Dostoevsky's traditions in the novel “Doctor Faustus” by T. Mann

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ABSTRACT

This paper makes analyses of the different research points of the Dostoevsky's traditions in the novel “Doctor Faustus” by T. Mann. On this case, Reception of ideas of F. Dostoevsky's in the novel “Doctor Faustus” by T. Mann. Finally, conclusions of the author done to make further analyses on the topic.

Keywords: Dostoevsky, traditions, novel, “Doctor Faustus”, T. Mann, Reception, F. Dostoevsky's.

1. INTRODUCTION

T. Mann and Dostoevsky - this problem naturally appear when reading one of the largest works of world literature of the 20th century - the novel “Doctor Faustus.” T. Mann himself admitted that Dostoevsky not only shocked him in his youth, but that the influence of the work of this artist on T. Mann deepened in subsequent years.

The question arises about the importance of the traditions of Dostoevsky in the creation of "Doctor Faustus" - a novel by an already mature German writer, addressing significant and pressing problems that are important for our days. These problems are connected with summing up the spiritual development of bourgeois society of that era, which T. Mann called the era of the end.

As the researcher E.Y. Puzyrnikova correctly notes, T. Mann’s novel “Doctor Faustus” can rightfully be called one of the most difficult phenomena not only in the art world of the writer himself, but also in all European literature of the 20th century [5].

The question of the attitude of T. Mann to Dostoevsky is extremely complicated by T. Mann himself. Despite the fact that Dostoevsky attracted the closest attention of the creator of "Doctor Faustus", he - the author of many theoretical articles and studies on the work of various cultural figures - avoided writing about Dostoevsky. The ability to make the whole vast universe of Dostoevsky the subject of his study, according to T. Mann himself, caused him fear, “not to say horror. He was frightened not only by the immensity of everything made by “Russian titan”, but also by the unique originality of his moral character [4, T.10, P.327].

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

T. Mann broke his silence while working on “Dr. Faustus.” In 1946, the writer received a proposal from the Daniel Press to write a preface to the American homonym of selected Dostoevsky novels and novels. Now, T. Mann had the opportunity to “bring critical tribute to the great Russian writer”, and "small space" was also suitable for him (since the collection included only six works). T. Mann could express his attitude towards Dostoevsky in “lite form”. So his article appeared “Dostoevsky - but in moderation” (1946).

This article and a number of scattered judgments in the article “The History of Doctor Faustus, A Novel of a Novel,” written on the basis of diary entries kept by the writer while working on the novel, and in some other articles, that’s all we have from direct statements T. Mann about Dostoevsky related to the last years of his life. Therefore, the novel itself remains the main source on which to rely on the development of the problem posed here.

In the articles mentioned above and in very few judgments that are available in the works of T. Mann, a deep respect for the great Russian writer is clearly traced.
3. MAIN PART

It is extremely interesting to observe the genre and structure of The Brothers Karamazov, which helps to understand Doctor Faustus, by N. M. Chirkov, who described this work as “the most complete synthesis of a social and psychological novel by Dostoevsky” and called it “the fullest expression of the so-called “philosophical novel.”” Putting the “Brothers Karamazov” in a “certain historical and literary perspective” outlined by Dostoevsky himself, N.M. Chirkov concludes that “in one way or another, the Brothers Karamazov presents a peculiar revival of the form of the mysteries in a new form. But the most curious is the fusion of the transformed ancient genre with the form of the European social and psychological novel of the 19th century. We have before us the literary symbiosis of the most modern and archaic forms, which determines the genre originality of Dostoevsky’s last novel ”[7].

T. Mann in The History of Doctor Faustus also outlined the “historical and literary perspective” of his novel, which is very important for determining his genre. In the article “An Essay on My Life” (1932), T. Mann wrote that over time, self-wishingly alien to the models and thoroughly daring, personally achieved the opportunity to create something new became for him the embodiment of art ”[4, T.9, P.138].

T. Mann writes completely different 10 years later in the article “Joseph and His Brothers” (1942): “There is a sign that allows you to determine the nature of a work, to establish what category it seeks to fall into, to find out its opinion about itself; this attribute is books that its author is especially eager to read while working on it, as he feels the benefit of reading.” Speaking about reading, T. Mann emphasized that he meant “not sources of information necessary for the author about the subject, not study of materials, but works of world literature in which he sees the older relatives of his own plans and ideas, high patterns, the contemplation of which supports him creative spirit and with which he seeks to imitate [4, T.9, P.185].

If you look at the list of books that T. Mann read while working on “Doctor Faustos,” which he left in his diary and then used in the “History” of the novel, one can establish an unusual similarity with those used by Dostoevsky in “The Brothers Karamazov’s”, which confirms the following conclusion about T. Mann’s novel: he also “presents a peculiar revival of the form of mystery in a new form”, “fusion of the transformed old genre with the form of a European realistic social and psychological novel of the 19th century”. Modern scholars note the work as a synthesis of different genres. So, for example, L.N. Tatarinova, revealing the genre specificity of the novel, writes about the synthesis of different genres in it: a philosophical novel, an intellectual novel, an anti-fascist novel, a music novel, a tragedy novel and a psychological novel [6].

Studying the composition of “Doctor Faustus” allows us to trace the ways of the appearance of a peculiar form of the socio-psychological and philosophical novel of the XX century. This task did not confront N.M. Chirkov, since he was considering a novel of the 19th century. However, his observations are very helpful in solving the task before us.

Analyzing The Brothers Karamazov, N.M. Chirkov establishes that in the book Pro u contra, preceding The Legend of the Great Inquisitor, Ivan Karamazov refers to medieval mysteries, school drama in Russia and pre-Petrine antiquity, to the famous apocrypha in Old Russian literature “The Walk of the Virgin in torment.” In connection with the medieval mysteries, Dostoevsky mentions the name of Dante, bringing his “Divine Comedy” closer to them. Many other associations arise with Goethe’s “Faust”, Byron’s “Kainoi” and the like in the genre, up to Flaubert’s “Temptation of St. Anthony” [7].

Among the first books read by T. Mann are books about music and Nietzsche. “Music, therefore, is Nietzsche,” he writes. These books are connected with the idea of the novel about Leverkus-composer, the prototype of which was to some extent Nietzsche. However, the idea of a novel about a sick composer immediately developed as a novel about an era, and music was understood as a generalized expression of the spiritual essence of this era, and therefore Leverkus’s image was associated with Nietzsche - a symbol of the spiritual life of Germany, and Faust. So the idea of the novel included several plans at once: social, psychological, intellectual and philosophical, which determined its structure. Thomas Mann considered this structure his main achievement, noting its innovation, which was determined primarily by “the greatest restraint in external concretization”, so as not to “belittle and vulgarize the spiritual plan with its symbolism and ambiguity” [4, T.9, p. 260].
"Doctor Faustus" absorbed a description of reality and showing individual fate of the characters. It was here that a characteristic trick of duality developed, realized by the writer himself and going back to Hoffmann. At first, this technique determined the presence of two kindred and so different characters, like Leverkyun and Zeitblom, in their unity most fully reproducing the fate of a humanistic culture at the turn of the century. Then a whole system of images arose, called, according to T. Mann, “to hide a great secret - the secret of their identity” [4, T.9, P.260].

4. ANALYSES

Chapters on the German province, T. Mann called the exposure of the novel. From the moment Leverkün moved to Leipzig, T. Mann moves on to a wider depiction of reality and to a wider use of the forms of the novel, while the first chapters are stylized in the tradition of 18th-century German memoirs. In the central chapters, the proximity of Doctor Faustus to Dostoevsky’s novels becomes especially noticeable. In the first chapters, Leverkun is opposed to the province, he is shown as a rebel, but his rebellion is not active. The “Napoleonic idea” is alien to Leverkun. He is enclosed in himself, cold; irony and skepticism determine his attitude towards people and the world. He finds himself in music, in which he first of all searches for his kindred relation to the world and people.

The first chapters did not satisfy the writer. In them reproduction of reality prevailed. Leverkun is the denier of this world and the creation of the devil, since in his denial there is no good beginning, there is no tragedy of his fate.

T. Mann found a new plot move, "combining the German color theme, the theme of the crisis, with common problems for the whole era and for Europe.” The image of Leverkun, his fate became an expression of the West European intelligentsia and, at the same time, the fate of West European culture.

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It is easy to trace how in all the events that formed Leverkun (episodes with Esmeralda, Nepomuk, Maria Godot, etc.), his behavior was defined as “self-manifestation”. But here you can also see the difference in the characters created by Dostoevsky and T. Mann. The characters of Doctor Faustus lack strong passions - a romance without love. T. Mann himself was hostile to the outpourings of the heroes of Dostoevsky, considering them superfluous. Such “restraint” should be explained not only by the character of T. Mann, brought up in the traditions of the burgher culture, but above all by the further
alienation of man, who first found theoretical expression in Kierkegaard’s philosophy and reached its greatest depth in the 20th century.

The fact that the absence of strong passions is inherent in the novel is evidenced by the judgment of T. Mann about the game of beads by G. Hesse. However, here we can also note the step forward that was made by T. Mann in comparison with G. Hesse. This is T. Mann’s refusal to reconcile the contradictions of his time on the paths of “a dreamy cultural-philosophical utopianism” [4, T.9, P.250], which he saw in G. Hesse. T. Mann shows the irreconcilability of contradictions, sharpening the originality of Leverkün's appearance - endows him with a disease; Sharpens the main situation of the novel - introduces Leverkun’s contract with the devil; Leverkun’s desire to “overthrow” Beethoven shows the inevitability of his death and his coming through suffering to comprehend the truth. Such a show by Leverkun not only gives a “critical outlet to suffering” and states the “tragedy of our situation”, as T. Mann wrote [4, T.9, P.250], but also indicates a way out of this situation, drawing it as a historical perspective further development of personality.

In this regard, one can see how close the ideological concept of T. Mann’s novel is to Dostoevsky’s novel and how he overcomes it. The structure of Leverkun’s image resembles the structure of the images of the tragic heroes of Dostoevsky’s later novels, especially Stavrogin, partly Raskolnikov, who could not combine the inhuman idea and human needs of a person, while remaining internally morally pure and human. T. Mann is close here to Dostoevsky. In the literature on Dostoevsky, all these questions found sufficient coverage. Assessing the actions of his hero in terms of the general principles of human morality, he is looking for a new way of historical and political assessment. In this regard, T. Mann’s statement about the impression that he made upon repeated reading of the scene of the devilish visions of Ivan Karamazov, which he wrote about in “The History of Dr. Faustus,” is of great interest. The mention of Dostoevsky is next to the mention of G. Flaubert. T. Mann was struck by the “Temptation of St. Anthony”, struck by the combination of “erudition and nihilism in this magnificent work”, A comparison of Salammbo and Joseph shows that in this case both style and the ideological concept of Flaubert’s novel could have caused estrangement. T. Mann was alien and exotic and cruelty in "Salambo". He opposed Flaubert's nihilism with the humanistic ideal as the core of myth. And if the scene in Dostoevsky caused alienation for the same reasons, then the following proposal can be made: obviously, the conflict of man and God, so characteristic of literature of the 18th and 19th centuries, the beginning of the 20th century, including Dostoevsky, has already exhausted itself. In the middle of the 20th century, Nietzsche’s slogan “God died” has already lost its sharpness, and a new, no less ambitious conflict between the individual and the people arose before the writer, as the most striking manifestation of alienation in society. And in the apotheosis is the face of the devil. Here, T. Mann describes the nature of the devil: “He must ... bear the highest self-satisfaction, extreme indifference, self-worthy denial” [4, T.9, P.296].

5. SUGGESTIONS

But with Dostoevsky, the problem of the denial of God is connected with an ethical conflict, with the condemnation of the principle of “everything is permitted,” the ideology of individualism. And here T. Mann acts as the direct successor of Dostoevsky, but, continuing his traditions in depicting the extreme manifestations of individualism, he nevertheless associates with them the fate of art, degenerated into formalism and the national fate of the Germans, that is, it does not limit itself to ethical problems, but also touches on problems political.

At Dostoevsky, Ivan Karamazov does not conclude a contract with the devil, this scene was used by the writer as a technique for revealing the inner world of his hero. Damn - Ivan’s double - the embodiment of the criminal, evil principle of his soul, generated by rebellion, the rejection of God, leading Ivan first to complete nihilism, and then the loss of reason. The devil of Dostoevsky and the devil of T. Mann carry a different content. In the first, he is the embodiment of everything that is vulgar and disgusting in man; the personification of a higher power that is supposedly able to give a person new achievements in all areas of his life. The second - the debunking of these forces is the pathos of the novel by T. Mann.
The image of the trait is used by T. Mann for the psychological characteristics of Leverkun. It becomes the image of a generalized expression of the whole area (reasonable and sensual) of the character’s inner life (his coldness, skepticism, etc.). T. Mann, following Dostoevsky, creates a whole system of such images-symbols, for example, the image of Esmeralda’s getter, depicting the moral character of his hero, one way or another conditional on his agreement with the devil. The combination of a generalized, with the help of images-symbols, an image of the hero’s inner world with a plastic reproduction of his daily life determines the structure of the novel; In this way, it is close to the figurative structure of Dostoevsky’s novel.

T. Mann uses generalized images-symbols to characterize Leverkun’s inner world, depicting his being in the spirit of Kierkegaard’s philosophy, whose works T. Mann read while working on the novel [4, T.9, P.271], shows him as an alienated person, which has lost all ties with the world and people, resulting in a lack of vivid passions and feelings. Inner cold is its most characteristic feature. The novel “Doctor Faustus”, as already mentioned, is a loveless romance, which gives a special coloring that distinguishes it from Dostoevsky’s novel.

However, this technique of artistic reproduction of an alienated person was first used by Dostoevsky in characterizing a person from the underground. It can be argued that T. Mann “competing” with Dostoevsky, showed in Leverkun’s face a man of art, also a man from the underground, which led to his death and his art. The image of an underground person is an image-symbol of a huge internal content, which has absorbed the whole life of a person, due to the historical and national conditions of his existence.

6. DISCUSSIONS

The way Dostoevsky explained the significance of this topic is quite applicable to Leverkun’s tragedy and explains it well. Dostoevsky wrote: “Only I brought out the tragedy of the underground, consisting in suffering, self-punishment, in the consciousness of the best and the impossibility of achieving it” [2]. Dostoevsky speaks not so much about the man of the underground as about the tragedy of the underground, caused by a clear awareness that the best must exist, but it cannot be achieved. The personality of the artist, musician, art man, according to T. Mann, expresses the inner essence of culture and society as a whole. That is why he makes the composer of Leverkun the personification of his time. And yet, T. Mann, overcoming the detrimental effect on the art of alienation of a person, transforms for his embodiment the techniques inherent in modernism. T. Mann shows Leverkun’s estrangement as a result not of his social existence, when estrangement is perceived as a fatal force, irresistible by man, but as a result of a certain stage of social development. This expands the possibilities of the epic in the novel, and interprets the fate of the individual as a tragedy. And this primarily consists in the positive significance of Dostoevsky’s work for foreign writers of the 20th century.

7. CONCLUSION

The character of Leverkun is entirely determined by the fact that this image is tragic, revealing it in the novel in terms of showing the unused possibilities of the artist and the person, which allows us to preserve the form of the novel, in the center of which the fate of the personality in its relation to society. The structure of Doctor Faustus as a whole is determined by the fact that Leverkun’s tragedy is shown in the real historical conditions of Germany’s life in the first decades of the 20th century. Showing the fate of Leverkun as a tragedy is a result.

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