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**Conceptual understanding of the categories “Culture” and “Politics” in the creative biography of Thomas Mann**

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...Politics is the morality of the spirit: ... a spirit without politics is an immoral spirit....

Thomas Mann, "Art and Politics", 1939

A concept is "a unit of intercultural communication that unites various fields of humanities" [1.P. - 52]. The notion of "concept" is interpreted in modern humanities in different ways. S.A. Askoldov was one of the first to use the term. In his work "Concept and Word", S.A. Askoldov defines a concept as "a mental formation that replaces [...] in the process of thought an indefinite set of objects of the same kind" [2. P. - 269]. D.S. Likhachev continues the study of concepts and in the book "The Concept Sphere of the Russian language" offers his own interpretation of the concept: a concept is "an algebraic expression of the meaning that we operate in our written and oral speech" [3. P. - 281]. We find additional characteristics of the content of the concept in Y.S. Stepanov. The scientist understands a concept as "a concentration of culture in human consciousness" [4. P. - 43]. The structure of the concept, consisting of its internal form, core and topical layer, allows us to consider the topical layer of the concept as changing in time, adapting to new conditions, connected with the perceiving consciousness (reader, listener, viewer), and influencing the semantic content (core) of the concept [4. P. - 48-60]. Such interpretations of the concept reflect the ideas about it in linguistic cultural studies and allow us to interpret the concept as a "cultural-mental-linguistic" formation [5. P. - 40].

The given semantic interpretations of the term "concept" can be extrapolated to the categories of "culture" and "politics", fundamentally important for the creative biography of Thomas Mann (Paul Thomas Mann, 1875 - 1955), a classic of German-language literature, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature (1929).

Т. Mann repeatedly emphasized that "the socio-political sphere is not the main object of his interest as a writer" [6].

T. Mann's early work (1890s - 1912) corresponds to the "foundations" of the writer's worldview, the "traditions of apolitical German-burger spiritual culture" that he inherited, which absorbed "music, metaphysics, psychology, pessimistic ethics, idealistic theory of individualistic pedagogy" that rejected "any political element" with disdain [6]. It is no coincidence that the theme of Thomas Mann's early novels, continued in the autobiographical family saga "The Buddenbrokes", the stories "Tristan" and "Tonio Kröger", is defined by critics as "the artist and the burgher" [7].

The "catastrophic external events" of the first half of the twentieth century ("a time of wars, revolutions, ideological bloodshed" [7]) lead the apolitical romantic to the realization of the impossibility of separating "spiritual life" from "politics", the conviction that "to create cultural values while remaining apolitical" is "a delusion of the German burgher ideology" [6]. It is natural that in 1918, after the October Revolution in Russia, Thomas Mann rethinks his own conservative philosophy, detailed in his "Reflections of an Apolitical" (Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen, 1918), feels the "negative side" of "links with the past" that are "so necessary ...for creativity" and leaves this book behind [6].

Reflecting on the works of great German thinkers (A. Schopenhauer, G. Hegel), Mann realizes the obvious relationship between the apolitical nature of the "burgher spirit in Germany" and its "path" to the "National Socialist catastrophe of culture" [6]. Mann is convinced that "Culture's 'refusal of politics' is impossible; it is 'self-deception'”. In Schopenhauer's "deep" apolitical nature and "pure genius", Mann senses "a specifically German potency, regularity, and danger" [6].

Mann believes that "the contempt for politics, the anti-democratism of the German spirit" has led to a "dictatorship of political terror" that threatens "the foundations and principles of all Western civilization and morality". However, according to the philosopher, it is "evil", which appeared in "shameless vileness", that "opens the eyes" to "the majestically simple beauty of good", makes it possible to get rid of "cold skepticism" and feel "the young happiness of the human spirit", like "David crushing Goliath" and "Saint George the Victorious, fighting the serpent of lies and violence" [6].

"Farewell to burgherdom as a form of spiritual life" [7] distinguishes four novels by Thomas Mann, which became his "opus magnum": The Magic Mountain (Der Zauberberg, 1924); Lotte in Weimar: The Return of the Beloved (Lotte in Weimar, 1939); Doktor Faustus (Doktor Faustus, 1947), "Joseph and His Brothers" (Joseph, der Ernäherer, 1933-1943). Embracing "the spirit of his time", these literary creations of the brilliant German novelist became "poems about humanity", imbued with "ideas of humanism", reflections on "the tragedy of the artist as an expression of the tragedy of the time" [7].

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