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EXPLORING FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY'S EXISTENTIAL THOUGHT THROUGH THE PROBLEM OF THE OTHER

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Abstract. Dostoevsky's existential thought cannot be adequately understood outside the context of the Christian tradition with which he associated himself. Dostoevsky develops his ideas in accordance with the doctrine of “*sobornost*” by which God reveals himself primarily as the “bosom of universal synthesis”. Such a condition precedes the individual separateness and subjective isolation. Dostoevsky postulates the initial ontological rootedness of the subject in co-existence with his neighbor whose co-presence is vital for the completeness of the subject's being (All-Unity). Dostoevsky explains the individual's separation from the initial All-Unity through the Fall's plot. Man found himself abandoned, alienated from God and his neighbor both. In this context, civilization should be considered as a period of total disintegration. Such a tendency reached its apotheosis precisely in *Western civilization*. In this context, the image of the “underground” hero is quite indicative. The hero breaks the bonds of fictional civilized unity in the name of self-realization. His position clearly resembles Heidegger's teaching on *Dasein*, which has gained its authenticity. Just as, in Dostoevsky's view, man is initially ontologically rooted in being-with his neighbor, Heidegger's *Dasein* initially finds itself already coexisting with the Other on a common basis. Heidegger regards the initial co-existence with others as an inauthentic mode of *Dasein*'s being, since the being-with presupposes an impersonal existence. *Dasein* gains its own authenticity by changing the life attitude from “being-with others” to “being-for-itself”. Dostoevsky's “underground man” follows the same logic, since he values his own personality and individuality most of all, for the salvation of which he isolates himself from everyone. There is only his *will*, which is the only one capable to satisfy his need for self-realization. According to Heidegger, the overcoming of the initial dissolution in “being-with others” makes it possible for *Dasein* to gain its authenticity. For Dostoevsky, such a path leads to the final loss of any authenticity. Dostoevsky proposes to find the solution in the lifestyle of Christ who came and died for all, thereby restating in fullness the essential All-Unity. By his sacrifice, he showed the way to the lost All-Unity. So, to achieve the lost All-Unity, a subject needs to accept the Other as his neighbor.

Keywords: Dostoevsky, Other, All-Unity, neighbor, Heidegger, existential thought, Biblical Hermeneutics

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Научная статья

ИССЛЕДОВАНИЕ ЭКЗИСТЕНЦИАЛЬНОЙ МЫСЛИ Ф. ДОСТОЕВСКОГО ЧЕРЕЗ ПРОБЛЕМУ ДРУГОГО

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Аннотация. В статье рассматривается проблема Другого как одна из детерминант экзистенциальной мысли Ф. Достоевского, сформировавшейся в соответствии с христианской парадигмой. Фигура Другого понимается Достоевским как отчужденный ближний, с которым субъект утратил экзистенциальную связь вследствие грехопадения. Достоевский решает проблему отчужденности Другого через обращение к специфической христианской доктрине, в которой Бог представлен как состояние Всеединства.

Ключевые слова: Достоевский, Другой, Всеединство, ближний, Хайдеггер, экзистенциальная мысль, библейская герменевтика

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Introduction

It is widely known that at the beginning of the 20th century European classical philosophy underwent a crisis, which is characterized primarily by the so-called “death of the subject”¹. In this regard, the problem of the Other acquired special significance in the philosophical discourse of the 20th century. Thus, already in the first half of the 20th century, the concept of the Other was developed as a separate existential category in the works of Martin Heidegger [1] and Jean-Paul Sartre [2]. Also, the figure of the Other acquired a special significance as an ethical and ontological issue in the dialogical philosophy of Martin Buber [3], Mikhail Bakhtin [4], and Emmanuel Levinas [5]. In fact, the foundation for the emergence of the Other’s concept in the European philosophy of the 20th century can be found already in Hegel’s phenomenology. However, such a close interest of these thinkers in the concept of the Other as a philosophical problem can be partially explained by the influence of Fyodor Dostoevsky’s works too. In this regard, the interview of Levinas [6] is especially significant in its calling Dostoevsky one of Levinas’ important inspirations for his developing the ethics and ontology of the concept of the Other².

On this basis, I believe that using the concept of the Other directly to understand Dostoevsky’s existential thought is relevant and productive. Meanwhile, the most well-known studies in which an attempt made to interpret some Dostoevsky’s works through the problem of the Other are mainly philological in nature, and only a few extensive philosophical researches on this subject have been carried out so far³. In order to partially meet this gap, this article is an attempt at a philosophical

¹ In this article I define the “death of the subject” as a metaphor that means the impossibility of using the former concept of the Cartesian subject, postulated as initially integral and self-sufficient Ego.

² See Toumayan [7].

³ In particular, see Girard [8], Podoroga [9], and Young [10].

interpretation and understanding of Dostoevsky's existential thought in the context of those perspectives that are directly revealed when referring to the concept of the Other.

The concept of the Other as an aspect of Dostoevsky's Biblical Hermeneutics

In this study, I proceed from the premise that Dostoevsky's existential thought cannot be adequately understood and interpreted appropriately if we consider it outside the context of the Christian tradition with which Dostoevsky associated himself. Moreover, we should take into account the very specifics of this tradition, since, as far as it is known, Dostoevsky develops his ideas in accordance with the doctrine of "*pochvennichestvo*", which is especially characterized by a specific pathos of "*sobornost*" [11. P. 326; 12. P. 158–161]. Following this doctrine of "*sobornost*", Dostoevsky understands Christianity as a religion in which God is revealed primarily not as an individual Personality but as a collective Personality. Particularly, Dostoevsky outlined this idea already in 1864 in one rough draft for his never finished article with the characteristic title "Socialism and Christianity". At the very beginning of this article, Dostoevsky postulates his understanding of God, so he writes, "God is the idea of a collective humanity, of the whole mass, of all" [13. Vol. 20. P. 191]. Based on this fragment, we see quite clearly that Dostoevsky connects directly the idea of God with a certain initially "collective" human condition. Dostoevsky expressed this idea more explicitly in his other draft note, which he makes the day after the death of his first wife Maria Dmitrievna. This note is highly existential in its essence, since it represents Dostoevsky's reasoning on the topic of immortality and the purpose of human being in the world. Besides other, this note contains an extremely significant place where Dostoevsky considers God as the "bosom of universal synthesis" [13. Vol. 20. P. 173]. At that, in terms of Dostoevsky, such a condition of "universal synthesis" or "*sobornost*" should be understood as a condition that precedes individual separateness and subjective isolation¹.

It should be noted that Dostoevsky's ideas in this regard are especially close to the philosophy of All-Unity ("*vseedinstvo*") formulated by Vladimir Solovyov. In particular, considering the question of human nature, Dostoevsky proceeds from the situation of a certain Unity, by which he understands an initial ontological rootedness of the subject in co-existence with his neighbor [14. P. 263]. To clarify this point, let us turn to the Bible. In the Book of Genesis, the creation of man is described as follows: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Gn 1:27)², and there is another verse: "Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created" (Gn 5:1). When referring to these verses of the Holy Scripture, it is necessary to focus not on the sequence of human creation – first man, and then female, but on its simultaneity and synchronicity ("created he them"). Based on this interpretation, the concept of All-Unity already implicitly implies the figure of the Other, which in this context is represented in the

¹ Thus, Dostoevsky writes in terms of "disintegrated" individuals when discussing the modern human condition [13. Vol. 20. P. 192].

² In this study, I follow the King James Version (KJV).

modality of neighbor. This the Other-neighbor¹ turns out to be the one whose co-presence is initially necessary for the completeness of the subject's being².

Aside from that, in the same rough article "Socialism and Christianity" Dostoevsky writes, "When people live in masses (in primitive patriarchal communities, tales of which have survived) – then they live *spontaneously*" [13. Vol. 20. P. 19]. There is a certain reason to assume that, in Dostoevsky's view, those "primitive patriarchal communities, tales of which have survived" existed in the period before the Fall, so Dostoevsky corresponds the existence of those communities precisely to the human being in the Terrestrial Paradise. Thus, whereas such a non-theistic existential philosopher as Sartre postulates that an individual always finds himself already abandoned in the world³, Dostoevsky presupposes to this abandonment a state of "spontaneity" characterized primarily by the absence of any individual's separation from the initial All-Unity.

However, in this context, a completely logical question arises – how does Dostoevsky explain the individual's further separation from the initial All-Unity? In the same draft article, Dostoevsky himself describes this situation as follows:

Then comes a time of transition, that is, further development, that is, civilization. (Civilization is a time of transition). In this further development a phenomenon arises, a new fact, which no one can escape: this is the development of personal consciousness and the negation of spontaneous ideas and laws. <...> In this phase of his universal genetic growth, man as an individual person has always taken a hostile, negative attitude toward the authoritative law of the mass and *the all*. For this reason, he has *always* lost his faith in God, too. <...> This condition, that is, the fragmentation of the mass into persons, or civilization, is a diseased condition. The loss of a living idea of God testifies to this. The second testimony that this is a disease is that a man in this condition feels bad, is depressed, loses the source of living life [13. Vol. 20. P. 19].

Obviously, in this fragment we can see how Dostoevsky understands and interprets the biblical plot of the Fall exactly.

To be sure, such an interpretation of the Fall in Dostoevsky's note seems to be specific and highly remarkable, and some details in this draft deserve particular attention. Thus, the most revealing of these details are the moments when man receives an opportunity to aware himself ("the development of personal consciousness") but lose his God-likeness ("a living idea of God") and his immortality instead ("the source of living life"). To elucidate these points correctly, let us turn to the text of the Holy Scriptures again. According to the Old Testament plot, the fall of man begins with the temptation of Eve with fruits from a tree which in the midst of the garden. So, the serpent assures Eve that "in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (Gn 3:5). And this is exactly what happens when the tempted Eve brings the fruits to Adam:

¹ In the further consideration, I will separate these two different concepts.

² It is noteworthy that Dostoevsky's view on the nature of the Other is absolutely opposite to Sartre's position, according to which the Other always restricts the subject and poses a threat to him of losing the subject's freedom [2. P. 397].

³ See his work "Existentialism Is a Humanism" [15. P. 25].

“And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons” (Gn 3:7). Thus, we can see that man develops self-consciousness (reflection) as a result of eating the forbidden fruit. And for its part, this development of self-consciousness marks a person’s exit from the initial condition of “spontaneity”, as well it marks the person’s cessation of perception of the Other as a part of himself, i.e., in modality of the neighbor. Thus, man saw himself from the outside, he saw himself alone – separated from his neighbor and from God.

The consequence of this self-consciousness is a double alienation, since man alienated himself from God and his neighbor both. How precisely did this double alienation happen? As we know from the story, after eating the forbidden fruit, God asks Adam, “Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?” (Gn 3:11). And Adam answers him, “The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat” (Gn 3:12). In this context, the words “the woman whom *thou gavest* to be with me” symbolize Adam’s escape from his own responsibility and his attempt to shift it to God. After that, Adam renounces Eve too, who is his only neighbor, so the second part of his answer to God is: “*she gave* me of the tree, and I did eat” (my emphasis). In that way, as a result of the Fall, man did not just fall away from God, but also found himself alienated from his neighbor, who has become the Other.

Based on this interpretation of the biblical plot, which Dostoevsky himself certainly follows, we can explicitly formulate the definition of the concept of the Other as the alienated neighbor. The very concept of the Other in such a context acquires the specifics of the fallen condition. At that, Dostoevsky considers the Fall itself, first of all, as neighbor’s alienation by man, and therefore his falling out of All-Unity, as well as his falling away from God as a consequence of this.

The problem of the Other in the context of Dostoevsky’s critique of Western civilization

In the current analysis of Dostoevsky’s outline of the article “Socialism and Christianity”, we should also pay a special attention to the author’s concept “civilization”, which Dostoevsky uses in a very specific way to describe the modern, i.e., the fallen state of man. We have already found out that Dostoevsky considers modernity as some “transitional time” with its inherent attributes, such as “the development of personal consciousness” and “the loss of a living idea of God”. Without any doubt, this Dostoevsky’s view of modernity fully corresponds to the common Christian paradigm on the modern time as the time after the Fall. However, there is also a specificity in the writer’s view. Thus, Dostoevsky directly defines civilization as a process of “the fragmentation of the mass into persons” [13. Vol. 20. P. 192]. In this context, civilization should be considered as a transitional period that replaces the time of the ontological rootedness of man in co-existence with his neighbor and marks the disintegration of the initial All-Unity. And particularly, in this regard, father Zossima in *The Brothers Karamazov* characterizes the time of modernity as a period of global isolation [13. Vol. 14. P. 275].

According to Dostoevsky, such a tendency towards global isolation, i.e., the individual’s isolation from all and everyone, reached its apotheosis precisely in Western European civilization, where “the development of the individuality has reached its extreme limits” [13. Vol. 20. P. 192]. Dostoevsky himself had the op-

portunity to make it sure personally during his trip abroad in 1862, the immediate impressions of which he outlined in his journalistic essay "Winter Notes on Summer Impressions", published in 1863. According to the Protestant theologian and thinker Fritz Lieb, one of the main peculiarities of this Dostoevsky's work is its "murderous criticism of the Western European bourgeoisie", i.e., modern European civilization [16. P. 57]. As James Scanlan notes on this point, in this work Dostoevsky "gave his most explicit and critical analysis of the egoistic principle, virtually equating it with immorality" [12. P. 61]. Thus, arguing on the failures of Western socialism, Dostoevsky remarks that modern civilized Europeans most of all tend to talk about "brotherhood as the great driving force of the whole humanity" although, in fact, the Western civilization has no grounds in itself for a fraternal unity of all people. Since, according to Dostoevsky's observations, the modern Western civilization is based on "the personal principle, the principle of isolation, of intense self-preservation, of self-solicitousness, of the self-determination of one's own ego, of opposing this ego to all of nature and all other people as a separate, autonomous principle completely equal and equivalent to everything outside itself" [13. Vol. 5. P. 79]. In that way, the concept of Western civilization gets its fatal character in Dostoevsky's view, since it contributes precisely to the rooting of man in his fallen state of alienation and self-isolation.

To note, Dostoevsky continued such a narrative of the Western civilization's criticism from the position of exposing all its destructiveness for the foundations of the moral nature of man in the story "Notes from the Underground" (published in 1864, one year after his "Winter Notes"). This work was created as a preliminary result of Dostoevsky's reflections on the most pressing issues for him and his time. In this regard, the story "Notes from the Underground" has undoubted importance for clarifying Dostoevsky's existential ideas, including those related to his reflections on the problem of the Other.

In particular, in this story, among his other reflections, Dostoevsky presents his vision of the social atomization's consequences, caused precisely by the development of the individuality in Western civilization. For instance, not so much in his reasoning but in the very spiritual image of the "underground" hero, Dostoevsky depicts all the horror and destructiveness for the modern man of being "abandoned to his own Self" [16. P. 59]. In that sense, the "underground man" symbolizes a modern man who "was touched by development and European civilization" and who has "renounced the soil and popular roots" [13. Vol. 5. P. 107]. He is not just a typical representative of the "Russian majority", as Dostoevsky marks him in one place¹. In his "underground" image, every civilized man in general is recognized, i.e., a "groundless" man has fallen out of the "bosom of universal synthesis" and has lost a direct existential connection with his neighbor. According to Dostoevsky, the true difference between the "underground" hero and any real civilized individual is only one. It lies in the fact that the "underground man" only reinforces the contradiction between "everyone" and his own Ego, thereby bringing the initial situation to its logical limit².

¹ Thus, Dostoevsky returns to the "Underground" theme in his one other draft note that concerns his fresh-published novel *The Adolescent* (1875). In this note, he writes: "I am proud that for the first time I brought out a real person of the Russian majority and for the first time exposed his ugly and tragic side" [13. Vol. 16. P. 329].

² To be sure, the "underground" hero himself emphasizes this point: "As far as I myself am concerned, I have merely carried to an extreme in my life what you have not dared to carry even halfway, and, what's more, you've taken your cowardice for good sense, and found comfort in thus deceiving yourselves" [13. Vol. 5. P. 178].

In this context, the words which the “underground” hero proudly shouts out from the depths of his existential loneliness are the most indicative: “I only dream in my head, but do you know what I want in reality? That you all go to hell, that’s what! I want peace. I’d sell the whole world for a kopeck this minute, just not to be bothered. Shall the world go to hell, or shall I not have my tea? I say let the world go to hell, but I should always have my tea. Did you know that or not?” [13. Vol. 5. P. 174]. Thus, he finally breaks the bonds of fictional civilized unity and brotherhood in the name of self-affirmation. It is interesting to note that the position of the “underground” hero clearly resembles Heidegger’s teaching on *Dasein*, which has gained its authenticity. This remark can serve as a basis for a further comparison of the views of the two thinkers regarding the concept of the Other.

The concept of the Other in Dostoevsky and Heidegger: Comparative analysis

As is well known, Heidegger’s philosophical project basically focuses on “the question of what we really mean by the word ‘being’” [1. P. XXIX]. According to the philosopher, one of the main and fundamental forms of being is *Dasein*. To note, Heidegger uses the very concept of *Dasein* to refer to the experience of being that is primarily a peculiarity of human beings¹. However, Heidegger fundamentally separates the concept of *Dasein* from the concept of the Cartesian subject², suggesting that it be understood primarily as “being-in-the-world” itself [1. P. 39]³. Such a “being-in-the-world” initially reveals itself not in aloneness, but in everyday being-with others [1. P. 116]. According to Heidegger, the existential and ontological meaning of this concept is revealed as follows: “‘The others’ does not mean everybody else but me—those from whom the I distinguish itself. They are, rather, those from whom one mostly does *not* distinguish oneself, those among whom one is, too” [1. P. 116]. In this regard, everyday existence itself already presupposes the presence of the Other, in relation to which *Dasein* acts as co-existence: “On the basis of this *with-bound* [*mithaft*] being-in-the-world, the world is always already the one that I share with others. The world of *Dasein* is a *with-world* [*Mitwelt*]. Being-in is *being-with* [*Mitsein*] others. The innerworldly being-in-itself of others is *Dasein-with* [*Mitdasein*]” [1. P. 115–116]. Just as, according to the concept of All-Unity from which Dostoevsky proceeds, man is initially ontologically rooted in being-with his neighbor (the simultaneous nature of the creation), so Heidegger’s *Dasein* initially finds itself already coexisting with the Other on a common basis.

However, there is an essential difference between Heidegger’s position and Dostoevsky’s view on this problem, which becomes clear from the following. Heidegger regards the initial co-existence with others as an inauthentic mode of *Dasein*’s being, since being-with presupposes an indefinite, impersonal existence

¹ Thus, Heidegger writes: “This being [Seiende], which we ourselves in each case are and which includes inquiry among the possibilities of its being, we formulate terminologically as *Dasein*.” [1. P. 7].

² See translator’s comment [1. P. 6].

³ The revelations of the “underground man”, which make up the first part of the “Notes from the Underground”, contain all the prerequisites for criticizing the Cartesian subjectivism of classical philosophy. In this sense, the reflections of the “underground” hero partly seem to precede Heidegger’s philosophy.

devoid of its own "Self". It should be noted that by the concept "others" Heidegger does not mean a specific Other as one's personality or simply the totality of all other people. So, he writes: "'The others', whom one designates as such in order to cover over one's own essential belonging to them, are those who *are there* initially and for the most part in everyday being-with-one-another. The who is not this one and not that one, not oneself, not some, and not the sum of them all. The 'who' is the neuter, *the they*" [1. P. 123]. What Heidegger means is precisely the way of everyday "being-in-the-world", expressed by the principle of "being like people", i.e., to dissolve the Self in *das Man*.

Heidegger contrasts the path of *Dasein*'s individualization, which presupposes a way out of its initial uncertainty in being-with others and finding its own "Self" (authenticity), with *Dasein*'s dissolution in the impersonality and meaninglessness of *das Man* as an inauthentic way of "being-in-the-world". Such "Self" manifests itself as pure spontaneity and freedom of *Dasein*, i.e., the ability of the Self to assert itself in being and realize its own life project based on its own existential capabilities. Thus, *Dasein* gains its own authenticity, according to Heidegger, by changing the life attitude from "being-with others" to "being-for-itself" (using Sartre's terminology).

As we can see, Dostoevsky's "underground man", who perceives others as a mass of *the They*, threatening his Self with the existential loss of itself, follows the same logic. Particularly, such an existential attitude is characteristically expressed in the words of the "underground" hero when he says, "I am one, and they are *all*" [13. Vol. 5. P. 125]. As Heidegger's *Dasein*, Dostoevsky's "underground man" values his own personality and individuality most of all, for the salvation of which he consciously leaves his official place, breaks all his social ties and finally isolates himself from everyone. Thus, he recognizes: "my apartment was my mansion, my shell, my case, in which I hid from all mankind" [13. Vol. 5. P. 168]. In this self-isolation, he creates an artificial microenvironment ("mansion", "shell", "case"), where there are no encroachments of impersonal "*allishness*", but only his free will, which, according to the "underground" logic, is the only one capable to satisfy his need for self-determination and self-affirmation.

At this point, the divergence of the positions of Heidegger and Dostoevsky becomes the most evident. According to Heidegger, it is overcoming the initial dissolution in "being-with others" that makes it possible for *Dasein* to "hear the call of being" and gain its authenticity. For Dostoevsky, such a path leads to the final loss of individual's authenticity.

The problem of the Other as a consequence of the "underground" pride

As Dostoevsky emphasizes by the example of the "underground man", an egoistic mechanism is laid at the basis of the need for self-definition, since the definition itself is aimed to define one's "me" through alienation from what is the fundamental "not-me" and radical opposition to it. First of all, it is precisely the opposition to the Other. Such an opposition leads to an inevitable confrontation with the Other, so an individual has to defend his individuality and his right for self-being. The result of such a confrontation between the Self and the Other is vanity, or pride. Thus, analyzing philosophically the "Underground" theme in Dostoevsky's works, Girard considers pride to be "the

primary psychological (and before long metaphysical) motor which governs all the individual and collective manifestations of the underground life” [8. P. 23]. In this regard, the admission of the “underground” hero about his relations with schoolmates is very significant: “My school fellows met me with spiteful and merciless derision, because I was not like any of them. But I could not endure derision; I could not get along so cheaply as they got along with each other. I immediately began to hate them, and shut myself away from everyone in timorous, wounded, and inordinate pride” [13. Vol. 5. P. 139].

The “Underground” pride manifests itself primarily as an individual’s desire to assert himself. This self-affirmation does not occur within the limits of the Self but by expanding the boundaries of the Self, i.e., by suppressing the boundaries of the Other. In that way, self-affirmation takes the pathological form of the Nietzschean *will to power*. Particularly, the motive of self-affirmation as the will to power is articulated quite clearly in the words of the “underground man”, which he addresses to Lisa in the final scene of “Notes from the Underground”: “Why didn’t you fling it in my mug when I started reading you my oration: ‘And you, what did you come here for? To teach us morals, or what?’ *Power, power, that’s what I wanted then*, the game was what I wanted, I wanted to achieve your tears, your humiliation, your hysterics – that’s what I wanted then!” [13. Vol. 5. P. 178]. Probably, the main merit of the “underground man” is that he formulates this idea with the utmost clarity. And that is why we can identify this hero as the main ideologist of the “Underground”.

Dostoevsky’s answer to the problem of the Other

However, already by the example of the “underground man” lifestyle, Dostoevsky underlines that the egoistic orientation to “being-for-itself” is a path that leads only to the degradation of personality and to the individual’s spiritual death. Such an interpretation can be explained by the fact that, according to Dostoevsky, falling out of co-existence with the Other is falling out into pure nothingness. This idea was most significantly expressed by Dostoevsky on the example of his other heroes following the “underground” ideology of self-will. Thus, Raskolnikov’s will to power, full of the Nietzschean spirit, took shape in the so-called “Napoleonic idea”, according to which the extreme manifestation of this power is the denial of the Other, i.e., his murder. However, after the crime he committed, Raskolnikov makes a characteristic confession: “Did I murder the old woman? I murdered myself, not her! I crushed once for all, for ever” [13. Vol. 6. P. 322]. As it follows from Raskolnikov’s confession, the murder of the Other turns out to be a symbolic suicide, since the subject is initially rooted in “being-with” the Other and has no ontological basis in himself. In that way, I illustrate how “the Underground” exposes the all ontological “unfoundedness of a strictly self-sufficient man” [16. P. 58], a man who dares to found his own existential project from himself. Particularly, this idea was also expressed by Dostoevsky in his novel *The Brothers Karamazov*, where he writes on behalf of *The Mysterious Visitor*: “For everyone strives to keep his individuality as apart as possible, wishes to secure the greatest possible fullness of life for himself; *but meantime all his efforts result not in attaining fullness of life*

but self-destruction, for instead of self-realisation he ends by arriving at complete solitude” [13. Vol. 14. P. 275].

So, according to Dostoevsky, a person's obsession with his Self ultimately leads to the loss of the basis of his own being. What solution to this situation does Dostoevsky himself propose? The answer is partly contained in his notes for the unrealized article “Socialism and Christianity”. Thus, he writes, “If the purpose of life had not been pointed to man in his state, it seems to me that he would have gone mad with all mankind. Christ pointed out” [13. Vol. 20. P 192]. In this context, not so much the teaching, but the life of Christ itself should serve as an existential guide for man. After all, what exactly did Christ do? He came and died for all, thereby restating in fullness the essential unity of all. As the Apostle claims, “we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son” (Romans 5:10). By his sacrifice, Christ actually revealed the way for man to the source of the “living life” lost as a result of the Fall and showed him the way to the lost All-Unity. For his part, Dostoevsky plainly claims that man's purpose is his “return to the spontaneity, to the mass” [13. Vol. 20. P. 192]. But what does it mean – to “return to the mass”? As we remember, Dostoevsky considers “the mass” as the state of man's initial co-existing with the Other. So, to return to the mass, the subject need to realize that the Other is not a threat or a boundary of his own Self, but his continuation. Therefore, in order for the subject to gain all the primordial fullness of being, it is necessary not to deny the Other, but to attach him as a neighbor. Such communion of the Other as a neighbor is achieved through a specific ethical attitude, which is embodied by all the “Christological” heroes of Dostoevsky (first of all, Sonya Marmeladova, Prince Myshkin¹ and Alyosha Karamazov). This attitude is expressed, firstly, in the subject's refusal from any condemnation of the Other (principled “non-condemnation”) and, secondly, in the subject's awareness of his personal responsibility for the Other, as Mitya Karamazov postulates: “we are all responsible for all” [13. Vol 15. P. 31]. This is how, according to Dostoevsky, the problem of the Other is solved and the lost All-Unity is achieved.

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