

## ARTISTIC INTERPRETATION OF THE "THEME OF CHILDHOOD" IN THE WORKS OF F.M. DOSTOEVSKY

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**Abstract:** In modern philological science, the greatest interest is caused by scientific research related to the issues of studying the problem of the evolution of the ideological and thematic originality of the Russian literary process. One of such problematic issues is the theme of childhood, since in its perspective an entire direction of the artistic system is formed - the worldview of childhood. The purpose of this article is to determine the main artistic aspects of the "children's text" in the prism of the evolutionary stages in the development of Russian critical literature, as well as to identify the dynamics of the transformations of the "children's text" based on the works of F.M. Dostoevsky.

**Keywords:** theme of childhood, literature, creativity, anthropocentrism, motif of innocence, work, interpretation.

Russian literature, permeated with sympathy for the weak and oppressed, never stays away from the theme of childhood, tries to draw attention to the fate of such children. Russian literature considers the image of a child in all its diversity, but, perhaps, the most relevant is the image of a child-sufferer or an orphan. Moreover, orphanhood is considered both in the physical and spiritual planes. Literature cultivates in people a caring and sensitive attitude towards orphans, calls for compassion.

Of all the heart-wrenching pages of Dostoevsky, the most powerful, the most tragic are the pages dedicated to children. It is by reading the descriptions of children, delving into what and how they live that you understand best what exactly worried the author, what exactly he wanted to share, what feelings in the reader's soul to touch.

Dostoevsky's philosophical work has not one, but several starting points, but the most important and even defining for him was the theme of man. Together with all Russian thought, Dostoevsky is anthropocentric, and his philosophical worldview is, first of all, personalism, colored ethically, but also reaching extraordinary strength and depth in coloring. "For Dostoevsky, amoralism, hidden in the depths of man, is the apotheosis of man, amoralism is a phenomenon of a spiritual order, and is not associated with biological processes in man" [5, p. 23].

The protagonist of the story "The Evening Before Ivan Kupala" will shed the blood of a child in order to gain personal happiness and wealth. Petro will receive wealth, but the hero will not find the family happiness he was striving for. The story ends with Pidorka leaving for a monastery, the death of Petrus and the destruction of their home. Thus Gogol resolved the question posed later in Dostoevsky's novel by Ivan Karamazov: "Would you agree to accept your happiness on the unjustified blood of a little tortured one, and having accepted it, remain forever happy?" [6]. The theme of

childhood, children's suffering, touched upon by Gogol, is important for all of F.M. Dostoevsky's work [3, p. 56].

The writer's main cherished idea, which he wanted to convey to the reader in his novel, is the idea of the revival of kindness and mercy in people. The writer seemed to see God's paradise and contemplate people who are pure in heart, ready to sacrifice themselves for the happiness of their neighbor. From these spiritual heights, the writer mentally looks at the world, torn apart by pride and hostility, and in a swift burst of love calls for compassion, the ability to see sincerity and childishness even in an evil person.

Dostoevsky was confident in the purity and sinlessness of a child's soul and even insisted on this: "Listen, we must not exalt ourselves above children, we are worse than them. And if we teach them something to make them better, then they teach us a lot and also make us better just by our contact with us. They humanize our soul just by their appearance among us. And therefore we must respect them and approach them with respect for their angelic face, their innocence and their touching defenselessness" [3].

A small child for Dostoevsky, especially a laughing and merry one, is a "ray of light from paradise", it seems to reveal the secret of the future, when a person will become as pure and simple-minded as a child. This same secret "burns" the whole being of the hero of the story, and therefore he will strive for people to help them restore in themselves the clouded kindness and lost sincerity, and this means to restore the child in themselves.

The idea of children, their early impressions, and disappointed expectations runs through all of F. M. Dostoevsky's work. Dostoevsky's artistic world, from "Poor Folk" to "The Brothers Karamazov," is populated by children. All of his later novels are about children.

T.M. Friedlander [10, p. 68] believes that the "child theme" in Dostoevsky's work had a certain evolution. In his first major novels ("The Insulted and the Humiliated" and "Crime and Punishment"), he showed the influence of poverty and the gloomy atmosphere of the city on the formation of the inner world of a child who matured early and became introverted [8].

But already in the novel "The Idiot" the images of children receive an additional plot function and ideological load: the theme of childhood coincides with Dostoevsky's moral ideals, with his dream of the future.

In *The Brothers Karamazov*, the relationship between the author and his characters is more complex. For Ivan, the suffering and tears of innocent children are the main argument in his "rebellion" against cruelty and an unfairly organized world. But the same Ivan allows adults to suffer because "they are disgusting and do not deserve love, and they have retribution: they ate the apple and learned good and evil." Dostoevsky denies cruelty, violence, and humiliating human suffering.

Dostoevsky noted the properties of a child's soul in adults (Mitya, Alyosha, Grushenka). And this "childishness" is not a real age, but a special state of mind. Hence the "rejuvenation" of some adult characters. The motive of innocence and purity is associated with "childishness".

The next aspect of the "childish" theme in the works is ethical: Dostoevsky saw in children an "angelic" nature, a renewing force of life. The boys in *The Brothers Karamazov* are called "the future of humanity." A child "heals" the soul of an adult. "Childishness" is a kind of moral criterion. In

almost every work of Dostoevsky, the motif of children suffering, enduring hardships and deprivations appears.

We have read these pages in *Poor Folk*, which tells about the children of the impoverished official Gorshkov, and in *The Brothers Karamazov*, and in the novel *The Idiot*. But now let us turn to the children's images described in *The Insulted and the Humiliated*.

In *The Insulted and the Humiliated* there is a scene in Chapter X which tells of Smith's granddaughter coming to look after her grandfather. "Her shabby and dirty dress looked even more like rags in the daylight than it had the day before... Her pale and thin face had an unnatural, swarthy-yellow, bilious tint. But in general, despite all the ugliness of poverty and illness, she was not bad-looking. Her eyebrows were sharp, thin and beautiful; especially beautiful was her broad forehead, a little low, and her lips, beautifully outlined, with a kind of proud, bold fold, but pale, only slightly tinted" [9, p. 351].

In this description, both the girl's appearance and her character are visible. We can visualize Smith's granddaughter with her disheveled black hair and her glowing eyes, and at the same time we understand: before us is a bright character, a person, a personality, a proud fold at the lips, a mysterious look, and at the same time a deeply unhappy, embittered, distrustful personality; it is not difficult to guess: her suspicion is not from joy, but from misfortune.

The heroes of mature Dostoevsky are not only humiliated; they feel insulted and despise their insulters. Many of Dostoevsky's heroes and especially heroines, Nastasya Filippovna and Grushenka, feel this way.

The same is true of the unhappy, lonely girl Elena from "The Insulted and the Humiliated." Yes, she is intimidated and downtrodden, she knows that she will be beaten, and she is afraid of someone who can torment and insult her. But the girl has not resigned herself to the insult, she does not want to feel humiliated. She goes without stockings in winter to spite her tormentors, she overcomes her fear ("I am not afraid of anyone!"), she leaves home, although she knows that she will be beaten for this.

It is quite understandable that the strange girl aroused Ivan Petrovich's interest. Why did she so not want this man who had shown concern for her to know where she lived? Why did she beg him "in terrible anxiety" not to follow her? Was she afraid of the people with whom she lived, or did she not want Ivan Petrovich to see how she was being humiliated? [11] And at the same time, he was drawn by curiosity, a bright and proud character was revealed to him in this little creature, abandoned by everyone and fighting alone against all the evil of the world, which was so familiar to the adult Ivan Petrovich.

The next scene is one of the strangest in the novel and it most accurately shows the entire character, one might even say, the disposition of Elena. In response to Ivan Petrovich's completely innocent words: "You've soiled your pretty dress with a broom." Elena, with the most cold-blooded look, tore her muslin dress from top to bottom, and then in a rage "torn it... almost to shreds." At the same time, she looked "with some kind of defiant look" and, probably, expected Ivan Petrovich to scold her. But we already know that Ivan Petrovich will not scold the girl, he has a different weapon. "This wild, embittered creature needed to be treated with kindness," writes Ivan Petrovich. And this bears fruit, but only with time [1, p. 146]. This is exactly what happened. Realizing that Ivan Petrovich loved her, she, of course, "sobbed until she became hysterical." When Ivan Petrovich finally managed

to calm her down, Elena suddenly told him that her name was not Lenchka, but Nellya – that’s what her mother called her” [1, p. 163].

Thus, Dostoevsky gave the main answer: the feeling of bitterness and embitterment is cured by kindness, but not immediately, but gradually.

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