

### To the Question of the Concept of "Religious Literature"

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**Abstract.** In relation to the Russian tradition, a narrow understanding of religious literature is associated with a specific expression of Orthodox views, with the development in a work of art of themes related to Orthodoxy. There have always been writers in the literary process whose work was built on the "foundation of a personally gained religious idea" [1, p.235], the essence of which is "the search for ways to transform a person for the sake of transforming the world" [5, p.44]. Among them, of course, are N. V. Gogol, F. M. Dostoevsky, D. Merezhkovsky and others.

Literature on religious topics has always seemed to fall into two channels - didactic and problematic. In the first one, she was mainly engaged in explaining that "believing is good, and not believing is bad, and confirmed this deep thought with expressive examples of positive and negative meaning" [1, p.235]. The problematic course illustrated the resolution of the tormenting question of the existence of God, described the thorny path of "the unfaithful and proud to humility and repentance" [1, p.235].

N. V. Gogol stood on didactic and educational positions, in whose work the question of the nature of the aesthetic principle and its relation to the moral theme in man was paramount. The more deeply Gogol was aware of the tragic disunity in the soul of the aesthetic and moral principles, the more problematic the theme of beauty, the theme of art, became for him.

Gogol was clearly aware of the utopian nature of his hope, but this was precisely the starting point for his further search. He was sure that only religion can combine beauty and goodness. Religious searches develop all the time around this topic: for Gogol, religion is called upon to transform the natural order of man, his culture, his creativity. What A. S. Khomyakov wrote about: "The root and beginning of the matter is religion, and only the explicit, conscious and complete creativity of Orthodoxy will open the possibility of any development" [2, p.91]. This idea is very close to Gogol's worldview of the times of "Selected Places".

Logically, Gogol, in the process of spiritual quest, comes to the conclusion that in the Orthodox Church "there is the possibility of resolving all the issues that are now in such acuteness before all of humanity" [2, p.91].

The writer raises the question of the illumination and Christian transformation of secular culture, calls for the restructuring of the entire culture in the spirit of Orthodoxy, reflects on how to save the aesthetic principle in a person, how to direct him to goodness, from which modernity has come off. He was the first to try to overcome the position of separate autonomous co-presence in the human personality of religious beliefs and secular activity, which had quite steadily developed by the 19th century. Gogol's religiosity penetrated into creativity, into all facets of everyday behavior.

Religious and literary appeared in Gogol's mind in unity, but not in the natural unity that could be characteristic of previous centuries, when the religious worldview was universal and therefore organic, but in the unity sought, felt as a need, and of course, more complex, in a lot of drama. An attempt to overcome the separation of the religious and artistic, to create a synthesis of genres was reflected in all of Gogol's work.

The general idea of Gogol's "Dead Souls" is to reflect the historical path of Russia: the first volume is the decadence of morality and values in Russia; the second is the path to rebirth; the third is Russia revived. The first volume completely fit into the framework of artistic creativity, as for the second and third volumes, here the author's intention came to a standstill, since the objective reality of the people can be considered in a work of art when it is positive and effective, and not only assumed. Therefore, he was able to realize his plan only by going beyond the scope of fiction. In order to find ways to revive Russia, Gogol had to turn to the philosophical and journalistic - "Selected passages from correspondence with friends" - and the religious "Reflection on the Divine Liturgy" - creativity. Both books are devoted to one thing - the revival of man and society as a whole in the light of Christ, that is, to what was to fill the second volume of Dead Souls.

Thus, "If we compare these three works, then Gogol's attempt to overcome the division of artistic philosophical and religious creativity becomes obvious" [2, p.16]. However, Gogol was not able to fully realize this idea, but with his work he gave a powerful impetus to the development of "synthetic" creativity in Russian literature.

The model of the problematic channel of literature on religious topics is the work of F. M. Dostoevsky, who, in the light of religious problems, raised acute questions of a moral and aesthetic order: the meaning of life, freedom and responsibility, man and God, good and evil, attraction and duty, reason and morality and etc. The path to harmonization and a perfect society, according to Dostoevsky, lies through humility and suffering, helping a person to overcome a moral crisis and freely choose the ideal of unity in Christ, the ideal of God-manhood, otherwise the rule "everything is permitted" will triumph and society will be plunged into chaos.

For Dostoevsky, religion is "a set of moral ideas based on love for one's neighbor" [8, p.78]. For him, God symbolizes, first of all, the beginning of good, therefore, for his heroes, a breakthrough to God always means overcoming filth, evil, communion with good. Through the mouth of his hero, he says that he does not want and cannot believe that evil is the normal state of people. The discovery of God for the heroes of Dostoevsky means a confrontation with evil and injustice, overcoming the duality of nature: to be with God or to be like God.

According to Merezhkovsky, "the true Dostoevsky, that fearless tester of divine and satanic depths as we know him, began with Crime and Punishment" [7, p.496]. it was enough for him to grow almost to the full extent of his powers. "In the tragedy itself, he never resolved this issue, but since then he could never get rid of it; with each of the following works he returned to him more and more stubbornly, more and more relentlessly.

All his life, Dostoevsky only thought about this issue, he suffered only from it: from Napoleon - Raskolnikov with his "everything is allowed" [7, p. 495], through the Teenager with his "power and solitude", through Stavrogin, "the sameness of pleasure in both poles, in villainy and in holiness", through Kirilov, who is the first to pronounce the name of the deity of this new faith - "Man-God" and comprehend "the main attribute of his deity" - "self-will" - to Ivan Karamazov with his "everything is allowed" [7, p. 496]., Ivan, to whom it is already revealed with final clarity that Raskolnikov only vaguely dawns - supermoral, it doesn't matter, positive or negative, Christ's or Antichrist's, but in any case, the religious meaning of the last freedom: "... it is permissible for a new man to become a man-god, even at least one in the whole world ... In this sense, everything is permitted to him - for God there is no law! Wherever God stands, there is already a place for God! Wherever I am, there will immediately be the first place - "everything is permitted" [7, p.537].

Dostoevsky discovered the main impotence of the Napoleonic idea - the religious one: before resurrecting the idea of Caesar - the Unifier, the Man-God, it was necessary to overcome the opposite idea of Christian universal unification, the idea of God-Man: overcame this idea, but did not approach it, did not see it at all..." [7, p.540]. The idea of atonement for sin through suffering runs through all of Dostoevsky's work.

Raskolnikov must atone for his sin, realize all the baseness of his fall and its consequences. Raskolnikov can find a way to the resurrection only through all-forgiving Christian love, the personification of which is Sonya. Gradually, the hero realizes that for him, as well as for the four-day stinking Lazarus, perhaps, according to the word of God, to rise, for this miracle to happen, repentance is necessary.

The uncomplaining bearing of one's earthly cross, repentance, expiatory suffering, a return to the gospel truths - the path of rebirth, which the hero has yet to go through. An even more difficult time awaits him - the time of redemption: "... but here a new story begins ..." Love for Sonechka will revive Raskolnikov to life.

The main creative principle of Dostoevsky is "to find a person in a person". Human nature is initially dual, contradictory. Its essence is the eternal struggle between good and evil. Dostoevsky sees a microcosm in the soul of any person in whom the ideal of the Madonna can coexist with the ideal of Sodom. "Here the devil fights with God, and the battlefield is the heart of people," says Dmitry Karamazov in Dostoevsky. Duality is a characteristic feature not only of Dostoevsky's heroes, but also of Dostoevsky himself, who until the end of his life did not decide whether to be with God or to be like God.

Religious literature is always, as it were, at the junction of social criticism and apology for the spiritual quest of each time period. The reception of the artistic embodiment of religious ideas was reflected in the literary process of the twentieth century. For example, in the works "Fire" by V. Rasputin, "The Sad Detective" by V. Astafiev and the novel "The Block" by Ch. Aitmatov, religious ideas marked a transition to a new period in literature, which was a reflection and consequence of social changes in the life of society and the state.

In the novel "The Scaffold" the writer pays special attention to issues of religion. In the novel, the writer uses numerous biblical stories and images in order to find "eternal supports - moral and philosophical - for his by no means religious concepts" [6, p. 44]. The novel "The Scaffold" reflects Aitmatov's search for a platform for creating his own moral and ethical teaching based on Christianity.

In the minds of his heroes, one can find features of God-seeking: “Characteristic was a sincere desire, a need not only for a religious worldview, but precisely for a religious faith that was not bound by official ecclesiasticism and was not limited by the rigid framework of Christian dogma ... God-seekers. I had to defend my point of view, arguing in two directions - with the atheistic wing of the intelligentsia and with the official church” [9, p.177]. In the space between the opposing sides is the main character of "Plakha" - Avdiy Kallistratov. On the one hand, being the son of a deacon, he follows in his footsteps and begins his studies at a theological seminary, but he is expelled as a "heretic new thinker." He publishes an article in the regional newspaper in which he expresses his own position on the status of Orthodoxy in the 20th century. Obadiah's conversation with the “representative of the Moscow Patriarchate, Father Coordinator” ends with the anathematization of the young “renovator”, as the hero puts forward the concept of a contemporary God that does not correlate with traditional Christian ideas about a higher being: “You stand up for the absolute of dogma, for the ultimate once and for all comprehension of the essence of the world and our spirit, but this is illogical - is it really possible that in two thousand years of Christianity we are not able to add a single word to what was said almost in pre-Biblical times? .. My church is myself.

I do not recognize temples and, moreover, I do not recognize clergy, especially in their current capacity... God is in our thoughts and in our words” [3, pp. 86-87]. Questions of faith are conditioned in Aitmatov's novel by the thoughtful detailing of images and names in the novel, citing the Holy Scriptures and his personal author's position: “Eras, times have changed in the world, but religion has not been erased from the human heart, from the human soul ... In religion we are looking for the secrets of man, the universe, in religion we are looking for a great power that can purify our spiritual universe ... Both the Koran and the Bible are aimed at purifying the human soul, at showing him the existing ways of development. I'm just trying to write in a similar form" [4].

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