

Title: Duality in Gogol's "Notes of a Madman"
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The primacy of language over ideas in Gogol's works is a frequently repeated truism, and numerous articles have dealt with this. Most, however, survey the language of his *oeuvre* overall, with varying degrees of commentary about how individual characters are individuated by their language (Gukovskii, Vinogradov). "Notes of a Madman," as Gogol's only work with a fictional first person narrator/protagonist would seem to preclude such individuation, and the story's style has been characterized as that of "alternation and contrast...but not the alternation between 'high' and 'low' levels" (Tynyanov). However, the work, as the alleged text of a deranged persona for whom language and individual words are of paramount importance and indicative of his mental states, should be looked at on an individual word basis. Such a close reading reveals a duality of language that parallels the dichotomy of the protagonist's perception: a colloquial ("low-brow") style that reflects the world he perceives around him, but a more literary ("high-brow") tone for the world of his delusional fantasies, that is, how he sees himself in that world. Furthermore, this duality does not remain constant throughout the "Notes," but changes and parallels the transfiguration of the character. The language thus undergirds the progression of Poprishchin from a parody of a Romantic seeker of self-realization (Krivonos) to Poprishchin's final royal parody of himself.

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