6 Deferred Senses and Distanced Spaces: Embodying the Boundaries of Dostoevsky's Realism

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In critical considerations of Dostoevsky's model of selfhood, examination of the psychic tensions within – and between – the characters has tended to dominate. Similarly, investigation into the effect of the characters' surroundings has largely focused on the symbolic significance of space, and its impact on the inner lives of Dostoevsky's heroes.[1] By comparison, the question of *how* his characters experience the world, and each other, has received little attention.[2] Yet the mechanisms of that experience are significant on various levels. The framework of Dostoevskian self-consciousness frequently implicates the visual sphere, as in *Poor Folk* [Bednye liudi, 1846], when Makar Devushkin catches sight of himself in a mirror. Bakhtin's identification of "how agonizingly the Underground Man eavesdrops on all actual and potential words others say of him," and of Stavrogin's dislike of being "spied upon," indicates the extent to which sense perception underlies both self-consciousness and dialogic interaction.[3] Relations between Dostoevsky's characters are often established through visual perception, as in *The Idiot* [Idiot, 1869], when Prince Myshkin becomes fascinated with Nastasya Filippovna through looking at her photograph. She equally emphasizes the role of vision in reciprocating that interest: "for the first time I've seen a human being!"[4] In the wider context of characters' experience of, and response to, their surroundings, the effect of St Petersburg on Raskolnikov owes as much to the sounds and smells that assault him as it does to the oppressive influence of the myth of the city's foundation. These visceral elements play a major role in bringing the spaces of the Imperial capital – both exterior and interior – to life for the reader.

References to sense perception not only locate characters in the outside world, but also allude to the "relation of inner essence to outer substance," due to the role of the sense organs as the "primary routes of ingress" into the body.[5] Dostoevsky firmly rejected the view of human beings as

physiological machines espoused by Nikolai Chernyshevsky.[6] Yet the interiority for which he is so famous does not deny physical being, but to the contrary implies the existence of an exterior. The poor reception of his early experiments at anchoring his protagonists primarily in the psychic realm, in *The Double* [Dvoinik, 1846] and *The Landlady* [Khoziaika, 1847], proved the necessity of addressing the material aspects of existence, if such characters were not simply to resemble phantoms. In the aftermath of the publication of *The Double*, and while working on *The Landlady*, Dostoevsky acknowledged the importance of both dimensions in his own life: "The *external* must be balanced by the *internal*. Otherwise, in the absence of external phenomena, the internal will come to a dangerous crescendo. Nerves and fantasy will take up too much space" (28.1:138).[7] Undoubtedly, his art favours the internal, and insistently probes the consequences of losing that balance. Yet Dostoevsky never returned to the outright phantasmagorias of his early period. The healthy physicality of Alyosha Karamazov – in contrast to the sickness and ethereal nature of Prince Myshkin – suggests that ultimately he saw a spiritual existence grounded in the real world, rather than divorced from it, as the solution to the crisis of faith he associated with the age and depicted in his works.

In this chapter, I explore how the relations of self, other, and space are constructed through sense perception. I will show that references to the senses in Dostoevsky's fiction – in particular to hearing and vision – serve to embody not only the perceiving consciousness, but also the object(s) of their perception, whether those be other characters, or the spatial arrangements in which they are placed. Indeed, it is very frequently the way that characters are positioned relative to space that creates the impression of them as embodied beings. In order to elucidate Dostoevsky's approach to embodiment, and his protagonists' perceptions of the outside world and its actors, the analysis will focus on *Crime and Punishment* [Prestuplenie i nakazanie, 1866], with reference also to *The Adolescent* [Podrostok, 1875]. The latter represents Dostoevsky's longest true first-person narrative, with the narrator at the centre of the action (by contrast, the narrator-chroniclers of *Demons* [Besy, 1872] and *Brothers Karamazov* [Brat'ia Karamazovy, 1880] remain peripheral figures). Dostoevsky also originally planned to write *Crime and Punishment* in the first person. Although he ultimately reworked his material as a third-person omniscient narration in order to overcome some of the limitations of that form, the final version nevertheless retains traces of its earlier conception. The narrator's closeness to Raskolnikov's psyche means that for much of the novel, the hero is more than just the focalizer; in terms of point of view, narrator and protagonist are frequently almost indistinguishable.

By assessing the role of sense perception in accessing the other and constructing the spaces in which they operate in these texts, I aim to show how the author uses embodied characters to make the fantastic and imaginary more real, and to de-realize the everyday dimension. I will argue that embodiment and sense experience in Dostoevsky's fiction are relocated to the edges of consciousness. They are displaced temporally and spatially through patterns of indirect presentation, and deflected through the appearance of a "third person" within the text. This results in the removal of the notion of realism from the everyday realm, making the distanced, and dislocated, more real than the surrounding representation of the "normal" world. Never simply a stylistic choice, this shift to the boundaries makes experience (and therefore the self) only indirectly accessible to both consciousness and the narrator. This, in turn, impacts significantly on our understanding of the characters and their motivation, as well as on the narrative form. The absence of direct embodiment, or access to the senses, becomes a primary problem for Dostoevsky's characters. It creates obstacles to Arkady's writing in *The Adolescent*, and to Raskolnikov's confession, as well as underlying the murder itself in *Crime and Punishment*. I will show that this type of separation from the self, and of the self from the other, is the source of the "not I" that pervades Dostoevsky's oeuvre, from Mr Golyadkin's "it's not me at all, not me, and that's that" (1:113),[8] to the "[t]hat person is not I, but someone else entirely" with which the author distances himself from the narrator of "Bobok" (21:41).[9] Dostoevsky conceived of his novelistic approach as one "of [find]ing the person in the person with complete realism" (27:65). But in his framing of embodied space, and relations to self and others, through sense perception, neither that source of the person, nor their experience of the world, is available directly. Both must be found without, rather than within.

Mentally Sensing the Self

Many of Dostoevsky's characters are endowed with a bodily presence through detailed physical descriptions, but the degree to which their perception of their environment and other characters is recorded varies considerably.[10] In *Crime and Punishment*, Raskolnikov is highly susceptible to his surroundings.[11] However, it quickly becomes apparent that his sense perception and experience of both his own body and environment, although acute, are subject to significant distortion. The murder scene, the violence of which one might expect to generate the greatest sense of the characters' corporeal existence, is instead largely marked by a feeling of unreality, references to blood notwithstanding. Outside the

moneylender's door, Raskolnikov feels his heart beating, but otherwise, "he was almost completely unaware of his body" (6:61).[12] He wields the axe "scarcely feeling a thing," and Alyona Ivanovna's blood pours out in notably abstract fashion, "as if from an overturned glass" (6:63; 70). Far from appearing in the episodes we would most readily associate with the physical dimension, sensual experience at such moments is minimized, distancing the characters from the embodied realm.

Nevertheless, from the start of *Crime and Punishment*, the distortion of Raskolnikov's acutely physical experience is apparent, for example after his "rehearsal" of the murder:

> He walked along the pavement like a drunken man, not seeing the passers-by, bumping into them […] Looking around him, he found that he was close to a drinking den, with steps leading down from the street to the basement […] his head was spinning and he was tormented by a burning thirst […] he ascribed his sudden weakness to hunger. (6:10; 9)

The bodily dimension is immediately associated with the abnormal states of drunkenness and weakness, which themselves cause physical contact with others. These states are further concretized by Raskolnikov's eventual awareness of his environment, as he stumbles upon a drinking establishment "like a drunken man." The reversal of causality, through which Raskolnikov is drunk *before* he enters the tavern, disrupts standard conceptions of bodily functions, further associating the working of the senses with abnormality. The affiliation of emphasis on the physical senses, material surroundings, and distorted bodily states continues in the next chapter, as vodka fumes and the stench of the food on the bar create an atmosphere sufficient to render anyone drunk (6:12).

The concomitance of unhealthy sense perception and awareness of the noxious environment's spatial dimensions is also foregrounded the morning after the murder, with reference to stuffy rooms and staircases, and the overwhelming smell of oil from the fresh paint. The allusion to Raskolnikov's sickness – "the usual sensations of someone with a fever who suddenly emerges out of doors on a bright sunny day" (6:74; 85) – establishes delirium as the source of his strong sense of both his own body and the physical world. This supports Raskolnikov's notion (6:60; 67) of the heightened consciousness of the man awaiting execution (later developed in *The Idiot*), but challenges Svidrigailov's idea that "A healthy person is the most earth-bound kind of person, and […] is obliged to live a purely earth-bound life" (6:221; 255). Raskolnikov's close attention to his surroundings is associated precisely with the acute phase of his illness. The restoration of his health – even if only partial – is

linked with a *loss* of sense perception and observation of the outside world. From part 3 of the novel onwards, references to both the topography of the city and its street life, particularly the sounds of the itinerate musicians he periodically encounters, disappear.[13] At least in the abnormal atmosphere of St Petersburg, healthier bodily states paradoxically appear to preclude direct access to corporeal experience, or a sense of embodiment within the city's spaces.

In line with the heightened senses associated with delirium, dreams present a concentration of sensual perception. Before the first of Raskolnikov's dreams, the narrator opines on the "unusually real and vivid, and extraordinarily lifelike nature" of dream states associated with delirium (6:45; 49). The violence of Raskolnikov's dreams in itself implies a strong degree of embodiment, but its representation takes an indirect form. The dream of his landlady being beaten by Ilya Petrovich is overloaded with references to sounds and hearing:

> Never in his life had he heard such an unearthly noise, such a howling, wailing, grinding, weeping, such blows and curses. [Takikh neestvennykh zvukov, takogo voia, voplia, skrezheta, slez, poboi i rugatel'stv on nikogda eshche ne slykhival in ne vidyval.] […] The fighting, bellowing, and swearing only got louder and louder […] He was kicking her, banging her head against the stairs, you could hear that quite clearly from the sounds, from her screams, from the blows! [On b'et ee nogami, kolotit ee golovoiu o stupeni, – eto iasno, eto slyshno po zvukam, po vopliam, po udaram!]. (6:90–91; 104)

The dream then expands to introduce other listeners: "You could hear [Slyshno bylo] all the people on all the floors, up and down the staircase [kak vo vsekh etazhakh, po vsei lestnitse], crowding together, you could hear [slyshalis'] their voices, their exclamations, hear them running upstairs, knocking on doors, slamming doors, running hither and thither in a body […] he could hear it only too clearly! [on slishkom iasno slyshit!] (6:91; 104). As hearing is repeatedly emphasized, climaxing with the homophonous *slishkom iasno slyshit*, the actions associated with the sounds embody first the protagonists of his dream, and then the building itself, as the other inhabitants' movements bring its threshold spaces into focus. His later dream in which he repeatedly tries to kill Alyona Ivanovna similarly focuses on sounds (the footsteps on the stairs above him), and on the spatial arrangement of her apartment: "Everything was as it had been – the chairs, the mirror, the yellow divan, the little pictures in their frames" (6:213; 245). This dream too widens out to reveal other people beyond the door, in the hallway and stairs, their laughter giving shape to the space.

While the dreams themselves access an intensity of sense-experience seldom attained in the waking life of the characters, the embodiment of the dream state spills over into the real world. Following Raskolnikov's dream of the horse being beaten, "He awoke covered in sweat; his hair was damp. He got up, panting with horror […] His body ached all over […] Leaning his elbows on his knees, he rested his head in both hands" (6:49; 54). At such points the boundaries between fantasy and reality are not so much blurred as reversed. Through the vivid evocation of sense perception in dreams and states of illness in *Crime and Punishment*, Dostoevsky associates the embodiment of characters and space with the abnormal and the unconscious. In this way, his depiction of the material world reaches beneath the surface of reality that realism usually occupies.

In the narration of *The Adolescent*, direct references to senses or the spaces they define are relatively infrequent. The only exception involves the chapters before Arkady's illness, after he receives the news of his sister Liza's pregnancy by Prince Seryozha. In this section of the novel a much stronger sense of his embodiment is apparent, notably in the descriptions of Arkady's fisticuffs with Baron Byoring (13:257–8), and his attempt to climb over a fence to set fire to a woodpile (13:268–70). This conforms largely to the type of delirious heightened sense experience we see in *Crime and Punishment*; Arkady notes that "delirium had undoubtedly begun to take hold" (13:268).[14] However, elsewhere in *The Adolescent* a different type of mental embodiment dominates. In large part due to its form as a first-person text recording events in the narrator's past, embodiment here is associated foremost with memory. Arkady conjoins bodily sensations with reference to memory on numerous occasions. His own physical responses are framed in this way, as when he learns of Kraft's suicide: "I remember being gradually overcome by quite a perceptible nervous tremor" (13:130; 171). The scenes with Baron Byoring and Arkady's accident while climbing cited above, are also framed with reference to memory. This suggests a distancing from Arkady's own sense of self, an idea that is emphasized as he deflects his own bodily sensations onto others, as in his rendezvous with Katerina Nikolaevna: "She listened to this whole wild tirade with big, wide open eyes; she saw that I was trembling" (13:203; 271). Memory for Arkady is even more strongly linked with the touch of others, in particular Versilov: "I remember him squeezing my hand" (13:171; 228). Such formulations indicate a desire to fix the moments when the relationship between the father and his illegitimate son appears solidified. Yet they also imply that Arkady does not quite trust the reality of the relationship.

Similar associations of memory and the senses also occur in *Crime and Punishment*, notably with hearing, the sense that becomes most significant

for Raskolnikov,[15] as suggested by the dream discussed above of his landlady being beaten. When he arrives at Alyona Ivanovna's apartment to rehearse the murder, and rings the doorbell: "He had forgotten the sound of this bell, and now its particular clink suddenly reminded him very vividly of something" (6:8; 6). A further reference to remembering the sound of the doorbell when he returns to the scene of the crime is more explicable (6:134). However, this first mention, already framed as a memory, implies that Raskolnikov has a recollection of the murder he has not yet committed. As with his drunkenness before the fact, this reversal distances Raskolnikov's sense perception from the concrete reality he occupies. In both novels, memory of the senses reifies experience in a way that everyday contact with the external world does not.[16]

Embodying the Other in Space

If dreamed and delirious embodiment makes these states more real than "normal" existence, they at the same time represent a distancing of the senses that cannot be accessed from everyday, healthy states of mind. Memory of sense experiences introduces temporal distancing as well. Both forms of distancing throw doubt upon the possibility of direct experience of the senses, and with them of the self. The feeling of detachment that this engenders is extended to the second form of deferred embodiment, which is framed primarily by the spatial dimension.

The idea of distancing senses from the self by projecting them onto the other is already apparent in Arkady's comment cited above, "she saw that I was trembling." As with many of the narrator's references to his own bodily sensations, invocations of the other provide a reality to his self that otherwise appears absent; in this instance, Katerina Nikolaevna's role as a witness matters as much, if not more, than his own physical response. In *The Adolescent*, that conception of witnessing takes on a greater significance through the aural dimension, as eavesdropping becomes a central device in the novel's revelation of its convoluted plot.[17] The first such scene, as Arkady waits at Vasin's apartment, relates to matters peripheral to the main storyline. It is therefore significant not so much in terms of the conversations overheard (concerning Versilov's contact with Olya) but rather for the dynamic it establishes on the boundaries of the private and the public.[18] Beginning with a detailed description of the apartment, including Arkady's position on a chair by the window (13:117), the episode consistently emphasizes the spatial arrangements and the movement of characters: doors open and close, heads poke out into the corridor in response to screams (indicating the presence of other listeners), and unknown figures are glimpsed.[19] When Vasin's stepfather Stebelkov, who

"has been listening with relish" (13:122; 160), joins the women – moving position from overhearer to overheard – the visual aspect of the scene disappears. The focus shifts to Arkady's aural perception of movement and space: "all of a sudden, in the middle of a loud peal of laughter, someone, exactly as before, jumped up from a chair; this was followed by both women shouting; you could hear [slyshno bylo] Stebelkov leap up to, and hear him say something in a different voice" (13:123; 161). The substantive content of the conversation is evidently less significant here than either Arkady's act of overhearing, or the movement of the speakers that gives the scene a strong spatial dimension.

In subsequent scenes a similar dynamic continues, emphasizing interior space and movement of the characters as much as, and at times more than, the information revealed. In the very next subchapter following the extended eavesdropping incident at Vasin's, Arkady provides a detailed description of the spatial arrangement of Tatyana Pavlovna's apartment. This alerts the reader to what is about to happen, because he admits that, "All these details are necessary to understand the stupid thing I did." (13:126; 165).[20] The ensuing conversation between Tatyana Pavlovna and Katerina Nikolaevna is, this time, more relevant to the development of the plot.[21] But the overt doubling of the eavesdropping dynamic in consecutive scenes also highlights the importance of the spatial dimension, which frames an indirect mode of representation of the other. Rather than being embodied in a direct form, characters in these scenes gain embodiment relative to the construction of the spaces in which they are moving and interacting. They are accessible to the narrator only at a distance: in another room, physically separated by walls and doors, and via the auditory medium.

In *Crime and Punishment*, eavesdropping is similarly associated with the representation of interior space.[22] Unlike *The Adolescent*, in which the concealed listener – as narrator – presents his own point of view, here the third-person narration focuses on the unaware, overheard parties. (Raskolnikov's visits to the pawnbroker are an exception as, for example, he listens carefully to the sounds she makes in the bedroom in order to visualize the furniture and its distribution in the room (6:9).) Notably, at the end of the scene in Sonya's room where she reads the Raising of Lazarus to Raskolnikov, the revelation that Svidrigailov has been listening from the adjacent apartment is first made with reference to the spatial arrangement of the rooms: "Behind the door on the right, the one that separated Sonya's lodging from Gertruda Karlovna Resslich's flat, there was another room, which had long stood empty" (6:253; 292–3). Svidrigailov's presence, and in particular his decision to bring a chair up to the door to listen in more comfort on the next occasion, parallels the

dynamics of the eavesdropping scenes in *The Adolescent*. Moreover, long before we are aware that Raskolnikov's conversation with Sonya has been overheard, the meticulous evocation of the interior space with which the chapter begins, and the consistent references to the movement and position of the two characters vis-à-vis each other and the furniture in the room, signal, as in *The Adolescent*, that the scene has been set up precisely in order to be overheard.[23] Naiman interprets the revelation concerning Svidrigailov's eavesdropping in terms of voyeurism, related to his conception of this and the subsequent confession scene as developing a physical as well as emotional intimacy between Raskolnikov and Sonya.[24] Yet these voyeuristic connotations are not dependent on the late disclosure of eavesdropping. Indeed, they would arguably be greater, if we knew the scene were being overheard from the start. Rather, precisely because of the revelation of Svidrigailov's concealed presence at the end of the episode, the significance of the eavesdropper is related to the form of the narrative and position of the narrator. We initially read the Raising of Lazarus scene as being channelled – like much of the rest of the text – through the omniscient third-person narrator, with Raskolnikov as the focalizer. The opening description of the layout of Sonya's room, beginning, "He cast a rapid glance over the room" (6:241; 279), indicates that it is framed from Raskolnikov's point of view. But the culminating announcement of the eavesdropper's presence reformulates the entire scene as being from Svidrigailov's point of view. From the convention of the narrator as hidden eavesdropper, revealing the characters' secrets to drive forward the plot, Svidrigailov takes the narrator's place to become the third person within the text.[25] As I will show, the question of the third person becomes significant in relation not only to the characters' embodiment within interior spaces, but also to wider issues relating to both novels' narrative form and ethics.

The following chapter of *Crime and Punishment* repeats the motif of the concealed listener, on this occasion the artisan who has accused Raskolnikov of murder. The space of Porfiry Petrovich's office is demarcated, and the character himself embodied, by the examining magistrate's bizarre movement around it: "By now he was almost running around the room, his podgy little legs going faster and faster, his eyes fixed on the ground, his right hand shoved behind his back while his left waved this way and that" (6:260; 299).[26] As in *The Adolescent*, the repetition of eavesdropping scenes that focus so strongly on the depiction of interior space – and the movement of characters within it – begs attention. Overt implications regarding the position of the narrator are absent in this second iteration. However, the common feature of the two consecutive scenes, foregrounding references to space and movement, suggests the necessity of a

concealed third person to actualize those features. Both scenes function as if the additional presence of a third character in itself creates an extra dimension that turns paper persons into embodied characters.

The implications of this differ in the two novels. In *The Adolescent*, Arkady is the first-person narrator, but only by turning himself into the third person in eavesdropping scenes can he have a story to tell, and make it real – the problem with which he begins the novel and addresses repeatedly throughout the text. Tellingly, he perceives eavesdropping as the primary route to knowledge of the other. In his first real conversation with Versilov, he notes, "There were moments when it seemed to me […] that he'd been sitting somewhere or standing behind the door each time during the last two months: he knew every gesture, every feeling beforehand" (13:223; 295). As with his representation of his own self through contact with the other, he introduces the eavesdropping dynamic to reflect back on himself here. This indicates its importance to his own understanding not only of the plots around him, but also of how others view, and know, him.

In *Crime and Punishment*, the sense of embodiment in the two overheard scenes in Sonya's room, actualized through repeated reference to the characters' physical interaction and movement around the space, and reinforced by the presence of a third person as (aural) witness, has a transformative effect on Raskolnikov. Previously, as we have seen, the distortion of his sense experience renders the hero's concrete reality unreal, including endowing the murder scene itself with a strong sense of abstraction. Raskolnikov's continued perception of the murder in the same abstract terms enables him to deny the humanity of the victim:[27] "it's not about her! […] it wasn't a person that I killed, but a principle!" (6:211; 243). In the scenes with Sonya, her verbal emphasis on the concrete person challenges Raskolnikov's reduction of others to abstractions: "That louse was a human being!" (6:320; 368). But Sonya's embodied presence and physical proximity to Raskolnikov also confront him with the reality of other human beings, including – perhaps especially – those, like herself, whom society considers of little or no account.

The connection between Sonya and Lizaveta has already forced Raskolnikov to acknowledge the murder that cannot be theorized away. At the end of the Raising of Lazarus scene, read from Lizaveta's New Testament, this is already apparent, as he pointedly preludes his confession with, "I'll tell you who killed Lizaveta" (6:253; 292). At their subsequent meeting, Raskolnikov's first recollection of killing Lizaveta – rather than Alyona – emphasizes her physical reaction. This reiterates the role of memory in embodying the senses discussed above: "He had a vivid memory of Lizaveta's expression on that day, as he advanced towards her with

the axe in his hand, and she backed away from him towards the wall, stretching out her arm in front of her [vystaviv vpered ruku]" (6:315; 363). Sonya immediately replicates Lizaveta's fearful movements, as she "suddenly stretched out her left arm [vystaviv vpered levuiu ruku], pressing her fingers ever so lightly against his chest, and slowly began to get up from the bed, edging further and further away from him" (6:315; 363). In doing so, she further concretizes the idea of the victims – now plural – as embodied beings like herself.

Raskolnikov's crime may be a product of his rejection of the other's humanity. But beyond the conscious roles of Sonya and Porfiry in moving him towards confession, the presence of a hidden third person in these scenes suggests that this triangular dynamic overturns the unreality of the murders to contribute to Raskolnikov's restoration by indirectly creating embodied space and giving physical form to the characters. Bakhtin suggests that "The semantic point of view of a 'third person,' on whose territory a stable image of the hero is constructed, would destroy this atmosphere, and therefore such a point of view does not enter into Dostoevsky's creative world."[28] However, the role of the hidden witness in creating a sense of embodiment in the scenes with Sonya suggests that, to the contrary, Raskolnikov *needs* the stability of the third person in order to restore him from his orientation towards the self and denial of reality outside him. The hero at such moments is no longer able to treat others as abstract entities to be disposed of at will.

Indirect Witnessing

Eavesdropping thus impacts significantly on the representation of the hero, but it remains an ambivalent device in both *Crime and Punishment* and *The Adolescent*. The dubious motivation of Svidrigailov renders the truth vulnerable to his manipulation. Porfiry's ultimate aim may be the truth, but his opaque method appears to undermine his efforts, as his careful set-up backfires. The ignorance of Arkady,[29] which leaves him at risk of being set up (as does indeed happen), potentially subverts the truth value of supposedly revelatory scenes, exacerbating the plot confusion. Nevertheless, the embodied dimension associated with eavesdropping, and related types of indirect witnessing, leads to other kinds of truth.

The connection of embodiment to witnessing is revisited shortly after Porfiry's thwarted revelation, when Dunya's jilted fiancé, Luzhin, accuses Sonya of theft at her father's wake. Pyotr Petrovich's initial interview with Sonya sets up a dynamic similar to the eavesdropping scenes examined above. The positioning of the three actors is highlighted through

reference to Sonya's moving gaze (6:287), but now the third-person witness (Lebezyatnikov) moves into plain sight. The end of the scene repeats the emphasis on the position and senses of the witness, as Lebezyatnikov congratulates Luzhin on what he has just observed: "Throughout this scene Andrei Semionovich was either standing by the window or walking about the room […] 'I heard everything, and *saw* everything,' he said with particular emphasis" (6:288; 332).

When Luzhin makes his accusation of theft public, Lebezyatnikov's refutation of the allegation against Sonya reprises the association of the senses and spatial arrangements with eavesdropping. His convoluted explanation, which begins, "although I was standing quite a way off, I saw it all, all of it [no ia vse, vse videl]," and ends "I saw it, I saw it [Ia videl, videl], and I'll swear on oath I did!" (6:306; 353). Moreover, his entire exposure of his mentor contains repeated reference to seeing, and the visual element is consistently combined with his commentary on his own position in the room in relation to Luzhin and the money: "I saw that because I was standing nearby just then." This gives his version of events an embodied dimension that survives its manifest deficiencies as a witness statement.[30] This suggests that although Lebezyatnikov is a figure of ridicule throughout the novel, his role here is serious. He espouses a form of witnessing that goes beyond mere looking by expressing itself in spatial, embodied terms. As Apollonio argues, his poor eyesight means he may well not have seen anything incriminating.[31] Undoubtedly, Luzhin is counting precisely on his witness *not* being able to witness – on him only hearing rather than seeing (thereby reinforcing the similarity of the scene to the earlier eavesdropping episodes). Yet Lebezyatnikov, because he is separated by his visual impairment and cannot "s[ee] with his own eyes," relies on the *various* forms of reality. In the essay "A Propos of the Exhibition" [Po povodu vystavki, 1873], Dostoevsky describes these various forms as leading to the "reality that really exists [deistvitel'no syshchestvuiushchee]" of Dickens, rather than the flat "evidence of their own eyes" of contemporary painters (21:75–6; 1:214–15). Allen's comment in relation to "A Gentle Creature" [Krotkaia, 1876] also appears to apply to Lebezyatnikov's unseeing act of witnessing: "Paradoxically, only the 'unrealistic' frame or vision can penetrate or bear witness to what is real, to what is seen not only *on* but also *from* the inside."[32] For all his other shortcomings as a character, Lebezyatnikov is able to perceive beneath the surface – of his own materialist beliefs and rejection of the notion of compassion as much as anything else – to understand what is essential in Sonya (and Luzhin). Paradoxically, he does so by focusing on the material elements of the scene he witnesses, emphasizing precisely the surface, physical arrangements. Thus, while the witness himself moves

into view here – after two scenes of eavesdropping with a concealed third person – his own *in*ability to view the incident acts as a further form of distancing. The separation of the character from direct sense perception reinforces the embodied nature of the scene.

Lebezyatnikov's act of visually impaired witnessing to Sonya's innocence affirms the role of the third person in representing the characters' embodiment, even as the text pokes fun at his narratorial inadequacies. A much more assured act of narration/witnessing – ostensibly concerning Raskolnikov's guilt – occurs towards the end of the novel, in two adjacent scenes. At the end of their final conversation, in the dive on Obukhovsky Prospekt near the Haymarket, Raskolnikov follows Svidrigailov back to his lodgings. Upon arriving in the corridor he shares with Sonya, Svidrigailov changes tone to deliver an elaborate narrative of his own actions while he is performing them:

> Look [Vidite], here's Sofia Semionovna's door: see, there's no one there! […] And look, it's Madame de Kapernaumov herself, isn't it? Well (she's a bit deaf [ona glukha nemnogo]), has she gone out? Where? So, did you hear that [slyshali teper']? […] Well now, have a look [izvol'te videt']: I'm taking this five-per-cent bond out of my desk (see how many I've still got left!); this one's on its way to the money changer's today. So, did you see all that [videli]? […] I lock the desk, I lock the flat, and here we are on the stairs again." (6:373–4; 430)

The pantomime of listening to the deaf Kapernaumova (as with the half-blind Lebezyatnikov), and the repeated exhortations to Raskolnikov to view what he is doing, reinforce the association of the senses with spatial arrangements that we have seen in other witnessing scenarios. Svidrigailov's narration casts not only Raskolnikov in the role of witness, but also Kapernaumova. Yet precisely *what* is being witnessed here, beyond Svidrigailov's superficial actions, is initially unclear.

A little over a page later, Svidrigailov recapitulates this scene and its triangular dynamic, this time with Dunya as his primary witness, and the porter as secondary: "I live right here, in this building we're coming up to. Here's the house porter; he knows me very well, look, he's bowing to me; he can see that I'm walking with a lady, and of course he's had time to notice your face" (6:375; 431–2). The repetition draws attention to his device, ultimately revealing its meaning as he proceeds to explain, in the same exaggeratedly theatrical manner, the spatial arrangement that enabled him to eavesdrop on Raskolnikov and Sonya. In doing so, Svidrigailov parodies the type of episodic doubling we have already seen in the appearance of the eavesdropping motif in consecutive scenes in both

Crime and Punishment and *The Adolescent*. In each case, it is the revelation in the second scene that endows the dynamic established in the earlier sequence with significance.

As we have seen, Svidrigailov's eavesdropping, which places him in the position of the third-person narrator, provides the extra dimension that embodies Raskolnikov. In turn, this forces him to see the other as an embodied being as well. In these recapitulations, Svidrigailov again takes over the function of the narrator by creating the doubled scene for his own purposes. Svidrigailov's refashioning of Raskolnikov's confession with his own intonation and evaluation[33] places the original conversation at two removes, first by his covert listening, and then by his re-enactment. The approach he adopts to performing these scenes, emphasizing the senses and the role of the space in enabling his eavesdropping, reinforces the idea that Raskolnikov's embodiment – once he has returned to relative health – occurs only at a distance and filtered through a third person. At the same time, Svidrigailov, by taking on the role of the witnessed, rather than the witness, also places himself in Raskolnikov's position. This happens, moreover, precisely at the point when Svidrigailov replaces Raskolnikov as focalizer in the only sustained passage of the novel that is removed from Raskolnikov's consciousness. The characters have effectively changed places: Svidrigailov's final movements (his walk towards the Petersburg side and his dreams that emphasize heightened senses and delineate the spaces of the tawdry hotel where he takes a room) parallel both Raskolnikov's earlier actions and his distorted sense experiences. Having lent his own embodiment to Raskolnikov, as the third person, to bring the hero closer to confession, Svidrigailov can now only access his own senses through dreams and delirium. This occurs precisely as he draws closer to the final disembodiment of non-being. In order to achieve their respective resolutions, each protagonist must take from the other what he lacks, and become what he is not.

Conclusion

The indirect embodiment of Dostoevsky's characters occurs through the distortion of their own senses, and in their filtered representation through the eyes and ears of witnesses, either concealed or in plain sight. Memory, dreams, and delirium form the basis of a mode of sense experience that distances characters from their own bodies and the reality around them. The distancing provided by witnesses is also subject to potential distortion, through the imperfect perception of the third person, or the recasting of the scene in another's words. As protagonists' relations to their material being and experience of the world become indirect, the

more real becomes less real, and vice versa – including in perception of the self. The outer body of characters and the world they occupy lack the stability normally associated with realist novels. This transpires not only because of the association of the sense experience with abnormal states and the unconscious, but also because body and space become doubly relative constructions; the two come into being as a result of their interaction, and as perceived through the eyes of another. At the same time, that very instability enables the exchange of interior and exterior states, potentially giving the other (and the reader) access to the self.

Raskolnikov undergoes a radical transformation as a result of this model: from heightened sense perception associated with sickness, he is subsequently rendered through Svidrigailov's perspective, before their final exchange of places and characteristics. This suggests that embodiment through a third person – even if, as in this instance, it has a positive effect, leading to the acknowledgment of others and ultimately the hero's confession – can lead to a loss of unitary consciousness. This parallels Yuri Corrigan's identification of the "Vasia Shumkov paradigm" of the collective personality, in which the borders between individual characters become indistinct and permeable.[34] As the "I" becomes "not-I," for Raskolnikov and Svidrigailov (as well as Arkady in *The Adolescent*, when he moves into the position of the third person in order to gain the perspective and knowledge he needs to tell the story), the implications of indirect embodiment shift onto the ontological and narrative planes. It relates to the separation from the self not only of Dostoevsky's doubles, but also that which the author himself underwent in order to create his distinctive narrative voices. As he formulated in his earliest conception of *Poor Folk*: "They [readers] are used to seeing the author's mug in everything; I don't show mine. But it doesn't enter into their heads that it's Devushkin speaking, not I, and that Devushkin can't speak otherwise" (28.1:117).[35] Distorted sense perception, and embodiment that is distanced through a third person within the text, thus become Dostoevsky's mechanisms for depicting the limits of the material world, and its potential to be breached.

NOTES

I would like to thank the editors of the present volume for their extremely constructive advice, which helped me transform a rather messy first draft into the chapter I wanted to write, and for their friendship and support.

1 Recent treatments of symbolic space in Dostoevsky include: Ganna Bograd, "Metafizicheskoe prostranstvo i pravoslavnaia tsimvolika kak osnova mest

obitaniia geroev romana 'Prestuplenie i nakazanie,'" in *Dostoevskii: dopolneniia k kommentariu*, ed. T.A. Kasatkina (Moscow: Nauka, 2005), 179–202; and Vladimir Ivantsov, "Digging into Dostoevskii's Underground: From the Metaphorical to the Literal," *Slavic and East European Journal* 62, no. 2 (Summer 2018): 382–400. See also Katherine Bowers's and Vadim Shneyder's contributions to the present volume

2 For exceptions to this trend, see: Sharon Lubkemann Allen, "Reflection/Refraction of the Dying Light: Narrative Vision in Nineteenth-Century Russian and French Fiction," *Comparative Literature* 54, no. 1 (2002): 2–22; Gabriella Safran, "The Troubled Frame Narrative: Bad Listening in Late Imperial Russia," *The Russian Review* 72, no. 4 (2013): 556–572; Anna Schur, "The Limits of Listening: Particularity, Compassion, and Dostoevsky's 'Bookish Humaneness,'" *The Russian Review* 72, no. 4 (2013): 573–589; and Daniel Schümann, "Raskolnikov's Aural Conversion: From Hearing to Listening," *Ulbandus Review* 16 (2014): 6–23.

3 Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, trans. Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 59–60.

4 F.M. Dostoevskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridtsati tomakh*, ed. G. M. Fridlender et al. (Leningrad: "Nauka," 1972–90), vol. 8, 148. Subsequent references to this edition will be indicated in the text with volume and page numbers. Translation: Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Idiot*, trans. Alan Myers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 185. Subsequent references to this translation will be indicated after the *PSS* volume and page number following a semicolon. On the rhetoric and thematics of vision in *The Idiot*, see A.B. Krinitsyn, "O spetsifike vizual'nogo mira u Dostoevskogo i semantike 'videnii' v romane Idiot'," in *Roman F M Dostoevskogo 'Idiot': sovremennoe sostoianie izucheniia*, ed. T.A. Kasatkina (Moscow: Nasledie, 2001), 170–205; and Robert Louis Jackson, *Dialogues with Dostoevsky: The Overwhelming Questions* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993), 47–49.

5 William A. Cohen, *Embodied: Victorian Literature and the Senses* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 1, 5.

6 N.G. Chernyshevskii, "Antropologicheskii printsip v filosofii," in *Izbrannye filosofskie sochineniia*, ed. M.M. Grigor'ian (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1951), 185–188. On Dostoevsky's polemic with Chernyshevsky, see Melissa Frazier's contribution to the present volume.

7 From a letter to Mikhail Dostoevsky, January–February 1847. My own translation.

8 Translation: Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Double*, trans. Hugh Aplin (Richmond: Alma Classics, 2016), 8. Subsequent references to this translation will be indicated after the *PSS* volume and page number following a semicolon.

9 Translation: Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *A Writer's Diary*, trans. Kenneth Lantz, vol. 1, 1873–1876 (London: Quartet, 1994), 170. Subsequent references to this

translation will be indicated after the *PSS* volume and page number following a semicolon.

10 The Underground Man represents one of the most extreme cases of *dis*-embodiment in Dostoevsky's fiction. *Notes from Underground* [Zapiski iz podpol'ia, 1864] is notable for its absence of reference to the senses; the narrator seldom sees or hears, and is generally impervious to outside or sensual influence until he meets Liza. More than half of the novella's 21 uses of *slyshat'* (to hear) occur in the scenes with the prostitute.

11 See, for example, Adele Lindenmeyr, "Raskolnikov's City and the Napoleonic Plan," *Slavic Review* 35, no. 1 (1976): 39–40.

12 Translation: Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, trans. Nicolas Pasternak Slater (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 68. Subsequent references to this translation will be indicated after the *PSS* volume and page number following a semicolon. Dmitry Merezhkovsky describes such moments of tension as leading to the "dukhovnost' ploti" (spiritualization of the flesh); D.S. Merezhkovskii, *L. Tolstoi i Dostoevskii*, ed. E.A. Andrushchenko (Moscow: Nauka, 2000), 146.

13 John Levin and Sarah J. Young, "Mapping Machines: Transformations of the Petersburg Text," *Primerjalna Književnost* 36, no. 2 (2013): 157.

14 Translation: Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Adolescent*, trans. Dora O'Brien (Richmond: Alma Classics, 2016), 357.

15 The aural dimension of *Crime and Punishment* is discussed in ethical terms, highlighting the negative associations of eavesdropping and Raskolnikov's predatory listening instincts, in Schümann, "Raskolnikov's Aural Conversion," 12.

16 The emphasis on the senses, particularly hearing, in "The Peasant Marey" [Muzhik Marei, 1876] in *A Writer's Diary*, indicates the importance of memory to embodied experience in Dostoevsky's works.

17 Dostoevsky's use of eavesdropping goes back to his farcical 1848 story "Another Man's Wife and a Husband Under the Bed," and is central to various works, including "Uncle's Dream," [Dyadushkin son, 1859] and the chapter "Akul'ka's Husband" [Akul'kin muzh, 1861] in *Notes from the House of the Dead*. On the latter, see Schur, "The Limits of Listening," 581–588.

18 This particular sense of space associated with eavesdropping, in which the private realm is transgressed, is noted by Ann Gaylin, *Eavesdropping in the Novel from Austen to Proust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 2. Bakhtin associates the movement from private to public inherent in eavesdropping with the development of the novelistic form. Mikhail Bakhtin, "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel," in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M.M. Bakhtin*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 123–124.

19 The repeated reference to doors in this scene, and those discussed below, indicates the connection between eavesdropping and the threshold chronotope and, therefore, the transformative potential of the eavesdropping dynamic. Bakhtin, *Problems*, 170.

20 Hansen-Löve notes the tension between Arkady's position as an outside observer in such scenes, and his desire to play a central role in the novel's drama. He indicates a psycho-sexual dimension to the frequency with which Arkady is trapped, eavesdropping, in a bedroom, which reprises the scenario of "Another Man's Wife and a Husband under the Bed." O. Khansen-Leve, "Diskursivnye protsessy v romane Dostoevskogo 'Podrostok'," in *Avtor i tekst: sbornik statei*, ed. V.M. Markovich and V. Shmid (St Petersburg: Izd-vo S-Peterburgskogo universiteta, 1996), 260–261.

21 As Gaylin argues, "Illicit listening in the novel stages the manner in which stories are generated and resolved." *Eavesdropping*, 2.

22 The connection of eavesdropping with interior space is explored in Peter Betjemann, "Eavesdropping with Charlotte Perkins Gilman: Fiction, Transcription, and the Ethics of Interior Design," *American Literary Realism* 46, no. 2 (2014): 95–115. Dostoevsky's preoccupation with interior design is apparent in the recurring motif of redecoration in *Crime and Punishment*, including of Alyona's apartment after the murder, the apartment downstairs where the decorators Mikolai and Mitrei are working, and the police bureau Raskolnikov visits at the beginning of part 2. These references draw the reader's attention to the delineation of the novel's interior spaces long before their significance to the eavesdropping scenes becomes clear.

23 The use of an initial interior description to set up future eavesdropping episodes also features in "Uncle's Dream"; a long description of the layout of Moskaleva's "salon" appears irrelevant until two chapters later, when her relative Nastasya Petrovna retreats to an adjoining cubby hole in order to eavesdrop on Moskaleva's conversation with her daughter Zina about the plan to ensnare the eponymous elderly Prince (2:319).

24 Eric Naiman, "Gospel Rape," *Dostoevsky Studies* New Series, no. 22 (2018): 11–40.

25 The connection between eavesdropping and the third-person voice in narrative is explored in John Vernon, "Reading, Writing, and Eavesdropping: Some Thoughts on the Nature of Realistic Fiction," *The Kenyon Review* 4, no. 4 (1982): 49.

26 This scene also associates sound and space with memory, thus recalling the forms of indirect sense perception discussed above, when Mikolka puts in his unexpected appearance: "Later on, when he thought back to that moment, Raskolnikov recalled it like this: The noise outside the door suddenly got much louder, and the door opened a fraction" (6:270; 310).

27 Raskolnikov considers only the crime he intended to commit, ignoring the murder of Lizaveta altogether until his first encounter with Sonya.
28 Bakhtin, *Problems*, 64.
29 As his sister, Liza, comments, "I've long since seen that you know nothing about anything" (13:133; 175).
30 Following Luzhin – the lawyer's – lead, both Lebezyatnikov and Raskolnikov frame their rebuttal of his allegation in terms of testimony (6:301–308), undermining the former's supposed authority and emphasizing the subjective status of witnessing, which becomes relevant not only to this novel, but to *Brothers Karamazov* in particular.
31 Carol Apollonio, *Dostoevsky's Secrets: Reading Against the Grain* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2009), 91.
32 Allen, "Reflection/Refraction," 7. Italics in original.
33 Bakhtin, *Problems*, 89.
34 Yuri Corrigan, *Dostoevsky and the Riddle of the Self* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2017), 18–21.
35 Letter to Mikhail Dostoevsky, 1 February 1846. My translation.