

METAPHYSICS OF LONELINESS IN DOSTOEVSKY'S VIEW OF LIFE: ESSENCE AND ISSUES POSED

METAFÍSICA DA SOLIDÃO NA VISÃO DA VIDA DE DOSTOIÉVSKI: ESSÊNCIA E QUESTÕES LEVANTADAS

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Abstract: Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky (1821-1881), a paramount figure in 19th-century Russian intellectualism, profoundly explored the human condition, emphasizing themes of solitude, freedom, and existential angst. His literary oeuvre, focusing on the intricate tapestry of human emotions and thoughts, navigates the complex journey of self-discovery and the quest for identity within the societal margins. Dostoevsky's philosophical discourse on loneliness, intertwined with a quest for freedom from a religiously rooted volition, presents a nuanced analysis of Russian character and the prospect of spiritual redemption. This article highlights the dichotomy in Dostoevsky's portrayal of human existence: the oscillation between despair and the pursuit of self-expression in a world fraught with uncertainty. His insights into the human psyche have profoundly influenced existential philosophy, marking a significant contribution to 20th-century existentialist thought. Dostoevsky's narratives, rich in empathy and introspection, advocate for resilience in the face of existential despair, promoting a vision of liberation and genuine freedom. Dostoevsky's legacy, as acknowledged by thinkers like Berdyaev, extends his influence beyond literary circles into the realms of existential and anthropological philosophy, championing the individual's capacity for self-transformation and the imperative of living a

purposeful life. His characters, emblematic of the broader human struggle, navigate their destinies against the backdrop of a Russia in flux, reflecting Dostoevsky's profound engagement with the socio-political currents of his time and his anticipation of a new chapter in Russian and human history.

Keywords: Existentialism. Freedom. Fyodor Dostoevsky. Human being. Loneliness.

Resumo: Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoiévski (1821-1881), uma figura fundamental do intelectualismo russo do século XIX, explorou profundamente a condição humana, enfatizando temas de solidão, liberdade e angústia existencial. Sua obra literária, com foco na intrincada tapeçaria de emoções e pensamentos humanos, navega na complexa jornada de autodescoberta e na busca de identidade dentro das margens da sociedade. O discurso filosófico de Dostoiévski sobre a solidão, entrelaçado com a busca de liberdade a partir de uma volição religiosamente enraizada, apresenta uma análise matizada do caráter russo e a perspectiva de redenção espiritual. Este artigo destaca a dicotomia no

retrato que Dostoiévski faz da existência humana: a oscilação entre o desespero e a busca da autoexpressão em um mundo repleto de incertezas. Suas percepções sobre a psique humana influenciaram profundamente a filosofia existencial, marcando uma contribuição significativa para o pensamento existencialista do século XX. As narrativas de Dostoiévski, ricas em empatia e introspecção, defendem a resiliência diante do desespero existencial, promovendo uma visão de libertação e liberdade genuína. O legado de Dostoiévski, conforme reconhecido por pensadores como Berdyaev, estende sua influência para além dos círculos literários, nos domínios da filosofia existencial e antropológica, defendendo a capacidade individual de autotransformação e o imperativo de viver uma vida com propósito. Seus personagens, emblemáticos da luta humana mais ampla, navegam por seus destinos tendo como pano de fundo uma Rússia em fluxo, refletindo o profundo envolvimento de Dostoiévski com as correntes sociopolíticas de seu tempo e a antecipação de um novo capítulo na história russa e humana.

Palavras-chave: Existencialismo. Liberdade. Fyodor Dostoevsky. Ser humano. Solidão.

1. Introduction

From the metaphysics of inner human to the metaphysics of loneliness are common themes in Dostoevsky's view of life reflecting a part of Russia's fate before and after the serfdom reform of 1861 (Kortunov). The fate of Russia after 1861 was marked by significant historical events and reforms. In 1861, Tsar Alexander II implemented the Emancipation Reform, which abolished serfdom in Russia. Dostoevsky understood that loneliness and individual turmoil are not the path leading humans to the future, but they represent the struggle, the tormented state, the mysterious realm of the soul, and the desire to break the boundaries that bind humans, the potential to escape from deadlock, to return to the self – the individual. Most Russian researchers have noted that the pinnacle of religious philosophy in Russia is the creation of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, achieving global recognition not just as a literary achievement but also as a religious philosophical achievement. If Tolstoy reflects the Russian revolution, more precisely, the transformations paving the way for a democratic-social revolution, then Dostoevsky, in our view, vividly represents Russian history with its intense contradictions and hidden depths of the Russian soul during transitional periods, or the boundary between progress and crisis, between the integration of values and the loss of faith in the future. According to Berdyaev, the creation of the Russian spirit was divided. The author of "The Fate of Russia" wrote: "All the strangeness and contradictions of Russian history are reflected in Slavophilism and Dostoevsky. The image of Dostoevsky was divided just like the image of Russia itself, creating opposing emotions. The infinite depth and vast emptiness are connected with mediocrity, cowardice, indifference, lack of character, and slavery. The infinite love for humans, essentially the love of Christ, is connected with humane

hatred and severity. The desire for absolute freedom in Christ is harmonized with the slavery of obedience. Wasn't Russia always like this?" (Berdyayev, 2007, p. 20).

Dostoevsky's worldview – that is existential philosophy, philosophy about human beings. Dostoevsky is the “Kierkegaard of the Russians,” or the “double man of Kierkegaard,” inspired by the title story “The Double”, one of Dostoevsky's early works, because of the similarity between him and Kierkegaard in their views on human beings, about the condition of loneliness, degradation, the spiritual origin of it, and the desire to overcome degradation, in search of freedom. The similarity is also shown in the search for spiritual salvation through the image of the “man-god” Christ.

However, the Russian soul, where two civilizations of Asia and Europe intersect, is far more complex. Therefore, the philosophy of Dostoevsky – a philosophy that places human beings at the threshold of life and death, optimism and pessimism, zeal and indifference, the conflict between reason and emotion, consciousness and instinct, the aspects of “divine” and “evil”, in other words, the philosophy of contentious situations, the fragility of existence, and the longing to overcome degradation, is a reflection of consciousness against reality and the recognition of the inner world of human beings in the complexity of social reality. To reflect the history and people of Russia in a multidimensional way, Dostoevsky established a metaphysical understanding on various linguistic aspects, from ontological language to aesthetic language, like ontology of the levels of the world, including the human world and its surreal levels; as an open and undefined field of knowledge; as a system for assessing communication and human behavior, or ethics; as the philosophy of creation, or the anthropological approach of reflecting on “I” and “we”, demonstrating the creative connection for the beauty of the Holy Spirit's world. The relationship between “I” and “we” is examined in many of Dostoevsky's works from "White Nights", "Notes from Underground" to "The Idiot" and "The Brothers Karamazov", where characters are placed in the tearing, fragmentation between relationships (Dostoevsky, 2013, 2017a, 2017b, 2023b).

In the fragile vulnerabilities of existence, the image of God, through Jesus Christ, is always present, not only as redemption but as a message of harmony in the human realm. Therefore, the category of “loneliness” is dynamic and relatively nuanced. It is not loneliness “with” the human world (humans cannot live isolated from society, outside of society), but loneliness “in” the human world (a state of loneliness among relationships). And, naturally, Dostoevsky was not the first to ponder loneliness. Loneliness, in its various manifestations,

has been reenacted in the history of human thought from different approaches, from literature, art to philosophy, and religion. Dostoevsky's contribution lies in giving this form a new cognitive appearance with the intellectual effort to reveal the hidden depths of the surrounding world and the world of human beings – a traditional issue of metaphysics.

2. The inner world of human beings and loneliness

From the perspective of social functionalism, the phenomenon of learning sets the task of exploring human creativity effectively, delving deeper into the spiritual world of human beings, understanding and analyzing the structure of individual consciousness in all aspects, relationships, and objectifying it in social life. The reduction of the phenomenon of learning means setting aside, or “enclosing in parentheses” the entire surrounding world, along with related theories and perspectives. Through this process, the "orientation towards the object itself" is achieved. Our perception will reach, as the most essential and crystallized part, some "part of the phenomenon," a domain of consciousness no longer dependent on the external world but still retaining the richness of content. Dostoevsky brought into his work a type of phenomenological analysis, or rather, a variation of phenomenology in the Russian style, aiming to depict the inner world of the Russian people, the depth and eternal nature of the Russian character, as well as its common and distinctive characteristics. If Kierkegaard surpassed Hegel's rational world through the synthesis of aesthetics, ethics, and religion, then Dostoevsky aimed for an explosive manifestation of existence through the effort of intuition, thereby revealing the essence of beings.

Dostoevsky connects the analysis of the inner world of human beings with the history of Russia, its culture, and its people in the latter half of the 19th century. The existential aspect in Dostoevsky's writings clarifies the concrete picture of Russia with its diverse aspects, contradictions, conflicts, and the dynamic trends of Russian society with the synthesis of Asian and European elements, manifested in the Slavophile and Westernizer tendencies. However, when Dostoevsky's works touch on consciousness, sensory perception of characters, the self-conscious "I", that is, delve into the mental structure or inner world, thoughts, and emotions, then the specific language of Russian culture asserts its advantage, its pure Russian advantage, without repetition. In that world, the dark and light aspects of the Russian character, the hidden corners of the soul, are described from the perspective of mystical realism, thus juxtaposing the sublime and the mundane in each individual vividly,

making the reader unable to take their eyes off the characters, from nameless characters to Raskolnikov in "Crime and Punishment" (Dostoevsky, 2023a) and Prince Myshkin ("The Idiot"), from the prostitute to the imaginary murderer and Alyosha's perception of freedom ("The Brothers Karamazov"). Dostoevsky's approach to the inner world of human beings can be expressed as a form of theatrical introspection—a portrayal of the intellectual and emotional energy of human beings through literary and artistic works, which only such creative endeavors can reach every stratum of society. Existentialism in the 20th century (Sartre, Camus, Simon de Beauvoir...) utilized this characteristic language in depicting the emotions, identity, and longing for freedom of human beings.

Expressing the inner world from the perspective of social dissection, Dostoevsky, as a thinker and psychologist, reveals the profound depths within each individual that pre-modern metaphysics, including Kant's critical metaphysics, despite striving for a Copernican revolution in epistemology, could not achieve because German philosophy took rationality as a model for that revolution, as seen in the work "Critique of Pure Reason" (Kant, 2018). There is sufficient reason to believe that Dostoevsky discerned the limitations of classical metaphysics of his time, including Kantian metaphysics, as well as non-systematic, naive, romantic metaphysics. The "I" and the world around it become more complex than familiar explanations of human nature. The mistake of classical metaphysics (Kant) lies in its desire to become purely rational. Hegel's mistake is rationalizing faith, examining the entire history of religion through the movement of consciousness. The mystical experience in Dostoevsky's creativity shares part of this mistake of traditional metaphysics, aiming to describe fragmented human beings, instead of being satisfied with propositions like "cogito ergo sum" (Descartes, 1973) or the "paradoxes of pure rationality" and the narrow framework of the triad of propositions "thesis - antithesis – synthesis".

Dostoevsky's anthropology is an inseparable part of Russian culture, reflecting the customs and habits of the Russian people. Dostoevsky's early works such as "Poor Folk" (БЕДНЫЕ ЛЮДИ, 1845), "The Double" (ДВОЙНИК, 1846), "The Landlady" (ХОЗЯЙКА, 1847), "White Nights" (БЕЛЫЕ, НОЧИ, 1848) ... introduced images of people and their personalities in different social classes, highlighting their distinctive features through various "races" and "species", with compatible psychological characteristics. Intellectuals, officials, masters, workers, rich, poor all have characteristic traits in terms of personality, behavior, but they are not far removed from the "essence" of Russia, the Russian identity. The mysterious collective spirit symbolized by churches or cathedrals occupies a dominant position in Dostoevsky's

anthropology. Due to the realm of existence in the earthly kingdom, where we live, filled with evil, the imperfection of creatures, humans are susceptible to harm from poverty, unhappiness, weakness, petty vices, and therefore need to overcome it through efforts towards the absolute.

In this regard, Lossky writes about Dostoevsky's perspective: "The existence of God and the immortality of the soul occupy a firm central position in Dostoevsky's worldview. He does not doubt the truthfulness of faith in these things and firmly understands their enduring significance: without God, there would be no absolute good, no absolute meaning of life, no perfect virtue" (Lossky, 1953, p. 144).

The symbol of the church, the mystical collective nature from the Eastern Orthodox perspective, has a dual significance in Dostoevsky's thought, representing belief in the absolute, the path to absolute perfection, and conveying the message of free will, moral freedom, the escape from the constraints of rigid doctrines, yet without violating the "law of absolute morality". In the mystical collective nature, the image of "divine man" or "humanity as divine" stands out, each aspect of human beings tends towards the "whole human being" in sacred existence. Therefore, Dostoevsky's anthropology is closely related to his ethical views. The human personality is the highest value, everything else pales in comparison to it.

The human being is an inherent value, not a means for anyone to achieve their own purposes. However, in wanting to express their individual selves, in specific cases, individuals seem to fall into states of self-satisfaction, or dissatisfaction, or fantastical thinking, and even feelings of inferiority, as depicted in the characters of "Notes from Underground", seeking solace in their own "filth" and contentment with it, sometimes isolating themselves from the world of "others".

From the metaphysics of inner human nature to the metaphysics of solitude is a common theme of many schools according to the anthropocentric - irrational tendency: philosophical anthropology, personalityism, especially existentialism.

"Solitude" is a psychological - social and existential philosophical category, describing the condition, status, and interaction of individuals in a communication environment that individuals perceive as alien to themselves, unable to accept and share. The concept of "solitude" is considered from the perspective of the relationship between the individual and society, more accurately, between the individual and "others", and even between human beings - individuals with their own selves. This term is also associated with the issue of "thrownness" of human fate, alienation, as well as the concept of "living in excess" that Sartre

described in "Nausea" - the binary dichotomy of human existence. Author Isupov writes: "Solitude (ОДИНОЧЕСТВО) marks not the conflict between society and the individual, but the tense dialogue of two polar opposites within the individual: the individual (socialized ego) and the individual (simplest, or unique consciousness): if the first human is alone in the emptiness of existence - we lose value and have no choice (Meditations: Thoughts to Myself, Marcus Aurelius), then the second case is loneliness without an escape route (misery, despair), if the defense of their "ego" boundaries is associated with a struggle against the invasion of the world that always wants to interfere with the "ego" (egoism, existentialism) (Isupov, 2017, p. 53).

In the languages of the play, satire, and myth, solitude is described in a special way, as the activity of the self-expression of the "ego". Schopenhauer, who paved the way for the fight against Hegelian rationalism, established the idea of solitude as the creative tranquility of the artist.

From the spread of the situation of "worldly loneliness", the process of individual alienation continuously threatens its integrity. The loss of life's advantages due to the state of separation has shown that, in the "self", its self-development in familiar spaces is stolen by the spirit of misery, and that among the destinies of the "self" only the desire to return to a place of peaceful residence remains, but filled with the irrational, meaningless of life. That is the path of the characters in *Demons* (Dostoevsky, 2011).

The isolation equates with defiance and even death in eras associated with the ignorance of the "self" concerning relationships, yet it also represents the pursuit of an ideal that leads to tragic, impotent, or alternative situations, meaning one is forced to choose. Each solitude carries a unique, non-repetitive thought. The "intellectual isolation" of Socrates heralds transformative shifts, moving beyond natural philosophy towards the inner world, namely human ethics through the declaration "know thyself" (Dinh, 1999, p. 90). Cynicism, or the philosophy of the early ascetics, represents another form of isolation – collective solitude. This school advocates separating from common social life, self-proclaiming as "educated dogs" (the meaning behind the name "Cynicism"), and sees returning to nature as the best self-improvement in terms of ethics. In the section "Self-Consciousness", part B (Freedom of self-consciousness; asceticism, skepticism, unhappy consciousness), Hegel describes asceticism as a rejection of the common, or "pure" freedom, lacking in real-life experience (Hegel, 1992, p. 108).

Christianity, by declaring sorrow (suffering, ennui from isolation) as a mortal sin, exposes solitude while simultaneously directing this condition towards contemplation, mystical knowledge, and praying to God, as part of religious life levels. Solitude in the Bible is sometimes interpreted as the deep source of existential philosophy – solitude, mystery, and the consciousness of human transformation. In the Bible, Jesus said "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani" which translates to "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (D'Ambrosio, 2020; Hunt, 2013). This statement is one of the most jarring Scriptures in the Bible and is found in Matthew 27:45-46.

In traditional epistemology, solitude contains a mystical element, thereby describing conflicts in the process of "returning" to the self-conscious "I". Conversely, romantic aesthetics perceive solitude as characteristic of the painter: he is isolated, hence free. In the artist's creative freedom, solitude, intentional hiding is simply a way to express the uniqueness, non-repetition of individual creation. This motif in existentialism, from Kierkegaard to Dostoevsky and 20th-century existentialists, has been reimagined anew in the legendary building of the existential-to-die theme and the fate of the individual thrown into existence. Its significance is now described in terms of fear, shame, sorrow, disappointment, hope, and anxiety. Solitude aligns with aspects of self-analysis and spiritual purification (Catharsis), the capability of freedom, and the trap. The solitude of "extraordinary individuals" in Dostoevsky's work is fully depicted at various levels. These "extraordinary individuals" might seek psychological therapy to heal their heart wounds through suffering, experience, and the hope of self-liberation from the current condition. The "underground man" derives from solitude a principle of dissatisfaction (rebellion, opposition) with a special epistemological significance, namely the revolt against obvious truths. These "extraordinary individuals" often talk about their "corner" and "carry the basement in their soul" (Dostoevsky, 2023b, p. 98). The "underground man" even considers himself "unable to become a beetle" despite often wishing so. He is "ashamed" and imagines negative things for himself "...today I did something vile again, that what was done is irretrievable, and, deep down, secretly, gnawing at myself for it with my teeth, tormenting and hurting myself to the point that eventually this bitterness turns into some sort of sweet, shameful, detestable pleasure, and ultimately into a serious, intense pleasure!" (Dostoevsky, 2023b, p. 26). These conflicts lead to the "final wall," "that there is no way out for him, that he can never become someone else; that even if there were time and faith to change into something else, perhaps

he himself would not want to change; and even if he wanted to, he could not do anything about it because, in reality, he might not change into anything" (Dostoevsky, 2023b, p. 27).

In "White Nights," Dostoevsky describes the loneliness within the "nooks" of Petersburg: "If one needs a precise definition, then it is not a person, but a creature of an average sort. Most of the time, that being huddles in a tiny, dangerous corner somewhere, as though hiding there to even avoid the daylight, and once it has hidden in its place, it clings to its own nook like a worm, or at least in this aspect, it is very much like a curious animal whose dwelling and itself are closely bound together, known as a turtle. What do you think, why does that being cherish its four walls so much, walls that must be whitewashed, covered in soot, gloomy, and tainted with tobacco smoke to the point of being dreadful?" (Dostoevsky, 2017b, p. 32). Does the loneliness stem from the character's complex about his social status, or is the complex extended to a Russia at a historical crossroads, needing a quiet moment to self-evaluate before a new destiny? The character of "White Nights" confesses to feeling that his lonely self is being abandoned by everyone (Dostoevsky, 2017b, p. 7). Loneliness, feeling so insipid that people want to leave as soon as they arrive. The "pitiful self," panicking when a friend visits. Loneliness and boredom, sipping loneliness thinking one is living a special life in one's "interesting cave": "The room was dark; his soul was empty and melancholy; a kingdom of dreams collapsed around him, leaving no trace, without noise or rattle, passing like a dream, and he himself did not remember what he had dreamed of. But a certain dark sensation made his chest slightly ache and stir, a strange new desire full of tempting and stimulating his wild imagination, calling up at any unknown time a whole new procession of phantoms. The small room was as silent as a sheet; solitude and laziness indulged the imagination" (Dostoevsky, 2017b, p. 37). In "The Idiot," the loneliness in thought haunts the young prince Myshkin, a person with epilepsy who sometimes speaks and acts with "enthusiasm" but "without control". In "The Brothers Karamazov," loneliness is explained through self-interrogation, leading to confession (confession). Mikhail, who committed murder, said in the cell of the monk Zosima: "First, it is necessary to end the era of human separation... Because in our century everyone is fragmented into individuals. Everyone is alone in their cave"? The result of the school of thought here is: my loneliness is tragic, because the basis of existence is tragic freedom - the spirit "must" be free in the space of inevitable relationships. In his works after "Notes from Underground," Dostoevsky continues to write about the human condition on one hand, and on the other, constructs levels of connection between people, taking empathy and sharing as a way to escape from

loneliness: the "I" places itself in connection with nature, with God, with the Other, and with oneself. In loneliness, the script for communication has been established, aiming for the open space of freedom and salvation.

3. Salvation and the Desire for Liberation, Towards Freedom

The loneliness of Lord Jesus on the cross is not an absolute social isolation, for after the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the struggle for the ideal of freedom and equality in the spirit of the Gospel continues to explode and spread. Many political changes in human history have raised high the flag of Jesus' spirit of liberation. Christ is infinitely lonely (forever lonely), he is the loneliest in the Gospel, but mankind is not lonely with him. The co-presence before Christ, the appearance before Him – the only standard of behavior and value of life. The image of "man-god" (Christ) mentioned by Dostoevsky in his works is like a hymn of spiritual liberation, the process of humans coming out of their dark caves to step into the light. But this is not a simple process, it is full of paradoxes, insurmountable difficulties. In "White Nights," God is always the symbol of salvation, of the witness, the judge, of consolation, of what is most human. In "Notes from Underground," in the "book-like" words of the main character, the viewpoint on truthfulness, integrity, love, happiness, the desire to overcome fate is expressed, even if it's just "dreams under the basement" (Dostoevsky, 2023b, pp. 142, 160, 168-171, 215). The classification of psychological layers in Dostoevsky's works is quite diverse. In "Crime and Punishment" and "The Brothers Karamazov," there is an interweaving, a collision between the id, the ego, and the super-ego, delusion, illusion, and the awakening in the character Raskolnikov. *Instinct* (Id), the "dark" area of the soul, is the layer of unconscious desires, the "primitive" of psychology. It is the basis of individual activity, the unconscious only adheres to the principle of satisfaction, unrelated to social reality. The ego, or the *Self*, the "light" area of the soul, is the domain of consciousness, the intermediary between instinct and the outside world, where natural regulatory properties and social institutions lie. The Self regulates the activity of instinct with the principle of reality, rationality, and objective inevitability. The super-ego, or the beyond-Self, the area "beyond" personal consciousness, is the inner conscience of the individual, a specific control, criticism, arising from the impotence of consciousness in preventing unconscious outbursts. In "Notes from Underground," Dostoevsky presents a choice between being a hero or mire, about beautiful, noble love, salvation (Dostoevsky, 2023b, pp.

111-112, 113), and openly shares his philosophy, even ... in a drunken state: "I love truth, truthfulness, and integrity, true friendship, equality" (Dostoevsky, 2023b, p. 142). In "Crime and Punishment," Dostoevsky points out that it is possible for a person to be drawn into fake ideals, thinking they are on the path of great men. According to Dostoevsky, it's hard to find a person who transcends society, often unhappy because they eventually discover the true depth of the world and their own terrible secret. The path of the "highest order" (highest type in the original) even ends in suicide. Without reaching the idea of immortality, a person, having broken off with life merely by biological instinct and beginning to ponder the meaninglessness of their own life, comes to the idea of suicide, realizing that there are no high ideals or purposes in human life. And only when accepting the idea of human immortality can one save themselves and embark on meaningful work. The tragedy of loneliness is not that there is no way out (itself being a way out), but that its attribute acts as a limit (threshold) of the inherent nature of the "self" compatible with the inevitable images of recognition of status and personal mood in relation to others, to the other. The measure of its movement is the depth of loneliness, the direct result of which is the new quality of self-awareness, communication, and creation. The separation for Dostoevsky's character - is the external condition of "the effort of consciousness" and the specific potential, when it is necessary to overcome the fear of oneself and "choose" one's personality. The choice sometimes for a mundane and practical purpose, just like finding shelter from the rain, chicken coops and villas are the same (Dostoevsky, 2023b, p. 77). Dostoevsky knew that solitude could be redemptive – the entire reality of asceticism and hermitage (isolation, desolation) is born in this condition. Serving the world breaks social isolation and is the ultimate escape. After much anguish and struggle, the 'Underground Man' asks: 'What is better – cheap happiness or noble suffering?' He seems to have found a way out: 'Give me, for instance, more autonomy, unchain anyone among us, broaden the sphere of action, loosen guardianship.' 'Leave me alone, without books, and I immediately become confused, lost - I wouldn't know what to get involved in, what to follow; what to love and what to hate, what to respect and what to despise?' (Dostoevsky, 2023b, pp. 221-222). The role of books as 'living fathers' that the 'Underground Man' realizes is also the exaltation of knowledge as a means to escape loneliness and reach true freedom.

The 'failure' or negative emotion of the 'Idiot's' idea does not lie in Christ being 'not like that' or some imperfect version of Christ recognized by Myshkin, but in the world not being ready to accept him. The world, in all parameters of corruption, degradation,

debauchery from ancient times and in its self-guided thought 'no sin - no repentance', suitable for all, is at fault in Myshkin's tragic fate - always being out of place, unromantic, uncomfortable, even dangerous, and therefore unprotected, as a naked truth. Prince Myshkin is indeed 'the Idiot' for being too pure, selfless, humble, enduring, forgiving, but dreamy and a bit delusional 'like a child', even when insulted he shows a refined and yielding character, 'overly enthusiastic about loneliness' (Dostoevsky, 2017a, pp. 784, 786, 791, 798, 825).

The therapy existing both within and outside must be decoded by the law of moral measure. Which measure? Is it governed by the freedom of the will's transition from thought to action? Or is it determined from outside – the everyday operational circumstances – as 'everything'? Or does it require an immutable destiny of 'context'? Neither this nor that. Everything is resolved in the languages of maximalism in spirit and behavior: either 'imitating Christ' (Myshkin) or the extreme uncontrolled state of rebellion. Humans, in their freedom, seem to be designed as if they are 'open', and in their openness, they do not err: with divine openness, humans are given space for freedom, surpassing all limits, including the state of uncontrolled, dreaming. Metaphysical breakthroughs into the future to affirm the sacred values of life can occur in the process of denying the secular at the level of behavior and speech. The characters of the 'underground', Prince Myshkin, the Karamazov brothers – each character finds in their own way the characteristics of madness and the glorious nature of their fate through faith in the absolute.

The affirmation of sacred values through the denial of the secular towards them - is not a rare path to truth in world religions. It can be found in Christianity and Zen Buddhism. Dostoevsky secularized Christian thought through his characters. He spoke of God, of Christ, of salvation, of human kindness, and the struggle for values that are either hidden or deprived, even though the means to the end are not the same for each character.

For Myshkin, as the representative of the Holy Spirit, meaning beauty, the measure of co-presence for humans is only one - to become just as a positively beautiful figure - Christ. Perhaps the conjunction 'as' should be understood here not merely as a means of comparison, but as a sign of image and model identity.

With metaphysics of personality, Dostoevsky emphasized the perpetual novelty of God's manifestation and the participation in this central event of world history - by animals and humans. Prince Myshkin, a person facing loneliness and aiming for the spirit of 'free choice' – a difficult process, but not unachievable. The world is full of calamity and paradox, but strive to make it better. The mission of the Russian is to aim for 'the revival and

resurgence in the future of all humanity'. Such a world-saving idea was expressed by Myshkin in moments of irrepensible, interspersed with a bit of loss of self-control (Dostoevsky, 2017a).

In one aspect, the characters of Victor Hugo (1802 – 1885) and Dostoevsky bear certain similarities, even if the outcomes are not exactly the same. The unusual nature of life has linked Jean Valjean in *Les Misérables* (Kuiper, 2024) and Prince Myshkin, one exiled, the other sick. Both find themselves somewhat outside society. Kindness, compassion, and empathy are the characteristics that dominate both characters. The great writer Hugo forces his character, for the love of those around him, to sacrifice personal happiness. But the path of suffering for Jean Valjean is illuminated by the personality of the parish priest and the image of Jesus on the cross. Prince Myshkin also sacrifices his potential for personal happiness (his love for Aglaia) and his personal life (for once trying to save Nastasia Filippovna), although in the end, he loses both - one falls into the arms of a pretender, self-proclaimed "exiled count," and the other leaves this life by Rogozhin's knife (Dostoevsky, 2017a, pp. 924, 931). After much mental suffering, the prince falls into a state of "collapse and illness" (Dostoevsky, 2017a, p. 931).

However, the outcome for the prince in the work does not bring redemption, and the end of madness awaits the young prince. And this conclusion fits perfectly with Dos's idea. Dostoevsky and Hugo believe in the positive nature and morality of humans, trust in people. Jean Valjean - a victim of society, Raskolnikov - a victim of his own mistakes. The resurrection, the struggle of the fallen character in their works, is the lawful victory of the true moral nature of humans. But in "The Idiot," Dostoevsky sets out to realistically portray the image of the "noble positive man" in artistic form (Russian Academy of Sciences, 2007, p. 356). Both the "endless misery" of Prince Myshkin and the perpetrator of Nastasia Filippovna's death are manifestations of "mental agony" (Dostoevsky's *The Idiot*, p. 932). "The Idiot" ends with the character Lizaveta Prokofievna's conclusion: "Enough of this madness! It's time to come to our senses" (Dostoevsky, 2017a, p. 932). With "The Brothers Karamazov," Alyosha feels intellectually isolated even in his own home. And in choosing the path of dedication lies the future wide open "my dear friends, do not fear life! Life is incredibly beautiful when we will do something good and true" (Dostoevsky, 2013, p. 825).

4. Loneliness, freedom, and human responsibility – the message of Dostoevsky

The reality of Russia is reflected in Russian literature and philosophy. This, above all, becomes clear in the very distinctive national ideology – Slavophilism and in our great national genius – Dostoevsky – a Russian among Russians. All the strangeness and contradictions of Russian history are reproduced in Slavophilism and Dostoevsky. Dostoevsky's appearance also bears a duality like the very face of Russia, evoking contrasting emotions. Infinite depth and vast emptiness are linked with mediocrity, cowardice, indifference, lack of character, and enslavement. The boundless love for humanity, essentially Christian love, is linked with human hatred and cruelty. The craving for absolute freedom in Christ is reconciled with the slavery of obedience. Isn't that Russia? Dostoevsky's faith in people and Russian history is expressed in many works. In "The Idiot," Dostoevsky speaks of the "Russian idea," the "Russian God," and the "Russian Christ," asserting: "...the Russian man will grow into the stature of a colossal, mighty, yet gentle, wise, and sincere giant before the whole world," the world that almost fails to properly understand the Russian, the Russian character (Dostoevsky, 2017a, p. 827). Therefore, in Dostoevsky's works, there appears a precarious situation, the thin line between life and death, existence and void, development and collapse. This is also the fate of Russia after 1861. This motif can also be found in 20th-century existentialism.

Dostoevsky's works open up the significant theme of 20th-century existentialism – death (sudden or forewarned) and liberation. Dostoevsky's characters often narrate in a manner: I am pushed by fate, I cannot but think, I cannot live like others because I know that everyone is waiting for me. This mindset relates to the lives of some writers, including Dostoevsky at certain times. Death, lurking behind the soul, asserts that it comes too early, that it is not present when the time for a person to leave this world has not yet arrived. It does not disturb the human soul, nor does it appear before it, but before leaving, it leaves for man two eyes out of countless invisible pairs. And then suddenly, man looks up to see what all see and what he sees with his old eyes, something entirely new. And to look at the new in a new way, not as everyone sees, but only as beings of "another world" do.

The "terrible death" approached Dostoevsky not at the moment when Dostoevsky stood before the firing squad waiting for his sentence, but later, when he wrote "Notes from Underground": "The 'new eyes' appear, and where 'everyone' sees reality, man only sees darkness and demons, and the place 'for all' does not exist as the only true reality. Death is

the greatest disharmony and the most terrible destruction of consensus between people, the most foolish.

In Dostoevsky, we encounter the existential problem of human beings in the divine, metaphysical world of his ontology: man appears before God and the world as a question and answer. Among the answers, the resistance of the "I" against the other is detailed by Dostoevsky with his characters. This metaphysical type in the modern world can be found in the works of existentialism. In the question and answer of Heidegger, as well as of Sartre, there is an opposition of I and the other. Heidegger complains about the self, "averageness" flattening the uniqueness of the individual: "We enjoy and entertain as 'one' enjoys; we read, look, and judge literature and art as 'one reads, looks, and judges... Averageness is an existing characteristic of 'one'" (Heidegger, 1973, p. 194).

For Sartre, the situation of being thrown is depicted in the sentiment of living superfluously - "the market is still crowded without one's presence." The feeling of living superfluously, being thrown, abandoned could very well push an individual towards the form of extreme affirmation - suicide. J. Sartre writes in "Nausea": "We were originally a 'heap' of existents in a confused, awkward state about ourselves; this one as well as the other, we do not have the slightest reason to exist; and each existent, confused, vaguely anxious, feels himself to be superfluous in relation to others. Superfluous, that is the only relationship I can establish between these trees, fences, pebbles... I dreamily think of annihilating myself to eliminate at least one of these superfluous lives. But even my death could be superfluous. My body, my blood on the gravel, among those trees, at the end of this cheerful park, would all be superfluous. And my flesh being nibbled away would also be superfluous in the earth that receives it; finally, my bones, cleaned, scrubbed, shiny like teeth, would also be superfluous: I am superfluous to eternity" (Sartre, 1994, pp. 240-241).

Loneliness, mystery, and void are concepts used to describe a prevalent and sorrowful condition in life: people wish to live in solitude, do not want to, and cannot empathize with others. According to Sartre, while exploring being (existence), the void appears and surrounds; being emerges on the background of non-being (non être). Being does not need the void to exist, but the void needs being to exist (Sartre, 1948). How must human existence be for the void to appear? Sartre answers: "The special ability of humans through which the void appears is freedom" (Sartre, 1948, p. 61). But how must human freedom be for the void to arise? Human freedom precedes the essence of it, the essence of a person's existence depends on human freedom. Sartre emphasizes: "there is no difference

between the essence of a human and the existence of its freedom" (Sartre, 1948, p. 61). Freedom, Void, and Anxiety (*angoisse*) are tightly linked. The process of becoming void in consciousness requires a break between the past and the present. Death is the end point of existence, the liberation, the ultimate pain, the ultimate goal. We exist to aim for that eternal emptiness. Why find a dwelling in solitude? In "The Fall," the existential philosopher and writer criticizes the licentious lifestyle of a segment of people, those who see debauchery as liberation. Even marriage is seen only as a bureaucratized licentious life, and as for drinking, even intelligent people enjoy being praised for drinking more than others a bottle of wine. Camus has written that in the turmoil of life, madness and violence pervade everything. It's expressed that we commit sins against one another, everyone is held accountable to others, and individually we are crucified, all without awareness (Camus, 1995).

Dostoevsky's thoughts on the human condition, human fate, the state of degradation and loneliness, the desire for liberation leave a mark in both atheistic existentialism and religious existentialism, or more accurately, one can find a historical connection between Dostoevsky and the existentialism of the 20th century, and also the issues of today's social reality, in Russia or in the world where there still exists pain and the desire for freedom.

5. Conclusion

Berdyayev passionately acknowledges Dostoevsky's profound contribution to humanistic thought, labeling him not only as a significant figure in anthropology but also as an experimenter in human nature. Dostoevsky, through his innovative approach and exploration of the human condition, unveiled new dimensions of human science previously unknown. His era of creativity coincided with a vibrant period of Russian intellectual thought, contributing to the foundational philosophical movements of the time. Dostoevsky's narratives, which delve into individual destinies without succumbing to individualism, display a deep empathy for the solitary and degraded states of individuals. His works, ranging from "Poor Folk" to "The Brothers Karamazov," propose new directions for life, advocating for a breakthrough from despair towards liberation and freedom, aligning with romanticism and sincere naivety.

Dostoevsky, alongside existential and anthropological philosophers before and after him, emphasized the transformation or redemption of the individual. This notion, celebrated by figures like Kierkegaard and Sartre, aligns with the existentialist premise that humanity

bears a profound responsibility not only towards oneself but towards all humankind. Modern humanist theories extend beyond mere existence to highlight the individual as a proactive agent of the future. Dostoevsky's historical message suggests that life should not be merely endured but lived with purpose and aspiration towards higher ideals.

He did not prescribe a specific path to freedom and the struggle for it but compelled his characters to choose their own destinies. Characters like "the underground man," Alyosha, and Myskin, set against the backdrop of a post-1861 Russia at a crossroads, embody the anticipation of a vibrant yet tragic future for the nation. Dostoevsky's engagement and eventual distancing from Russian revolutionary democrats foreshadowed a tumultuous but significant chapter in Russia's history.

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