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**TRANSFORMATION OF THE CONCEPT OF “FREEDOM –
RESPONSIBILITY – LAW” IN DOSTOEVSKY’S WORK**

M. Y. Prokopyeva (a)*, Y. I. Tishkina (b), L. N. Shikhardina (c)

*Corresponding author

(a) Kurgan State University, Kurgan, Russia, prokopiwa.m@yandex.ru

(b) Kurgan State University, Kurgan, Russia, godo@list.ru

(c) Kurgan State University, Kurgan, Russia, ardinal@yandex.ru

Abstract

The paper attempts to consider the transformation of the concept of ‘freedom – responsibility – law’ in European and Russian traditions. In European cultural tradition this concept has an ancient origin. The legal system has linked the concepts of freedom and responsibility by drawing a red line with regard to the limits of the possible and permissible. The same is not true of the culture of Russia. The interpretation of the concepts of ‘will’ and ‘justice’ from the subject-oriented perspective, non-single-valued nature of interpretation of the role and significance of the law in human life make this construct not universal enough. It is stressed that in the culture of Russia the object-oriented concept of ‘law’ is replaced with the subject-oriented concept of ‘conscience’. The paper analyzes the works by Dostoevsky as a clear proof of such replacement. The Russian writer showed that in human nature, the ideas of freedom and the inner moral component of personality are organically combined, wherein responsibility acts as a mediator. The criterion of both freedom and responsibility of a man is his conscience. Based on the analysis of Dostoevsky’s works, three types of conscience are distinguished by the authors: ‘psychological’, ‘social’ and ‘metaphysical (religious)’. Characteristic features of each type of conscience are given. It is reported that these types of conscience can be observed in the modern cultural and historical realities of Russian society. This fact indicates the transformation of the concept of ‘freedom – responsibility – law’ with the subjective conscience being relevant.

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Keywords: Freedom, responsibility, psychological type of conscience, social type of conscience, metaphysical (religious) type of conscience, Russian culture



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1. Introduction

The articulation of the ‘freedom and responsibility’ issue in European philosophical tradition originates from ancient thought. The ideas of the ancient Greek thinkers are crucial to understanding the familiar concepts used in scientific discourse today. Brumbaugh (1981) emphasizing the importance of the ancient Greek discoveries notes that a lot of ideas that have become a part of our sense of global consciousness today “had to be discovered and were by the early Greek philosophers” (p. 1). It was the Greek philosophers who introduced such concepts as ‘choice’, ‘responsibility’, ‘freedom’, ‘necessity’, ‘good’, ‘evil’ and ‘justice’. The duality of the concepts of ‘freedom’ and ‘responsibility’ is inevitable, regardless of the range of possible interpretations. In ancient Greek philosophical thought Plato’s conceptual understanding of freedom as “the existence of good” differs from Epicurus’s definition of freedom as “an expression of internal choice”. Plato (2001) connects the understanding of responsibility with legalism predicting the death of that state “where the law has no force and is under someone’s authority” (p. 715). It is Plato who defines the law as “the only true voice of freedom” (Cassirer, 1970, p. 22).

Initially, the ideas of freedom and law in the ancient Greek civilization as well as in other civilizations of the ancient world had a mythological basis. The laws according to which the community was settled in the Mycenaean or Polis period were of divine origin and relied on the will and justice of gods. But both the fate and the life of the gods themselves were subject to law. According to V.S. Nersesyants, in the days of Homer, the Greeks were clearly aware of the differences in gradation and mediation of the notions of justice and law. This is evidenced by the presence of the appropriate terminology: ‘nomós’ (law), ‘thémis’ (customary law, custom), ‘dikē’ (truth, justice), ‘tímē’ (personal honor, honorable claim to rights) (as cited in Volkov, 2015).

The formation and further development of philosophical and political thought brought the relationship between freedom, responsibility and law to the level of an interacting triad. Thus, Epicurus asserting the contractual nature of the state and legal system implies freedom and equality of citizens of the state. Although freedom can be determined not by necessity (Dybnik, 1955), but exclusively by individual self-responsibility of a man, the safety for people living together requires that the people, guided by their own reason, be able to independently form the principles and norms of the life of their society.

The conceptual idea of interaction between freedom, responsibility and law was further developed in the works of the philosophers of Ancient Rome. But the centrality and utilitarianism of the Roman civilization inevitably led to rethinking of these concepts and principles of their interaction. The ideal of a Roman citizen was determined not by the set of his external and internal qualities but by the ratio of his rights and freedoms. Perhaps the historical factor (i.e. constant wars as a condition for the formation of culture and statehood), the cultural factor (i.e. mass-oriented focus; taking into account legal and value aspects while representing an ideal citizen), the extensive path of development led to the construction of social and cultural space duality of the second ancient culture. Rome is the first among the other states to form a clear legal system that determines the degree of responsibility and freedom of the state citizens to maintain internal security and economic stability.

The legal system has linked the concepts of freedom and responsibility by drawing a red line with regard to the limits of the possible and permissible. It is this very simple and practical treatment of freedom and responsibility conditioned by the system of legal relations that was understandable and acceptable for an ordinary representative of Roman society. Such treatment, being able to solve everyday conflicts and problems, could be easily used. Philosophical thought continues to develop its own axiological and ethical interpretation of freedom. From that moment on, for the everyday culture of different historical periods and eras, the utilitarian principle of the interaction between freedom, responsibility and law became a necessary principle applicable to the everyday life of humans.

Thus, the triad of ‘freedom – responsibility – law’ has been formed within the framework of the philosophical reflection of ancient culture. The utilitarian attitude which can be attached to Roman civilization, but not to that of the ancient Greeks, brought this triad beyond the framework of a complex philosophical game of mind to the level of everyday awareness. In the culture of Europe that presents itself as the heir to ancient traditions, this very concept became the basis for civil society formation.

The situation in Russian culture is quite different. The enslavement of a significant part of the population, the absence of an active social lift, weak positions of secular culture in comparison with the processes of secularization of culture in the Renaissance era – all these and other reasons led to the formation of a special correlation in the Russian mentality which is unparalleled in any antique or European traditions. For the axiological system of the Russian cultural world view, diffusion of the concepts of ‘freedom’ and ‘will’ is characteristic. Arutyunova (2003) emphasizing the constant interaction of these semantic units throughout the history of Russian culture indicates that “the will repeatedly invaded the field of freedom, acquiring a social meaning, and freedom sought to throw off the fetters and identify itself with illegal will” (p. 54). At the level of everyday awareness of the Russian man, the primacy of will is quite understandable. In the situation of collective being and existence, with restrictions imposed on social and political rights and freedoms, complex system of relationships between a human being and power, a concept focused on subjective factors of implementation inevitably had to become the antithesis to subordination. Unlike objective freedom, the will is perceived and experienced by the Russian man as his own freedom. Will is not a spirit, but a state of the Russian soul, a personal space, realized through freedom of action and deed (Petrovykh, 2002). Will manifests itself at the level of irrationality; it is not characterized by restrictions that responsibility and law impose on a human being and society.

2. Problem Statement

If we are talking about the shift of the Russian man’s activity vector from objective freedom to subjective will, is it possible that the two remaining parts of the triad were not subject to semantic correction? The modification of them could not be avoided. The complex and mixed attitude toward law in the culture of Russia is indicated not only by the numerous proverbs that assert that “Little thieves are hanged but great ones escape”, “One law for the rich and another for the poor”, but also by the folktales that we learned from childhood. In these tales Ivan the Fool often asks Father the Tsar “to give him a fair trial”. The law is objective and harsh while justice is subjective and selective. The concept of justice, in contrast to the norms of the law, is contextual, self-contained and it has no universal application (Karchagin, 2016).

It so happened that within the framework of ancient philosophical and political thought another direction close to that treating of the relationship between freedom and responsibility that we find in Dostoevsky's philosophical search, emerged. His works are justly celebrated as the embodiment of certain aspects of the Russian character. It was Hesiod who interpreted law antithetically to injustice. The Pythagoreans sought to find that objective norm of justice and law which could become the basis for the proper organization of society and state. And even though their interpretation of justice as "qisas" closely echoes the primitive symmetric principle of retaliation, known as 'talion principle', and justice is defined as a kind of formal equality but the very fact of recognizing justice as an important criterion for assessing law is of great importance as it allows one to introduce an additional variable into the interaction of freedom, responsibility and law. Both Plato and Aristotle spoke about justice dividing it into spheres of activity and correlating it with the forms of political and state structure.

In the late 19th century Russian scientific thought as well as the Russian society at large failed to provide a full analysis of the essence and influence of the concept of 'justice' on the process of historical and cultural development of our country. Thus, according to Mamardashvili (2009), during this period law did not happen but justice happened as an intuitive feeling that unites all together, and that can be trusted more than a formalized institution of law.

The law can be evaded, the judges can be bribed but justice and retaliation are inevitable. Due to lack of trust in the law ("Fear the law not the judge", "A friend in court is better than a penny in purse") the notion of 'responsibility' is transformed into a more complex concept taking it beyond the scope of the law. The ethical component of this concept in Russian culture has always been equally important. It is the framework of moral and ethical norms, wherein the idea of guilt as a responsibility is formed. Dostoevsky conveys the general sense of this idea in the words of Father Zossima "every man is to blame for everyone and for everything". It is the feeling of joint guilt that forms responsibility, for it imposes certain duties even on judges. In order to take responsibility and have the right to issue pardon for somebody a judge should understand and accept that he himself "is guilty as guilty can be".

Thus, in Russian culture, the triad of 'freedom – responsibility – law' is undergoing significant transformation. The interpretation of the concepts of 'will' and 'justice' from the subject-oriented perspective, non-single-valued nature of interpretation of the role and significance of the law in human life make this construct not universal enough. The way out of this collision is likely the replacement of the objective 'law' with the subjective 'conscience', a key concept for Russian culture. In fact, conscience focused on moral and ethical standards is the inner self. Conscience is subjective but its activity is based on a man's awareness of both his own freedom, even modified into will, and his own responsibility.

3. Research Questions

- 3.1. What are the specifics of the concept of 'freedom – responsibility – law' in Russian culture?
- 3.2. Is Dostoevsky's work of relevance to contemporary Russian culture?

4. Purpose of the Study

The aim of this research is to show that Russian classical literature, the works by Dostoevsky in particular are still of relevance to the modern world.

5. Research Methods

The methodological basis of the research, due to the complex nature of the presented problem, is a set of methods of philosophy, history, and cultural studies. The use of the comparative historical method made it possible to demonstrate the essential differences in the interpretation of the concept of “freedom – responsibility – law” in European and Russian reflexive traditions. The typological method has become the main method for identifying the main types of conscience based on the analysis of Dostoevsky’s characters. The autobiographical method made it possible to compare Dostoevsky’s life and work stages and the process of forming a typology of conscience. The retrospective method made it possible to show the consistency and cause-and-effect relationship of this typology in the works written by the great Russian writer.

6. Findings

The works by Dostoevsky, from whence a new conceptual idea of man emerges, bear witness to this. According to Dostoevsky, a man is contradictory and ambivalent: individual and typical, rational and irrational at the same time. In human nature the ideas of freedom, be it “freedom from” or “freedom for”, and the inner moral component of personality are organically combined. “Man is a mystery. It needs to be unravelled, and if you spend your whole life unravelling it, don’t say that you’ve wasted time. I am studying that mystery because I want to be human” (Dostoevsky, 1985, p. 281). The contradictory nature of a man always leads him to tragedy. The tragedy of a man, according to the writer, lies in the fact that he rushes between two faces of freedom which in turn gives rise to his sufferings. But Dostoevsky is not talking about how to put an end to these sufferings and how to make a man happy. On the contrary, the relationship between tragedy and freedom takes on the form of an antinomy: the repression of tragedy is the repression of freedom; the preservation of freedom is the preservation of tragedy. Thus, tragedy and freedom act as the basis of human life. Tragedy and freedom are always combined with responsibility. Man is responsible for his actions. The criterion for both freedom and responsibility of a man is his conscience.

Analyzing the writer’s work, one can draw a parallel between the writer’s personality development and becoming of his characters; he is growing up with them. The writer’s creative path begins in 1845, when he finishes working on the novel “Poor folk” which brings fame to the author. An interesting fact is that Dostoevsky constructed the storyline of the novel from memories of his childhood, when he watched his father work in the hospital for the poor. This early period of the writer’s work can be called the becoming of the ‘psychological type of conscience’ which is intrinsic both to the writer himself and his characters.

The ‘psychological type of conscience’ is the conscience of a little man, oriented towards the material or reified world, i.e. the world where “man is capable of forgetting his own authorship of the human world”. This world comes across “as a strange facticity, an opus alienum over which he has no

control rather than as the opus proprium of his own productive activity” (Berger & Luckmann, 1991, p. 106). The conflict of this type of conscience lies in the fact that the frightful outer world is opposed to the rich unique inner world of the characters; and no matter to what social stratum a person belongs respect for him remains the dominant personality trait. During this period of the writer’s work, characters rejected by society appear; they are “no longer people” being on the edge of human existence. For Dostoevsky, this edge is always very “unstable” and man is constantly trying to cross it.

In later works, the edge of human existence will manifest itself most vividly, but in the meantime, they are “poor folk”. Makar Devushkin is a timid, lonely man; having met Varvara Dobroselova he finds his life purpose. He treats her like his own daughter and feels sympathy and mercy for her family. Despite living a life of poverty, the characters have not lost the moral basis which is a key fundamental feature of their nature and which gives them self-confidence and happiness. Another example is Yakov Petrovich Golyadkin, a titular councilor from the novella “The Double” (1845). From Dostoevsky’s point of view, social and moral degeneration of Golyadkin is due to the influence of an abnormal society. Golyadkin’s unrealized ambitions cause the state of anomie. On the one hand, the “little, downtrodden man” understands that he is treated like a filthy clout, a “rag”; on the other hand, trampled human dignity glimmers in the depths of his soul. The writer shows the fragility of the human personality, the dependence of its mental state and the inner moral basis on society. All her life Netochka Nezvanova, from the eponymous novella (1849), faces poverty, ignobility and cruelty not only from strangers, but also from her relatives. The writer portrayed the helpless children’s sufferings with special sensibility perhaps because he himself suffered as a child. “Dreamers” are introduced in the novella (Efimov, Netochka’s stepfather, and her mother). They dream of another beautiful life, but poverty and hopelessness lead them to moral decline and death. Netochka grows up and stops “stuffing her ears with dreams”. Dostoevsky’s child characters often die unhappy, unlike Netochka. Despite the burden of misfortunes that appear in the family of “dreamers”, Netochka does not lose her human qualities and becomes a strong and active personality.

Three lines diverge from “Poor Folk” in the later works by Dostoevsky. First, “dreamer” characters are introduced; second, attempted riots for personality rights emerge; the third line shows the rioters obsessed with ideas. Subsequently, these three lines are combined into the genre of the ‘ideological’ novel in which such types of conscience as ‘social’ and ‘metaphysical (religious)’ appear. However, one should keep in mind the chronology of “ageing” of these types of conscience both in the writer’s personality and in the personality of his characters.

The 19th century became the age of flourishing of various social and political theories in Russia which, on the one hand, tried to rationalize the world and the laws of being, on the other hand, to simplify the interpretation of a man, to reduce this interpretation to a simple ‘rag’, a ‘piano key’ in this complex historical and cultural situation. The proponents of these theories were aimed at the reorganization of the world by any means. Dostoevsky becomes a member of the Petrashevsky Circle, in particular its most radical branch – the society (included seven participants) under the leadership of the communist N.A. Speshnev whose aim was to start up a hedge press and stage a coup in Russia. In April 1849 Dostoevsky was arrested and incarcerated in the Peter and Paul Fortress. The court recognized the writer as “one of the most important criminals” for reading Belinsky’s letter and “failure to report on the dissemination of Belinsky’s illicit letter about religion and the government” and sentenced him to death. Dostoevsky himself

assessed his participation in the Petrashevsky Circle as follows: “We were infected with the ideas of theoretical socialism of those days ... Long before the Parisian revolution of 1848, we were seized by the charming influence of these ideas” (Dostoevsky, 1978, p. 115). At the final moment, when Dostoevsky was at the pillar for execution, the death sentence was changed. He was declared guilty of treason by an act of attainder and sentenced to four years of hard labor and compulsory military service. Dostoevsky’s memories of that day will later be put in the mouth of Prince Myshkin in the novel “The Idiot”: “There was about five minutes of time left for him to live ... Those five minutes seemed to him an infinite length of time, an immense richness ... He was only 27 when he was going to die, healthy and strong ... And a continuous thought: “What should I do if I were not to die now? What if I were to return to life again? What an eternity of days, and all mine! How I should grudge and count up every minute of it, so as to waste not a single instant”.

During this period, Dostoevsky’s literary activity is subsiding; the writer is serving time in Omsk prison, followed by exile in Semipalatinsk. While Fyodor Mikhailovich is reflecting on social injustice, another type of conscience “is ageing”, a social one. His new characters are born in these reflections. The ‘social type of conscience’ is the realization of a special ‘person – society’ relationship, where the personal, i.e. pains, sufferings and troubles, and the public (even represented by another person) should be codependent.

A new stage in the literary activity starts with the novella “Uncle’s Dream” (1859), which is dripping with sarcasm aimed at Russian reality (the novella was written in the literary tradition of those times). The novella is a kind of awakening from a utopian “sleep”, a turning point in the writer’s worldview. Dostoevsky notes that for the fear of censorship, he wrote the novella with the sole purpose of “restarting the literary career”. That is why he calls it “a little thing of dovish gentleness and remarkable innocence” (Saraskina, 2013, p. 327).

The bearers of ‘social conscience’ are the characters of “The House of the Dead” (1861), where Dostoevsky tries to show that “life is everywhere life, life is in ourselves, not in what is outside us. There will be people near me, and to be a man among people and remain a man forever, not to be downhearted nor to fall in whatever misfortunes may befall me – this is life; this the task of life. I have realised this” (Dostoevsky, 1923). From the Peter and Paul Fortress he addresses these words to his brother Mikhail. But in reality, everything turns out to be more complicated. The novella can be called autobiographical, whereas the writer in an artistic form introduces the life of prisoners to the reader. The story is narrated on behalf of Alexander Petrovich Goryanchikov, a nobleman who is serving time for murdering his wife. In fact, these are Dostoevsky’s own memories, his impressions and experiences about the years spent in prison.

In hard labour, Goryanchikov does not see the unity of people that he expected to see but he collides with a rigid social hierarchy where everything ‘turns upside down’: “Here, there was no resemblance to anything. Habits, customs, laws, were all precisely fixed. It was the house of living death” (Dostoevsky, 2011). The environment in which the character finds himself does not correspond to his social status, so he takes his stay in the “dead house” very hard. The prisoners, nearly all of whom belong to the peasantry, do not take him for an “equal”, they despise him but nevertheless they respect his social status. Even the nobles turn out to be alien to him. Therefore, Goryanchikov faces the task of “being human”, not losing his individuality, making the right choice between “aristocratic” ambitions, which manifested themselves in

prison, and an internal protest against social barriers. Dostoevsky wrote about these barriers scores of times. Thus, Goryanchikov is eager to find the unity with the world, so necessary in this case. However, Goryanchikov after hard labor fails to find unity with the world; he creates his own world, getting rid of many things (he refuses his relatives, does not read books and magazines, etc.).

Dostoevsky perceives a prison camp as a “dead house” from the very first minutes of his stay there, and this perception will remain unchanged forever. These are lifelong impressions. However, the years of hard labor let the writer receive Christ: “... God sometimes sends me moments of perfect calm; at these moments I love and find that I am beloved by the others; at such moments I have conceived a Symbol of Faith in myself, in which everything is clear and sacred to me. This symbol is very simple, here it is: to believe that there is nothing more beautiful, deeper, prettier, wiser, more courageous and more perfect than Christ, and not only nothing, but with jealous love I tell myself that it cannot be” (Dostoevsky, 1985). And it was faith that helped the writer to overcome difficulties of hard labor. But the relationship with God was not so easy for the writer. The writer’s spiritual search, resulted in the image of another character, is a case in point.

Ivan Karamazov (novel “The Brothers Karamazov”, 1880) is a vivid example of the manifestation of the ‘social type of conscience’. This is a typical intellectual. He is gloomy and irritable; he constantly justifies himself, having a “strong philosophical mind” (S.N. Bulgakov). He demonstrates his intellectual superiority, and is seized by disbelief and contradictions. Critics called Ivan Karamazov “Russian Faust”. The ‘social type of conscience’ manifests itself in this image under the influence of the “doubles”. The bifurcation of reality seems to appear – the “dark side” of the soul, opposite to the real Ivan, is embodied in the image of a devil; his atheism and unbelief of a desperate person are opposed to Smerdyakov who, unlike Ivan, strictly follows the principle “anything goes”.

The emotional struggle of both Ivan, and Dostoevsky himself, is associated with faith in God. Ivan denounces God for his inaction against evil: “Why should he know that diabolical good and evil when it costs so much? Why, the whole world of knowledge is not worth that child’s prayer to ‘dear, kind God’; “Of the other tears of humanity with which the earth is soaked from its crust to its center, I will say nothing ... I am a bug, and I recognize in all humility that I cannot understand why the world is arranged as it is. Men are themselves to blame ...” (Dostoevsky, 2009, p. 1). He tries to find answers to eternal questions. In Alyosha’s words we see his passion for life: “I have a longing for life, and I go on living in spite of logic. Though I may not believe in the order of the universe, yet I love the sticky little leaves as they open in spring. I love the blue sky, I love some people, whom one loves you know sometimes without knowing why” (Dostoevsky, 2009, p. 1) but eternal questions make him restless. Ivan writes a philosophical parable “The Legend of the Grand Inquisitor”, where he touches upon these eternal questions, and reads it to Alyosha. Ivan says: “It’s not that I don’t accept God, you must understand, it’s the world created by Him I don’t and cannot accept” (Dostoevsky, 2009, p. 1). It might sound surprisingly but in this counter-intuitive Legend his striving for God and an attempt to adjust the differences is clearly seen.

For the last period of Dostoevsky’s work the ‘metaphysical (religious) type of conscience’ leading both the writer and his characters to faith and God is characteristic. The writer claims that the religious type is an ideal for a person and it is practically unattainable. We have chosen two images to illustrate this type of conscience: Lev Nikolayevich Myshkin (“The Idiot”, 1868) and Alyosha Karamazov (“The Brothers

Karamazov"). Prince Lev Nikolaevich Myshkin is a "positively wonderful person" who is not understandable to the people around him, he is "blessed" or, as they call him, an idiot. Fatal events, in the center of which he is, on the one hand, whip up a feeling of hopelessness in him, and on the other, lead to the knowledge of God and the Truth of Christ. According to Gadzhiev (2005), "man is the meeting place of God and the Devil. Man is the meeting place and coincidence of opposite principles: mercy and cruelty, peacefulness and aggression, consensus and conflict, order and anarchy, sociality and asociality, etc. In other words, man is a living, polar, contradictory being, not a computer ... Man is Janus-faced, always torn between two opposite poles" (p. 6). Prince Myshkin found himself in the midst of this meeting of "God and the Devil", on the brink, having made a choice in favor of the Truth of Christ.

Alyosha Karamazov was conceived by the author as the main character of the novel "The Brothers Karamazov". In the preface to the novel the author writes: "This is a strange man, even an odd bird. But strangeness and oddity rather do damage than give the right to attention, especially when everyone strives to unite particulars and find at least some common sense in the general confusion. An odd bird, in most cases, is particular and isolated" (as cited in Dostoevsky, 2016, p. 7). However, we know that the character of Alexei Karamazov is by no means the central part of the plot. Having said that, the main axiological orientations in the plot of the novel were created around this character. Alyosha, having dedicated his life to God, replaces the ideal of the Truth of Christ with social conscientiousness. It is conscientiousness, and not human conscience that Fyodor Mikhailovich is speaking about, since conscience is the Truth of Christ, an ideal of human spirituality, and conscientiousness reduces conscience to prohibitive norms that give rise to guilt. This originates not from the Russian, but from the Western tradition. An act of consciencelessness is also interpreted by the Russian man as a manifestation of conscience. The characters of the novel constantly seek help from Alyosha, confess their sins to him, and try to "cleanse" themselves through him and by communicating with him. Alyosha has the strength to love people, to be imbued with their troubles and sufferings, but "the Karamazovs' blood" flows in him, he "stands at the line" between the faith and truth of life and makes his choice: "He longed to forgive everyone and for everything, and to beg forgiveness. Oh, not for myself, but for all men, for all and for everything. 'And others are praying for me too' echoed again in his soul" (Dostoevsky, 2009, p. 1).

7. Conclusion

The considered types of conscience show the evolution of the personality of the writer and his characters. But Dostoevsky is not called a "prophet" for nothing. We can see these types of conscience in modern cultural and historical realities. They, of course having changed somewhat, carry us the message of the writer and show a certain axiological component of a man's cultural transformation. Conscience as a phenomenon has not disappeared in the modern world; a person's attitude to this phenomenon can give us some guidelines for the future. Modern culture makes the 'psychological type of conscience' the most widespread. For a long time, the material world in the axiological system of Russian, and then Soviet culture was treated as something secondary, incomparable with the spiritual guidelines for the development of an individual and society. However, in everyday life, it is the ability to get possession of a thing, blending in with the term "consumer shortages" that becomes the indicator of a "respected" person. At the end of the 1980s, Russia engages in a dialogue with Western culture, which finds itself at the postmodern stage of the

development. The coincidence of two tendencies, the reification of the postmodern culture and the recognition of the importance of things in everyday Soviet culture, brings the perception of a thing to a new level. The tendency of reification of the process of human self-identification is characteristic of modern Russian society. In traditional society, and this was typical for Russia and Dostoevsky's characters, an individual identified himself through belonging to a family, to a religious community (or to some other spiritual system), a profession, etc. A thing was undoubtedly an important item in the list, but spiritual constituent, including love, respect, and mutual supportiveness, did occupy a pivotal position.

In modern culture, the notion of 'family' has been narrowed down to two or three generations at most. Both the number of family members and its stability have also significantly decreased. The enthusiasm of Russians for various spiritual practices, their unauthorized interpretation, the spread of atheism affect the position of the religious factor in the system of human self-determination. Due to the tendency of a modern man to frequently change not only place of work, but also line of profession, the significance of the professional indicator of self-identification has been put in question. In this situation, it is the thing or rather possession or non-possession of it that takes on the role of an identifier of a man's achieved status. Modern mass culture is a culture-industry that produces and sells everything: from information to services. It is almost impossible to be outside of it, outside of its material world, at the same time, it is almost impossible to reach its heights. What does a little man feel while watching bright life of the capital's Beau Monde in the news broadcast? How does he arrange his living?

It would seem that there is no place for the 'social type of conscience' amid the corporeality of modern culture. But culture is full of contradictions and paradoxes. Sociocultural dynamics is such that at some point within the mainstream, a new often opposite tendency emerges which potential is capable of tipping global social and cultural development into a new dimension. Contemporary researchers stress that through the last decade the refocusing of man from the material world to the world of emotions has been arisen. For such man, it is not a thing, but new impressions that matter; he is able to devote all his spare time to voluntary work in hospice, to abandon traditional household and, instead of spending his vacation at the warm seaside, to leave as a volunteer to some godforsaken corner of our country.

Unlike the 'psychological type' that is widespread, the 'social type of conscience' cannot be massive, since it requires a certain level of self-reflection and value orientation from a person. But if we consider receiving emotions as receiving pleasure, then the 'psychological type of conscience' has a trigger that can provoke an increase in the number of its adherents. However, a question arises, the answer to which is extremely important. That remains to be seen whether the modern type of the 'psychological conscience' results from such relations or whether it is just a manifestation of a person's inner self and his desire to receive different emotions.

The transformation of the 'metaphysical (religious) type of conscience' in the contemporary Russian social and cultural space was inevitable. Despite the processes of so-called "religious renaissance" of Russia, religion has not been able to assume the role of a spiritual leader. Knowledge of religious foundations is often limited to general terms. Most modern Russians have a rather vague idea of spiritual religious values. That is why for modern Russian culture this type of conscience could be defined as 'metaphysical'. In post-Soviet Russia the 'metaphysical type of conscience' oriented towards spiritual

search, seemed to be lost. The intensification of social and political contradictions in the modern society makes this hard-to-attain type of conscience crucial.

Dostoevsky advances an idea that has become central in all his works: the cause of social and political rift is to be sought at the bottom of the human soul; it lies in the loss of optimism, hope, self-efficacy and substitution of eternal values for those of violence and destruction.

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