

ARTICLE

Hesitation, Projection and Desire: The Fictionalizing 'as if...' in Dostoevskii's Early Works

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Dostoevskii's narrators play a key role in creating a sense of ambiguity and uncertainty in his texts that has been associated stylistically with the presence of 'as if' phrases. This article uses concordances to identify and examine patterns of usage of 'as if' that indicate a shift to an unreal condition and introduce the imaginative dimension that underlies all fiction. The analysis focuses on three early works – the unfinished *Bildungsroman*, *Netochka Nezvanova*, the slight 'month in the country' story, 'Malen'kii geroi', and the over-wrought Gothic tale 'Khoziaika' – where one particular 'as if' phrase (*kak budto*) is used with heightened frequency. It identifies a three-stage process whereby 'as if' is used by the narrators of these texts to reflect on the self as narrator or focalizer, relate to the other, and project the other back on the self. It argues that this schema relates the development of Dostoevskian self-consciousness both to childhood perception, and the role of the fantastic in his works.

From unrepentant confessors and tellers of tall tales to embodied chroniclers, Dostoevskii's narrators have long been a focus of critical attention (Grossman, Jackson, Miller, Bakhtin *Problems*, Matlaw, Coetzee, Moore, Egeberg, Jones 'Narrator', Martinsen, Young *Ethical Foundations*, Ruttenburg, Stromberg, Barsht). Exhibiting every variety of unreliability, these narrators are fundamental to the instability and ambiguity of Dostoevskii's fictional world. The stylistics associated with Dostoevskian ambiguity have been examined by Arutiunova, whose analysis of the 'seeminglyness' (*kazhimost'*) of subjective impressions focuses on the use of *kak by* ('as if'), alongside indefinite pronouns and adjectives of uncertainty in *Brat'ia Karamazovy* (*The Brothers Karamazov*, 1880). More recently, Barros García, assessing the complex interplay of real and unreal elements in Dostoevskii's narrative, has identified 'as if' phrases (both *kak by* and *kak budto*),¹ used in conjunction with 'suddenly' (*vdrug*), as fundamental markers

¹ *Kak by* and (*kak budto*) are the two most commonly used 'as if' phrases in Russian. Although not interchangeable, the differences between them are of nuance rather than type. *Kak by* is more conversational (and is sometimes considered 'bad style'). It can be used within a narrative to indicate oral form, or to create a sense of intimacy with the reader. It also implies approximation rather than comparison. (*Kak budto*) has a wider range of uses, as unlike *kak by* it can be employed in complex constructions. It tends to be used for more concrete comparisons, but at the same time can introduce an element of doubt or of the unreal. The choice between *budto* and *kak budto* is a stylistic one; in terms of effect, *budto* generally appears more dynamic, speeding up the narrative, whilst *kak budto* has the opposite effect of slowing it down or inserting a pause.

of ambiguity that catch the characters mid-thought and embed the creative process in the text (*Dostoevskii i ego sposoby*). Yet if, in itself, 'art is an as if' (Blanchot 19), and the 'as if' introduces a fantastic or unreal element (Todorov 79–80), then it is far more than simply a textual marker; 'as if' represents the mode of story-telling itself. The aim of the present article is to show how Dostoevskii integrates ambiguity, hesitation and the unreal in his own artistic development through the use of 'as if' phrases. It argues that his first-person narrators' lack of knowledge of events and of the inner lives of the characters introduces a process of imaginative reconstruction without which their story cannot be told. As such, it addresses the implications of the unreal in shaping the narrative voice. Focusing on less-discussed early works that nevertheless represent important stages in the shaping of Dostoevskii's mature novelistic voice, it proposes a connection between the type of story-telling introduced by 'as if' and the development of Dostoevskian self-consciousness, to advance a new understanding of the author's 'fantastic realism'.

Extrapolating from what is seen to how it is interpreted, and substituting concrete knowledge with analogies, 'as if' phrases become routes into the imaginary for both narrators and characters. They centralize questions of perception and doubt and seek solutions beyond the so-called objective realm. Hans Vaihinger's *The Philosophy of As If*, written towards the end of Dostoevskii's lifetime but not published until 1911, posits 'as if' (*als ob*) as the necessary fictionalization used to construct knowledge and access truth indirectly, primarily by analogy. He defines fictions as ideational constructs that are 'not only in contradiction with reality but self-contradictory in themselves' (Vaihinger 29–30, 16).² The relationship this proposes between 'as if' and the non-real worlds of fiction more generally has been explored by Iser (130–57) and Kermode (39–41). Its relevance for Dostoevskii's works has not previously been touched upon, but the sense of self-contradiction Vaihinger identifies with 'as if' is inherent to Dostoevskii's dualistic conception of human nature. Indeed, the inclusion within the 'as if' of 'an impossible or unreal assumption' (Vaihinger 93) means that it can almost be read as Dostoevskii's artistic and personal *credo*. His famous confession of faith in his letter to Natal'ia Fonvizina of 1854 represents a startling example of the idea of 'the cognitive work space opened up when some thing that is "given" (i.e., "real, true") is considered in the light of an "unreal" or "impossible" condition' (Stampfl 450). In this letter, Dostoevskii orientates himself deliberately towards the symbol rather than the real: 'even if someone were to prove to me that Christ lay outside the truth, and it really was the case that the truth lay outside Christ, I would rather remain with Christ than with the truth.' (28.i: 176) As a 'symbol of faith', the ability 'to believe that there is nothing more beautiful, more profound, more attractive, more reasonable, more courageous and more perfect than Christ' (ibid.), marks a leap into the unreal that has serious ethical implications for Dostoevskii the person. A similar leap beyond the real in his fiction, privileging the imaginary and the subjective in order to access other worlds and hidden knowledge, enables the author to develop the bounds of his so-called 'fantastic realism' (Jones, *Dostoyevsky After Bakhtin* 1–31; Young 'Fantastic'). The 'as if' for Dostoevskii operates not only on the external level of fictional creation; internally within the fiction, it is also used by his characters as knowing (or, to be more accurate, frequently not-knowing) subjects, bringing the fictionalizing process into the text. It is this internal dimension that marks out Dostoevskii's use of the 'as if' from that defined by Iser or Kermode.

² The presence in German of subjunctive verb forms, which in the written language should accompany the *als ob*, create a stronger sense of the subjunctive mood than in Russian, where there is no such separate verb form. While the subjunctive itself in German suggests in the present a suspension of decision or belief, and in the past something illusory or impossible, Russian by contrast depends on the conditional particle *by* and phrases such as 'as if' to convey similar moods.

Within Dostoevskii's corpus,³ usage of the two main 'as if' phrases, (*kak budto* (2278 occurrences) and *kak by* (2087 occurrences), exhibits a very clear pattern: in the early works, (*kak budto* predominates, and although *kak by* ultimately takes over after *Prestuplenie i nakazanie* (*Crime and Punishment*, 1866), the relative frequency of the latter phrase remains much lower than its earlier counterpart.⁴

The much higher relative frequency of (*kak budto*, particularly in the early works, and the general decrease in the use of 'as if' terms overall in Dostoevskii's mature oeuvre, is perhaps surprising, as we might more readily associate the type of speculative, imaginative construction indicated by 'as if' with the partial knowledge of the gossipy narrator-chroniclers who feature in his later novels. What, then, is the significance of the strong presence of (*kak budto* in the early works? What is the effect of its fictionalizing, subjective connotations on the construction of his early characters' and narrators' consciousness?

In order to answer those questions and assess the significance of the 'as if's fictionalizing qualities for the development of Dostoevskii's novelistic form, the present analysis will address the three early fictional texts where *budto* is most pronounced: *Netochka Nezvanova* (1849), 'Malen'kii geroi' ('A Little Hero', written 1849, published 1857), and 'Khoziaika' ('The Landlady', 1847). Across this micro-corpus, *budto* is the 26th most frequently used word, considerably elevated from its position as the 110th most frequent word in the larger corpus of Dostoevskii's works. In each of these three early texts, a similar dynamic is apparent, as (*kak*

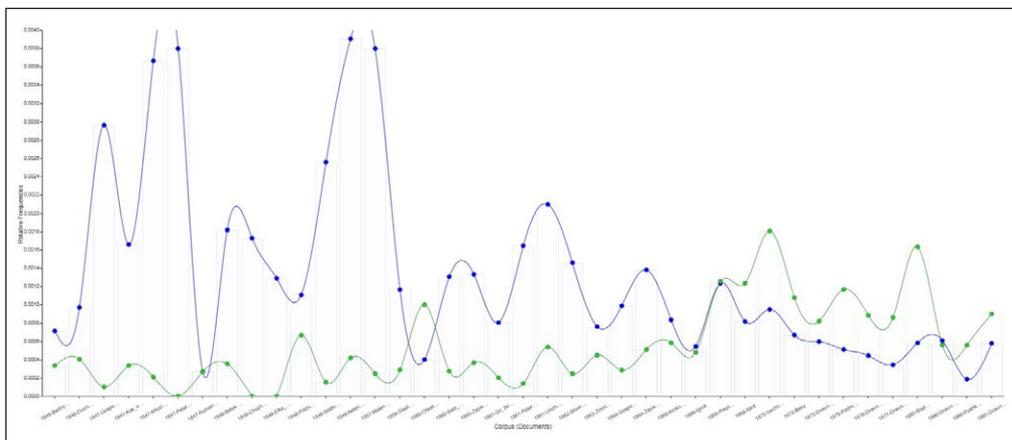


Figure 1: Relative frequency of *budto* and *kak by* in Dostoevskii's corpus.⁵

³ In building a corpus of Dostoevskii's works for concordance analysis, I have excluded correspondence, and most of the author's short and incidental journalistic pieces from the 1860s and 70s. Other non-fictional texts, however, have been included, on the basis that works like *Zimnie zametki o letnikh vpechatleniakh* (*Winter Notes on Summer Impressions*, 1863) and *Dnevnik pisatel'ia* (*Diary of a Writer*, 1873–80) construct narrative voices and experiment with fictionality in a very similar way to his novels and short stories. Textual variants have also been excluded from the main corpus, although some of these are discussed in the analysis below.

⁴ Other synonyms for 'as if', including *slovno*, *tochno*, and *vrode* (which in any case tend to be used simply to introduce similes), are insignificant by comparison. Never in common usage, *slovno* appears 159 times in Dostoevskii's oeuvre up to 1861, but only 53 times thereafter. I discuss its significance in relation to 'Khoziaika' below.

⁵ For an interactive version of this graph, go to S. Sinclair and G. Rockwell. *Word Trends*. *Voyant* (2016). Retrieved 4 March 2018, from http://voyant-tools.org/?corpus=6df901c5a0fcdc2769c0ce3e0bb091dd&query=%22%D0%BA%D0%B0%D0%BA%20%D0%B1%D1%8B%22&query=%D0%B1%D1%83%D0%B4%D1%82%D0%BE*&bins=39&view=Trends.

budto (occasionally accompanied by *kak by* and *slovno*) establishes a dual self/other perspective that introduces a three-stage formula: reflecting on the self, relating to the other, and projecting the other back on the self. *Netochka Nezvanova* is the fictional autobiography of a young girl rescued from poverty and the trauma of emotional (perhaps also sexual) abuse, and the subsequent story of her maturation with two branches of her wealthy adoptive family. In the course of her narration of the relationships that become central to her identity, the paradigm signalled by 'as if' of hesitant self-reflection and emotional self-discovery through desire for (and of) the other, is elaborated most fully, emphasizing the role of her imagination in the development of her relationships, her selfhood, and her writing. The seldom-discussed tale 'Malen'kii geroi' likewise reflects back on the (this time male) narrator's childhood. The similar patterning of the 'as if' to reveal an emotional awakening in 'Malen'kii geroi' confirms the significance of Dostoevskii's introduction of the child's perspective in his development of his characters' subjectivity. While both those works feature similar first-person narrative perspectives, of an adult narrator revisiting childhood memories, embedding the 'as if' in the narrative form, 'Khoziaika' is a third-person narrative in which the 'as if' is filtered through different characters. The delirious atmosphere and Gothic trapping of the story – the very factors that have contributed to its generally negative reputation among scholars and readers – foreground the unreal condition introduced by the 'as if', and link the mode of the fantastic, from hesitations about what is real, to hints of the supernatural and demonic, to the focalizer Ordynov's confused imagination. It is this story that illuminates the connection between the fantastic and the development of the immature mind (on this occasion concerning the inexperienced dreamer rather than the child) when it is confronted by the other and by the arousal of desire. This has significant implications for our understanding of Dostoevskian self-consciousness and the author's mode of fantastic realism.

In *Netochka Nezvanova*, (*kak budto*) is occasionally used as a general means of introducing a simile or a straightforward subjunctive mood. However, the vast majority of occurrences (79 per cent, a figure established through a qualitative close reading of the concordance list for *budto*) are related to the perception of self and other, and the speculative nature of the understanding (or lack of understanding) that exists between the two. It is of course inevitable that the narrating self's perception will always be present in a first-person narrative. Yet the degree to which 'as if' is deployed in this text specifically in relation to inter-personal dynamics and the self-consciousness of the eponymous heroine, is remarkable. In the first stage of *Netochka's* mode of self-reflection, her feelings for others are repeatedly filtered through the prism of (*kak budto*). Excluding three occurrences relating to *Netochka's* memories, and four on her sensations on hearing music, (*kak budto*) is used to denote the narrator's self-perception in terms of her feelings towards others 48 times. A general increase in this usage towards the end of the novella is in line with the story of her coming to consciousness. For example, she describes her awakening feelings for her step-father Efimov as, 'какая-то безграничная любовь к отцу, но чудная любовь, **как будто** вовсе не детская' (Dostoevskii 2: 160).⁶ In the second phase of the story, as her life is transplanted to the house of Prince X. and she develops an intense relationship with his daughter, *Netochka* describes her feelings as she recovers from illness and sees Katia's face for the first time, as, 'каким-то счастьем, **будто** сладким предчувствием наполнилась вся душа моя' (2: 197).⁷

⁶ 'A sort of boundless love towards my father, but a strange love, as if not child-like at all' (Dostoyevsky, *Netochka* 32). I have made revisions to this and other translations to clarify the use of (*kak budto*).

⁷ 'A sort of happiness, as if a sweet premonition had filled my soul' (*Netochka* 81).

In both these examples, the use of the indefinite pronouns *kakoi-to* (some kind of) in close proximity to (*kak*) *budto* is noticeable. This represents a common pattern. 27.3 per cent of all appearances of (*kak*) *budto* in the novella are clustered with an indefinite pronoun, with a greater concentration in the first two parts: 35.5 per cent in the Efimov story (chapters 1–3), and 29.7 per cent in the Katia episode (chapters 4–5), but only 18.4 per cent in the final stage of the novella depicting her life with Aleksandra Mikhailovna (chapters 6–7).⁸ The effect of this is to enhance the sense of uncertainty already suggested by the ‘as if’ phrase. Arutiunova identifies a similar pattern in Dostoevskii’s later works, but associates this solely with *kak by*: ‘The meaning of *kak by* (as distinct from *budto* and *kak budto*) converges with the meaning of the uncertainty signal expressed in the indefinite pronouns *kakoi-to* and *kak-to*’ (67). Yet the frequent doubling of the *budto* with an indefinite pronoun suggests that Dostoevskii is framing the ‘as if’ in the same way here. Indeed, Netochka’s reference quoted above to her love for Efimov as *chudnáia* (strange), which adds a further layer of indeterminacy to her description, corresponds directly to Arutiunova’s identification of modifiers of uncertainty associated with *kak by* (64).

The sense of indeterminacy established by the use of (*kak*) *budto* in relation to the narrator’s self-depiction is further problematized by her ambiguous use of ‘understanding’ verbs (*ponimat’/poniat’*). Rowe, who categorizes Netochka as a ‘child as adult’ because of her growing awareness of her suffering, claims that ‘the text abounds with passages beginning “I understood”’ (*Child and Man* 62). However, an overview of her usage of ‘understanding’ verbs suggests a more nuanced situation. The chart in **Figure 2** below compares positive references (‘I understood’), negative (‘I did not understand’), and indeterminate understanding (modified by adverbs such as *stranno* or *chudno* and other synonyms for

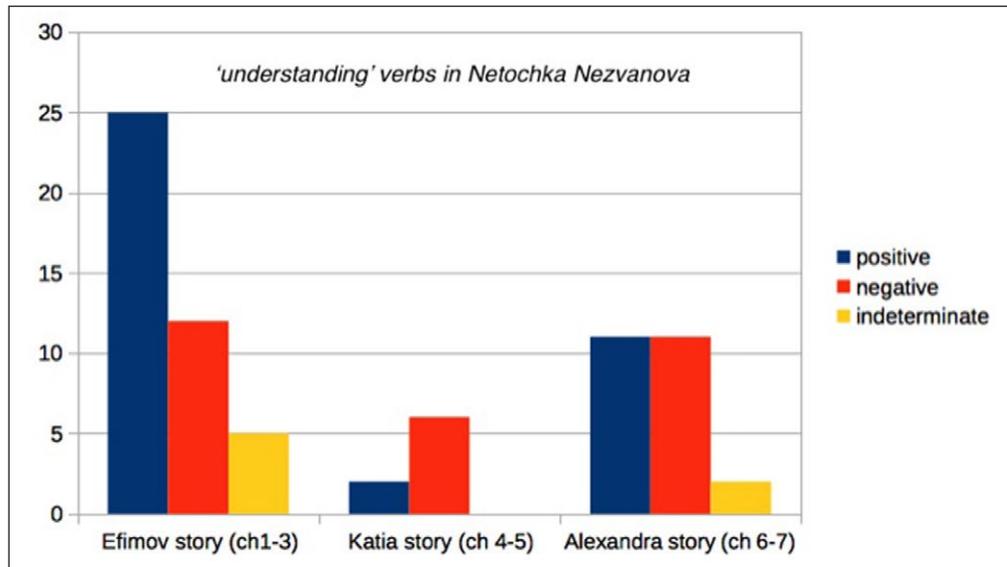


Figure 2: Frequency of verbs of understanding (*ponimat’/poniat’*) in *Netochka Nezvanova*.

⁸ For purposes of counting within an AntConc concordance, I define a cluster as occurring within five words of the target phrase; the usage in the first quotation is therefore not included in this statistic, but the example shows that well beyond these parameters, indefinite phrases still connect strongly to the ‘as if’. Laurence Anthony. *AntConc* (3.5.2), freeware corpus analysis toolkit. Waseda University, 2018, <http://www.laurenceanthony.net/software>. Accessed 4 March 2018.

'strangely', *neiasno* [unclearly], or *edva* [hardly], across the three stories from which the novella is formed.

The highest concentration of Netochka's positive uses of the verb in relation to her own understanding (65.8 per cent) is paradoxically found in the first section of the novella, as despite her tender years she repeatedly claims to understand Efimov. In the Katia story, albeit with much smaller numbers, Netochka strongly inclines towards emphasizing her *lack* of understanding, while in the episode charting her relationship with Aleksandra Mikhailovna, the numbers are evenly distributed. At times in this final story, however, her growing uncertainty becomes apparent even when she uses verbs in the positive. When, reflecting on Aleksandra Mikhailovna's worsening attacks of melancholy, she states, 'Были минуты, в которые мне казалось, что я что-то понимаю в этой загадке', and '**как будто** я уж понимала ее' (2: 232),⁹ her supposed understanding implies quite the opposite. As a result, the diminution in use of indeterminate pronouns in relation to the 'as if' in this section appears to be counterbalanced by hesitant admission of her incomplete understanding. This seems to subvert the framing of the novella as a *Bildungsroman* (Frank, *Seeds* 349–51; Allen; Krasnostchekova), in which one would normally expect to see more positive signs of a growth in understanding as the heroine matures. In a comment on the avid reading habit she develops under Aleksandra Mikhailovna's guidance that appeared in the original serial publication but was cut during Dostoevskii's later revisions, Netochka states that, 'Несмотря на свои тринадцать-четырнадцать лет, я уже слишком много жила сердцем, слишком много работала головою, хотя не всё еще вошло для меня в ясное сознание' (2: 450).¹⁰ Although she goes on – in the final published version – to claim her consciousness has now illuminated her past life, she at the same time admits that the reading she has undertaken has led 'почти до отчуждения от действительности' (2: 234).¹¹

The role of reading that is apparent here in Netochka's self-perception is significant, as this ultimately takes over from human interaction in her development of selfhood. In the first two sections of *Netochka Nezvanova*, the use of (*kak*) *будто* in relation to the narrator's own feelings concentrates on the major figures in her life, Efimov (five occurrences) and Katia (seven). In the final two chapters, by contrast, there is only a single reference each to Netochka's feelings towards Aleksandra Mikhailovna and her husband Piotr Aleksandrovich. Instead her feelings in this section are transferred to written texts. First of all, this relates to books, where five uses of *kak будто* frame her reading in the same terms as she views her relationships with human beings.¹² Three of these appear in consecutive phrases, to emphatic effect:

Действительно, почти каждая страница, прочитанная мною, была мне уж **как будто** знакома, **как будто** уже давно прожита; **как будто** все эти страсти,

⁹ 'There were moments when I thought I had some sort of understanding of the problem'; 'as if I understood her' (*Netochka* 127–8).

¹⁰ 'In spite of my thirteen or fourteen years I had already lived too much by the heart, worked my mind too much, although not everything yet entered into my consciousness clearly', cut from 2: 234, line 16, after 'Меня хранил мой детский инстинкт, мой ранний возраст и всё мое прошедшее' [I was guarded by my childish instinct, my youth and my past] (*Netochka* 130). On the significance of the heart in Dostoevskii's early works, see Toporov.

¹¹ 'Almost to [her] alienation from reality' (*Netochka* 130).

¹² Marullo's interpretation of *Netochka Nezvanova* as governed by codependency identifies important features of the characters' behaviour, including tendencies to projection, 'external referencing' or 'seeking fulfilment in people, places and things apart from themselves', and difficulties in expressing their feelings (*Heroine Abuse* 1–2). While overall Marullo subsumes too much into the category of codependency (even Falstaff the dog receives this diagnosis, 93–7), so that as an interpretative tool it ultimately threatens to become reductive rather than enlightening, there is no doubt that aspects of Netochka's behaviour, such as her treating books in the same way as she does people, can fruitfully be explained through this theory.

вся эта жизнь, представшая передо мною в таких неожиданных формах, в таких волшебных картинах, уже была мною испытана. (2: 234)¹³

Secondly, in relation to the letter to Aleksandra Mikhailovna that she discovers hidden in a book, *kak budto* appears five times to highlight its effect on Netochka's feelings and the fatal role she perceives it will play in her own life. Three of these are in a single sentence:

когда я прочла его, то почувствовала такое болезненное сжатие сердца, **как будто** я сама всё потеряла, **как будто** всё навсегда отнялось от меня, даже мечты и надежды, **как будто** ничего более не осталось при мне, кроме ненужной более жизни. (2: 240)¹⁴

The clustering of *kak budto* in both these quotations – typical of key moments in the novella – alerts the reader to the importance of the phrase as an indication of Netochka's self-reflection, and the degree to which her world view is self-centred. There is no reflection until much later on what the discovery of the letter might mean for its original recipient.¹⁵

The fact that she uses the same formula for describing her feelings toward written texts as she does towards people indicates a tendency to view everything outside her own being as equally unreal and existing only for her. At the same time, the importance of imagination to her self-perception, and her blurring of reality and fantasy, become apparent (Rowe, *Child and Man* 62). As she states in the context of her reading, 'И такая жизнь, жизнь фантазии, жизнь резкого отчуждения от всего меня окружавшего, могла продолжаться целые три года!' (2: 235).¹⁶ All these factors indicate the role of the 'as if' in introducing an unreal condition, and the association of that unreality specifically with the written word.

The three factors which shape her self-perception (her reading and imagination, the sense of self-detachment she describes, and her self-centredness) also condition the second stage of development of the 'as if'. Netochka conveys the other's feelings in a way that closely resembles her own self-depiction. The sheer oddity of this lack of differentiation, given the surplus of insight into the self by comparison with the other, may represent an aspect of the phenomenon Yuri Corrigan has recognized: 'Dostoevskii's early characters desire to erase their internal dimensions, to stifle their memories, to avoid introspection, and to become a purely outward, relational phenomenon' (83). While her self-centredness remains a factor, she does not ultimately turn into the sort of self-aggrandizing ego we recognize in Dostoevskii's

¹³ 'It was almost as if every page I read was already familiar to me, as if I'd already lived it long ago; as if I had already experienced all these passions, this whole life standing before me in such unexpected forms, in such enchanting pictures' (*Netochka* 130).

¹⁴ 'As I read it I felt such a painful contraction of my heart, as if I had myself lost everything, as if it had all been taken away from me forever, even my dreams and hopes, as if nothing more was left to me than a futile existence' (*Netochka* 139).

¹⁵ This sense was even stronger in original serial publication in *Otechestvennye zapiski* (*Fatherland Notes*), in which, after 'я сама не знала, что со мной делается' [I didn't know what was happening to me] (2: 246; *Netochka* 147), the following words concerning the effect of the letter originally appeared: '**как будто** весь мир души моей был разрушен, **как будто** чем-то глубоко оскорблено было мое сердце, **как будто** я обманулась во всем, что доселе было со мною' [as if the whole world of my soul had been destroyed, as if my heart had been profoundly insulted, as if I had been deceived in everything that had previously happened to me] (2: 452). Of the thirteen additional appearances of *kak budto* that were cut for the revised 1860 publication, eight relate to Netochka's feelings and projections of her fate; the removal of these in the 1860 version gives more emphasis to her speculations about the feelings of the other.

¹⁶ 'And to think that this kind of life, a life absolutely divorced from my surroundings, could last for three whole years!' (*Netochka* 131).

later works (and there is no indication that she would have done so had the novel been completed), which suggests that the process of figuring the other in the same way as she does herself is a narrative act to displace her sense of self.

The only real difference between the treatment of the self and other is one of degree, as 66 per cent of all uses of (*kak budto*) across the novella relate to her speculations and reconstructions of the other's feelings (22 per cent of uses of (*kak budto*) relate to Netochka's own feelings). It appears 38 times to refer to her perception of Efimov's feelings, motives and actions, as in the scene before his final abandonment of her: 'Он долго тер себе лоб, **как будто** вспоминая что-то, что еще не было сделано. Наконец он **как будто** нашел, что ему было надо' (2: 185).¹⁷ There are six occurrences in relation to her mother's motivation, an indication of how little Netochka considers this. Katia's feelings merit only fifteen such occurrences, which is surprisingly few given the significance with which Netochka endows their relationship. In the final section, however, there is a marked increase, as (*kak budto*) appears 58 times referring to Aleksandra Mikhailovna's feelings, and sixteen relating to Piotr Aleksandrovich's. Here significant clusters suggest a heightened sense of uncertainty, and a desire to fight the gaps in her perception and pin down her subject. This begins almost immediately upon the opening of the new chapter in her life, and her autobiography, as she speculates on Aleksandra Mikhailovna's past traumas and secrets: 'Она была страстна и впечатлительна по натуре своей, но в то же время **как будто** сама боялась своих впечатлений, **как будто** каждую минуту стерегла свое сердце, не давая ему забыться, хотя бы в мечтанье' (2: 225).¹⁸

Within these repeated references to the 'as if' of the other's feelings, a significant subset represents the third stage of this schema: reflection back on Netochka as she speculates about the other's feelings towards her. This is already apparent in her relationship with Efimov:

Мой плач поразил его. Он тихо опустил меня на пол и с минуту безмолвно смотрел на меня, **как будто** узнавая и припоминая что-то. Наконец, вдруг, **как будто** что-нибудь перевернуло его, **как будто** его поразила какая-то ужасная мысль. (2: 185)¹⁹

This pattern becomes more marked in subsequent relationships, with eleven of the (*kak budto*) references to Katia's feelings, and eighteen of Aleksandra Mikhailovna's, projecting back on Netochka. Again clusters emphasize the importance of this dynamic for the narrator's self-perception. They also indicate the increasing sense of her own uncertainty about the story she is telling, and the people to whom she is trying to relate, as in this passage about Aleksandra Mikhailovna's attitude towards her, when the former appears to be withdrawing her affections:

¹⁷ 'He scratched his forehead for a long time as if trying to remember something that he hadn't yet done. Finally, it was as if he found what it was' (*Netochka* 64).

¹⁸ 'She was by nature passionate and impressionable, but at the same time it was as if she herself were afraid of her impressions, as if she were constantly guarding her heart, not allowing it to forget itself, not even in dreams' (*Netochka* 119). The next 100 words contain a further three occurrences of *kak budto* and one of *slovno*. Such concentrations are not unusual in the final two chapters; the next paragraph, about Piotr Aleksandrovich, features twenty six occurrences of *kak budto* in 1,188 words (2: 226–8). The greatest concentrations of (*kak budto*) overall lie at the beginning of chapter 6 with the introduction of the final family with whom Netochka lives, and chapter 3, the denouement of the story of her stepfather.

¹⁹ 'My cries startled him. He quietly put me down on the ground and looked at me for a minute without speaking, as if recognizing and remembering something. Finally, suddenly, it was as if something overturned him, as if he was struck by some sort of terrible thought' (*Netochka* 64).

Но в другое время – и это было тяжелое, грустное время – она сама, **как будто** в каком-то отчаянии, судорожно обнимала меня, **как будто** искала моего участия, **как будто** не могла выносить своего одиночества, **как будто** я уж понимала ее, как будто мы страдали с ней вместе. (2: 232)²⁰

In relation to this type of reflection back on herself, (*kak budto*) becomes a means of emphasizing the connection between Netochka and her counterparts. It therefore represents the final corrective to her self-centredness, as it constructs her as a product of the relationship rather than an isolated ego. This form of reflection is used at moments of physical contact, to impart an emotional or psychological dimension to the physical gestures of others, paralleling a shift Arutiunova identifies from the physical to the psychological denoted by *kak by* (69–70). In relation to her mother, we read: 'Она долго, крепко держала меня в объятиях, как будто трепеща одной мысли, что разлучится со мною. Сердце мое разрывалось' (2: 182).²¹ Similar scenes occur with Katia: 'Она высвободилась из моих объятий, схватила меня за руки и, нахмутив брови, **как будто** я чем ее обидела, спросила меня: – Что ты? зачем ты меня целуешь?' (2: 199).²² Gestures are also used to denote her collusion with Efimov: 'вдруг взглядывал на меня, мигал мне глазами, делал мне какие-то знаки, **как будто** в нетерпении поскорей добиться денег и **как будто** сердясь, что я до сих пор не взяла их у матушки' (2: 179).²³

Connections that reflect the other back onto the narrator's self are also constructed by use of parallel phrases with (*kak budto*): 'Но наши истории нераздельны. Ее роман – мой роман. **Как будто** суждено мне было встретить ее; **как будто** суждено ей было найти меня' (2: 223).²⁴ This enables Netochka to claim a mutuality to her relationship with Katia which other details in her story may bring into doubt (notably Katia's suggestion that they should take turns giving and obeying orders (2: 221), which appears less the recipe for equality Netochka imagines than the beginnings of a sadomasochistic dynamic). Other phrasal echoes convey parallel actions that construct a connection between herself and the other. She describes how Efimov 'оглядываясь кругом, **как будто** боясь, чтоб его не застали, всё гладил он меня по голове' (2: 177).²⁵ At the end of the same paragraph, her reference to her own actions repeats the phrase: 'Я взяла деньги и, вышед в сени, тотчас же пустилась бежать, **как будто** боясь, чтоб меня не догнали' (2: 177).²⁶ The similar intensity of Netochka's feelings towards Efimov and Katia is highlighted by the use of the same phrase in chapters 3 and 5: 'Я тотчас же пошла, но едва только взошла на тротуар, **как вдруг будто что-то кольнуло меня в сердце...**' (2: 187); 'Я посмотрела на нее в изумлении, и **как будто что-то кольнуло меня в сердце**' (2: 203).²⁷

²⁰ 'But at other times – and these were sad and difficult moments – she herself, as if in some sort of despair, would convulsively embrace me, as if seeking my sympathy, as if she couldn't stand her own solitude, as if I already understood her, as if I was suffering with her' (*Netochka* 128).

²¹ 'She held me for a long time in a firm embrace, as if terrified at the thought of parting from me. My heart was bursting' (*Netochka* 60).

²² 'She freed herself from my embrace, grabbed me by the hand and, frowning, as if I had offended her, asked, "What's wrong with you? Why are you kissing me?"' (*Netochka* 84).

²³ 'Then he would suddenly glance at me, wink at me, make some kind of signs as if impatient to get the money as quickly as possible and as if angry that I had not yet taken it from mother' (*Netochka* 56–7).

²⁴ 'But our stories were inseparable. Her romance was my romance. It was as if I was destined to meet her; as if she was destined to find me...' (*Netochka* 116).

²⁵ 'Looking around, as if afraid of being caught, kept stroking my head' (*Netochka* 53).

²⁶ 'I took the money, went out into the passage and immediately began to run, as if afraid of being chased' (*Netochka* 54).

²⁷ 'I set off at once, but had scarcely reached the pavement when it was as if something suddenly stabbed me in the heart...' (*Netochka* 67); 'I looked at her in dismay, and it was as if something had stabbed me in the heart' (*Netochka* 90).

Such textual echoes in her relationships with Efimov and Katia underline the sense of her becoming part of her others. Similar patterns also appear, less expectedly, in the context of the characters Netochka rejects. Almost every occurrence of (*kak budto*) in relation to her mother refers to the inexplicability of her actions and motives, creating distance between them. Netochka then reverses this, appearing to bring them closer by highlighting their parallel responses: 'Наконец она **как будто** измучилась и впала **в забытьё**. [...] Я лежала **как будто в забытьи**, но сон не смыкал глаз моих' (2: 182–3).²⁸ This could indicate a subconscious awareness during the writing that her antipathy towards her mother concealed a closer connection between them than she could admit. But that connection appears to be less their blood relationship than their mutual love for Efimov, and the final phrase 'но сон не смыкал глаз моих' ultimately emphasizes the differences rather than similarities between them. The occurrence of parallel phrases in relation to Piotr Aleksandrovich places Netochka in the position of being his victim as much as Aleksandra Mikhailovna is, further strengthening the connection between the two women:

– Я вас спрашиваю, слышали ли меня или нет? прервал Петр Александрович, еще более возвышая голос и **как будто не слыжав, что сказала жена** (2: 252).²⁹

Она была, по-видимому, спокойна; но за это спокойствие я боялась больше, чем за всякое волнение. Я **как будто не слыжала слов ее** и оставалась на месте как вкопанная... (2: 253)³⁰

In both the triangular relationships in which Netochka participates, these parallelisms become a further means of creating a connection with the object of desire (Efimov and Aleksandra Mikhailovna) at the expense of the third member.³¹ In both cases, she colludes with one party to conceal deception from the other. In this final scene, as she defends Aleksandra Mikhailovna, Netochka is acting from more clearly moral motives than in the earlier collusion with her stepfather, as Allen argues (135–6). Certainly, the reader's sympathy here lies with Netochka and her ally, rather than their opponent (Netochka's mother), as in the first episode. Nevertheless, the pattern, and the form of its narration, remains the same, leaving a residue of ambiguity that challenges the suggestion that she has changed and grown. At the same time, the use of (*kak budto*) provides Netochka with an alibi for her entire role in these relationships: if they are merely 'as if', there may be no reality to her perception at all, and her actions may mean nothing. As her final words put it: 'Но, может быть, это мне так показалось. Всё это **как будто** мелькнуло у меня перед глазами' (2: 267).³²

In *Netochka Nezvanova* the use of (*kak budto*) is strongly connected with the heroine's development of selfhood and the relational form this ultimately takes. It also incorporates significant elements of the unreal and emphasizes the importance of her imagination, developed

²⁸ 'Finally, as if exhausted, she fell into oblivion. [...] I lay as if in oblivion, but sleep would not come to my eyes' (*Netochka* 61).

²⁹ "I asked you a question. Did you hear me or not?" Piotr Aleksandrovich interrupted, raising his voice even more as if he hadn't heard what his wife had said' (*Netochka* 155).

³⁰ 'She was apparently calm, but this calm frightened me more than any agitation would have done. I stood as still as a post, as if I hadn't heard her words' (*Netochka* 155–6). The change of verbal aspect in the second instance suggests 'I did hear her words, but am not sure that I did.'

³¹ It is perhaps because Netochka has no such obvious rival for Katia's love (the latter's father Prince X. being somewhat distant from events) that she has less need to present this relationship in these indirect terms. The more significant role assigned to the Prince as an abusive codependent in Marullo's analysis is tenuous, given his minimal presence in the story (*Heroine Abuse* 97, 102, 105).

³² 'But perhaps I only imagined it. It was as if all of this flitted before my eyes' (*Netochka* 173).

through her reading and thus endowed with a primary textual dimension. While this was Dostoevskii's first attempt at a large-scale work – thwarted by his arrest and never subsequently completed – 'Malen'kii geroi' by comparison is very slight. Its setting, a summer house party on a country estate, is one we would more normally associate with Turgenev than Dostoevskii. The story of a child's awakening emotional life and his involvement in a love-triangle, however, represents more familiar territory, and the thematic resemblance of the tale to *Netochka Nezvanova* has been identified (Hart 305). Its brevity (just under 13,000 words, compared to *Netochka's* 57,000) means that the thematic and stylistic elaboration is much less complex than that of its predecessor. However, in its use of (*kak budto*) it contains a comparable frequency (38.63 per 10,000 words compared to 39.49 in *Netochka*) to construct a similar schema, albeit involving much smaller numbers, with 47 occurrences in the version read today. The frame narrative that accompanied the story on its original 1857 publication in *Otechestvennye zapiski*, removed by Dostoevskii during revisions in 1860, contains a further ten instances of (*kak budto*) (2: 455–8).

The extent to which (*kak budto*) is used in a similar fashion to *Netochka Nezvanova* quickly becomes apparent, as the narrator sets the scene before introducing the blonde woman whose teasing so confuses him:

Но – странное дело! – какое-то непонятное мне самому ощущение уже овладело мною; что-то шелестило уже по моему сердцу, до сих пор незнакомое; и неведомое ему; но отчего оно подчас горело и билось, **будто** испуганное, и часто неожиданным румянцем обливалось лицо мое. Порой мне как-то стыдно и даже обидно было за разные детские мои привилегии. Другой раз **как будто** удивление одолевало меня, и я уходил куда-нибудь, где бы не могли меня видеть, **как будто** для того, чтоб перевести дух и что-то припомнить, что-то такое, что до сих пор, казалось мне, я очень хорошо помнил и про что теперь вдруг позабыл, но без чего, однако ж, мне покуда нельзя показаться и никак нельзя быть. (2: 269)³³

The correlation here of (*kak budto*) with indefinite pronouns, in addition to the inclusion of the epithets 'strange' (*stranno*) and 'incomprehensible' (*neponiatno*) in the first line, highlights the narrator's inability to define his own feelings; 23.4 per cent of occurrences of (*kak budto*) are clustered with an indefinite pronoun, while eight occurrences of *stranno* (strange) are clustered with (*kak budto*) (17 per cent).

The pattern with (*kak budto*) thus begins in the same way, and the awakening of feelings is equally central (21.8 per cent of occurrences in the story are clustered with words denoting emotions). But on this occasion, that process is aborted, because the narrator represents himself as an unwilling victim, the connection with the blonde lady being imposed upon him. It is only subsequently, with the lovely and melancholy Mme. M., that the pattern is fulfilled. The narrator describes falling in love with her as, '**как будто** я допытывался какой-нибудь

³³ 'But strange to say, a sensation which I did not myself understand already had possession of me; something was already whispering in my heart, of which till then it had had no knowledge, no conception, and for some reason it began all at once to burn and throb, as if in panic, and often my face glowed with a sudden flush. At times I felt as it were abashed, and even resentful of the various privileges of my childish years. At other times it was as if astonishment overwhelmed me, and I would go off into some corner where I could sit unseen, as if to take breath and remember something – something that it seemed to me I had remembered perfectly till then, and now had suddenly forgotten, something without which I could not show myself anywhere, and could not exist at all' (Dostoevsky, 'Little Hero' 224). The reference to memory and its sudden loss in the final lines may hint at a trauma that parallels *Netochka's* experience of abuse by Efimov.

тайны... ' (2: 274),³⁴ explicitly connecting the relationship with uncovering knowledge. The narrator then takes on the role of defender within a love-triangle that parallels Netochka's position with regard to Aleksandra Mikhailovna and her husband. Both the first encounter he describes, when the narrator stumbles upon Mme. M. weeping alone in the garden, and his subsequent reaction to interrupting this scene, are marked by the use of *kak budto*: 'Она сидела одна-одинехонька, **как будто** нарочно выбрав такое уединенное место' (2: 274); 'мне всё казалось, что я **как будто** бы виноват пред нею, застав вчера ее слезы и помешав ее горю' (2: 277).³⁵ The latter quotation, in which the narrator's emotions are based on his speculations about her feelings regarding the incident, resemble the type of the projection back onto the self that we see in *Netochka Nezvanova*.

As the connection between the two develops, the narrator's first service to Mme. M. involves collusion, as his participation in a pretence to deceive her husband features two 'as if's: 'Конечно, я тотчас же подошел к т-ме М*, как только она указала на меня мужу, и глядел так, **как будто** она меня уже целый час назад пригласила и **как будто** я уже целый месяц ходил с ней гулять по утрам' (2: 278).³⁶ The plot device of the mislaid letter from her lover that culminates the story – echoing the events of the final chapter of *Netochka Nezvanova* – is emphatically framed by 'as if'. 19.1 per cent of all uses of (*kak*) *budto* appear in the final two pages, alongside three occurrences of *slovno*, as the narrator returns the letter, concealed in a nosegay, to its owner, with both parties acting 'as if' nothing has happened. The final, silent exchange confirms both the connection between them and his emotional response in the same terms: 'В тот же миг скорый, горячий поцелуй обжег мои губы. Я слабо вскрикнул, открыл глаза, но тотчас же на них упал вчерашний газовый платочек ее, – как будто она хотела закрыть меня им от солнца. [...] Но вся душа моя как-то глухо и сладко томилась, **будто** прозрением чего-то, **будто** каким-то предчувствием' (2: 295).³⁷

Beyond the final comment that the episode marks the end of his childhood (2: 295), the development of selfhood is not such an explicit theme of 'Malen'kii geroi'. Nevertheless, the tale reprises the 'as if' formula from *Netochka Nezvanova* in a condensed and direct form. The narrator's position within the love-triangle remains ostensibly the same, the physical contact of the kiss moves him – if only in his own imagination – from the role of protector to potential lover himself. Netochka may be cast unwillingly in that role by Piotr Aleksandrovich, when he assumes the discovered letter is to her, but she is not able to achieve this in her own right as an equal with Aleksandra Mikhailovna.³⁸ Yet for both narrators, chance involvement in these affairs, which gives them their first access to the world of adult emotions, plays a significant role in the formation of the self through creating a relationship with the other. The temporal position of both narrators in recounting this story of their maturation is also similar, as both are told by an older narrator looking back on their childhood. This was originally explicit in

³⁴ 'As if I were on the verge of some kind of mystery' ('Little Hero' 231).

³⁵ 'She was sitting quite alone, as though she had purposely chosen this solitary spot' ('Little Hero' 231); 'I felt as if I were to blame in regard to her, for having come upon her tears the day before and hindered her grieving' ('Little Hero' 235).

³⁶ 'Of course, I immediately joined Mme. M. as soon as she indicated me to her husband, and looked as if she had invited me to do so an hour before, and as if I had been accompanying her on her walks every morning for the last month' ('Little Hero' 236).

³⁷ 'At that instant a swift, burning kiss scalded my lips. I uttered a faint cry. I opened my eyes, but at once the same gauze kerchief fell upon them, as if she meant to screen me from the sun. [...] But my whole soul was full of a dumb, sweet yearning, as if a veil had been drawn from my eyes, as if at a foretaste of something' ('Little Hero' 256–7).

³⁸ The frank eroticism of her relationship with Katia and strong suggestions of a sexual element to her relationship with Efimov are problematic in this regard because of the sadomasochistic aspect of the former and the abusive nature of the latter.

'Malen'kii geroi' through the presence of the frame narrative, but in the revised story is made clear though the narrator's comments towards the end of the tale: 'Я до сих пор не знаю этой тайны, [...] я тогда не понимал всего этого так, как теперь об этом думаю' (2: 291–2).³⁹ References to memory in the opening lines of the first two chapters of *Netochka Nezvanova* (2: 142, 158) establish a similar perspective. In both cases the temporal distance between the narrating voice and the events depicted suggests that the narrator is no longer the same person who experienced the events, creating a dualistic sense of the character not coinciding with themselves (Bakhtin, 'Author' 127). The use of 'as if' constructions frames the former self as unreal for the narrating self, who has to take a leap into the imagination to recover access to their childhood perspective.

The third fictional text in which (*kak budto*) features most prominently, 'Khoziaika', at first glance looks quite different from the other works discussed, as it has an omniscient third-person narrator and an adult focalizer, the 'dreamer' (*mechtatel'*) Vasilii Ordynov.⁴⁰ Yet as this story also pivots around a love-triangle, its similarities to *Netochka Nezvanova* and 'Malen'kii geroi' are significant. As Frank notes, 'The hold that Peter Alexandrovich exercises over his wife [in *Netochka Nezvanova*] resembles that of Murin over Katerina [in 'Khoziaika']; and it is, in fact, a transposition of much the same drama into the social terms of the late 1840s. [...] the state of mind to which he has reduced his wife is similar to that of the inwardly enslaved Katerina in *The Landlady* (*Seeds* 361–2). Corrigan views *Netochka Nezvanova* as 'a more focused investigation of the tripartite relationship that [Dostoevskii] had explored with little aesthetic success in "The Landlady"' (93). Moreover, while Ordynov may not be the narrator of 'Khoziaika', he nevertheless shares many of the characteristics of the narrators of Dostoevskii's early fictional autobiographies, as he is a poor, young inhabitant of St Petersburg who has lost his social position, and is isolated, orphaned and prone to sickness (Gigolov 11–17). Indeed, these similarities, alongside the role literature plays in structuring her reality in the later stages of the novella, allow us to categorize *Netochka* as a dreamer as well.⁴¹

The use of (*kak budto*) in 'Khoziaika' resembles that in *Netochka Nezvanova* and 'Malen'kii geroi', as it relates primarily to the perception of self and other. But the switch to a third-person narrative means that in place of reflection back on the narrating self through the use of 'as if', here an additional layer of perception is introduced. The 'as if' still denotes an externalized, imaginative understanding of the other that is connected to the conception of the self. The frequency with which (*kak budto*) is used to speculate about the mental and emotional states of others on the basis of a physical description (45.45 per cent of all occurrences) is particularly notable.⁴² But the narrator's use of 'as if' phrases, alongside those employed by the characters, ultimately contributes to the erosion of the boundary between the narrator and focalizer, augmenting the sense of confusion for which the story is often criticized.

The tale starts with the narrator positioned externally to the dreamer-protagonist Ordynov, extrapolating about his psychological condition from his appearance: 'Бледные щеки его стали покрываться легким румянцем, глаза заблестели **как будто** новой надеждой'

³⁹ 'To this day I don't know her secret. [...] I did not understand it then as I am able to think of it now' ('Little Hero' 252–3).

⁴⁰ On the figure of the dreamer in Dostoevskii's work, in particular 'Khoziaika' and 'Belye nochi' (White Nights, 1848), see Bem, and Leatherbarrow, 'Romantic Dreaming'. On the role of the dreamer in Dostoevskii's 'Peterburgskaia letopis' (Petersburg Feuilletons), see Apollonio (30–1).

⁴¹ The high frequency of *budto* in the feuilleton 'Peterburgskaia letopis' suggests that the 'as if' is a central mode to the figure of the dreamer.

⁴² By comparison, the association of (*kak budto*) with indefinite pronouns is much weaker than in the other texts examined, at 14.7% of occurrences.

(1: 264).⁴³ But it is not long before the (*kak budto*) comes to signify Ordynov's own perception of his sensations: 'он глухо чувствовал, что вся его жизнь **как будто** переломлена пополам' (1:273); 'Озноб пробежал по спине его, все члены его болели и **как будто** были разбиты' (1: 275).⁴⁴ As Gaustad notes, the narrator 'start[s] melting into his asocial hero. [...] the distance between hero and narrator gradually becom[es] reduced to the level of a mere third person pronoun' (209). We see the shift from the external viewpoint to internal perception most clearly during the first of many episodes of delirium in the story: 'Нет никого; я один... ничего, пусть! теперь лучше... хорошо мне теперь! — говорил Ордын, **будто** в бреду. Комната **как будто** ходила кругом него' (1: 276).⁴⁵

25 occurrences of (*kak budto*) relate to Ordynov's self-perception, but it is perhaps unsurprising that this is outstripped by 31 occurrences relating to Katerina, his obsession with whom forms the basis of the story. It is immediately made clear that we are given Ordynov's perception of her, rather than the narrator's, through the inclusion of 'he saw': 'он видел, что она вся дрожала от волнения и **как будто** от страха' (1: 272).⁴⁶ Later we also see the same kind of parallelism that Netochka uses to underline her relationships with others, as reference to a repeated gesture suggests Ordynov perceives a unity between himself and Katerina: 'Катерина **провела рукою по лицу, как будто** что-то гнело и давило ее' (1:295); 'Опомнясь, он **провел рукой по лицу, как будто** снимая с себя сон и ночные видения' (1: 302).⁴⁷ Subsequently, the use of (*kak budto*) comes to characterize Ordynov's increasingly delirious impressions of Katerina's actions, her supposed relationship with him, and his own lack of understanding of her relationship with Murin:

Он привстал и, пошатнувшись, ступил шаг вперед, подошел к Катерине и схватил ее за руку; но она и не взглянула на него, **как будто** его не заметила, **как будто** не признала его... Она **как будто** тоже теряла сознание, **как будто** одна мысль, одна неподвижная идея увлекла ее всю.⁴⁸ (1: 309–10)

By contrast, other relationships and viewpoints on them are presented only minimally in this way: (*kak budto*) appears only six times with reference to Ordynov's impressions of Murin, and only eight times to signify Katerina's perception (three focusing on herself, three referring to Ordynov, and two to Murin). Murin's viewpoint is largely excluded, apart from the few times when he speaks, and he does not participate in the type of imaginative response to the other that (*kak budto*) indicates.

However, the story's use of 'as if' acquires a further layer, relating to a synonym with poetical and folkloric connotations that is rarely used in spoken Russian and that Dostoevskii seldom employed: *slovno*. Indeed, the story accounts for 16 per cent of all occurrences of

⁴³ 'His pale cheeks began to be suffused with a faint flush, his eyes began to shine as if with new hope' (Dostoevsky, 'The Landlady' 248).

⁴⁴ 'He dimly felt as if his whole life had been broken in half' ('Landlady' 260); 'A chill ran down his spine, all his limbs ached and felt as if they were broken' ('Landlady' 262).

⁴⁵ "'No, there's no-one. I'm alone... never mind, it doesn't matter. Now it's better... I'm alright now!' said Ordynov, as if in delirium. It was as if the room was spinning round him' ('Landlady' 263).

⁴⁶ 'he saw that she was trembling with emotion and as if from fear' ('Landlady' 259). Barros García notes a similar shift from the thoughts of the narrator to those of the character associated with *kak by* in *Prestuplenie i nakazanie and Brat'ia Karamazovy (Análisis y visualización* 197–8).

⁴⁷ 'Katerina passed her hand across her face, as if something were weighing upon her and oppressing her' ('Landlady' 286); 'Coming to himself, he passed his hand over his face as if shaking off sleep and the visions of the night' ('Landlady' 295).

⁴⁸ 'He got up and, reeling, took a step forward, went up to Katerina and clutched her hand. But she did not look at him, as if she hadn't noticed him, as if she didn't recognize him... It was as if she too had lost consciousness, as if one thought, one fixed idea had entirely absorbed her' ('Landlady' 304–5).

slovno in Dostoevskii's *oeuvre*, and its use 34 times here is significantly more than the (much longer) text next closest to it in frequency, *Dvoynik* (*The Double*, 1846), where it appears 24 times. The fact that *Dvoynik* is Dostoevskii's most overtly fantastic work gives some clue to the role of *slovno* in 'Khoziaika'. Having appeared only once in part I of the story, referring to the figure of the minor character (and external voice of reason) Iaroslav Il'ich, *slovno* suddenly becomes prominent in part II, as a regular feature of Katerina's speech. It features in relation to her own memories: 'Это давно уже было, очень давно, я и не помню когда, а всё **как будто** вчера передо мною, **СЛОВНО** сон вчерашний' (1: 294).⁴⁹ Within the tale she tells itself, the formula 'like in a dream' is repeated to convey her own feelings: 'Я села, прижалась к нему и забылась совсем у него на груди, **СЛОВНО СОН** какой нашел на меня' (1: 298).⁵⁰ Such uses underline the confusing nature of her story, with its unconfirmed hints of demonic possession, incest, paedophilia, and kidnapping. She also uses it in relation to her mother's emotions: 'Родимая с минуту молчала, вся как платок бела, говорить со мной **СЛОВНО** боится' (1: 296).⁵¹ And her perception of Murin in the present time of the story is framed in the same confused terms: 'когда я вслушиваюсь в его голос, то **СЛОВНО** это не он говорит, а кто-то другой, недобрый' (1: 293).⁵² Katerina's disjointed narrative contains 13 occurrences of *slovno*, 38.2 per cent of all uses in the story.

If we associate (*kak budto*) with Ordynov's consciousness, then *slovno* becomes the marker of Katerina's. However, towards the end of her narrative, the use of *slovno* begins to spill out into the surrounding text. First of all, it appears in a break in her story and is related to Ordynov's perception: 'Она вздрогнула, хотела было что-то сказать, но кровь залила ей лицо... **СЛОВНО** в беспамятстве закрылась она руками и бросилась лицом на подушки. Всё потряслось в Ордынове!' (1: 299).⁵³ The same thing happens in the next – and final – break in her story, again, returning to Ordynov's point of view: 'Она хотела прервать его, взяла его за руку, хотела сама что-то говорить и **как будто** не находила слов. Какая-то странная улыбка медленно появилась на ее губах, **СЛОВНО** смех пробивался сквозь эту улыбку' (1: 300).⁵⁴ This transference of the speech pattern suggests that Ordynov's perception has become confused with part of Katerina's, as a result of his delirium. Subsequently, we read: 'Он [Ordynov] теперь только подумал о Мурине. Глаза старика, **СЛОВНО** потухавшие в предсмертной тоске, смотрели на него неподвижно' (1: 304) and, 'Она была вся **СЛОВНО** в огне, и чудно делалось это' (1: 307).⁵⁵ The use of *slovno* indicates a growing confusion, as if the text – or the narrator – can no longer distinguish between the two viewpoints. Moreover, when Murin speaks, *slovno* emerges as part of his very distinctive vernacular: 'Ишь вы, побратались, единоутробные! Слюбались, **СЛОВНО** любовники!' (1: 304); 'Разум не воля для девицы, и слышит всю правду, да **СЛОВНО** не знала, не

⁴⁹ 'It was long ago, very long ago, I don't remember when, but it's all before me as if it were yesterday, like yesterday's dream' ('Landlady' 285). In this and subsequent quotations, I translate *slovno* using phrases with 'like' to emphasize both the difference from *kak budto* and the more colloquial, folksy nature of Katerina and Murin's speech.

⁵⁰ I got on the horse, huddled up to him and forgot everything on his bosom, like a dream had come over me' ('Landlady' 290).

⁵¹ 'Mother was silent for a minute, all as white as a handkerchief, like she's afraid to speak to me' ('Landlady' 287).

⁵² 'When I listen to his voice it's like it's not him speaking, but someone else, someone evil' ('Landlady' 284).

⁵³ 'She started, wanted to say something, but the blood flooded her face... She hid her face in her hands and fell upon the pillow like in a swoon. Ordynov was quivering all over!' ('Landlady' 291).

⁵⁴ 'She wanted to interrupt him, take his hand, try to say something, but it was as if she couldn't find the words. A strange sort of smile came slowly to her lips, like laughter breaking through that smile' ('Landlady' 292).

⁵⁵ 'Only then did he think of Murin. The old man's eyes, like they were dimmed by the approach of death, were staring at him fixedly' ('Landlady' 297); 'It was like she was on fire, and it was marvellous' ('Landlady' 301).

ведала!' (1: 308).⁵⁶ As a result, what had initially appeared to be indicative of Katerina's point of view now seems suggestive of Murin's. From this point until the denouement and Ordynov's removal from Murin's and Katerina's sphere of influence, it becomes difficult to identify with any certainty the perceiving consciousnesses in the story.

This blurring of boundaries between the characters' minds, and the uncertainty or hesitation it causes in the reader, contributes significantly to the loss of distinction between the real and unreal in 'Khoziaika' that relates the story to the genre of the fantastic (Gaustad 206, Todorov 25–40). The place of the characters' perception of others, and projection onto others, within that blurring of boundaries, points to the role of the 'as if' in shaping the fantastic element of the tale. As critics have noted, the 'truth' of Katerina's relationship with Murin is obscured by two layers of projection: Murin's and Ordynov's. Frank states that 'the secret of her enslavement by Murin lies in what Katerina *believes* to be true, not in what actually may be the case' (*Seeds* 338). Her self-perception depends to a great extent on Murin's projection onto her. At the same time, when Gaustad comments that the creation of Katerina's image 'depends, in a very direct way, on another person's perception' (214), that person is immediately identified as Ordynov. Gaustad further clarifies the source of projection: 'It is made clear to the reader that there is no *one* truth about Katerina and Murin (or if there is, it is not divulged), and that their meaning, beauty and "otherness" might only have been projected onto their persons by the romanticising observer, Ordynov' (214–5). Leatherbarrow also identifies projection in Ordynov's perception of Murin, linking it to the production of the narrative itself: 'the demonic identity ascribed to Murin is also the product of Ordynov's creative delirium, an ingredient in the fictional folk tale into which he draws the merchant and his companion' ('Sorcerer's Apprentice' 609).

As we have seen in *Netochka Nezvanova* in particular, the formation of the narrator's identity is dependent upon a similar process of projection, driven by her imagination and indicated by her use of (*kak*) *budto*. In 'Malen'kii geroi', (*kak*) *budto* governs the projection of the narrator's ideas to present the other characters as types within his own drama:

For if these women behave less like flesh-and-blood women than dolls, whose movements are more predictable than life-like, it is because they are essentially creatures of the hero's private world, and as such, are interesting not for what they tell us about the adult female mind (they tell us next to nothing), but what they suggest about the inner workings of the immature male mind: its erotic apprehensions, its evasions, and, ultimately, its dreams. (Gregg 291)

The additional layers of projection in 'Khoziaika' take the distortion of perspective to the extreme, rendering the tale almost incomprehensible in places. But the comparison of this process to that in *Netochka Nezvanova* and 'Malen'kii geroi', alongside their shared triangular dynamics, suggests a common origin in the child's relationship to the other and view of the world. Ordynov may, unlike these other characters, be in his twenties, but his youth and inexperience – the result of his passion for 'learning' (*nauka*) – are emphasized: 'Он был молод и покамест не требовал большего. Страсть сделала его младенцем для внешней жизни' (1: 265).⁵⁷ Indeed, Gregg's characterization of the eleven-year-old 'little hero' above

⁵⁶ 'So you, you've become brother and sister, born of one mother! Fallen in love, like sweethearts!' ('Landlady' 298); 'A maid's mind's not her will, and she hears the whole truth, but it's like she doesn't know, doesn't understand!' ('Landlady' 303).

⁵⁷ 'He was young and, so far, asked for nothing more. His passion made him a babe as regards external life' ('Landlady' 249).

could equally describe Ordynov. Katerina's narrative of how she came to be with Murin also incorporates her childhood perspective, its apparent distortions emphasized by the folk-tale elements.

The correlation of (*kak*) *budto* with the child's uncertainty about the world and the other is given particular concentration in the moments when they stand outside relationships, try to make sense of them, and intrude on them. Within the self-consciousness of Dostoevskii's protagonists that is dependent on others' perceptions of the self, and what the self believes others' perceptions of them to be, the 'as if' reveals hesitation as a central factor in the formation of the self's (and perception of others') feelings. Bakhtin – without further elaboration – identified *Netochka Nezvanova* and 'Khoziaika' as representing the next stage in the development of self-consciousness, reworking a different area of the Gogolian world to the milieu of the 'poor clerk' that had inspired both *Bednye liudi* (*Poor Folk*, 1846) and *Dvoinik* (*Problems* 76).⁵⁸ Yet in their depiction of the awakening of inexplicable feelings, the inability to understand the actions of others, and collusion with the object of desire, these texts go beyond the bounds of Dostoevskian self-consciousness as it is normally perceived. It is here, rather, that Dostoevskii experiments with the formation of subjectivity itself, and its role in creating narrative.

The adoption of the child's view of the world also underlines the extent to which the themes of the fantastic become instrumental to the development – and writing – of selfhood in *Netochka Nezvanova* and 'Malen'kii geroi', as much as in the overtly fantastic 'Khoziaika'. As Todorov points out, central to the 'themes of the self' associated with the fantastic is the 'effacement of the limit between subject and object', as a re-writing – in adult terms – of what Piaget described as the infant's inability 'to distinguish the psychic world from the physical one' (115–16). While obviously relevant to the quintessential Dostoevskian trope of doubling, this type of blurring of self and other is as much a part of the process of projection and its narration for *Netochka* and the 'little hero', as it is for Ordynov and Katerina. The collapse of the self into the world of ideas that is another aspect of the same phenomenon is as apparent in *Netochka*'s reading and reliance on her imagination as it is in Ordynov's 'creative delirium'. Although neither *Netochka* nor the 'little hero' (nor indeed Katerina in her story about Murin) is telling the story of their *infancy*, they are reworking from an adult perspective the experiences of their childhood. Their recourse to themes commonly associated with the fantastic reflects the disjuncture between the self that was and the narrating self, internalizes the hesitation between subject and object, and associates it with the fictionalizing 'as if'.

Todorov argues that 'the network of themes of the self corresponds to the system of perception-consciousness'; conversely, 'the network of themes of the other corresponds to the system of unconscious impulses' (149). In Dostoevskii's texts, these 'themes of the self' relate to the process of projection and self-reflection introduced by 'as if' phrases, as I show above. The 'themes of the other' correspond to the desires and relationships (actual or imagined) associated in all three stories with the 'as if'. The variations on 'transformations of desire' outlined by Todorov (131–2) all feature implicitly or explicitly in these works: incest (*Netochka* and Efimov; Katerina and Murin); homosexuality (*Netochka* and Katia); sadism (Efimov, Katia and Piotr Aleksandrovich; the blonde persecutor of the 'little hero'; Murin), and 'supernumerary love' or *l'amour à trois* (the love-triangles at the centre of each text). A further dimension of desire associated with the 'themes of the other' relates to the demonic, owing to the identification of sexual desire with the devil (Todorov 127). The representation of Murin in

⁵⁸ On Gogol's 'Strashnaia mest' ('A Terrible Vengeance', 1832) as a source for 'Khoziaika', see Leatherbarrow ('Romantic Dreaming' 587). Efimov, like Chartkov in Gogol's 'Portret' ('The Portrait', 1835), is an artist-hero, with similar hints of demonic possession (see note 58 below), but beyond this, it is hard to relate *Netochka Nezvanova* to this tale.

'Khoziaika' as a demonic figure is overt, but *Netochka's* step-father, and formative influence, Efimov, also potentially falls into this category. His prowess as a violinist compared to his previous career as a mediocre clarinetist hints at a demonic source for his talent; the accusation that he killed the Italian violinist in order to get hold of the instrument (2: 144–5), although formally disproved, nevertheless lingers in the reader's memory.⁵⁹ The demonic allusions surrounding Efimov locate the early stages of the novella in distinctly Gothic territory (Bowers; Jones, 'Romanticism'; Marullo, 'Man-God' 233–4). The fact that this story is by necessity told second-hand, as it predates *Netochka's* life, alerts us to the role of the imagination, and its fantastic tendencies, in her narration and her desires. In the first chapter of *Netochka Nezvanova* and throughout 'Khoziaika' we see the 'as if' operating on precisely the level of Todorov's identification of the 'as if' as a signifier of the fantastic (79–80). The rest of *Netochka* and 'Malen'kii geroi' appear to escape those fantastic origins, but the continuing presence of (*kak budto*) indicates the persistent influence of that mind-set and the role of the imagination in these works. Thus while the use of (*kak budto*) and other 'as if' phrases relates primarily to self-construction and the development of intersubjectivity in the transition from child- to adulthood, it also reveals the fantastic premise Dostoevskii brought to all of his fiction.⁶⁰

The fictionalizing 'as if' Dostoevskii uses to develop the narration of childhood memories of the relationship of self to other in *Netochka Nezvanova* and 'Malen'kii geroi', at a point when he was still refining his novelistic technique, seems highly significant, particularly given the importance of children to his later fictional world. Yet, as the concordance results show, usage of (*kak budto*) dramatically decreases at the very point when one might have expected it to feature more prominently. The present reading indicates that it is precisely the child's perspective that is at stake here, and the fantastic aspect of the 'as if' that enables imaginative comparison in compensation for gaps in understanding. This suggests that we see elevated usage of (*kak budto*) in *Unizhennye i oskorblennye* (*The Insulted and Injured*, 1861) alone among Dostoevskii's post-Siberian *oeuvre* because of its predominantly youthful protagonists and narrator. Thereafter, although children are increasingly centralized as *images* of innocence and suffering, their agency as narrators (and to a great extent, as active participants in the drama of the texts) diminishes. This would imply that alongside the (*kak budto*) that is used so frequently to signify it, the child's own perspective is largely excluded from Dostoevskii's later work. Verifying that hypothesis, however, must be the subject for another article.

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⁵⁹ The associations of the violin with the devil, notably in relation to the virtuous Niccolò Paganini, are explored in Berger. An indirect link to *Netochka Nezvanova* is supplied by the figure of Heinrich Wilhelm Ernst, Paganini's disciple and successor, and a visitor to Petersburg whose performance was heard by Dostoevskii in 1847, as mentioned in the 'Peterburgskaia letopis' of 27 April and 11 May of that year (18: 18, 22). Rowe (*Ernst*), does not make this connection, but in a later unpublished paper argues that the figure of the violinist S. in Dostoevskii's novella is based on Ernst, incorporating the demonic associated with Paganini into the portrayal of Efimov ('Dream' 14–19).

⁶⁰ See, for example, the author's foreword to 'Krotkaia' ('A Meek Girl', 1876), which defines the 'fantastic' aspect of this story of a man reflecting on his marriage and the suicide of his wife in terms of the form of the narration *as if* (albeit not using the terms discussed above) a stenographer were in the room recording his thoughts (24: 5).

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