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Dostoevsky on the Metaphysical Mystery of the Unhappy Consciousness

Galina I. Petrova

Full Professor of Philosophy, Faculty of Philosophy, Tomsk State University,
Tomsk, Russian Federation
seminar_2008@mail.ru

Nikolay A. Tarabanov

Associate Professor, Faculty of Philosophy, Tomsk State University, Tomsk,
Russian Federation
nikotar@mail.tsu.ru

Abstract

We argue that such trends of modern philosophy as philosophical anthropology, hermeneutics and phenomenology in their ideological origins were born in Russian philosophizing, so that the ideas and images of Dostoevsky's works have been revealed as their harbinger. More specifically, he supplemented the categorical apparatus of philosophy with the concept of mystery, foreseeing the specifics of descriptive language, which has become relevant to the specifics of modern philosophical and anthropological discoveries and socio-ontological constructions. In addition, we consider the phenomenon of unhappy consciousness found in *Notes from the Underground* and make an assumption about intersubjective (pluralistic) idealism – an original metaphysical conception, within the framework of which the definition of man as a mystery can be explained.

Keywords

metaphysical mystery – Hegel's unhappy consciousness – pluralist idealism – Dostoevsky's philosophy – “man as a mystery” – *Notes from the Underground*

Introduction

The philosophical intuition and thought of Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky have a powerful potential and have anticipated many topics of European thought. We argue that Dostoevsky posited the problem of man and consciousness (and this is the performative potential of his philosophy), which received theoretical conceptualization only in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Thus, Dostoevsky became the harbinger of philosophical anthropology, hermeneutics and phenomenology.

The task of looking at Dostoevsky's ideas as harbingers leads to what Hans-Georg Gadamer¹ has called a philosophical pre-understanding, interpreted in terms of an act that helps to consider and interpret (de)constructive processes in culture and philosophy. This is the act of immersion in the living environment where the most important formulations of Dostoevsky's worldview emerged. With their help, the writer created a unique philosophical space of human experience. The relevance of the topic lies in the fact that the comparison of ontological and epistemological ideas of the Russian writer, on the one hand, and the doctrines of Western thinkers, on the other, testifying to the commonality of the spiritual problems of Russian and Western cultures, speaks of the possibility and necessity of their dialogue.

The comparison shows the historical cultivation of anthropological content in the hermeneutic-phenomenological direction of the study of consciousness, which in Dostoevsky's writings manifested itself in all the complexity of its own structure, not reduced only to reason and intellect. The method of historical dialogue is also used: a dialogue is conducted with the views of philosophers, during which the specifics of the study of "pure reason" and the transcendental subject, who have come today to the need for "hermeneutic grafting" and optics. The method of intellectual history made it possible to oppose two traditions of understanding consciousness. The first is associated with the "intellectual habit"² to see consciousness as a simple structure with a "clear and distinct idea",³ the second assumes consciousness in its complex, mysterious (metaphysical) content. Two "intellectual habits" are two types of philosophical thinking. Dostoevsky is a representative of the second type,

1 See Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (London and New York: Continuum, 2004), 397.

2 Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2001), 10.

3 René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, trans. Michael Moriarty (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 55.

identifying the main problem – the mystery of man, the secret of his “heightened” and “unhappy” consciousness.

Mystery as a Philosophical and Anthropological Category

Dostoevsky’s thesis about man as a mystery⁴ expresses the essence of human existence – incomprehensible and fundamentally impossible for knowledge. In this context, the mystery of man has become an anthropological category, over which philosophical anthropologists are still struggling. Enriching the categorical apparatus of philosophy, Dostoevsky stimulates subsequent generations of philosophers to constantly raise the question “what is a man” and not regret the time spent, even if it is known in advance that there is no final answer. The mystery of man is a consequence of his reflexive consciousness, where contradictions have intertwined in an irresolvable way.

Dostoevsky helps us get closer to the mystery of man, working with the image, where thought always clings to feeling, and in such a unity he (man) makes it possible to recognize himself. The combination of a rational concept and an irrational feeling allowed the writer and philosopher to become a harbinger of future philosophical discoveries and directions, which in our time, if not solving the riddle, at least showed the direction in which it can be solved.

Dostoevsky’s answer about man as a mystery is today, perhaps, the only philosophically and anthropologically reliable answer. The credibility is largely due to his intuitive and sensory insight into the basic ideas of phenomenology – intentionality and the phenomenological reduction. The principles of phenomenology came to Dostoevsky even before Husserl (*Notes from the Underground* were published in 1864) and opened the possibility of seeing the reason for the mystery in the fact that man in his existence went beyond the boundaries of objective reality and, finding himself in a different nature, “got rid of” any limits and frameworks in which it could be defined as any empirical thing. But, for Husserl⁵ this idea has to receive an abstract form of bracketing objective reality (phenomenological reduction),⁶ whereas it came

4 This thesis is revealed in a letter to his brother: “Man is a mystery. It must be solved, and if you are going to solve it all your life, then do not say that you have lost time; I am engaged in this mystery, because I want to be human”. Fedor Mikhailovich Dostoevskii, *O russkoi literature* (Moscow: Sovremennik Publ., 1987), 317.

5 See Edmund Husserl, *The Idea of Phenomenology*, trans. Lee Hardy (Dordrecht: Springer, 1999), 34.

6 Later, Scheler solved this problem by endowing a person with the property of transcending beyond vitality and “sensual impulse” into an alien existence, where (thanks to a meeting

to Dostoevsky in the image of a “stone wall”⁷ dividing the natural (physical) and spiritual (metaphysical) worlds. The essence of man is in the deepest layers of being, behind the “stone wall”, in metaphysics as a derealized reality of non-substantial being. A person is given the *a priori* ability to overcome the boundaries of the “stone wall”, because this person is endowed with the ability of intention, which characterizes him not only by its orientation outward, but also, according to Ilyin, inward (“*emlet vnutr*”)⁸. Man is not determined only by the laws of nature; it means that his mystery must be sought outside them and outside the logic which they obey. They must be looked for in the way of his being, the specificity of which is to be an “eternal Faust”⁹, to transcend all boundaries and limits, to break through them and in reflexive awareness of oneself to break away from the vital state of nature. A person is a mystery because he possesses a consciousness that reveals to him that layer of being, which – there, behind the “stone wall” – is mysterious in its metaphysical call to reveal the truth.

Thus, phenomenological intuitions and questions of philosophical anthropology as they are today posed and solved by world philosophical thought, came to Dostoevsky earlier than in Western European philosophy.¹⁰ They are initiated by the specifics of Russian philosophizing regarding the problem of man and his consciousness.¹¹ The traditional unity of rational thinking and religious faith made it possible for Russian philosophy to see the light of being in its innermost causal foundations. As such, it did not reveal mysticism, but it appeared as an objective ontological region of the world, although not subject

with the “spirit”) a genuine birth – “conversion” – of a person takes place. See Maks Sheler, *Izbrannye proizvedeniia*, per. A.V. Denezhkina i dr. (Moscow: Gnozis Publ., 1994), 189.

7 “What stone wall? Well, of course, the laws of nature, the conclusions of natural science, mathematics.” Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*, trans. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (London: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), 13.

8 See Ivan Il’in, *Aksiomy religioznogo opyta* (Moscow: AST Publ., 2002), 90.

9 See Maks Sheler, *Izbrannye proizvedeniia*, 164.

10 Scanlan makes a similar remark: “<...> Edmund Husserl, and others, who developed the doctrine of the “intentionality” of consciousness <...> Such a separation between consciousness and object is already implicit in Dostoevsky’s view of freedom of the will <...>.” James P. Scanlan, *Dostoevsky the Thinker* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2002), 32.

11 Bakhtin stresses the specificity of Dostoevsky’s view on consciousness: “What unfolds in his works is not a multitude of characters and fates in a single objective world, illuminated by a single authorial consciousness; rather a *plurality of consciousnesses, with equal rights and each with its own world*, combine but are not merged in the unity of the event.” Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, Theory and History of Literature, Vol. 8, ed. and trans. Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 6.

to pure rationality, but comprehensible by the “fullness of living knowledge”¹². It was categorically defined as “transrational”, “incomprehensible”, “metalogical” and was discovered by a special method – “transposition”,¹³ which did not reject rationality, but saw it in unity with irrational intuition, faith, understanding. Only such “fullness” allowed consciousness to penetrate into those layers of being, where, it was believed, the truth lives – the *verity*. Dostoevsky operated with metaphysics as a description, which gave an understanding of the reality of consciousness as a truly human reality.

Rational consciousness, which came with the Enlightenment and still dominated in the nineteenth century, and was fenced off, as Dostoevsky says, from the possibility of knowing the deep foundations of being by a “stone wall”, was directed to the “laws of nature”, physics and prudently rational logic, which used as the instrument of its work the “beast-reason”. In this work, a person does not have metaphysical optics, does not know the highest goals and meaning of life; he is concerned only with his own benefit, being in spiritual emptiness, abomination, humiliation and insult. For the “beast-reason”, there was no anthropology of human existence with its mystery. On the contrary, it has something soothing, morally permissive and final, because “<...> it’s proved to you, for example, that you descended from an ape, there’s no use making a wry face, just take it for what it is <...> there’s nothing to be done, because two times two is – mathematics”.¹⁴ Dostoevsky saw the mystery not in the logic of the “laws of nature”, but in the world of free will – incomprehensible, inexpressible, disturbing with metaphysical meanings and irrational volitions.

This is where Dostoevsky draws the reader into the space of consciousness. The mystery of consciousness, and, consequently, of man, is what creates the problem and the core of all his works. What is it, what is hidden in it? This question still worries both philosophy and literature. Dostoevsky tried to give an answer, which he associated with the need to break through the impenetrable “stone wall” behind which there is the tension and incomprehensibility of the world of consciousness.

Consciousness is an extra-objective, metaphysical problem, reality in its fundamental non-substantial foundations. In its non-substantiality, it is the essential being of a person, where the simplicity of the laws of logic (rationality as a cliché) does not operate, but where plural meanings and heterogeneous ontologies live. It exists as something that does not exist as matter, but in

12 See Vasilii Rozanov, *O ponimanii: Opyt issledovaniia prirody, granits i vnutrennego stroeniia nauki kak tsel'nogo znaniia* (Moscow: Tanais Publ., 1996), 42.

13 See Semen Liudvigovich Frank, *Sochineniia* (Moscow: Pravda Publ., 1990), 73.

14 F.M. Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*, 13.

certain situations it can materialize objectively and find itself in explanations and actions that are not subject to the “reason-beast” – incomprehensible in their non-logic, but absorbing both the heroes and the reader. Consciousness is not logically clear, it gives a person the understanding that the world does not consist only of object-material “benefits”: it contains meanings, symbols, tension, anxiety, evil, good, happiness, faith, etc. – experience as a whole.

The reality of consciousness, where Dostoevsky’s heroes live, is complex, detective-like, mysterious. The mystery gives a specificity to his detectives, which is connected with the fact that they are plotting not about the world of existence of objective “what”, causally and naturally related things, processes and “benefits”, not about a world subject to logical unraveling its intricacies as in simplicity of “two by two is four”. No, his detectives move away from subject-matter physics into the metaphysical world of spiritual traditions, consciousness, ideological attitudes. All this breaks the logic and laws of “benefits”, makes incomprehensible – from the point of view of the simplicity of reason – the gesture of Raskolnikov, who did not use the money of the old woman-pawnbroker, introduces an insoluble contradiction, when an act logically calculated and rationally justified in the space of a “stone wall” does not find justification in the metaphysical world of anthropological authenticity.

Anthropology is against logic. Irrational human “will” and rationality of consciousness, freedom and “laws of nature” are antinomies that cannot be solved and are impossible for him. All that remains is, “if you feel free to reconcile <...> beat your wall with a painful fist.”¹⁵ Truth is there – beyond the rational reduction of the world and is revealed in the fusion of thought and feeling, when it becomes clear that behind the natural world of the “stone wall” there is a supra-natural world – a true one.

Unhappy Consciousness and Underground Metaphysics

The anthropological category of mystery attracts modern researchers who hear its metaphysical call and associate it with the incomprehensibility of human consciousness, with its contradictory essence and the torment from the impossibility of self-expression. Of Dostoevsky’s vast written legacy, *Notes from the Underground* is perhaps the most relevant to represent attempts to speak of the mysterious complexity of consciousness. *Notes* give a philosophical perspective on the problem of consciousness, presenting it in a rather unusual way – as a disease and misfortune: “<...> any consciousness at all is a

15 F.M. Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*, 14–15.

sickness”;¹⁶ “<...> consciousness, in my opinion, is man’s greatest misfortune <...>”.¹⁷ This resembles the concept of unhappy consciousness introduced and considered in Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*: “<...> *unhappy consciousness* is the consciousness of itself as a doubled, only contradictory creature”.¹⁸ Indeed, *Notes* are literally replete with ambiguous and often contradictory characteristics of the verbalized consciousness of the “underground” man, confessing to someone unknown and with an unknown purpose: “And I lied about myself just now when I said I was a wicked official. I lied out of wickedness”.¹⁹ The hero’s “confession” is in part an allusion to Rousseau’s *Confessions*, where the French writer seeks to portray himself as “a man in all the truth of nature”;²⁰ “l’homme de la nature et de la vérité” is a French expression three times mentioned in *Notes*, literally meaning “man of nature and truth”, but it is used, rather, in an ironic and contradictory way, as a kind of symbol of dual human nature:

Well, sirs, it is just such an ingenuous man that I regard as the real, normal man, the way his tender mother – nature – herself wished to see him when she so kindly conceived him on earth. I envy such a man to the point of extreme bile. He is stupid, I won’t argue with you about that, but perhaps a normal man ought to be stupid, how do you know? Perhaps it’s even very beautiful. And I am the more convinced of this, so to speak, suspicion, seeing that if, for example, one takes the antithesis of the normal man, that is, the man of heightened consciousness, who came, of course, not from the bosom of nature but from a retort (this is almost mysticism, gentlemen, but I suspect that, too), this retort man sometimes folds before his antithesis so far that he honestly regards himself, with all his heightened consciousness, as a mouse and not a man.²¹

The opposition of “normal” (natural, but stupid!) and “heightened conscious” (cultured, but reasonable?) person is revealed here in all its contradictory duality. Isn’t this kind of “confession” just a symptom of the hero’s morbid consciousness?

16 F.M. Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*, 8.

17 Ibid, 31.

18 Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. Michael Inwood (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 123.

19 F.M. Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*, 6.

20 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Confessions*, trans. Angela Scholar (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 5.

21 F.M. Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*, 11.

The original (religious) meaning of confession is to admit one's vices and mistakes before God; in other words, confession is a frank narration of an individual about himself as the cause of unfavorable events in his life. Nevertheless, seeming at first glance confessional (be frank), the stream of consciousness of the underground man is not really such: firstly, the exact addressee of the "confession" is unknown (he only uses the appeal "sirs"); secondly, it can hardly be considered in any way connected with religion or an appeal to God (in any case, no explicit references are found in the text). In addition, it is quite difficult to judge how frank (sincere and confessional) the underground man is. And is it even possible to be completely frank? Consciousness is painfully unhappy because in the contradictions it finds it can no longer separate truth from falsehood, sincerity from pretence, rationality from stupidity.

The metaphor of the "underground" (inert and constantly reflecting) unhappy consciousness is in opposition to the "ground" (active) life, saturated with actions and events. The hero of *Notes* is presented as the bearer of "heightened consciousness" which is in constant contemplation and cannot decide on any action for a long time; in this respect, the story of an officer who offended him, who turned out to be the unwitting object of fruitless and prolonged meditations of the underground man, is indicative. The main leitmotif of the narrative, apparently, is the instability and incessant dialectics of isolated ("underground" and "heightened") unhappy consciousness, embodying in many ways the extremes of both idealistic (naturally sentimental) romanticism and materialistic (culturally pragmatic) rationalism: "Submitted to the testing of full acceptance, the testing of this irreducible human existence, the 'heightened consciousness' of the rationalist, like the sentimental impulses of the romantic, runs into disastrous and comic reversals. Hence the paradoxically defiant double-mindedness of the underground man, and his intransitive dilemma".²²

The rationality of the "heightened consciousness" thus borders on the tragicomic irony of one's own impotence, constantly bumping into the "stone wall" against which the unfortunate consciousness rests, so that it is hardly possible to break through it, but it is also impossible to come to terms with it: "To be sure, I won't break through such a wall with my forehead if I really have not got strength enough to do it, but neither will I be reconciled with it simply because I have a stone wall here and have not got strength enough".²³ This, apparently, is the contradictory irony of the painfully unhappy consciousness. Irony is usually defined as a philosophical and aesthetic category, which expresses a

22 Richard Pevear, Introduction, Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*, VIII.

23 F.M. Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*, 13.

certain moment of dialectical (self)revelation of meaning through something else, often opposite to it. Friedrich Schlegel, being a theorist of Romanticism, defined it as follows: “Irony is the form of the paradox. Paradox is everything simultaneously good and great”.²⁴ A kind of paradox is also revealed by the painfully split, unhappy consciousness of the underground man: “The more conscious I was of the good and of all this ‘beautiful and lofty’, the deeper I kept sinking into my mire, and the more capable I was of getting completely stuck in it”.²⁵ What is common between Dostoevsky and Schlegel?

The force that bonds Schlegel and Dostoevsky together is that they both share a belief in anti-foundationalism. A thought and its antipode do not form a stable and isolated system for understanding any given event, text or idea. Just as the underground man likes to reflect on the reflection of his reflection, ad infinitum, all thoughts attract their antipodes to the degree of infinity.²⁶

It turns out that the ironic paradoxicality of the romantically painful underground man does not allow discovery of any ultimate grounds in his own consciousness, resting against the “stone wall” of the laws of nature. The underground man (paradoxalist) is both a romantic hero and a rationalist antihero, whose unhappy consciousness rushes between being and non-being, good and evil, humility and pride. However, almost every person finds himself in such a situation of duality, which Dostoevsky did not fail to hint at in the preamble of his work: “Both the author of the notes and the Notes themselves are, of course, fictional. Nevertheless, such persons as the writer of such notes not only may but even must exist in our society, taking into consideration the circumstances under which our society has generally been formed”.²⁷ Who, if not Dostoevsky himself, is the author of “such notes”? What are the circumstances under which “society has generally been formed”? The author ironically plays with the reader, clearly implying the ambiguity of the expression “the author of the notes”. It is no coincidence, therefore, that the “underground” man is anonymous (it is only known that he is “one collegiate assessor”);²⁸ the contradictoriness of consciousness represented by him is probably a characteristic of practically every human being. Moreover, such inconsistency may well testify to the unbalanced duality of the world itself: “this unhappy consciousness turns out to be a sign of a deep imbalance, which, despite all its fleetingness, is not only the imbalance of the philosopher, not only the imbalance

24 Friedrich Schlegel, *Philosophical Fragments*, trans. Peter Firchow (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 6.

25 F.M. Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*, 8–9.

26 Paul Fung, ‘Dostoevsky, Consciousness and Romantic Irony’, *Dostoevsky Journal*, 18 (2017), 77. DOI: 10.1163/23752122-01801005.

27 F.M. Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*, 5.

28 *Ibid.*, 7.

of humanity, but also the imbalance of the entire universe, which is aware of itself in humanity, in the philosopher".²⁹

The unbalanced and contradictory duality of the unhappy consciousness noted by Hegel and reinforced by Wahl manifests itself at different levels of being – from relationships with the world and others as part of this world to relationships with oneself. So, we can distinguish the following “most important forms of duality: 1) social dichotomy between the individual and ‘others’, which he considers as a kind of unity; 2) personal split between ideal and attraction; 3) a split between the I, identified with reason, and the will of the whole soul, nourished mainly by the unconscious”.³⁰ The last two forms of duality, apparently, correspond to the previously mentioned opposition of Rationalism and Romanticism, while the first expresses not only a dramatic opposition of oneself to others (“I am one, and they are *all*”),³¹ but also the philosophical problem of the existence of other consciousnesses, the reality of which is not obvious.

Dostoevsky often appears in his works as a philosopher striving to reveal the metaphysical nature of the dialectic of life and consciousness that he artistically describes. The concept of metaphysics etymologically goes back to the Greek *μετά τὰ φυσικά* – “what is after physics” (physics as the study of nature in the broadest sense, *φύσις* as “nature”), that is, it means the philosophical doctrine of the super-experienced (“supra-natural”) beginnings of being in general; while metaphysics is often used as a synonym for philosophy. The super-experienced character of the artistic images presented by the writer is revealed in a special kind of idealism – intersubjective, in contrast to the objective (Plato) and subjective (Berkeley) forms of idealism well-known in the history of philosophy. As for artistic creation, philosophical idealism (both objective and subjective) is reflected in the following way according to Bakhtin:

Ideological monologism found its clearest and theoretically most precise expression in idealistic philosophy. The monistic principle, that is, the affirmation of the unity of existence, is, in idealism, transformed into the unity of consciousness <...> The unity of consciousness, replacing the unity of existence, is inevitably transformed into the unity of a *single* consciousness.³²

29 Jean Wahl, *Neschastnoe Soznanie v Filosofii Gegelya*, per. V.Y. Bystrova (Sankt-Peterburg: Vladimir Dal' Publ., 2006), 7.

30 Reinhard Lauth, *Filosofia Dostoevskogo v sistematicheskom izlozhenii*, per. I.S. Andreevoi (Moscow: Respublika Publ., 1996), 68–69.

31 F.M. Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*, 41.

32 M.M. Bakhtin, *The Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 80.

It is this “unity of a *single* consciousness” that is represented in *Notes*, where the hero is forced to rush into the metaphysical underground of his own consciousness, which comes into contact with the consciousnesses of others only in a visible (inauthentic) way, from which he becomes unhappy. In this regard, Hegel’s explanation is noteworthy:

But it is precisely here that this consciousness, instead of being consciousness equal-to-itself, is in fact just an utterly contingent confusion, the vertigo of a perpetually self-engendering disorder. *It is this for itself*; for consciousness itself maintains and produces this confusion in motion. That is why it also confesses to it, it confesses to being a wholly *contingent, singular* consciousness, – a consciousness which is *empirical*, takes its guidance from what has no reality for it, obeys what is for it no essence, does and brings to actuality what has no truth for it.³³

The unhappy single consciousness of the “underground” man is a kind of expression of his inability to go beyond the revealed contradictions. Returning to the relationship between metaphysical idealism and ideological monism, it is advisable to draw attention to yet another thought of Bakhtin: “And the soil of monistic idealism is the least likely place for a plurality of unmerged consciousnesses to blossom. <...> Dostoevsky’s world is profoundly *pluralistic*”.³⁴ Thus, we can come to the conclusion that Dostoevsky, with his work, substantiates a new kind of idealism – pluralistic or intersubjective. It was this discovery of the plurality and the individual uniqueness of a person and his consciousness that made it possible for Dostoevsky to define a person in his authenticity – in mystery. But no (even philosophical) ideology is capable of exhausting all the richness of the writer’s artistic images:

One should not confuse a writer, and especially his genius, with the oscillations of an underground pendulum. This is why all interpretations that are based on ideology remain superficial; they remain in captivity of fruitless oppositions generated by the conflict between the *Other* and the *Self*. Dostoevsky’s double ideological extremism is an example of the very *breadth* by which he himself defined modern man.³⁵

33 G.W.F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, 85.

34 M.M. Bakhtin, *The Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, 26.

35 René Girard, *Kritika iz Podpol’ia*, per. N. Movinoi (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie Publ., 2012), 113.

The breadth of the unhappy human consciousness remains that metaphysical mystery which Dostoevsky sought to reveal, but which continues to remain unsolved.

Conclusion

The interpretation of Dostoevsky's ideas in the context of the specifics of traditional classical and modern philosophical thought makes it possible to show, on the one hand, the rootedness of his philosophical and literary creativity in the realities of Russian culture, and, on the other, its integration into the world philosophical process. The significance of this kind of research is that it allows one to discover and outline new horizons for the development of not only modern philosophy, but also, more broadly, humanities in general. New horizons are associated with solving the mystery as a philosophical and anthropological problem. On the path of mastering "new horizons", the article supplements the categorical apparatus of phenomenology, when in the categorical series ("intentionality", "natural attitude", "phenomenological reduction") there is a concept expressed in an artistic-figurative form – "mystery". Reading Dostoevsky's problems and ideas in a context of philosophy can support the continuity of analytical work with Dostoevsky's text as something that actualizes the understanding of modernity in its various aspects: philosophical, political, and sociocultural.

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