

Title: Dostoevskian Allegory and the Realist Project
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Abstract:

Mimesis in the nineteenth-century always implies a scientific worldview, even when that science takes the form of Comte's "social physics"; Balzac frames *La Comédie humaine* (1842) with reference to zoology, for example, while Zola claims the mantle of Bernard in his "experimental" novel. In its Russian version Realism is explicit in its scientific ambitions in the claims of the so-called Natural School as well as in the equally aptly-named genre of the "physiology": this is a Realism defined by its apparent lack of literary artifice in an imitation of a science that is one with what it describes. Allegory in what Romanticism and Postmodernism alike have taught us to see as its open artificiality would seem an artifact of another way of writing, one that emphasizes "theory" over "fact," sign over signified, and often it is, even in Chernyshevsky. In Dostoevsky, however, allegory serves not as an anti-Realist device, but as an expression of the very different approach to the material world, one epitomized by the "dual-aspect monism" of pioneering physiological psychologist George Henry Lewes.