

## ПРОБЛЕМИ КОМПАРАТИВІСТИКИ

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### F. DOSTOEVSKY AND CH. DICKENS: THE QUESTION OF THE TRANSFORMATION OF MOTIVES

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*The article attempts to trace the transformation of motives Dickens's novels in the works of Dostoyevsky as an example «The Old Curiosity Shop» and «Humiliated and Insulted». Among the borrowed from the English writer's motifs (the unfortunate child, the friendship of two girls, unexpected inheritance, etc.) deserves special attention «reincarnation» of the character of Nelly Nell Trent into Nelly Volkovskaya that is a unique example of a complete transformation of the character with some modification did by the Russian writer.*

*Key words: transformation, motive, borrowing, the impact of the creative modification of the character.*

According to I. M. Katarsky, «the band of special hobbies of Dickens in Russia was 40th years of XIX century. <...> Dickens was one of those foreign writers whose works have helped the best Russian writers in developing his own artistic identity. They helped them to create the domestic realistic novel» [7, p. 357–401]. In the 50th -60-ies of the XIX century the realist prose in Russia is experiencing a period of rapid flowering. The works of the English writer continues to read (though in French translation). «With one third of the XIX century for a certain circle of readers, the English literature becomes available in the original. Russian translated literature of the XIX century does not ignore any more or less prominent figure in the literature of contemporary England» [2, p. 149]. Further, I. Turgenev continued that idea, argued that «now only one writer is popular in Russia. It is Dickens. Our literature for 30 years (depuis 1830) lost its influence there, now only the British and American novels were addicted in Russia» [18, p. 95].

This begs the question: what did the English realists close to the Russian ones? Literary critic M. K. Tsebrikova tried to answer that question. In her memoirs (1887) she said: «A well-known reticence of the English literature, reaching sometimes up to purism, much more impressed by the Russian

writers than «frivolous and frivolity» of many French writers. Dickens favorably affected the minds of freedom-loving Russian people» [13, p. 192].

For Dostoevsky Dickens was one of the most popular writer of the rest of his life. Being abroad, Dostoevsky readily attaches to read Dickens his wife. Anna Grigorievna noted in her diary, that in May 1867 in Dresden her husband took for her from the library «The Old Curiosity Shop» in French and «The Adventures of Nickleby» [5, p. 107]. In the memories of Dostoevsky's daughter we can read: «When my father went to Ems or work was not allowed to do it himself, he asked my mother read us the works of Sir Walter Scott and Charles Dickens — this «great Christian», as he called him in «The Diary of a Writer». During dinner my father asked us about our impressions and restored the entire episodes of these novels. My father, who had forgotten the name of his wife, and the face of his beloved, remembered all the English names of Dickens' and Walter Scott's characters, which produced an impression on him in his youth, and spoke of them as his close friends» [5, p. 90–91]. L. P. Grossman in his book «Life and works of Fyodor Dostoevsky» cites the example of Dostoevsky's reviews about Dickens in June 1880 at breakfast in the presence of many Russian writers. A. I. Suvorina recalls: «F. M. approached me with the question: Do I like Dickens? I told him with shame that I did not read Diccens. He was surprised and stopped. Suddenly Dostoevsky calls Suvorina «the happiest of human», and passionately develops his thought: «Lord, happy Anna has not read Dickens and her lucky, be it happiness! Oh, how I would like to be in her place! Once again, read »David Copperfield» and the whole Dickens. Then he added: «When I am very tired and I feel disagreement with myself, nobody is able to calm me and please as this world writer»» [3, p. 139].

There is no doubt that Dickens' novels had a significant influence on the formation of the young Dostoevsky's creative manner. The proximity of this was «the result of the life observing similarities and proximity of artistic purposes of both writers» [7, p. 402].

Looking at the transformation of the motives of novels written by the English writer in Dostoevsky's work, we cannot ignore the life of Charles Dickens. Based on the biographical material collected by known scientists [16, p. 20], well-known that Charles Dickens was born in a family of English commoners («his parents were always fond of each other. Father John Dickens was in Government employ, with a steady position at the Navy pay-office» [19, p. 9]). Due to non-payment of bills the family gets into debts. Little Charles was hard to imagine that he was the son of the debtors: «debts

were dragons to be killed. It was an idea that would not have come to him so early had he not so early realized that he was a debtor's child» [19, p. 14]. Soon Dickens' father was in the Marshalsea debtor's prison, and Charles had at an early age to earn money for the family. «His fortune was made. He was to earn six shillings a week, posting labels on pots of blacking in a warehouse down by the river» [19, p. 25].

Fifteen months of work in a wax factory deposited in the minds of Dickens like a serious injury. That is why the English writer has developed a special attitude to the children. The Dickensian world of children is a special world and yet inseparable from the adult world: it is strongly associated with it, depends on it, and strongly affects it. Children feel and understand much more than adults think. The children world reflects the state of the child's family, educational and training institutions, the state of society, the society with its fundamental interests, manners, with its social and state institutions. Such a world for the first time in literature was discovered and recreated by Dickens with extraordinary realism and conviction, with the deepest insight into the psychology of a child. Undoubtedly, interest in children and childhood can be explained by a number of facts of Dickens' biography: it never faded memories of his own childhood adversity [11, p. 32]. It should be noted the important fact that before the 20s–30s of XIX century, that is, before the era in which Dickens lived, the child was considered as a little adult: there was no children's clothes, shoes — everything was done as for adult but only smaller in size. Only in the XIX century the world of childhood was discovered. «First of all children are those who provides continuity of time, thank of them a cycle of life newly resurges» [20, c. 266]. This discovery is recognized and appreciated by many writers, who concerned about social evils, «accursed questions» of adult world. Among them should mention Dickens and Dostoyevsky.

The Russian writer also devoted to children a lot of scenes in his literary works — children from the street, from poor families, lonely, abandoned and unhappy. Dostoyevsky's children are huge special world, child's perception of grief, social injustice, resentment, hunger and cold. His «little characters»: Netochka Nezvanova, Nelly Valkovskaya, the children of Katerina Ivanovna Marmeladova, etc. — they are subtle psychologists, an adult-minded, sensitive and with a pure heart, able to understand everything and forgive. As already mentioned, many researchers [17, p. 20] emphasize that severe trauma that Dickens received in his childhood, left its mark in his life, and was embodied in the characters of his children's novels. May

Becker, describing the grim childhood of Dickens after his father was arrested and imprisoned for debt, talks about the hard work in the workhouse:

«The work was at first not so easy. The paper was stiff, the string slipped, his unaccustomed hands went slowly. But not for long. One thing he knew, and to that he clung as to a life-preserver in a midnight sea. Unless he could do this dull degrading labour at least as well as these streetboys around him...» [19, p. 28]. И далее: «He never told his children that David Copperfield's experiences at the warehouse of Murdstone and Grinby had been his own» [19, p. 31].

Dostoevsky's childhood was unhappier than Dickens one. «Dostoevsky remembered this time of his life as bleak and lonely time. Fiodor and his older brother Michail didn't have any friends, as children they were forbidden to be friends with peers» [1, p. 240]. Dostoevsky's father was a violent man, a tyrant for families and for the peasants. He made his son Fiodor learning that he did not want to make him to become an officer and sent him to the Engineering School in St. Petersburg.

At nineteen, the Russian writer suffered a stroke — the murder of his father. Dostoevsky always remembered his childhood as horror and sadness. That's why in books he was looking for the answers to torment questions.

German researcher J.-R. Jauss in his time introduced into scientific use the concept of «the horizon of expectations», denoting circle of motifs, characters, challenges and possible solutions that exist in the minds of potential readers and determine what they would like to find in a work of art, which has not yet read. Reconstruction of «the horizon of expectations» allows to find the questions that, according to the reader, a text of literary work should give an answer.

Young Dostoevsky looking for such books, which tell of the difficult childhood, about right, which makes its way through violence. Dickens was such a writer who meets his requirements and needs. This was «the horizon of his expectations», that gave an answer the question of why adults are so cruel to children, why children torture children. Dickens showed how it is; happy ends of the English novelist were necessary to Dostoevsky, who wanted to go through it again, but with a happy ending.

As previously mentioned, Dostoevsky read «all of Dickens» [3, p. 319]. In one letter, which Anna Dostoevskaya recorded Dostoevsky makes a recommendation what children should read: «Let them reading Walter Scott and Charles Dickens in translation, but these translations are difficult to obtain <...>. Dickens and Walter Scott can be given already thirteen years

children» [6, p. 237]. «Here is a list of Dickens's novels to be read: «Pickwick Papers», «The Adventures of Nickleby», «Dombey and Son», «Bleak House», «David Copperfield» [6, p. 212].

Already contemporaries noticed an obvious similarity in the characters, themes, plots in Dickens' and Dostoyevsky's works. It applies, above all, the favorite themes of each. The theme of destiny «disadvantaged child» at least meant for the creator of such characters as Netochka Nezvanova, Ilyushchka Snegirev than for whom were created characters of homelessness Sweeper Joe and little Nelly Trent [7, p. 357].

Reading the novels of Dickens in many cases was for Dostoevsky «stimulus push to design their own plans». Influence of Dickens to Dostoyevsky is without any doubt. With particular force it showed at the coincidence of the most important «blood» for both the writers. The theme of children's suffering is the main theme of both writers.

From many similar motifs (for example, *an unexpected inheritance, unhappy marriage, a friendship between two girls*, etc.), acting in the literary works of both writers, I would like to stay on a unique example of the transformation of the motif of *childhood*, regarding the characteristics of the characters Nell Trent («The Old Curiosity Shop») and Nelly Valkovskaya («Humiliated and Insulted»). Nell Trent transformed into Nelly Valkovskaya. This case — a special example of complete transformation, so it deserves to be examined in detail.

According to I. M. Katarsky, «the influence of Dickens, in particular, «The Old Curiosity Shop» on «Humiliated and Insulted» is different in many critical works on Dostoevsky» [7, p. 390]. In the early Dostoevsky we can notice the interest in the unhappy children, especially girls: Netochka Nezvanova, Nelly Valkovskaya, the children of Katerina Ivanovna Marmeladova and, of course, the Little hero. Why girls? The misfortune of a girl as being «different kind» largely incomprehensible in the eyes of the men is more terrible and more tragic than boy's ones. Unhappy girl evokes much more pity and sympathy, than a suffered boy.

Among the poor children, wronged by fate, Nelly Valkovskaya occupies a special place. We can draw parallels between the characters of the English Nell Trent and the Russian Nelly Valkovskaya. Compare the appearances of two girls.

For my part, my curiosity, and interest were at least, equal to the child's; for child she certainly was although I thought it probable from what I could make out that her very small and delicate frame imparted a peculiar youth

fullness to her appearance. <...> She was dressed with perfect neatness. *The Old Curiosity Shop*, p. 15.

Reading the description of Nell, we can see the girl with an angelic face, very delicate and tender; from this little figure breathes something light, airy, very affectionate.

Show a portrait of Nelly Valkovskaya: «*Маленькая, со сверкающими, чёрными, какими-то нерусскими глазами, с густейшими чёрными включенными волосами и загадочным немым и упорным взглядом <...> Особенно поражал её взгляд: в нём сверкал ум, а вместе с тем какая-то инквизиторская недоверчивость и даже подозрительность. Ветхое и грязное её платье при дневном свете <...> походило на рубище. <...> Но вообще, несмотря на безобразие нищеты и болезни, она была даже не дурна собой. Брови её были редкие, тонкие и красивые; особенно был хорош её широкий лоб, немного низкий, и губы прекрасно обрисованные, с какой-то гордой, смелой складкой, но бледные, чуть-чуть только окрашенные*» («Униженные и оскорблённые» [6, p. 107]).

As can be seen from the examples, the girls are united only attractive and beautiful appearance. But we can notice a significant difference: how angelic pale and air Nell Trent, so demonically bright Nelly Valkovskaya. «The image of Nell Trent touches us — the image of Nelly Valkovskaya shocks: the life embittered so hard this little girl, completely taking away joy of her life» [7, p. 402].

Both girls have a grandfathers, which they love and forgive them many bad things. Love to grandpa (Nelly Valkovskaya and Nell Trent) resembles pity «the child to the person to whom according to his age ought to be a guardian or mentor. She is like beyond her years an «adult» child» [22, p. 52].

Both girls remind old men (Trent and Smith) their own daughters. These parallels and even the fact that both girls were used by their grandparents, that is, one grandpa robbed money and another one stolen them are similar to these characters. The Russian Nelly says: «*Я стою на мосту, прошу у прохожих, а он ходит около моста, дожидается; и как увидит, что мне дали, так и бросится на меня и отнимет деньги, точно я утаить от него хочу, не для него собираю*» («Униженные и оскорблённые» [6, p. 161]).

The English Nell stunned to see that her own grandfather stole her last money.

No strange robber, no treacherous host conniving at the plunder of this guests, or stealing to their beds to kill them in their sleep, no nightly prowler, however terrible and cruel, could have awakened in her bosom half the

dread which the recognition of her silent visitor inspired. The grey-headed old man gliding like a ghost into her room and acting the thief while he supposed her fast asleep, then bearing off his prize and hanging over it with the ghastly exultation she had witnessed, was worse — immeasurably worse, and for more dreadful, for the moment, to reflect upon — than anything her wildest fancy could have suggested. *The Old Curiosity Shop*, p. 303.

Doubtless similarity of two girls — is that they are both seriously ill. As noted by Ivan Petrovich, «Мне казалось, что она больна в какой-нибудь медленной, упорной и постоянной болезни, постепенно, но неумолимо разрушающей её организм» («Униженные и оскорблённые» [6, p. 107]).

Another common points of young characters that they are dying at a young age. The death of a child was an extremely widespread phenomenon in the XIX century and it was also the similar theme that can cause deep and sincere sympathy that Dickens had hoped when, in spite of numerous requests of his readers «not to kill Nell», finished the novel the girl's death [11, p. 17–18]. The writers so pathetically described the death of their characters that we'd think dying queens.

For she was dead. There, upon her little bed, she lay at rest. The solemn stillness was no marvel now. She was dead. No sleep so beautiful and calm, so free from trace of pain, so fair to look upon. She seemed creature fresh from the hunt of God and waiting for the breath of life; not one who had lived and suffered death.

Her couch was dressed with here and there some winter berries and green leaves, gathered in a spot she had been used to flavor. «When I die, put near me something that has loved the light, and had the sky about it always».

Those were her words. She was dead. Dear, gentle, patient, noble Nell was dead. *The Old Curiosity Shop*, p. 692.

Nelly Valkovskaya is also dying surrounded by people who love her, and also before death she moves to another house. The room where she is dying is decorated with flowers.

«Он (старик Ихменев. — Л. К.) уставил цветами всю её комнату. Один раз купил он целый букет прелестнейших роз, белых и красных, куда-то далеко ходил за ними и принес своей Нелличке... Всем этим он очень волновал ее. <...> В этот вечер, в вечер прощанья ее с нами, старик никак не хотел прощаться с ней навсегда. <...> Через два дня она умерла.

Помню, как старик убирал ее гробик цветами и с отчаянием смотрел на ее исхудалое мертвое личико, на ее мертвую улыбку, на руки ее, сложенные крестом на груди» («Униженные и оскорблённые» [6, p. 337]).

Both external (event-specific facts) and internal (emotional and background colors) characters are exactly the same: two, almost the same age, girls are sick, both have grandfathers, who deceived them; death surrounded by a family and friends, the whole flavor of the room, colors, flowers, parting smile, desolate and sad hearts of relatives after the death of the girls.

Transforming the character of Nell Trent, Dostoevsky did not leave it in the «pure» form. Apparently, there has been a writer personalized manner to create «his» Nelly. According to I. M. Katarsky, «using narrative motifs of Dickens' novel, Dostoevsky has created a completely different character» [7, p. 400].

Nell Trent is a quiet, kind, delicate girl with an angelic appearance. The Russian Nelly is closed, incredulous, «evil», as she calls herself, and very proud. «The image of Nelly Valkovskaya is richer and versatile than Dickens' character, who is monotone and given only pathetically sentimental terms with a touch of the heroic. Earth is clearly lacking in her image» [7, p. 401–402].

As rightly noted T. L. Motyleva, claiming that all the characters of Dostoevsky, belonging to the category of «poor», «insulted and injured» suffer inhuman deprivation and misery — as Oliver Twist, as Fantine in «Les Misérables». <...> But their main pains lie not in poverty as such, not in material deprivation, but in unbearable agony wounded human dignity. <...>. It is the consciousness of their own oppressed, the sense of social inferiority in thousand times harder for them than a lack of daily bread. None of the writers of world literature didn't pass with such tremendous force of suffering a violation of human personality» [8, p. 24–25].

Dostoevsky takes a special term — «the egoism of suffering» — showing how an insult was hard and how the wound pains, appearing out distrust and mystery [9, p. 67].

The tragic fate of the «little» people in Dostoevsky's and Dickens' novels is the generation of life itself, the terrible conditions of social life, in which there were millions of disadvantaged people both in England and in Russia. According to I. M. Katarsky, «affinity of characters of both writers is the result, above all, of the similarity of life experiences» [7, p. 367].

Speaking generally about the similarity of other Dickensian characters with the characters of the novel «Humiliated and Insulted», we can select a few of them: the old man Smith and the old man Trent, the prince Valkovsky and Ralph Nickleby. I. M. Katarsky also mentions their similarity in his book.



Two old men are similar in several points: both have daughters who die young, they have granddaughters, which they use robbing and stealing money from the little girls; both regret of their wickedness. Smith is proud and reserved. He doesn't remind of Dickens' character. The fact that Smith has cursed his daughter is going through because of this, is doomed to loneliness, reminds Mr. Dombey, who also avoided his daughter and hated her.

The prince Valkovsky, selfish, mean-spirited, selfish, greedy for money, could not be better matched to Ralph Nickleby, rich moneylender, endowed with identical characteristics. In addition to these «valuable» characteristics, makes them close the fact that both are the persecutors of their own children — Smike and Nelly — to avoid them, throwing the will of fate, hating and not recognizing consanguinity.

Adopting Dickens' certain motifs and characters, Dostoevsky never reduced them to a «student» copy. Even if there was a similarity (partial or complete) due to current interest motive, so-called «horizon of expectations», that allowed to answer the urgent questions, always there was an opportunity to change, to alter them by own way. It is the best evidence of this dialogue between Nelly and Vanya about the books he had written.

«— А она... ну, вот и они-то... девушка и старичок, — шептала она, продолжая как-то усиленнее пощипывать меня за рукав, — что же, они будут жить вместе? И не будут бедные?» («Униженные и оскорблённые» [6, p. 194]).

What is it? Trying to live once again dark periods of his life, but with a happy ending. It was that Dostoevsky sought in Dickens' works and, finding, perceived according to the characteristics of his mind, world outlook and creative imagination. Therefore, it is always at the similarity of motifs and characters persisted at least differences due to the individuality of the writer, the different conditions of the social life of England and Russia.

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## Ф. ДОСТОЄВСЬКИЙ ТА Ч. ДІККЕНС: ДО ПИТАННЯ ПРО ТРАНСФОРМАЦІЮ МОТИВІВ

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*У статті простежується трансформація мотивів романів Ч. Діккенса у творчості Ф. М. Достоевського на прикладі романів «Крамниці старожитностей» та «Принижених й ображених». Серед запозичених у англійського письменника мотивів (нещасна дитина, дружба двох дівчаток, несподіваний спадок та ін.) особливої уваги заслуговує «перевтілення» образу Нелл Трент в Неллі Волковську, що є унікальним прикладом повної трансформації образу з модифікацією російським письменником.*

*Тема особливого світу дітей уперше в літературі була відкрита Ч. Діккенсом та розроблена ним з надзвичайною переконливістю й з глибоким проникненням в психологію дитини.*

*З першої третини XIX століття для певного кола російських читачів англійська література стає доступною в оригіналі. Російська перевідна література XIX століття не обійшла увагою жодної скільки-небудь знакової фігури в літературі тодішньої Англії.*

*Твори Ч. Діккенса справили істотний вплив на формування творчої манери молодого Ф. М. Достоевського. Для Ф. М. Достоевського Ч. Діккенс був одним з найулюбленіших письменників до кінця його життя. Дитяча тема в творчості Ф. М. Достоевського — величезний і особливий світ: це — сприйняття горя та соціальної несправедливості.*

*Виходячи з факту існування двох джерел літературної творчості: реального життя та вражень від прочитаних книг, які доповнюють один одного, можна стверджувати, що обидва чинники, мають визначальний характер для творчості письменника.*

*У Ф. М. Достоевського спостерігається певна трансформація мотиву: попередниця диккенсівська Нелл Трент перевтілилася в Неллі Валковську. Але можна помітити й істотну різницю: наскільки ангельськи бліда та легковажна Нелл Трент, настільки демонічно приваблива Неллі, що створена талантом Ф. М. Достоевського.*

*Вплив Ч. Діккенса на Ф. М. Достоевського не обмежувався трансформацією мотивів. Ф. М. Достоевський запозичував у Ч. Діккенса також ту особливу атмосферу, яку можна назвати диккенсівським фоном у творчості Ф. М. Достоевського.*

**Ключові слова:** *трансформація, мотив, запозичення, вплив, творча модифікація образу.*

## Ф. ДОСТОЕВСКИЙ И Ч. ДИККЕНС: К ВОПРОСУ О ТРАНСФОРМАЦИИ МОТИВОВ

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*В статье предпринимается попытка проследить трансформацию мотивов романов Диккенса в творчестве Достоевского на примере «Лавки древностей» и «Униженных и оскорблённых». Среди заимствованных у английского писателя мотивов (несчастный ребёнок, дружба двух девочек, неожиданное наследство и др.) особого внимания заслуживает «перевоплощение» образа Нэлл Трент в Нелли Волковскую, что представляет собой уникальный пример полной трансформации образа с некой модификацией русским писателем.*

**Ключевые слова:** трансформация, мотив, заимствования, влияние, творческая модификация образа.

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