidegger's militaristic tone, the "phallic aggressiveness," as he calls it, asserting that Heidegger's lectures in the early 1920s recall Paul's letter to the Thessalonians in which "Paul speaks of the breastplate of faith and the helmet of hope." Caputo attributes such comportment to Heidegger's experiences during the war.
[117] *Being and Time*, 268/312.
[118] *Ibid*., 295/342.

Dasein in taking *action* in itself for itself, a verb that Heidegger tries to avoid, which, the text, though seldom, incorporates. It seems like the odds are against hearing the call, as "[it] is [. . .] something which *we ourselves* have neither planned nor prepared for nor voluntarily performed, nor have we ever done so. 'It' calls, against our expectations and even against our will [. . .] to a more or less awake [Dasein]."[119]

In wanting to want, autarky is a possible attribution, for Heidegger does not reject this notion when it comes to choice. However, he utterly eliminates such associations with Dasein's thrown "basis":

> As being, Dasein is something that has been thrown; it has been brought into its "there", but *not* of its accord. [. . .] [a]s long as Dasein is, *Dasein*, as care, *is* constantly its 'that-it-is'. To this entity it has been delivered over, and as such it can exist solely as the entity which it is; and *as this entity* to which it has been thus delivered over, it *is, in its existing*, the basis of its potentiality-for-Being. [. . .] The Self, which as such has to lay the basis for itself, can *never* get that basis into its power. [. . .] Thus "Being-a-basis" means *never* to have power over one's ownmost Being from the ground up.[120]

The uncontrollable aspect of Dasein is in the primordial case of Being-basis "from the ground up." This is explained by the idea that Dasein's thrownness as being a basis is a "nullity."[121] Nullity, here, is not negation in that it negates something prior, but it is inherent to the Being of Dasein. Heidegger recalls Augustine in his rendition of the "not" as also *not* "*privatio boni*," nor, he says, is the "not" present-at-hand, but Dasein is always taking up its own possibilities. In a paradoxical manner, "Dasein constantly lags behind its possibilities."[122] Dasein cannot fully pick itself up because of the burden of its thrownness;

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[119] *Ibid*., 275/320.
[120] *Ibid*., 284/330.
[121] *Ibid*., 284/330.
[122] *Ibid*.

the voice of conscience, however, sets possibilities for Dasein, and only upon resolving to enact on those possibilities does Dasein find itself: "'[w]anting to have a conscience' [. . .] is a way of letting one's ownmost Self take *action* in itself of its own accord in its Being-guilty, and represents phenomenally that authentic potentiality-for-Being which Dasein itself attests."[123]

In order to understand Dasein's revelation to itself by itself and its unity in this self-understanding, and Hamlet and Raskolnikov's relation to the "eventfulness" of conscience being called by the self to the self, the significance of guilt should be considered. What one hears in the call of conscience is that one is "Guilty!," and that "[a]ll experiences and interpretations of the conscience at one in that they make the 'voice' of conscience speak somehow of 'guilt'," writes Heidegger.[124] We are always already "Guilty!"—an idea which comes from the fact that "'Guilty!' turns up as a predicate for the 'I am'."[125] Our everyday understanding of "guilt" as owing something or having debts, is, Heidegger says, Dasein's Being-with-Others concernfully, in care.[126] Not only does guilt signify debt, but "[it] also has a signification of '*being responsible for*."[127] Such conventional (and moral) interpretations of "Guilty!" thrust Dasein into the domain of concern. However, Heidegger does not demonize moral understandings of guilt, but claims that there is a pre-moral source for common morality, which in Shakespeare and Dostoevsky manifest in suddenness of action.[128]

[123] *Ibid*., 295/342 (emphasis mine).
[124] *Ibid*., 280/325.
[125] *Ibid*., 281/326.
[126] *Ibid*., 281/326.
[127] *Ibid*., 282/327.
[128] *Ibid*., 286/332.

It is a familiar sequence of the inconstant spirit Shakespeare captures in Hamlet whose weariness in performing a fool with nefarious motives catches up with him as he faces folly external to himself. The skull's wisdom in infinite jest and its reminder of death propel a moment sans masks, sans vengeful fury. "Let be" (5.2.238), Hamlet decides. But even in an instance where the fool takes off his coxcomb on an exhausting stage, he protests against the rest being silence. "You do remember all the circumstance" (5.2.2), Hamlet asks the friend who has seen the battling selves even if he was not given full access to Hamlet's woe eternal. And again, he pleads with Horatio before dying, "tell my story" (5.2.384), a story that is quintessentially different from the bloodshed of the last scene, a story of a fool of "feeling and education" whose spirit was vitiated by a dangerous idea. The last words of *Crime and Punishment* perhaps utter what Hamlet does not:

> But that is the beginning of a new story, the story of the gradual renewal of a man, of his gradual regeneration, of his slow progress from one world to another, of how he learned to know a hitherto undreamed-of reality. All that might be the subject of a new tale, but our present one is ended. (*PSS* 6:422)

No other "perfect" endings were promised. The paradox of the schism remains:

> [. . .] we fools of nature
> So horridly to shake our disposition
> With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls?
> Say, why is this? Wherefore? What should we do? (*Hamlet,* 1.4.59-62)

But what Shakespeare and Dostoevsky grant with certainty, is the idea that in performing folly to suppress ethical gestures, Hamlet and Raskolnikov inadvertently allow for conscience to raise the question of the sacredness of human entity against all odds, in an ongoing battle that speaks to the human condition.

CHAPTER 3: FEMALE FOOLS: GENDER REVERSALS

I met the Bishop on the road

And much said he and I.

'Those breasts are flat and fallen now,

Those veins must soon be dry;

Live in a heavenly mansion,

Not in some foul sty.'

'Fair and foul are near of kin,

And fair needs foul,' I cried.

—W.B. Yeats, "Crazy Jane Talks with the Bishop"

Scarce Subjects

Female fools represents an underexplored category in both Shakespeare and Dostoevsky studies. The question this study proposes is not whether Shakespeare and Dostoevsky's female fools jests or laughter are funny, but that they engage in jest and foolishness. Dostoevsky's novels and Shakespeare's plays place female fools in a physical social where they participate in the so-called "masculine" space of foolishness, raising the question of how one embodies, dwells in, and shapes that space. The authors' laughing and jesting women explore what Marian Rothstein has called the "androgyne plentitude," which can act as a way of exploring "human plentitude." Rothstein's insight in connecting the androgyne to the figure of the fool, especially in the context of carnival as ritual, considers

the hierarchical inversions generated and promoted by the fool that establish, as Rothstein says, "truth as *sic et non* [yes *and* no]—that is, as *both*."[129] The historical discussion of folly suggests that no single theory of foolishness will suffice to explain the complexity of folly in Shakespeare and Dostoevsky. The sparse scholarship on female fools in Shakespeare and female fools and gender in Dostoevsky, for instance, makes the methodological aspect of this undertaking challenging, and to avoid overgeneralizing, this chapter focuses on select plays and novels in the author's later period where female folly as a category at its most paradoxical and performative. As a topic, "female fools" raises questions about the perceived cultural and social norms that are often in conflict with the literary versions of the fool in Shakespeare and Dostoevsky, and as a function, performing foolishness provides new perspectives on gender, identity, and perception.

Although studying every female fool, literary or otherwise, is not the task at hand, the excruciatingly sparse scholarship on female fools certainly makes the methodological aspect of this undertaking challenging, for even an argument focused on Shakespeare and Dostoevsky's fools and their specifically ethical functions, still, to some extent, requires the larger literary and cultural purview of each author, which would better shape this specific focal point. Aside from the necessary historical overview, scrutinizing any female fool requires clear delineations of what constitutes the category of "female fool," a topic which raises questions of gender, identity, and perception. The main part of my larger argument—the ethical function of the fool—necessitates a response to the question: For a chapter entitled

[129] Marian Rothstein, *The Androgyne in Early Modern France: Contextualizing the Power of Gender* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 164.

"Female Fools," which characters are "worthy" of inclusion? Do male fool characters who play female roles count, as, for instance, is the case of the two fool-like convicts, Sirotkin and Ivanov in the theater scene of the *Dead House*? How about the Shakespearean (male) fools, especially in the comedies, who often have non-fool female counterparts, as if deliberately paired with female characters to highlight their queerness through persistent celibatic patterns, or to some other purpose? Is it any character in the two writers' works who is identified as "fool," "female," and "ethical" synchronously, however blurry these categories can get? The answer can be a decisive "yes" to all, but these are questions best answered through demonstration, pending the complexity of the categories "fool" and "female fool," as well as the perceived cultural and social norms that are often in conflict with the literary versions of "fool" in Shakespeare and Dostoevsky.

R.J. Broadbent, in the first eminent study in the English language of pantomime as a type of fool, classified fools in nine broad sub-categories, where the third sub-category is: "3.— The female fool, who was generally an idiot" (74).[130] This is the only instance in all of the nine categories (and in the entire book) that the phrase, "female fool," appears. Broadbent's typology as lacking as it is in variety of female folly and female pantomime, reflects historical truth; it was not until late twentieth century that female fools were given access to the general category of "artificial" rather than "natural" fools. There have been a

[130] R.J. Broadbent's complete classification of fools in A History of Pantomime includes, "1.—The general domestic fool, termed often, but improperly, a Clown; described by Puttenham as 'a buffoune, or counterfett foole.' 2.—The Clown, who was a mere country booby, or a witty rustic. 3.—The female fool, who was generally an idiot. 4.—The city or corporation fool, an assistant in public entertainments. 5.—The tavern fool, retained to amuse the customers. 6.—The fool of the ancient Mysteries and Moralities, otherwise the Vice. 7.—The fool in the old dumb shows, often alluded to by Shakespeare. 8.—The fool in the Whitsun ales and morris dance. 9.—The mountebank's fool, or merry Andrew" (75).

few exceptions of female fools whose craft in clowning may have been the sole reason for their appointment in courts or rich households, and not necessarily their eccentric looks or mental health issues, but the fact that the women's liberation movements opened up doors for female clowning as a profession, mostly in circuses, remains. As Jon Davison, a professional clown and writer, maintains, it is evasive to offer ancient Greek female Dorian Mimes, Mathurine from the French court, or Columbine from commedia dell'arte to simply argue that the sphere of professional folly and clowning has historically included women, when even the quickest inquiry into such examples unveils the slew of problems present in that very inclusion.[131] Consider, for instance, an 1895 Barnum & Bailey Circus poster, which advertised "Evetta the Only Lady Clown" as part of the evolution of "New Woman" at the turn of the century; to a certain degree having a woman performer on the poster was a publicity stunt. This observation is in no way meant to disregard the great achievement of Evetta and other female clowns in a male-dominated arena, but to further underscore the adamantly persistent binaries and discrimination against female fools who consciously performed foolishness.[132]

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[131] See Jon Davison, *Clowns*, 131, which although not entirely dedicated to female clowns, is one of the few works on the topic that dedicates an entire chapter to women clowns, entitled, "Clown Women."

[132] Davison mentions Félicien Champsaur's female pantomime, Lulu (1888), whose later versions, especially the one in Frank Wedekind's Lulu cycle (1895) is highly eroticized (134). Another example which includes in Clowns, is meant to show that gender roles pose a challenge not only to clowning as a performance, but to performance in general. Kristen Anderberg, a street performer/artist/journalist from Ventura CA recalls her experiences as a woman artist in a space (the street) which was considered the original place for spectacle: "If you are a woman breaking gender roles by commanding street corners for entertainment, your safest bet is to sing sad love songs, depicting yourself as lovelorn and lost, still looking for a man to save you. Or as Joni Mitchell sings, 'There's a wide, wide world of noble causes … but all I really want to do right now is find another lover.' Although people are uncomfortable with your use of street venue, as a woman, they are consoled by the material, which fits the female stereotypes and keeps a male focus. When I began street performing at age 18 in 1978, I followed these gender rules. I had a confident stage presence and strong voice, yet I sang about needing a man, and of men who left me heart-broken. One day a male street performer came up to me and said, 'Is love all you can sing about?' It made me take notice of what men sang about. They sang about sex, and

Earlier examples are not as generous as Evetta's, however. Roberta Barker brings to our attention Early Modern spectacles involving women in mental wards: "The idea of the madwoman as the epitome of feminine spectacle circulated in Shakespeare's culture. It appears, for instance, in *The Hospitall of Incurable Fooles*, an Italian satirical pamphlet translated and adapted for an English audience and published in 1600, around the time of Hamlet's composition."[133] The pamphlet's language itself seems to be somewhat wary in its descriptions of female patient exploitation for the purposes of spectacle:

> I thinke it not much amisse to point out vnto you likewise this other part of the Hospitall, allotted to women, causing you to beholde with your eies, the most ridiculous emploiments of foolish women, that euer peraduenture you haue seene in the worlde. [. . .] for all those be Cels appropriated to foolish women, to be hold which leisurely, is accounted no smal fauour, it being the custome to shew them seldome, and to few, in respect of the modestie obserued towardes that sexe, naked for the most part as you now see. (*The Hospitall*, 141-42)

But as Barker suggests, this is a gimmick, as "to shew them seldome" and "naked for the most part" are "designed to enhance their commodity value."[134] The "foolish women," whether as part and parcel of the "natural fools" category, which is often unchosen by the women in question, or even as professional fools, have largely been presented and perceived as sexual objects.

The category, "natural" fool, that was coined in the twelfth century and persisted for centuries to come,[135] though not a gendered term in a purely linguistic sense, nonetheless

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getting drunk and high. They were singing about traveling, and wars, and whaling, and politics. And about trying to stay away from women who would marry them. They were not singing forlorn love songs" (qtd. in Davison 137-38).

[133] Roberta Barker, *Early Modern Tragedy, Gender and Performance 1984-2000* (Palgrave, 2007), 39.

[134] *Ibid*., 40.

[135] See Robert Hillis Goldsmith, *Wise Fools in Shakespeare*, 7.

participates in a matrix of power that sorted women with mental and physical disabilities (often perceived as grotesque) under its umbrella. Towsen writes,

> The mental aberration attributed to both the fool and the trickster is often mirrored in his appearance, his bizarre attire or grotesque deformity immediately setting him apart from his fellow man. Many fools, in fact, have been freaks of nature—dwarfs or hunchback, for example—of quite normal mentality. [. . .] Society may ostracize those it considers to be fools, but it also has shown an abiding interest in them.[136]

Within this category of "natural" fool, did the gender of the person really matter to the fool's owner if the source of the entertainment is the perceived "grotesque," the "anomalous," or the "eccentric"? The Pharaoh Dadkeri-Assi in ancient Egypt had a pygmy fool who was an exotic and curious fool who happened to be a great and witty entertainer. Thomas More was a proud possessor of a "natural" fool, Patteson. Queen Elizabeth's female fool, Thomasina, was a dwarf. It is ironic that it seems as if the "natural" category does not discriminate against women when it comes to the sheer act of inclusion, whereas the "artificial" fool category does so conspicuously. Mathurine from the court of Henry III and Louis XIII, not considered a "natural" fool, "walked the streets dressed like an Amazon warrior and was noted for the fervor with which she attempted to convert Huguenots to Catholicism" (Towsen 25), displaying what her audiences would consider a masculine and exotic trait, in order to be recognized as an official-artificial-fool. Should Mathurine then be considered outside the norm? According to Judith Butler, such a question poses a paradox: "To be not quite masculine or not quite feminine is still to be understood exclusively in terms of one's relationship to the 'quite masculine' and the 'quite feminine'" (*Undoing Gender*, 54). The "natural" category perversely masked the ostracization of women, while capitalizing instead

[136] Towsen, *Clowns*, 5–6.

on their physical and mental disability instead of on their gender, and the "artificial" one, in case of female fools, in exchange for inclusion, demanded sexualization of the body or participation in the masculine.

Between East and West

The situation in Russia in the medieval and early modern periods differed from its neighbors in the West. As Western customs penetrated Russia especially in the eighteenth century, so did the keeping of dwarfs and other persons considered non-normative become fashionable to display in court performances. Peter the Great housed some seventy dwarfs, among whom women, who were deliberately overfed to the amusement of their noble lords and were ordered to perform numbers that required constant dancing, brisk and extensive movement,[137] a form of cruelty which finds its analogues in similar treatments of people considered "natural" fools in the West. This example, among a few others, is not representative of the general behavior toward such individuals often coercively deemed as entertainers, considering the phenomenon's short lifespan in Russia. What was different in Russia, is the quick change in attitude toward those once briefly regarded as part of the "natural" fool category. As Ewa Thompson notes, "This kind of entertainment did not catch on at the homes of country nobles and later tsars abandoned it altogether." [138] While the phenomenon of "natural" fool as entertainer thrived in the West, in Russia, it transformed into the *iurodivyi* (holy fool) category, in which female fools constitute a large part. After this notable shift, the figure of the holy fool, male or female, became increasingly feared and

[137] Ewa Thompson, "The Archetype of the Holy Fool," 248.
[138] For a variety of influences on this shift, see ibid.; see also E.M. Thompson, *Understanding Russia: Holy Fool in Russian Culture.*

revered, an attitude that was further fortified by the popularity of Byzantine saints and mystics from Asia Minor.

The general tolerance and reverence in Russia toward holy fools, however, was not always a given, especially when it came to female holy fools. Among those who were venerated during their lifetimes or after, have not come to that position without abuse. Thus, the "official" status of *iurodivyi*—whether sanctification by the church or a general agreement that a person must not be mistreated because that person was believed to be "touched by God"—did not always guarantee abuse-exemptive existence. The *zhitie* (*vitae*) and tales of female holy fools are replete with instances of maltreatment, often obscured by voluntary suffering to impose the idea of kenotic virtue and therefore solidify a given holy fool's venerated stature. The first known tale about an "artificial" female fool (celebrated by the Russian Church and officially referred to as a *iurodivaia*), who performed her *iurodstvo*, is that of Isidora, a madwoman from Egypt who was discovered by a holy man. She was kept in the kitchen of a nunnery, and mocked and ridiculed.[139] Since Russia inherited many of the holy fools from Byzantium, its list of holy fools is long. Among the Russian female holy fools are the famous *iurodivye*, Ksenia Peterburgskaia, who was from a noble family and gave away all of her possessions to the destitute, becoming a wandering holy fool (the literalness of "emptying out" her financial accounts is meant to connote the spiritual "self-emptying" or kenosis), and, Annushka, another *iurodivaia* from St. Petersburg. Mikhail I. Piliaev, a nineteenth-century writer and journalist, in his 1887 *Staryi Peterburg: Rasskazy iz*

[139] See Sergei A. Ivanov, *Holy Fools in Byzantium and Beyond*. Ivanov notes that Isidora's legend inspired the character of Cinderella, another abused female who gains reverence, but only after involuntary suffering (51, n5).

byloi zhizni stolitsy [Old Petersburg: Tales from the Capital's Past], spotlights Annushka, otherwise knowns as Anna Ivanovna, among all the different fools roaming the streets of Petersburg:

> Different kalki, blinds, degenerates [*urody*], holy fools [*iurodivye*], blessed ones [*blazhennye*], men and women wanderers [*stranniki i strannitsy*] meandered especially before church holidays; among the latter, was an old woman, in her sixties, in abuckram dress, with a reticule on her arm that was full of different gifts, who enjoyed the great sympathy of the merchants.[140]

Annushka, Pyliaev informs, was also from a noble family, and married to an army officer, who cheated on her before abandoning her, after which Annushka left the city. Pyliaev's account differs from holy fool accounts in the *zhitie*, as here at no point is Annushka described as a "madwoman," but rather a philanthropist, and a learned one at that (she speaks French and German). Instead, Pyliaev uses various other nouns as substitutes for her proper name: "old woman," which is a non-grotesque physical attribute; the "deceived bride," which calls attention to the mistreatment Annusha endured, and "God's servant, Anna" (328-29), which further emphasizes her holy foolishness as a *iurodivaia Khrista radi* [fool for Christ's sake]. As a member of the female holy fool oeuvre, Annushka is not remarkable. She fits within an already-established formula: abused-in-the past-turned-holy fool-revered. When Annushka returns to St. Petersburg, Pyliaev writes, *no tol'ko uje iurodivoiu* [but this time as a holy fool] (328). What is unique about this account, is that the author does not pathologize Annushka for her eccentric deeds, nor does he label her in such a way that characterizes her

[140] [Брели, особенно передъ праздниками, разные калѣки, слѣпцы, уроды, юродивые, блаженные, странники и странпицы; между послѣдними долго пользовалась большою симпатіей у торговцевъ старушка лѣтъ шестидесяти, въ черномъ коленкоровомъ платьѣ, съ ридикюлемъ въ рукахъ, полнымъ разными даяніями.]

holy foolishness as part of her gender. She is not a holy fool *because* she is female, but she is a female holy fool, who has seen injustices, gone on a great journey like a knight or a pilgrim, and returned as a different person, a trope that Russian nineteenth-century writers, including Dostoevsky, utilized in their fiction.

As far as the Russian cultural mind was concerned, "holy fool," as a general category, was non-gendered, but the moment the focus shifted to such sub-categories as "female holy fools," attitudes changed. This explains why Dostoevsky's literary female fools, although some can be grouped together due to shared characteristics, highlight different cultural-social attitudes not just toward their foolishness, but to their gender, and thus they have differing functions in the novels. The category "female fool" is where Shakespeare and Dostoevsky together meet at yet another thematic point that best defies the spatial and temporal boundaries between them. The framework in both is thus: The category "fool" identifies issues about the fool's function; the "female" category complicates the question of gender; the "ethical" category looks into the ethico-moral universe of characters, in this case, female fool characters in Shakespeare and Dostoevsky, who, according to their own truth-value systems, consciously and unconsciously help another, often a conflicted individual, in specific situations. The following note is crucial to the proceeding arguments:

> To assume that gender always and exclusively means the matrix of the 'masculine' and 'feminine' is precisely to miss the critical point that the production of that coherent binary is contingent, that it comes at a cost, and that those permutations of gender which do not fit the binary are as much a part of gender as its most normative instance.[141]

[141] Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender* (Routledge, 2015), E-book, 54.

But it is also imperative to consider the idea that "gender might very well be the apparatus by which such terms are deconstructed and denaturalized."[142] The plasticity of foolishness in Shakespeare and Dostoevsky, its unique ability to cross binaries and thresholds through disguises ("intuitive;" "artificial"), and its balanced mixture of "official" and "unofficial" license in fooling, are at the forefront of the argument. Female fools in the two authors' works participate in these attributes, but even more significantly, they underscore issues of normative conceptions of gender, interrelated with problems of abuse, shame, and other maltreatment, therefore holding a magnifying glass up to subterranean social issues. Shakespeare and Dostoevsky's female fools while disrupt binaries, they are sacrificial figures who maximize the livelihood, more immediately of the "other."

The Sacred and the Profane: Stinking Lizaveta in The Brothers Karamazov

Dostoevsky's brother Andrei, who has been an invaluable source when it comes to Dostoevsky's childhood, writes in his *Reminiscences*,

> As a conclusion to my brief recollections of the village, I cannot but remember about the fool [*durochka*], Agrafena. In the village, we had a fool [*durochka*] who did not belong to any family; she spent all her time loafing about the fields, and only in severe frosts in the winter was she forcibly sheltered in a hut. At the time she was already 20-25 years old; she spoke very little, unwillingly, incomprehensibly, and incoherently; it could only be understood that she is constantly remembering a child, buried in the cemetery. She seems to have been a fool [*durochkoi*] from birth, and despite her condition, she has suffered violence and was made a mother to a child, which soon died. Later reading the story of Stinking Lizaveta in my brother, Fyodor Mikhailovich's novel, *The Brothers Karamazov*, I involuntarily recalled our fool [*durochku*], Agrafena.[143]

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[142] Ibid.

[143] *Vospominania Andreiia Mikhailovicha Dostoevskogo*, Izdatel'stvo Pisatelei v Leningrade, Leningradskii Oblastlit No. 40.567, 1930. [В заключение кратких своих воспоминаний о деревне я не могу не упомянуть о дурочке Аграфене. В деревне у нас была дурочка, не принадлежавшая ни к какой семье; она все время проводила шляясь по полям, и только в сильные морозы зимой ее насильно приючивали к какой-либо избе. Ей уже было тогда лет 20—-25; говорила она очень мало, неохотно, непонятно и несвязно; можно было только понять, что она вспоминает постоянно о ребенке, похоронещюм на кладбище. Она, кажется

Among the many striking, and yet familiar instances in this passage, is the fact that Andrei consistently refers to Agrafena as a *durochka*, which can also be translated as "fool." But he does not stop there—Agrafena belongs to the village, she is, as he says, "our *durochka*." This sort of harmless possessiveness had to do with the Russian custom, which dictated that holy fool-like individuals like Agrafena, as an act of Christian charity and also as revered and feared beings, were to be under someone's protection. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it was the official duty of the *voevoda*, or the county chief, to take care of such fools, but after changes in the governing bodies that came with the eighteenth century, the "office" of the *voevoda* was dissolved, and "the care of the holy fool became the honor and duty of the peasants."[144] Andrei Mikhailovich's comparison of Agrafena to Dostoevsky's Stinking Lizaveta is most apt. Startlingly grim images of others' experiences hardly skipped Dostoevsky's sensitive mind. He returns to this childhood memory decades later, as if trapping the shocking image of the violated and pregnant *durochka* in his character of Stinking Lizaveta in *The Brothers Karamazov*.

While Andrei Mikhailovich consistently refers to Agrafena as a *durochka* and not once as a *iurodivaia*, that does not mean that she was not considered a holy fool. Dostoevsky who was more attuned to the fine differences within the phenomenon itself, reconfirms this idea by categorizing Stinking Lizaveta as a *iurodivaia* in a marvelous scene that takes place

была дурочкой от рождения и, несмотря на свое таковое состояние^ претерпела над собою насилие и сделалась матерью ребенка, который вскоре и умер. Читая впоследствии в романе брата, Федора Михайловича, «Братья Карамазовы» историю Лизаветы Смердящей, я невольно вспоминал нашу дурочку Аграфену.]

[144] Ewa Thompson, "The Archetype of the Holy Fool," 248.

in the Karamazov bathhouse. Fyodor Karamazov's servants, Grigorii and his wife, Marfa, one day hear "groans 'seemingly of a woman'" who turns out to be Stinking Lizaveta:

> Opening the door of the bathhouse, [Grigorii] saw a sight which petrified him: the town's holy fool [*gorodskaia iurodivaia*], who wandered the streets and was known to the whole town by the nickname Lizaveta Smerdiashschaia [Stinking Lizaveta], had got into their bathhouse and had just given birth to a child. The baby lay beside her, and she lay dying next to him. She said nothing, for she had never been capable of speaking. But all this should be explained in detail.[145]

Detail *was* important to Dostoevsky especially when it came to his holy fools. In the chapter entitled, "Stinking Lizaveta," that follows the scene, Dostoevsky utilizes the flashback technique to give the reader pages and pages of a character's story who has been dead for many years. Why did he think it significant to include facts like, "Lizaveta was a very short girl [*devka*], 'not five foot within a wee beet';" "wandered about summer and winter alike, barefooted;" "always slept on the ground and in the dirt;" "[her father] used to beat Lizaveta inhumanely;" "the tradespeople, tried to clothe her better;" "She would walk into strange houses, and no one drove her away. Everyone was kind to her and gave her something. If she were given a kopek, she would take it, and at once drop it in the poor box of the church or prison" (*BK*, 89-90)? Stinking Lizaveta is an eccentric and a holy fool who checks some of the boxes of "natural" fools in the Western European scene, albeit with important markers of difference that are at times either cultural or exclusively Dostoevskian.

The narrator does not label Stinking Lizaveta as a "dwarf" [*karlitsa*; *dvarf*; *gnom*], even if "*Эта Лизавета Смердящая была очень малого роста девка, 'двух аршин с*

[145] The Brothers Karamazov, 89. In this chapter, all quotes from Dostoevsky's novels are from the following editions: Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment* (Norton, 1989); Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Idiot* (Vintage, 2003); Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov,* (Norton, 1978).

малым'" has been translated into English as "This Lizaveta was a dwarfish creature, 'not five foot within a wee bit'" (Garnett);[146] "Reeking Lizaveta was a tiny creature, 'just a teeny-weeny thing of four-and-a-half-feet'" (MacAndrew);[147] "This Stinking Lizaveta was a very short girl, a 'wee bit under five feet'" (Pevear and Volokhonsky);[148] and a rendition identical to Garnett's translation from a revised edition: "This Lizaveta was a dwarfish creature, 'not five foot within a wee bit'" (McReynolds).[149] "Dwarfish creature" seems to be the preferred English translation in a sentence which literally means, "This Lizaveta was a very short girl, 'shorter than two arshins'."[150] The painstaking detail here is necessary in understanding Dostoevsky's choice in (non)labels. This holy fool is "stinky" (non-substantive attribute), but not decisively "dwarfish" (substantive attribute). Even if Dostoevsky gestures toward the idea that Lizaveta is short in stature, he does not do so unequivocally because doing so otherwise would shore up the idea that she shares in the "natural" (Western-like) fool type, and thus, must be largely understood within the confines of that specific category, which would downplay other attributes that make her a holy fool. Another point is that Dostoevsky's narrator does not use "creature" [*tvar'*; *sushchestvo*] to describe Stinking

[146] F.M. Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, Trans. Constance Garnett, Ebook #28504, Project Gutenberg, 86.
[147] F.M. Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, Trans. Andrew R. MacAndrew (Bantam Classic, 1970), 116.
[148] F.M. Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, Trans. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002), 118.
[149] F.M. Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, Trans. Constance Garnett, Ed. by Susan McReynolds, Revised by Ralph E. Matlaw and Susan McReynolds, A Norton Critical Ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2011), 89.
[150] Here I am providing a literal translation. "Arshin" is a Russian measurement, now obsolete. 1 arshin= 71.12 cm; hence 2 arshins would be 142.24 cm, which is ~ 4'8". We do not know what height exactly defined one as an "adult dwarf" in Russia during Dostoevsky's time, but current stature measurements specify a height of 4'10". https://medlineplus.gov/dwarfism.html Several (current) Russian medical journals uniformly quote from the U.S. National Library of Medicine. There is, also, of course, the differences in height between short males and short females.

Lizaveta, as all of the aforementioned translations have, save Pevear and Volokhonsky's, which, when used in the phrase "dwarfish creature," is meant to be derogatory and to provoke notions of degeneration and deformity, which are not Dostoevsky's intent.

Despite the narrator's or Dostoevsky's reservations about gendering eccentricity, Stinking Lizaveta is still seen by other characters within the confines of her gender. A "band of five or six of our gentlemen," among whom is the (then)young Fyodor Karamazov, one day walk by the river bridge where Stinking Lizaveta is napping, "stopped to look at her, laughing, and began jesting with unbridled licentiousness" (*BK*, 90). Stinking Lizaveta is not harassed in spite of her status as a holy fool, but because she is a *female* holy fool. The "eccentric question," raised by the so-called gentlemen at this point in the story, is framed around Stinking Lizaveta's sexuality, "whether anyone could look upon such a wild beast as a woman [*takogo zveria za zhenshchinu*], and so forth . . . " (90). Fyodor Karamazov, whom the entire town, "with intense and sincere indignation" considers to be the "offender" in the case of Lizaveta's pregnancy, finds "a certain piquancy" (90) not in the victim's *iurodstvo* (holy foolishness), which would include her attire, barefooted wanderings, charity, or other characteristics that she shares with male holy fools, but in the fact that she is a woman *and* a holy fool. Stinking Lizaveta's abuse, which reaches its peak with her rape, pregnancy, and immediate death that follows, is due not to a category error, that she did not perform her holy foolishness customarily enough to gain the respect of the townspeople as a revered holy fool. If holy foolishness, "natural" or "artificial," performed by men can be seen as a non-gendered category, meaning, male holy fools do not have gender identity markers that come with the category, in the case of female holy fools, this has proven impossible. On the contrary, their

perceived "femaleness" *as* holy fools amplified their eccentricity, and therefore, abuse, a reality Dostoevsky embodies in regard to his female holy fools.

The general anxiety toward any kind of eccentricity is reflected in degeneration theories of the time, which developed and circulated in a Darwinian world where nobility felt uneasy about any display of non-normative behavior and physiology: "Degeneration theory was an early attempt to identify physical traits which would make madness overtly *visible*, while also providing scientific evidence that the insane should be incarcerated, thereby easing social anxieties." Anxieties about any sort of "aberration," thus, extended beyond criminals or those considered "mad" (often there were no clear demarcations drawn between the two) and were heightened due to contemporary psychological and physiological theories that deemed any perceived "abnormality" as hereditary.[151] Nineteenth-century French psychologist, Benedict Morel (1809-1873), fairly popular among contemporary Russian researchers in the field of psychology, in his *Traité des Degenerations* (1857), proposes a theory of hereditary degeneration, which he correlates with the idea of original sin.[152] The jump from Eve as the original sinner, to women appearing in a psychological pamphlet on degeneration, one could imagine would not have fomented feelings of progressivism when it came to gender binaries. In the Russian psychological scene, a rigorous opponent of Morel was Aleksandr Freze (1826-1884), whose *O predskazanii v dushevnykh bolezniax* [On

[151] See Frederick H. White, *Degeneration, decadence and disease in the Russian fin de siècle: neurasthenia in the life and work of Leonid Andreev* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014) for nineteenth-century views on the relationship of the criminal to genius, criminal typology, madness as disease, and the decadent context in Russia.

[152] On the subject of Morel's theoretical framework being influenced by his Catholic perspective, see M.E.C. Pereira, "Morel and the Question of Degeneration," 11 (2008): 490-96. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/294448493_Morel_and_the_question_of_degeneration

Predicting Mental Illnesses] (1875),[153] is an extensive psychological treatise on mental illnesses, including melancholia, mania, madness [*sumasshestvie*], intellectual disability, or more commonly known at the time as, "simplemindedness" [*slaboumie*], and other types of cognitive illnesses Freze discusses. Freze's unwillingness to explain psychology through physiology, however, was not a common view among scientists. Aggressively advocating for the visibility of non-normativity had become the task for the scientists in Europe and in Russia: "Societies selected a number of groups such as Jews, homosexuals, gypsies and the insane onto which to project general anxieties" (White 41), the sort of identification that also extended to those considered the "second sex."[154] Holy foolishness is a category that subverts power hierarchies, therefore, allowing subjugated groups to perform power by performing holy foolishness. Slowly changing roles of women, substantiated by the powerful stature of empresses in the imperial period in Russia [155] and queens in the West,[156] intensified anxieties over gender roles. Even as progressive a critic as Vissarion Belinsky, in whose circle Dostoevsky once belonged, expresses unease about gender transgression:

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[153] A.U. Freze, doktor medetsiny, direktor Kazanskoi Okruzhnoi Lechebnitsy, vo imia bozhei materi vsex skorbiashchix, *O Predskazanii v Dushevnykh Bolezniakh* (Kazan: V universitetskoi tipografii, 1875).

[154] For women's roles in nineteenth-century Russia, see Wendy Rosslyn and Alessandra Tosi, eds., *Women in Nineteenth-Century Russia: Lives and Culture* (Cambridge: OpenBook Publishers, 2013).

[155] Sibelan Forester, "Introduction: Framing the View: Russian Women in the Long Nineteenth Century," ibid.: 1-17, states, "By the end of the Imperial period, women's creativity was attracting more attention and admiration in Russia than ever before; the articles about female cultural figures in the Brokgaus-Èfron *Encyclopedic Dictionary*(*Entsiklopedicheskii slovar'*) produced in St Petersburg in 1890–1907 are respectful and often quite detailed, even if most of the articles were authored by men. For a variety of reasons, the topic of women's creativity and self-perception fell out of favour in the Soviet period and was neglected for decades.2 As late as 1985, a Western encyclopedia of Russian literature could provide an article, 'Women in Russian Literature', that treated women primarily as characters in works created by men, artefacts rather than artists. In histories of Russia, any tendency to focus on rulers meant that the eighteenth-century empresses (often themselves born in Western Europe) were de facto representatives of Russian women" (2).

[156] The most obvious example is of Elizabeth I, who vowed at the age of eight not to marry. There were certainly political reasons to this, but also social, in that having a husband in the sixteenth century would mean she would lose her autonomy as a supreme ruler.

> For her [woman] – the representative on the earth of beauty and grace, priestess of love and self-sacrifice – it is a thousandfold more praiseworthy to inspire Jerusalem Liberated than to write it herself, just as it is a thousandfold more praiseworthy to hand her chosen one a shield with the device 'With it or upon it!' than to throw herself into the heat of battle with weapon in hand (30).
> The mind of woman knows only a few aspects of being or, to say it better, her feeling has access only to the world of devoted love and submissive suffering; omniscience is horrible in her, repulsive, while for a poet the whole boundless world of thought and feeling, passions and deeds must be open (31). (qtd. in Forester 6)

Stinking Lizaveta does not have to be a "dwarfish creature" in order to be considered a "degenerate" by some of the other characters in the novel or nineteenth-century readers. Dostoevsky shows that in the case of female fools, their gender and sexuality, are seen as the defining aspects of their eccentricity.

When Dostoevsky's male fools in the theater scene of the *Dead House* perform female roles, they are not abused, something that cannot be said about the female fools in other novels who perform (knowingly or unknowingly) their gender. On the contrary, "Sirotkin, dressed as a girl, was very sweet [*milo*]" and "In a word, the play was concluded to the complete general satisfaction. There was no criticism; how could there be?" (*House*, 191). The prisoners do not protest gender-crossing and cross-dressing, as it is something that occurs when they have suspended their notions of social norms in an agreed-upon space— theater— the same way Shakespeare's audiences did not renounce boy actors playing women's roles. Dostoevsky's female-holy fool-*durachok-strannik*,[157] is similar to the male-holy fool-*durak* that abounds the pages of the *Dead House* in the sense that the type is described as eccentric in specific instances that are meant to highlight the convict-fool's oddity, therefore, securing his participation in *iurodstvo*. For instance, Isaiah Fomich's

[157] Strannik, meaning "wanderer," is etymologically connected to strannyi, meaning, "eccentric."

eccentricity is mainly expressed through his Jewish faith; the three Daghistani brothers are marked by their ethnicity; and so on—attributes that outside the walls of prison would equally be perceived as dangerous to the status quo, hence, "degenerative." Dostoevsky, through his narrator, Gorianchikov in the *Dead House*, despite the fact that he highlights the physiological oddities of specific fools (e.g. Petrov's odd-looking lower lip; Baklushin and Skuratov's face warts), extends the idea of degeneration to the entire body of the prison population, to the chasm's "criminal-degenerates." The grotesqueness of their shaven heads, especially in the bathhouse descriptions, is the common denominator of their varied eccentricities. Gorianchikov describes these heads and bodies "scarlet from the steam" becoming *urodlivee*, a word which not only means "uglier," but is also related to *iurodivyi* (holy fool), and even more significantly, is parallel to the etymology of the word, *dēgenerātus* (Russian: *u* – negative prefix; *rod* – genus; Latin: *de* – negative prefix, *genus* – birth). While Dostoevsky's engagement with degenerative theories is clearly exhibited in his notebook sketches of odd-shaped heads, his faith in human being's inherent goodness, protests the visibility of eccentricity as a determining factor for any pariah's observed "criminality." It is no wonder that his notebooks for *Demons*, a novel replete with "predatory" types, house the greatest number of such drawings. Interestingly, however, Dostoevsky's sketches of visible deformity do not include women.

For his female fools, Dostoevsky had another plan. Their function is re-generative and not de-generative. Stinking Lizaveta [*Smerd*iashchaia Lizaveta] gives birth to a child, *Smerd*iakov, in the bathhouse [*bania*], a curious space where the sacred and the prophane coexist:

> Bania was a place for becoming clean, and its own cleanliness could be important. But traditionally the bathhouse (most often 'black bania,' sooty inside) was considered supremely *un*clean, 'the home of the malicious banik [spirit] and, sometimes, his wife . . . [as well as] a gathering place for various types of evil spirits, witches and the unclean dead' (Ivanits 1992:59). Russian ideas of impurity were linked explicitly to times of vulnerability and to the bania.[158]

Bathhouse's symbolic richness complicates Stinking Lizaveta's uncategorizable stature. M.G. Vadeisha notes that "The category of cleanliness is evaluated not in connection with the bathhouse, but with water, washing, [. . .] One of the primary verbs connected to the bathhouse is the verb, 'to correct' [*pravit'*]" (126). The metaphor of the Word as the water of life, along with the pagan female tutelary deities associated with water, create a dialogue between the sacred and the profane. In *The Sacred and the Profane*, Mircea Eliade talks about the act of manifestation of the sacred as a hierophany. "By manifesting the sacred," Eliade writes, "any object becomes something else, yet it continues to remain itself" (12). While at first Eliade proposes a "possible definition of the sacred" as the "opposite of the profane," (11), he then surmises that the two are not isolated phenomena existing on different planes:

> [The] experience of the sacred spaces makes possible the "founding of the world": where the sacred manifests itself in space, *the real unveils itself*, the world comes into existence. But the irruption of the sacred does not only project a fixed point into the formless fluidity of profane space, a center into chaos; it also effects a break in plane, that is, it opens communication between the cosmic planes (between earth and heaven) and makes possible ontological passage from one mode of being to another. [

[158] Dale Pesmen, in her ethnographic work, *Russia and Soul*, 107, records her experiences from Russia, as well as many interviews that try to capture what dusha [soul] is for Russians. In the "Bania and Sex" section of the chapter, "The Baths: A Celebration for Soul and Body," Pesmen writes, "Men and women sometimes steamed together, so some comments on 'uncivilized' Russians referred to the widespread association of 'primitive' and sexuality and even to village life. [. . .] Traditionally, the bathhouse was used for male and female prenuptial rituals. During the Soviet era, bathhouses were allegedly used for provided by members of the local elite to visiting inspectors, officials, and guests (Simis 1982:131; Corten 1992:128)" (101-2).

> . . .] Hence the manifestation of the sacred in space has a cosmological valence; every spatial hierophany or consecration of a space is equivalent to cosmogony.[159]

For Eliade, as for Dostoevsky whom the former read with great interest, the sacred is a way of orientation in chaos. Among the myriads of Russian proverbs associated with the bathhouse are: *No matter how much you wash, you won't cleaner than water*, or *You can't wash off a dirty dog*, which although espouse the idea Dostoevsky rejects, that one cannot become better if one is already "tainted," are also proverbs that show the regenerative powers of the bathhouse, for instance, *The bathhouse is our second mother; If it weren't for the bathhouse, we would all be lost*.[160] The bathhouse as regenerative is a motif again used in the novel, when captain Snegirev tells Aliosha Karamazov that the doctor "prescribed baths in some solution" (*BK*, 182) for Nina, his hunchback daughter, suffering from rheumatism. Water is essentially prescribed as a corrective agent for Nina's kyphosis, a condition which the novel's utilization of holy foolishness categorizes her as a "degenerate" (the profane), but like Stinking Lizaveta, also as a figure, who "with her angelic meekness [*angel'skoiu krotost'iu*]" borders the sacred (182).

Meek and Pregnant: Lizaveta in Crime and Punishment

Stinking Lizaveta may be short in height, but is not a dwarf, lives and sleeps unsheltered, but still has a "healthy, red face" (*BK*, 89), is saint-like and charitable, but at the same time, is sexualized and abused. She is additionally a "Lizaveta," short form of

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[159] See Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred & the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, trans. William R. Trask (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1987)., 63.

[160] [Как ни мойся, а чище воды не будешь; Черного кобеля не отмоешь добела; Когда б не баня, все б мы пропали; Баня — вторая мать наша] For a discussion of other proverbs related to the bathhouse, see M.G. Vadeisha, "Russkaia bania po materialam fol'klora: ideal'nyi chelovek v ideal'nom mire." Fol'kloristika: 125-143. https://eusp.org/sites/default/files/archive/et_dep/sborniki/afl1/125_143.pdf

"Elizaveta," who shares her name with God (El). Her description as a "very short *devka,*" which I translated as a "very little girl," is an equivocal attribute due to the variety of meanings in Russian related to *devka* that range from "prostitute" to "virgin" to "beautiful goddess."[161] The narrator describes Stinking Lizaveta as a "sleeping Lizaveta" [*spiashchuiu Lizavetu*] (90), a phrase of folkloric significance, which immediately recalls "Sleeping Beauty,"[162] and for the Russian audience, *spiashchaia krasavitsa* [sleeping beauty] and *spiashchaia tsarevna* [sleeping princess]. Dostoevsky's use of the old motif, the hiddenness of the sacred, is simultaneously the subversion of a subversion, the female holy fool recalls the man disguised as the Son of God, and Mary, a virgin girl to become the Mother of God, a miracle, which one critic has deemed as an act of rape.[163] Dostoevsky's deviations do not allow for the absence of the profane. Smerdiakov's sooty birth, as Grigori says, "from the slime [*mokroty*] in the bathhouse" (111), is an image Dostoevsky had already utilized in the *Dead House* decades earlier, "Stream that half blinded the eyes, soot, filth [*kopot'*, *griaz'*], a

[161] D.O. Shepping, in Mify slavianskogo iazychestva (Moscow: Direkt-Media, 2016), notes that the letter "d" often appears in forms like dzh, dz, and z, as can be seen in words like vodit', vozhdi, rodit', rozhden, rozhat', etc., and in the names of gods: Deva, Dzieva, Sieva, Seva, or Zhiva. Shepping writes, "Deva does not only carry within herself the understanding of maidenhead, but also of charming beauty, proved by the similarity of the roots of words such as, deva and divo, devitsa and divit'sia (udivliat'sia [to be surprised] gliadet' [to gaze])" (61). See also, Anatolii Abrashkin, in Russkie bogi. Podlinnaia istoria ariiskogo iazychestva (Izdatel'stvo 'Algoritm,' 2013), who goes even further back in Slavic paganism, to the gods, Dyia and Diva, noting the possibility that they might be one and same.

[162] Charles Perrault and the Brothers Grimm were very popular in the Russian nineteenth century and had an important influence on its literary scene.

[163] Mary Daly, in *The Mary Daly Reader*, Eds. Jennifer Rycenga and Linda Barufaldi (New York: New York University Press, 2017), writes, "Mary is so 'full of grace' that she is de-natured, destined to become the mother of a god-son who bestows upon her his pseudo-nature, this 'grace.' In this pornographic mythic mirror-world, the son totals his virgin-mother-victim. The immaculate conception is the ultimate depiction of (pre-natal) woman-battering, a mythic model of incestuous assault. It is the primal rape of the Arch-Image. Within the mad ill-logic of dogmatic constructs, it is logically prior to the rape of the Virgin that takes place at 'The Annunciation,' when the adolescent Mary is told by the angel Gabriel that she is to be the mother-of-god and gives her fictitious assent. To put it in other words, as a consequence of her initial rape ('grace') Mary has been totaled, made totally unable to resist divine aggression/lust/rape. At 'The Annunciation,' then, the already raped Mary 'consents' to further rape" (238).

press so thick that there was nowhere to put one's foot down" (145). Despite it being an inferno, the *Dead House*'s bathhouse is a space of baptismal rebirth. Smerdiakov, however, is a far cry from the Son of God. The physiological profaneness associated with this character's psychology later comes to reveal his predatorial inclinations in his murdering of the patriarch, Fyodor Karamazov. But born out of a holy fool, whose holy foolishness is an ambiguous amalgamation of the sacred and the profane, Smerdiakov cannot but also face the far-removed sacredness within him, vis-à-vis his mother. This implicit memory affect is manifested in his act of suicide, which can be interpreted as his display of conscience, the ultimate regenerative act in Dostoevsky's fiction.

Stinking Lizaveta is not the only female fool endowed with metaphoric regenerative properties that are partially enhanced by the literal ability to bear children. The pawnbroker, Alëna Ivanovna's younger sister, Lizaveta, in *Crime and Punishment*, whose name is an identity marker within the Dostoevskian female holy fool category, has a specific function in the novel—to act as a trigger for Rodion Raskolnikov's rebirth. But before getting to Lizaveta's ethical function, Dostoevsky makes sure the reader (and his characters) recognizes the type. In a tavern where Raskolnikov finds himself after pondering his nefarious plan, he overhears from one of the students a few details about the two sisters, one of whom is portrayed as evil and another as meek, "whom the vicious little thing [Alëna Ivanovna] was beating and whom she kept in complete subjection and treated as if she were a child, although Lizaveta stood at least five foot ten" (*CP*, 54-5). The abuse is yet another signifier in the chain of signifiers that also applies to Stinking Lizaveta. What the loquacious "student found the most surprising and amusing was that Lizaveta was pregnant" (55). Dostoevsky's

sub-categories become clearer in comparison—if Stinking Lizaveta more closely resembles the medieval archetype of the *strannik/strannitsa* holy fool in her ambiguity about whether she rejects worldly things like money, shelter, and clothes because she is feigning her holy foolishness, in Lizaveta's case, her childishness is characterized by her innocence, and vice versa, something that is meant to cast her as a "natural" meek persona whose meekness is not part of a deliberate performance, as in, she is not feigning it.

The narrator also does not pathologize Lizaveta, but it is clear that she has cognitive issues that her oddly shaped figure is supposed to underscore: "She was a tall, awkward, timid, meek *devka* of thirty-five, all but an idiot [*idiotka*]" (52). Lizaveta's tallness and Stinking Lizaveta's shortness are descriptors that set them apart from their Western "natural" analogues. In Dostoevsky, oftentimes the point is not the specific oddity itself, but the fact that there *is* an oddity. The details of Lizaveta's height are reiterated a few pages later by the narrator who had mentioned them earlier: "she was remarkably tall" (55). The narrator also finds it important to note that she is from "the working-class, not educated, and a *devitsa* [maiden/damsel/virgin] [. . .]" (55). Lizaveta, like Stinking Lizaveta, is associated with a *deva*, which combined with all the other descriptors, including the "big, long, splay feet," makes her a puzzling character (55). These quirks explain the police officer's confusion, who asks the student, "But I thought you said she was a degenerate [*urod*]?" to which the student replies, "Yes, kind of swarthy, and looks like a guardsman in disguise, but you know, not at all a degenerate [*urod*]" (55). Having a dark skin or being gender-ambiguous would, at this time, qualify one as a "degenerate." Lizaveta also "has such a kind face and eyes, to the extreme even. Proof—everyone likes her. She is so quiet, meek, irresponsive, agreeable,

consents to anything" (55). Dostoevsky is unsparing in his descriptions of faces that he considers important to the development of his themes. The faces of the female holy fools, even if they are supposed to look strange, are nonetheless described as kind, gentle, and meek. Lizaveta's timidity has a double entendre both as a requisite for the female holy fool, but also for the male holy fool, whose reserved behavior is associated with humility and femininity simultaneously. Aliosha Karamazov, another holy fool-like figure, for instance, is described as an equally reserved character. The basis of the confusion between the two men at the tavern is the problem of (un)recognition, complicated by the questions of gender and the sacred. While the student sees Lizaveta as a *iu-rodivaia* [holy fool], the officer understands his descriptions to mean, *u-rod* [degenerate]. The further confusion prompts the question, "'You like her yourself, don't you?' laughed the officer" to which the student replies, "Because she's an eccentric [*strannosti*]" (55). The student's ongoing descriptions of Lizaveta help him identify the type for himself, and when he arrives at a recognition, he screams in excitement, "What a phenomenon! [*fenomen*]" referring to Lizaveta (55). Dostoevsky provides yet another lengthy description for a character who is soon to be murdered, not even as part of Raskolnikov's plan, but as the murderer's effort in not leaving behind a witness. Dostoevsky casts these specific female holy fool types as functions, other than being characters, that act as catalysts in the realization of specific themes and of contemporary social issues, while at the same time not losing sight of the specific abuse those participating in the type, "naturally" or "artificially," endure.

Lizaveta's fate being connected to Raskolnikov's from the very beginning of the novel is part of Dostoevsky's narrative technique, utilizing the motif of doubles, so prevalent

in Shakespeare, not only to enhance his protagonist's moral shortcomings, but also to attach a special significance to a character who is more likely to get undermined by the sheer fact of being a holy fool. The narrator does not foreground the pawnbroker, even though she seems to be the more important character than her sister, Lizaveta, based on the fact that the pawnbroker is at the center of Raskolnikov's motive. "Alëna Ivanovna, the moneylender" (*CP*, 52) is one of the few narrative descriptions she gets. The focus, instead, quickly shifts to Lizaveta: "[Raskolnikov] had known all about Lizaveta for a long time, and she knew him slightly" (52). This assimilation is Dostoevsky's way of underscoring his own literary creation of holy foolishness by connecting it to his schismatic protagonist. Dostoevsky looked back to the holy fool archetype and saw it as a sacred aspect of his *narod* [the People]. Lizaveta is described as a Russian muzhik, a laborer who not only works hard at the Haymarket, but also at home. It is noted that Lizaveta cleans and scrubs, and when Raskolnikov is in the old woman's apartment, he notices a "big bed, very clean," which, considering its size, must belong to Lizaveta, and not to her wickedly portrayed sister, "the old woman," as the narrator says, whose hair is "thick with grease" (66). Because Lizaveta is farther removed from the archetype of the holy fool than Stinking Lizaveta in the *Brothers Karamazov*, her characteristics are less ambiguous. Her cleanliness is proverbial, a symbol of her purity. The English phrase, "Cleanliness is next to godliness" in Russian, is, "clean body, clean mind" [чистое тело, чистый разум]. This particularity comes up again in reference to another fool-like figure, detective Porfirii Petrovich, when the narrator feels it necessary to note that "his linen was spotless" (211). The narrator is also keen to point out that Lizaveta,

like Porfirii, who is not a stickler for officialities, is not a *chinovnik* [official] (*CP*, 55). In his February 1876 entry of the *Diary*, Dostoevsky writes,

> I repeat: judge the Russian People not by the abominations they so frequently commit, but by those great and sacred things for which, even in their abominations, they constantly yearn. Yet not all of the People are villains; there are true saints, and what saints they are. [. . .] In fact, we have never posed the question any other way: 'Who is better, we or the People? Are the People to follow us, or are to follow them?' (200-201).

Dostoevsky's idea that the Russian People are a suffering people and that their ideals are sacred become part of his literary holy fools who are drawn as stark contrasts to the intellectual characters in his novels, who look down upon the People as an unrefined and "degenerate" mass. Dostoevsky often plays with his novel's optics, setting up holy foolishness both in terms of particulars and as an overarching idea.

The notion of Lizaveta's role in Raskolnikov's "resurrection" as his appropriate double becomes more translucent in view of the religious objects that keep resurfacing after her death. The icon Raskolnikov witnesses in Alëna Ivanovna's apartment belonging to her sister, Lizaveta (given to her by Sonia), immediately affects Raskolnikov's demeanor (see Chapter 2). There are also other important religious objects as props that reappear in later scenes: "There were two crosses on the cord, one of cypress-wood and the other of brass, as well as an enameled religious medal" (*CP*, 67). When Sonia tells Raskolnikov about her get-togethers with Lizaveta, "Yes . . . . She was good . . . She came here . . . not often . . . she couldn't. We used to read together and . . . talk. She will see God'" (275), it becomes clear that Raskolnikov is repulsed by her precisely because he protests his indirect association with Lizaveta, or more indirectly, his own salvation: "These bookish words sounded strange to him, and here was another new thing: some sort of mysterious get-togethers with Lizaveta,

and both—holy fools. 'Here one would become a holy fool oneself! Contagious! [*zarazitel'no*]'—he thought" (275). Although Lizaveta is physically absent, Raskolnikov is still presented as in the company of the two "holy fools," Sonia and Lizaveta. Raskolnikov is no longer merely "doubling" with Lizaveta, but with Sonia and Lizaveta simultaneously. When Sonia tries to get Raskolnikov to see that he is perhaps a fallen man who "throw[s] himself from the bell tower" (346), Raskolnikov has a vision, "he looked at [Sonia] and suddenly in her face he seemed to see Lizaveta" (346). The theme of tripartite fusion of holy fools, the two already there and one in-the-making, continues when the cross in the beginning of the novel that Raskolnikov saw in Lizaveta's apartment, makes its way back to him: "'Here, take this cypress one,' says Sonia, "I have another, a brass one, Lizaveta's. Lizaveta and I exchanged crosses; she gave me her cross, and I gave her my little icon. I'll wear Lizaveta's now, and this is for you. Take it . . . it's mine! It's mine!' she insisted. 'We'll go to suffer together, and we'll bear the cross together!'" (356).[164] The gesture of giving Raskolnikov a cypress cross is significant, considering the religious meaning of the cypress tree. It comes from Cyprus, one of the early Christian states, and the Greeks planted it in cemeteries to deflect evil spirits. As the "receiver" of evil spirits, it endures pain, therefore, symbolizing suffering. Due to its hardy nature and longevity, it also symbolizes eternal life, but it does not regenerate if cut too severely.[165] Raskolnikov, as a Lazarus attempted to be raised, and his potential journey to moral awakening, cannot be accomplished without the

[164] [На, возьми вот этот, кипарисный. У меня другой остался, медный, Лизаветин. Мы с Лизаветой крестами поменялись, она мне свой крест, а я ей свой образок дала. Я теперь Лизаветин стану носить, а этот тебе. Возьми... ведь мой! Ведь мой! — упрашивала она. — Вместе ведь страдать пойдем, вместе и крест понесем!]

[165] Alva William Steffler, *Symbols of the Christian Faith*. (Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2002), 60.

female holy fools whose fates are entwined with his, and who, as his external consciences try to guide him toward his rebirth.

Doubles in Dostoevsky are formed if the holy fool character, even though she has the aspects of the archetype, is still quite removed from it. For instance, Stinking Lizaveta does not have a pronounced double, but her son, Smerdiakov, is a reminder of her existence in the town's memory, and his last act, can be seen as a passive show of conscience, as a manifestation of Stinking Lizaveta's doubling with his son through his acknowledgment of the "sacred" within him. In Dostoevskian ethics, Smerdiakov's suicide can be seen as not necessarily a result of boredom, but rather triggered by his conscience. In Shakespeare's comedies, in particular, where the official fool figure is attached to a female character, doubles are not as opaque. In *Twelfth Night*, for instance, Olivia, is paired with Feste, in *As You Like It*, Rosalind with Touchstone, in *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Bottom with Titania. The motif of doubles is more complicated and often multilayered in the tragedies where the fool takes on more functions than just that of an entertainer. There is a pattern in Shakespeare's fools' attitudes toward the females in the plays. As Alan Hager notes, "Shakespeare's fools generally have close attachments to women in the plays, often including strong but asexual sentiment" (291).[166] In a German woodcut by anonymous,[167] the fool is portrayed tickling a woman's genitalia with a flower, while he also plays the pipe for her: "Her attention is not upon him but upon herself as desiring and desirable; passively half-lying behind her, he shows no signs of intending to satisfy the desire he has awakened [. . .]

[166] See Alan Hager, "Lear's Fool" in Fools and Jesters in Literature, Art, and History: A Bio-Bibliographical Sourcebook, ed. Vicki K. Janick (London: Greenwood Press, 1998):
[167] See William Willeford, The Fool and His Scepter (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1969), 184.

he may or may not play the role of the man seeking sexual union with a woman" (Willeford 184). The intimate relationship between the fool and his or her double in Shakespeare is a connection not lost to Dostoevsky's fools.

Licensed to Laugh: The Nurse in Romeo and Juliet

The official fool in Shakespeare is not a minor character but a marginal figure to the extent that the fool operates on a different level of consciousness, one that qualifies the fool as a wise figure in Shakespeare, a position that was not exempt from attacks generating from officialdom. Pairing the fool with a female character, for instance, allows the female character a register whereby she can partake in the fool's jests, a license that would have otherwise only belonged to the (male)fool. The fact that the fool in Shakespeare is unmarried, widowed, or portrayed as asexual is a dilution of clerical abstention that makes the fool and the fool's pair an androgynous double entity. Should scholars of queer Early Modern studies then consider the character of the fool as "queer" not only in terms of definitions (earlier definitions of "queer" include "eccentric" or "peculiar") but also in terms of the double's, looked at as a whole, gender- and sexual-ambiguity? The fool's (a)sexuality is a variety of polymorphous sexuality. Some scholars have considered the task of "[casting] a backward gaze on the early modern history of sexuality" challenging, "[because] these early modern queer lives do not offer us a model of modern recognition, they offer us models of living sexualities that are not so easily seen as properties of individual identity or affective

consciousness" (Stanivukovic 42).[168] What is unambiguous, however, is that the fool in Shakespeare and Dostoevsky challenges gender, sexual, and power hierarchies.

Juliet's nurse in *Romeo and Juliet* has often been seen as a bawdy figure who makes crude jukes and jests unbecomingly. As such, she takes on the role of the fool in a play that lacks an official fool. In fact, the Nurse already belongs to a category of the "old nurse" who was often paired with the "young damsel." Shakespeare's contemporary, George Puttenham, in his *The Arte of English Poesie* (1589), lists the nurse as one of the figures within the category of "vice" that actors played interchangeably:

> The Poets deuised to haue many parts played at once by two or three or foure persons, that debated the matters of the world, sometimes of their owne priuate affaires, sometimes of their neighbours, but neuer medling with any Princes matters nor such high personages, but commonly of marchants, souldiers, artificers, good honest housholders, and also of vnthrifty youthes, yong damsels, old nurses, bawds, brokers, ruffians and parasites. (Chap. XIIII)

The Nurse's domestic employment might further characterize the Nurse as a jester, and instead, obscure her more serious role in the play. Brenda Bruce, a Royal Shakespeare Company actor, keenly observes, "In my opinion, Nurse is no country bumpkin. She holds a very important position with an important family in Verona. She is the Italian equivalent of a bright Cockney with all the same energetic vulgarity and warmth, and the only interest in her life is Juliet and Juliet's happiness" (qtd. in Worthen 22). As the character of the fool in the play, the Nurse reminds the audience that perhaps if younger, she would be more suited for the role of the jester or clown, but not in her old age and especially not in a Shakespearean tragedy which retorts to wise fools rather than to domestic clowns whose sole purpose is to

[168] On Early Modern sexualities, see the collected volume, Queer Renaissance Historiography: Backward Gaze, eds. Vin Nardizzi, et al. (New York: Routledge, 2009).

entertain. There are instances that reveal the Nurse's reluctance in being considered a jester. She does not want to be, as she says, "jaunting," a word inconspicuously associated with the jester or clown.[169] "Fie, how my bones ache! What a jaunt have I!" (2.5.27) and "Beshrew your heart for sending me about / To catch my death with jaunting up and down" (2.5.27) the Nurse tells Juliet.

Any licentiousness attributed to the Nurse mainly stems from her encounter with Romeo, Mercutio, and Benvolio, where the latter two actively try to categorize the Nurse as a bawdy character. Such characterization of the Nurse is unwarranted, in the scene where she is merely looking for Romeo to pass on Juliet's message. Her rather polite, "God you good morrow, gentlemen" (2.4.111) and "If you be he, sir, I desire some confidence with / you" (2.4.129-30) gets her Mercutio's recommendation that because she is so ugly, she ought "to hide her face, for her fan's / the fairer face" (2.4.109-10) and "'Tis no less, I tell you, for the bawdy hand of / the dial is now upon the prick of noon" (2.4.114-15); Benvolio's "She will indite [Romeo] to some supper" (2.4.131); then again, Mercutio's "A bawd, a bawd, a bawd. So ho!" (2.4.132) and his suggestion, which is a play on "hare" and "whore," that the Nurse is a harlot: "No, hare, sir, unless a hare, sir, in a Lenten / pie that is something stale and hoar ere it be spent" (2.4.134-35).[170] The Nurse quickly and resiliently protests the typology at

[169] Unsurprisingly, the word, "jaunt," does not appear elsewhere in Shakespeare, which says much about the seriousness of the Shakespearean fool and Shakespeare's gradual moving away from the jaunting, jesting clown. A century later, the word reappears in fiction, in relation to clowning. Henry Carey's play, The Honest Yorkshire-Man. A Ballad Farce (1736), for instance, uses "jaunting" as one of the aspects of the clown's act: "Such flaunting, / Gallanting, / And jaunting, / Such frolicking thou shalt see, / Thou ne'er like a clown / Shall quit London sweet town, /To live in thine own country" (1.3).

[170] Gordon Williams's *A Dictionary of Sexual Language and Imagery in Shakespearean and Stuart Literature* (London: The Athlone Press, 1994), 646, defines "harlot" as "3. A bawd. The dialect use of 'bawd' = hare supplies word-play in Shakespeare, Romeo (c. 1595) II.iv.128, when the nurse desires 'some confidence' with Romeo. Mercutio chooses to interpret this in a dubious light: 'A bawd! a bawd! a bawd! So ho', adding the sportsman's cry to heighten the senses of the sexual hunt. He tells Romeo that has found 'No hare, sir; unless a

several occasions in the same scene, "Out upon you! What a man are you?" referring to Mercutio (2.4.116); "I pray you, sir, what saucy merchant was this / that was so full of his ropery?" again, referring to Mercutio (2.4.147-48). Romeo's immediate commentary on Mercutio's behavior, "A gentleman, nurse, that loves to hear himself / talk and will speak more in a minute that he will / stand to in a month" (2.4.149-51) categorizes Mercutio as a clown, the type whose unwelcomed loquaciousness, devoid of any ethical motive, is a point of irritation to Shakespeare's serious characters in the tragedies.[171] The Nurse is not a clownish fool, nor is she just a messenger or maid. Her advice to Romeo to treat Juliet more respectfully than they have treated her, that is, as a lascivious female figure, makes the Nurse a wise fool:

> What she bid me say, I will
> keep to myself. But first let me tell you, if you
> should lead her in a fool's paradise, as they say, it
> were a very gross kind of behavior, as they say. For
> the gentlewoman is young; and therefore, if you
> should deal double with her, truly it were an ill
> thing to be offered to any gentlewoman, and very
> weak dealing. (2.4.167-74)

The Nurse does not subscribe to officialdom, and her unceremonious behavior when it comes to women's roles and abuse are not taken lightly in the conventional world of the play.

In her unofficial role as *the* fool of the play, the Nurse defies Capulet, the heavy father of the play, whose disgust with Juliet's insubordination is a preface to Lear's

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hare, sir, in a Lenten pie, that is something stale and hoar ere it be spent'. The nurse, advanced in years, appears more bawd than whore. If the latter, then she is much past her best, a mouldy whore like the hoar hare eked out during the meatless days of Lent. In a song gathered by Howard, Choice Spirits Museum (1762) 95, 'the fam'd Coney-warren at Lambeth' is said to have 'CONEYS enough—but the Devil a HARE'."

[171] See Chapter 2 for Hamlet's vexation with the chatty and disruptive clown: "And let those that play / your clowns speak no more than is set down for / them" (3.2.40-42).

thundering statement directed at the outspoken Cordelia, "Better thou / Hadst not been born than not t'have pleased me / better" (1.1.269-71).[172] The Nurse's defense of Juliet, "You are to blame, my lord, to rate her so" (3.5.177) is met with Capulet's scorn: "And why, my Lady Wisdom? Hold your tongue. / Good Prudence, smatter with your gossips, go" (3.5.178-79). There is truth to Capulet's reverential titles, despite their sarcastic tone. Wisdom in the play is associated exclusively with the Nurse, who praises Juliet in front of Lady Capulet for her protestation against the imposed marriage. The Nurse quickly perceives the subtlety of Juliet's sophisticated response, "It is an honor that I dream not of" (1.3.71) and in return, correlates Juliet's wisdom with hers: "An honor? Were not I thine only nurse, / I would say thou hadst sucked wisdom from thy / teat" (1.3.72-74). The poignancy of the Nurse's response relies on a series of negations: the reader knows that Juliet does not "dream of" an arranged marriage; the Nurse *is* the only one who has nursed Juliet (a point of tension between Lady Capulet and the Nurse); the last part of the Nurse's tripartite statement thus rests on the affirmation that her wisdom did transfer to Juliet, suggestive here, through her breastmilk. This maternal link of nourishment connects the Nurse and Juliet in a motif of doubles, where the Nurse underscores her role as a regenerative, protective, and wise figure.

Capulet's "Peace, you mumbling fool!" does not exactly insinuate reverence toward the wise female fool (3.5.183), nor does the Nurse's ambiguous status as an official fool guarantee her the freedom of speech. In fact, the Nurse is constantly interrupted in her

[172] For the notion of Juliet as possession for Capulet and Juliet as an unconventional lover who defies centuries-old courtly love motif, which dictates that the beloved be seen as an unearthly, heavily spiritualized object, see Michael Bryson and Arpi Movsesian, *Love and its Critics: From the Song of Songs to Shakespeare and Milton's Eden* (Cambridge: OpenBook Publishers, 2017), especially the subsection, "Love as Resistance: Juliet and the Critics who Disdain."

speeches. Shakespearean performance study scholars who have examined theatrical cues agree that "[e]veryone wants the Nurse to shut up" (Palfrey and Stern 254). It is not only Capulet and the foolish youth who actively try to misrepresent the Nurse and suppress her voice, but also Lady Capulet, an absent parent, who finds Nurse's longwinded story about Juliet's upbringing irritating: "Enough of this. I pray thee, hold thy peace" (1.3.54). The tension between the Nurse and Lady Capulet stem from the fact that Juliet considers a female fool her confidant and counselor: "Comfort me; counsel me / [. . .] Some comfort, nurse" (3.5.220; 224). At one point Lady Capulet entirely ignores the Nurse's criticism of the view that women are merely procreative bodies:

> LADY CAPULET: By having him [Paris], making yourself no less.
> NURSE: No less? Nay, bigger. Women grow by men. (1.4.100-101)

The Nurse is far from callous to warrant the notion that she misunderstands social cues. She deliberately speaks over her cues when in dialogue with authority figures. Modern edited versions of this conversation between the Nurse, Lady Capulet, and Juliet do not quite capture the Nurse's resilience as they substitute the "said I," "say I," and "cried I," forms from the folio and quarto versions, with "Ay":

> NURSE: [. . .] And, by my holidam,
> The pretty wretch left crying and said ***"Ay."***
> To see now how a jest shall come about!
> I warrant, an I should live a thousand years,
> I never should forget it. "Wilt thou not, Jule?" quoth he.
> And, pretty fool, it stinted and said ***"Ay."***
>
> LADY CAPULET: Enough of this. I pray thee, hold thy peace.

NURSE: Yes, madam, yet I cannot choose but laugh
To think it should leave crying and say ***"Ay."***
And yet, I warrant, it had upon its brow
A bump as big as a young cock'rel's stone,
A perilous knock, and it cried bitterly.
"Yea," quoth my husband. "Fall'st upon thy face?
Thou wilt fall backward when thou comest to age,
Wilt thou not, Jule?" It stinted and said ***"Ay."***

JULIET: And stint thou, too, I pray thee, nurse, ***say I***. (1.3.47-63, emphases mine)[173]

The phrase, "said I," however, is a necessary cue for the other actors (those who are cued) to know it is their turn to speak and for the (cuing) actor, speaking the "said I," to stop their speech. One of the persistent characteristics of the fool is the ability to speak or put forth an unconventional and substantive thought when others will not or cannot. In Shakespeare and Dostoevsky, this aspect of the fool is also extended to the female fool. The Nurse continues telling her story despite the cue (1.3.48; 56).

Consistently and subtly political and often dangerously so, Shakespeare embedded important details in irrelevant-seeming passages of his fools. Clare Asquith relates the Nurse's long speech about Juliet as a weaning child to Henry Wriothesley, 3rd earl of Southampton and the grandchild of the 1st Viscount Montague, who besides being Shakespeare's patron, was involved with the Earl of Essex and in the Essex rebellion of 1601. While Southampton was not executed but only given a life imprisonment sentence, his

[173] The passage is fully quoted and demonstrated in Simon Palfrey and Tiffany Stern, *Shakespeare in Parts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). The authors note, "Shakespeare does not repeat cues carelessly, but he does repeat them often enough to demand some answering hypothesis" (250). Palfrey and Stern focus on the inconsistency of the Nurse's cues as part of the "garrulous humor," "terse disagreement, familial tension" and that "[b]oth comedy and bathos are enhanced by repetition" (254). While these are all valid points, they miss the fact that they highlight the Nurse's persistent resilience and situate her exactly in the role of the fool—a point that cannot be overstated considering how the idea of a female being a fool has been understated again and again.

uncompromising Catholic friends did not receive or care for Shakespeare's warnings against rash action and regicide.[174] The Nurse's story, rich with underlying political and religious allusions, is also the first instance where Shakespeare establishes Juliet as a fool figure. Out of the eleven combined usages of the words "fool" and "foolish," seven of them are in reference to Juliet:

-BENVOLIO: Part, fools! (1.1.65) [in reference to the quarreling youth]
-NURSE: When it did taste the wormwood on the nipple
Of my dug and felt it bitter, pretty fool,
To see it tetchy and fall out with the dug. (1.3.32-34) **[to Juliet]**
-NURSE: And pretty fool, it stinted and said "Ay." (1.3.53) **[to Juliet]**
-CAPULET: We have a trifling foolish banquet towards.— (1.5.136) [to Romeo]
-ROMEO: Her vestal livery is but sick and green,
And none fools do wear it. Cast it off. (2.2.8-9) **[to Juliet]**
-NURSE: But first let me tell you, if you
should lead her in a fool's paradise (2.4.168-69) [to Romeo and **Juliet]**
-ROMEO: O, I am Fortune's fool! (3.1.142) [to Romeo]
-JULIET: Back, foolish tears, back to your native spring; (3.2.112) **[to Juliet]**
-LADY CAPULET: I would the fool were married to her grave. (3.5.145) **[to Juliet]**
-CAPULET: Peace, you mumbling fool! (3.5.183) [to the Nurse]
-CAPULET: And then to have a wretched puling fool, (3.5.195) **[to Juliet]**

The Nurse has educated Juliet to be able to navigate as well as a young girl can a world where women are merely fools for speaking too loudly or too well. The Nurse is not the only character to speak and act in codes. Juliet feigns her death, and in order to pacify her mother, who asks Juliet a question while limiting her response, "Speak briefly. Can you like of Paris'

[174] On this topic, see Clare Asquith, *Shadowplay: The Hidden Beliefs and Coded Politics of William Shakespeare* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2005), especially Part II.5, "Persecution, 1592-1594." The Nurse's reference to Lammas Eve as Juliet's birth date (1.3.23), which is July 31st, reemphasized by the Nurse's repetition of "Jule" three times (1.3.47; 51; 62) referring to "Juliet" as a way of reminding the spectators of the month of July; the earthquake (1.3.25); the dove-house (1.3.35); Juliet falling and bumping her head on "cock'rel's stone, / A perilous knock, and it cried bitterly" (1.3.58-59); and Juliet's utterance of "Ay" three times, according to Asquith, recall the events associated with the martyred Jesuit Edmund Campion, who arrived in England in 1580, the year of a violent earthquake, and arrested in July while hiding in a dove-house. "[T]here are echoes here of Peter's triple betrayal of Christ, marked by a cockcrow," writes Asquith, "Like Peter, the infant Juliet 'wept bitterly' at a 'perilous knock' associated with a 'cock'rel [. . .] Like Peter, she responds three times with the word 'Ay' to a request for the ultimate act of love'" (88).

love," (1.4.102), Juliet responds in feigning docility, "I'll look to like, if looking liking move" (1.4.103), a statement which proves true for Romeo, who falls in love at first sight, but not for the more reflective Juliet. Juliet is a fool in the eyes of the other characters and of the audience. In manipulating figures of authority and feigning a role to get what she wants, Juliet is an "artificial" fool, something that only another fool doubling with Juliet would notice. But for her visible resistance to officialdom and custom, Juliet is labeled as a fool. Either way, it is inevitable that she suffer in her role as an unofficial fool, and the Nurse knows this. The Nurse's foresight in her story from Juliet's childhood, "Dost thou fall upon thy face? / Thou wilt fall backward when thou hast more wit" (1.3.45-46) certainly has a sexual connotation, where to "fall backward" can both mean to have sex and die on one's back. In the case of the latter meaning, the statement has tragic knowledge, that wit and wisdom come at a price. Knowing what kind of a young woman she has raised, the Nurse is curious about Juliet's performance, "To see now how a jest shall come about!" (1.3.49).

If the fool knows how to use wit as a weapon against abuse, the female fool knows well enough that wit alone is not sufficient. By already playing the role of the fool, the female fool participates in the masculine while participating in foolishness. The first time the Nurse appears in public is with Peter, one of the serving men—*Enter Nurse and her man*—where the two are at first seen as a singular entity, and later, as two, but indistinct bodies. Upon seeing them, Romeo's repetition "A sail, a sail!" (2.4.104) uses the same word to describe both, less nautically and more as "sail," meaning, a "projection from a surface,"[175]

[175] Oxford English Dictionary, "sail, n.3": "Amount of projection from a surface." See also the usage, in "1660 tr. H. Blum Bk. Five Collumnes Archit. (new ed.) A Projectura, the sayle of every moulding."

which is immediately followed by Mercutio's "Two, two—a shirt and a smock" (2.4.105) where a "shirt" can be considered a "smock" and vice versa. Like Mathurine, the French Amazon-warrior-female-fool, the Nurse feels she ought to improvise cross-gendered identification in order to be taken seriously. Feeling wrongfully attacked, she quickly retorts to what would be considered the masculine voice: "An he speak anything against me, I'll take him / down, an he were lustier than he is, and twenty / such jacks" (2.4.152-54). The Nurse's behavior is abnormal within gender norms. Hence, Mercutio thinks her ugly [degenerate], someone who ought to hide her face behind a fan. To use Foucault's term, when a "peripheral sexuality," a woman in this case, in broad daylight, does not conform to normativity, then persecution is in order for constituting a forbidden behavior. Even though the Nurse momentarily subverts the power hierarchy, she remains the "Nurse cursed in the pantry" (1.4.108), the outcast and the "pervert" that Foucault talks about, whose gender fluidity, complicated by being simultaneously female and a fool, does characterize her unpopular actions as "aberration of the genetic instinct," or "degenerescence."[176]

The Nurse's castigation of Romeo, the only other "fool," who is weeping and wailing on the floor in the company of Friar Lawrence and the Nurse, has to do with Romeo's adoption of the perceived feminine behavior. "Stand up, stand up. Stand an you be a man!" the Nurse commands Romeo, whom she thinks Juliet's double, "O, he is even in my mistress' case, / Just in her case. O woeful sympathy!" (3.3.92-93). The female fool, who taught Juliet the tricks of the trade, tries to communicate the dangers of the "quite feminine"

[176] See Michel Foucault, "The Perverse Implantation," in The History of Sexuality, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978): 36-49.

and “quite masculine” to Romeo. The Nurse’s command is not a criticism of Romeo’s moment of gender-fluidity, but rather a warning against its consequences in a world of binaries, “For Juliet’s sake, for her sake, rise and stand” (3.3.96). Friar Lawrence, who is the other adult in the room, on the other hand, looks at Romeo as a “misbehaved and sullen wench” who “pouts” (3.3.153; 154) and compares Romeo’s display of emotion to the actions of a madman (3.3.64). The tension between the secular fool figure and the clergyman, a representative of conventional wisdom, though not scarce in Shakespeare, can get underplayed here in lieu of Friar Lawrence’s seeming altruism. Both fools, Juliet and Romeo, look to the “good nurse,” “honey nurse,” and “dear nurse” for direction, against whose unparalleled sympathy Friar Lawrence’s long and philosophical speeches hold no value for either of the star-crossed lovers. “I’ll give thee armor to keep off that word, / Adversity’s sweet milk, philosophy, / To comfort thee [. . .]” (3.3.57-59), says Friar Lawrence to Romeo, where Romeo’s response, “[. . .] Hang up philosophy. / Unless philosophy make a Juliet” (3.3.60-61), underlines the lover’s disinterest. The Friar’s ceremoniously prolix teachings, which get dismissed by the Nurse’s laconic “O, what learning is!” (3.3.170) that follows the Friar’s passive advice to Romeo, pales in comparison to the Nurse’s active movement throughout the play. Risking being there at all, the Nurse gives Romeo Juliet’s ring, a memento from Juliet, which does more for Romeo than words, words, words. Romeo’s “How well my comfort is revived by this!” (3.3.175), as if looking forward to Juliet’s “Well, thou hast comforted me marvelous much” (3.5.242), are spoken both to the Nurse at different occasions to highlight the Nurse’s function as not one of savior from death, but of caregiver. In Shakespeare and Dostoevsky, the fool does not save, but guides. The

female fool guides and comforts. The Nurse is someone, who, like the audience, already knows the outcome of this story, but who nonetheless gives the young fools what they desperately need—nourishment, protection, counsel, strength, and care. In other words—love.

Licensed to Mock: Nastasia in Crime and Punishment

Shakespeare's intelligent and witty servant who doubles as fool did not escape Dostoevsky's view, as he came across the type in his favorite Shakespearean tragedies. But in Dostoevsky, humor and jest is more often a character trait of the male fool than the female fool. Like in Shakespeare, in Dostoevsky also, the servant is not necessarily a fool figure.[177] The cook, Nastasia Petrovna, in the building where Raskolnikov rents his tiny apartment, is Dostoevsky's most Shakespearean female-fool-servant character. Like the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet*, Nastasia is known by her first name, which is unusual for a character in Dostoevsky. Nastasia treats Raskolnikov like a foolish youth, but still continues to take care of him despite the landlady's disapproval. After bringing him cabbage soup, a peasant food, instead of sausage, the two have a conversation about the landlady's grievances against Raskolnikov at the police station for failing to pay his rent. Raskolnikov's decisive solitude and unwillingness to speak to anyone, including to the members of his own family and his

[177] The female servant of the Karamazov household, Marfa Ignatievna, for instance, is said to be "not a foolish [glupaia] woman" (BK, 87), but is far more intelligent than her husband, Grigorii, who is, in fact, described as the "foolish [glupyi]" one in the relationship (BK, 17). Marfa nurses Smerdiakov upon finding him in the bathhouse next to his holy fool mother, and nurses him, in addition to being a second mother to her child-like husband. Dostoevsky's choice in her name, "Marfa," meaning, "master" is a testament to her having the upper hand in marriage. While Marfa is simple, resilient, yet quiet, but also, caring, she does not fit within the pattern of Dostoevsky's holy fools whose character traits share in the archetype.

close friend, get lifted when around Nastasia. “Of course she’s a fool [*dura-to ona dura*],” Nastasia agrees with Raskolnikov, referring to the landlady, “and so am I, and you’re very clever—but in that case, why do you lie here like a sack, with nothing to show for your cleverness?” (*CP*, 24). The cook’s short questions that Raskolnikov willingly continues to respond to form a humorous exchange, reveal the absurdity of the role Raskolnikov adopted. Their playful conversation recalls Hamlet’s dialogue with the gravedigger, where Hamlet gets outwitted by the clever fool:

> NASTASIA: “You say you used to go and teach children; why do you do nothing now?”
> RASKOLNIKOV: “I am doing . . . ” [. . .]
> NASTASIA: “What?”
> RASKOLNIKOV: “Work . . . ”
> NASTASIA: “What sort of work?”
> RASKOLNIKOV: “Thinking,” [. . .]
> NARRATOR: Nastasia fairly shook with laughter. She was one of those laughing ones, and when anything amused her, her whole body shook and quivered with noiseless mirth until she almost choked.
> NASTASIA: “Well, and have you thought up how to get a lot of money?”
> RASKOLNIKOV: “I can’t teach children when I have no boots. Besides, I despise the whole business.”
> NASTASIA: “It’s no good quarreling with your bread and butter.”
> RASKOLNIKOV: “Teaching children is very badly paid. What can you do with a few kopeks?” [. . .]
> NASTASIA: “I suppose you want a fortune straight off?”
> NARRATOR: He looked at her strangely and paused for a moment.
> RASKOLNIKOV: “Yes, I do,” [. . .]
> NASTASIA: “Well, you’d better go slow, or you’ll frighten me; in fact I’m frightened already. Am I to go for the load or not?

A figure of laughter and mirth, Nastasia Petrovna, who shares her patronymic with the buffoon-like detective, Porfirii Petrovich, is also Raskolnikov’s voluntary caregiver, the troubled young man’s *petra*—rock. Nastasia’s first name, short for Anastasia, meaning, “resurrection,” signals to the reader that this fool is yet another trigger on the path to

Raskolnikov's possible regeneration that Dostoevsky has in store for his schismatic intellectual.

Nastasia's every appearance in the novel and her literal entrance into Raskolnikov's infernal lair where his harmful theories are born, are often presented in a symbolic manner. She is there either as a bringer of soup or water, which in Dostoevsky is a life-giving force, or as an uncalled-, but yearned-for conversation partner. Although differing in her mannerisms from Dostoevsky's other female fools, Nastasia is a female holy fool who participates in the sacred and in an act of charity: "At this hour, when the weather was clear, the sunlight always fell in a long streak across the right-hand wall of his room and lit up the corner near the door. Near his bed stood Nastasia" (99). Angelic Nastasia whom Raskolnikov often finds by his bedside, is associated with the sun and light, emblematic of a form of sacralization in the novel's pagan and Christian themes. The descriptions of Raskolnikov's moments of delirium in his room always entail Nastasia's presence. A similar diffusive lens is implemented in *The Idiot* involving a raskolnikovian character, Ippolit and his dreamlike states after his feverish confession. The details include Ippolit's story about his nightmarish dream or vision of a reptile-like creature with a trident-like tail whom his dog, Norma, kills to save the young Ippolit, but is herself mortally wounded. "Here I woke up and the prince came in," says Ippolit (*Idiot*, 391). The double motif of reptile-Ippolit and Norma-Prince Myshkin chooses the logic of parable and the dreaming and waking worlds to reinforce the analogy of Christlike self-sacrifice and the evils of purely theoretical knowledge, which both nihilistic characters, Raskolnikov and Ippolit, espouse. Ippolit is awakened by Myshkin, while Raskolnikov is awakened by Nastasia.

Her wit and care place Nastasia in the company of the gravedigger-clown in *Hamlet* and the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet* simultaneously, and her sudden appearances in Raskolnikov's immediate range of vision and hearing recall the Porter in *Macbeth*. Dostoevsky read and loved *Macbeth*, and in 1846, his *Poor Folk* appeared in Nekrasov's *Petersburg Collection* [*Peterburgskii sbornik*] along with A.I. Kroneberg's translation of the play. Raskolnikov's delirious dreams as continuities of his waking life get interrupted by Nastasia. One such instance, where guilt comes knocking louder and louder is in the form of a "strange idea" Raskolnikov gets, where he surmises that "perhaps all his clothes were soaked and stained with blood and he could not see it because his mental powers were failing and crumbling away . . . his mind was clouded" (*CP*, 76-77). What follows is, "[f]inally he was awakened by a loud knocking on his door" (77). The scene determinedly persists the notion of conscience as an externalized agent: "'Open the door! You're not dead, are you? He's always fast asleep!' cried Nastasia, beating on the door with her fist. 'Lying there fast asleep all day like a dog! A dog, that's what he is! Open the door, can't you?'" (77). Nastasia is there with the doorman, but it is not the doorman who is doing the knocking. The two, however, stand outside Raskolnikov's door as one entity, like the Nurse paired with Peter, and are viewed as a doubled compilation: "He was right; the doorman [*dvornik*] was there with Nastasia" (77). Dostoevsky's decision in not calling the doorman a porter (*privratnik* in Kroneberg's translation of "Porter" in *Macbeth*'s) shows Dostoevsky's deep understanding of the Porter's function in *Macbeth*. The doorman cannot be a "Porter"—that function belongs to Nastasia. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, like Raskolnikov, hear a constant knocking that are amplified as educed voices from the subconscious. The stage direction, "*Knocking*

within. Enter a Porter" is preceded by Macbeth's "To know my deed 'twere best not know myself. *Knock*" (*Macbeth*, 2.2.93). To open or not to open is Raskolnikov's deliberation that reaches a decision of "Better open it! Damnation! . . . " (78) as if he were being summoned to hell, a reference to the Porter's "If a man were / porter of hell gate, he should have old turning the / key. (*Knock.*)" (2.3.1-3). The act of opening the door to a summons from the police department is a simulation of Raskolnikov's uninhibited attitude toward Nastasia, as he often relies on her discernment: "'Nastasia, why don't you say something?' he asked at last hesitantly, in a weak voice" (98). This dialogue between them looks back to the codependence of blood and knocking in *Macbeth*:

> 'It's the blood,' she answered at last quietly, as if she were talking to herself.
> 'Blood! . . . What blood? . . . ' he mumbled. He had turned pale, and moved closer to the wall. Nastasia went on looking at him in silence.
> [. . .]
> 'Nobody came. It's your blood that makes a noise. [. . .] Are you going to have something to eat, eh?'
> He did not answer. Nastasia still stood near him, with her eyes fixed on him. (98)

Raskolnikov is not abandoned in yet another feverish episode of "anguish, such an intolerable feeling of limitless terror" (98). Nastasia had appeared, "Suddenly a bright light illuminated the room; Nastasia had come in with a candle and plate of soup," and this time, with nourishment linked to the Russian peasant and paganism: "She looked at him and, seeing that he was not asleep, put the candle on the table and began to set out the things she had brought, bread, salt, and a spoon, and the plate" (98). In Slavic cultures, the ceremonial bread and salt signifies prosperity, a traditional food combination that goes all the way back

to Slavic paganism as an offering to the gods.[178] The association of holy foolishness with ancient Slavic belief is a pattern in Dostoevsky that has to do with his veneration of the Russian peasant whose "truth" for Dostoevsky was superior to the intellectual's well-argued rational truth. "Give me a drink . . . dear Nastasia" is Raskolnikov's way of clinging onto that simple "truth" concealed within him (99). He is less hesitant in drinking the water Nastasia fetches him than he is when Porfirii admonishes him to drink water. When Nastasia comes back with water in a "white earthenware mug," of which he only swallows a few drops and spills the rest on his chest, he hardly knows why he agreed to drink the water. The episode is followed by "complete unconsciousness" (99), signifying Raskolnikov's unwillingness to accept the holy fool's "truth." Within the Macbethesque themes of blood, tincture, and knocks, Dostoevsky makes sure the reader does not lose sight of the non-Shakespearean in his fool.

"Mad" Laughter: Nastasia Filippovna in The Idiot

The abstention of Shakespeare's fools (widowed, unmarried, asexual) is analogous to the celibacy of Dostoevsky's fools, or in some cases, their deemphasized sexual identity. In nineteenth-century Russia questions around gender-ambiguity were largely informed and influenced by Hegelian dialectics and Populist theories, the focus of which was the whole and its (oppositional) parts. Dostoevsky's contemporary critic and philosopher, Nikolai

[178] See Elena V. Levkievskaia, *Mify russkogo naroda* [Myths of the Russian People], ed. by A.Iu. Golosovkaia (ACT, 2010). In one tale, a peasant, according to the known tradition, wraps bread and salt in a woman's new shirt, and ties it with a red ribbon after which he takes the bundle to the crossroads in the forest and asks the female spirits [rusalki]:
Прошу вас, русалки,
Мой дар примите,
А скотинку возвратите. [I beg you, rusalkas, / Receive my gift, / And return the cattle.]

Mikhailovsky, wrote about hermaphroditism as an analog to the Russian peasant commune, *obshchina*, or as he saw it, the Russian *narod*'s lost totality.[179] Mikhailovsky illustrates this idea by referring to the story of hermaphrodites in Plato's *Symposium*, who as punishment were separated into two halves, a man and a woman, deemed to forever seek their lost integrality.[180] Mikhailovsky applies his general idea of totality to his commentary of various Russian writers and physiologists, including Dostoevsky, as criticism of these writers' view of the woman as a separate, unequal, and "degenerate" [*urod*] entity. In his famous piece on Dostoevsky, entitled, "Cruel Talent," Mikhailovsky criticizes the novelist: "'Crime and Punishment,' 'Idiot,' 'Demons' are overflowing with all sorts of rarities, exceptional phenomena, eccentrics."[181] Mikhailovsky's problem with Dostoevsky's female eccentrics is that even though Dostoevsky was occupied with them his whole life, he did not develop them. Mikhailovsky's preoccupation with pathologist and physiologist, Il'ia Mechnikov's misogynistic theories of the woman as an *urod*, made him biased toward Dostoevsky's craft in the holy fool's subtleties and literary sub-categories. Mikhailovsky judges Dostoevsky by

[179] See N.K. Mikhailovsky, *Literaturnie vospominaniia i sovremennaia smuta*. Tom I. PSS.
Aside from Mikhailovksky's ideas which influenced Russian thought, including Dostoevsky's, in the literary scene of the 1840s, Slavophiles Alexei Khomiakov, Ivan Kireevsky, and Konstantin Aksakov had their influence on major Russian literary figures of the time, including Dostoevsky who avidly read Aksakov's Slavophile magazine Den'. Sara Hudspith, *Dostoevsky and the Idea of Russianness* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 9 provides a thorough explication of Dostoevsky's ideological position with regard to the Slavophile movement in the context of nineteenth-century hubbub of Petersburg intellectual life and in relation to Dostoevsky's (and his brother Mikhail's) magazines, *Vremia* and *Epokha*. Hudspith quotes Aksakov's views on *obshchina*, "There is such a people [*narod*], who even before the advent of Christianity held society as a principle, a principle which it then sanctified through the acceptance of Christianity. That people is the Russian people, who from time immemorial had integrated the lofty idea of the commune. This is why it accepted Christianity so profoundly in its soul and is totally permeated by it" that show the idealization of a unified community, the manifestation of which in the current society was the hope of many Slavophiles and also of Dostoevsky.
[180] *Ibid*., (also quoted in Walicki, 264).
[181] N.K. Mikhailovsky, "Zhestokii talant," in *Literaturno-kriticheskie stat'i,* PSS.

the same token as he does the physiologist who experimented on several women whom he considered *urody*. Mikhailovsky's vexation of Mechnikov's view is that the physiologist saw women as the lesser halves of the lost totality, a limited perspective, which Mechnikov disguised as a "genuine concern" for the "degenerate" half. Thus, the physiologist desired to fix this degenerate-woman-half-creature. Here, for instance, Mikhailovsky's irritation with Mechnikov is at its peak:

> [. . .] Mr. Mechnikov, under the banner of science, is hastily picking suitable and unsuitable objects, not always heeding objections, unnecessarily cutting corners, and not even clearly realizing why he takes this or that step. Everything, everything, everything for her—for science! Everything, even that which science itself has acknowledged to serve—the human happiness. It is said that female nature is an obstacle on the road. It is very simple: we ought to remove her from the road.[182]

What Mikhailovsky did not want to acknowledge is that his and Dostoevsky's ideas on hermaphroditism were more complementary than he had ever realized. They were both attracted to the cult of dualistic personality, the notion that the halves are in constant disaccord. In Dostoevsky, dualism is most prominently featured in the totality of the doubling fools—meek and predatory—where the female fool is not "an obstacle on the road," but the road itself.

Mikhailovsky's discontent with Dostoevsky's portrayal of his female characters is marked with contempt particularly toward, what Mikhailovsky calls, Dostoevsky's "strange type of imperiously cruel, eccentric, but charming woman" ("Cruel Talent"). Mikhailovsky has in mind, characters like, Nastasia Filippovna in *The Idiot*, and Grushenka in *The Brothers*

[182] Ibid., "V odnoi iz tolstovskikh kolonii.—Iz proshlago i nastoiashchago gr. L.N. Tolstogo.—*Polemika s nim I.I. Mechnikova*, 1892, ianvar'" in *Literaturnie vospominaniia i sovremennaia smuta*. Tom I. PSS.

Karamazov, his grievance being Dostoevsky's stagnation in this type's development. Dostoevsky's preoccupation was not with developing the type per se, but the function of his own literary version of holy foolishness. "Madwoman" is a label the cruel and confident female character gets. Mad-seeming characters like Nastasia Filippovna, Mar'ia Lebiadkina, the lame woman in *Demons*, or Liza Khokhlakova, the young girl on the wheelchair in *The Brothers*, whom Victor Terras considers as Ivan Karamazov's mischievous double[183] but who is also attracted to Aliosha Karamazov's goodness,[184] like Dostoevsky's earlier female fools, are consecrated in spite of their visible "profanity." The onomastics alone of these specific "mad" types are a conspicuous gesture toward sacralization.

Aside from their conventionally Dostoevskian names, these mad-seeming and lofty heroines all share an aspect that others exploit as a basis of their accusations—laughter. Laughter is a phenomenon easily attributed to the fool, but it also, as Bakhtin notes, was thought to be evil:

> [L]aughter in the Middle Ages remained outside all official spheres of ideology and outside all official strict forms of social relations. Laughter was eliminated from religious cult, from feudal and state ceremonials, etiquette, and from all the genres of high speculation. [. . .] The very contents of medieval ideology—asceticism, somber providentialism, sin, atonement, suffering, [. . .] all these elements determined this tone of icy petrified seriousness. (*Rabelais and His World*, 73)

Laughter as a phenomenon has not been subject to the same rebuke in lower classes, as it has among the nobility. Maids like Nastasia, who takes care of Raskolnikov, or the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet*, could get away with laughter without much scrutiny. In Russia, the

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[183] See Victor Terras, A Karamazov Companion: Commentary on the Genesis, Language, and Style of Dostoevsky's Novel (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1981), 55.
[184] William Rowe, "*Crime and Punishment* and *The Brothers Karamazov*: some comparative observations" in Russian Literature Triquarterly 10 (1975): 331-42, talks about triads in Dostoevsky, and specifically refers to the Ivan-Liza-Aliosha triad as a "triplicity."

antagonistic attitude toward laughter has a long history that goes back to its most revered Church Fathers: "Early Christianity had already condemned laughter. Tertullian, Cyprian, and John Chrysostom preached against ancient spectacles, especially against the mime and the mime's jests and laughter. John Chrysostom declared that jests and laughter are not from God but from the devil" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais*, 73). High society's serious tenor condemned laughter, especially a woman's laughter. Nastasia Filippovna's laughter, like Mar'ia Lebiadkina's, for instance, laughter, is amplified in a biased narration which capitalizes on and heightens what society perceives as deviant behavior.[185] In *Demons*, while it is Stavrogin who leads a wild life and is often caught in sudden and shocking acts of violence, it is Mar'ia Lebiadkina whom society labels as an "ecstatic idiot" and "madwoman." Intuitively privy to Stavrogin's destructive acts, like the fools who laugh to the major's face in the *Dead House*, Mar'ia Lebiadkina "was laughing loudly in his face" (*Demons*, 273), calling him an impostor inside the "sooty walls" of her cell-like room (156). The carnivalesque trick has more success in the *Dead House*, where certain fool-convicts have license to subvert categories, but in *Demons*, such behavior gets the female fool murdered. Gender norms accentuate the tension between using laughter instrumentally as a gateway to the license of fool and enduring animosity toward laughter.

Nastasia Filippovna's three major public appearances in *The Idiot*—at the Ivolgins', at her birthday party, and at the altar—are ornamented with laughter, Shakespearean

[185] Robin Feuer Miller, in her *Dostoevsky and The Idiot* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), masterfully explicates the narrator's biases and the reader's shifting response toward categories and labels in The Idiot. For instance, Feuer Miller shows the narrator often expresses the view that Prince Myshkin is an idiot, a category Myshkin rejects continuously, while other characters either welcome or are unsure about.

mechanicals who follow her around, and ugly truths which discomfort her much refined audiences. Like Prince Myshkin, who keeps company with clown-like figures, Nastasia Filippovna has her own entourage of fools that is Rogozhin's retinue. In the scene where the rowdy group arrives to Nastasia Filippovna's birthday party, it is clear that Rogozhin, who "marched in ahead of them all," is their current leader (181). But following Nastasia Filippovna's masterful performance and circuitous games designed to unmask her guests' hypocrisies and especially, her guardian, Afanasii Totskii's past abuse of her, Nastasia Filippovna wins herself the role of the lead fool: "Above all, and God knows why, [Rogozhin and his company] felt cowardly towards Nastasia Filippovna" (181). The present fools do not take the Queen Fool's performance for granted, and Rogozhin is voluntarily demoted. He is rather joyful about his new role and "circle[s] around Nastasia Filippovna" like a junior jester (193). In a world where masculine and feminine identities are more tightly controlled and policed, Nastasia Filippovna's reversal of accepted gender norms and unnatural embodiment of, or rather, transgression into the masculine—her as speaker, judge, and fool, where the non-fool male characters are as listeners, defendants, and audience—is not entirely successful. General exclamations like "This is a real madhouse!" (187) or "It's bedlam, bedlam!" (192) that are supposed to extend to every guest at the house who has been shown to be a social deviant, are, nonetheless, directed at the "colorful woman," Totskii's label for Nastasia Filippovna (195), who "seemed to be in a frenzy" (192) and "[Who's] mad, isn't

she? Isn't she mad?" (195). Nastasia Filippovna confronts an old problem Dostoevsky highlights: The male as fool is more successful than the female as fool.[186]

As the promiscuous woman of *The Idiot*, Nastasia Filippovna, who as a child was robbed of her innocence in an abusive affair with Totskii, whom she refers to as a "love[r] of babies" (191), has already been ascribed a role. The highly speculative society to which she has arrived with a mission, tries to pawn her, like Shakespeare's Juliet, to the highest bidder. Her first physical appearance in the novel, in terms of creating a shock, is parallel to Myshkin's arrival in St. Petersburg's nobility circles: "[It] was a most strange and bothersome surprise for them all" (*Idiot*, 125). The suddenness of the spectacle recalls the medieval holy fools, who after wandering for long periods outside society, would later return and cause uproar through their shocking behavior. This is a pattern in holy fools that has been seen as partially influenced by Greek Cynicism.[187] Surprise is also an element in the clown's bag of tricks, who relies on the audience's reaction for the trick to work. The novel sets up Nastasia Filippovna's performances in terms of theatricals. Like a fool-actor on the stage, she is physically detached from her audience by a curtain; for instance, "As soon as the door curtain was raised and he saw Nastasia Filippovna" and "Nastasia Filippovna's maids, also came running and watched form under the raised door curtain with deep amazement and fear" (182; 183). The curtain isolates, conceals, and reveals, and in this case, it also officiates

[186] Although not on the topic of gender and clowning, see Katie Sutton's *The Masculine Woman in Weimar Germany* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011) for a complementary lens on women, sexual identity, and sexual perversion as a point of fascination and rejection. Sutton calls attention to the fact that by contrast, the discourse on the "feminine man," was much less prominent in Weimar Germany.

[187] Ivanov, *Holy Fools in Byzantium and Beyond*, 16, mentions the fact that hagiographers paid special attention to the "cynical" aspect of the holy fool's behavior.

Nastasia Filippovna's role as a fool within a theatrical space.[188] The curtain that is the "threshold" [*porog*], a physical and metaphoric space of in-betweenness and *translatio* in Dostoevsky, associated prominently with Dostoevsky's holy fools, is pertinent to the notion of dualism in his novels.

Within the triad Myshkin-Rogozhin-Nastasia, Nastasia Filippovna transitions between three masks, or three starkly different dispositions. She is the masterful actor among the three, the feigning and laughing fool who is aware at all times of her performance and has willingly dominated the performance, the audience of which she is determined to shame even to her own detriment. Like Hamlet, if she is not laughing or jesting, then she is utterly serious and pensive. She has a "'crooked' smile" ("'*krivoiu*' *ulybkoi*" is a medical term related to paralysis), a facial expression associated with Dostoevsky's predatorial types, that in Dostoevsky is also a descriptor for harmful action or affair all of which utilize the adjective, "crooked" (*Idiot*, 616). Physical degeneration as a signifier for moral degeneration is a tricky aspect of Dostoevsky's fools that blurs the category lines. Nastasia Filippovna's dark features, piercing look, and crooked smile are all a form of "degenerative" or non-normative qualities that associate her with one of Dostoevsky's most nihilistic and malevolent characters, Nikolai Stavrogin in *Demons*, while her concealed innocence, is the other side of the coin. More immediately, although described as extremely beautiful, but eccentric in appearance, Nastasia Filippovna is likened to Parfën Rogozhin, who has "curly, almost black

[188] Foucault, in *Madness and Civilization*, writes about the evasiveness in speaking about madness in the "domain of literary and philosophic expression" of the fifteenth century and how "great pains are taken to ward it off" (42-43). The officialdom had made the world too calm, which, Foucault says, "readily yields its naïve mysteries to the eyes of the wise [wo]man, and the latter, by laughter, always keeps his [her] distance" (44).

hair [. . .] his thin lips were constantly twisting into a sort of impudent, mocking, and even malicious smile" (27). Nastasia Filippovna, is, at the same time, Myshkin's double, himself child-like, who defends the suffering female fool everyone thinks a madwoman: "She's . . . a child; now she's a child, a complete child! Oh, you don't know anything!" (605). Despite the narrator's efforts in drawing distinctive lines between the meek Myshkin and the mad Nastasia Filippovna, they are Dostoevskian holy fool types, who share the characteristics of the phenomenon. External "degeneration," meaning, "degeneration" independent of moral constitution, in Dostoevsky, as a type of profanity, is not a hindrance, but a necessary attribute of Dostoevsky's holy fools. Sonia Marmeladova's sexuality, for instance, is connected to the "profane" through her job as a prostitute, and at the same time, it is linked to her charity of saving a house full of starving adults and children. Sonia's "profanity," therefore, is a vessel through which the "sacred" shows itself.

Nastasia Filippovna's eccentric behavior and features are subjected to her society's gaze, which does not recognize as a holy fool type. It takes a fool to know a fool. Before Nastasia Filippovna and Myshkin meet, upon seeing her portrait, the prince focuses on her "marvelous [*udivitel'noe*] face," a word denoting surprise or shock, and the suffering on her face, which he immediately links to her fate (59). Nastasia Filippovna's face is as shock-inducing as her actions, and "her eyes, these two little bones, the two points under her eyes where the cheeks begin" (59) depict her face, like most of Dostoevsky's holy fools' faces, as emaciated and pale. Dostoevsky models her face after his favorite image, the dead Christ's

face in the tomb, whose suffering, as it were, is manifested on his cadaverous face.[189] During their first encounter, Myshkin lays claim to noetic knowledge, "I've also seen you somewhere [. . .] As if I've seen your eyes somewhere . . . but that can't be! I'm just . . . I've never even been here before. Maybe in a dream . . . " (127-28), which conjoins the two seemingly discordant characters. Nastasia Filippovna does not reject Myshkin's illogical assertions about knowing the "real" her. In fact, she welcomes them without laughter and mockery:

> Ten minutes later the prince was sitting beside Nastasia Filippovna, gazing at her without tearing his eyes away, and stroking her head [*golovke*] and face with both hands, like a little child. He laughed when she laughed and was ready to weep at her tears. He did not say anything, but listened to her fitful, rapturous, and incoherent babbling [*lepet*], hardly understood anything, but smiled quietly, and as soon as it seemed to him that she had begun to be anguished again, or to weep, or reproach, or complain, he would at once begin again t stroke her head [*golovke*] and tenderly pass his hands over her cheeks, comforting and reassuring her like a child. (595)

Dostoevsky's use of the diminutive for "head" and Nastasia Filippovna's "babbling" like a child, complicate her role as a "predatory" type in *The Idiot* and also effeminize Myshkin, as if giving him access to motherhood. Nastasia's character is at times almost indistinguishable from Myshkin's similar characterization throughout the novel. However familiar, their prescribed gender fluidities outline their functions. Myshkin's participation in the feminine makes him seem as caring and maternal, while Nastasia Filippovna's perceived masculinity is supposed to seem as self-lacerating. Nastasia Filippovna's propensity to care, unlike

[189] Dostoevsky was preoccupied with this image of suffering ever since he saw Holbein's painting, "The Body of the Dead Christ in the Tomb," that he and Anna Dostoevskaya saw on their way to Geneva, in Basel. Anna Dostoevskaya writes in her *Vospominaniia* [Reminiscences]: "His emaciated face, covered with bloody wounds, and his appearance was horrifying. The painting deeply impressed Fyodor Mikhailovich, and he stood in front of it as if astounded. I could not find the strength in me to continue looking at the painting [. . .] When I returned after fifteen or twenty minutes, I found Fyodor Mikhailovich in front of the same painting, as if chained to the spot."

Myshkin's, is selective in that she only shows empathy toward meek characters who deserve it and who are also outliers, like Myshkin or Nina Alexandrovna, but not toward those who wronged her, among whom she counts herself. She is, as the narrative informs, "for some reason [. . .] extremely fond of all such original little men and women, and even of holy fools" (163). Her and Myshkin's childlike nature, undefined duty or mission, pariah status, nervous ticks, and their sacrificial persona make them a Dostoevskian double—one masks her goodness and the other unwittingly overexposes it to a point of being perceived as an idiot and a holy fool. The profane and sacred thus act as transfusable phenomena where the profanation of sacralization is informed by its metathesis, sacralization of the profane.

Dostoevsky's fools, like Shakespeare's do not always live, but live on. Nastasia Filippovna's death almost always gets interpreted in terms of Myshkin's alleged inability or, as some scholars have called it, his "failure" to save her.[190] Christ-like, maternal, and holy foolish Myshkin's "job" description does not necessitate saving, but caring, truth-telling, and seeing better than others, which makes Myshkin a suffering and sacrificial figure. Of course, such unparallel goodness in the community in which he briefly lived, does not exactly meet its match. Hence, his demeanor is often seen as "mad" or "idiotic." Some of his key characteristics match Nastasia Filippovna's suffering and her desire to return to the state of innocence in her childhood. Nastasia Filippovna relates to the prince in her most candid

[190] Sarah J. Young, in Dostoevsky's *The Idiot and the Ethical Foundations of Narrative: Reading, Narrating, Scripting* (London: Anthem Press, 2004) considers Myshkin's "own failure" as "his inability to fulfill his self-appointed mission to save Nastasia Filippovna" (118), even though Myshkin never specifies such a "mission" in the novel. George Pattison's similar proclamation in "Existentialism and Religion" in The Bloomsbury Companion to Existentialism, ed. by, Felicity Joseph, et al. (New York: Bloomsbury, 2011): 117-37: "Myshkin has many Christ-like traits, but, again, he seems unable to save" (129), anticipates a happy ending to which Dostoevsky's novel endings do not conform.

moments—"So I really am a princess!" (189). Even if at times such gestures are sheathed in an air of mockery, they fall outside narrative attempts at insinuating the two characters' simulations. The main difference in these doubling fools' demeanor lies in their method of delivery, unfeigned versus feigned foolishness. Nastasia Filippovna's technique is more in line with Hamlet's, and also, Poor Tom's designs in *King Lear*, who believes and acts with "[r]eason in madness!" (4.6.193). In Dostoevsky, unlike "natural" folly, foolishness as a disguise is not an easily identifiable evoker of regeneration. In fact, according to the novel's cause and effect logic, it gets the female fool killed. By the same token, one could judge Poor Tom's performance in madness as lousy for not "saving" anyone (from death). Regeneration in Dostoevsky, as in Shakespeare, is the realization of a certain truth that the fool repeatedly tries to uncover from different angles. In *King Lear*, knowing is seeing better. In *The Idiot*, it is the knowledge and reverence of primeval purity, which an originary call, or "babbling" summons to a state of innocence.

Her first name "resurrection" (Nastasia), her patronymic "lover of horses" (Filippovna), and her last name "lamb" (Barashkova), are a series of nods to Dostoevsky's sacrificial, suffering, and regenerative female holy fool figure. Nastasia Filippovna's death echoes the death of another abused fool-like character, Marie, whom Myshkin knew from Switzerland and whose unconditional goodness and Christ-like sacrifice Myshkin, through his teachings, makes visible to the children who do not yet see it and who instead abuse Marie. Similar to Marie's little grave, which the children decorate with flowers, Nastasia Filippovna's bed and the entire room where the triad is reunited, is adorned with flowers. Myshkin barely makes out the outlines of her body, as the curtain that veils over the bed

faintly obscures the figure whose last performance Myshkin was not there to witness. Nastasia Filippovna's body is "covered from head to foot with a white sheet" (629), in Rogozhin's specification, with "oilcloth" (630), an image that recalls Christ's embalmed body covered with clean sheets.[191] As animated as her portrait, which first introduces Nastasia Filippovna to the audience, her dead body, as Myshkin observes, "sleeping [. . .] a completely motionless sleep" (629), is not presented in terms of a final end. Nastasia Filippovna's appearances in geographic corners of various rooms throughout the novel paint her as a strategically placed religious icon that lives on. Nastasia Filippovna's death, like that of Christ's, does not save anyone physically, but it is a viable representation of beauty, reconciliation, and comfort. Nastasia Filippovna's death brings the two opposing forces, Myshkin and Rogozhin to a single moment of brotherly embrace, where the disaccord coexists harmoniously. As Joseph Frank writes,

> Man has always displayed an unconditional need for beauty inseparable from his history; without it, as Dostoevsky poignantly suggests, he would perhaps not wish to go living at all. [. . .] there could be no question for Dostoevsky of bridging the gap between the real and the ideal merely by material means. [. . .] man 'lives most fully' in Dostoevsky's universe only when he is in disaccord with reality. (332)

The text does not prioritize the details of the murder, for it would otherwise give Rogozhin the agency of Nastasia Filippovna's death. The scene, instead, focuses on the functional and affective aspect of her "sleep," in order to constitute it as a form of conviction and resistance. Her death enables a re-generation of self-identity that has been de-generated by the abuse. In a prelapsarian model, as Myshkin returns to a state of "idiocy" back in Switzerland, so does Nastasia Filippovna, in death, return to her state of innocence, to the little village of Delight

[191] See John 19:40; Matthew 27:59.

[*Otradnoe*][192] where she had spent her childhood. She finally saves the child that needed saving. Judged by every character as the most beautiful person in the novel, Nastasia Filippovna realizes Myshkin's proverbial assertion, "Beauty will save the world"—her world.

"Mad" Song: Ophelia in Hamlet

Nastasia Filippovna's demeanor and fate make her Ophelia's prototype in *Hamlet*. Understanding the role and function of Dostoevsky's "mad" female fool provides a window into untangling Ophelia's complicated plight, a regressive technique which puts the onus of interpretation on Dostoevsky. Scrutinizing Ophelia's character runs the risk of retorting to a Hamlet-dominated analysis, and yet, the motif of doubles requires a look at dualistic pairs. Hamlet's games and riddles necessitate players, and Ophelia, however unfairly, is caught in a game which she either does not want to play, but does so to her doom, or, in hopes of helping Hamlet in his endeavor, sacrifices herself for his mission. Either way, Ophelia is a victim. In Saxo Grammaticus, Shakespeare's source story, Ophelia is the unnamed "fair woman" whose role in Shakespeare, according to Piotr Sadowski, is much more dynamic "mainly due to the transformation of the girl's character into a weak if decent static that is Ophelia" (148).[193] A framework that at the onset categorizes Ophelia as a "decent static" figure is determined to see her as a stock character of sorts—the daughter abused by a bully father and an unaffectionate intended. The myriads of paintings, John Everett Millias's "Ophelia" being

[192] The village's name, Otradnoe, can also be translated as "Comfort."
[193] See Piotr Sadowski, Dynamism of Character in Shakespeare's Mature Tragedies (Cranbury: Rosemont Publishing & Printing Corp., 2003).

remarkably germane, depict Ophelia as a nymph, floating on water, or as a saint-like creature. As Barker asserts,

> When critics return to Shakespeare's playtext in search of a more complex and coherent portrait of feminine identity, they often find only masculinist constructions of frail and passive womanhood. In most representations, Ophelia remains the epitome of Luce Irigaray's 'virginal woman,' who in and of herself simply 'does not exist.' (29)[194]

Ophelia, a victim of masculine culture, is also much more than that.

In Saxo, Ophelia's prototype, like Amleth, puts on a guise, and later proves to be Amleth's ally. Ophelia is the only one other than Horatio who is entrusted with marking Claudius's reaction to the play-within-the-play. "I'll mark the / play," (*Hamlet*, 3.2.168-69) Ophelia tells Hamlet after their sour dialogue where the prince advises her to go to a nunnery. The encounter follows Hamlet's famous "To be or not to be" speech, which is a long list of conjunctive scenarios that are part of Hamlet's antics in persuading Claudius and Polonius, whom he suspects in eavesdropping, that he is indeed mad. Hamlet's proclamation to Ophelia about her father, "Let the doors be shut upon him he may / play the fool nowhere but in 's own house" (3.1.143-44) is an indication that Hamlet would rather Polonius fool around there and not here, and implies that the prince might have reservations about believing that he and Ophelia are alone in the room. Ophelia's responses to Hamlet's accusations until this point in the scene are calm in tone, and only after Hamlet's hint that they are being watched, does Ophelia once more embrace the notion of Hamlet's madness. In this vein, Hamlet's "God hath given you one face, and you / make yourself another"

[194] For different constructions of Ophelia in performance and scholarly criticism, see Roberta Barker, Early Modern Tragedy, Gender and Performance 1984-2000 (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

(3.1.155-56) does not have to be seen as an allegation but warning, that Ophelia must now wear the mask of disguise. Ophelia's sudden and laconic exclamations, "Heavenly powers restore him!" and "O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!" (3.1.153; 161) make use of the exclamation point, which her responses do not otherwise utilize, a grammatical technique in Shakespeare that underscores the insincerity of the spoken lines.[195] Ophelia is also equally animated when she first hastens to tell Polonius of Hamlet's "madness": "O, my lord, my lord, I have been so affrighted!" (2.1.85). The series of Ophelia's cued reactions open up the possibility of Ophelia's complicity in Hamlet's schemes.

Interpretations that insist or resist Ophelia's autonomy are also largely influenced by stage performances of the role. In Dostoevsky, the narrative voice lifts some of the labor in emphasizing the parallels between dualistic pairs. Doubling fools often mimic each other; for instance, Myshkin's laughter is conditioned by Nastasia Filippovna's laughter: "When she laughed, he also smiled" (*Idiot*, 124) or "He laughed when she laughed" (595). The narration is also tasked with underscoring nuances that the dialogue does not necessarily render. Nastasia Filippovna's confident personality and disguise are made clearer through the narrative voice: "Nastasia Filippovna looked him up and down with a mocking and haughty glance" (137); "and the mockery remained as if forcedly on her face" (140); "this was a

[195] Excited rhetoric, replete with exclamation points, are abundant in Shakespeare. The Capulet scene of grief in Romeo and Juliet, for instance, while meant to be comedic, reveals something unsettling about the nature of the grieving characters. The Nurse who finds the unconscious Juliet first, perhaps suspects something is at play. Capulet and Lady Capulet mimic the Nurse's outcries in a histrionic manner. The Nurse reveals the Capulets' hypocrisy and their neglect of Juliet, in how ready they are to immediately accept Juliet's death. The musician's comment, "Faith, we may put up our pipes and be gone," (4.5.102) further reveals the ridiculousness of their histrionic reaction to Juliet's death.

completely different character from before, that is, not something timid, uncertain" (65). Ophelia's obedient responses to her brother, father, and other authority figures in the play, who focus on her chastity, depending on their delivery on the stage, can influence the audience's perception of her. Frances Barber, who played Ophelia in an RSC production of *Hamlet* in 1984, writes about her delivery of the line, "Madam, I wish it may," which is a reply to Gertrude's "And for your part, Ophelia, I do wish / That your good beauties be the happy cause / Of Hamlet's wildness" (*Hamlet*, 3.1.42-44):

> I emphasized the 'I,' causing the director to groan each time the scene was played. I was desperate to indicate that the only reason she had agreed to participate in the encounter set up by Polonius was to help Hamlet, hence, *I* wish it may reassemble his wandering mind, as well as the queen. (*Players of Shakespeare*, 142; qtd. in Barker 30).

Barker interprets Baker's emphasis of the "I" thus: "Barber *locat[ing]* an I: a self-willed subject behind the maidenly exterior sketched by her tightly laced gown and primly dressed hair" (30-31). Through her performance, Barber establishes an Ophelia who is continuously defying her position as a demure daughter and a coy court member. Barber's curtsies become increasingly curt during her performance, and her claims to obedience are more angrily delivered. A few productions portray Ophelia dressed in something other than white. The white gown as a directorial choice, which is not a specification in Shakespeare's text, is supposed to mirror her angelic character. Helen Mirren, in the RSC production of *Hamlet* in 1970 and Anastasia Vertinskaia in Kozintsev's 1964 film appearing in black—Hamlet's choice of color—is "Ophelia's usurpation of Hamlet's theatrical dominance" (Barker 41). Every character, save Hamlet, perpetuates the constructed version of virginal Ophelia. Repetitions in Shakespeare either affirm reality or suggest absurdity. Laertes advises Ophelia

not to open up her "chaste treasure" (1.3.35) to Hamlet, and after hear death, insists on Ophelia's angelic status: "And from her fair and unpolluted flesh / May violets spring! / [. . .] A minist'ring angel shall my sister be" (249-50; 251). Hamlet's surprised reaction to Laertes's characterization of Ophelia as an angel, "What, the fair Ophelia?" (5.1.253) is a double entendre, which reveals to Hamlet that it is Ophelia who is being buried, and, within the play's scaffolding of the notion of "seemliness," it also suggests the absurdity of Laertes's vision of his sister.

In Hamlet's absence, Ophelia's role as a fool is foregrounded. A starkly different character appears in Act 4, whose entrance in modernized texts differs in its varied renditions: *Enter Ophelia mad, [her hair down, with a lute]* or simply, *Enter Ophelia distracted*. In Q1, or the Bad Quarto, as it is known, the stage direction, which does not categorize Ophelia as a madwoman, reads, *Enter Ophelia playing on a Lute, and her haire downe singing*. Deanne Williams defends the 1603 version of the play, calling attention to the recently growing scholarly interest in Q1, which, she says, is full of "energy and verve." Williams writes, "With a title page that promotes its association with Shakespeare, [. . .] Q1 has been considered close to Shakespeare's company ever since its rediscovery in 1823."[196] Scholars have also regarded this scene as Ophelia's moment to shine.[197] Ophelia's choice in hairstyle, down and free, rather than properly curled and pinned to her head as is befitting a noblewoman, has been seen as reflective of her constitution—madness. Ophelia's freely floating hair, however, might also signify her taking charge against being confined to a

[196] See Diane Williams, *Shakespeare and the Performance of Girlhood* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).
[197] Howard Staunton writes, "the quaint direction of the quarto, 1603, . . . indicates the manner in which the author himself designed that [Ophelia] should appear in this her greatest scene" (qtd. in ibid).

consecrated image other characters laboriously constructed for her. Ophelia sings and plays the lute, actions which are traditionally performed by the jester. Her *Hey non nonny*[198] song is meant to be playful and non-dramatic: "Similar to *hey diddle diddle* and *hey derry down*, *hey nonny nonny* are nonsense words to English folk songs dating back to the Elizabethan era. Such songs were typically performed by dancing jesters" (*Magic Words*, 78).[199] The first words Ophelia speaks are to Gertrude, "Where is the beauteous Majesty of Denmark?" (4.5.26), a remark, which shifts the lens that long policed Ophelia's appearance and mannerisms to the Queen. Ophelia, like Hamlet, participates in the function of the fool as a truth-speaker, truth-seeker, and agitator, all of which threaten to topple down the officialdom's carefully contrived walls.

The double meaning of Ophelia's songs generate discomfort and pique her listeners' curiosity, as each of the songs prompts questions: "Gertrude: How now, Ophelia?" (*Hamlet*, 4.5.27); "Gertrude: Alas, sweet lady, what imports this song?" "King: How do you, pretty lady?" (4.5.46). According to Robert Hornback, "Artificial fools often make outrageous claims that bait their listeners into saying, 'How prove you that?' 'Derive this; come,' or "Tell me thy reason,' so that they may take on the persona of a logician" (171n65).[200] Ophelia does not only present herself as a "logician," but as a teacher, heeding her audiences to "Pray you, mark" and "remember," pointers that are often utilized by characters like

[198] Balthasar, the fool, sings the Hey nonny nonny song and in Much Ado About Nothing, the Jailer's Daughter, who indicates she is a fool, "The sun has seen my folly" (3.4.3), incorporates the song in her speech, which has its own scene where no one else speaks or is present, is as if a separate performance for the audiences.
[199] See Craig Conley, *Magic Words: A Dictionary* (San Francisco: Weiser Books, 2008).
[200] See Robert Hornback, *The English Clown Tradition: from the Middle Ages to Shakespeare* (New York: D.S. Brewer, 2009).

Hamlet, his father, and the gravedigger, whose purpose is to reveal rather than conceal. Ophelia's first song,

> *How should I your true love know*
> *From another one?*
> *By his cockle hat and staff*
> *And his scandal shoon*. (4.5.28-31)

is the song version of "Mousetrap," which was designed to "catch the conscience" of the monarch. "Cockle hat and staff" is a parody of the king's crown and scepter that belonged to Gertrude's "true love," which is either Claudius or Hamlet senior, a choice in a lover Ophelia presents in the form of a question. The song is an old ballad about the Greyfriars, and the cockle hat is a pilgrim's hat.[201] The Ghost, unlike Claudius, resembles a wandering and begging friar. Ophelia might also be referring to Hamlet as her "true love," with a "cockle hat and staff," symbolic of the fool's coxcomb and bobble that Hamlet metaphorically appropriates. Hamlet does refer to himself as a beggar, "Beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks" (2.2.293). However "outrageous" a fool's claims seem, as Claudius says of Hamlet's madness, "There's matter in these sighs" (4.1.1), there is also matter in Ophelia's songs, which are too refined to be considered frenzied utterances. Claudius's "Follow her close; give her good watch, I pray you" (4.5.79) parallels his equal distrust for Hamlet's madness. Laertes, however, the only one oblivious to most subtleties in the play, dismisses Ophelia's encoded songs and symbolic, flower-giving gesture. Like the narrator in *The Idiot* who

[201] *The Wordsworth Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* (Based on the original book by Ebenezer Cobham Brewer) (Ware, Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Ltd, 2001) defines "Cockle hat" as "A pilgrim's hat especially the hat of a pilgrim to the shrine of St. James of Compostella, in Spain: his symbol was really a scallop-shell, but the word cockle was more usually applied to it" (265). The cockle hat reference appears in Two Noble Kinsmen, where the Jailer's Daughter, another mad-seeming daughter who almost drowns herself, is in the role of the wise fool. It is also twice mentioned by Berowne in Love's Labor's Lost, who is known for his mockery and linguistic wit.

readily categorizes Myshkin as an "idiot," Laertes immediately diagnoses Ophelia: "A document in madness" (4.5.202).

In both Shakespeare and Dostoevsky, the fool is anti-institutional, and thus, does not conform to convention, whether it is conventional knowledge or "truth." The fool incessantly crosses over into different spaces, challenging fixed boundaries, including that of gender. By participating in the "traditionally masculine" and the "traditionally feminine," the fool occupies a space that is in itself a threshold. Hamlet beats himself up for being "frail" like a woman:

> Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave,
> That I, the son of a dear father murdered,
> Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,
> Must, like a whore, unpack my hear with words (2.2.611-14)[202]

And Ophelia is judged as "mad" for performing a male-dominated role. The tragic double, however, is aware that one of the archetypal features of the fool is that the fool does not have overtly sexual or marital attachments. If a marriage occurs, it is either off-stage, unsuccessful or cut too short due to the character's death. Hamlet jokes with Ophelia, "Or if thou wilt needs marry, / marry a fool" (3.1.149-50), possibly referring to himself. No matter how effectively others try to set Ophelia and Hamlet as a potential couple, the play resists this

[202] Shakespeare's contemporary, John Earle, in the section, in a section of his Microcosmography (1628) entitled, "An Affected Man," refers to the characteristics of a recognized type: "Is an extraordinary man in ordinary things. One that would go a strain beyond himself, and is taken in it. A man that overdoes all things with great solemnity of circumstance; and whereas with more negligence he might pass better, makes himself with a great deal of endeavor ridiculous. [. . .] Every action of his cries,— 'Do ye mark me?' and men do mark him how absurd he is." John W. Draper, in The Hamlet of Shakespeare's Audience (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1966), attributes Earle's description of "affected man" to Osric but interestingly, not to Hamlet, even though his descriptions more immediately can be applied to Hamlet and in more general terms, to the figure of the fool.

imposition. In his conversation with Hamlet, the gravedigger refuses to identify Ophelia, for whom he is digging a grave, in terms of gender binaries:

> HAMLET: What man dost thou dig it for?
> GRAVEDIGGER: For no man, sir.
> HAMLET: What woman then?
> GRAVEDIGGER: For none, neither. (5.1.133-36)

Shakespeare's England was not Dostoevsky's Russia, but both writers had at their disposal theories which influenced their take on dualism. Human anatomy as a window into understanding human behavior features in their designs of the fool. In sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England, contentions in medical art did not tread behind political and religious controversies. Elizabeth Lane Furdell notes that disputed medical theories were especially fierce between the followers of the Roman physiologist Galen and their rivals.[203] According to Sujata Iyengar,

> Although Vesalian dissection overthrew Galenic anatomy by the second half of the sixteenth century, Renaissance physicians took from Galen theories of temperament or *crasis* [. . .] his emphasis on bloodletting and on curing opposites (allopathy); [. . .] Galen also transmitted to the early moderns his anatomical development of the Platonic tripartite soul.[204]

As a duologue of archaic and novelistic forms, Shakespeare's wise fool, like Dostoevsky's holy fool, is a representation and mediator of oppositional forces, an encompassing integrality, who joggles issues that go beyond the immediate politics of the given work.

[203] See Elizabeth Lane Furdell, *Publishing and Medicine in Early Modern England* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2002).
[204] Sujata Iyengar, *Shakespeare's Medical Language: A Dictionary* (London: Bloomsbury, 2011).

Suffer the Children

Shakespeare and Dostoevsky's female fools are often represented as saviors, martyrs, or spiritual guides, a sacralization that in Dostoevsky assumes a more prominent role due to his belief in the Gospels. The female fools in Dostoevsky, like the meek male fools, are often portrayed as child-like. Dostoevsky's attunement to the suffering child and his high esteem for children, influenced by the Gospels, translated into his poetics of holy foolishness. As part of his motif of doubles, the female child who is paired with other adult female fools has something to teach. Sonia's half-sister, Polia, is one such character whose encounter with Raskolnikov holds more significance for him than he at first realizes. The two female fools, aside from their shared function, also have similar physical attributes: "Sonia was small, about eighteen years old, thin but quite pretty" (*CP*, 157) and Polia, with her "thin, but gentle little face" (161). The thinness of their faces signifies their suffering, which symbolizes the physical body of emaciated Christ carrying his cross. It also complements Raskolnikov's "thin figure" in the narrator's first physical description of him (2). Their physiologies as a mirror to their inner constitution is one of their binding principles. In his torn state, after helping the Marmeladov family with the last of his money, and conflicted by his act of goodwill, Raskolnikov rushes out of the apartment:

> He went down quietly, without hurry; he was in a fever again, but unconscious of the fact, and full of strange new feeling of boundlessly full and powerful life welling up in him, a feeling which might be compared with that of a man condemned to death and unexpectedly reprieved. Half-way down the stairs he was overtaken by the priest returning home; Raskolnikov silently let him pass, and they exchanged bows without speaking. Then, when he was descending the last few stairs he heard hurried steps behind him. Someone was running after him. It was Polenka, hurrying down behind him and calling: 'Listen! Listen!' (160-61)

As Raskolnikov's displaced conscience, Polia calls after him to "listen" and not feel guilty for espousing a feeling of duty to help the suffering other. It is not coincidental that Raskolnikov does not regard the orthodox priest that he passes on the staircase, but the female child who has a "message" for him. In a striking image, Raskolnikov is in the presence of the sacred: "He turned to her. *She ran down the last flight of stairs and stopped just in front of him, one step higher. A dim light came from the courtyard*. Raskolnikov looked at her thin, but gentle little face smiling at him and looking at him with childish cheerfulness" (160, emphasis mine). Dostoevsky's own experience in the Siberian katorga when a female child gave him a quarter kopek as an act of charity, an image which reappears in *Crime and Punishment* when Raskolnikov himself receives twenty kopeks as charity from a passer-by and her young daughter (see Chapter 2), is a collage of conscience, charity, and the sacred feminine. It is important that Raskolnikov stop and ask the child's name and inquire about her sender, who turns out to be Sonia. Dostoevsky's onomastics are meant to further secure Polia's role as yet another appropriate pair for Raskolnikov. *Polia* is short for *Apollinaria*, Apollo, the god of the sun and light, as the name's root, a cosmic body Raskolnikov is urged by detective Porfirii to resemble later in the novel (see Chapter 2). *Polia* also recalls *pole*, meaning "field," which in Russian is associated with the peasants, and in Slavic paganism, it was an important dueling sight. Dmitri Karamazov, in his ardent confessions, uses *pole* to express a dualistic idea, "Here God and the devil fight, and the battlefield [*pole bitvy*] is the human heart" (*BK*, 98). In Raskolnikov's battle against his "rational egoist" half, Polia, like Sonia and Lizaveta, is supposed to act as a trigger for the other, more empathetic side of the schismatic protagonist.

Suffer the Mares

The image of the female fool as a suffering figure, who has either consciously taken upon herself the role of moral arbiter or is ascribed that function, in Dostoevsky is construed in the recurring image of the suffering and beaten mare. Dostoevsky translated yet another childhood memory into the function of holy foolishness. In his February 1876 entry of the *Diary*, entitled, "The Russian Society for the Protection of Animals. The Government Courier. Demon-Vodka. The Itch for Debauch and Vorobev. From the End or from the Beginning?" Dostoevsky recalls a story about a drunken courier who beats the coachman who then takes it out on his horses in a futile attempt to restore his dignity. Dostoevsky writes,

> Doubtless it is cruel of the coachman to whip his horses that way: they come galloping into the next station worn out and barely able to breathe. But tell me, in truth, could any member of the Society for the Protection of Animals resolve to bring charges against the peasant for cruel and inhuman treatment of his horses? This disgusting scene has stayed in my memory all my life. (*Diary*, 184)

While in Dostoevsky's memory the animal's gender is unclear because he uses the plural "horses" [*loshadi*], in his fiction, the beaten "horse" [l*oshad'*] from his childhood transforms into the abused, overworked, and suffering "mare" [*kliacha*]. The word "nag" or "jade" is almost-appropriate an analog for *kliacha*, considering that "nag" or "jade," like *kliacha*, signifies an old and worn-out horse, and yet, the English words do not necessarily mean a female horse, whereas *kliacha* does. Additionally, *kliacha* (like "jade") is sometimes used to describe an unattractive woman. In the descriptions of Raskolnikov's dream, Dostoevsky makes sure there is no confusion between a regular horse and a mare, that the reader knows that the abused and violently murdered horse is necessarily a "she":

> Near the entrance stood a cart, not an ordinary peasant's cart, but one of the huge drays drawn by great cart-horses [*loshadei*], which are used for carrying bales of goods or barrels of liquor. He always loved to watch theses massive dray-horses [*lomovykh konei*] with their long manes and thick legs, plodding along at a steady pave and effortlessly pulling mountainous loads behind them, almost as if they found it easier than drawing an empty cart. The strange thing about this one was that a peasant's small, lean, decrepit peasant mare [*krest'ianskaia kliachonka*] was harnessed to it, one such as he had often seen straining under a high-piled load of hay or firewood, especially when the cart was stuck in a rut or in the mire, while the peasant lashed it mercilessly with his whip, sometimes even beating it about the head and eyes. (*CP*, 47)

The emaciated mare, like the female holy fool who is portrayed in a similar light, simultaneously recalls the smallness of a child and thus, the child's innocence (or merely child-like if not child-sized, as is Lizaveta's case) and the suffering of Christ. The mare's extreme thinness, also an indication of physical oddity, makes her the female holy fool's animal double in her echoing of such particularities. Therefore, in this gruesome scene, the mare is only referred to either as a *kliacha* or as its diminutive form—*kliachonka*. In her initial description in the passage, the mare is alliteratively a *krest'ianskaia kliachonka* [peasant horse] where the root word for "peasant" [*krest'ianskaia*] is *krest*, meaning "cross," which is also the root word for "baptize" [*krestit'*] and "godchild" [*krestnitsa*].[205] Lizaveta's gruesome murder in *Crime and Punishment* parallels the killing of the beaten mare in Raskolnikov's dream, both of whom receive a blow with an ax to their foreheads. "Beat her

[205] Etimologicheskii slovar' russkogo iazyka (M.P. Fasmer): крестьянин (в соврем. знач. - с конца XIV в.), др.-русск. крьстыанинъ "христианин; человек", ст.-слав. крьстининъ χριστιανός (Супр.), болг. кръстянин "християнин", сербохорв. кр̀шћанин, словен. kršč̑ân, чеш. křesťan "християнин", польск. chrześcijanin - то же, в.-луж. křesćijan - то же, н.-луж. kśesćijan - то же. Заимств. из лат. christiānus "християнин" (ср. пога́ный); см. Мейе, Ét. 186; Скок, RES 7, 193; Тиц, "Slavia", 9, стр. 26. Менее вероятно, судя по ударению, посредничество д.-в.-н. christjâni "християнский, християнин" (вопреки Бернекеру 1, 634 и сл.) или прямое заимствование из греч. χριστιανός (которое якобы сблизилось с крьстъ), вопреки Фасмеру (Гр.-сл. эт. 102 и сл.), Кипарскому (236). http://rus-yaz.niv.ru/doc/etymological-dictionary/fc/slovar-202-13.htm#zag-6114

across the eyes" is what Mikolka, the mare's owner, yells (49), and "[t]he blow fell on her skull, splitting it open" (68) is how Lizaveta dies. Their horrendous ends alone are not fully representative of their suffering. They carry on their shoulders the weight of another person's sins. The female fool in Dostoevsky is the outlet of another's transgression, and only when she becomes part of the transgressor's guilty conscience, does she get translated into the transgressor's inner moral scream.

In the *Brothers Karamazov*, Ivan Karamazov in his tirade against the evils of humanity recalls N.A. Nekrasov's poem about the beaten mare:[206]

> There are lines in Nekrasov describing how a peasant lashes a horse on the eyes, 'on its meek eyes,' everyone has seen it, it's Russianism. He describes how a feeble little horse [*loshadenka*] has foundered under too heavy a load and cannot move. The peasant beats it, beats it savagely, beats it at last not knowing what he is doing in the intoxication of cruelty, thrashes it mercilessly over and over again [. . .] The little mare [*kliachonka*] strains, and he begins lashing her, the defenseless one, on her weeping, 'meek eyes.' Beside herself she tugs and draws the load, trembling all over, not breathing, moving sideways somehow with some kind of skipping movement, somehow unnaturally and shamefully—it's awful in Nekrasov. But that's only a horse, and God himself gave us horses for beating. (208)

The abuse of horses as a type of "Russianism" may have to do with Dostoevsky's objections to corporal punishment,[207] though it alone does not entirely explain why the abused horse in Dostoevsky's fiction is always a female horse. The altruistic idea might have inspired the gruesome images in the novels involving the suffering mare, but Dostoevsky's fictionalized

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[206] Ivan refers to Nekrasov's second poem, "Before Twilight" [Do sumerek] (1859), in his collection, About the Weather [O pogode]. https://ilibrary.ru/text/1532/index.html

[207] Susan McReynolds, in the edited Brothers Karamazov (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2011), Book V: Chapter IV, note 3, comments, "Ivan may be referring to the absence of capital punishment in Russia. Capital Punishment was theoretically abolished by Empress Elizabeth Petrovna in 1754. Despite the official ban, however, capital punishment continued in the form of harsh corporal punishment that resulted in death. The legal reforms of the 1860s made it illegal to cause death through the infliction of excessive corporal punishment" (208).

version is more in line with the female holy fool who is prone to being abused. In order to counter such "Russianism," Dostoevsky presents yet another image of the beaten mare in *The Brothers*, but this time, it is a story of kindness. The impoverished captain, Snegirëv, tells Aliosha Karamazov about his terminally ill son, Iliusha, and his love for horses:

> I was glad to be able to turn his mind from painful thoughts, and we began to dream of how we would move to another town, how we would buy a little horse [*loshadku*] and cart. 'We will put mamma and your sisters inside, we will cover them up and we'll walk, you shall have a lift now and then, and I'll walk beside, for we must take care of our little horse [*loshadku*], we can't all ride. That's how we'll go.' He was enchanted at that, most of all the thought of having a little horse [*loshadka*] and ride her. For it is known, that just like that, a Russian boy is born with a little horse [*loshadkoi*].

The only indication here that the little horse is a mare is the pronoun in "ride *her*" [na *nei* poedet]. The gentle attitudes toward the female figures, including the imaginary mare, in the Snegirëv family, a house full of cripples and hunchbacks, is in stark contrast with its parallel scenes in Dostoevsky's fiction where the mare is abused, and as such, it is not commensurate with the "Russianism" that demands the beating of the mare across the eyes. Snegirëv's "For it is known, that just like that, a Russian boy is born with a little horse" reconfirms an old dualistic idea of tutelary feminine spirits in ancient Slavic myth. In Dostoevsky's version of the story, the female horse is the female holy fool as a protector or guide for the male protagonist. In the Snegirëv family, the person directly associated with a *kliacha*, is the captain's daughter, Varvara Nikolaevna: "And don't judge Varvara Nikolaevna[208] harshly

[208] "Varvara," is "Barbara" in English, and recalls St. Barbara, whose vita was written down in Rus' in the fourteenth century, though she was already mentioned in the eleventh century in the vita of Boris and Gleb. Varvara is supposed to have died in the hands of her father. Dostoevsky is subverting the abusive heavy father motif by presenting a meek and gentle Snegirëv as a positive father figure. For details on the life of St. Barbara in the Russian tradition, see O.V. Tvorogov, Drevnerusskie chet'i sborniki XII-XIV vv. (TODRL., 1990. T. 44. C. 204). See also, Uspenskii sbornik XII-XIII vv. M., 1971, L. 11.

either, she is an angel too, she, too, has suffered wrong. [. . .] Though indeed she couldn't go back, for she has to work for us like a prisoner. She is like an overdriven mare [*kliachu*] with all of us on her back" (182), says the captain to Aliosha. Varvara chooses to help her family by providing for them and doing their chores, while the other daughter, Nina, who is a hunchback and a cripple, according to the captain, "is the saving of all of us with her angelic sweetness" (182). Captain Snegirëv's and the narrator's perspectives collide when Aliosha first notices Nina and Varvara,

> Beside her at the window stood a young girl, with a considerably ugly [*nekrasivym*] face, with scanty reddish hair, poorly but very neatly dressed. [. . .] Beside the other bed was sitting another female figure. She was a very sad sight, a young girl of about twenty, but hunchback and crippled 'with withered legs,' as Aliosha was told afterwards. [. . .] The strikingly beautiful and gentle eyes of this poor girl gazed with some kind of calm meekness at Aliosha. (172-73)

Varvara's "scanty reddish hair" and "ugly" face immediately draw attention to her physical eccentricity. The narrative voice, however, does not retort to the usual *urod* for "ugly," which would categorize her as a "degenerate," but instead describes her as *nekrasivym* [un-beautiful]. And the contrastive additive, "neatly dressed," recalls Lizaveta's and Porfirii's cleanliness as qualifiers for their inner purity. Dostoevsky utilizes the same technique in Nina's case, whose "gentle eyes" and "meekness" defy her grotesque figure to a point where grotesqueness and meekness are displayed as harmonious and not irrelevantly discordant coexistences. Within this haven of tolerance and recognition that is the Snegirëv cottage, female holy fool-like figures are revered, a "Russianism" Dostoevsky aspired to.

Dostoevsky's image of the female fool is not at all divorced from the elevated status of the sacred feminine in Eastern Orthodoxy:

> The Fathers were of the opinion that before the fall there existed in Paradise neither marriage nor the begetting of children, even if they did not all agree with Gregory of Nyssa's theory that sex was a consequence of the fall. In actuality, sex will serve to bring about the pleroma of humanity. In itself the soul is undifferentiated, neither male nor female; it is incorporeal, and the image of God is therefore equal in men and women. [. . .] Not taking much notice of psychology, the ancients imposed practically the same rule upon monasteries of monks and nuns. The ascetics' ideal was to go beyond sex in order to achieve the state of angels (Mt 22:30) where, according to Origen's allegorical phrase, 'the wife becomes the man'. Many women became spiritual mothers' (*ammas*). (Spidlik, *The Spirituality of the Christian East*, 112)

Becoming the spiritual mother of the lost "other," whether knowingly or unknowingly, is an important characteristic of Dostoevsky's female holy fool, where the "other" always happens to be male. Contemporary ethnographic works and tales that include female holy fools do not necessarily rest on this principle. N. Barkov, for example, in his 1865 collection of various pseudo-fools, writes about a certain holy fool, Olga Makar'evna, who is sometimes simply referred to as either *mat'* Olga [mother Olga] or *matushka* [little mother]. In Olga's tale, an ill person is given advice: "[D]rop it, lady, stop trying to get healed by a doctor [*lekar'*]; go instead with *matushka* Olga Makar'evna to the *bania* to be washed clean; she will rub you, will read over you, and you'll see, you'll be as good as new the next day" (58).[209] The tale utilizes the property of caring for the other:

> [I]t is in the Russian woman–especially the Russian peasant woman–that Dostoevsky sees the hope for the salvation of Russia and her ill sons. As a Russian slavophile and Christian, he wants to defend both the Russian folk-belief in Mother Earth and the Orthodox faith in a more general sense. For him, the Russian peasant woman possesses both, which makes her the ideal healer for the Russian man's Western disease.[210]

[209] P. Barkov, 26 *Moskovskikh lzhe-prorokov, lzhe-iurodivykh, dur i durakov* (Moscow: Tipografia Semena, 1865).
[210] Richard Avramenko and Jingcai Ying, "Dostoevsky's Heroines; Or, On the Compassion of the Russian Woman," VoegelinView (November 14, 2013). https://voegelinview.com/dostoevskys-heroines-compassion-russian-woman-part-1/

In the *Brothers Karamazov*, Dmitrii Karamazov is the "crying babe" of his dream whose emaciated mother has no milk in her breasts to feed the "wee one" (*BK*, 535). Grushenka, an amalgamation of Dostoevsky's Nastasias, Lizavetas, and Sophias, herself child-like and profane, beautiful and small in stature, like a little peasant woman who always wears her black shawl on her shoulders, comforts the delirious Dmitrii, "And I am with you, too, I won't leave you now, I will go with you for the rest of my life" (535). Dmitrii's heart dances with joy at this image of maternal care and "turned toward some sort of light, and he wanted to live and live, to go on and on along some path, towards the new beckoning light" (535-36). Dostoevsky turns an existing trope into a leitmotif, with variations. Sonia Marmeladova, who follows Raskolnikov to a Siberian prison, is referred to by the prisoners as "Matushka [little mother] Sofia Semenovna, you are our gentle, affectionate mother!'—these course, branded criminals would say to the slight little creation [*sozdaniu*]" (*CP*, 461). Dostoevsky uses *sozdanie* [creature], a word related to *sozdatel'*, meaning God or Creator, whose function is to take care of Russia's "ill sons."

The Sacred Feminine

The sacred feminine in Dostoevsky is a powerful force representative of *Mat' syra zemlia* [Mother Damp Earth] and the pagan protective spirits. Dostoevsky's female holy fool's role in the male character's protection and regeneration corresponds to the function of the *rozhanitsy*, female deities in Slavic paganism, who as supreme god, Rod's companions, share his name and his regenerative power.[211] Reflective of their physiognomies in ancient

[211] A primary source on Rod and rozhanitsy is B.A. Rybakov, *Iazychestvo drevnykh slavian [*The Paganism of Ancient Slavs] (Moscow: Nauka, 1994).

sculpture where they are Siamese twins, their name, "rozhanitsy," is always in the plural number, and they appear as mother and daughter in Siberian hunting myths. Rozhanitsy were believed to preside over a newborn and were known to be responsible for the child's fate and happiness. This specific function persisted in the Slavonic translation of the Bible in Isaiah 65:11, which renders the word *fortuna* by *rozhanitsa*. The *rozhanitsy*'s connection to the Creator Rod, who represents light/creation [*svet*] and is a stand in for Sabaoth and Christ complicates both Sonia's and Rodion Raskolnikov's relationship. Rybakov postulates that pagan Slavs associated certain *grudy* with Rod, a word he posits means "droplets," which the pagans believed generated new babies. Examples of the belief in the power of the rain, Rybakov asserts, was closely linked to earth and women (450). Dostoevsky's holy fools in their connection to water and earth, admonish the "predatory" types to participate in pagan ritual. Thus, the holy fool, through the specific gesture of offering drinking water to the character whose morality is on trial, participates in the feminine aspect of rebirth.

The Old Gods and New Morality

The similarities between Slavic, Nordic, and Greek gods and their functions foreground the universalities of the pagan themes of regeneration that reverberate in Shakespeare. Lear, out in the heath during *Storm and tempest*, as the stage direction reads, tells the Fool, "O, Fool, I shall go mad!" (*King Lear*, 2.4.327). And so he does. In the company of fools and madmen, who propel him toward seeing, the drops of rain not only trigger Lear's en-light-enment, but bring him a second childhood. In her reunion with her "child-changéd father" (4.7.19) as Cordelia refers to him, she emphasizes the importance of the "nimble stroke / Of quick cross-lightening" (4.7.40-41). Like Dostoevsky's female holy

fools who are venerated despite their visible "abnormalities" and frowned upon nonconformities, upon seeing Cordelia, the rebellious daughter who would not be coerced into playing Lear's games, Lear likens her to a "soul in bliss" (4.7.52), "spirit" (4.7.56), and to a "Fair delight" (4.7.59). In taking care of the Fool, the guilt-ridden Lear also metaphorically takes care of Cordelia whom he realizes he disowned unjustly in a moment of thundering anger and unseeing. The folkloric framework accounts for the third and youngest daughter's caring and forgiving nature, which the tragic structure of the play quickly annuls through death. This moment of sincerity and unconditional care,

> LEAR: Be your tears wet? Yes, faith, I pray, weep not.
> If you have poison for me, I will drink it.
> I know you do not love me, for your sisters
> Have, as I do remember, done me wrong.
> You have some cause; they have not.
> CORDELIA: No cause, no
> cause. (4.7.81-86)

even in the unforgiving cosmos of Lear is enduring. The short-lived reunion of Lear and Cordelia reverses the traditional roles of the double, where now Cordelia assumes the part of a parent and god of thunder. The Doctor who asks Cordelia to "draw near" cues for "Louder music there" (4.7.30), which when performed on the stage, dramatizes Cordelia's approach and accentuates this linkage. Cordelia, however, like Rod and rozhanitsy, does not strike to hurt, but to heal:

> CORDELIA, *kissing Lear*
> O, my dear father, restoration hand
> Thy medicine on my lips, and let this kiss
> Repair those violent harms that my two sisters
> Have in thy reverence made. (4.7.31-34)

Cordelia's kiss awakens Lear, a reversal of the folkloric motif of the prince's rejuvenate kiss of the enchanted princess. Kisses in Shakespeare are also rich with religious meaning.[212] More immediately, Cordelia's kiss is an ethical gesture referring back to Lear's kissing of Gloucester's hand and the recurring phrase in the play, "Give me thy hand," which Edgar, in his disguise as a madman, speaks to his father at several instances. These are gestures that say, *I will help you. I will lend you a part of me and I will guide you*. *I see you.* As James Kearney puts it, "If *Lear* looks hard at human cruelty and folly, if it creates a universe where the gods seem absent or indifferent or malicious, it also holds out the promise, for better or worse, of ethical relations, allows that 'there can be in the world pity, compassion, pardon and proximity—even the little there is'."[213] Either kneeling or crouching over Lear's weary body, Cordelia's kiss and the position of her body hark forward to Dostoevsky's fools, who in a similar gesture of humility, kiss, bow, and kneel as sufferers and saint-like figures. Aliosha Karamazov mimics Christ's kiss of the Grand Inquisitor in Ivan's legend by kissing his brother; Zosima bows to Dmitrii Karamazov; Sonia asks Raskolnikov to bow and kiss the earth, and Raskolnikov bows to her, saying, "I prostrated myself not before you, but before all human suffering" (*PSS:* 272). Self-actualization and enlightenment in Shakespeare and Dostoevsky are not devoid of suffering, but this suffering is not born in solitude, for otherwise it would be merely asceticism that resists the element of human relationality.

[212] For religious rituals and biblical verses associated with kissing and kneeling in Shakespeare, which also mentions Romeo's famous "holy palmer's kiss," see *Shakespeare's Religious Language: A Dictionary* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014).
[213] See James Kearney, "'This above all strangeness': King Lear, Ethics, and the Phenomenology of Recognition," in *Shakespeare and Phenomenology* 54.3 (2012): 455-67, 466.

Second Childhood

Nowhere else in Shakespeare is the ineluctable need for the fool as a compassionate non-absent human as strikingly accented as in *Lear*. Lear's Fool, like a protective mother who follows Lear everywhere, helps him undress, ridding of old morality. *Tearing off his clothes*, "Off, off, you lendings! Come, unbutton here" (*Lear*, 3.4.115-16), Lear enters into a state of nakedness, a requisite phase toward the ethics of care. Lear's concern for Poor Tom's, the Fool's, and Gloucester's suffering and cold bodies and his anguish over Cordelia's dead body shows a Lear no longer on the threshold between care/presence and non-care/absence, but one who has crossed over into the sphere of unconditional charity where the tripling fools, Lear-Cordelia-Fool, are conjoined through their complementary functions. We first come to the knowledge of the Fool through Cordelia when Lear is discussing his daughter's departure: "I will look further into't. But where's / my Fool? I have not seen him this two days" (1.4.71-72). The Knight replies, "Since my young lady's going into France, sir, / the Fool hath much pined away" (1.4.73-74). Although Cordelia, who, like Dostoevsky's female holy fools who are either dead, murdered, or quiet, is absent from most of the play, we are constantly reminded of her in Lear's utterances of regret. The intimate connection between Cordelia and the Fool is established through Lear's remembrances of his favorite daughter and his tender love and care for the Fool.[214] The Fool and Cordelia never appear on the stage at the same time, as the boy actor who played Cordelia might have also

[214] The Cordelia-Fool association is not new in Shakespeare scholarship. It is part of a dispute with uncompromising opinions on both sides. See for instance, Richard Abrams, "The Double Casting of Cordelia and Lear's Fool: A Theatrical View in Texas Studies in Literature and Language 27.4 (1985): 354-68. See also, Thomas B. Stroup, "Cordelia and the Fool" in Shakespeare Quarterly 12.2 (1961): 127-32. One could sense Stroup's vexation at the possibility of Cordelia being a fool: "Indeed one [Arthur J. Singer] has gone so far as to argue 'that the Fool in Shakespeare's King Lear is none other than Cordelia herself'" (127).

played the Fool. Directors, such as Giorgio Strehler, have made use of this "off-stage" theory, which could have been simply a practicality on Shakespeare's stage, to underscore the thematic connection between the two characters. The clown, like the Porter, would appear on the stage, jokingly comment on the play, take a jab at the audience, and disappear.

This brief interaction between the clown and the audience is not insignificant; it portrays the clown as an observer and critic, a function Shakespeare transforms into criticism of unethical behavior: "The trap is this: that whilst clown offers a radical opportunity to question our received ideas about ourselves, once we fixate on a particular idea the clown disappears" (Davison 136). The Fool in *Lear* functions similarly: he mysteriously disappears when Lear is no longer in need of guidance. Commenting on Strehler's directorial choices in displaying the Lear-Cordelia-Fool "triplicity," Donald McManus states,

> By physically merging Lear with Cordelia-Fool through the placement of the bodies and the lighting of the costumes and acting area, Strehler brings Lear into the same realm as the Fool and Cordelia. Just as she had appeared out of the darkness with the aid of a follow-spot allowing her to defy the scenic convention that trapped the other characters, Lear, upon his death, transcends the physical stage space by association with his Fool-daughter's body. Just as the Fool led Lear out of darkness into enlightenment metaphorically, by means of his clown logic manifested in Lear as Madness, so the body of the dead Cordelia, the Fool's double and a broken puppet, leads Lear out of the primordial soup that is the setting of Strehler's production. (103)[215]

It can be inferred that the suffered and aged body of Lear would be unable to carry Cordelia's body to the middle of the stage to allow the audience a better view. Despite the stage direction, *Enter Lear with Cordelia in his arms*, one imagines this to be a difficult walk for Lear who is probably unable to march steadily when carrying an adult body, but is perhaps at

[215] See Donald McManus, No Kidding! Clown as Protagonist in Twentieth-Century Theater (Newark: Delaware University Press, 2003).

times himself falling, now dragging, now lifting Cordelia's body. An anecdote about anonymous Cambridge students expressing their ideas of what a clown is by satirizing a 1599 play, *The Pilgrimage to Parnassus*, which opens with dragging a clown across the stage, conveys the reality of the clown's role on the stage:

> Enter Dromo, drawing a clown in with a rope. [. . .] Dost thou not know a play cannot be without a clown? Clowns have been thrust into plays by head and shoulders ever since Kempe could make a scurvy face; and therefore reason thou shouldst be drawn in with a cart-rope. (qtd. in Towsen 59)

Lear, carrying Cordelia's corpse on the stage, desperately trying to bring back his fool into the action of the play and into life, is the quintessential image of absurdity where the tragic and the comic faces of life merge. When Lear "howls" over the death of his child: "And my poor fool is hanged. No, no, no life?" (5.3.369), we cannot help but remember the Fool, the two lastingly contracted on the dying king's lips.

CODA: UNFINAL WORDS: TOWARD WHOLENESS AND LOVE

Who'd be the fool to stay?

Would you—Say—

Would you be the fool to stay?

—Emily Dickinson, "The Wind didn't come from the Orchard—today—"

Doubling with the Fool

In Dostoevsky and Shakespeare images of fools are not merely archetypal but rather retain archetypal characteristics. Fools and fool-like entities, as mutating configurations, travel through the authors' works, mainly functionally, in stages of development, while preserving eccentricity as their primary attribute and violation of the symbolic order as their main objective. Despite their commonality in literature, the "ambivalent nature of [dualistic] carnival images," forms, what Bakhtin calls, "threshold dialogue,"[216] where the split consciousness seeks unity through the other. Although Bakhtin steers clear of Shakespearean criticism casting instead Dostoevsky as *the* proprietor of dialogism, I have endeavored to demonstrate the highly polyphonic nature of Shakespeare's plays that render his dialogic, parodic doubles, or triples as fluid entities who test an idea, and as such, are ideational and philosophical in their directionality, and are truth-seekers who themselves interminably provoke and test other truths. In both writers, I have argued, the dialogic is not only

[216] Mikhail Bakhtin, Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics, 257; 239.

expressed in the carnivalized world of their characters, but *through* them, who, as ideas, not only encapsulate oppositional and also similar forces, but draw toward a unity or a whole.

From the point of view of performativity, however, having in mind the two large categories of "natural" and "artificial" action, the ethically oriented dialogic pair in Dostoevsky and Shakespeare is hardly "parodic" in the comic sense. Meaning, the goal of imitation with this typology is not immediately comic relief, but integrality, nor is the movement toward wholeness necessarily a conscious performance. Characters with dramatized schismatic consciousnesses like Hamlet or Raskolnikov, and to some extend Lear, subconsciously seek to ameliorate inner contradictions not through internal accord, for the inner disaccord remains, but through external manifestations of conscience, namely of other fool-like characters that perform the role of a moral teacher or guide. The appropriately singular entity within the doubles or triplicities, as explored in chapter 3, especially, bears care as fundamental to the possibilities of being simultaneously in acknowledgment of the other.[217] In Shakespeare criticism, the fool's role in doubling has been more readily marked (and made easy to devalue) due to the traditional image of the fool and his double, while on the Dostoevskian side of the matter, doubles or quasi-doubles have been pinpointed strictly in terms of similarity; for instance, so-called predatorial types have predatorial matches. Such examples in Dostoevsky criticism range from Raskolnikov-Svidrigaylov (*Crime and Punishment*) to Ivan Karamazov-Smerdiakov-the Devil-Kolia (*Brothers Karamazov*), and

[217] Thomas A. Carlson, *With the World at Heart: Studies in the Secular Today* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2019) discusses the concept of solicitude (Fürsorge) in the framework of Martin Heidegger's philosophy of positive care especially in the latter's Being and Time and Augustinian "understanding of love as a willing that beloved be" (41), E-book.

even cross novel-to-novel boundaries in the manner of Raskolnikov (*Crime and Punishment*)-Stavrogin (*Demons*) -Ivan Karamazov (*Brothers Karamazov*).[218] The same can be said for his holy fool types. In this sense, doubling as an outward-looking stance of relationality and a bridge to existing with the other functions as an antidote to the figure of the monologic hero. The self-lacerating "heroes" in Shakespeare's later works, especially, Hamlet and Lear, and in Dostoevsky's major novels, including *Crime and Punishment*, *The Idiot*, and *The Brothers Karamazov*, are complex figures attracted to stagnation at the expense of their potentialities as empathetic beings.

The Death of the Hero

The authors' restructured fool, from the more archetypal, clown-like, ridiculous, and entertaining figure in their earlier works to the wise, critical, and caring fool in the later works, allows the figure to act as a requisite for ethical endeavors if not immediately in a communal sense, then for those bilious types who nonetheless show a promise to regenerate. Within this amalgamated entity that includes the fool(s) and a dialectical other (often a schismatic type) as constituents, the new fool destabilizes the self-constructed myth of the hero in his (often a "he") veiled potentiality, which does not necessarily contradict the inner fluctuations of the non-fool constituent, the goal being a second layer of dialectical formation. Iurii Tynianov in his formalist readings of Shakespeare, in particular, comments on the static principle of the hero:

> [T]he static unity of the hero (as, in general, every static unity in a literary work) turns out to be exceedingly unstable. It depends entirely on the principle of construction and may fluctuate in the course of a work in whichever manner the over-all dynamics

[218] Bakhtin (1984), Terras (1981), Frank (2010), L. Grossman, "Dostoevsky-khudozhnik," in *Tvorchestvo F.M. Dostoevskogo*.

> of the work determine, in every individual circumstance, that it should fluctuate. It is not enough that there exists a sign of unity which legitimizes the most extreme cases of its actual violation and compels us to consider such cases as *equivalent of unity*. It is already completely obvious, however, that such unity is not some naively conceived static unity of the hero; it is marked, not by the sign of a static whole, but by the sign of dynamic integration of completeness. There is no static hero, there is only a dynamic hero.[219]

The problem of staticism in Dostoevsky and Shakespeare is attempted to be resolved through speech *and* deed (see the presented formulae in Chapter 2 in Shakespeare and Dostoevsky: *words are not thoughts* and *words are not deeds*, respectively) in assigning activity and movement to the presumed hero's words and deeds in conjunction with the other's.

Instability as an unfinalizable, ever-evolving position counteractive to stagnation is the desired developmental state of the dynamic whole toward renewal, which the authors demonstrate is not realized monologically. "Words, words, words" (2.2.210) says Hamlet exhausted by Polonius's prolixity that lacks intent; words as fixed categories or as pure values are meaningless, but thinking as an activity is not so, as it marks the self-self as a first-tier relationality, a steppingstone to the self-other constellation. Hamlet's isolated thinking, for instance, which Dostoevsky bemoans to his brother Mikhail, is also tragedy realized by Hamlet who compares his own perceptions, "thinking makes it / so" (2.2.269-70), to a "prison," "nutshell," and a "shadow" (2.2.270; 273; 279). Thinking that gives no coherence to other's meanings of relation is in danger of being veiled over, *obolochka*, in Dostoevsky's locution, that underscores this type's rationally persuaded imprisonment of conscience.

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[219] Tynianov, "Rhythm as the Constructive Factor of Verse" in *Readings in Russian Poetics: Formalist and Structuralist Views*, ed. Ladislav Matejka and Krystyna Pomorska (Chicago: Dalkey Archive Press, 2002):126-45; 127, bases his interpretation on Goethe's remarks "on the use of contradictory facts by Shakespeare" (126). [Originally published as "Ritm, kak konstruktivnyi faktor stikha" in *Problema stikhotvornogo iazyka* (1924): 7-17.

Dostoevsky expands on Shakespearean subtleties; Raskolnikov's isolated thinking that he likens to a job, matured in Ivan Karamazov's Euclidian view of the world, is parodied by fool-like maid Nastasia and buffoon-like detective Porfiry, and later altered through holy-fool-like Aliosha/Alexey, the "man of God's" more empathetic response to his conflicted brother. Inspired by Dostoevsky's structure of oppositions and the same, Bakhtin's architectonics as a dialogical form[220] emphasizes the non-static relation in a duality or a triad:

> In order to vivify my own outward image and make it part of a concretely viewable whole, the entire architectonics of the world of my imagining must be radically restructured by introducing a totally new factor into it. This new factor that restructures the architectonic consists in my outward image being affirmed and founded in emotional and volitional terms *out* of the other and *for* the other human being.[221]

As the "new factor," the fool-like character's presentness is an essential element of relationality in Dostoevsky and Shakespeare that warrants a function of care.

This study has also attempted to respond to the questions, as to why in these works, time and time again, we encounter a fool who does not leave or give up, but rather acts a guide to the stagnant and static consciousness. The official fools in Shakespearean comedies do not break the unity; Sonia follows Raskolnikov to prison and remains presently as an *etalon* of care; Aliosha, torn between the "mighty opposites" that are his brothers, leaves the monastery to actively offer his empathy and teachings to every character; Ophelia stays to keep Hamlet's antics at place and by "indirections find directions out" albeit in a tragic

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[220] Michael Holquist, in *Dialogism: Bakhtin and his World* (New York: Routledge, 1990), explicates the association of dialogism and authorship, and Bakhtinian architectonics, what he calls the "general science of ordering parts into the whole" (47). The elements in a duality (I-for-itself and the not-I-in-me) add a third item, "the relation that center and not-center bear to each other" (47).

[221] Bakhtin, *Art and Answerability*, ed. Michael Holquist and Vadim Liapunov, trans. Vadim Liapunov (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), 97.

ending; Cordelia instructively rebels and then comes back to tend her "child-changéd father," and when Kent inquires as to who remains with Lear in the storm, the answer is unequivocally, "None but the Fool" (3.1.19). In Heidegger's philosophy of Dasein's being, this non-absence is expressed in terms of an *existentiale*, the Being's presentness which he terms "present-at-hand," being familiar with, residing, dwelling, or inhabiting a space *in* the world as a way of actively being with the other. "*Being-in*," writes Heidegger, "*is thus the formal existential expression of Being of Dasein, which has Being-in-the-world as its essential state*."[222] While Shakespeare's fools and fool-like characters often remind us of ontological folly (e.g. Lear through his proverbial "When we are born, we cry that we are come / To this great stage of fools; Hamlet's "we fools of nature" and Dostoevsky's gallery of fools), ontological care and empathy is instead not merely put into words but exhibited through an activity, one of the vital points where Shakespeare and Dostoevsky converge, in a gamut of varied foolishness, where "unofficial" fooling, as in extending beyond conventional entertainment, takes charge.

The fool-constituent's priority within the unit and in-the-world is a push for the other's recognition of the self and other, a step in devaluing the solipsistic character's self-ascribed heroism whose priorities are inward rather than outward. The two writers generally avoid the term "hero" as an end, unless it is used in a more comical register to parody the hero's ego or reject it, or in the sense of casting it as the actively empathetic fool's mission, which is put in progressive terms in conjunction with the appropriate constituents within the unit. In the former sense, Raskolnikov's Napoleonic aspirations, Hamlet's belief that he is the

[222] *BT*, 80; *SZ*, 54.

sole proprietor of the Ghost's secret and its mission, or Lear's absurdly self-grandiose demands as not just king but a wrathful father, claim ontological privilege and are initially conflated with their image of themselves as the heroes of their and others' stories. And though Hamlet insinuates that everything, including substance and dreams, has its shadow, whereby "our monarchs / and outstretched heroes [are] the beggars' shadows" (2.2.282-83), he proclaims that at the moment he "cannot / reason" (2.2.284-85). What Hamlet, the "unofficial" fool in *Hamlet*, does not declare, Lear's Fool, Poor Tom, Cordelia, and Kent do without reservations. In telling Lear that which Lear does not want to hear, Lear's "sweet and bitter fool" (1.4.148), for instance, declares himself as "Lear's shadow" (1.4.237) and Lear, a fool. In the B-plot of the play, it is Edgar who shadows Gloucester in his role as Poor Tom, another instance the play conceives of shadowing as part of the dialogic. At several instances, Edgar, as Poor Tom, states his function: "How to prevent the fiend and to kill vermin" (3.4.167), which Martin Lings aptly terms as Poor Tom's "occupation."[223] In a series of undoings that variously take the form of reprimand, shock, agitation, and active empathy, the character of the fool actively labors to dissolve the monologic-heroic ethos to make room for mediation in dialogue.

Foolishness as Unconventional Heroism

The stages of development of the fool character in Dostoevsky and Shakespeare mark a steady pace in the authors' respective oeuvres. The fool-amalgamate as a type of integral

[223] Martin Lings, *Shakespeare's Window into the Soul: The Mystical Wisdom in Shakespeare's Characters* (Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 2006), 116. Lings frames Edgar's function in terms of a guide whose "job" is "to kill those things in the soul that are purely negative and to outwit the devil as regards such psychic substance as can be salvaged and transformed" (116).

entity, however, is a novelistic direction that the authors curiously investigate. As necessary junctures of this process, some of the questionable fools that I have been referring to as "fool-like" to indicate their "unofficial" status, are also central figures. Traditionally, the fool has not been part of the story's main plot, and Dostoevsky and Shakespeare laboriously attempting to assign a more principal role to the fool character and facilitating the appropriate rearrangements that this change demands, complicate the entire ecosystem of their pieces and mark novel directions of the figure of the fool, in general. The new reconfiguration more urgently plays with the reader's expectations. In Dostoevsky studies, for instance, there is a general sense of unease about *The Idiot's* Christ-like protagonist, his success or failure, a paradox I attribute to the character's unorthodox fooling and Dostoevsky's attempted (but not yet fully realized, at this point in his career) break with the conventional formula of the hero.[224] A definitive answer to whether Myshkin is a failure or success is perhaps not the most urgent question in this context, but asking why the confusion exists regarding his role renders responses about Dostoevsky's categorization and typologies of foolishness. In an 1868 letter from Geneva to his niece, Sofia Alexandrovna, Dostoevsky himself describes the entire novel as a "positive failure," which in the subtext of this letter means that Myshkin's "positively beautiful" (*polazhitel'no prekrasno*) and noble character has substance and is real, but due to its ridicule by other characters and immediate categorization as an "ideal" by the critics of his time, Dostoevsky feared the character would be misunderstood (*PSS* 28:2:251) and as such, seen as a failure. Dostoevsky feared this glitch between the reader's

[224] See Howard H. Keller, "Prince Myshkin: Success or Failure?" *Journal of Russian Studies* 24 (1972), see screenshot taken on July 6.

response and his experimentation with an archetype. In analyzing the dialogical process in the *Idiot* in the context of Bakhtin's ethics of *vzhivanie* (active empathy) explored in his "Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity," Alina Wyman aptly terms Myshkin's lucidity a curse. According to Wyman, Myshkin's attempts to be in dialogue with another consciousness is not always successful in that Myshkin himself lacks faith in his own truth in moments when he retorts to performative, sermon-like discourse.[225] In relation to Roghozin in particular, however, "[Myshkin] attempts to 'live into' [the literal meaning of *vzhivanie*] Roghozhin's soul, to look at the world through Rogozhin's eyes, without completely fusing with his interlocutor."[226] In a letter to Apollon Maikov the same year, Dostoevsky responds to the many accusations of looking at life through "rosy" lenses. Speaking about a future novel he wants to write that would be titled, "Atheism," Dostoevsky says,

> My dear friend, I have a totally different conception of truth and realism from that of our "realists" and critics. My God! If one could but tell categorically all that we Russians have gone through during the last ten years in the way of spiritual development, all the realists would shriek that it was pure fantasy! And yet it would be pure realism! (*PSS*, 28:2:329)

Dostoevsky's fool's demeanor is unrelentingly woven into the author's Christology, the apocalyptic vision of the "new earth" in the Book of John (Rev. 21:1) that also does not lose sight of the simple practicalities of life, which Dostoevsky tirelessly foregrounds in his major novels.

In the *Idiot*, Dostoevsky reaches a realization in his portrayal of ethics where the comedy is a necessary condition of the "natural" aspect of the fool: "But Don Quixote is

[225] Alina Wyman, *The Gift of Active Empathy: Scheler, Bakhtin, and Dostoevsky* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2016), 121.
[226] *Ibid*., 119.

noble only by being at the same time funny," Dostoevsky writes (*PSS* 28:2:251). If the fool is to be a caring figure who is not consciously performing his or her kindness but is so intuitively, then that fool is seen by the other characters as unconventional, to a degree an eccentric, therefore, variably comical, even ridiculous, depending on the pitch. Dostoevsky intentionally does not circumvent his own requirement of "natural" folly for the active fool-in-the-making who is to be a more "real" character, but "realness" is achieved through activity. While Dostoevsky considered the first part of *Idiot* as "ineffective" where "there is nothing decisive" (*nichego reshitel'no*), the entire novel can be considered a prologue to what Dostoevsky accomplished with the ethically active fool in the *Brothers Karamazov* (*PSS* 28:2:251).

Shakespeare avoids this conflict between the serious tenor and the fool's play through the technique of disguise. Edgar's ethos in *King Lear* would deteriorate if he remained Edgar *and* a foolish figure simultaneously, thus Poor Tom must be born to facilitate a renewal of the characters who need to be enlightened. Ridicule is safely transposed on to an official fool whose foolishness is not questioned as a category, even though it is presented as an aspect of the wiser typology. The moment of recognition extends beyond the generic prince, son, or heir-in-disguise-later-revealed form, as Lear does not recognize Edgar as Edgar nor does he consider Poor Tom to be a rogue; in fact, to Lear, Poor Tom is anything but a clownish or roguish figure whose function is only to entertain or pester:

> Lear: First let me talk with this philosopher. (3.4.162)
> Lear: I'll talk a word with this same learnèd Theban. (3.4.165)
> Lear: Noble philosopher, your company. (3.4.183)
> Lear: I will keep still with my philosopher. (3.4.189)

After Lear's and Gloucester's regeneration reaches its promised end albeit not evading the subsequent tragic end that the genre of tragedy demands, Poor Tom is relieved by the author from his doubling role and disguise. And so is Lear's Fool. The Fool, however, must disappear, as Shakespeare still adheres to the conventions at place that resist the official fool's centralization at its fullest only because folly as wisdom is already taken on its unofficial, yet primary, shape. In a pivotal speech at the very end of the play, Edgar speaks as Edgar and not as Poor Tom (a fool, madman), a maneuvering of the unofficial fool as a protagonist which Dostoevsky has turned into a maxim with his holy fool-like characters. The "seeming" or feigned aspect of performativity takes away from the genuineness of the character adding a veil of disguise to feeling: "The weight of this sad time we must obey, / Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say" (5.3.392-95) says Edgar as part of his closing speech. Unlike Hamlet who juggles his own moral conscience in attempting to bend it to a vengeful persona, Edgar's disguise is only in appearance, yet his own feelings of care for his father, Lear, and the troupe stuck in the storm, and his active labor for their moral awakening, align with who he is.

The Woman as a Fool

Each subsequent work of Dostoevsky and Shakespeare adds to the already-multifaceted function of the fool where singularity dissolves to give way to relationality. The official fool is often paired with a female character who often outwits the fool or outdoes the fool-like protagonist in moral lessons. This also paves the way for licensure of the female characters who have fool-like characteristics and are placed in teaching roles as responsible figures for the "predatorial" types. In Shakespeare's comedies the pairing is smooth but still

daring as it does meddle with existing norms where such reversals are not common. The fool as female was not a conventional category unless she was kept in the court as an official fool or existed in society as a "natural" fool, meaning, had a disability. Each single entity in the Olivia-Feste pair in *Twelfth Night* participates in the other's role where the focus is wisdom and witticism. The switch is achieved through humor in instances when Feste, an official fool, recognizes Olivia as an unofficial fool:

> Olivia: Take the Fool away.
> Fool: Do you not hear, fellows? Take away the Lady. (1.5.36-37)

Similarly, in another later comedy, *As You Like It*, Shakespeare pushes category boundaries for official fooling by extending the role to other female figures like Celia and Rosalind. It is important that not only the official fool, but other characters also recognize them in this role. In two occasions, for instance, Duke Frederick calls Celia a fool:

> Thou art a fool. (1.3.83)
> You are a fool. (1.3.91)

The question of whether women are naturally sharper in wit than the play's designated fool, Touchstone, is discussed in an ingenious dialogue between Rosalind and Celia which the former terms as "our sport" (1.2.30):

> Celia: Though Nature hath given us wit to flout at Fortune,
> hath not Fortune sent in this fool to cut off the
> argument?
>
> Rosalind: Indeed, there is Fortune too hard for Nature,
> when Fortune makes Nature's natural the
> cutter-off of Nature's wit.
>
> Celia: Peradventure this is not Fortune's work neither,
> but Nature's, who perceiveth our natural wits too
> dull to reason of such goddesses, and hath sent
> this natural for our whetstone, for always the dullness
> of the fool is the whetstone of the wits.

To Touchstone. How now, wit, whither wander you? (1.2.45-56)

To maintain the consistently playful tone of the comedies, the fools and fool-like characters explore forbidden topics albeit less experimentally than the tragedies, nonetheless extending the fool's license to those who have not traditionally filled this role.

In when the fool is not traditionally male, both writers sustain the perceived feminine aspect of the fool and the unit's persistently ethical function. Each of the units (Raskolnikov-Sonya-Lizaveta, Myshkin-Rogozhin-Nastasia, Lear-Fool-Cordelia, Hamlet-Yorick-Ophelia) is a triplicity with some differentials due to the subplots of the text and some of the fool-like characters' branched-out doubling with other such characters. Like self-perpetuating Borromean rings that overlap and mutate in creating newer rings, the formula of doubling rests on integration and correspondence. The witty detective Porfiry, for instance, whom Raskolnikov variedly refers to as a fool, jester, buffoon, and a pulcinella, only sees himself in the role of a teacher who again and again emphasizes the need for *feeling and education* for the young man who actively suppresses emotion. Drawing parallels between Porfiry and Lizaveta who is seen as a holy fool figure, proximate him with the unit. Like in Shakespeare, Dostoevsky's fools are queer; the effeminate features of the male fools are necessary elements of the fool's characterization and a requisite for their ethical function. Appropriately, it is not the militantly vengeful Ghost who bears the regenerative impulse, but Yorick, whose merriment and tenderness—"bore me on his / back a thousand times" (5.1.190-91)—that triumph in Hamlet's laconic description of the King's dead jester. Both writers employ the interrelationship between care and gender-queerness as a necessary precondition for the symbiotic fusion of the individual ego with others. Disguise is the

dominant technique in Shakespeare's comedies, while in the tragedies and Dostoevsky's novels, it becomes less literal and more about the fool-like character's performance of non-normative behavior (as discussed in chapter 3, through Nastasia Filippovna's or Ophelia's participation in the masculine space).

Dostoevsky bases queerness both on substantive qualities and through non-normative characterization. Besides his linen being spotless, a detail promptly mentioned in relation to Lizaveta, in his first lengthy description, Porfiry is also dressed in an informal gown (*khalat*) while "[the] glance of those eyes was strangely out of keeping with his squat figure, almost like a peasant woman's [*dazhe chto-to bab'e*]" (*PSS* 6:192). Although not uncommon for men to wear the *khalat* in nineteenth-century households, Dostoevsky usually utilizes the long dress to queer-code his fools. In the *Brothers Karamazov*, it is Lise, the mischievous fool, who although ridicules Aliosha's monastic dress, at the same time establishes a familiar pattern in Dostoevsky's characterization of his male fools:

> "Forgive me if I'm not . . . Maybe it was a terribly silly . . . You said I was cold, so I up and kissed you . . . Only I see it came out silly . . . "
> Lise laughed and hid her face in her hands.
> "And in that dress!" escaped her in the midst of her laughter, but she suddenly stopped laughing and became all serious, almost severe. (*PSS* 14:198)

Still concerned about Aliosha's dress, Lise reiterates, "what are you going to wear when you leave the monastery, what kind of clothes? Don't laugh, don't be angry, it's very, very important for me" (*PSS* 14:199). It is not specifically Aliosha's monastic features that disquiet her, but his general effeminate look which she would rather replace, as she puts it, with a "velvet jacket, a white piqué waistcoat, and a gray soft felt hat" (*PSS* 14:199), the "normal" look for a gentleman, which according to her, would also make Aliosha not look

ridiculous. This vexation puts Lise in the company of yet another upper-class female character in the *Idiot*, Agalaya Epanchina, who is consistently agitated not by Myshkin's odd choice in clothes, but his gentleness and guilelessness. To both Lise and Aglaya who see themselves as possible romantic partners, queerness poses a danger in hindering the prospects of forming a procreative unit, but at the same time, they show concern for the queer character inasmuch as his eccentricity halts the reciprocation of social codes, makes him an object of ridicule, and pushes the character farther from the perceived "real" (as understood by Lise and Aglaya and their accepted worlds), which then again cyclically impedes any willingness to actively pursue romantic involvement. The narrative voice underscores subtleties characters do not readily recognize: "The prince's gaze was so gentle at that moment, and his smile was so free of the least shade of any concealed hostility" (*PSS* 6:23). Dostoevsky, like Shakespeare, moves toward reconstructing the unofficial fool's identity in terms that it acts as an antidote to "predatorial" tendencies where queerness and care are necessary conditions even if this aspect of the fool's performance generates humor and ridicule, which Dostoevsky believed "weakens the reader's sympathies" (*PSS* 28:2:251). In this sense, the fool's function and its development concerned Dostoevsky more than the reader's response.

In fact, violence as an omnipresent state of the ethical fool is part of the authors' critique as it calls attention to the reality of the fool's suffering. Through the aestheticization of eccentricity, the two authors invite cultural criticism of the pain inflicted on those cast in this category. Unhoused holy fools transferred from the monastic "care" to that of the state's, sexually abused women labeled as "holy fools," court fools as properties of their monarchs

and the caricaturizing of disability for entertainment, the medicalization of persons who did not abide by gender norms or fit in strictly defined gender categories are social problems highlighted by the authors. Violence is inflicted and not invited, for the fools we meet are not martyrs in the hagiographic sense of representation of pain and suffering. The authors' interest in the suffering body and the oscillating mind in a battle with itself is reflected in the teacher-student formula they incorporate within the unit itself. The development of the fool as a teacher type is logically more mature in their later works. *The Tempest*, largely believed to be Shakespeare's last play, contains the existing formulae already utilized in earlier works although not as forcefully, and goes even further in ambiguating and complicating the function of its unofficial fools. Shakespeare's agender spirit, Ariel, enslaved by Prospero, as the wiser version of a singing and entertaining jester appearing in various disguises including as a harpy and a sea nymph,[227] functions as a teacher to the "untutored" clownish characters infiltrating the island with an attempt to awaken them, "Shake off slumber and beware. / Awake, awake!" (2.1.348-49). Ari*el* whose theophoric name also reflects its function, "You fool, I and my fellows / Are ministers of Fate" (3.3.78-79), moves in an orbit that includes Prospero and Caliban. Contrasted with uneducable Caliban and his dark motivations whose stagnation is reflected through his grotesque appearance, Ariel represents Shakespeare's predominant theme of transformation, and as a contrast to its "master," Prospero's apathy,

[227] Brinda Charry proposes that Ariel might be the "eunuch-in-disguise" who is "normalized as a spirit," and yet it is important to remember this possibility "in light of the discourse of servitude, transformation, and ambiguous gender identity." It is worthwhile thinking about Charry's question whether "eunuch" is used in a similar way to "queer" and signifies more than a monolithic identity ("'Proper' Men and 'Tricksy' Spirits: The Eunuch in Disguise in *Twelfth Night* and *The Tempest*" in *Staged Normality in Shakespeare's England,* eds. Rory Loughnane and Edel Semple. Palgrave Shakespeare Studies, 2018, eBook: 188-206, 202).

Ariel's suggestion to forgive his adversaries underscores the spirit's ability to care and educate:

> Ariel: That if you now beheld them, your affections
> Would become tender.
> Prospero: Dost thou think so, spirit?
> Ariel: Mine would, sir, were I human. (5.1.23-36)

Prospero's teachings and his many "mark me" disciplinarian's directives pale in comparison to Ariel's lesson in compassion. The question as to whether Ariel would leave if Prospero allowed its freedom before Prospero's decision to discharge Ariel "after two days" can only be surmised based on Shakespeare's pattern with his official and unofficial ethical fools who do not break from the unit if they are not coerced into staying. Dostoevsky employs a similar design with his fools who are responsible for another's enlightenment.

The Feminine Aspect in Dialogue

The unit in Shakespeare and Dostoevsky makes up an androgynous whole where the ethical fool-constituent is celibate and strives to construct other such units in a symbiosis with others. None of the entities existing within the unit show any sexual interest in the other, thus what holds the unit together is not *erōs* between the constituents but *agapē* as represented in the Church Fathers, particularly in Dionysus the Areopagite and Hesychius, where the two terms are almost synonymous. Shakespeare and Dostoevsky also avoid the androcentric perspective as it relates to the whole in casting the feminine aspect as a positive. The transformative and regenerative forces in the dyads and triadic units are generated from the feminine and queer aspects of the characters who are contrasted with those exalting the masculine aspect, which is consistently depicted as a negative. Those belonging in the latter

camp are fools in the sense that their folly lies in rejecting feeling, conscience, and care, while the participants in the former make up the wise-fool category where wisdom is consistently defined as active empathy and tenderness. In Dostoevsky, the earlier model for the new type of fool comprises women holy fools, with Sofia (Sonia) Marmeladova in *Crime and Punishment* as the primary blueprint for later such fools that are instantiations of this character. His many later Sofias (Divine Wisdom), therefore, push for the revelation of intuitive knowledge and unification that are veiled over and hindered by prideful reason and separation. The character also configures aspects of the archetypal Great Mother[228] figure in their characterization, which in Dostoevsky, is espoused with pagan elements and looks to *Mat' syra zemlia* or Damp Mother Earth of Slavic paganism as a positive regenerative force. Vladimir Solovyov's mystical visions of Divine Sophia (Divine Wisdom)[229] impacted Dostoevsky's ideas of the ultimate good, a symbiosis of the rational and the mystical.[230]

[228] There was also considerable interest in Jewish mystic tradition and kabbalah both in nineteenth-century writings, mainly through Vladimir Solovyov's philosophy, and in Early Modern England. Elliot R. Wolfson has extensively discussed the concept of androgyny, *sefirot*, and Ein Sof especially in relation to kabbalistic teachings and rabbinic tradition. *Shekhinah*, the divine feminine aspect at least in the early kabbalist writings, was androgynous, but as Wolfson points out, in a distinctly androcentric manner where "the positive aspects of femininity are valenced as masculine and the negative as feminine" (*Language, Eros, Being: Kabbalistic Hermeneutics and Poetic Imagination*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2005, 104), E-book.
[229] As relating to Solvoyov's conception of the idea, see Paul du Quenoy, "Vladimir Solovyov in Egypt: The Origins of the 'Divine Sophia' in Russian Religious Philosophy" in *Revolutionary Russia* 23.2 (2010): 147-58.
[230] In terms of Solovyov's effect on Dostoevsky's fiction, scholars have largely focused on the three Karamazov brothers as oppositional yet interconnected forces that correspond to Solovyov's idea of "integral wholeness," but evaded Solovyov's Kabbalistic thought that prioritizes the feminine aspect of God, and his understanding of the Ein Sof. Dostoevsky had worked the idea of triadic unity and Divine Sophia into his writings as early as the mid-1860s when he was drafting *Crime and Punishment*. In a letter to an unidentified addressee, 28 January 1881, Dostoevsky described his dream of a "full moon which broke into three parts and came together three times" (310), a triadic symbol which captured the attention of notable twentieth century figures like Eliade and Jung. In his 6 June 1959 journal entry, Eliade writes, "We [he and Jung] spoke of several other things: of Dostoevsky's dream [. . .] a dream that Jung interpreted thus: The moon, that is the feminine principle, revealed to Dostoevsky that trinity is not an exclusive mode of 'masculine' Spirit, as Christianity interprets it" (Mircea Eliade, Journal II: 1957-1969, Trans. Fred. H. Johnson, Jr. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989, 41).

In Shakespeare, the dyadic or triadic unities may partially be inspired by Greek philosophy, especially Plato's ideal forms and their manifestations which participate in the ideal. The philosophical angle was perhaps made more appealing by the sociological and political factors that raised interest in androgyny as a way of claiming equality and moved toward the archetypal virtues of femininity such as mercy, patience, temperance, and the overall feminization of society:

> [F]eminists turned to androgyny because in its mystical expression it appeared to explain so suggestively what they regarded as a wholly obvious and demonstrable social fact: that men and women shared common behaviors, attitudes, experiences. The idea of (positive) androgyny also had currency in cotemporary political affairs. Sixteenth-century Europe was governed by powerful women regents; [. . .] Elizabeth I was responsible both directly and through her apologists for an extensive rhetoric of political androgyny.[231]

As a figure prone to malleability and transformation, Shakespeare's new fool contributed to the sexual and gender discourses of the time and played a critical role in the evolving notions of identity. Crossdressing and disguise in the plays are also informed by the specific stories of intersexuality and bisexuality that as Greenblatt says, were a "resonant instance of that Renaissance mediation."[232]

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[231] Constance Jordan, *Renaissance Feminism: Literary Texts and Political Models* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), 137.

[232] Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988, 77). The most popular of such stories was of Marie le Marcis, who lived with Jeane le Febvre in a small town near Rouen in the beginning of the seventeenth century and "one evening, while they were doing the laundry together [. . .] whispered that she was in fact a man" (Greenblatt 73) quickly attracted the attention of not only the townspeople, but also of one of the doctors, Jacques Duval whose *On Hermaphrodites, Childbirth, and the Medical Treatment of Mothers and Children* shows a learned interest in Marin (his later adopted name) and his identification as male. See especially the chapter, "Fiction and Friction," for a discussion of Viola's disguise as Cesario in *Twelfth Night* in the context of Marin's story and for an extensive account of Duval's expert testimony in court which helped the lovers, Marin and Jeane, to be released.

The feminine aspect of Dostoevsky's holy fools and Shakespeare's wise fools manifests itself dynamically in the motif of doubles and extensively, triples, and so forth. Divine Wisdom, therefore, is not a separate element of the female fool existing independently of the male fool-double but is a function of the relationship the unit shares through the ethical gesture of giving, which is prioritized by the ethical fool. Perhaps the reason that comparative scholarship on Shakespeare and Dostoevsky is so sparse is that it is often assumed that Shakespeare's secular world is incompatible with the religious tenor of Dostoevsky's fiction. Dostoevsky's religion, however, like his holy fools, is a self-constructed representation of the forces of life striving against each other, on a micro and macro level, that ultimately yearn for synthesis. Resolutions and last words in Dostoevsky, like Shakespeare's tragic or comic endings, are less so the point than the unyielding labor toward compassion, care, and charity. To society's chagrin, Shakespeare and Dostoevsky's fools possess these attributes that are often conflated with the "sacred," in addition to the seemingly "profane," unexpected, and conventionally "unwomanly" characteristics of wit, verve, and wisdom. The character of the female and queer fool is portrayed as a force to be reckoned with, whose regenerative and caring properties are ironically "othered" in a conventional world that labels them a "degenerate." Shakespeare and Dostoevsky do not neglect such otherness. They establish it as a requisite for ethical-moral awakening as an important step in inclusivity.

Willing Heartily

Heroism as a solitary pursuit is rejected in the early writings of both writers only to be redefined as an act of productive communication and active empathy in an ongoing openness

that sees the other as other and not as self. Dostoevsky's fool becomes more activity-oriented in his last major novel where the figure of the fool is more communal and less comical, thus more realistic and dialogical. The teacher-student formula in the *Brothers Karamazov* most prominently depicted in the Zosima-Aliosha double is kinetic, creating similar doubles that are held together through empathy. Aliosha's consequent activity with his own and the Senigryov family is put in motion at first by Zosima who preaches that he must "go to those [he] has promised to see" (*PSS* 14:155). Aliosha's deeds are the pronouncement of *starets* Zosima's last word on earth. Dostoevsky reiterates an idea he had introduced through Dunya's assertive voice in *Crime and Punishment*, that words are not deeds, but the word (*slovo*) as relationality, love, and care is dynamic. The promise is the manifestation of activity and responsibility, more specifically of "active love" (*deatel'naia liubov'*) taught by Zosima and self-actualized in and through Aliosha, the young fool-in-the-making. In the novel's preamble, "From the Author," Dostoevsky attempts to redefine the fool as the new hero-to-be, leaving it to the reader to comprehend why precisely his new fool is a "hero," what heroism should entail, and why he is contemplative, or as someone who is shown to have achieved a balance of *feeling and thinking* with which so many of the author's "predatory" types have been tasked. In this last developmental stage, which is the *Brothers*, Dostoevsky foregrounds the first part of the aphorism, *feeling* through the poetics of the *heart*, as the ultimate connector to other consciousnesses, and as such, beings-in-the-world. If Dostoevsky's earlier, and in some ways "unsuccessful," fool of the *Idiot* is "forced to bear on his chilled back all the sweetness of a damp Russian November" (*PSS* 8:6) where going to the people is presented as a burdensome but urgent task, the new hero of the *Brothers* is

redefined to "[carry] within himself the very heart of the whole, and the rest of his epoch have for some reason been temporarily torn from it, as if by a gust of wind . . . " (*PSS* 14:5). Dostoevsky's visits to the Optina Pustyn and the *startsy* (elders) whose hesychastic beliefs, preserved in Russia, but also espousing ancient hesychast prophetic aspects going back to eremitical monasticism where the *gerontes* (elder) was later considered *starets* in Russia,[233] no doubt had an effect on his ethics and poetics. Dostoevsky's long-term project consisted of proving how attempts by Raskolnikov and Raskolnikovian manifestations (as well as Hamlet's similar stance which Dostoevsky bemoaned) to separate the heart and the head is an unnatural, even a de-generative exercise.

On a different scale, Dostoevsky's fusion of the mind and heart goes against the customary stance of the Eastern writers, including the Church Fathers, who in an attempt to dissociate themselves from Western "rationalism" take the heart to be the emblem of the human being. In the Greek tradition especially, that unquestionably influenced the Russian, "it is the heart, with which the Spirit is linked, which is the 'seat of the Spirit'."[234] A similar yet secular and politically charged rhetoric dominated the Westernizers of the sixties who in their scorn for German Romantic Idealism and aesthetics rejected any tincture of the metaphysical mission of art. In his new hero-fool, who is both a (silent) thinker but an active doer, in whose "heart there is the secret of renewal for all that will finally establish the truth on earth" (*PSS* 14:29), Dostoevsky integrates the two forces as a natural disposition. The

[233] Many of Dostoevsky's spiritual directions can be explained through the hesychastic tradition and his reverence for navel-gazing or deep prayer, the sacred and its manifestations, the eschatological mysteries of Christianity, and the importance of charity and Divine Wisdom. For a more detailed outlook on the spirituality and monks of the East, see John Meyendorff, *St. Gregory Palamas and Orthodox Spirituality*, Trans. Adele Fiske (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1974).
[234] Spidlik, *The Spirituality of the Christian East*, 103.

mind-heart separation, however, is not as hard and fast as defenders of its popular binarism would like to suggest:

> Speculative by nature, the Greeks did certainly not by mere chance substitute *nous* (reason, mind) for the biblical *lev*, *levav* (heart). According to Gregory of Nazanius the 'clean heart' of Ps 50:2 was the *dianoētikon* (mind). On the contrary, Western medieval spiritual literature contrasted the *cordis affectus* to the *intellectus* and the *ratio*. Thomas Aquinas considered the evangelical counsel to love God wholeheartedly (cf. Lk 5:25) an *actus voluntatis quae hic significator per cor* (an act of the will, which is indicated here by heart). Sooner or later a reaction in favor of 'feelings' was bound to occur, especially in popular piety. And for Theophane the Recluse, 'the part of the heart' or 'the part of feelings' are both one and the same.[235]

As a mysterious concept in the speculative East and especially in Russia, the heart, not as an organ or a faculty, but the point of contact between God and the human is reflected in Dostoevsky's double-meaning of it, which in the phrase, "the very heart of the whole," is rendered as *serdevinu* ("kernel" or "core" of the whole) and not *serdtse* (the word for "heart"). The "heart" seems to be dominating in Dostoevsky's last novel especially because the head of his bilious types has taken the wheel (the most masterful of these types being Ivan Karamazov), an issue Shakespeare's major plays similarly do not downplay. The significant jump from 25 mentions of "heart" in *Hamlet* to 58 in *King Lear*, the latter profusely utilizing phrases like "true hearted," "noble hearted," and "flawed heart," reflects the affective reinforcement in Shakespeare's poetics that crystallize his ethics. Still in the process of enlightenment, Lear endeavors to suppress the heart and therefore to restrain the "mother" that "swells up toward [his] heart," (2.4.62), a "*Hysterica passio*" as he terms it, that needs to be commanded "down, thou climbing sorrow!" (2.4.63). To his consecutively doleful stifling of the heart, "O me, my heart, my rising heart! But down!" the Fool, as a

[235] *Ibid*., 104.

teacher of the heart, instructs and encourages Lear to instead "Cry to it" (2.4.135; 136). Prospero's rebuke of Miranda in *The Tempest*, "Tell your piteous heart / There's no harm done" (1.2.8-9) to her Macbethesque, "O, the cry did knock / against my very heart!" (1.2.15-16) is a similar attempt at suppressing conscience. The oft-resolute attempt by characters to dissociate the mind from the heart in the major plays concomitant with the impulse to coalesce the two under the patronage of the heart exact a confusion that the ethical fool is attempting to clarify and (re)direct. The heart as the principle of unity in Eastern spirituality, which finds its literary and aestheticized reverberations in Dostoevsky, helps us understand Shakespearean unities from a different angle. In challenging Lear's wrathful temperaments to effect a change in his heart, Cordelia notes the mind and heart separation, but only in terms of performativity: "Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave / My heart into my mouth" (1.1.100-101). Not only onomastically a "heart," *Cor*[Latin: "heart"]delia is both intellect and heart. The play avoids leaning toward a timidly angelic status for Cordelia exalted in the Petrarchan poetic tradition of the inactive beloved; instead, the most mistreated daughter exemplifies the first line of Sonnet 94, "They that have power to hurt and will do none" especially toward the end of the play when she does possess external means to hurt her abusers, including Lear, but chooses to act with forgiveness and care.

The "foolosophy" of the heart is uniquely complicated in *Hamlet* where the titular character takes on the role of the fool and is simultaneously the renewee and the renewer. In the last act of the play where Hamlet's conscience is at its most perturbed, he holistically and by default, identifies the heart as the locus of the mind *and* heart, situating the mind *in* heart: "Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting / That would not let me sleep" he tells Horatio

(5.2.4-5). And when telling Horatio he is determined to fight Laertes, something upsets Hamlet's heart-entire, "thou wouldst not think how ill all's here / about my heart" (5.2.226-27), which he speedily discards as, "But it is no matter" (5.2.227). Per usual, the perceptive friend whose advances in care and understanding are mostly curtailed by Hamlet's solipsism and the hero complex, does not get to finish his "Nay, good my lord—" (5.2.228) remark to further indicate that Hamlet's pangs of the heart indeed have matter and that it is "good" to feel "ill" during a haphazardly uncharacteristic moment in the play—an affective charge Hamlet promptly characterizes as "but foolery" (5.2.229). It suitably *is* "foolery," for Hamlet adheres to the avenger persona he constructs and re-constructs in wanting to preserve it "unnaturally," and it *is* "foolery" in the framework of the fool's ethical function that acknowledges heart and conscience. Horatio, whom Hamlet entrusts his own eulogy, understands the prince's "natural" disposition, which he sums up in the word the prince suppressed, engaged with, but with the dictum of which he did not fully comply in deeds: "Now cracks a noble heart" (5.2.397).

Presently a Becoming, in Love

"In most cases the eccentric [*chudak*] is a particularity, a separate element. Isn't that so?" reads the very first page of the *Brothers Karamazov* (*PSS* 14:5), a statement Dostoevsky's entire project that includes his magnum opus was determined to refute through the reconstruction of foolishness and fools. It is a project of inclusivity that looked to revise and challenge conventional views of eccentricity and otherness, advocating a more pivotal role for outcasts in society. Dostoevsky's quintessential term, *strannyi* (odd), amply used in many of his other works, here fittingly transforms into a *chudak* (etymologically the root of

the word is *chudo*, meaning "miracle"), a term signifying oddity, yet even more closely associated with the healer or miracle-worker archetype that in the Russian culturo-religious mind is commonly the saint's surrogate who lives *in* the world.[236] Losing sight of Dostoevsky's secular values and realism in lieu of his Christology is an undemanding task especially in the accompaniment of Shakespeare, but it is precisely this literary comparison that sheds light on the less discernable aspects of each writer. In its reversals, subversions, and the unifying principle of doubling made especially prismatic through multiple versions and types of fools and their appropriate functions, Dostoevsky's project shares with Shakespeare's own novelistic directions that kept redeveloping throughout the latter's career, and predominantly, with theater's transformative and regenerative properties. And in turn, Dostoevsky's literary vision that adapts the idea of the immortality of the soul and bodily resurrection, in conjunction with pagan elements of rebirth and connectivity, helps us navigate more responsively his own dignification of matter and in better consideration of Shakespeare's reorientation of the sacred, which he, like Dostoevsky, unfailingly grounds in human affairs.

The fool's responsibility as the proper activity of care is also an exercise in love, a mystery that is framed in terms of the equally undefined "mission" of the fool. Myshkin's inability, for instance, to put into words as to why he must go to the people from the remote

[236] *Chudak* is a prominent figure in Russian folklore and hagiography that was resurrected in the literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Alexander I's spiritualism especially expanded to the whole of Russia when the country was absorbed in irrationalism and mysticism. For more on *chudak* and *chudachestvo*, especially in the works of the nineteenth century Russian writers, see Albert Opulsky*, Zhitiia sviatykh v tvorchestve pisatelei XIX veka* (Russian Language Journal, Michigan State University, 1986).

village in Switzerland, comprises an essential characteristic of the fool's constantly evolving and charity-driven function:

> Maybe my fate will change completely, but that's all not it and not the main thing. The main thing is that my whole life has changed already. I left a lot there, too much. It's all vanished. I sat on the train thinking: 'Now I'm going to be with the people; maybe I don't know anything, but the new life has come.' I decided to do my duty [*delo*] honestly and firmly. Maybe it will be boring and painful for me to be with people. In the first place I decided to be polite and candid with everybody; no one can ask more of me. Maybe I'll be considered a child here, too—so it be! Everybody also considers me an idiot, for some reason, and in fact I was once so ill that I was like an idiot; but what sort of idiot am I now, when I myself understand that I'm considered an idiot?" (*PSS* 6:64).

The focus on the self quickly shifts to the focus on the other, upholding the relational and communal element of this *delo*, which becomes the core premise of the novel and Dostoevsky's ethics later characterized more lucidly in Aliosha Karamazov's character. Described as "simply an early lover of humanity" (21), this new hero-fool arguably mends certain aspects of the earlier models, while retaining some of their characteristics, though this time, in a balance. The intentionally unfinalized mission of the fool is reiterated in the *Brothers Karamazov*:

> On his arrival in our town, he made no direct reply to the first question of his parent: "And precisely why this visit before you've finished your studies?" but he was, they say, more than usually thoughtful. It soon became clear that he was looking for his mother's grave. [. . .] But this hardly exhausted the reasons for his visit. Most likely he himself did not know and would not at all have been able to explain what it was precisely that suddenly rose up in his soul and irresistibly drew him onto some sort of new, unknown, but already inevitable path. (*PSS* 14:21)

This unfinalizability is also Dostoevsky's response to Hamlet's finalized and constructive mission-driven imperative that hampers the heart and the impulse to actively seek transformation and responsibility. Through Zosima's teachings, Dostoevsky puts the matter of care bluntly: "'we are all responsible to all for all" (*PSS* 14:275); "for all is like an ocean,

all is flowing and blending; a touch in one place sets up movement at the other end of the earth" (*PSS* 14:290); "love is a teacher" (*PSS* 14:290). As custodians of this new truth, which cannot be put into words in an attempt not to finalize, hermetify, or separate it, but allow its abiding wholeness, transfiguration, and thus, uncategorizability, the function of the fool follows the logic of transitive law: the fool is a teacher → love is a teacher → the fool is love.

Paradise is life lived accordingly among and with others in constant labor of annulling "hell," as defined by Zosima in the *Brothers Karamazov*: "Fathers and teachers, I ask myself: 'What is hell?' And I answer thus: 'The suffering of being no longer able to love'" (*PSS* 14:292). Such a specification of hell, and with that, paradise, avoids any ambiguities regarding the two concepts. Underscoring both as exclusively human matters, similar echoes can be heard in Kent's "Freedom lives hence, and banishment is here" (*Lear*, 1.1.205). In a more affective credence, the already-seeing and enlightened Lear as if reconfirms what has been stated again and again by Dostoevsky's person on the scaffold and the fool, that even a brief moment of such meaningful living opens the mind to the heart and knocks against the heart attempting to purge paradise: "No, no, no, no. Come, let's away to prison. / We two alone will sing like birds i' th' cage" (*Lear*, 5.3.9-10). The static nature of the cage is no longer the point, as Lear is already reoriented in terms of a *toward* and not an *at*, a point also reoriented in Dostoevsky's last novel:

> in relation to Aliosha Karamazov: "towards the light of love" (*PSS* 14:17)
> in relation to Dmitri Karamazov: "towards some sort of light [. . .] towards the new beckoning light" (*PSS* 14:457)

and the uncompromisingly ambivalent endings of all his major works.[237] Shakespeare does not yield in this arrangement either, for despite the seemingly conclusive endings of the non-comedies, especially, the futural element abides. Hamlet resists the last word; *The Tempest*'s "unless" and "would" in relation to "mercy" and "free" as the chosen words for an ending that imparts on the audience the delight of interpretation rather than conclusiveness; Gloucester's heart "burst[ing]," but "smilingly" (5.3.235) or Lear's unfinalizable, strange, but promisingly interminable, "Look there, look there!" (5.3.375) before his final breath are the continuity sought and achieved. The evolving function of folly in both Shakespeare and Dostoevsky is regenerating and regenerative, for active love as empathy depends on it. The fool comes; the fool stays; the fool labors, and dwells in care-with-others.

[237] The yet-to-be as the state of *beyng* is perhaps best philosophized by Heidegger in his concept of the last god. Elliot R. Wolfson, "*Gottwesen* and the De-Divinization of the Last God: Heidegger's Meditation on the Strange and Incalculable," in eds. M. Bjork and J. Svenungsson, *Heidegger's Black Notebooks and the Future of Theology*, https://10.1007/978-3-319-64927-6_9 , provides a detailed analysis of Heidegger's last god, arguing that "*beyng* essentially occurs in the manner of time-space as that 'between' which can never be grounded in the god and also not in the human being" (239). Because of its "in-betweenness," the last god, as Wolfson writes, "is continually on the way to coming, the passing, too, must be ongoing; a god that passes is not the god that is passing" (219). The present and futural orientation of the last god is intricately related to Heidegger's idea of *Ruf des Gewissens* (call of conscience) whereby beings are awakened to the truth of Being, which Heidegger thoroughly explores in Division II of *Being and Time*, trans. John MacQuarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., 2008).

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