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## From the Editor

Esteemed Colleagues, Dear Readers,

On 28<sup>th</sup> February – 2<sup>nd</sup> March our IWL RAS Research Centre “Dostoevsky and World Culture” together with the Research Committee for Dostoevsky’s Artistic Heritage within the Scientific Council for the History of World Culture RAS organized the 2<sup>nd</sup> online conference “*Crime and Punishment: Current State of Research*” (the program can be found here: <https://imli.ru/133-seminary-i-konferentsii-2023/5255-mezhdunarodnaya-nauchnaya-onlajn-konferentsiya-prestuplenie-i-nakazanie-sovremennoe-sostoyanie-izucheniya>; the recordings of the conference are available here: First day: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=azTgFc7VHMk&t=18608s>; Second day: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EhXq33ppPoU>; Third day: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K1aDvctgbtc>). The conference gathered researchers from Russia, China, USA, Italy, Spain, Serbia, Uzbekistan, as well as Japan and Turkey (the latter as listeners and participants to the discussion). I would like to stress the fact that for our conferences we accept applications to join as listeners and participants to the discussion, and that we include such participants in the program, as we highly value their presence in the work of the conference. A detailed review of the conference is planned for publication in the next issue. However, in this issue we are already publishing two articles based on the contributions made at the conference.

The first one is an article by Tatiana Boborykina, “The Divine Height of Words (On a Couple of Words in the English Translations of *Crime and Punishment*),” published here in the section *Dostoevsky: Translation problems*. Boborykina’s contribution became an epigraph to the conference, as it is based on an extreme attention to Dostoevsky’s words. The question on being attentive to the words sharpens when we turn to translation, as we can observe meanings that we thought intrinsic to the text disappearing. Tatiana Boborykina shows what I call the author’s “pointing finger” (using Dostoevsky’s words) in the novel *Crime and Punishment*, a finger that is clearly traced through all the text, and that in Boborykina’s article

is identified in two words thrown to the hero from the audience, which, according to Boborykina, in the novel is used as a variant of the Greek chorus. These words describe Raskolnikov's state, mistaken both times for a drunken man. The words are *narezalsia* and *nakhlestalsia*, and they denote the poles of his journey from the crime to the confession. None of the English version analyzed by the author presents a translation of these words that is adequate to Dostoevsky's intention.

The second article, by Olga Meerson, is titled "The Teaching of Literary Theory through the Shock of Not Understanding the Text. *Crime and Punishment*," and it is based on the paper that concluded the pedagogical session of the conference. We publish it in a new section, *Teaching Dostoevsky*, that we hope will become one of the most demanded of the journal. Meerson's article is not only a thorough demonstration of a method of engaging students in the reading of the text, but also contains several aphoristic statements that can provide not only methodological but also philosophical and emotional support to teachers when working with students. For example: "Snobbery thinks in stereotypes as much as officialism," an attitude that helps the teacher not to get lost before demonstrations of "cleverness" by students, reproducing what was memorized, but not understood — and to work with it accordingly. The author distinguishes between truth and opinions about it, and doing this she clearly demonstrates why the existence of a single truth does not mean there is a "single true" interpretation, as truth is revealed through a multitude (and only in a multitude) of judgements reflecting only one aspect of it.

Speaking of conferences, I would like to announce the next one of this year: the 25<sup>th</sup> International Readings "Dostoevsky's Works in the Perception of 21st-Century Readers", also dedicated to the novel *Crime and Punishment* and will take place in Staraya Russa on 19<sup>th</sup>–21<sup>st</sup> April 2023 (the information letter is available here: <https://imli.ru/133-seminary-i-konferentsii-2023/5331-khkhv-mezhdunarodnye-chteniya-proizvedeniya-f-m-dostoevskogo-v-vospriyatii-chitatelej-khkhhi-veka>). The call for papers is open.

We are planning conferences dedicated to *Crime and Punishment* for next year as well, as our Centre is now working on a new volume (or, more probably, volumes) of the series *Dostoevsky's Works: Current State of Research* dedicated to this novel. Since *Crime and Punishment* is part of all educational programs in Russia and sometimes even abroad, in addition to the themes that are typical for the series and cover the entire field of academic research on the novel, the volume will also focus on its presence

in textbooks and teaching aids, different methodological approaches to it, etc. We look forward to your requests for participation in conferences and publications. We especially invite teachers and educators who have something to say about the value, usefulness, and applicability (or vice versa) of textbooks and teaching aids concerning the novel, and who can share their own insights and observations about how the novel is perceived by today's students and pupils. By the way, as the conference participants noted, this year's pedagogical section was a great success and attracted a great deal of interest.

The years 2021 and 2022 were marked by the publication of a great number of books about Dostoevsky and his work. We are ready and willing to make room for the publication of insightful reviews of books and anthologies, published in the last three years. We are as well open to the publication of extensive summaries of past conferences.

The present issue is opened by an article of mine dedicated to a question, the answer to which at some point last year became for several people negative: why should we read Dostoevsky? I attempt to systematize the underlying reasons why people do not read Dostoevsky, moreover, do it loudly and in public, quite insistently. I also attempt to answer the question how do loving him readers read Dostoevsky: to explain how to read Dostoevsky to understand why to read him.

The second article of the same section (*Hermeneutics. Slow Reading*) by Tatiana Magaril-Il'iaeva is dedicated to Gnostic mythology, namely to the Hymn of the Pearl, and its role in Dostoevsky's short story *The Landlady*. Tatiana repeats a very important theoretical standing about the role of Gnosticism in Dostoevsky's work, that unfortunately is poorly considered by many who speak of the presence of gnostic motifs in the writer's production: Dostoevsky poses the problem in a gnostic paradigm (as Gnosticism poses the problems of human beings in the most radical way, and Dostoevsky wants to face the problems in their most radical form), however, he solves it in the Christian paradigm. Nonetheless, according to Magaril-Il'iaeva, *The Landlady* is part of the single text of Dostoevsky's early works, where the problem is posed, but not solved. The writer merely shows the movement of a spiritual man, lost in the infinite circles of being, missing the possibility of starting a direct path of spiritual ascension.

Bearing in mind the reputation, established since Belinsky's times, of *The Landlady* as Dostoevsky's most obscure text, should be said that the article is readable like a good detective story, almost transparently uncovering what seemed dark, confusing, and quite nonsense. The researcher

was able to achieve this because the main principle of her analysis was to follow the author's text faithfully, without ignoring the dark and "non-sense" parts of the text (on the contrary, she perceives the obscure points as entries to the story, places, starting from which answers can be found), and without trying to make up ideas for the author in order to build up a "coherent" story, which the author has supposedly "failed" to write. And this trust is richly rewarded.

The first article of the section *Poetics. Context* is a piece of research by Nikolay Podosokorsky about the Otherworld in Dostoevsky's story "Bobok". Podosokorsky creates an incredibly clear and deep piece of research thanks to the fact — once again — that he takes the text seriously as Dostoevsky's attempt to get an insight into what happens in the immediate postmortem of the man and does not reduce the story to a strange metaphor or social satire, closing his eyes to the mystical component of the text. Podosokorsky's attempt to explain the strange title of the story leads, among other things, to the unexpected discovery of an abundant presence of legumes in Dostoevsky's texts, both in idiomatic expressions and in a quite original description of Dostoevsky's contemporary Russia as seemingly solid ground, in fact representing "something like the surface of some pea jelly." A terrifying trap appears in the imagination, beckoning with delusive stability, but at the attempt to step in it disappears, straight into the endless viscous, suffocating abyss. It seems that this abyss, created by man's stupid greed for his lusts, which even death cannot shake, is what opens up before the reader of "Bobok."

The focus of Ludmila Saraskina's article (the second in this section), that captures in its scope many facts from more than a century and a half ago (primarily relating to the Crimean campaign) that suddenly begin to feel surprisingly modern, and which many, because of this, would not want to recall, are three poems Dostoevsky wrote in exile: "On European Events in 1854," "On the First of July 1855," and "On the Coronation and the Conclusion of Peace" (1856). In the commentaries to the *Collected Works in 30 volumes*, which came out in the Soviet era, and in other editions and studies of the time, these poems were declared an attempt by Dostoevsky to get the opportunity to publish through compliance with the political conjuncture, an attempt to buckle under the pressure of circumstances. Saraskina's article aims to change the perception of the place and significance of these works in Dostoevsky's work and biography by rejecting the idea of the author's hypocritical engagement, showing them as a "serious and honest creative work, full of noble feelings and high meaning."

The article by Evgenia Ivanova, published in the section *Dostoevsky in the 20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> Century*, is dedicated to the understanding of Rozanov's work through the lens of Bakhtin's *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* – as well as to the understanding of Rozanov's personality, always striving to accurately reproduce the words of his interlocutors and an “equal exchange of thoughts,” to present his own thoughts in the context of objections, additions, extensions made by his interlocutors. The author affirms and demonstrates that Rozanov's thinking was polyphonic at its core. The article also concerns the essentiality of Dostoevsky (which is inevitable when quoting Rozanov's statements about Dostoevsky,) at least for a Russian person, but in fact for any person with a living soul.

I would like to make a personal observation. When reasoning of Rozanov's judgements about characters that were inspired by Apollinaria Suslova (the outwardly religious, but secretly debauched young lady from prince Valkovsky's tale, Dunia from *Crime and Punishment*, and Aglaia from *The Idiot*), Ivanova writes that these comparisons are “less flattering” than Dolinin's (Dolinin compares Suslova with Polina from *The Gambler* and Nastasia Filippovna). However the question here is not about flattery, but about different essential traits of character. Whereas Dolinin correlates Suslova with bright, passionate, abused, and preserving a longing for an unattainable ideal heroines, Rozanov points to a strange combination in her character of unaware, almost clumsy virginity and aggressive, determined, and offensive activity, in which (or rather, in the extreme degree of her determination and offensiveness) he sees a manifestation of depravity. And Rozanov's correlation is, of course, much more accurate.

In the section *Museum* we continue the publication of a series of articles and summaries by Vladimir Viktorovich and Albina Bessonova dedicated to the construction in real time of the Museum of Dostoevsky's childhood: the restoration and museumification of the Darovoe-Monogorovo-Cheremoshnia. As always, this is polemical, explosive material, exciting as a detective story. Researchers of Dostoevsky's work argue strongly and actively against any distortion of the space of Dostoevsky's estate, introduced by the standardized thinking of museologists – supporters of restoration “by analogy”. But this time, it seems, the sides are closer to cooperation than to confrontation: a museum, created through the joint efforts of historians and philologists, is emerging. There is very important work going on outside the museum grounds as well: Natalia Nikitina, the current owner of a large plot of land adjacent to the museum grounds and part of the Dostoevskys' estate, who has revived

the famous pastila of Kolomna, in my opinion, perfectly understands the task of working with this land of memory, the task of restoring what has been lost. Her project of creating an apple orchard, gathering a collection of all varieties mentioned in research on Russian history, as well as the project of a family summer camp, where children live every day together and do something with their parents (rather than being where parents “leave” their children), is fascinating. This undertaking – of collecting, restoring, preserving the great heritage of Russian people in any field – is truly typical of Dostoevsky, and revives something far more than the conventional resemblance to a typical or even a specific 19<sup>th</sup> century manor house; it revives the spirit of this place, that was absorbed by Dostoevsky.

Among other things I was pleased to see in this article that, while taking care of the museum’s development, its founders, at least in the long term and in their plans, also take into account the interests of the inhabitants of the villages near the memorial space, strive to make sure that the growth of museum attendance does not overwhelm the rural infrastructure, preserve for local residents free passage through the museum’s territories. I believe that living in the horizon and the aura of the museum should be seen as a great privilege rather than a serious inconvenience, and I think this is the key to the longevity of a house museum.

In the section *Juvenile readings in Staraya Russa* we published an article by 10th-grade student Ekaterina Mochalova: “Dostoevsky’s Petersburg through the Eyes of a Contemporary Schoolgirl.” The young researcher’s article attracts by its clear statement of research objectives, intelligible description of the research method, logical presentation, depth of immersion in the material, undoubted keenness to verify the conclusions of venerable researchers, and not to trust them unconditionally. I am not personally attached to the idea of deciphering address omitted by the writer or the shortened name of a bridge or a lane (incidentally, I would be more interested in understanding the reasons for such shortening or omission, trying to understand why some toponyms in *Crime and Punishment* are mentioned in full, while others are abbreviated), just as I am not attached to the idea of searching for the hero’s house in a novel. But it is an activity that has always involved researchers of all levels when trying to create a real commentary on the text, so it is certainly honorable and respectable. I read this piece of research with engagement and interest, and I think I will take a walk to the newly found house of the Marmeladovs on my next visit to St. Petersburg. Well, and if suddenly other researchers can explain

that the author of the article is still wrong and where exactly – that would also be a good result.

In this issue we feature two reviews: the first one, in the section *Dostoevsky on Stage*, was written by me and is dedicated to the production of a play based on the novel *Demons* by the Brusnikin workshop. This is certainly one of the most successful productions of Dostoevsky's work, because its authors follow the thesis of the writer himself, who believed that to correctly transfer the novel to the stage you must retreat from external means of expression, in order to preserve the profound essence of the work. The ideological and structural likeness of the play to the novel is maximized through an apparent departure from the text, in which, however, the inevitably reduced text is replaced and compensated for by a coherent series of symbolic details. I note that Tatiana Boborykina points out the same strategy as the main reason for the successful and adequate translation of the novel into the language of cinema (referring to Kulid-zhanov's film *Crime and Punishment*) in her article.

The second review (appearing in the *Review* section) was written by Nikolay Podosokorsky on a book entitled *Dostoevsky's Unfinished Journey*, published in 2007 and translated into Russian for the Contemporary Western Russian Studies series in 2022. The book is well known to Russian scholars thanks to the conferences of the International Dostoevsky Society and is authored by Robin Feuer Miller, an American scholar and professor at Brandeis University. The review is thorough and persuasive in both its apologetic and critical components.

The journal is on Vkontakte and Telegram (with already more than 7 100 followers). You can subscribe to our pages to follow news from both the Journal and Research Centre "Dostoevsky and World Culture." Among other things, all the recordings from seminars and conferences organized by the Centre are published here. Books and articles dedicated to Dostoevsky are also available for download.

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The journal is published in cooperation with the Commission for the Study of Fyodor Dostoevsky's Artistic Heritage at the Academic Council "History of World Culture" of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Our work is carried out in close contact with the Russian and International Dostoevsky Society.

All quotations from Fyodor Dostoevsky's works, if not specified otherwise, are cited according to the *Complete Works in 30 vols.* (Leningrad, Nauka, 1972–1990), and references follow the format of the Russian Science Citation Index. In the Soviet edition the capital letters contained in the names of God, the Virgin, as in other holy names and concepts, have been lowered because of censorship; the original spelling is restored here in accordance with the editions published during Dostoevsky's life, Dostoevsky's *Complete Works in the Author's Spelling and Punctuation* (Petrozavodsk, Petrozavodsk State University, 1995 – continuing publication), and Dostoevsky's *Complete Works and Letters in 35 vols.* (2nd edition, revised and amended) published by IRLI RAS (Pushkin House) (2013 – continuing publication). The author's original emphasis in quotations (where not specified otherwise) is indicated by italics; the emphasis of the author of the article is indicated by bold font.

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