

The Importance of the Iconic Poetics: Based on the Works of N.V. Gogol and F.M. Dostoyevsky

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Abstract The article is devoted to the aesthetically valuable picture of the world in the poetics of N.V. Gogol and F.M. Dostoevsky. As well as icon of the world with iconic images belonging to her which serves as a way of demonstrating and expressing the tune full of divine grace. The discovering of the Russian icon began and the interest to this phenomenon arose at the beginning of the twentieth century. Various researches concerning painting and icon painting, as well as literature and philology, philosophy and theology appeared. Many literature researches were dedicated to the “iconology,” the study about the icon, combining problems connected with an image, icon painting and icon worship. The comparison of an icon and a picture, icon painting and religious painting, icon canon and the creative freedom took an important place. When considering icons from the aesthetic point of view, unusual opportunities for studying both the Orthodox culture and elegant literature appear. The “icon” proceeds to the literary context and as a general idea embraces a level of mind, defines the type of the mindset. The “iconicity” becomes not just a religious art or architecture term, but also a term about a piece of art. Therefore, the iconicity of the verbal types of art is difficult and complex, but very relevant and topical.

Keywords picture of the world; an icon of the world; iconic artistic image; tune

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Introduction

The artistic iconicity, according to Dunayev, Yesaulov, Kazantseva, Sergeyeva, Shkuropat, is connected to the iconic poetics and iconic aesthetics. *The principle of the world perception* (Lepakhin 164) is represented by the iconicity in Lepakhin's works. The learning of the world and the outlook can be various—subjective, natural or centered on the icon, essential.

One can see, study and describe the world as a picture or as an icon of God, as a work of a perfect Artist: "...the iconic attitude towards the world is a primary intuition to the world which finds the complete outlook and mindset particularly in the iconicity—in Jesus Christ as the materialized Logos and Image" (164).

The essence and the substance of an icon is not the picture of a Divine, but a denotation of a person's participation in the spiritual life. Fundamentally, the icon is ontological, and its ontologicity means that the icon is an "existential revelation of the Prototype"; it "is an uplifted image showing the way to the Kingdom of God" (Kazantseva 166). As a result of the icon attitude towards the world, the forefront of the artwork research is taken not by the aesthetically valuable picture of the world but the icon of the world and the iconic images belonging to it. What is the core of the iconic image? The iconic image is as close to the Prototype as possible, aspires to the unity with the Prototype, and that "assumes the personal iconicity of the creator" (Lepakhin 164).

In the wide sense, the iconicity has a fundamental-ontological character; it is identical to the order in which "all the sense bearing completeness of the physical presence" of the grace "is in the evidence" (Domashchenko 125). Thus, the order is not available for a subjectified mind, it is not empirical, undividable, but complete and "is embraced by the fulfillment of the whole world's self-demonstration" (129). Belonging to the ontological event makes a person whole, completely learning himself/herself and the world, and the piece of verbal art becomes truly poetic, complete only then, "when in beauty of the images there is at least a reflection of that Beauty, which fills the order" (114).

In the strict sense, the iconicity serves as one of the ways of demonstration and expression of the grace-filled order, which acquires its difference in the aesthetic form. It is worth noting that the iconic pictures affect the human, "dedicating" his/her sight (according to John Damascene), and as a piece of art they provoke the aesthetical feelings, attracting the person with its beauty to the contemplation of the picture. Icons, "like a meadow," please the sight and insensibly disclose "the glory of God to the soul" (Rev. John of Damascus 69).

Icons differ from pictures by a special spiritual beauty, that is, not all the aesthetically beautiful pictures or pieces of art are iconic. Besides, as Lepakhin notes, “by the inside contents the image can be demonical,” the piece of art can be imaginative, but not iconic.

That is to say, the concept of an icon, having an impressive pluridimensionality (icon (greek εἰκών) means “a picture and ‘an image in thoughts’,” according to venerable John Damascene, “an icon is at the same time a semblance (ομοιωμα), an image (παραδειγμα) and a print (εκτυπωμα) of what is painted, turned into an icon (εικονιζομενον)” (Sadovnikova) and an “icon image” (Lepakhin), which “embraces and unites various levels of existence; the material world and the spiritual world” (Sadovnikova), because “a true icon or an iconic image is always a duality of the visual (icon) and the invisible (image), the divine and the humanlike, the earthly and the heavenly” (Lepakhin 133). The iconicity serves as “a principle... of interrelation between the image and the prototype, when the prototype is spiritually present in the image and connected with it synergically” (163).

In an iconic image two concepts, mentioned above, combine—“the icon” (visible) and “the image” (invisible). In this case, the iconic poetics is meant to overcome the division of our mind by uniting with the ontological vector the earthly (eventful) and the spiritual (timeless and everlasting).

Focusing at the iconicity of an image, we acquire a living spiritual fusion, present in the piece of art, and the iconic poetics here serves as Vergil leading lost Dante out of the condition of blindness by the picturesqueness to seeing the true.

A piece of art, conceived as a “verbal icon,” by the artful word materializes the image of the Prototype and requires a special treatment, which is examining the images in an inverted perspective, as the icon assumes it. It is obvious that “...the straight perspective reproduce the aiming of art to fully correspond in the imitation to the visible forms of objects... the inverted perspective leads us from the objects to the world of prototypes” (Shkuropat 279). Pavel Florensky, having studied the visual symbols in detail, notes that the straight perspective appears as the opposite of the inverted perspective when one’s sight is opposed to the “Eye of Omniscience” of the Lord. The straight perspective is egocentric; it makes the human a measure of all things and puts it in the center of the world. The inverted perspective supposes a principally different understanding of life and art, in which “the visible pictured secrets” are outside the borders of human sight and mind.

Therefore, the picture of the world is on the top (the straight perspective), “is embodied in the work by the graphic and the expressive means of this type of art. The more artistic there means are and the higher the degree of similarity of the cre-

ated images is, the brighter picture conceptions they rise in a person” (283).

The icon differs from the picture by being “a spiritual core” of the work, “the inverted perspective” world, which shows itself, becomes seen from the visible images of the art world. “The inverted side” of the work is meant to create a completely different impression from the seen picture of the world—“the outside form” of the work, which just “extensionally illustrates the vents of the outside world, pictures the reality with big and small touches, observing it... from the straight perspective”(286).

The icon, identical to the order, is silently present in the work. The ability to hear the voice of the icon and be impressed by what you hear can be acquired if the spiritual eyes open for seeing and hearing. It is possible inside a questioning mind, which is, as opposed to the imaginative, not methodological. It begins outside the subjective orientation and objectifying approach to a poetry work. The questioning mind opens “a perspective for a thought trying to answer to the nature of the tongue” (Aksakov 36).

Therefore, the picture of the world can be analyzed inside the “eidos” theory of literature, which means that an inside form of the work, filled with symbolic sense aesthetic, the image (the eidos) becomes the object of interpretation. The eidos discussion “is concentrated on the life entity, embodied in the word and clearly seen for an imaginative mind” (Domashchenko 15).

Clearly imagining the living image of the living reality, the disunion of the seen and the essence is overcome in the borders of the eidos literature theory; and the poetry is understood as presence of the idea in the sensual thinking.

According to G.W.F. Hegel’s words, “...the power of the poetic art is in the fact that poetry forms itself an internal content, not entering the area of real external forms and the developing of a melody, and by this it turns external objectivity of other arts into internal—the spirit discloses it for presenting in the same look it is given and has to remain in the spirit” (Hegel 194). The main thing for the eidos discussion is the artistic image, the most sensual thought, considered and analyzed as the internal form of the work. And the icon of the world cannot be analyzed, although we can conditionally speak about iconic poetics as a way of analyzed an artwork, but it has to be more precise—we can touch the icon because it keeps the possibility of spiritual revelation, refreshing the memory about the Prototype.

The thing is, the difficult questions of poetical ontology and iconic poetics are a part of protodiscursive theory (acc. to Domashchenko), which consider an image not from the aesthetic, but the ontological, iconic point of view. The aesthetical is matched with the sensual field, at the same time when the poetic word has secret

meanings, “which precede the birth of aesthetic consciousness” (Domashchenko 142). This provides the possibility to speak about the iconicity of the image in a work of art.

It has to be specified when a word can be called an icon. First of all, this hypostatic Word (Logos)—God the Son. “... the eyelids are made by the Word of God,—writes the Apostle Paul,—so out of the invisible the visible originated” (Heb, 11:3). However, as Liepakhin writes, God the Son is not only Logos, but also “an image of the invisible God” (Col, 1:15; sr. 2 Cor, 4:4). “... the world created by God is not only logosian, but also iconic; in their internal ontological structure logos and image, word and icon are identical. That is why the word can be considered as an icon” (Lepakhin). So, the word is able to connect the two existences—the visible and the invisible, two worlds—the sensual and the noumenal (Sergeeva 249).

As for the icon in a piece of art, it serves not just as a household item, an insignificant detail, but has a symbolic meaning which is an important part for complete philological analysis of a literary text. An icon with all its artistic features, “certain elements of the art language, composition, aesthetic, paint, principles of drawing the human body and face, finally, certain technique are used in a) the storyline; b) the developing of the plot; c) structuring the composition of the work; d) creating the image and the personality of a character, a certain hero (in poetry—a persona); e) the characteristic of the heroes’ and characters’ mindset; f) picturing and interpreting the relations between certain heroes and characters; g) author stating some aesthetic problems; h) illustrating the distinctive features of Russian culture, Russian mentality, ‘the Russian soul’ ” (Lepakhin).

It is obvious that the interrelations between an icon and a word are deep; there is the exceptional breadth and the formal richness of the mutual influence of the icon (the image) and the word (the image).

The Iconic Motives of the Work of N.V. Gogol

The iconic motives and their discovering in N.V. Gogol’s works have been described in our monograph, *The Literary-Artistic Style and the verbal tune in N.V. Gogol’s creation* (Liubetska). In this study, we will describe the type of the interrelation of the iconicity and picturesqueness in the writer’s literary works, and what can be discovered in N.V. Gogol’s works thanks to the iconic poetics.

N.V. Gogol’s works are often considered as “picturesque artworks,” like bright pictures, in which the writer intensifies the visual influence on his reader many times, and there is the appeal to both the external look and the internal contents of a person. As for N.V. Gogol, a piece of art is connected with another “invisible” piece

of art, which can only be disclosed to an inner, “spiritual eye.”

In N.V. Gogol’s works, the picturesqueness seamlessly harmonize with the author’s religiousness, and that shows the “personal iconicity of the creator.” N.V. Gogol, as no one else, can be called with M. Tsvetaeva’s words “a poet with history,” the poet of the theme, who knows what to write about and where to go, such a poet always has an aim (“a poet-arrow”). N.V. Gogol knew about his destiny and wrote about it in his article *Four letters to different people about “Dead Souls”* with such words: “God created me and did not keep my destiny in secret. I was not born to be a sensation in the literature field at all. My duty is simpler and closer; my duty is something every person should think of first of all, not only me alone. My duty is a soul and other matters of life. Therefore, the character of my actions should be tenable, and I have to create tenably” (Gogol 133). Art, according to N.V. Gogol, is necessary for correlation of one’s own life with Christ’s commandments, transfiguration of the soul and the spiritual action in the interest of Russia’s resurrection.

In *Selected places from correspondence with friends*, N.V. Gogol formed clearly his opinion on the true art, destined to use Christian objects as art objects. It is important that the true piece of art causes people to feel adoration, winged sentiments, prayer, that is why N.V. Gogol starts writing not for a sitting room, but for the temple of human’s soul.

N.V. Gogol, as a “poet with history,” “too large in scope and verve,” feels too tight in his “I” and he expands this “I” so that it “merges with the edge of the horizon.” To overcome your human “I” means to realize your boundaries. The subjective consciousness, iconically cognizing the world, opens its ontological dependence on the transcendental beginning. *Dead Souls*, as N. V. Gogol writes in a letter to A.S. Danilevsky in May 1842, “is the a little pale antrum of that great poem that is built in me and will finally solve the mystery of my existence.” The human “I” of the “poet with history” “becomes the ‘I’ of the country—the nation—the given continent—the century—the millennium—the concave ... The theme for such a poet is the reason for the birth of a new self, which is not always human. Their whole earthly journey is a series of reincarnations ... They seemed to have absorbed all the days of creation” (Tsvetaeva).

The theme (reformation of malice, the resurrection of souls “in a purified and bright form” (Gogol 131) and the occasion for the birth of “the new yourself” (“desire to be the best” (127) for N.V. Gogol is realized in the poem *Dead Souls* in which the sensual (picture of the world) is connected with the spiritual (the icon of the world).

N.V. Gogol called his work just a poem; he wanted to emphasize its importance and significance, understanding it as “the extreme top, the crown and the limit to the

highest works of the human mind” (Trediakovsky). *Dead souls* are often compared with Homer’s *Iliad*. And the similarity is emphasized by N.V. Gogol—the same scale, intention—to embrace everything in the spiritual expanse.

In the poem the writer did “an analysis of the human soul,” and through the human life seen more closely, N.V. Gogol came to Christ and was amazed “by Him first of all human wisdom and the knowledge of the soul, unheard of before” (Priest N. Bulgakov 12).

The iconicity of *Dead Souls* can be observed even in the title of the poem. Before N.V. Gogol, the phrase “dead souls” was not used, it was generally accepted in Orthodoxy that the soul was immortal, and how to determine what the “dead soul” was, was not clear. The most obvious meaning of the title of the poem *Dead Souls* is associated with the “adventures of Chichikov,” with his speculation—buying the dead, but existing in the paper “disguise” of the peasants. These “souls” have not only their names inscribed in the “census list,” but also characters, fate, history of life. It is even reported how death happened to them. At the same time, the dead appear more alive than the characters in the poem, spiritually dead landowners and officials. The list of men resembles the Book of Life, in which actions of each person are written.

Thus, it bares the meaning of the idea of the Last Judgment, where people will be judged by how they fulfilled their earthly purpose. The peasants who died (the Cartwright Mikheyev, the carpenter Stepan Probka, the brick-maker Milushkin, the shoemaker Maxim Telyatnikov, the seller Yeremey Sorokoplekhin) were masters of their work and deserved the Kingdom of Heaven by fulfilling their purpose. However, N.V. Gogol’s task was to indicate the true path to the lost souls, as Christ “came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance” (Mat., 9:13), to awaken them to eternal life. At the same time, the author, referring to the “reader of high society,” argued that the person him/herself must take the first step towards spiritual rebirth, which begins with a discerning attitude to himself and a respectful attitude to the “Russian word”: “... they want the Russian language to suddenly descend itself from the clouds... and would sit them right on their tongues, and they would have nothing more than to just open their mouths and expose him” (Gogol 171).

It is obvious that the concept of “dead souls” in Gogol’s poem constantly changes its meaning, moving from one semantic plan to another. The artistic space of the first part of the poem consists of two worlds: the real world, visible, where the main character is Chichikov, and the ideal world, intelligible (lyrical digressions), where the narrator is the main character. Lyrical digressions allow to reveal the spiritual meaning of the work, seeing the icon of the world based on the prototype

of the “future century.” Lyrical digressions are insignificant in the initial chapters of the poem, but by its end, the lyrical element completely captures the work. At the end of the fifth chapter, a significant author’s argument about the nature of the Russian language is given: “Like a myriad of churches, monasteries with domes, chapters, and crosses are scattered on holy, pious Russia, so myriad tribes, generations, peoples crowd, mottled and torn across the face of the earth. And every nation... full of the creative abilities of the soul... distinguished itself... with its own word... but there is no word that would be so presumptuous, smartly, would have escaped from the very heart, that would boil and beat like an aptly spoken Russian word” (113). Glorifying the felicitous Russian word, N.V. Gogol also glorifies the word of God, Logos, in which spiritual instruction is concentrated.

Further, the writer looked at “all the hugely rushing life... through the laughter visible to the world and the invisible, unknown tears” (139) and relates the life of a person to the image of the road. Along with the picture display of reality, symbolic inserts about the path and the meaning of human life appear: “And a person could descend to such insignificance, pettiness, nastiness... everything can happen to a person... Take it with you, going from harsh youthful years to harsh courage, take with you all the human movements, do not leave them on the road...” (132). Obviously, this fragment on the preservation of spiritual purity contains a reference to the Gospel instruction: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” (Mat, 5:8).

A further search for a way to save the soul continues in chapter ten, where the direct question appears: “... where is the exit, where is the road? Now the current generation sees everything clearly, marvels at delusions, laughs at the foolishness of their ancestors, it’s not for nothing that this chronicle is scribbled with heavenly fire, that every letter screams in it, that the piercing finger is everywhere looking at it, at the current generation; but the current generation laughs and arrogantly, proudly begins a series of new delusions, over which descendants will also laugh later” (200).

In search of “eternal truth,” humanity chose “twisted” roads. Although they were “narrow,” they turned out to be “impassable” and led away from the road straight, “lit up by the sun and lit up all night with lights” (219). Let us compare it with the verses from the Matthew’s Evangel: “Enter by the narrow gate; because the gate is wide and the path is wide, leading to destruction, and many go by it; because the gate is narrow and the way is narrow, leading to life, and few find it” (Mat. 7, 13:14). Trying to show the humankind a way to God, N.V. Gogol appears as a prophet, speaking through a parable (the adventures of Chichikov) preaching: “For what the word must be harbored? Who, if not the author, should tell the holy truth? You are afraid of a deep-eyed gaze ... which of you, full of Christian humility,

is not public, but in silence, alone, in moments of solitary conversations with yourself, will deepen this difficult question inside your own soul: “Is there any part of Chichikov in me?” (Gogol 256-257). The last chapter created an image of the road to light and to a miracle, to rebirth (from portrait to iconic), to the second book rise (“be not dead, but living souls”).

The Iconic Art of F.M. Dostoevsky’ Works

F.M. Dostoevsky, feeling the presence of the sacred, becomes a prescient writer in Russian literature. The works of F.M. Dostoevsky are imbued with a concord that contains the fullness of truth. Joining the concord causes the iconic art of F.M. Dostoevsky, combining a high ideal and authentic realism. “The connection of F.M. Dostoevsky with the icon is subconscious, he does not write about the icon, but the sermons carried by the icon and the broadcasts of F.M. Dostoevsky are so close in spirit that it cannot be explained simply by chance” (Riabushinsky).

The flat visible objective world of reality is only one of the components of the world that F.M. Dostoevsky recreates. The world is perceived by the writer as multifaceted, there is an invisible mediation between the worlds—the real and the unreal. The visible (picture of the world) is very significant and important not only in itself, as it concludes other higher meanings (the icon of the world), a connection is made between the person and the High World. Actually iconic—appears as one of the means of spiritual knowledge of the world, not depicting anything, but showing the invisible in a work of art.

In F.M. Dostoevsky’s, as well as in N.V. Gogol’s works there is an iconic consciousness. However, N.V. Gogol is more Logos, his life and work itself is “verbalized,” the Word is intended to literally transform the world. F.M. Dostoevsky demarcates the artistic word and the Word of the Bible. The word for F.M. Dostoevsky is an intermediary, a substance testifying to the symbolic (canonical) sense of direct existence. The word forms modern life, testifying to its sacral meaning (Virolainen). Consequently, in describing the world, the writer does not simply show it in the form of objective reality, narration of events, but tries to create an intermediary space between the world of the sensual (earthly) and the invisible world beyond the limits of the sensual, visual-figurative (celestial). Such a spatial icon is filled with the presence of the fertile harmony.

Icons are an indispensable attribute of the nineteenth century Russian interior, that is why they appear so often in the works of various writers and, of course, in F.M. Dostoevsky. The emergence of the icon in the work and the meaning of the mention of it should be sought on a symbolic level, because “on the one hand, we

have evidence of the presence of this object in a certain situation, on the other—systematic references to it” (Guido Carpi 229). Thus, the role of the icon in the work should be taken into account, recognizing the symbolic meaning of its image. Let us try to understand some of the “scenes with icons” in the artistic world of F.M. Dostoevsky.

In the story *Krotkaya* (the original name is *Girl with the Image*) the heroine hock her icon in the dolly shop. Only the framing is accepted on pawn, but the icon itself appears next to other images in the red corner of the narrator, “enters the circle of the keepers of the home” of the person (229) which *Krotkaya* marries.

But just before the tragic outcome, the housemaid Lukerya noticed in the *Krotkaya*’s room that “the image... was taken out, it stood on the table in front of her, and it looked as if the mistress was only now praying to it” (229). Being freed from the influence of her husband, the *Krotkaya* (girl with the image) “goes out of the window” with her icon in her hands.

In *The Writer’s Diary* (October 1876, the chapter *Two suicides*), F.M. Dostoevsky told about a real fact—about the suicide of the dressmaker M. Borisova, which apparently became the plot basis of the story *Krotkaya*: “... she fell to the ground, holding the image in her hands. This image in the hands is a strange and unheard of feature in suicide! This is some kind of meek, humble suicide. Here apparently, even was no complaint or reproach: simply—it became impossible to live, ‘God did not want’ and—she died, having prayed” (Dostoevsky 332). The writer points to the symbolic significance of this episode: “About other things, no matter how simple they may seem, you cannot stop thinking for a long time, seem to be imagining something, and it even is your fault. This meek, self-exterminating soul unwittingly torments the thought” (332). M. Borisova’s suicide is compared and contrasted to the suicide of A.I. Herzen’s seventeen-year-old daughter: “This is the death that reminded me of the suicide of the emigrant’s daughter that I was told about in the summer. But what, however, are two different creatures, just both from two different planets! And what two different deaths! And which of these souls suffered more on the earth, if only such an idle question is appropriate and permissive?” (332). The second suicide occurs “as a result of,—according to Dostoevsky,—one’s perverted theory of upbringing in the parental home, upbringing with an erroneous concept of the higher meaning and goals of life, with the intentional extermination in the soul of her every belief in her immortality” (Guido Carpi 230). As Guido Carpi points out, the attitude towards death and the afterlife is different for the “Europeanized elite” and the representative of the “popular masses”: “For the daughter of the people, suicide is an act of obedience to God’s liberty, while for

the daughter of the baseless intellectual class it remains a simple self-destructive act” (230).

The icon for F.M. Dostoevsky is the accelerator of fate. Duplicity and mask are opposed to the image and face in the work of F.M. Dostoevsky.

Thus, the image of Krotkaya is contrasted by F.M. Dostoevsky with the image of her husband—he was rejected by society and therefore became a cruel person. As N.A. Dobrolyubov rightly notes: “... People who are offended by human dignity, are showed by Dostoevsky in two main types: meek and violent... Meek people do not make any protest anymore, vail under the strain of their position and seriously begin to assure themselves that they are nothing, nothing, and that if His Excellency speaks to them, then they must consider themselves happy and blessed. Others, on the contrary, seeing that their right, their legitimate demands, that what is sacred to them, with which they entered the world, is trampled upon and not recognized, they want to break with everyone around them, to become alien to everything, to be sufficient for themselves and from anyone in the world to ask and accept neither services, nor fraternal feelings, nor a kind look. It goes without saying that they do not manage to endure character, and therefore they are always dissatisfied with themselves, curse themselves and others, conceive suicide, etc.” (Dobrolyubov).

It seems that the meek person is not the man, who does not oppose the pressure and preserve the dignity, but is Krotkaya such a person according to F.M. Dostoevsky? Preserving the dignity, the character and finding your own place in this world are her main task.

The retired officer, banished from regiment because of cowardice, then—homeless beggar, and now—successful moneylender, pawnbroker asserts himself, humiliating and trying to capture Krotkaya completely.

In Krotkaya, the main character felt the capability of understanding all his mysterious suffering and of perceiving his image, given that he met the same poor and suffering creature as he was. After the shameful banishment from regiment, the narrator, having a proud ego, separates himself from other people, cruelly despising them and despising all human sufferings and troubles. The character is going to “increase” his conditions with tears and suffering of other wretched people, showing his pride and coldness like a demon, not like a human.

It is no coincidence that the character quotes to Krotkaya the Mephistofel’s words from *Faust* by I.V. Goethe: “I am the part of the whole, which wants to do evil, but does good», and strikes her imagination with the poem *Demon* by A.S. Pushkin” (Dostoevsky). He has survived such a dramatic discordance with the world and experienced a lot, so in such a way he contrasts himself with her, who has

lived for little, who has a kind and fair soul. Krotkaya correlates to the main character of the poem *Demon* by A.S. Pushkin, who lives in the complete unconscious harmony with surrounding world before the meeting with “spiteful genius,” when “all impressions” of existence are new for him (Dostoevsky).

The character had calculated all details and understood that “kind and gentle people oppose for a short while” (Dostoevsky), so he married with Krotkaya, who was a poor foster-daughter, the mysterious purpose was taking from her the complete respect and submission, because he wanted her ‘to stand in front of me with adjuration for my suffering...’ ” (Dostoevsky). He dreams to become a false image for his wife, an object for adoration, which can replace her the whole world. The wife has to understand that he is stern and proud, that he is silently suffering, and she “will see later, that there is a generosity; someday she will find out about this, and she will appraise it a lot and fall into the dust, laying the hands in the adjuration” (Dostoevsky).

The main character of this novel could not expect that the wife did not submit to him completely, that she could rebel and do something against his volition. After all, the character supposes that the woman cannot fail to submit to a man’s volition, and what’s more, the woman “will adore even all man’s evil and crime” (Dostoevsky), if she loves him.

The first meeting of the character and Krotkaya assures him of the fact that she is submissive naturally, but her soul is already fractured, when the main character points at her poorness. “Oh how she has blushed! I understood that I had caught her out” (Dostoevsky). The character celebrates, he is confident in his force, Krotkaya has a lower status than he does, she is materially bounded, her life is difficult and then the character “has some ideas as for her” (Dostoevsky). He dreams to become a “high-world” creature for her, a liberator, and then she will appreciate him and absolutely submit to him.

Krotkaya agrees with the moneylender’s marriage proposition with gratitude, but at this moment, the duel between the character and Krotkaya begins. This duel is for the right of complete possession of another person, a try to fight with one’s own fear of the world and to realize oneself by the other’s freedom suppression.

Besides everything else, it is a conflict of values. When the moneylender denies the self-sacrifice and generosity, which is “not worth a rush,” as he supposes, “the suspicious, silent and a not good” smile appears at Krotkaya’s face and from this moment she begins keeping silence more than having conversation with the character, who does not appreciate her feelings at all and only suppresses her, waiting for love.

The character cannot educate Krotkaya according to his vision of life, because she sees everything in another way and wants to live conscientiously. She associates the family with harmony, because she keeps all her parent's things with a gentle hand, as jewels. The pawned image of the Blessed Virgin, from which she does not remove the icon plating, is the most valuable one for her. It shows her striving to wholeness, when the world is understood as the unity of the earthy and the heavenly, external and internal things.

There are no icons in the pawnbroker's room, and it is a clear evidence of the fact that he does not pray before sleep and he just does not need them, because they have no value. However, in the room the customers enter there is an icon-case: "My icon-case with an icon lamp is in the hall, where the cash desk stands. In my room, however, there are just my bookshelf and a few books inside and a chest with my keys, and, well, a bed, tables, chairs" (Dostoevsky). The icon case (kiot) is an evidence and a sign of the pawnbroker is a supposedly religious man, depended on other people's opinion. He, as opposed to Krotkaya, has lost his wholesomeness by neglecting the image in himself, although he dreams of being loved as an internal person.

The mismatch of the apparent and the occurring is still increasing, the disharmony in the relationships with husband is growing stronger, and Krotkaya, in spite of herself, in spite of her personality, starts doubting the fact that her husband is "the most generous of all," as he called himself. In the end, he exhausts her, having humiliated her, marching her by the hand from the last rendezvous with Yefimovich, holding "the scary" minute at gunpoint, held by Krotkaya to his head. And Krotkaya's "win" echoes with a real trouble for her.

Krotkaya does not get forgiveness from her husband, who likes their inequality, her subdued position and his final win: "This feeling of inequality, it is very delightful... I sympathized her painfully sometimes, although at the same time I definitely liked the idea of her humiliation from time to time. I really liked the idea of our inequality..." (Dostoevsky).

The character has so to speak divorced with his wife, bought her a bed, and she isolates herself more and silence becomes her protection: "... she seemed to be glad to not say an extra word. I thought it was absolutely natural for her. I thought, 'She is too shaken and too defeated, and, surely, she needs to forget some things and accustom'" (Dostoevsky).

The constant and accustomed silence has suddenly been changed by Krotkaya singing silently. This change amazed the character: "... the news made an awesome impression, and I still do not understand it. Before then, I had never heard her sing-

ing, if only on the first days when I brought her to the house and we still could have fun shooting at targets from a revolver. Back then, her voice was strong enough, clear, albeit nervous, but eerily pleasant and healthy. Now the song was so weak, not really mournful (it was some romance), but sounded as if there was something cracked, broken in her voice, as if it could not make it, as if the song itself was ill. She was singing in a low voice, and suddenly, after raising, her voice broke,—such a pitiful voice, such pitifully broke; she coughed and started singing quietly again... Firstly, at least, in the first minutes, a puzzlement and horrible surprise appeared, horrible and strange, painful and almost revengeful: “She is singing, and that is when I am here! Has she forgotten about me or something?” (Dostoevsky). Thanks to the singing, the character’s soul shrugged, he scales fell from his eyes, he decided to talk to his wife, to come to terms with her: “... I was murmuring that I loved her, that I will not stay up, ‘let me kiss your dress... pray for you for all my life like this...’” (Dostoevsky). Of course, this confession frightens Krotkaya, as she happens to be at the God’s place, the role her husband puts on her, and he was ready to pray for her as for an icon: “... and suddenly she started crying and shaking; an awful hysteria started. I scared her” (Dostoevsky). A try to overcome the estrangement this way anticipates the tragic ending. Krotkaya does not want anything, she is horribly tired from life, and death becomes the only escape for the heroine trying to protect her world; and she asks the Virgin Mary to be her protector.

Lukerya retells the character the last events like this: “... she stood onto the window and was standing to her full height, in the open window, with her back to me, and the icon in her hands. My heart was in my mouth at once, I yelled, ‘Mistress, mistress!’ She heard it, moved as if to turn to me, but she did not turn, she just stepped forward, pressed the icon to her breast and—and jumped out of the window!” (Dostoevsky)

The jump out of the window with an icon is symbolic, the heroine rejects the imperfect world to enter the other world. There is a strange smile on Krotkaya’s face, which promised the joy of death, ending the tyranny of her husband and the waiting for forgiveness.

Krotkaya’s death changes the narrator. We can read in the author’s foreword for the novel about the character: “A variety of memories recalled by him unstopably leads him to the truth in the end; the truth unstopably elevates his mind and heart. At the end, the mood of the novel changes in comparison with its messy beginning. The truth discloses to the poor pretty clearly and certainly, at least for himself” (Dostoevsky). The silence presses upon the character; it becomes for him a symbol of non-existence: “They say the sun gives life to the universe. The sun rises – and

look at it, is it not dead? Everything is dead, and the dead are everywhere. There are only people and silence around them—this is the earth!” (Dostoevsky). The character recalls the First Epistle of John, which has such words: “One who does not love does not know God, because God is Love” (John 1, 4:8) and a warning: “Children! Save yourselves from idols” (John 1, 5:21).

The character starts talking with his deceased wife, he understands his fault for her more and more, realizing that separating and creating of a false image has killed love and distanced him from God: “... I am not crazy and I am not raving at all, on the contrary, my mind has never been clearer... I exhausted her—that is it!” (Dostoevsky). We see that the character is suffering and is deeply sorry; his soul purifies, and he himself appears on the way to transfiguration. The true feeling were hidden under the mask of pride, although the character wanted harmony and love. He was suffering from loneliness but rejected the only creature he loved himself. The character only managed to see Krotkaya’s image when it was too late, he lost her and was alone forever.

For F.M. Dostoevsky, visual images are important in their spiritual, expressional mode of existence. The significance of the icons in the novel *Krotkaya* is great, because in Dostoevsky’s works, the axis of the world is an icon and the people are icons. Some figures of F.M. Dostoevsky can be compared to “smoky, dirty and even painted on, and the author himself seems to be a great icon painter, who was given such an icon for restoration” (Riabushinsky).

The main character of the novel *Krotkaya* is the same smoky icon, which clears through suffering. F.M. Dostoevsky consider suffering an ingrained spiritual need of the Russian people. “... He seemed to be infected with the hunger for suffering since the beginning of the times. The line of suffering goes through its whole history, it is not only caused by external tragedies and disasters, but goes from the very heart of the people. For Russian people even happiness certainly has some suffering, otherwise, the happiness seems not whole for them. They never have a proud and celebrating look, even in the moments of triumph, but they only have a touched to suffering look. They sigh and give their glory to God. The Russian people somehow enjoys the suffering. It applies both for the whole people and for certain types, speaking in general terms. For example, look at the various types of the Russian roughnecks. There you see not only everlasting mayhem, sometimes surprising by its impudence and the ugliness of the fallen soul. The roughneck is first of all a sufferer” (Dostoevsky 36).

F.M. Dostoevsky knows that not only Krotkaya but even his main character is a “sufferer,” and there is a pure and beautiful spirit hidden under the dirt. “Here

he is carefully removing the soot and the layer of ash from the human look, and—it is a miracle—we can see the image and the resemblance of God” (Riabushinsky). The second type of people-icons is the original icon—a saint. “He had tried to clear his mind and his body when he was alive, he submitted them to the spirit, and the God’s Spirit made them holy and spiritualized them. The icon painter does not need to clear anything; he just needs to write down what his eyes see, the spiritualized body” (Riabushinsky).

The faces and images create a strong impression in F.M. Dostoyevsky’s works, like icons, when the reader finds in them the revelation and the relief; “when his spiritual eyes open and Saul becomes Paul” (Riabushinsky). Anyway, we should note, as did V. Riabushinsky, in F.M. Dostoyevsky’s works the spiritual can only be seen through the soot, while in an icon it shines with bright light.

Icons serve as one of the types of the spiritual on earth; “the latter only results from the aspiration to the heavenly, but it also works vice versa; the spiritual in its turn leads to the heavenly, makes the ache for it the supreme value of life” (Riabushinsky). The ache for the heavenly, the aspiration for it became the main sense, the basis of the Russian culture.

F. M. Dostoyevsky puts the world in the most spiritually ill-timed place. It suddenly is pictured not in a church, but for example in a tavern (as in the scene of Marmeladov’s revelation from *Crime and Punishment*, when he suddenly starts speaking the Old Church Slavonic language and pronounce sermons in the poor basement with awful alcohol abuse around him). This spiritual environment finds its trueness, although it is not implemented in the traditional church. In F.M. Dostoyevsky’s works it is the spiritually-artistic field, that is, the field of spiritual, implemented with the artistic images.

Conclusion

The icon or iconicity becomes the main point in the creation and understanding of the Russian Orthodox concept of the world. In the literature of the nineteenth century, the theme of the icon and, accordingly, the entry into the field of artistic iconicity, is present both in the works of N.V. Gogol and in the works of A.S. Pushkin. The iconic cause becomes penetrating and leading in N.S. Leskov, popularized in the works of L.N. Tolstoy, I.S. Turgenev, M.E. Saltykov-Shchedrin, A.P. Chekhov. All these appeals to the icon are vivid evidence that the icon is of great importance for understanding Russian culture and literature. According to K.S. Aksakov: “For a Russian, you need an icon painting, not a pictorial letter” (Aksakov 186). The icon serves as a reminder of the real presence of the sacred on earth, accessible to the in-

side senses.

The iconic poetics is unique, it allows to deepen the literary analysis of a literary text and “provides an opportunity to imagine the vision of the essential sense of the work” (Shkuropat 303). The presence of an icon itself in a work is significant, because it is not just an element of the material world, but a symbol, accompanying the character. Thanks to the iconicity, created, according to Shkuropat’s notes, by the literary word, the imaginative sense transforms into a prototype, hidden, but always present in N.V. Gogol’s and F.M. Dostoyevsky’s works.

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