

两百年后，陀思妥耶夫斯基如何击中我们的内心

- ▶ 《地下室手记》如何影响了尼采、弗洛伊德、卡夫卡、贝娄和罗斯？
- ▶ 为什么说圣彼得堡是一个“被预谋的”城市？
- ▶ 陀思妥耶夫斯基当年如何从刑场侥幸生还？又如何经历了十年的西伯利亚流亡？
- ▶ 《地下室手记》主人公要去与之辩论的是怎样一群“地上的人”？
- ▶ 为什么陀思妥耶夫斯基和他的主人公不满于“水晶宫”所代表的一切？
- ▶ 陀思妥耶夫斯基为什么告诫我们去爱“真实的人”？
- ▶ 在人类的经济行为、政治参与和婚恋生活中，非理性如何影响我们？
- ▶ “in extremis”这个拉丁文短语是什么意思？



扫码听课



听课笔记

Can Dostoevsky Still Kick You in the Gut?

Dostoevsky's underground man rails against our worship of rationality in the modern age, exposing the unpredictability of human motive and behavior.

By David Denby, The New Yorker, Published Jun. 11, 2002

Many people would say that Dostoevsky's short novel "Notes from Underground" marks the beginning of the modernist movement in literature. Certainly, Nietzsche's writings, Freud's theory of **neurosis**, Kafka's "**Metamorphosis**," Bellow's "Herzog," Philip Roth's "Portnoy's Complaint," perhaps Scorsese's "Taxi Driver," and half of Woody Allen's work wouldn't have been the same without the existence of this **ornery**, unstable, unmanageable text—the fictional **confession** of a **spiteful** modern Hamlet, an inhabitant of St. Petersburg, "that most abstract and **pre-meditated** city," and a man unable to act and also unable to stop humiliating himself and embarrassing others. A **self-regarding**, **truculent**, **miserable**, **paralyzed** man.

Dostoevsky worked on the text in 1863 and published it the following year in *Epoch*. "Notes from Underground" feels like a warmup for the **colossus** that came next, "Crime and Punishment," though, in certain key ways, it's a more **uncompromising** book. What the two

fictions share is a solitary, restless, irritable hero and a feeling for the **feverish**, crowded streets and **dives** of St. Petersburg—an atmosphere of careless **improvidence**, neglect, self-neglect, cruelty, even **sordidness**. It is the modern city **in extremis**. Dostoevsky himself had recently returned from exile, and his St. Petersburg life in this period was **furtive** and desperate.

The text itself **purports** to be the writings of a retired mid-level government bureaucrat. The underground man addresses an imaginary audience whom he refers to as "you" or "ladies and gentlemen"—**presumably** a representative group of educated, Westernized Russians. But "Notes" is a **canny** work of literature, not a **tract**: Dostoevsky may have put his own ideas into the mouth of a brilliant man, but he undermined him as a self-destructive mess at the same time. The text, as academics might say, is **multivalent**, at odds with itself. It's not so much that the underground man's opinions are wrong, but that they were inseparable, like all opinion, from personal strengths and weakness, even personal **pathology**.

We are inevitably subjective and self-justifying—that is one of the modern elements in the book. We are also entirely **inconsistent**. The underground man **taunts** his listeners, apologizes, criticizes himself, then gets aggressive, then collapses again. On and on. He pulls the **rug** out from underneath his own feet; he realizes he's trapped in the prison of his own character. Hell is myself. No one would **put up with** this guy in his home for more than a half hour. He's only possible—entertaining, funny, nasty—on the page.

In the first part of the novel, the underground man, after introducing himself, complains, in his **ejaculatory**, stop-and-start way, about the spectacular Crystal Palace built in London (this was back in 1851). He **rails** against everything that the building represents—industrial capitalism, scientific rationality, and any sort of **predictive**, mathematical model of human behavior. What's wrong with such techniques, in both their **cynical** or **ameliorative** uses, was simply stated by Sartre, in 1945: "All materialist philosophies create man as an object, a stone." The underground man says that, on the

contrary, human beings are **unfathomable**, unknowable. Given the opportunity, they may deny, for themselves, the certainty that two and two makes four.

Predictors of human behavior, as the underground man says, generally assume we will act in our own best interests. But do we? The same question might be asked today, when "rational-choice theory" is still a predictive model for economists and sociologists and many others. When working-class whites vote for Republican policies that will further reduce their economic power—are they voting in their best interests? What about wealthy liberals in favor of higher taxes on the rich? Do people making terrible life choices—say, poor women having children with unreliable men—act in their best interests? Do they calculate at all? What if our own interest, as we **construe** it, consists of refusing what others want of us? That motive can't be measured. It can't even be known, except by novelists like Dostoevsky. Reason is only one part of our temperament, the underground man says. Individualism as a value includes the right to **screw yourself up**.

词汇

gut /gʌt/ n. 内心, 直觉, 本能

- the place where your natural feelings that make you react in a particular way are thought to be
- e.g. I had a feeling in my guts that something was wrong. 我本能地感到出了事。

neurosis /njʊə' rəʊsɪs/ n. 神经症, 神经官能症

- (*medical*) a mental illness in which a person suffers strong feelings of fear and worry

metamorphosis /,metə'mɔ:fəʊsɪs/ n. 变形 (尤指从蛹变为昆虫); (性格、环境等的) 改变, 变形, 质变

- a process in which a young insect, frog, etc. changes into another stage in its development
- e.g. Beetles undergo a complete metamorphosis in their life cycle. 甲虫在它们的生命周期里要经历一个完全变态过程。
- a process in which sb./sth. changes completely into sth. different
- e.g. She had undergone an amazing metamorphosis from awkward schoolgirl to beautiful woman. 她经历了从笨拙的女学生到大美人这一令人惊讶的变化。

ornery /'ɔ:nəri/ adj. 脾气坏的, 执拗的

- behaving in an unreasonable and often angry way, especially by doing the opposite of what people want you to do
- e.g. an ornery kid 一个坏脾气的小孩

confession /kən'feʃən/ n. (对神父或上帝作的) 忏悔, 告解

- a private statement to a priest about the bad things that you have done
- e.g. You must go to confession. 你必须去忏悔。

spiteful /'spɪtfl/ adj. 恶意的, 居心不良的, 故意使人苦恼的

- behaving in an unkind way in order to hurt or upset sb.
- e.g. She was spiteful and unkind, both to her friends and to her son. 她又恶毒又刻薄, 对朋友这样, 对她的儿子也这样。

pre-meditated /pri:'medɪteɪtɪd/ adj. (犯罪或袭击) 有预谋的, 预先策划的

- (of a crime or bad action) planned in advance
- e.g. pre-meditated murder 预谋杀杀人

self-regard /,self rɪ'gɑ:d/ n. 自尊, 自我欣赏

- a good opinion of yourself, which is considered bad if you have too little or too much
- e.g. He suffers from a lack of self-regard. 他缺乏自尊。
- **self-regarding** /,self rɪ'gɑ:dɪŋ/ adj. 利己主义的
- e.g. His biography is nothing but self-regarding nonsense. 他的传记只不过是自命不凡的一派胡言。

truculent /'trʌkjələnt/ adj. 爱争吵的, 粗暴的, 寻衅的

- bad-tempered and always willing to argue with people

- e.g. a truculent attitude 凶狠的态度

miserable /'mɪzərəbəl/ adj. 乖戾的, 脾气坏的

- (*disapproving*) (of a person) always unhappy, bad-tempered and unfriendly
- e.g. He was a miserable old devil. 他真是个令人厌烦的老家伙。

paralyzed /'pærəlaɪzd/ adj. 瘫痪的, 麻痹的

- unable to move part or all of your body or feel it
- e.g. The accident left him permanently paralysed. 那次意外事故使他永久瘫痪了。

colossus /kə'lɒsəs/ n. 巨人, 巨物, 伟人, 极重要的人(物)

- sb. or sth. that is extremely big or extremely important
- e.g. an intellectual colossus like Leonardo 像列奥纳多这样的智慧巨人

uncompromising /ʌn'kɒmprəmaɪzɪŋ/ adj. 不妥协的, 不让步的; 坚定的

- unwilling to change your opinions or intentions
- e.g. an uncompromising opponent of democratic reform 民主改革的坚决反对者

feverish /'fi:vərɪʃ/ adj. 激动的, 焦虑不安的

- showing strong feelings of excitement or worry, often with a lot of activity or quick movements
- e.g. a state of feverish excitement 异常激动的状态

dive /daɪv/ n. 下等酒吧, 低级夜总会

- (*informal*) a bar, music club, etc. that is cheap, and perhaps dark or dirty

improvident /ɪm'prɒvɪdənt/ adj. 挥霍的, 无远见的

- too careless to save any money or to plan for the future
- **improvidence** /ɪm'prɒvɪdəns/ n. 浪费, 无先见之明, 目光短浅

sordid /'sɔ:dɪd/ adj. 卑鄙的, 丑恶的, 无耻的

- immoral or dishonest
- e.g. It was a shock to discover the truth about his sordid past. 他以往的丑行被发现时, 人们感到震惊。
- **sordidness** /'sɔ:didnis/ n. 肮脏, 污秽, 卑鄙, 可耻

in extremis /ɪn ɪk'stri:mɪs/ adv. 在危急关头, 在极端情况下, 在绝境

- in a very difficult situation when very strong action is needed
- e.g. The use of antibiotics is permitted only in extremis. 只有在万不得已的情况下才允许使用抗生素。

furtive /'fɜ:tɪv/ adj. 偷偷摸摸的, 鬼鬼祟祟的

- behaving as if you want to keep sth. secret
- e.g. There was something furtive about his actions. 他的行为有点鬼鬼祟祟。

purport /pɜ:'pɔ:t/ v. 自称, 标榜

词汇

○ to claim to be sth. or to have done sth., when this may not be true

○ e.g. The book does not purport to be a complete history of the period. 本书无意标榜为那个时期的全史。

presumably /prɪ'zju:məbli/ adv. 可能, 大概, 据推测

○ used to say that you think sth. is probably true

○ e.g. It's raining, which presumably means that your football match will be cancelled. 下雨了, 这可能意味着你们的足球比赛要取消。

canny /'kæni/ adj. (尤指在商业或政治方面) 精明谨慎的, 老谋深算的

○ intelligent, careful and showing good judgement, especially in business or politics

○ e.g. a canny politician 老谋深算的政治家

tract /trækt/ n. (尤指宣扬宗教、伦理或政治的) 短文, 传单, 小册子

○ (sometimes disapproving) a short piece of writing, especially on a religious, moral or political subject, that is intended to influence people's ideas

multivalent /,mʌltɪ'veɪlənt/ adj. (抗原, 抗体) 多价的, 多化合价的; 可用于多方面的, (可) 有多种意义的, (可) 有多种价值的

○ (of an antigen or antibody) having several sites at which attachment to an antibody or antigen can occur

○ e.g. multivalent antiserum 多价免疫血清

○ having or susceptible of many applications, interpretations, meanings, or values

○ e.g. visually complex and multivalent work 直观上给人以复杂且多方面有用的工作

pathology /pə'thɒlədʒi/ n. 病理学; 变态, 反常

○ the scientific study of diseases

○ an aspect of sb.'s behaviour that is extreme and unreasonable and that they cannot control

inconsistent /,ɪnkən'sɪstənt/ adj. (两种说法) 不一致的, 互相矛盾的; 反复无常的

○ two statements that are inconsistent cannot both be true

○ e.g. The accounts of the witnesses are inconsistent. 几位目击者的说法不一致。

○ (disapproving) tending to change too often; not staying the same

○ e.g. Children find it difficult if a parent is inconsistent. 如果做父母的不始终如一, 孩子会觉得无所适从。

taunt /tɔ:nt/ v. 辱骂, 嘲笑, 讽刺, 奚落

○ to try to make sb. angry or upset by saying unkind things about them, laughing at their failures, etc.

○ e.g. The other kids continually taunted him about his size. 其他孩子不断地耻笑他的个头。

rug /rʌg/ n. 小地毯, 垫子

○ a piece of thick material like a small carpet that is used for

covering or decorating part of a floor

○ e.g. a hearth rug (= in front of a fireplace) 壁炉前的小地毯

put up with sb./sth. 容忍, 忍受

○ to accept sb./sth. that is annoying, unpleasant, etc. without complaining

○ e.g. I don't know how she puts up with him. 我不明白她怎么受得了他。

ejaculate /ɪ'dʒækjəleɪt/ v. (尤指因惊奇而) 喊出, 突然说出

○ old-fashioned or literary to suddenly shout or say sth., especially because you are surprised

○ **ejaculatory** /ɪ'dʒækjələtəri/ adj. 突然喊叫的, 感叹的

rail (at/against sth./sb.) /reɪl/ v. 怒斥

○ (formal) to complain about sth./sb. in a very angry way

○ e.g. She railed against the injustice of it all. 她大骂此事太不公正。

predictive /prɪ'dɪktɪv/ adj. 预测的, 预言的, 前瞻的

○ connected with the ability to show what will happen in the future

○ e.g. Fighting in the first year of marriage is not predictive of divorce. 结婚第一年的冲突不一定就预示着要离婚。

cynical /'smɪkl/ adj. 愤世嫉俗的, 怀疑的, 见利忘义的

○ believing that people only do things to help themselves rather than for good or honest reasons

○ e.g. a cynical view/smile 愤世嫉俗的观点

ameliorate /ə'mi:liəreɪt/ v. 改善, 改进

○ to make a bad situation better or less harmful

○ e.g. It is not clear what can be done to ameliorate the situation. 可以采取什么办法来改善局面并不明确。

○ **ameliorative** /ə'mi:ljəreɪtɪv/ adj. 改善的

unfathomable /ʌn'fæðəməbəl/ adj. 难以理解的, 莫测高深的

○ too strange or difficult to be understood

○ e.g. an unfathomable mystery 难以解释的奥秘

construe /kən'stru: / v. 理解, 领会

○ to understand the meaning of a word, a sentence or an action in a particular way

○ e.g. He considered how the remark was to be construed. 他考虑这话该如何理解。

screw sb. ↔ up 使烦恼得不能正常生活, 使神经不正常, 把...搞糟

○ to upset or confuse sb. so much that they are not able to deal with problems in their life

○ e.g. Her father's death really screwed her up. 父亲死后, 她真是万念俱灰。

今日习题

1. 根据英文释义写出文中出现的对应单词或词组

_____ : bad-tempered and always willing to argue with people

_____ : in a very difficult situation when very strong action is needed

2. 一词多义

Which of the following underlined words is closest in meaning to the one in the sentence "What the two fictions share is a solitary, restless, irritable hero and a feeling for the feverish, crowded streets and dives of St. Petersburg—an atmosphere of careless improvidence, neglect, self-neglect, cruelty, even sordidness."? _____

- A. He ventured a high dive into shallow water.
- B. Profits really took a dive last year.
- C. The goalkeeper made a dive for the ball.
- D. The hotel has a licensed dive.

3. 翻译：根据给定中文回译英文

这篇文章标榜其是一位退休的中级政府官员的作品。

习题答案

1. truculent; in extremis
2. D
3. The text itself purports to be the writings of a retired mid-level government bureaucrat.

费奥多尔·米哈伊洛维奇·陀思妥耶夫斯基（Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky, 1821 年 11 月 11 日 - 1881 年 2 月 9 日），出生在莫斯科的一个普通医生家庭。他的母亲于 1837 年去世，当时他仅 15 岁；而他的父亲在他 18 岁时被人殴打致死。陀思妥耶夫斯基终生患有癫痫症，据说父亲的死导致他的癫痫症第一次严重发作，此后便不定时发作。

陀思妥耶夫斯基毕业于彼得堡军事工程学校。毕业后，他做过一段时间的工程师。二十多岁时，他与一群激进的作家和知识分子结交成为朋友。虽然他并没有深入参与，但当政府决定镇压异议时，陀思妥耶夫斯基也被围捕并判处行刑队枪决。在最后一刻——当士兵们准备开火时——缓刑的消息传来。于是，他又被送往西伯利亚进行四年（1849 - 1854 年）的强迫劳动。从西伯利亚回来后，陀思妥耶夫斯基才有了成为作家的想法，并从中年开始，创作了一系列主要书籍，成为了俄罗斯著名小说家、散文家和记者。

陀思妥耶夫斯基的文学作品探索了 19 世纪俄罗斯动荡不安的政治、社会以及人类的精神与心理，同时还涉及各种哲学和宗教主题。他一生撰写过 12 部小说、4 部中篇小说、16 部短篇小说和众多其他作品。代表作有《罪与罚》（*Crime and Punishment*, 1866 年）、《白痴》（*The Idiot*, 1869 年）、《群魔》（*Demons*, 1872 年）和《卡拉马佐夫兄弟》（*The Brothers Karamazov*, 1880 年）。许多文学评论家认为他是文学界最伟大的小说家之一。他在 1864 年创作的的中篇小说《地下室手记》（*Notes from Underground*）被认为是最早的存在主义文学作品之一。因此，他也被视为是哲学家和神学家。

参考资料：维基百科；The School of Life