



CENTRAL ASIAN JOURNAL OF LITERATURE, PHILOSOPHY AND CULTURE

eISSN: 2660-6828 | Volume: 03 Issue: 11 Nov 2022
<https://cajipc.centralasianstudies.org>

On the Issues of the “Infernal Theme” In the Work of N.V. Gogol and P. Merimee (On the Example of the Story “VIY” And the Short Story “Carmen”)

Akhmedova Madinabonu Makhudjonovna
Lecturer at Alfraganus University, Uzbekistan, Tashkent

Received 10th Sep 2022, Accepted 12th Oct 2022, Online 25th Nov 2022

ABSTRACT

The article examines the “Infernal theme” in Russian and foreign literature on the example of the works “Viy” by Gogol and “Carmen” by Merimee. The infernal theme in the study understood as an object of artistic reflection, those life characters and situations (the relationship of characters, as well as the interaction of a person with society, with nature, everyday life). Which, as it were, pass from reality into a work of art, form the objective side of its content and have a connection with the other world and the world of base human passions. The theme of the work in this interpretation is an intermediary between reality and the artistic whole; it manifests itself both in the real world and in the artistic one.

The mystical consciousness of writers, expressed in different ways, leads to one thing: renewal, strengthening of realism as a method. Gogol fights against the “capture” of a person by evil mystical forces, resorting to the help of a spiritual, divine-moral principle. Merimee contrasts such forces with a romantic personality with its beauty, love, freedom. Often understanding freedom narrowly as freedom from society, we forget about the acquisitions that made by realist writers back in the XIX century. In this sense, the story “Viy” by Gogol and the short story “Carmen” by Merimee are modern and in demand even in the XXI century.

KEYWORDS: Infernal theme, Russian literature, foreign literature, images, comparison, problem, mysticism.

INTRODUCTION

Under the infernal or mystical, the writers mean the confrontation between good and evil: the opposition of higher powers and the devil both at the level of a single individual and at the level of a certain social community. These motifs appeared in the works of Russian literature at the beginning of the 19th century. Many writers turned in their work to the inexplicable, fairy tale, fantasy. Some of them, such as A. Veltman, V Odoevsky, A. Bestuzhev-Marlinsky devoted most of their creative life to this. If the works of A. Pogorelsky and V.P. Titov can be considered a trend in the development of the infernal theme, the work of N.V. Gogol is its climax. A significant difference between the works of N.V. Gogol is his aesthetic understanding of the infernal theme and a high degree of artistry (Korobkina, 2017).

Russian literature of the XIX century, starting with A. S. Pushkin, attracted the attention of one of the brightest foreign writers, P. Merimee, with its realistic fantasy. Both Pugyakin himself and his followers in the field of fantasy (M. Y. Lermontov, N. V. Gogol, I. S. Turgenev) entered the circle of translation interests of the French novelist. From the point of view of modern perception, let us consider the infernal theme in the works “Viy” by N.V. Gogol and “Carmen” by P. Merimee.

In the fantastic works of realist writers, the action takes place in the ordinary, real world, in which something inexplicable, unknown happens. The narrator maintains the tension with an interest in whether the infernal is supernatural or, after all, everything will be explained naturally. There is no clear boundary between the real and the unreal, between this world and the other world. living and non-living heroes, life and death, strange characters, doubles, ghosts, vampires, demons, a femme fatale, closed places: a church, an old house, anxiety, restlessness of the soul, connection with the existential world, nightmares, curses, loss of a sense of reality, of one's own identity (one's “I”), collusion with the devil.

METHODS

Questions related to the study of the infernal theme have long attracted and continue to attract the attention of literary critics. A comprehensive analysis of the infernal theme in the works of various writers is presented in the works of F.K. Sologub “Man to man is the devil” («Человек человеку – дьявол»), D.S. Merezhkovsky “Gogol and the devil” («Гоголь и черт»), Gruzin Y.V. “Infernal Hero in Russian Prose of the XX Century. Origins. Typology. Transformation”, («Инфернальный герой в русской прозе XX века. Истоки. Типология. Трансформация»), I.I. Shpakovsky “Infernal and beyond in the modern Russian short story” («Инфернальное и запредельное в современной русской новелле»).

There are studies devoted to the study of the infernal theme in the work of major writers: an article by P.A. Gorokhova and E.R. Yuzhaninova “Philosophy of the infernal in the work of N.V. Gogol and M.A. Bulgakov” («Философия инфернального в творчестве Н.В. Гоголя и М.А. Булгакова»). Ph.D. thesis by V.A. Khanova “Symbolism of the infernal in the creation of the image of the “bottom” (Символика инфернального в создании образа «дна» в драме М. Горького «На дне») in M. Gorky's drama “At the Bottom”. PhD thesis by T.G. Kotelnikova “Motive of a deal with evil spirits as a structural basis of duality in the works of F. Dostoevsky”, («Мотив сделки с нечистой силой как структурная основа двойничества в творчестве Ф. Достоевского»). Ph.D. “Writers from Kiev: “A. Kuprin and M. Bulgakov” («Писатели из Киева: «А. Куприн и М. Булгаков») and others.

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

In many world cultures, darkness appears to be associated in the moral sphere with evil and vice. In the East Slavic tradition, darkness is associated with the afterlife. According to the author of the famous study “Poetic views of the Slavs on nature” A.N. Afanasyev, the concept of night darkness (darkness) among our ancestors approached the idea of death; the word “darkness” (“wraith”) related in root to the word “death” (“pestilence”). According to Slavic mythological ideas, “the setting of the sun in the evening was likened to death: hiding in the west, it was in the power of Morena, the goddess of night and death” (Korobkina, 2017). The very fact of the extreme saturation of the artistic world of Gogol's story with gloom, darkness, blackness has a deep meaning: the church and its environs are a space dominated by demons of darkness (servants of the devil, the devil – from the point of view of Christianity, or the death goddess Morena – according to pagan ideas).

Russian and foreign researchers of that time did not disregard the fantastic works of Gogol and Merimee with mystical consciousness, surreal forces of the infernal world that affect a person. Researchers have established two types of possible interpretation of the infernal.

1. Firstly, the existence of the supernatural allowed, otherworldly forces, the power of a demon, interfere in the fate of the characters.
2. Secondly, the incomprehensible, the Unknown, the inexplicable, is finally explained in a clinical way, the character in the heat of passion falls into madness (Korobkina, 2017).

A rational hypothesis can explain the phenomenon of a “strange” property because of an illusion, chance, and coincidence. In the West, such phenomena considered as a literary anticipation of Freud's discoveries, his psychoanalysis, when the irrational allows you indirectly express forbidden topics, suppressed instincts in yourself, which clearly represented in the infernal theme in the works of both writers.

When comparing the story “Viy” and the short story “Carmen”, a feeling of obvious demonism is born, the prevalence of formidable and existentiality in the work of the Russian writer. Specifically, it looks like this. The scene of a magical flight over the earth awakens strange feelings in the hero of the story, caused by the beauty of the world seen for the first time from heaven, the aesthetic perfection of real and miraculously transformed faces of reality. It is hidden, passionate feelings that make the bursak Khoma Brut stare intently into the face of the pannochka witch, finding her face the pinnacle of beauty created by nature. Gogol is evolving from romantic ideas about the identity of good and beauty to the understanding that beauty can bring evil. Beauty – pannochka, obviously completely “captured” by otherworldly, otherworldly forces, belongs to such an evil, demonic world – infernal.

Another important oddity: despite the wealth of the centurion and the abundance of people in his estate, the church has a completely neglected appearance: “blackened, cleaned with green moss”. These dilapidation and neglect are not accidental; they explained by neglect of faith, of God: “They approached the church and stepped under its dilapidated wooden vaults, which showed how little the owner of the estate cared about God and his soul”; “It was noticeable that no service had been sent in it for a long time”. No one cares about the soul here – neither the owner of the estate, nor his subjects.

Let us note that this church is strange and unusual in many respects. Starting with its location: contrary to the Orthodox custom, which prescribes to build God's temple on the highest and most prominent place, in the center of the settlement, the church on the estate of the pannochka's father “sadly stood almost on the edge of the village”. If we assume that the image of the church in the story of N.V. Gogol symbolizes the general state of the Christian faith in the village, then a very definite conclusion suggests itself that religion in the life of this society is on the periphery. In other words, it is not God that occupies a central place in the minds of the heroes of the work.

Let us pay attention to one more significant detail – the “dull” appearance of the temple. Usually God's temple adorns any area, looks festive, and makes a bright, joyful impression. Everything is different here: the domes of the church are “cone-shaped”, and not ordinary, resembling the vault of heaven with their spherical shape and thereby evoking associations with the heavenly world, that is, the divine.

In “Viy” the motive of “vision-recognition” is manifested. “To see” means to distinguish between good and evil, and by pointing to evil, to free or free oneself from this evil, one of the principles of calling and describing the infernal world. The incredible insight inherent in Rhoma allows him to revive the dead woman

in the church, to strive for her liberation from the forces of the other world. The revelation of the true mask of the beautiful pannochka leads to the destruction of the magic circle outlined in the church and usually protecting the hero, and here, because of the destruction of this circle, to the death of the hero.

Bursak Khoma sees a picture of how *“a beauty lay before him with a disheveled luxurious plait, with eyelashes long as arrows <...> Khoma trembled like a tree leaf, pity and some strange excitement and timidity, unknown to him, have mastered it”*. A strange feeling of awakening love for the lady helps Khoma overcome all this “devilry”. Bursak agrees to bury the beautiful panna, reads prayers in the hope that it is the divine from above faith itself. That will help him cope with the “evil spirits”. Researcher V. A. Voropaev writes, “If Gogol’s heroes are sometimes eliminated and even defeated by demonic machinations, then this only indicates that they themselves had that spiritual flaw that made it possible for the demonic power to so boldly rule in their souls. Human passions and vices are the reason for the revelry and temporary victory of the dark forces (Voropaev, 2020).

The atmosphere of horror paralyzes him. During the day, it seems to Khoma that the dead lady is threatening him with her finger from the coffin. At night, heavy forebodings intensify. I portray the psychology of the hero. Gogol thickens the colors: fear, horror, confusion, melancholy, numbness. The boundary between “I” and “I” is lost, one’s own identity disappears. Sometimes it seems to Khoma that it is no longer he himself, but the dead pannochka pronounces spells. At the same time, the presence of the terrible can be interpreted in a dual way: both from the position of the mystical and psychologically, that is, realistically, forming a “two worlds” of the simultaneous existence of a real and other plane.

Khoma Brut experiences the transition from the world of everyday reality to the imaginary world, having lost its balance, given over to evil forces, for several hours of standing in front of the coffin of the dead beauty pannochka. The loss of energy, “sucked out” of him by the vampire Viy, who rules in the locked church, brings the bursak to an obsessive, painful state. From fear to anxiety, from anxiety to horror, from horror to hallucinations, until the appearance of a tangible vampire Viy, closing the circle of the terrible, supernatural, and fantastic. Such is the psychic evolution of the path from the real to the surreal, infernal through hallucinations, “traps” of the imagination, which the very nature of the Unknown sets up for him.

As we can see, Gogol's demonic forces exist both in the person himself and outside him, in the surrounding space. Obviously, Khoma himself takes some steps towards the demonic, other-being, forces of the unreal world. In particular, he is open to the inner magnetic influence of the dead lady on him. In the case of the French novelist, on the contrary, Carmen seems to be on the brink, provoking José into outward acts: first to kill an Englishman, then pushing José to become a smuggler. However, Jose still does not cross the line of death. Apparently, there are no such magical charms in Carmen that would make a soldier in love experience an inner desire to leave this world, the earthly vale. At the end of the novel, we see the death of Carmen herself at the hands of the same Jose. It is, rather, a psychological outcome of the injected tension in a love conflict (Tairov, 2019).

Carmen every time throws him in the face, that she and José would die together. Such words Carmen forced to assume that the hero Merimee, predicting the future, is, as it were, under the influence of otherness, that to some extent she herself is a particle of otherness. Her portrait, in fact, bears the stamp of fate, pointing to a mystical consciousness expressed by fantasy. This is, in our opinion, the essential difference between the freedom-loving Carmen Merimee and the Gogol lady, completely “captured” by aggressive forces and dragging her evil, demonic will there behind him, into oblivion, Homa Brutus – his possible lover in this world. Merimee’s Carmen, on the contrary, showing freedom of spirit, dies herself in real life, not allowing

the “wild”, demonic forces from the outside to play out enough to take possession of her spirit, turn her into a “slave of love”.

As you can see, N.V. Gogol and P. Merimee are well versed in the world of the fantastic – infernal, owning the techniques of romanticization, avalanche and pictorial possibilities. The mystical consciousness in the surreal, demonic aspect of the fantastic has always been a true, innovative means that recreates in the artistic world the recognition of everything that was not previously deciphered by the Mind. A living poetic feeling is love, freedom and beauty, behind which objectively real “secrets” dreamed or exist and this feeling is truly unknowable. Behind the finite one senses the infinite, behind the real-world Gogol and Merimee guess an unreal, otherworldly world. It becomes even more precious because of the presence of the divine spirit in it, in which evil in Gogol opposed by the highest divine principle, and in Merimee – beauty, freedom, personality, space of the human soul. The infernal theme, expressed in fantastic images, tends to irrationalism, which most often means death in the language of symbols. Therefore, Khoma from “Viya” dies under the influence of the otherworldly world. Pannochka awakens new, unexpected love feelings in Khoma. However, she herself is a witch, which threatens Homa with death, disappearance into oblivion.

CONCLUSION

Fear of the “mysterious”, giving birth to the mystical, makes a person mortal. With the help of a higher religious and moral feeling, Gogol tries to resist evil, aggressive forces. Merimee subtly feels his heroine. His Carmen, according to Pushkin’s tradition, is dual: strange, “wild” and at the same time alive, more real than the pannochka in Gogol’s Viy, completely “captured” by forces of other being. However, Merimee is Carmen, being an earthly woman, also carries a “strange”, fatal stamp. So, the ideas of the fantastic, interacting with writers, develop characters, and at the same time realism as a creative method.

The fantastic, with a mystical consciousness in the story “Viy” by Gogol owes the source of its existence not only to the foreign “Gothic”, “mysterious”, fatal beginning, but also to the domestic mythological, still pagan beginning, shown by the Russian realist writer so deeply and in relief. For Merimee, a Spanish gypsy, a worker at a tobacco factory in Seville, is an image from the ordinary, real world. Possessing a “strange” beauty, Carmen, like no other woman in the novel, endowed with extraordinary inner qualities that characterize her as a romantic nature with strong passions. Merimee’s heightened interest in the “mysterious”, mystical forces, located mainly in the heroine herself, creates a soulful artistic image of a woman rushing from the “capture” by other-being forces into the world of a real spirit – to real freedom. In addition, all this happens with Merimee in the aesthetics of the fantastic, through the realization of the idea of beauty, in a vivid figurative form.

Thus, the idea of infernality, expressed in the XIX century by means of romanticism, carries a demiurgically semantic dominant, while the XXI century, by means of postmodernism, changes its semantic component radically, bringing to the fore the dominant of eschatological death, giving the demiurge to the mocking crowd for dismemberment and devouring. Having arisen from nothing, it reaches an extreme degree of materialization, after which the crowd simply eats it. Such is the eschatological demise, the death of the idea of inferno, which gave rise to the worlds of infernal souls.

Reference

1. Voropaev V. A. 2020. *Sovremennoe prochtenie Gogolya. Sovremennoe prochtenie russkoj klassicheskoy literatury XIX veka: V 3- t. 4-izd.* – M.: Pashkov dom.

2. Korobkina E.N. 2017. Infernal'nye dushi: metamorfozy obraza // Voprosy russkoj literatury. №1.
3. Tairov A. Y. 2019. Karmen. Prosper Merime v russkoj literature. – M.: ROSSPEN.