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## THE GREAT DEAL OF CONSCIOUSNESS IN DOSTOEVSKY'S RIDICULOUS MAN AND UNDERGROUND MAN

Jonathan Florentino da Silva\*, Cláudia da Silva Lopes Araújo, Jaqueline da Silva Lopes, João Francisco Pereira Nunes Junqueira

### Abstract

Russian literature wouldn't definitely be the same without the endless contributions of Fyodor Dostoevsky. Until recent days his work binds us together with discussions on issues humanity cannot get rid of. So, this paper takes into account two well-known characters, the Ridiculous Man (The Dream of a Ridiculous Man) and the Underground Man (Notes From Underground), both nameless characters whose complexity has to do with a problem of consciousness. If the first one deals with a divine experience which helps him overcome his inner consciousness disease, the second one drowns in his own sorrow as nothing can release him from the pain he has. Thus, we aim at analysing how Dostoevsky showcases the fate of consciousness as a problem and also the way that so-called problem can be seen from a perspective of art-philosophy that follows Dostoevsky's discourse.

### Key words:

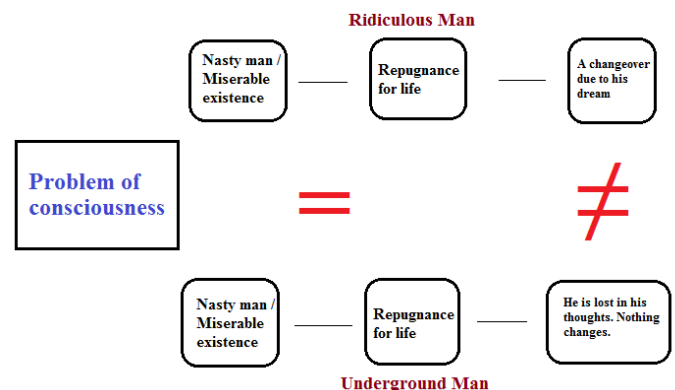
Dostoevsky, Ridiculous Man, Underground Man.

### Introduction

The nameless narrator of Dostoevsky's Notes from Underground starts by opening his memoirs with the declaration "I am a sick man... an angry man". From that point we can see the nastiness he has accumulated throughout his life. Nothing gives him pleasure, the only thing he has is his consciousness which claims for criticism and revenge. From the very beginning we see a man who is sick and tired of his life and seeks to escape reality, as long as the second part reveals the past of this man whose actions prove himself a quite insecure man, in such point he decides to fight whoever is in the tavern, but then stands around, unable to do anything. The nameless character of The Dream of a Ridiculous Man, on the other hand, had been through a different ending. He's a man decided to take his own life, and nothing else seems to be worth his efforts. All changes when he dreams of a new life, and the consciousness of his existence is touched by a feeling he has never experienced. Keeping those points in mind, our purpose is to show the Underground Man's problem of consciousness unsolved, worthless, different from the Ridiculous Man, whose misery is transformed by a higher consciousness of existence.

### Results and Discussion

As described by Bakhtin (2013), Dostoevsky's discourse is based on polyphony, which means the reader has to deal with a variety of voices that do not present a whole truth, but talk about possibilities of truth. That is exactly what happens with the Underground Man, as observed by Schnaiderman (1994), when he points out the paradoxes of existence. Furthermore, both characters criticize society, open room for self-reflection and expose the position of the other in the construction of identity, having, however, a different solution. The similarities and differences can be seen in the following flow chart.



### Conclusions

After all, the paradox is that we are told a story in which a strange girl positively changes the fate of a man (Ridiculous Man) and another one in which well-known friends sentence a man to misery (Underground Man). The point that brings them together is the problem of a consciousness that understands too much of what seems not to be really understood, and that's the touch of genius presented in Dostoevsky.

<sup>1</sup> BAKHTIN, Mikhail. Problemas da poética de Dostoiévski. Trad. Paulo Bezerra. 5ª edição. Rio de Janeiro: Forense Universitária, 2013.

<sup>2</sup> DOSTOIÉVSKI, Fiódor Mikhailovitch. Memórias do Subsolo. Trad. Boris Schnaiderman. 6ª edição. São Paulo: Editora 34, 2009.

<sup>3</sup> DOSTOIÉVSKI, Fiódor Mikhailovitch. O sonho de um homem ridículo. Trad. Vadim Nikitin. In Fátima Bianchi (org), Contos Reunidos. São Paulo: Editora 34, 2017.

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