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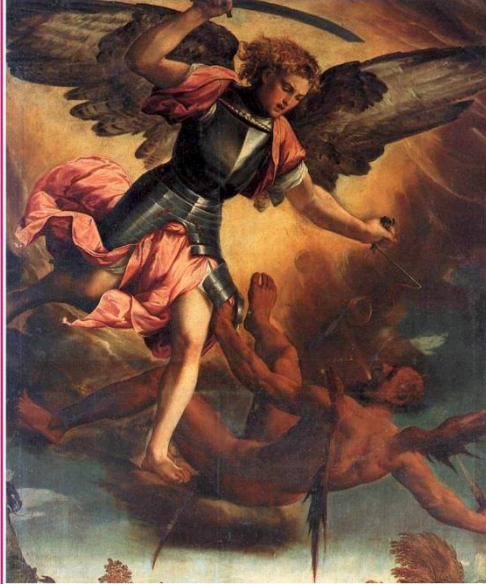
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# Allusions to Dostoevsky in Yury Buida's Stories

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## Abstract

The article demonstrates the continuity of the main thematic and ideological corpus of Dostoevsky's novels, as well as elements of poetics in Yury Vasilyevich Buida's short story collection *Jungle* via comparative qualitative research methods. As a result, the conceptual character of the author's opposition of light/darkness, realizes the ideas of both writers about the nature of the world and humanity. In conclusion, an important aspect of the research is the continuity between the works of Buida and those of Dostoevsky, which stems from common cultural elements and historical features of Russian society.

**Keywords:** Russian Literature; Short Story; Dostoevsky.

# *Alusiones a Dostoievski en las historias de Yury Buida*

## **Resumen**

El artículo demuestra la continuidad del principal corpus temático e ideológico de las novelas de Dostoievski, así como elementos de la poesía en la colección de cuentos de Yury Vasilyevich Buida Selva a través de métodos comparativos de investigación cualitativa. Como resultado, el carácter conceptual de la oposición del autor a la luz / oscuridad se da cuenta de las ideas de ambos escritores sobre la naturaleza del mundo y la humanidad. En conclusión, un aspecto importante de la investigación es la continuidad entre los trabajos de Buida y los de Dostoievski, que se deriva de elementos culturales comunes y características históricas de la sociedad rusa.

**Palabras clave:** literatura rusa; Cuento; Dostoievski.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

A critical understanding of the influence of the classical Russian literary heritage on modern Russian prose is a noticeable trend in literary scholarship of the early 21st century. For modern literary criticism, the heritage of Dostoevsky remains still relevant, as problems faced by the field at present are ideological problems characteristic of Dostoevsky's works, for example, the problem of nihilism and its influence on society and humanity, the relationship between humans and God, and ethical and moral standards. In recent years, Statkiewicz has explored the philosophy of Dostoevsky and Nietzsche, in particular, the phenomenon of nihilism. Weir (2017) reflects on the discussion category evil in the context of Tim Crane

and John Searle's philosophy, but also that of Dostoevsky, and concludes that this issue is unsolvable.

Kruszelnicki (2017) talks about Christian ideas expressed in *The Brothers Karamazov*, and points out the utilitarian approach to faith taken by Dostoevsky's heroes, who think that one can buy the right to salvation. Kirillova (2011) separately present the original concept of Christian perspectives of Dostoevsky's novels. Trunin (2010) in separate works look at the tradition of Dostoevsky in Russian prose of the late twentieth century. Auweele (2016) focuses on Ivan and Alesha Karamazov, who experience redemption through existential experience.

Anisimov (2016) analyzes Easter motifs in the story of Gorkovenko (2011) looks at motifs of the real and the surreal in Nabokov's prose; these works celebrate the tradition of Dostoevsky to which the writers refer. Barros (2015) conducts a comparative analysis of the works of Dostoevsky and Machado de Assis, while Khusnulina defines the ethical influence of Dostoevsky on John Fowles and Anthony Burgess. Evlampiev (2014) indicates the similarity of the key philosophical ideas of Dostoevsky and León (2016) considers Notes (2018) from *Underground* from the point of view of the origin of Dostoevsky's philosophy of tragedy. Roberts (2013) and Choruzenko (2016) write about ethical and moral categories, illustrating them with examples from the works of Dostoevsky.

The study of allusions to the classics in modern literature, which reveals the specificity of the influence of poetic-cultural phenomena of

the past on the latest prose, is ongoing in many other works: Arustamova (2007), and others. Bobileva & Prokhorova (2016), writing together, and Blacker (2015) reveal different kinds of influences in the works of Yury Buida

Literary allusions in Buida are also analyzed by Ivanova (2016), However, Dostoevsky's influence on Buida – as distinct from that of Chekhov, Grass, and others – is almost uninvestigated. The purpose of the article is to identify allusions to Dostoevsky in several stories of Buida using a comparative typological approach. Buida's stories *The Report* by Anna Bodo, *Esesovka Dora*, and *Michel*, reveal many allusive contacts with the prose of Dostoevsky, associated with the ideas, the concept of the world and humanity, even some of the images characteristic of his poetics. In addition, parallels with the problems and poetics of the works of Pushkin and Gogol were revealed. The typical hero in Buida is a lonely person, outside of society, possessing similar features to the little person type in Russian literature but at the same time distinguished by individual features, especially the desire to comprehend reality at its level of intellectual development. In the characters of Buida self-deprecation is revealed as a property of the national consciousness.

The female type is represented by a strong, independent heroine, capable of taking decisive steps to uphold her own and her family's interests, like Dostoevsky and Buida. A rich spectrum of similar motives is defined: self-will, responsibility, murder as a way of upholding human existence, anguish. Meanwhile, there are also original author motives, such as counting steps and wandering, as well as transformed Pushkin and Gogol motifs: soul dissipation,

harmonious existence, and unrestrained movement. Important allusions to the ideological content of the stories can also be seen: the spider, the miserable little room, the Bible, the little bug, and the urban topoi – the monument to Pushkin, the Pushkin Square – personifying another, humanized space.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

The similarity of the artistic worlds and the thematic fields of Buida and Dostoevsky consists, first of all, in their subjects, and in the depiction of a marginal social stratum: in the field of view of the authors are people who are out of society and in a state of inner loneliness, feeling themselves on the periphery of life. The image of the world of the protagonist of the story *The Report* by Anna Bodo is in some ways unclear (her age and occupation are unknown) as well as limited, since her perception of the world is focused solely on counting steps.

Modeling the world in which Anna lives, the author uses some details from the works of Dostoevsky: spider, small room, Bible, beauty, bug. An old Jewish woman, Mirra, breeds spiders in large glass jars and feeds them with her own hand-made flies, so as not to feel alone in the world. An obvious hint of a classic fills the image of spiders in a glass jar with deeper content, creating a space of hopelessness. According to the pessimistic views of Svidrigailov (*Crime and Punishment*), eternal life, which from the point of view of religious consciousness is the realm of harmony and perfection, is

nothing more than a bathhouse filled with spiders: For us, everything seems to be eternity as an idea that cannot be understood, something huge, huge! ... And suddenly, instead of all this ... there will be one room, some sort of country bath ... and spiders in all corners, and that is all eternity.

If Dostoevsky's Raskolnikov lives in a tiny little room, six steps long, which had the most pitiful appearance with its yellowish, dusty wallpaper, cutting off from the walls everywhere, then Buida's drunkard's neighbor Edik lives in a dirty little room littered with various rubbish, with furniture that stinks of misfortune and loneliness, the walls of which are painted with ridiculous phrases. But the mention of many books, including the Bible, testifies to the existence in the terrible, absurd world of unshakable spiritual values, belief in the revival of a harmonious person, the existence of bright beginnings of being. Beauty, about which the unsociable old man Gulyaev speaks, are also correlated with the ideas of Dostoevsky, his understanding of the values of the world (the world will be saved by beauty), and the spiritual foundations of life. Just like the classics, in the story of Buida there is a diverse interpretation of the concept of beauty. The old man Gulyaev, reading books in the Old Russian language, contrasts the concepts of beauty and beauty: Do you know what beauty is, bug?

The aquarium filled with water in Edik's room symbolizes the primeval state of the world in which the Light of the Word of God appears. The phrase, ironically spoken by the character, and the light shines in darkness, and everyone sees it, refers to the Gospel of John:

<sup>1</sup>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

<sup>2</sup>It was in the beginning with God.

<sup>3</sup>All through Him began to be, and without Him nothing began to be, that began to be.

<sup>4</sup>In Him was life, and life was the light of man

<sup>5</sup>And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not grasped it.

There is also a parody episode. The inhabitants of the communal dwelling, who are outside the Christian value paradigm, deny God and his commandments with their whole beings. The episode becomes symbolic when a girl, plunging her head into an aquarium and seeing the Light there, becomes frightened, as if she suddenly saw something monstrously shameful, hiding in the most cherished depth of life. It can be assumed that having seen her for a moment, Anna experienced horror when she saw the monstrous distortion of her own life. The culmination of the story is Anna's murder of her mother, whom she hates because of the intolerable circumstances of family life created by her and the indifferent attitude of a seemingly close person to the abuse committed by Dmitry Nikolayevich. It is noteworthy that shortly before the murder, Anna sees in the aquarium the floating light of a street lamp, dispelling the gloom of the night.

In the finale of *The Report* by Anna Bodo, an idea was expressed about the potential of rebellion embedded in the national character: ... a dark, beginningless Russian wind that ... can ... burst ... and die fiercely and disastrously ... breaking everything in its path, without dismantling the right and the guilty ... until all the great city of Moscow is left except for the copper Pushkin and the gloomy Kremlin



... for there would be no penalty, which would have failed us, no one, and no one could escape it. The explicit Gogol (1937) allusion uses a specific syntactic structure that conveys to the text a movement, a special rhythm of the dance, and reflections on the Russian national character, and the complex fate of Russia brings Buida with (Gogol, 1937).

### **3. DISCUSSION**

Female national character is in the center of attention of Buida's story *Esesovka Dora*. The name of the main character, Dora (cf. Theodore) comes from the Greek Θεοδώρα meaning God's gift and is related to the personality of the character. Dora Feodorovna Odnobryuhova is presented in the story as a typical simple Russian woman: Four children, seven husbands, eleven abortions, one Caesarean, twenty-seven teeth, eighty-nine kilos, one hundred seventy-two centimeters, a hoarse bitch voice, bladder stones and bristles in a pocket. The meaning of her life, its main value, is family and home, home and children, home and her own, from which circle men are excluded: she relies only on her own strength.

The female image created by Buida, correlated with the understanding of Dostoevsky's essence of the character of a Russian woman, the peculiarity of her personality, expressed in one of the letters: In our woman, sincerity, perseverance, seriousness and honor, the search for truth and sacrifice are increasingly noticed; and it was always higher in a Russian woman than in men ... A woman is more persistent, more patient in business; she is more serious than a man

wants things for the business itself, and not to appear. For Dora, the family is the only moral value, so for the sake of its prosperity, to build a reliable home-fortress where there is room for anyone, Dora is ready for anything: deceive, betray, kill (Indriastuti, 2019; Tosheva, 2016).

Buida declares the time-space paradigm of the House to be an archetypal image, making a retrospective excursion into the existence and biography of the Tatar courtyard, Dora's family nest: Plywood partitions, curtains, and folding screens – all temporary, all somehow.... Knocking sewing machines, the smell of kerosene lamps and stoves, moonshine and cat urine.... Whispers and screams, laughter and baby talk, despair and hope, hatred and shame.... Wedding ring under the floorboard and milk teeth behind the images. the description of the house reveals, first of all, the idea of a temporary, fragile, nomadic existence that the heroine is eager to overcome. The episode telling about wartime becomes symbolic, when an aerial bomb hits the house but gets stuck between floors and does not explode. A large number of people passed through the dwelling space, but the house remained (Godino et al., 2019; Luo et al., 2018)

The author's thought about the inviolability of family values and the continuity of the life flow is clearly expressed here. House and Dora appear as a kind of integrity: This house has long been its skin and bones, shell and hump. It was in her fall that the rusted water pipes moaned, the hardening bricks ached, and somewhere near the liver the wedding ring that rolled under the floorboard froze and burned. The house is the only reason for the existence of the heroine, a silent accomplice bearing witness to her life collisions.

## 4. RESULT

The protagonist of this work set in an orphanage, the former prison executioner Ivan Matveevich Mikhalev, is depicted as a man not idle, kind, sympathetic, whose main life goal is to create a cozy home. Spiritual comfort for him is associated with the house, garden, wife, children, and family hearth. In a key episode at the beginning of the story, Ivan Matveyevich (Michel), consoling the orphanage of the mentally disabled boy Misha Mezentsev, orphans, lights a fire in the bottle, iridescent either scarlet, or purple, or gold, or greenish.

The flame is perceived as a home fire, personifying the unity of the family. On the other hand, the symbolism of fire also has a mythopoetic meaning correlating with the existential categories life, man, and soul. In the context of the story, color terms perform specific functions for symbolic meaning-making: scarlet is interpreted as a symbol of vitality; mauve is spirituality, helplessness, and loneliness; gold is a thirst for the ideal; greenish is harmony, peace, balance. The dream of Ivan Matveyevich about the family nest, where goodness, well-being and mutual understanding reign, is initially embodied but later destroyed: the color of the flame that ignites the unconscious killer Misha changes, as the golden color disappears from the spectrum. The resulting tricolor flame – scarlet, purple, greenish – is endowed with a negative meaning: death.

Philosophical reflections on the spiritual light inside us become important in the story: There is light in man too. ... No darkness is terrible for this light. Michel is the creator of his own philosophy of light, permanently present in humans whether alive or dead, spiritual or immoral: .... there was never any soul of this reptile, it is a murderer and a cannibal.... And there is light.... So weak ... either blue, or very white ... Pathetic such.... Just about to go out, not go out. Traditionally, blue is the color of eternity and the sky, white is the soul. Thus, in each person, there is the presence of a divine principle, but sometimes it turns out to be unrealized. The story ends with the expression of a philosophical idea about the light of love that fills the universe and human life, despite the tragedy of being.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

Allusions to Dostoevsky in Buida's *The Report* by Anna Bodo, *Esesovka Dora*, and *Michel* have not become the subject of research by contemporary literary critics until now. A rigorous literary analysis of these texts from Buida (2010) suggests the existence of explicit references to the famous works of Dostoevsky (1972) at the levels of form and content. Buida's typology of heroes includes a transformed type of little man and a type of strong-willed Russian woman. The motives of self-will, responsibility, murder as a way of upholding human existence, and anguish associated with the creative legacy of Dostoevsky appear.

Buida's design in using them seems to be to show the peculiarities of the interaction of the individual and society, to emphasize the idea of the original natural freedom of human beings, and therefore their responsibility for everything done around, to put forward for discussion the idea of radical violence for the sake of the good, to emphasize a special psychological state of anguish in the terrible world. The exclusive motive of counting steps is multifunctional: it is intended to present the limitations of the character's world, to act as a means of filling the void of their lives, and to serve as a way to streamline it. Allusions abound in the details: the spider, the miserable room, the insect evoke a picture of homelessness, wretchedness, devoid of meaning. Urban details that relate to the cultural memory of the nation, such as the Pushkin Square monument, on the contrary, fill life with meaning.

The meaning of the metaphor-leitmotiv of the aquarium is determined by its connection with the archetypical image of water, which personifies the world chaos that Light opposes. The philosophical category of Light indicates the divine origin of life and the need for spiritual fulfillment. The image of Fire stands as a symbol of life, and Heaven as the personification of the ideal. The night, on the contrary, is associated with the idea of death. Images of the house and garden, stable in the poetics of Buida, express the idea of family unity. The beauty that saves the world, Love and God's Word are the basis of the world order.

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