

June-July Seminar 2019  
NIDA LACAN STUDY AND READING GROUP

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Time: 6-8 pm

Location: Tutorial Room, No.3, NIDA, 215 Anzac Parade

## The Double in Literature: The Case of Dostoevsky

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### Overview

We have allotted two seminars (June-July) to the topic of the double in Dostoevsky's remarkable novella, *The Double*. In the seminars, we will first discuss the foundations of Freud's and Lacan's literary studies, especially the interpretation of fiction—the assimilation of which still need a lot of work in the humanities and literary studies. Even though these two strands of literary hermeneutic refer to the same group of theories, however, they are radically different. Then we will proceed to examine the double doubling as a universal foundation of in the formation of the subjectivity in Freudian and Lacanian theoretical parlance. We will devote a thorough understanding of Freud's seminar essay on 'Dostoevsky and Parricide'. We will underline the limitation of the traditional literary studies in undermining the *signification* in favor of *meaning*. This trend in literary studies came from the fixation of Western metaphysics with meaning. Lacanian literary theory as a broader interdisciplinary study fills this vacuum in literary criticism. This will be followed by a Lacanian reading and analysis of *The Double*. As this novella bears evidence, that Dostoevsky offers an archive for psychoanalysis. An in-depth understanding of the theoretical discourse undoubtedly positions us better to observe minutely a literary text. The essential purpose of this essay is not a demonstration of psychoanalytical theory but an attempt to solve the puzzle of the double and doubling in literature and also assimilate Lacan further in the mainstream of the poststructuralist literary studies with emphasis on the plurality and multi-disciplinary of interpretive and hermeneutical activities. This outlook also testifies the posterity of Lacan's literary theory.

### I. Freud's Psychobiography

At the heart of Freud's methodology of the understanding and criticism of art and literature lies an endless inquiry into psychobiography and psycho-criticism of the artist and the author. The data for analysis is often acquired from a plausible scansion of the structure of the unconscious make-up wherein the indexed documents of the history of infantile experiences of an artist and an author. These indexed experiences play an engendering and constitutive role, as Freud famously claimed that psychoanalysis begins and ends in a child's room.

Freud's style of literary criticism may well be described as a mixture of his dedication to science and traditional metaphysical rationality as well as a poetic language—a style that was culminated later in Lacan's obfuscating psychoanalytic poetics. Jean Starobinski claims in *The Living Eye* that

psychoanalysis enticed literary critics to focus on scientific literary criticism and surrealist writers and artists to explore the archipelagos of the unconscious.

Freud, always careful to avoid both the scientific dryness and the garrulous inventiveness of some of his followers and to engage in constant dialogue with his patient, maintained his mythology midway between the expressive language of poetry and the highly conventionalized quantitative language of science. (Starobinski, 1999, 316)

In Freud's exegetical technique, the text is treated like a site of fictional fantasy in its deep association with the Oedipus complex and infantile sexuality. The theory of the psyche and the unconscious approaches a living human action in conjunction with its dramatizing reflection in a literary text as a patient's discourse reveals what a Freudian analyst demystifies. In Freudian psychoanalytic clinic, the therapy could produce a successful result, only when the resistance on the part of the patient's ego, superego, and id is uninvolved. In *Five Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, in a clear and unpretentious way, Freud defines resistance and repression that stumbling-blocks on the way of therapy by way of an anecdotal example:

Suppose a lecturer finds his students calm and attentive with the exception of one who is frequently and intentionally do everything to interrupt the lecturer. The lecturer announces that he cannot bear this, and he is unable to proceed with the lecture. This prompts a few strong students to act and after some struggle they manage to throw the interrupter outside and then place chairs up against the door in order to prevent the interrupter from re-entering the room. Consequently, the students on the one hand *repressed* the disrupter and put up a *resistance* against his return in future. Such *repression* and *resistance* often take place in a literary discourse too and the critic needs to identify them and remove them from the scene in order to reveal the truth and meaning that is hidden behind conscious and unconscious resistance. Textual resistance takes numerous shapes such as the use of a network of skillful rhetorical devices, overblown fantasies, dreams, verbal extravaganza, spectacular imagery, paraproxes, aporias, irrational and bungle actions, muddled setting, symbols, lies, and so on and so forth. Such resistances always stand out in a literary text in order to cover and misplace the truth and the flow of the underlying desire. Even so these elements might be taken as meaningless and insignificance by traditional critics, but they are taken seriously which strongly support the psychoanalytic interpretation of the text for nothing happens accidentally in the text. For example, the existence and theft of a handkerchief in Shakespeare's tragedy, *Othello* might have been something worthy of discounting in the traditional literary studies, whereas in psychoanalysis this sparks off the key meaning and the purpose of the drama. Like the anonymous letter in Poe's "Purloined Letter," the handkerchief at once discloses the signification of the signifier, which defines and empowers the person who holds this object at hand. The item and its deep meaning uncover what Freud spells out in terms of the latent and the manifest contents of dreams. The manifest content is not merely a meaningless concealment of desire but the manifest designation of the latent content of desire.

Great literary works are so clear about their purpose, about their intentional axis, that is enough to read them with an eye to the meanings with which they are replete, even when the author hesitates between several competing versions. Their meaning lies ahead of them because it lies entirely within them. (Ibid, 318)

Freud brought into his principle concern the psychobiography in order to redraw a 'coherent' structure of desire in a literary text by re-calibrating the textual revelations and the facts of real incidents in the actual life of an author that we will see this later when Freud tries to reconstruct Dostoevsky's neurosis from his text and his documented life story.

To clarify the last point, let us examine Freud's criticism of Leonardo da Vinci's famous painting 'Mona Lisa' on which the painter worked for four years. Freud tries to integrate what is on display—the unfathomable smile in the painting—with Leonardo's childhood experiences before he determines his theoretical observation of the painting. Freud first considers the views of former critics of the famous painting and then proclaims that the apparent portrait of Mona Lisa del Giocondo was a reproduction of the picture of John the Baptist in the Louvre and the face of Mary in the "Madonna and Child with St Anne. The idiosyncratic feature of the da Vinci's painting is "the subtle details of the features on this lady's face with such sympathetic feeling that he transferred its traits—in the face that he painted or drew afterwards," (Freud, 1989, 202). For Freud the endlessly mysterious smile in the face of the woman holds the key for the interpretation of the painting which shows the obsessive fixation of Leonardo on the ideal lady that goes back to the infantile experience of the painter himself. Keeping Marie Herzfeld's analysis of the painting in mind, Freud lays emphasis.

It may very well have been that Leonardo was fascinated by Mona Lisa's smile for the reason that it awoke something in him which had for long lain dormant in his mind—probably an old memory. This memory was of sufficient importance for him never to get free of it when it had once been aroused; he was continually forced to give it new expression. (Freud, 1989, 203)

Freud draws attention to the spellbinding effect of the smile which was expressed by the painter and those who gazed at the painting for more than four hundred years. The universal glorification of the motherhood is the riddle that the great painter is seeking in order to give back to his own mother that familiar mysterious smile. Freud discovers a double meaning that the mysterious smile: 'the promise' of namely, "the unbounded tenderness" and "sinister menace". The tenderness 'determined his destiny' and the ominous 'sinister menace' perhaps the deprivation and the loss of that 'tenderness'. Keeping in mind the portraits of children and women in da Vinci's other paintings, he concludes that, "if the beautiful children's heads were reproduction of his own person as it was in his childhood, then the smiling women are nothing other than repetitions of his mother Caterina, and we begin to suspect the possibility that it was his mother who possessed the mysterious smile—the smile that he had lost and that fascinated him so much when he found it again in the Florentine lady," (Ibid, 205). The blissful and tendering mother "like all unsatisfied mothers, she took her little son in place of her husband, and by the too early maturing of his erotism [*sic*] robbed him of a part of his masculinity," (209). Thus, the painter and Freud share the belief that the repressed unconscious material erupts in adult life as symptoms and as art.

## II. Lacan: Textual Hermeneutics

In "*Le réel dans le texte*," published in *Littérature*; Vol. 3, 1971, Serge Leclaire reverberates the foundation of the final phase in Lacan's critical theory vis-à-vis a literary text in a more straightforward and accessible ways, even though some Lacanians might have presumed that Leclaire isn't an authority for the understanding of late Lacan.

The work of the psychoanalyst is defined by one imperative: *to unmask the real*. His goal is to reveal the inconceivable place in which anxiety unfolds, to shine light into the crack inn which ecstasy hides. It is in the locus of the impossible that the psychoanalyst locates the object as nameless index of the real. (Leclaire, 1999, 320)

The real in Lacanian theory is the unanalyzable kernel, the *objet petite a*, the object cause of desire or the site of *jouissance* that shows itself in a variety of fault-lines in the texture of the text that is

absconding from meaning and signification. In a nutshell, a reading of the above index in a literary text would be the primal function of psychoanalytical reading and the interpretation of literature. In other words, such a textual catalogue is “both as a system of representations and a locus of the psychic apparatus, upon which “unconscious memory traces are inscribed and arranged in accordance with a logic that might be called the logic of desire,” (Ibid, 320-321). The real is that object as a pure signifier (without a signified), which is impossible to decipher for it remains beyond our direct ‘grasp’. Unlike Derrida’s radicalization of deconstructive critical model who prescribes in *Of Grammatology* that there is nothing outside the text, *il n’y a pas de hors-texte*, Lacanian literary theory by contrast allows for the constant play of the subject and the dynamism of the unconscious in the text that makes the production of the real or traces and residues of the real possible in a literary text.

I would like here to synopsise the significant points of Leclaire’s essay with my accent on Lacanian phraseology:

At the beginning, the author endeavors to clarify the unconscious text in terms of the substrate that represents the bodily erogenous zones with their processes which is constituted and encrypted by the subject’s libidinal economy, in which the drives of life and death are living in permanent conflict, as he writes that these zones embodies “a correct place for the unconscious text, the erogenous or libidinal corpus or “double” traditionally known as soul  $\eta \psi \chi \eta$ ,” (321). These traces or the referents of the real exist as disruption to the orderly and lawful stream of language. Thus, this is the rightful function of psychoanalysis and I must say Lacan’s insight to consider and analyse the relationship between the ‘action of writing’ and the inscription of the unconscious text. This interaction produces what Leclaire calls ‘the indelible breach[es]’ of the real that we have just discussed. Behind all this, the ‘libidinal activity of the subject’ for instance serves as the driving engine of the resurfacing the ‘nameless index of the real’ in the literary text.

From the standpoint that the psychoanalyst necessary adopts, the activity of writing can thus be seen as an attempt to re-produce or re-present (*sic*) the unconscious text—an attempt whose obligatory failure establishes the rules intrinsic to the practice of writing.” (321-322)

1. The real builds the logic of the unconscious text. The object-cause of desire and shall I say the insistence of *jouissance* cause the rise of disruption, breach or a leeway in relation to castration all in order to put a temporary disorder in the stability of the signifying chain or order of the letters and signifiers in the text. Nevertheless, the real as a disruption to order and textual harmony is inscribed in terms of an “*erasure, a suture of the breach.*” (322)
2. The act of writing is in fact the writing of the order of signifiers and letters whereby the unconscious and libidinal economy of the subject often brings “the absolutely other, or the real (lack, anxiety, *jouissance*), in a literary order in which the quasi-fetishized materiality of the text takes the place and function assumed by the real object (the object as unnamed index of the real ) in the reference text constituted by the unconscious corpus.” (322)
3. A literary text produces the real as “a spider’s web takes charge of the space that organizes and in which it unfurls its trap,” (322). The act of writing allows for such playfulness of the text in hiding and revealing the real in different ineffable ways of disruption, rearrangement and transposing, and etc.

4. Writing is always an attempt to veil the real in a text, but this act falls short of achieving its goal in postmodern literary texts. That is the reason that in Joyce, Beckett, Mallarme and others the text catalogue a myriad of the traces of the real and its associated *jouissance*.

Writing is first of all an impossible attempt to master the unconscious text. But perhaps it is in the very impossibility of what he attempts that the writer truly discovers the real. (323)

## The Double and Doubling in Mirror

The notion of the *double* and *doubles* in psychoanalysis implies the imaginary fixation of the ego with its alter-ego (the *I* and specular *I*, the ego and specular). Lacan theorizes in his essays on the mirror stage and in a topological term in “The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic Desire” and elsewhere. Freud talks about the concept of the double in his essay, “The Uncanny”. The recurrence of the drama of the doubling as a general characteristic of subjectivity, *I* and *Thou*, *the two of us*, *I* and God, the body and soul, *I* and the devil, the self and other has always been dramatized in different forms in literature and poetry. The relationship between these entities is always plagued with love, hate, rivalry and so on. Shakespeare gives us a typical comic portrayal of the *double*: the twin brothers, Antipholus of Syracus and his missing twin brother, Antipholus of Ephesus in *The Comedy of Errors*. We may well sum up a nutshell what he meant for the *double*.

1. Lacan presents his theory of Mirror Stage as an antithesis to the autonomous identity of Cartesian Cogito. According to this the, the visual imagery is the first encounter of the human infant in its preverbal stage. The implication of this sustains itself throughout the adult life. In extreme and symptomatic cases of such a fixation, the double becomes a recurrent preoccupation that shows itself in different guises. An infant (6-18 months) develops and recognizes his own identification on the ground of an infantile jubilant and playful libidinal experience of the self and an idealized mental image from outside or to be more precise between the images of the self and an idealized image from outside that duplicates the reality of the self. Lacan defines these two entities as ego-ideal (superego) and ideal-ego (imago), the image and specular image, *Innenwelt* and *Umwelt* and so on. Through the process of such a playful identification of the *I* with the mirror image or the *I* with the *other*, which Lacan identifies as the ‘dialectic of identification’—misrecognized, and alienated identification it objectifies itself as a secondary identification before the emergence of the social *I* in the symbolic.

But the important point is that this form situates the agency known as the ego, prior to its social determination, in a fictional direction that will forever remain irreducible for any single individual or rather, that will only asymptotically approach the subject’s becoming, no matter how successful the dialectical syntheses by which he must resolve, as *I*, his discordance with his own reality. (Lacan, 2006, 76)

2. Influenced by Otto Rank, Freud theorizes the doubling as the recurrence of the primary narcissism where the strange double of the self evolves as a reincarnation of the old but familiar self. Freud explores the traces of double in mythology and religion in detail in

his essay as a part of defense and denial against the power of death. Freud examines the double in Hoffmann's short fiction, "The Sandman," as a typical obsessional neurosis that brings the long forgotten infantile experience in the adult life.

The idea of the 'double' does not necessarily disappear with the passing of primary narcissism, for it can receive fresh meaning from the later stages of the ego's development. (Freud, 1988, 357)

The notion of the *double* and *doubles* in psychoanalysis implies the imaginary fixation of the ego with its alter-ego (the *I* and specular *I*, the ego and specular). Lacan theorizes in his essays on the mirror stage and in a topological term in "The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic Desire" and elsewhere. Freud talks about the concept of the double in his essay, "The Uncanny". The recurrence of the drama of the double pairs such as, *I* and *Thou*, *the two of us*, *I* and God, the body and soul, *I* and the devil, the self and other, the dead and the ghost has always been dramatized in different forms in literature and art. The relationship between these entities is always plagued with love, hate, rivalry and so on. Shakespeare gives us a typical comic portrayal of the *double*: the twin brothers, Antipholus of Syracuse and his missing twin brother, Antipholus of Ephesus in *The Comedy of Errors*. We may well sum up a nutshell what he meant for the *double*. The notion of double thus is a universal pre-existing imaginary operation behind the primary and pre-verbal identification of the subject that insists throughout the life. In extreme cases when the subject integrates its psychical system in the symbolic order, it become a symptom. As aftereffect of a psychic mechanism that Freud called *nachträglichkeit*, deferred action, infantile experience transforms into series of traumatic memories that returns in the adult life. The trauma arises from the inability of the infant to reach outside the mirror image—specular image and remain as irreducible traumatic experiences of unsuccessful identification in the mirror stage. The traumatic experience of failure of identification is predominantly centered on interaction between an image, the image of the self, reflected in the mirror, and an idealized image (ideal-ego). The idealized image in the mirror is the image that subject recognizes the image of his own self and internalizes it as oneself par excellence. Thus, the identification is constituted on the image from outside. The circulation of the images including the internalization of the outside image put the subject in a perpetual rivalry with oneself. At the bottom of this imaginary or primary identification lies misrecognition and ambivalence. Such a jubilant and even ecstatic see-saw between ideal-ego (ideal *I*) and the social *I* of the subject that finds re-enactment in literature in multiple visual manifestations of the doubling.

## Freud's Fyodor: Psychobiography in Action

Freud is eager to draw a clinical portrayal of Dostoevsky's neurosis that emerges from the unconscious expression of the known facts of his real life and the texture of the unconscious expressions in his fiction: sadomasochism, guilt, imaginative fantasies, obsession with gambling, just like the discourse of his favorite patients disclosed. Among other things, he devoted a profound study to the oedipal riddle in Dostoevsky's text.

At the outset of his essay, "Dostoevsky and Parricide," he summarizes the complexity of Dostoevsky as a man of many parts: the creative artist, neurotic, the sinner, and the moralist. For defining Dostoevsky's great art, he has no doubt, but for dealing with the question of 'the creative artist' and the question of creativity—as he names it later in the essay as 'unanalyzable artistic gift'—according to Freud, psychoanalysis has no other choice but to 'lay down its arms'.

Freud catalogues Dostoevsky in that category of moralists who indulge in the penance after the crime was done. He relates the source of this trait in Dostoevsky to the traditional Russian characteristic that Ivan the Terrible symbolized. A sense of morality for Freud was often a practical and instantaneous human temptation and response against any wrongdoing. In this sense, Dostoevsky's heavy remorse and standard of morality is subdued to the powerful demands of the instinct for crime, making the author captive of a tyrannical and castigatory superego as the sadomasochistic self-punishment of most of his major heroes reveals. In such cases, the ego and the superego come apart where the ego turns masochistic and the superego turns sadistic. Later in the essay Freud concludes that the ego and superego both take up the role of father. This propensity urges the author to submit to the moral authority of Christ, Tsar, and Russian nationalism. Freud categorizes Dostoevsky as a sinner and criminal and draw this conclusion from Dostoevsky's overpowering guilt and masochism—as he saw the passion for self-punishment at the hearts of all crimes. Moreover, Freud draws parallels between Dostoevsky's life episode and his fictional characters, as he states that the author's "choice of material, which singles out from all others violent murderous and egoistic characters, thus pointing to the existence of similar tendencies within himself, and also from certain facts in his life, like his passion for gambling and his possible confession to a sexual assault upon a young girl," (Freud, 1989, 442). Dostoyevsky's neurosis on the other hand for Freud was unfolded by the author's epilepsy. However, he shows a degree of skepticism in Dostoevsky's epilepsy.

Freud suggests Dostoevsky's epilepsy as a mixture of mental life disturbances and hysteria of the affective types that he names as 'affective' epilepsy. In this, Freud seems to handle the Russian writer in the same way as he treated Wolfman. This might have been a result of compulsive interest in psychobiography. Indeed, Dostoevsky's real life was no less vertiginous than the life of his protagonist. Both seemed to be like characters in a wild Artaudian drama. He was fifteen when his mother died, three years later, his ruthless father was murdered by his own serfs. Dostoevsky was imprisoned in 1849 and sentenced to death but pardoned at the last moment. He spent four years at Siberian prison camp and then he was condemned for a compulsory military service. Dostoevsky was a compulsive gambler who has reflected his gambling experience in his novel *The Gambler*. Even though Freud seems, as hinted above close to deny Dostoevsky's epilepsy, later he examines the earliest epileptic experiences of the author from where he draw conclusion that Dostoevsky had developed a pathological fear of death, "His brother Andrey tells us that even when he was quite a young Fyodor used to leave little notes about before he went to sleep saying that he was afraid he might fall into this death-like sleep during the night and therefore begged that his burial should be postponed for five days," (Ibid, 447). Freud interprets Dostoyevsky's obsession with identification with a dead person or a living person who is wished dead. This is reflected in the author's "self-punishment for a death-wish against a hated father." (447) Freud refers all these facts in Dostoevsky's actual life to the processes that constitute Oedipus complex and castration in the relationship of a child his parents.

Nonetheless, Freud is keen to psychoanalyze epilepsy and its bipolarity. Epilepsy is often associated with moments of ultimate feeling of liberation and bliss and moments of cruel punishments in terms of fits and convulsions—the kind of bipolarity of bliss and mourning "in the brothers of the primal horde who murdered their father, and we find it repeated in the ceremony of the totem meal," (451). Freud attributes Dostoevsky's lack of epileptic seizures when he was in Siberia to the fact that there he was already punished in other way. He further oedipalizes criminality by asserting that the superego of criminals saves the right to punishment by pursuing of such chastisements.

Strange as it may seem, Freud takes a step further when he investigates the oedipal residues in Dostoevsky's self-confessed overriding feeling of unknown guilt and even saw this as the key to his epilepsy as a makeover of the author's hysteria whereby the author's epileptic seizures were re-enacting the "the comedy of killing which his attacks had so often represented in *play*. Here penitence gained the upper hand." (451) . Such a feeling that Freud saw at the heart of universal human religious feelings—the creation of the universal human unconscious oedipal law-breaking—have been reflected by Dostoevsky when he portrays his character, Ivan Karamazov who knowingly avoided to prevent his own father's murder by Smerdyakov in his great novel, *The Brothers Karamazov*. Smerdyakov is the closest to Ivan and learns philosophy from him and the inevitability of the evil. Freud perceives this to justify and authenticate his most cherished universal oedipal archetype as a root cause behind the writing of three outstanding masterpieces in the world's literature, *The Oedipus Rex*, *Hamlet*, and *The Brothers Karamazov*. In first, the son unknowingly murders his father and in the second the uncle of Hamlet did the task and in the third, the murder is committed by the epileptic step brother of the hero.

It can scarcely be owing to chance that three of the masterpieces of literature of all time—the Oedipus Rex of Sophocles, Shakespeare's Hamlet and Dostoevsky's The Brothers Karamazov moreover, the motive for the deed, sexual rivalry for a woman, is laid bare. (453)

Freud traces similar motives in Dostoevsky's proverbial passion for gambling which wasn't for the want of money but for a sense to see himself at an utter loss and thereby punish himself. The passion for gambling was his first sign and repeated losing on the gaming-table the second sign of Dostoevsky's unconscious satisfaction from a harsh self-punishment. He loved to stand humiliated to the core before the watchful eyes of his wife.

He could then scold and humiliate himself before her [his wife], invite her to despise him and to feel sorry that she had married such an old sinner, and when he had thus unburdened his conscience, the whole business would begin again next day. (457-458)

We always find Dostoevsky's characters entrapped in the Hellfire of despair, endless suffering—virtually a death that he desired. An unnamed hero of *Notes From Underground* is a typical example whose sense of guilt is morphed into a nihilism that "masks a pathological submissiveness," (Frank, 2012). This is a situation that Terry Eagleton defines as evil in his book, *On Evil*. This is a situation and a universalized trait of the trap of guilt that Freud hypothesized as the foundation of Oedipalization. Father Zosima in *The Brothers Karamazov*, a Platonic *Agathos kai Sophos* [wise and good], a perfect example of the Archetypal figure of a wise old man in Jungian analytical psychology, declares in the novel that, "They [the damned] shall burn everlastingly in the flames of their own hatred, and long for death for non-being. But death shall not be granted them," (Dostoevsky cited in Eagleton, 2010, 117).

## *The Double: The Self and its Specular-Image*

Golyadkin Sr. & Golyadkin Jr.

Dostoevsky's protagonist in *The Double* dramatizes a typical example and a textbook case for Lacan's mirror stage in the world literature. The author embarks on playing the game of *doubling*. The protagonist is the weirdest of men who is disoriented with himself and the world. He is

ensnared in an abyss of a narcissistic and libidinal double-bind between his own self and an idealized self. In an imaginary setting, he is lacking a fixed identity and never is capable of getting outside the mirror. This imaginary lure for Dostoevsky, as a master psychologist, was the emergence of an unescapable unconscious conflict that flared up as a result of the self in its intra-subjective and inter-subjective dimension, as he once wrote to his brother, “the inward will take too dangerous a sweep upwards...Nerves and fantasy will take up too much room.” (Dostoevsky cited in Rosenthal, 1989, 60). The source of Dostoevsky’s knowledge of profound psychology comes from his own self-analysis. He is a rare kind of writer whose text goes beyond Barthes’ death of the author. His text and his personae are not separated from the author’s person. That is the reason that why we can’t stop reading his text without retroactively looking at his real-life story.

The protagonist, Golyadkins that is later broken into two persons, Golyadkins Sn., and Golyadkins Jn., mends his traumatic split of identity by choosing to live in the world as two persons. This makes him a spectacle to be seen by others. He also begs others to determine a sense unified identity for himself, as Dostoevsky tells us about Golyadkins’s obsession with the mirror in the first page of the novella.

Mr. Golyadkin twitched his eyes shut again, as though regretting his recently-ended slumbers and wishing to recall them for a moment. But an instant later, having in all likelihood at last stumbled upon the one idea about which his scattered and inconsequent thought had been revolving, he bounded out of bed, and ran to a small round mirror standing on the chest of drawers. Although the sleepy, weak-sighted and rather bald images reflected was of so insignificant a character as to be certain of commanding no great attention at a first glance, its possessor remained well pleased with all that he beheld in the mirror. (TD:3)

*The Double* probes a regenerating human inner-conflict, the staple of Dostoyevsky’s themes in his fiction. The novella was written when Dostoyevsky was still of twenty-four years of age and this gave a writer the passion to express his desire in the text in a crude and unblemished way. This is the case for all great writers who put their real being in their texts best in their early works. A writer’s mature works even though showing artistry and workmanship, bury the truth under the multiple layers of superfluities and paradoxes. This was probably known by the author himself who thirty years after writing the novella wrote, “I have never pursued a more serious idea in my entire career as a writer.” (Dostoevsky cited in Rosenthal, 1989, 60)

As it was hinted above, at the heart of doubling is fantasy and the passion of the imaginary. The novella shows an exceptional fascination for panoramic depiction of the setting the city of Petersburg in the nineteenth-century. The Dostoevsky’s hero is like the protagonist of Proust, *In Search of Last Time*, is fallen into ‘*le néant*’, ‘the abyss of not-being’, from which, he says he could never escape by himself,” (Jordan, 2001, 100). Golyadkin sees his own image in the image of the others and also desire to be seen in his ideal double. However, this relation is plagued with dual tendencies of love and hate. This is the underlying condition in narcissism in which the subject takes a dual path of libidinal attachment, love and aggressivity. Dostoevsky’s work is a fantastic example of literary cohabitation of the two images of the split of the self, projected on a fantasized image from outside.

*The Double* is about an individual’s failure to develop and maintain his own sense of his self. Since the senior Golyadkin’s identity is dependent upon the validation of others, his double’s intrusion into every aspect of his external or social world result in his ceasing to exist. In essence a narcissistic nightmare has been created.” (Rosenthal, 1989, 60)

Dostoevsky prefers not to wait for his hero to unfold himself through action. In his minute observation, the author forthrightly says everything while introducing his characters at the outset. From the opening sentences of the novella we are introduced to a strange person, Golyadkin who wakes up in his dull, sooty, and small room in morning but unsure whether he is still in sleep or in the midst of a 'disordered' dream. This doubt later grows when he is uncertain about himself if he is being really himself, "it really isn't me, it *isn't* me," (TD: 8). "He was neither dead nor alive, but somewhere in between." (23) "more dead than alive," (33). "Mr. Golyadkin wanted not only to escape from himself, but to annihilate himself completely, to return to dust and cease to be." (39)

In the second chapter, when he meets his doctor, the conversation between the doctor and his patient shows us that Golyadkin is an unflawed bohemian, deeply depressed, lonely, and a reserved person.

But you must follow my instructions, you know. I told you your treatment must take the form of a change of habits. Amuse yourself, visit your friends and acquaintances, don't grudge yourself a bottle occasionally, and keep gay company...you must radically reform your whole life, and in a sense change your character completely...Don't fight shy of gay life...Go to theatres, go to a club, and in any case don't be afraid of occasional glass. It is no use staying at home." (TD: 10-11)

When the doctor is about to write him a new prescription, Golyadkin insists that he doesn't need one and then his whole body showed signs of impulsiveness.

A peculiar change came over Mr. Golyadkin. His grey eyes flashed with strange fire, his lips trembled, all his muscles and features twitched and disarranged themselves. His whole body shook violently. Having followed his first impulse in arresting the doctor's hand, Mr. Golyadkin now stood stock-still as though lacking self-assurance, and awaiting inspiration for further action. ..Golyadkin's second impulsive action. His lips trembled, his chin quivered, and quite unexpectedly, he burst into tears. Sobbing, bobbing his head up and down... (TD: 14)

The topic of conversation suddenly changes when he fearfully spoke in a whisper that closely bears upon his mental breakdown: "I have enemies, Doctor, I have enemies. I have deadly enemies who have sworn to ruin me..." (14). When the doctor asks him who his enemies were? he refused to name them. In third chapter, we find the paranoid Golyadkin, wandering and restless who is going from one shop to another pretending to buy almost everything and bargaining with shopkeepers, promising them he would return with deposits. Finally, when he gets back to his carriage to head for home after spending hours in the street, we find out that he spent only one and half roubles for a pair of gloves and a bottle of perfume. His craziness grows when Golyadkin's words and agitated body moving violently together and we understand from his broken sentences that he had suffered a humiliation when he went uninvitedly to the birthday party of Klara Olsufyevna, but he was escorted out.

At chapter five, Golyadkin see a strange man who was "dressed and muffled exactly' like him from head to foot," (TD:41). The man rapidly disappears but later coming closer to him again. He was alarmed when he saw the man closely. He seemed to be a familiar person who was frequently seen by him. Golyadkin "knew this man perfectly well, knew his name even. But again, not for all the tea in China would he have spoken his name or been willing to admit that that over there was so-and-so who father was so-and-so," (TD: 42). Later he catches the sight of the stranger who was walking a few yards away on the same direction that he was walking.

Golyadkin sees that the mysterious man knocks at the door of his flat and steps in the very room where he lives. It was all hallucination. The stranger, his shadow and no one else but himself.

And small wonder. He had fully recognized his friend of the night. It was none other than himself—Mr. Golyadkin...Another Mr. Golyadkin, but exactly the same as him...it was, in short, his double... (TD:44)

Next day when he wakes up he remembers the horror of the previous day and he finds that his servant Petrushka bring the morning tea a bit later than the usual time, his suspicion grew. As his servant unusually refused to make an eye contact with him, he is rather astounded, and his paranoia increases. When Golyadkin goes to his office he sees the stranger standing by his desk and then his boss asks him to sit down opposite the stranger.

Sitting opposite, was the terror of Mr. Golyadkin, the shame of Mr. Golyadkin, his nightmare of the day before in short, Mr. Golyadkin himself; not the one who was now sitting on his chair with mouth agape and a dry pen in his hand. (TD:48)

But this man is another Golyadkin, “with the same height, same build, dressed the same, bald in the same place, in short, the resemblance was perfect; nothing, absolutely nothing had been omitted, so that had they been stood side by side, not a soul would have undertaken to say who was the real Mr. Golyadkin, and who the counterfeit, who the old, and who the new, who the original and who the copy.” (Ibid) [the rest may be obtained from the author.]

## **Notes:**

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