

"Bobok" as a Mirror of Surprise

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ABSTRACT

Analyzing Dostoevsky's acutely satirical story "Bobok", the hero of which, once in the cemetery, hears the conversation of the dead, M. M. Bakhtin believes that it unfolds a typical carnivalized hell of menippea." In the opinion of the author of the article, there is a mental connection of two worlds, the living and the dead, which turned out not to be opposite, but similar, continuing one another. This similarity, which does not deprive the story of an external carnivalization, always dealing with duality, is internally focused on the idea of one-mindedness, having one source and anticipating the question of the way in which reality, that is, being in possibility, is modified into reality? This is akin to medieval mysticism, the meaning of which is precisely in the attempt to understand the world in its very nature. Dostoevsky makes a move that is the reverse of Bakhtin's position. He sees the real in what was once possible. The speech in the story is deeply dialogical, aimed, however, not at the discourse of carnival, but at the competition of unity. The recognition of the identity of earthly life and falsehood, respectively, the identity of eternity and truth, is an unintentionally and unconsciously revealed state of one-worldliness, which has replaced the world polyphony.

Keywords: bobok, man, dead man, life, morality, menippea, carnival, identity of the world, reality, activity

INTRODUCTION

In our time, the concept of "narcissism" is very common, which has migrated from psychology to philosophy, and has preserved in both the perception of oneself as a unique individual, although, as they sometimes say, "a little more unique than others". A.V. Rubtsov wrote a lot and interestingly about this phenomenon, which in principle can relate to any person, but above all to a person of power, so Rubtsov mainly writes about political narcissism. The reflection on this phenomenon is very serious. It is about how to relate to the mirror in which a person must look watching himself for himself for the sake of self-understanding. As Rubtsov wrote, "narcissism is subjectively idealistic" by the very fact that the subject is fixed precisely on the reflection – the image, the ethereal picture, the symbolic status, just an impression and a "second-order impression" (impression from impression). In the end, what matters to the narcissist is not how he is really evaluated, but what this other person's perception looks like, how he himself perceives this other person's

perception."¹ Actually, the perception of someone else's perception is intriguing, if you read the "Diary of a Writer" by F. M. Dostoevsky, which he began to keep since 1873 in the magazine "Citizen", and in particular a short story published inside the "Diary" with a funny and incomprehensible title "Bobok".

Dostoevsky explained his decision to keep a "Diary" as follows: he wanted to look at himself as in a mirror: "I will also talk to myself <...> What to talk about? About everything that will amaze me or makes me think."² But, apparently, the criticism that reproached the writer with the fact that his characters are a cast of himself, led

¹Рубцов А.В. Политический нарциссизм в России: триумф пустоты [Rubtsov A.V. Political narcissism in Russia: triumph of the void], URL:<http://www.forbes.ru/mneniya/vertikal/330685-politicheskii-nartsissizm-v-rossii-triumf-pustoty>. – Data of access 30.05. 2021.

²Достоевский Ф.М. Бобок // Достоевский Ф.М. Полн. собр. соч.: В 15 т. Т. 12. Дневникписателя 1873. Статьииочерки 1873 – 1878. [Dostoevsky F. M. Bobok, Dostoevsky F. M. *The complete collection of works in 15 vol. Vol. 12. The writer's Diary 1873. Articles and essays 1873-1878*]. Л.: Наука. Ленинградскоеотделение, 1994. С. 49.

him to ironic self-defense. In the brief preface to "Bobok", he wrote: "This time I put "Notes of one person". It's not me; it's a completely different person." And indeed-it, this third person, Ivan Ivanych, as "Fritz" in general, as "Ivany" in general, behaves like an anti-narcissist. The toper-writer Ivan Ivanych, the hero of "Bobok", declares in response to the reproach that he is always drunk: "I am not offended, I am a timid man; but, nevertheless, they have made me mad. The painter copied the portrait from me out of chance: "After all," he says, " you are a man of letters." I gave in, and he threw me out. I read: "Go look at this sickly, near-insane face." He sees himself as *other* one.

Anti-narcissism is his credo. He even understands his abomination according to Pushkin. In a letter to P. A. Vyazemsky in 1925, Pushkin wrote: "The crowd greedily reads confessions, notes, etc., because in their meanness they rejoice in the humiliation of the high, the weaknesses of the mighty. At the discovery of every abomination, she is delighted. *He's small like us, he's nasty like us!* You lie, you scoundrels: he is both small and vilenot in the same way as you are — otherwise."³ And as Pushkin agrees, " writing your Mémoires is tempting and pleasant. You don't love anyone so much, you don't know anyone so well as you do yourself. The subject is inexhaustible. But it's hard. Don't lie-you can; to be sincere is a physical impossibility. The pen will sometimes stop, as with a run before the abyss — on what an outsider would read indifferently. To despise ... the judgment of men is not difficult; to despise one's own judgment is impossible."⁴

What's the irony in? The syllable would have to be observed. And therefore he says that he is no literary man. So, he writes advertisements for merchants, composes feuilletons, and wrote "The Art of Pleasing Ladies" on request. "Here are about six such books in my life I let go. I want to collect Voltaire's bonmos, but I'm afraid it will seem bland to our people. What a Voltaire now; now a bludgeon, not Voltaire! The last teeth of each other were knocked out! Well, that's all my literary activity."⁵ This is, of course, an obviously stated anti-narcissist, albeit

³Пушкин А.С. Собр. соч.: В 10-ти т. Т.9. М.: Художественная литература, 1962. С. 216. [Pushkin A. S. *Works in 10 vols. Vol. 9.* Moscow, 1962. p. 216.]

⁴Ibidem.

⁵Ibid. P. 50.

with a touch of narcissism. The narcissist is static, he looks at himself motionlessly, and if he moved, he would notice a change. And here the irony is off the scale: "I think that the painter wrote me off not for the sake of literature, but for the sake of my two symmetrical warts on my forehead: a phenomenon, they say. The idea is not there, so they now go on phenomena. Well, how did my warts work out in his portrait - alive! They call it realism."⁶

Fyodor Mikhailovich was indeed recorded, and in Wikipedia they recorded him as a realist. The reasons for such a record are not clarified: "He created realistic works," although at the same time he only "embedded his own work into the reality surrounding him, and did not create a new one for them." The reason for his entry in realists is his attention to details, trifles, random incidents, scandals and crimes... digital refinements". "Digital refinements" instantly evoke Gogol with his "Marchobr 86th" and prevent Dostoevsky from being tied to literary realism. Although Dostoevsky has important connections with Gogol, including "Bobok" . The link to Wikipedia is not accidental: the article is extensive, students will definitely read it, the definition of Dostoevsky in realists will remember as a cliché.

The story was poorly received by the reading public, even somewhat contemptuously⁷ . But a true connoisseur of Dostoevsky's poetics, M. M. Bakhtin, attributed the story "in its depth and

⁶Ibid.

⁷ См. об этом: Хамитов М.Р. Разговоры в царстве мертвых: «Бобок» Достоевского // Достоевский. Материалы и исследования. РАН ИРЛИ (Пушкинский Дом) [See: Khamitov M. R. *Conversations in the Kingdom of the Dead: "Bobok" Dostoevsky. Dostoevsky. Materials and research. RAN IRLI (Pushkin House)*]. СПб.: Нестор-История, 2016. Т. 21. С. 29-43; Милнер-Галланд Р. Что происходит в рассказе «Бобок»? . Пер. с англ. Елены Погорелой / Р. Милнер-Галланд, О.Ю. Соболева // Вопросы литературы. 2012. №4. С. 293 - 312 [Milner-Galland R. What happens in the story "Bobok"?, transl. from the English by Elena Pogoreloy, R. Milner-Galland, O. Yu. Soboleva. *Questions of literature.* 2012. No. 4. P. 293 - 312;ТунимановВ.А. Примечаниякрасказу «Бобок» в: *ДостоевскийФ.А.* Собр. соч.: В 15 т. Т. 12 [Tunimanov V. A. notes to the story "Bobok" in: Dostoevsky F. A. *The complete collection of works in 15 vol. Vol. 12*].Л.: Наука, 1994. С. 315 – 324.

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boldness to one of the greatest menippeai in all world literature."⁸ Moreover, he considers it

"almost a microcosm of all his work. Very many, and moreover the most important, ideas, themes and images of his work—both previous and subsequent."⁹

What is menippea? This is a kind of serious-laugh genre. The term was used by M. M. Bakhtin in "Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics". Varro in the first century BC wrote a book with the title "Menippov's satires", which served to define the genre of Bakhtin. But he distinguished Menippea from the "Menippean Satyr." Menippea, in his opinion, in contrast to Menippean satire, covers literary phenomena of different eras: these are short stories and philosophical novels of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. According to M. L. Gasparov, Bakhtin, however, "artificially magnifies the genre proposed by him. He promotes his concept not as a philologist, but as a philosopher. For him, ethics is important, and he projects his ideas about what should be done on literature. Therefore, the process of choice, the formation of an act, and not the system of a literary work is important to him. Orderliness is rejected and tragic chaos and comic chaos are extolled¹⁰.

To see in a serious but funny menippeai the philosophy of an act is, in fact, the definition of a genre, and not at all a denial of the "system of a literary work". The enumeration of the features of menippea, such as the increase in the specific weight of the laughing element, the absence of the requirements of plausibility of the plot in order to create exceptional situations for provoking and testing a philosophical idea, the combination of deep symbolism with extreme and rude slum naturalism - these are the

⁸Бахтин М.М. Проблемы поэтики Достоевского [Bakhtin M. M. *Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics*]. М., 2002. С. 81.

⁹Ibid. P. 85.

¹⁰Гаспаров М. Л. История литературы как творчество и исследование: случай Бахтина (Доклад на международной научной конференции «Русская литература XX—XXI вв.: проблемы теории и методологии изучения», 10-11 ноября 2004, Москва, МГУ) // Вестник гуманитарной науки. — 2004. — № 6 (78). [Gasparov M. L. *Russian Literature History as Creativity and Research: the case of Bakhtin (Report at the international scientific Conference "Russian Literature XX-XXI Centuries: problems of Theory and Methodology of Study"*, 10 -11 November 2004)].

principles that Bakhtin sets for menippeai, which is not identical with "Menippean satires".

Dostoevsky from the very beginning, as if in the preface to the story, poses a truly philosophical problem – the mind, thinking as belonging to any person, showing its ambivalence, in which the relativity of reason and madness is revealed. It is this rigidity of the question that allows the world to be divided into a world of *loud* words and a world of *silence* - a cemetery, initially disturbing.

The difference between the smart and the crazy the main narrator, who is sometimes considered the conductor of Dostoevsky's own ideas, depends on politics – whether state or public (what, for example, are the mentioned "Spaniards"?, "Frenchmen"?), because they write down (and lock up) talented people who can drive them crazy (make them crazy? Teach them to be surprised?, but they don't make anyone smart. I consider it absurd to identify Dostoevsky's ideas with the ideas of the author of the Notes, the one about whom it is said "one man told me", some Ivan Ivanich. Here, from the very beginning, the "ostranizing" (distancing) method is introduced – irony, which even very serious arguments give a mocking, "wrong" shade. The hero himself half-laugh, half-asks-does-not-know-how about his reflections on what is mind and what is madness, as is the case with a philosophizing person who stumbles over the cornerstone of his existence – mind.

This very Russian word ум[oum, "mind"] is similar to the blow of an axe - "wow!". Dostoevsky clearly notices this, because he puts into the mouth of that "one person" the reasoning of another person about his syllable: "Your syllable changes," he says, 'chopped. You chop, chop - and an introductory sentence, then another introductory sentence to the introductory one, then you insert something else in parentheses, and then you cut again, cut again..."Speech is something that is the iconic material of inner life, if you follow Bakhtin-Voloshinov¹¹, in speech the word is still clucking, still just being born. This explains that Ivan Ivanich "has a change of character and a

¹¹Волошинов В.Н. (М.М. Бахтин). Марксизм и философия языка: Основные проблемы семиологического метода в науке о языке [Voloshinov V. N. (M. M. Bakhtin). *Marxism and the philosophy of language: The main problems of the semiological method in the science of language*]. М.: Лабиринт, 1993. С. 19.

headache." He begins to "see and hear some strange things. Not that the voices, but as if someone is near: "Bobok, bobok, bobok!"¹² Bobok is a sprout, something sprouts in it and goes out, according to the well-known proverb: on the tongue of a drunk. But if you repeat "bobok" many times in a row without a break, then you can identify "obok"¹³, like "we live side by side with you), and since then we will talk about the "other" world, this homonymy means a lot. However, there are many homonyms in the story (for example, the mentioned "chop" or "move" - start walking, go crazy, smolder).

Ambivalence is now a rarely used word. When Bakhtin's books began to be published after the lull, it was in use among intellectuals. In the story, especially. Trying to find out "what is bobok?", the author of "Notes" goes to have fun, but got to the funeral. It was impossible to forget about ambivalence, it was impossible to consider the story pornographic, filled with horror, black humor, aimed at the cynical society of that time. I would not even consider "Bobok" a black satire¹⁴, not to mention that "Bobok" does not give grounds for apocalyptic tones, especially those expressed in the words "sickening images", which express both "agonizing anxiety for godless humanity" and the approach to "Bobok" as "the most terrible of Dostoevsky's metaphysical views"¹⁵. Although you can find such images and metaphysics, it is

calmer - "warning" and "admonition"¹⁶. It seems, however, that, despite all the hubbub described (chaos, as Gasparov said), the matter is in the Bakhtin *ostranenie*. It is worth thinking about it, as everything "sees" calmer, stricter, more focused.

The description of the cemetery and the funeral, built on oxymoronic combinations, "is imbued," as Bakhtin says, "with an accentuated familiar and profane attitude" to both the place and the event itself, "full of descents and landings, carnival symbolism and at the same time rude naturalism."¹⁷ "There are fifteen dead people here. There were even two hearses, one for a general and one for a lady. A lot of mournful faces, a lot of fake grief, and a lot of outright cheerfulness. You can't complain to the priest: income. But the spirit, the spirit. I wouldn't want to be a clergyman here." No better than descriptions of the dead, funerals, reflections on the prices of burials, descriptions of the neighborhood with an almshouse and a restaurant, where "I noticed a lot of fun and sincere animation. I ate and drank."¹⁸

It is these "sharp shades of familiarization and profanation" that Bakhtin considers "a condensed example of the style of carnivalized menippea"¹⁹, obviously associated with a certain act (he ate and drank), which led to unexpected consequences. But it still seems that despite the slurred language and fragmentary stories, Ivan Ivanovich stubbornly holds on to the main, almost – far – from-Pasternak question prepared for Stalin: about life and death, where the external demagnetization hides a fear devoid of courage. The cemetery is like the border of life and death, where the living and the dead are side by side. It is no coincidence that Ivan Ivanich's wobbles are not just caused by the fact that he "sat down on a monument" - a symbol of memory and "thought accordingly". Thoughts, apparently, ran: "I started with the Moscow exhibition, and ended with surprise, with which, as has long been known, knowledge begins.

¹²Достоевский Ф.М. Бобок [Dostoevsky F. M. *Bobok*]. С. 51.

¹³ Milner-Galland reports that "it is hardly unwise to hear, as some commentators do, the word 'God' encoded in his stressed syllable" (Milner-Galland p. What happens in the story "Bobok"?), however, in the same work, the name of the fashionable writer of the 1870s is mentioned. Peter Boborykin, from whose surname M. E. Saltykov-Shchedrin (presumably) formed the verb "boborykat".

¹⁴См.: Алексеев В. Тление тела как метафора греха: рассказ Достоевского "Бобок" [Aleksееv V. *The corruption of the body as a metaphor of Sin: Dostoevsky's story "Bobok"*] // https://www.google.ru/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwiysPgovHwAhWn_CoKHbj6AVI4FBAWMAF6BAgDEAM&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.russianlutheran.org%2Fstrannik%2Fdeath_dostoevskiy.html&usq=AOvVaw2etECezlbDPnHwi1ApdzQe: Data of access: 30.05.2021.

¹⁵Мочульский К. Достоевский. Жизнь и творчество [Mochulsky K. *Dostoevsky. Life and creativity*]. Париж, 1947. С. 393.

¹⁶Джексон Р.Л. Искусство Достоевского. Бреды и октюрны [Jackson R. L. *The Art of Dostoevsky. Delusions and nocturnes*]. М., 1996. С. 231.

¹⁷Бакhtин М.М. Проблемы поэтики Достоевского [Bakhtin M. M. *Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics*]. С. 82.

¹⁸Достоевский Ф.М. Бобок [Dostoevsky F. M. *Bobok*]. С. 52.

¹⁹Бакhtин М.М. Проблемы поэтики Достоевского [Bakhtin M. M. *Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics*]. С. 82.

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The theme of surprise is not at all "shaky reflection", as Bakhtin believes, and not even because Ivan Ivanich for some reason unfolds a rather vulgar opinion that not to be surprised is taken for a good tone, and not even because this bad opinion is combined with the theme of respect accepted among drunkards: this kind of vulgarity (which arose from surprise and fear) allows you to cross the border between life and death, it directly and directly introduces you to the afterlife. And it was mirrored.

In itself, this theme – getting into the afterlife – is ancient, not to mention the other journeys that Bakhtin mentions in connection with the theme of menippea (for example, about Lucianov's "Menippe, or Journey to the afterlife" and "Conversations in the realm of the dead"), it is enough to recall the grand journey of Dante, who heard the voice of Hell itself ("I take you to the rejected villages, I take you through the eternal groan, I take you to the lost generations: the architect is inspired. I am created by the supreme power, by the fullness of omniscience, and by the first love"). The "reduced" description of the border crossing in "Bobok" only emphasizes the reference to the classical height of the original source: the modest "one person" who owns the "Notes" is not in a state of cathartic state of mind, but in a state of binge – drinking spirit, but which also takes you to that height where everything is identical, since it identifies the state of sitting with the state of lying down ("sat., that is, even lay down"), and where sleep turns out to be a brake on separation, connecting and kindred high and low-Dante's "so much sleep entangled me with lies" is adjacent to "oblivion" and "voices" of Ivan Ivanich.

"Bobok" has been compared to "The Divine Comedy" for a long time. For example, it is compared with the IX chapter of the first part of "Notes from the Dead House"²⁰, V. K. Kantor, considering that in the "Diary of a Writer" Dostoevsky solved eternal problems on very relevant subjects, putting them in the context of the "last questions", also compared Dostoevsky's work with Dante, while

²⁰Акелькина Е.А. Данте и Достоевский (рецепция дантовского опыта организации повествования в «Божественной комедии» при создании «Записок из Мертвого дома» [Akelkina E. A. *Dante and Dostoevsky (reception of Dante's experience of organizing narration in the "Divine Comedy" when creating "Notes from the Dead House")*] // Вестн. Ом. ун-та. 2012. № 2. С. 394.

mentioning Western thinkers who discussed this topic (Spengler)²¹. He, however, emphasizes that the comparison is always lame, not giving "an understanding of the new phenomenon in its entirety", and refers to the If at the heart of poetics "Comedies" Dante laid down the idea of the highest justice of the world order, then in Dostoevsky's "Notes..." in the image of the empirical reality of the Dead House, the idea of justice turns, at least into a question.²² You can also refer to "Bobok", not to mention comparing it with medieval visions, stories and their interpretations. "A certain man named Peratin with traces said to his son and neighbors: "Alas, alas for me! I have a tree in my garden that brings bad luck. My first wife hanged herself on it, then the second, and finally the third, and so I am in inconsolable grief." One of those who listened to his complaints, named Arrius, says: "I am surprised that you are grieving under such circumstances. Give me, if you please, three shoots of this tree, and I will distribute them to the neighbors. Let every man have a branch on which his wife can hang herself." And so it was done." But here's the moral: "My dears! This tree was the Cross on which Christ hung."²³

Why not "Bobok"?

It is possible, however, when comparing with Dante, to speak of opposition, because with the similarity of the infernal pictures, the understanding is still different: in Dante, the theology of sleep, in Dostoevsky, the empyria of sleep, as and in general another hero and another empyria. Here we should rather think not about the symbolic symbolism, but about the performativity of the sign, which has the ability to instantly switch what is said into action. I. I. Evlampiev, who is also referred to by Kantor when he wrote that "Bobok can be considered as an assumption about a possible form of human existence in the perspective that the

²¹Кантор В.К. Проблема посмертного существования (от Платона до Достоевского). «Бобок», рассказ Достоевского [Kantor V. K. The problem of postmortem existence (from Plato to Dostoevsky). "Bobok", Dostoevsky's story]// Germanoslavica. Zeitschrift für germane-slavische Studien. Literatur und Wissen. 2018. 29. С. 66.

²²Тоичкина А.В. Образ ада в «Записках из Мертвого дома». К теме Достоевский/Данте [Toichkina A.V. The image of Hell in "Notes from the Dead House". On the topic Dostoevsky and Dante] // Достоевский и мировая культура. Альманах (29). СПб., 2012. С. 54.

²³ Gesta romanorum / Herausgegeben von H. Oesterley. B., 1872.N. 33.

"higher idea" of immortality opens up to us, and this assumption is striking in its hopelessness and looks even more terrible than the idea of eternity in the form of a bath with spiders, which frightens Svidrigailov,"²⁴ wrote about something else – about a different style. "Bobok", of course, can be viewed from the point of view of eternity, from the standpoint of the Orthodox Church about the immortality of the soul, from the standpoint of denouncing public cynicism, from the standpoint of understanding the eternal life, in which there is still shame, but all this leaves the impression that it is not about "Bobok". In "Bobok" everything is double ("I drank-I ate") and everything is turned upside down ("I went to have fun, but I got to the funeral"²⁵), in "Bobok" everything is funny. It seems that Bakhtin's obsession with menippea arose precisely because even in his time this laughter was not heard, because it is laughter that is excluded from all these undoubtedly intelligent judgments, with his (laughter) much stronger philosophical intention. When they frighten us with "agonizing anxiety for godless humanity", we may be talking about Dostoevsky's worldview, but not about "Bobok", where "afterlife" people have no anxiety either for themselves or for humanity. Ivan Ivanich appears, but not very decisively. "Debauchery in such a place, debauchery of the last hopes, debauchery of flabby and rotting corpses, and not even sparing the last moments of consciousness! They are given, given these moments and... and most importantly, most importantly, in such a place! No, I can't allow that... "Here, it would seem, and "excruciating anxiety", but... " I will visit other categories, I will listen everywhere. That's what you need to listen to everywhere, and not just from the edge, to form a concept. Maybe I'll come across a comforting one." He also intended to return to "those", but again not to denounce them: "They promised their biographies and various

²⁴Евlampиев И.И. Философия человека в творчестве Ф. Достоевского (от ранних произведений к «Братьям Карамазовым») [Evlampiev I. *The philosophy of man in the works of Dostoevsky* (from early works to the Brothers Karamazov)]. СПб., 2012. С. 449.

²⁵ It is an obvious reference to Griboyedov's «Woe from wit»: "I went into a room – I got into another one". Dostoevsky's references to literature are so great in this little story that one can make the "Bobok" a focus through which one can see all its blossoming.

anecdotes." And even though "ugh! But I will go, I will certainly go; it is a matter of conscience!", but conscience clearly means not conscience, but the fulfillment of the promise to return. The truth of Russian life also lies in the unfolding nihilism (I do not write from a negative position, but only to indicate the direction that Fedor Mikhailovich was very interested in, and to question the generally accepted concepts, at least to make sense of them).

V. V. Bibikhin begins "The Interpretation of Dreams" with a reflection on philosophy: it is revealed when it is "captured", when it is fate, when it is something that can no longer be lost, when it "outshines all earthly things with its brilliance and blinds us too <...> when faced with an idea, a person does not become armed, on the contrary, disarms"²⁶. At Bibikhin's, he goes blind. Ivan Ivanich in "Bobok" also closes his eyes, but does not go blind, but – opens his hearing. She begins to hear the other world. He, who was in a state of half-sleep and half-wakefulness, began to "listen carefully."

What is philosophy about? I will refer again to Bibikhin, who was able to find the exact words for what the other could not pronounce. "Philosophy is not an intellectual activity... the philosopher does not enter into our picture of the history of philosophy in one way or another. It's to show us where our pictures are, where our dreams are, and where the missing things are, what the dreams are about."²⁷

This is quite in tune with the thoughts of Dostoevsky, who writes about what strikes him. He writes using a simple, somewhat ruined, but still strange understanding of the languages of the world, even if the language of the other side of the world is similar to ours, and maybe that's why we know it, if we also know that similarity leads to comparison, and therefore not identity.

Bakhtin calls the further development of the plot an anacrisis, a provocation of "exceptional force", forcing the interlocutor to express his opinion to the end.

And the interlocutors are the dead-border guards, recently deceased, who, as Augustine said long ago, are in a state after the first death

²⁶Бибихин В.В. Толкование сновидений // Бибихин В.В. Словоиспытание [Bibikhin V. V. The interpretation of dreams // Bibikhin V. V. *Word and event*]. М.: УРСС, 2001. С. 15.

²⁷Ibid. P. 19.

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before the Last Judgment, when they either completely die or rise to a new life.

What are they doing? They fight in preference. Unmeasured or unmeasured surprise!

The voices are "weighty and solid" (general's, as the inscription on the monument suggests), "flattering" (court councilor, as the rumor suggests), popularly relaxed, ladies' "squeamish and... arrogant"²⁸. And "there" the hierarchy is preserved: the count who turned out to be a baron, the general, the privy councilor, the court councilor, the engineer, the merchant, the shopkeeper, the girl with reduced social responsibility. But the point is not in the hierarchy, but in the fact that here is stored all the diverse and different people who feel their social roles—and this, of course, is the peculiarity of Dostoevsky—the world: cheaters, thieves, libertines with dreams of a blonde and with conversations about food, cards, hiccups, cheating in the shop, about the unflagging desire to live, about the project of a new (not a commission, but) a sub – commission in the ministry, about diseases and—about boredom, since the speech is still the same. But the surprise is boundless, because the border between the two worlds turned out to be so transparent that it caused a truly unique internal semi-condemnatory exclamation of Ivan Ivanovich: "And this is a modern dead man!"²⁹

This strange (and very funny) exclamation, mixing the time series, provoked the appearance of another figure – the philosopher. True, "homegrown", but settled down – "natural scientist and master...He has published several philosophical books."

Bakhtin considers the speech of the deceased philosopher Platon Nikolaevich an allusion to the "Socratic dialogue" and, of course, "an anacrisis that provokes the consciousness of the dead to open up with complete, unrestricted freedom."³⁰ It is in the mouth of Platon Nikolaevich that the explanation of the fact of the posthumous life of the modern dead is put:

"He (Platon Nikolaevich. — *M. B.*) explains this by the simplest fact, namely, that upstairs, when we were still living, we mistakenly considered the death there for death. The body here once

again seems to come to life, the remnants of life are concentrated, but only in consciousness. This — I cannot express it to you - life goes on as if by inertia. Everything is concentrated, in his opinion, somewhere in the mind and continues for another two or three months... sometimes even six months... There is, for example, one here who is almost completely decomposed, but once in six weeks he still suddenly mutters one word; of course, meaninglessly, about some bobok: "Bobok, bobok"³¹.

Bakhtin believes that this "unfolds the typical carnivalized underworld of Menippea."³² But isn't there something else going on here—the joining of beginnings and ends? The philosophical thought of Platon Nikolaevich combined (or contained, correlated) the last thoughts of a certain deceased with the last exciting thoughts of the living, though half-asleep Ivan Ivanovich, who also heard "Bobok, bobok", which turns into "obok, obok", but also "the end", because the border is not only an internecine territory, but also the end? The thoughts of one person seem to be embedded in the thoughts of another person, who lives in a different time and is certainly in a different place. This similarity, which does not deprive the story of an external carnivalization, which always deals with duality, is internally focused on the idea of one-mindedness having one source, anticipating the unborn question: "how is reality, being in possibility, modified into reality in the act of realization, i.e. when reality joins?"³³ This is somewhat akin to medieval mysticism, the meaning of which is precisely in the attempt to understand "a certain being, which is considered ontologically as a certain essence – God—to understand in his very nature."³⁴ And although this is said about the supreme being-God, this unity can be manifested in every "certain being". That is, Dostoevsky makes a reverse move with respect to Bakhtin. He sees the real in what was once possible. This is not the move of the author of "Notes of One Person", but of the author of "Bobok", which, of course, turns the speech into

²⁸Достоевский Ф.М. Бобок [Dostoevsky F. M. Bobok]. С.52, 53.

²⁹Ibid. P. 57.

³⁰Бахтин М.М. Проблемы поэтики Достоевского [Bakhtin M. M. Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics]. С.82.

³¹Достоевский Ф.М. Бобок [Dostoevsky F. M. Bobok]. С. 61.

³²Бахтин М.М. Проблемы поэтики Достоевского [Bakhtin M. M. Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics]. С. 78.

³³Хайдеггер М. Основные проблемы феноменологии [Heidegger M. Basic problems of phenomenology]. СПб., 2001. С. 115 – 116.

³⁴Ibid. P. 17.

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a dialogical, internally, deeply dialogical, but aimed not at the discourse of carnival, but at the competition of unity. Actually, the desire of almost all the dead to "not be ashamed", if it is translated into the register of the last knowledge, where all things are identical, really means a kind of confessional freedom, which consists, among other things, in the call of one of the main "scoundrels of the pseudo-high world", Baron Klinevich, "not to lie"³⁵. For, in his words, "it is impossible to live on earth and not lie, for life and lies are synonymous," or -"rotten ropes."³⁶. The recognition of the identity of earthly life and falsehood, respectively, the identity of eternity and truth, served to return Ivan Ivanovich from the border to the place of his temporary stay. "And then I suddenly sneezed. It happened suddenly and unintentionally, but the effect was amazing: everything fell silent, as if in a cemetery, disappeared like a dream. A truly sepulchral silence has fallen."³⁷

The main thing here is not to sneeze. The main thing is "suddenly and unintentionally", an unintentionally and unconsciously revealed state of one-world peace, which replaced the world polyphony.

In the unrecorded work "The Philosophy of Action", Bakhtin, in fact, speaks about this embedding of one thing into another, building an event, seeing "in an action a way out of only possibility into uniqueness once and for all"³⁸, especially since "the world is such a thing that it exists in a dream no less than not in a dream"³⁹.

³⁵Достоевский Ф.М. Бобок [Dostoevsky F. M. Bobok]. С. 58, 62.

³⁶Ibid. P. 62.

³⁷Ibid. P. 63 – 64.

³⁸Бахтин М.М. К философии поступка // Философия и социология науки и техники. Ежегодник 1984 - 1985. [Bakhtin M. M. To the philosophy of action. *Philosophy and sociology of science and Technology. Yearbook 1984-1985*]. М., 1986. С. 103.

³⁹Бибихин В.В. Словоисбытие [Bibikhin V. V. Word and event]. С. 115.

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