
From the Editor:

THE BOOK IN THE BOOK

Esteemed Colleagues, Dear Readers,

First of all, I want to thank all my friends and colleagues of the Editorial Board and Editorial Council who prepared the the last anniversary issue of our Journal and participated in the publication with their articles.

Thank you to everyone involved, I am deeply grateful and very touched.

The present issue of our “Dostoevsky and World Culture. Philological journal” is largely devoted to the theme “The Book in the Book,” which our Research Centre “Dostoevsky and World Culture” has been intensively engaged in for a year already, and which by this time is beginning to reveal more and more its true scale and significance.

On October 2–4, 2023, the first International Academic online Conference “The Book in the Book” was held. It was dedicated to the 85th anniversary of the birth of the great Russian philologist, theoretician and cultural historian, Germanist, historian of art, and translator Alexander Viktorovich Mikhailov (1938–1995). The conference was devoted to the theoretical problem of **the presence of books as texts that are mentioned directly and/or appear as material objects that participate in the plot of other works of world literature and culture**. The conference was organized by the Centre “Dostoevsky and World Culture” and was held within the framework of our work on a research project carried out at IWL RAS with a grant from the Russian Science Foundation, project no. 23-28-00258 “The Role and the Image of Books in F.M. Dostoevsky’s novel *The Idiot*” (<https://rscf.ru/project/23-28-00258/>). You can read the Russian version of the program of the conference at the following link:

<https://imli.ru/121-seminary-i-konferentsii-2022/5449-mezhdunarodnaya-nauchnaya-onlajn-konferentsiya-kniga-v-knige-posvyashchennaya-predstoyashchemu-85-letiyu-so-dnya-rozhdeniya-aleksandra-viktorovicha-mikhajlova-1938-1995>

Recordings of the first day:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3phWLGDE6a0&t=653s>

Recordings of the second day:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sGV4CoQ6XRg>

Recordings of the third day:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E3_cqsOgy4g

A good number of articles in the present issue are based on reports made at the conference. One of the striking discoveries we made during our work on the topic “The Book in the Book” is that, regardless of the incredible amount of comparative literature dedicated to Dostoevsky’s novel *The Idiot*, the researcher will find only a pitiful and constantly drying up rivulet of this wide sea of articles devoted to the books that are mentioned and placed in the novel itself by the will of the author. Sure, some of the books mentioned in the novel are lucky enough to have several pieces of research focusing on them, such as Dumas’ *The Lady of the Camellias* and Cervantes’ *Don Quijote*. However, these studies are conducted almost entirely, with negligible exceptions, using a comparativist approach. I have every reason to believe that this scenario is not only the case with *The Idiot*.

Meanwhile, a book that appears in another book, often as a material object having different additional functions, needs quite a different way of studying than is accepted in comparative literature. The presence of a book must be understood and conceptualized as an important part of the new whole created by the author. This whole is internally supported by all the books introduced by the author’s will into this new whole. However, the book in the book can serve not only as a support for its foundation. It can also act as a buttress, a support that was taken from the outside world in order to show what the character or the plot created anew by the author *is not*. The book in the book can also be something like a tunnel leading to a profound level of the revealed plot that is not

obvious to the reader, but that is crucial in order to arrive at its ultimate meaning. Anyway, a book appearing in another book must be studied as a part of a new whole, and not as a different whole juxtaposed to it.

We intend to organize the conference “The Book in the Book” as an annual event and try to gather around it those researchers who understand the importance and the novelty of the topic and are looking forward to finding an adequate methodology to approach it. The next conference is scheduled for October 1-3, 2024.

Two other conferences are scheduled for next year. The first one is dedicated to *Crime and Punishment* and will be held online from February 28 to March 1, 2024. The second one will be dedicated to *The Idiot* and will take place on April 18–20, 2024 in Staraya Russa as part of the annual Readings “Dostoevsky’s Works in the Perception of 21st-Century Readers.” I kindly ask all the participants of past conferences on *Crime and Punishment* to please keep in mind that in 2024 our Research Centre will be completing the new volume of the series *Dostoevsky’s Works: Current State of Research* and it will be devoted to this novel. We are really looking forward to publishing your articles, based on the reports already held in previous years. 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 all the fields of academic research on the novel, the conferences and the volume will also focus on its presence in textbooks and manuals, teaching aids, different methodological approaches to it, etc.** We look forward to your requests for participation in conferences intended for 2024 and in the planned publication. We especially invite teachers, educators, professors, and methodologists who have something to say about the value, usefulness, and applicability (or vice versa) of textbooks and manuals concerning the novel and those who can share their own insights and observations about how the novel is perceived by today’s students and pupils.

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. Please send us your application to participate as a listener (with all

the necessary information about yourself) in case you are interested in this option.

The years 2021–2023 were marked by the publication of a great number of books about Dostoevsky and his work. We are ready and willing to provide space for the publication of insightful reviews of books and anthologies published in the last three years. We are also open to the publication of extensive summaries of past conferences.

In the present issue, Valentina Borisova and Irina Andrianova published an article devoted to the review of the XVIII Symposium of the International Dostoevsky Society, which was held in Japan at the Nagoya University of Foreign Studies at the end of August 2023. Their informative and interesting text asks for a small clarification I would like to make. The authors affirm that the Symposium of the International Dostoevsky Society was held in Asia for the first time. I do agree with them, when we approach the matter in a very formal way. However, it is important to remember that, although at the 1998 Symposium in the United States the ardent request of the Japanese Dostoevsky Society to hold the next Symposium in Japan was not satisfied, in 2000 the president of the Japanese Society, Toyofusa Kinoshita, organized an International conference on Dostoevsky's work at Chiba University, which was almost equal to the Symposium organized by the International Dostoevsky Society in terms of the richness of the topics involved and the number of participants.

As always, the opening section of the journal is dedicated to Hermeneutics and slow reading. The first article, written by Caterina Corbella, focuses on the concept of “book” in Dostoevsky's novel *The Idiot*. This piece of research shows how one of the main meanings contained in the concept turns how to be the one of “repository,” “place of storage.” The obvious meaning involved in the idea of book as a repository of information, stories, data, and so on, is here widely and meaningfully supported by the fact that in the novel books are used as places where **objects** that are important for the plot are placed and stored. I would express it better this way: objects that are important to **connect** the external plot with the internal one, i.e. that are crucial for the revelation of the profound meaning of the novel. Reading books turns out to be a way for the characters to find an **image** (*obraz*) of themselves, a way out of their

formlessness (*bezobraznost'*). The researcher admirably shows how this process of finding an image of themselves is explicitly stated in the text of the novel when speaking of Parfyon Rogozhin. However, it is worth noting that the acquisition of an image is also explicitly stated in relation to the case of Nastasia Filippovna. This process concerns not only the acquisition of a new face (“It was difficult to imagine how little this new Nastasia Filippovna resembled her former one in looks”), but also the acquisition of a new character. This second process is connected by the author to the process of reading. As Corbella notes, this time the connection shows itself **negatively**, or, more correctly, in a complex way. Out of “something timid, uncertain in a boarding-school way, sometimes charming in its original liveliness and naivety, sometimes melancholy and pensive, astonished, mistrustful, weepy, and restless,” suddenly emerges “an extraordinary and unexpected being.” Totsky, as well as the narrator, wonders how and from where this new being could have arisen: “Could it have been from her girls’ library?”. The “girls’ library” of Nastasya Filippovna was assembled by Totsky as an instrument of influence on her. However, the books contain more than such a self-gratifying gentleman thinks they contain. A book by itself, read *in freedom*, outside of previously imposed interpretations, cannot become an instrument of formatting a person according to the interests of others, because every book tells the story of people and, on the one hand, it always contains something that breaks every unambiguous, ideologically held interpretation. On the other hand, when the reader of the book changes, the angle of view and perception also changes. For example, Alexandre Dumas *fil’s* novel *The Lady of the Camellias*, which according to Totsky should become an additional instrument for the moral corruption of Nastasia Filippovna, becomes a wall of stone blocking the way of any carnal temptation, reinforcing the disgust for it that has already appeared in her.

The conclusion of the article focuses on the reflection of the image of Cervantes’ Don Quixote on various characters of the novel, first of all, Aglaya (a new and very accurate choice).

The second article of the section *Hermeneutics. Slow Reading*, by Tatiana Magaril-II’iaeva, is devoted to the presence in *The Idiot* of two French novels, the already mentioned *The Lady of the Camellias* and Gustave Flaubert’s *Madame Bovary*. **They mark**

the beginning and the end of Dostoevsky's novel. While the first novel is dedicated to the romanticized story of a prostitute, which to a superficial reader could give the impression that if the lover married her and his family did not oppose this decision there would be paradise and universal happiness in a single unit of society, the second book is devoted to the horror and the human catastrophe of the "normal life of a family." Introducing these novels into his text, Dostoevsky seeks to show clearly that the supposedly universal recipe of marriage and "family happiness" is not at all suitable for the restoration and salvation of the **human person** in the world; that hoping that the change of social conditions will bring a real resolution of the **human** problem is completely baseless; that "something else is needed," because the happiness of human realization is a synthesis that appears in a completely different level than the one of the creation of yet another "bosom of the family."

The section presents two more articles (the first one by me, Tatiana Kasatkina, the second by Olga Dekhanova) dedicated to the presence and significance of George Henry Lewes' *Physiology of Common Life* in Dostoevsky's novel *Crime and Punishment*.

My article compares two points that are immediately emphasized by the author when Sonia's name is first mentioned in the novel. These two points are contained in the story told by her father and seem to accumulate in themselves "all the Enlightenment" ("vse prosveshchenie") of the character. They are a person and a book: on the one hand, Cyrus of Persia, where her study of history stopped, and on the other hand *The Physiology of Common Life* given her by Lebeziatnikov, a book she read entirely, even communicating the passages that particularly interested her to her household. I demonstrate that both Cyrus and Lewes' *Physiology of Common Life* should be regarded as important anchor points to understanding how Sonia conceptualizes the world as well as the place and role of man in it. It is important to consider that both these elements are not what they seem at first glance. Cyrus, who at first impression might be added by Raskolnikov to his line of "renewers of mankind" and "violators of the ancient law" (note that Cyrus is the founder of the **first Empire of the world**) in reality, turns out to be the restorer of the ancient law. Lewes' *Physiology of Common Life* after the analysis turns out to be a philosophical text that is aimed to allow the reader to see in the laws of the organism

the laws of the universe and of humanity. In the article, I show how Christ's words about "fulfilling" the law should be understood as "replenishing," and with the help of Lewes' *Physiology* I explain what Svidrigailov and Porfiry Petrovich meant when they insisted that Raskolnikov needs "air, air, air!". A detailed table of the contents of the *Physiology of Common Life*, read by Sonia, is given at the end of the article, in order to correct the false impression that readers of *Crime and Punishment* have of the book on the basis of second-hand witnesses.

The second article dedicated to George Henry Lewes' *Physiology of Common Life* was written by Olga Dekhanova and it describes the ferment of minds that characterized those times, when the scientific world was on commotion; the determination of young people to reach a fruit partly forbidden, that was expressed by positivistic research on the world and, first of all, on man; the controversial polemics raised by Lewes' book and the positive review on it published in the Dostoevsky brothers' journal "Vremia." The researcher tries to explain Dostoevsky's choice of giving Sonia Lewes' *Physiology of the Common Life* to read, and not Ludwig Büchner's *Physiological Pictures*. Appealing to the *Physiology of Common Life*, the article explains why "You were hungry" is the first reason Sonia thinks about in order to explain Raskolnikov's crime; it is also partly explained what it means, to be hungry. At the same time, Olga Dekhanova is able to demonstrate that Dostoevsky radically changes the motivations. According to her analysis, the hunger shake does not undermine Raskolnikov's humanity, but the strength of his ideological attitudes, thus allowing human indignation and disgust at the idea of crime to break through them.

The section *Poetics. Context* opens with an article by Tatiana Boborykina. The work she presents is rich in important observations as it is devoted to books in the books of Dante, Shakespeare, Pushkin, and Dostoevsky. Its most interesting motif can be found in the idea of the book read by the lovers. In Dante's *Comedy* we see a book that lovers read together, and which provokes them to repeat the path of those they read about: in this sense, it teaches them about love. In Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin* there are books read by lovers who have been rejected by their beloved (at the beginning, Tatiana reads Onegin's book, then Onegin reads the book listed among those that "replaced everything" for Tatiana, particularly Rousseau)

in order to understand and most importantly to feel through books their unrequited, distant lovers. In Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, Raskolnikov and Sonia also read together, but the book is the Gospel. I cannot agree with Tatiana Boborykina, seeking to not only compare but equate Dante's reading of lovers by Paolo and Francesca with Dostoevsky's reading of the Gospel by Sonia and Raskolnikov. I think Dostoevsky here does something different, a third kind of interaction: here the book does not become a guide, and not even a procurer, for the characters, as it is in Dante; here, each one of the characters becomes a guide for the other to the Gospel. This new interaction creates a new plot translating the same meaning inside their own history. Sonia looks at the dead (as she thinks, from loss of faith), Raskolnikov, and hopes he will be revived by hearing the story of Lazarus. Raskolnikov looks at Sonia, socially and morally "dead," and hears in her anxious delight at the reading of the story of Lazarus the anticipation of her own resurrection. A story of two thousand years ago reaches each of them as the present-day story of the one who is now reading it with them. But if it were not for Tatiana Boborykina's article I would not have seen any of this in the novel.

The second article of the section is a study of the books in the novel *The Possessed*, conducted by Liudmila Saraskina. Before approaching *The Possessed* directly, the researcher clearly and convincingly shows how the "active and raging" powerful element of literary creation overwhelms many characters in almost every Dostoevsky's novel. And yet none of them can be compared to *The Possessed*, where two thirds of the characters (20 people) are writers, composing a total of 25 manuscripts or publications. Notably, the careers of all these writers end in a fiasco. However, the author of the article focuses not on the writers but on the readers and reveals something incredible for our times: people need books to live. They need them in order to understand their sons and daughters (this is why Varvara Petrovna reads Shakespeare, and Stepan Trofimovich *L'Homme qui rit* and *What is To Be Done?*), their lovers, and — in the end — themselves. The only character of the novel who reads only for entertainment (hence almost no reader) is Pyotr Verkhovensky. It is also stated that the most important reading of all, the most necessary for life, is the Gospel, as suddenly becomes clear in the last pages of the novel.

The third article of the section, by Alexandra Toichkina, is dedicated to the clarification of how historical-literary and historical-philosophical writings became material for the writer's creative laboratory, although the transition from the analysis of some concept in Strakhov's works to their presence and meaning in Dostoevsky's novel looks like the sudden appearance of shining diamonds where there should have been just small leaves of gray foil. I do not think that it is possible to make one into the other, and, more importantly, there is no need for the writer to do so. However, to see a preliminary reference to Strakhov in what Dostoevsky later expressed in all its power is certainly a great help for the researcher.

In the fourth article of the section, Lazar Milentijevic very productively analyses the image of Svidrigailov as a point of convergence and confrontation of Christian and pagan concepts in Dostoevsky's work. The author uses the word "syncretism," however, I maintain that considering a phenomenon from multiple points of view and in the light of various ideas that can shed light on it is not syncretism, something that is still commonly understood as a rather mechanical amalgamation of dissimilar things. The mind of the researcher would understand "syncretism" as a philosophical concept that unites everything, while the mind of Dostoevsky concentrates on the phenomenon itself and uses any suitable philosophical tool in order to understand and get to know it, if the instrument is able to better clarify some aspect of it. He acts in accordance with saint Paul's precept: "Examine all things, hold fast to what is good."

In the section *Dostoevsky on Stage*, we publish Enisa Uspenskaya's work about the staging of *Crime and Punishment* in Serbia in the first half of the 20th century. The author conducts an impressive study, in the course of which, on the basis of almost no surviving materials, with small strokes, gently but confidently—and surprisingly emotionally convincing—reconstructs before the reader's eyes performances of many years ago and even the psychological pattern of the roles.

The journal is on Vkontakte and Telegram (with already more than 8 400 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.

Vkontakte: <https://vk.com/dostmirkult>

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As before, all quotations from Fyodor Dostoevsky’s works, if not specified otherwise, are cited according to the Complete Works in 30 vols. (Leningrad, Nauka Publ., 1972–1990) with the references formatted according to the rules of the Russian Science Citation Index. Capital letters in the names of God, the Virgin, as in other holy names and concepts, that were lowered in this edition because of Soviet censorship are here restored in accordance with the editions published during Dostoevsky’s life. 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.

Our email address is fedor@dostmirkult.ru. The journal accepts articles in Russian and English. We accept submissions related to the subject of the journal from Russia and abroad. The authors will be notified about acceptance or refusal within a month.

Tatiana Kasatkina