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Dostoevsky in Kazakhstan: History of Study, Results, Prospects

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Abstract. The article is devoted to the analysis of the Semipalatinsk and Kuznetsk periods in the life and work of F.M. Dostoevsky. The purpose of the study is to reveal the Kazakh-Siberian periods in the fate of the Russian writer, their reflection in the letters and works of art by F.M. Dostoevsky. In the year of the 200th anniversary of the birth of the Russian writer, we cannot talk about the complete study of the indicated periods of the life of the prose writer, which, of course, to one degree or another, were reflected in his prose. This determines the degree of novelty of this article. Dostoevsky is dear to Kazakhstan. He not only served his exile, but also found a friend here, sincere and quivering – the historian, orientalist, ethnographer Ch. Valikhanov. The stories “Uncle’s Dream” and “The Village of Stepanchikovo and Its Inhabitant”, the first chapters of *Notes from the Dead House* were written in Semipalatinsk. The story “The village of Stepanchikovo and its inhabitants” (1857–1859) has the author’s clarification: “From the notes of the unknown”. Many works of fiction in world literature are the result of travel notes, diaries. Undoubtedly, the restoration of the history of the Kazakh-Siberian period of the life and work of F.M. Dostoevsky is of great value, because the greatest Russian writer experienced spiritual revival there, in Kazakhstan. The works of F.M. Dostoevsky were included in the literature program of secondary schools in Kazakhstan, translated into Kazakh (*The Idiot*, *The Brothers Karamazov* translated by N. Syzdykov). Dostoevsky scholars of Kazakhstan in the XXI century continue to study the writer’s works.

Keywords: Kazakh-Russian literary ties, author, motive, cultural transfer, literary translation, steppe, museum, story, notes, diary



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Достоевский в Казахстане: история изучения, итоги, перспективы

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Аннотация. Статья посвящена осмыслению Семипалатинского и Кузнецкого периодов в жизни и творчестве Ф.М. Достоевского. Цель исследования – раскрытие казахстанско-сибирского периода в судьбе русского писателя, их отражения в письмах и художественных произведениях Ф.М. Достоевского. В год 200-летия со дня рождения русского писателя мы не можем говорить о полной изученности указанных лет жизни прозаика, которые, безусловно, в той или иной степени, отразились в его прозе. Это и определяет степень новизны данной статьи. Достоевский дорог Казахстану. Он не только отбывал ссылку, но и обрел здесь друга, искреннего и трепетного – историка, востоковеда, этнографа Ч. Валиханова. Повести «Дядюшкин сон» и «Село Степанчиково и его обитатели», первые главы «Записок из Мертвого дома» написаны в Семипалатинске. Повесть «Село Степанчиково и его обитатели» (1857–1859) имеет уточнение автора: «Из записок неизвестного». Многие художественные произведения в мировой литературе стали итогом путевых заметок, записок, дневников. Безусловно, восстановление истории казахстанско-сибирского периода жизни и творчества Ф.М. Достоевского имеет научную ценность, поскольку на этой земле произошло духовное возрождение величайшего писателя земли русской. Произведения Ф.М. Достоевского включены в программу по литературе средних школ Казахстана, переведены на казахский язык («Идиот», «Братья Карамазовы» в переводе Н. Сыздыкова и др.). Достоевсковеды Казахстана в XXI веке продолжают изучение творчества писателя.

Ключевые слова: казахско-русские литературные связи, автор, мотив, культурный трансфер, художественный перевод, степь, музей, повесть, записки, дневник

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Fyodor Dostoevsky, the most mysterious Russian writer of the 19th century, in the 21st century continues to be the focus of attention of literary critics in many countries. Researchers from Russia, the United States of America, Great Britain, Romania, Hungary are aiming to unravel the mystery of the tragic world created by the genius of Russian literature, to comprehend the artistic dialectic of mind and heart.

Study of Dostoevsky in Kazakhstan is one of the important directions in the study of Russian classical literature. Kazakhstan entered the fate of Dostoevsky through the tragic period of exile in Semipalatinsk. In 1854, Dostoevsky was enlisted in the Seventh Siberian Line Battalion. The writer spent almost five years on the Kazakh land. In 1971, on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of his birth, a literary and memorial museum was opened in the house where the exiled prose writer lived. The project of the architect Vlasov, according to which the building was built, was the 27th version. It was decided to build the building in the form of an open book: the broken line of the walls is the pages, the end of the building is the spine. In 1977, a bronze sculpture “Fyodor Dostoevsky and Shokan Vali-khanov” by the Moscow sculptor D. Elbakidze appeared next to the museum.

In the house that belonged to the postman Lepukhin, the writer in January 1857 for eight silver rubles a month rented the upper floor: the dining room, the living room, the study and the room of Mariya Isaeva – Dostoevskaya. During the period from 1857 to 1859, the stories “Uncle’s Dream”, “The Village of Stepanchikovo and Its Inhabitants”, the first chapters of “Notes from the Dead House” were written.

Cultural transfer and literary exchange

In the year of the 200th anniversary of the birth of Dostoevsky “it is difficult to talk about the complete study of the Semipalatinsk period of the writer’s life, a difficult period filled with suffering, soldiery, the first manifestations of an incurable disease (epilepsy), love for a married woman, constant lack of funds and eternal debts. During this period, he discovered through the eyes of those people who live in this region. In correspondence with his friend Chokan Valikhanov,

Dostoevsky urged to write the word *Steppe* with a capital letter”, emphasizes in the greeting “Two centuries of Fyodor Dostoevsky” to the exhibition “F.M. Dostoevsky. Episodes”, which opened in April 2021 in Semey, Professor, Doctor of Philology B. Mamraev. The exhibition was prepared by the Dostoevsky Museum and the Russian House in Nur-Sultan with the support of the Russian Embassy in Kazakhstan and the State Atomic Energy Agency “Rosatom”.

Dostoevsky “raised one of the main tasks of humanistic literature – the education of human morality, teaching him compassion, without which it is difficult to be called a full-fledged person. This formula: a full-fledged person – *tolyk adam* – we meet at Abai. A person cannot live without faith. The basis of any faith is, first of all, love for a person, and it should unite people,” thinks B. Mamraev.

In 1989, the All-Union Dostoevsky Readings were held in Semipalatinsk. The report of N.I. Levchenko “The circle of Semipalatinsk acquaintances of F.M. Dostoevsky”, contains information about the Isaev family. As you know, they met in Astrakhan, M. Isaeva studied at the women’s gymnasium. The speaker provided new information about A.I. Isaeva, M. Isaeva, her father D.S. Constant, which I found in the archives of Astrakhan and Omsk, and the circle of acquaintances of the writer in Semipalatinsk was determined as follows: “...was quite extensive. It has 85 people” [1. P. 70].

The fund of the museum in Semipalatinsk has over 21 thousand museum exhibits, including unique collections of autographed books, memoirs, periodicals of the 19th-20th centuries, manuscripts and documents, rare photographs. Among the exhibits are the first editions of the novels “Crime and Punishment”, “Teenager”, “The Brothers Karamazov”.

A notable contribution to the study of Dostoevsky’s work was made by the participants of the International Scientific and Practical Conference “Dostoevsky and World Culture: Artistic Heritage and Spirituality”, held in Semipalatinsk in October 2004. The word about Dostoevsky was spoken by A.D. Dostoevsky, who emphasized, in particular, “that not everyone who has read Dostoevsky knows and can imagine that path from the scaffold, through the Omsk penal servitude, the Semipalatinsk soldiery, the path that Dostoevsky took. And it seems to me that if it were not for this path, you and I would have had no need to get together today. And if not for all those temptations, all those hardships, all that abyss of human existence that he knew, then, probably, there would not have been his “Notes from the House of the Dead”, “Crime and Punishment”, “The Brothers Karamazov” ... I came to Semipalatinsk from St. Petersburg, however, having done a slightly different path than in his time Fyodor Mikhailovich, in order to bow from all the Dostoevsky to this land on which the “resurrection from the dead” took place, the spiritual rebirth of the greatest genius of world literature” [2. P. 7].

Special thanks to Alexei and Dmitry Dostoevsky were expressed by the organizers of the Dostoevsky day UK, held in London from November 11 to December 18, 2016, in the year of Dostoevsky. Dostoevsky's days in the capital of Great Britain were dedicated to the 150th anniversary of the publication of Dostoevsky's "Crime and Punishment". At the University College London's School of Slavonic and East European Studies (UCL SSEES) in the Bloomsbury studio, the grand opening of Dostoevsky day UK (DDUK. Crime and Punishment – 150) took place. From the English side, DDUK was curated by Dr. Vladimir Alexander Smith-Mesa, a representative of the London University of Education Library. A. Sorokin made a welcoming speech on behalf of Rossotrudnichestvo in Great Britain.

On the birthday of a world-famous writer – November 11, on the first day of the opening of a series of events dedicated to the anniversary, the participants of the International Scientific Conference listened not only to interesting scientific reports, but also watched the film "The Great Russian Writer Fyodor Dostoevsky", in which the Semipalatinsk period of the life of the classic was shown as well.

Raskolnikov's monologue "Is there no blood?" was brilliantly read by Jonathan Curry, a famous performer of the main roles in classical performances (Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet by W. Shakespeare) and modern repertoire. The protagonist of the novel "Crime and Punishment" painfully searched for answers to questions, challenging society and himself: "Am I a trembling creature or do I have the right?"

The academic presentations of the participants of "Dostoevsky day UK" and academics of the Department of Slavic and European Studies of the University College London were on various topics. They talked about the first editions of Dostoevsky's works in English and how copies of his books, donated to the British Library, Oxford and Cambridge libraries, are kept. Based on the materials of feature films based on the works of Dostoevsky, stored in the National Film Archive, a report by Nigel Arthur (BFI National Film Archive) was built. The author of the report analyzed not only films and footage, but also compared posters, their technique, colors, textures.

Cathy McAteer (University of Bristol) intrigued the audience with the title of the report: "Who is the author of the novel: a writer or a translator?" Dostoevsky into English on the example of the work of the translator Davida Magarshacka, a native of Russia, who moved to London, learned English and earns a living by translating. Actively in the process of translation, he was helped by his spouse, whom he never mentioned or thanked anywhere. Translating Dostoevsky's texts, he modernized them in order to make them interesting for the English reader.

“Days of Dostoevsky in Great Britain” included various events: theatrical performances of fragments of stories by Dostoevsky’s “Netochka Nezvanova”, “White Nights”; screenings of feature films “The Idiot”, “The Brothers Karamazov”, “Crime and Punishment” of different years. The organizers of “Dostoevsky day UK” expressed their gratitude for the active assistance in holding the events to representatives of Rossotrudnichestvo in Great Britain (Russian Cultural Center in London), director of the “Likhachev Foundation” A. Kobak and program coordinator E. Vitenberg, director of the museum F.M. Dostoevsky in St. Petersburg N. Ashimbaeva and curator V. Biron and A. Knyazeva, director of the Institute of Russian Literature – Pushkin House of the Russian Academy of Sciences A. Bagno and the head of the group for the study of creativity F. Dostoevsky K. Barsht and many others. English researchers of Dostoevsky expressed their gratitude to the International Dostoevsky Society and its active participants at the University of British Columbia, Toronto, and Argentina.

Cultural transfer, therefore, presents itself as an indispensable component of a comprehensive analysis and study of the text of the works of art in the original language and in translation.

It is interesting to reveal how the work of Charles Dickens influenced the artistic world of Dostoevsky. We will not find information about this in the expositions of the Charles Dickens Museum. But the location of the museum, the area in the capital of Great Britain, where the house is located, allows you to imagine and understand a lot about his childhood, the work of the English prose writer, to trace the origins of the themes, motives. In this regard, the tasks for the future are formulated by N. Ashimbayeva in the article “Reflections of the artistic world of Dickens in the work of Dostoevsky”: “Many characters and situations of Dostoevsky’s works are polygenetic and often simultaneously turn out to be quoted in relation to various sources, many associated with the world of Dickens’s novels. These are reflections of the “Shop of Antiquities” in “The Humiliated and Insulted”, “Notes of the Pickwick Club” – in the “Village of Stepanchikovo”. In the novel *The Idiot*, Mr. Pickwick, at the direction of Dostoevsky himself, can be regarded as one of the prototypes of Prince Myshkin. However, with Pickwick, perhaps the only one when Dostoevsky revealed the connection of his character with the hero of Dickens, and such a hero who still does not look too much like Pickwick, while Dostoevsky has a lot of Dickensian situations, which he himself in no sources directly links with Dickens” [3. P. 47–48].

The concept of collective identity, including alien, other elements, provides a new perception of the literary text in the context of the world literary process. Internal differences make it possible to perceive in a different way the phenomena of culture, the literary text.

Kazakhstan-siberian period of Dostoevsky's life and work

A distinctive feature of the prose of the classic of Russian literature of the 19th century F. Dostoevsky consists in showing their heroes in the most intense moments of their lives, in a tense internal struggle with themselves. The characters of the heroes are revealed in acute dramatic situations, unexpected actions, with particular completeness conveying mental crises and challenges.

Of particular importance for revealing the feelings of Dostoevsky's heroes is the movement of artistic time, in which three layers can be distinguished: the past, the present and the future. The writer quite often seeks to show that in addition to the "general" time inherent in the entire action of the novel and moving according to the laws of its inner world, there are also "private", or, rather, individual streams of time, which coincide with this general time and, together with those diverge. The case of a countercurrent flow of artistic time, when the writer creates a kind of counterpoint, speeding up one flow of time and slowing down another, is quite often included in the narrative. And this is what creates the tension of the emotional atmosphere of the work, draws the reader into it, helps him to feel the moods and experiences of the heroes.

M. Kushnikova in the book "The Dark Man of the Writer of Dostoevsky (Riddles and Interpretations)" explores the Siberian period in the life of Dostoevsky, writes about Kuznetsk, where on February 6, 1857, not just a wedding in Odigitrievskaya church took place, almost all his life and not all the work of Fyodor Mikhailovich" [4. P. 8]. Isaeva, according to M. Kushnikova, "was consonant with Dostoevsky in the strength of the spirit ... It was with her that Dostoevsky learned the priceless bitterness of the exposure of the human soul – perhaps from here, in all his work, unbearably unprotected, as if" peeped "depths" [4. P. 17].

In "Uncle's Dream" the writer reflects "a true or imaginary scandalous relationship between M. Isaeva and Vergunov" [5. P. 31]. The comic novel "Uncle's Dream", as planned by the author, turned out to be by no means cheerful. The work was published in the spring of 1859, "at the very time when Dostoevsky was going to leave Siberia. The novel was published in March, and then Dostoevsky confessed to his brother that he would like to leave Semipalatinsk in April, but the plans were not destined to come true "on the occasion of the slowdown in the resignation". Leaving "Semiproklyatinsk" – as he called this city, Dostoevsky hoped for a break in relations between Isaeva and Vergunov" [5. P. 33]. Hence the painful love triangle in his works of art.

The comic novel splits into "Uncle's Dream" and "Stepanchikovo Village". In Uncle's Dream, the writer laughs first of all at himself (the old, deceived prince). The time of the author and the time of the character are different.

Fyodor Dostoevsky's "Kuznetsk crown" in his novels, letters and bibliographic sources of the past century" by M. Kushnikova, K. Tillo and V. Togulev is a new word in the science of Dostoevsky. Comparing the "Diary of 1867", "Memoirs" by A.G. Dostoevskaya and the book "Dostoevsky in the image of his daughter L. Dostoevskaya", memoirs of A.E. Wrangel and the memoirs of P.P. Seme-nov-Tyan-Shansky, other sources, the authors of the study are trying to figure out what role was played in the life and work of the famous Russian writer by his first wife, relations with whom are assessed differently by the authors of the diaries and memoirs mentioned: pity, friendship in love. One cannot but agree with V. Lvov's opinion that the authors of Kuznetsky Wreath "opened the veil of mystery over many facts from Dostoevsky's life and thereby allowed us to better understand his multifaceted personality... Invoking new, previously unknown archival documents and carefully examining correspondence and works of art of the great writer, researchers literally bit by bit restore the exciting history of his Kuznetsk period of life associated with Isaeva" [6. P. 602].

M. Kushnikova, K. Tillo, V. Togulev note the striking similarity of circumstances in "The Eternal Husband" and especially in "Notes from the Underground" with the realities of Dostoevsky's connection with Isaeva. "The testimony of Strakhov opens our eyes to many things. And to the actual "murder of Isayeva" (not by medical treatment abroad, while FM was staying with Polina, in particular, in Italy, where Isaev was urgently subject to take), and to an unseemly position in relation to Isaeva and Vergunov, accused by him in adultery (for the accuser is only Dostoevsky, and no one else is proving their guilt), and on the apt characterization of Isaeva, who noticed the "convict", dishonorable motives of her husband's actions" [5. P. 582].

M. Kushnikova, K. Tillo and V. Togulev identify the main themes and motives in the art of Dostoevsky, illuminating them through the prism of personal relations between the writer and his first wife. Thus, the theme of life and death in "The Idiot" and "Eternal Husband", as well as in "Crime and Punishment", is a cross-cutting motive. Rogozhin, fraternized with Myshkin, tries to kill him, but kills Nastasya Filippovna – the object of their mutual love. Trusotsky, hugging and kissing Velchaninov, tries to stab him with a razor. "Memento mori", coupled with the grievances of the "deceived husband" – that logical bridge that connects him until the end of his days with such a stormy and menacingly saturated period of his biography that passed under the sign of Isaeva" [5. P. 422].

Furthermore, quite often the writer gave the characters the names of the prototypes. In the novel "Demons" in the chapter "At Tikhon", which was not included in the final version of the novel, there is a remarkable scene of the marriage of Marya Lebyadkina, whose fiancé is glad that he managed to "beat off" the bride from Nikolai Stavrogin. "Under Marya Lebyadkina," the researchers

note, “Maria Isaeva is quite transparent, under the fiancé – Dostoevsky, and Nikolai Stavrogin is associated with Nikolai Vergunov” [5. P. 450].

The narrative structure of Dostoevsky is defined by the interweaving of the past and the present. The essence and originality of the novel chronotope lies in the fact that it is focused on the study and reproduction of the fate of the main characters. The writer “refuses continuous historical and biographical time, but concentrates his action at the points of crises, fractures and catastrophes. Actions are concentrated within the chronotope of the “threshold” (at the door, at the entrance, on the stairs, in the corridor, etc.), the metaphor of which can be a living room or a city square” [7. P. 292].

Conclusion

Dostoevsky is considered a man of the path. He attached “such exceptional importance to well-known subjects that they wandered from novel to novel with him” [5. P. 59]. Unfortunately, not all local historians fully reproduce the “Semipalatinsk” sources that shed light on the authenticity of what is happening in the fates of Dostoevsky and Isaeva.

It is necessary, in our opinion, to comprehensively study the history of the creation of works of art by the Russian writer, especially those related to his Kazakh and Siberian periods, “to try to reconstruct the psychology of Dostoevsky and the motives of his actions based on his own novels” [5. P. 67]. Arguably, the Semipalatinsk period is the time of the return to literary creativity for Dostoevsky.

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