

POETICS OF THE LEITMOTIFS OF JAAN KROSS'S NOVEL "THE CZAR'S MADMAN"*

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No one has yet written about the leitmotifs¹ used by Jaan Kross in "The Czar's Madman" (nor about the micropoetics of his novels as a whole). This article will make the first attempt at such an analysis, which will provide not only for greater understanding of the architectonics of the writer's artistic world as a whole, but also for the concretization of a complete series of features related to the composition of Kross's works that have already been broached by literary scholars and critics.

In accordance with literary tradition, "leitmotif" in this article is understood as a repetitive element in the text (words, phrases, parallel scenes, etc.), which, through its repetition many times over, forms a distinctive compositional structure in the novel. Repeating motifs (or leitmotifs) are a means of structuring a narrative (a type of composition) that inevitably leads to the appearance in the text, alongside empirical imagery, of conditionally symbolic details, scenes, or episodes.

Just such a narrative organization is found in "The Czar's Madman", which, like some of Kross's other historical novels, such as "Between Three Plagues" and "Professor Martens' Departure", approaches the genre of 20th century neomythology. Neomythological texts² are works into whose structures ancient or biblical images are incorporated, constituting an independent, symbolic layer in the text and lending an "eternal" character to its subject; "The Czar's Madman"

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¹ Regarding the leitmotif technique in the novel of the 20th century and its inherent connection to the musical dramas of Richard Wagner, see: [Мелегинский]. Regarding the functional mechanisms of leitmotif in prose, see: [Гаспаров].

² Regarding the 20th century neomythological novel, see: [White; Мелегинский; Минц].

is included in this genre not only due to its technique of leitmotif, but also due to Kross's consistent reference to Old and New Testament symbolism, overlapping historical and conditional/symbolic layers, deepened psychology, including descriptions of subconscious processes, and narrative focus on the inner monologue.

This article does not touch upon the question of whether Kross was influenced by his literary predecessors, those prominent representatives of this genre in western European and Russian prose — James Joyce, Franz Kafka, Thomas Mann, and Dmitry Merezhkovsky, among others — although this question must undoubtedly be addressed in one way or another by literary scholars sooner or later. This article also will not address the *specifics* of Kross's neomythology; that is, the ways in which the use of this feature in his novels differs from that of the works of his predecessors.

The creative space itself of “The Czar’s Madman” is organized in a special way. Although Kross describes a concrete, objective world and, to some degree, the landscape surrounding the characters, each image in it bears a second, symbolic meaning. Thus, for example, one key motif is that of the border, which is represented in the text by the images of *doors, windows, walls, hedges (hekk), shrubbery*, and so on. The narrator, Jakob Mättik, describes in his diary the spaces that are particularly marked by their borders. Borders between different rooms are noted not only in the descriptions of estate buildings in Võisiku and Kivijalg³ (such as the mezzanine, where Timo writes his memorandum and Jakob his diary), but also in descriptions of the space in Moier’s house in Tartu (the low ceiling), and the bath house in which important characters meet for particularly serious discussions, etc. Bock’s estate is described as *divided* into *separate* plots; the house as *divided* into *separate* spaces (this *segmentation* and *disconnection* proves to be more important to Jakob than the *unity* of the manor space). In part, such a perception of space by the protagonist is spurred by Jakob’s lack of self-confidence in the unfamiliar, “gentlemanly” home in Võisiku; thus, he wants to separate and *dissociate* himself spatially from the owners: “On the first floor of the house there were sixteen rooms and the kitchen; in the mansard were another four rooms where the servants lived and commoner guests were housed. I asked of Eeva one of these rooms for myself. Although she herself intended to settle me on the first floor, and even in two

³ In one case after another, not only the borders between spaces are emphasized, but also the *divisions* within the rooms themselves: “One *whopper of a pipe passes through the middle of my room*... I stuck my hand in a *narrow hole in the ceiling* and felt there a *hollow space, like a box two cubits long and two or three handspans wide*” [Kross: 11]. From here on, citations of this edition of the novel’s translation are noted by page number only.

rooms. But I preferred to stay upstairs. Because there I was *isolated*... For the sake of greater *isolation*: living upstairs, I did not necessarily have to, upon entering the house, or leaving it, use the main entrance and make my way through all the Bocks and Rautenfelds..." [23]. However, Jakob's diary writing and his subsequent discovery of Bock's memorandum provide additional reasons for his search for privacy and, consequently, *isolation* from others in the house. Võisiku is plagued by incessant eavesdropping and spying; thus, for the inhabitants of the house (and above all, for Jakob and Timo), separation from others is of highest import⁴. At times the protagonist himself is compelled to eavesdrop, hiding behind an impenetrable shrubbery: "*Through the acacia thickets, still wet with yesterday's rain, I saw that Timo stood ten paces from the hedge. Wearing a green housecoat, a pistol in his right hand, his hand extended, he at that moment took aim... Through the wet bushes I saw Laming come out from behind the trees... I did not want to be in Laming's company. But the conversation between Timo and the manager I heard perforce*" [46–47]. Clearly, the spatial isolation of the characters from one another is connected with their *inner lack of freedom*, which, in turn, is caused by an external lack of social and political freedom.

Finally, it must be noted that Jakob pays particular attention not only to empirical (real, objective) space (his *borders*), but also to the conditional and symbolic interpretation of space⁵ attributable to the training he received first from Pastor Masing and then in the army under the command of Colonel Tenner: the cartography of particular locations, or else the copying of maps. Thanks to this work, after marriage and with the help of Colonel Tenner, Jakob obtains a surveyor's permit⁶ and for some time serves in this capacity.

Accordingly, the repeating images of impenetrable or closed (locked) spaces in the novel are always concrete; they do not break the day-to-day or psycho-

⁴ The two lovers' necessity of *separating* themselves from the others is emphasized in the words of Pastor Masing to Eeva and Timo, who plan to marry and experience quite understandable difficulties as a result: "With such trust in each other you can easily hide from all this fuss, as if, let's say, in a round pearl shell! Let there be any kind of storm, what can it do to your shell? It will only sway pleasantly" [21].

⁵ Compare, for example: "Human destiny, and possibly the destiny of the whole world (if it is indeed separable from the fate of man), is nothing but a miniscule movement in space: a stroke of the pen, a loud word, the turn of a key, the whistle of an axe, the firing of a bullet..." [58].

⁶ It is possible that Jakob Mättik's occupation has a literary source. More than likely, when Kross wrote this novel, he was already familiar with Franz Kafka's work "The Castle", which was published in German in 1926 (it appeared in Estonian translation only in 1987). The protagonist of "The Castle", a surveyor, is reminiscent of Jakob Mättik not only in profession, but in the characterization of his intellectual world: he is constantly in limbo and ignorance ("teadmatu"). Regarding the influence of Kafka's work in Estonian literature, see: [Krull].

logical plausibility of the narrative. At the same time, these images bear other, generalized symbolic meanings, which extend beyond the merely physical.

These same two layers of meaning can also be found in descriptions of the landscape. The novel contains essentially no developed, independent passages depicting nature. From the first few pages the setting is extremely laconic. For example, the protagonists' travels from Petersburg to Võisiku at the beginning of the story is noted by only one very short (pseudo)sketch of the landscape: "The wagon, shuddering, moved forward, *and the shadows of the wayside birches slid across Eeva's face*" [9].

Nonetheless, the world of plants is significant both for the narrator and the author himself of "The Czar's Madman". Images of *wild roses* (thickets of wild rose bushes signify the *border* between the old, nobleman's home in Kivijalg and the rest of the world)⁷, *rowan trees*⁸, and *plum* fruits are important symbols in the novel that repeat throughout whole passages or even the whole text. The symbolism of these images is particularly connected with Estonian folklore. This correlation emerges most clearly in, for example, the following ("summary") utterance by Eeva, who has recently lost her husband: "Eeva tore a branch from the wild rose bush growing near the bench.... 'Timo wanted to be an iron nail in the side of the empire. Sometimes he spoke loud words, to prove his right to say them... I thought: maybe I'm within my rights to want... that I could be... do you know what this plant is called in Estonian? It's *slave's whip* — *Sklavenrute* — yes! I could be a slave's whip to the body of the empire, while I live...'" [306]. Kross was undoubtedly aware that in Christianity, the wild rose symbolizes Christ's passion⁹, and the synonym used by Eeva (*orjavit* — slave's whip) is found specifically in Estonian folk tales (see: [Tuisk]).

⁷ See: "The house is fifteen yards long and five wide... And all of this is right in the park under old willows and among such thickets of wild roses that now, at this time of year, the scent of roses takes one's breath away" [82].

⁸ See Timo's words to Eeva when he argues his refusal to flee the country: "I don't know whether you have experienced how powerful the sense of taste can be. And precisely in that moment when the taste of oranges arose in my memory, I had in my hand rowan berries from that tree, and I unconsciously put them in my mouth. Suddenly I felt in my mouth and throughout my whole body their expected sweetness and unbelievable bitterness — that same flavor, only in the berries it was incomparably more bitter and powerful... *I can go nowhere because of those berries...*" <author's italics> [248].

⁹ Christian symbolism and the image of Christ play an important role in the novel. In this regard, Kross as a *historical* novelist not only precisely portrays the religious and ethical priorities of the era he depicts, but also the realistic contours of the worldview of Bock's historical prototype. In "The Decembrists' Contemporary T. G. Bock" A. Predtechensky writes: "Religion in Bock's view is so very sacred that he rejects any non-religious treatment of Scripture" [Предтеченский: 40].

The image of the rowan, which in the novel symbolizes the possibility of recovery both for Timo and, more generally, for the nation (this has already been noted in Estonian literary criticism, see: [Kivimäe: 306]), is also closely associated with Estonian folk beliefs, in which, as in the folklore of many other European peoples, it is ascribed magical properties (see, for example: [Viires]).

Plums are mentioned in those episodes depicting the celebration of Timo's birthday and his son Jüri's birthday. Eeva brings dissonance into the Bock family tradition of baking a plum cake for birthdays by her attempt to continue it on the day of a lunch with the Bocks, the children of the Vöisiku tenant and Timo's sister's husband, Peter Mannteufel: "And near the end Eeva served her that very baked plum cake, as if someone in the family were having a birthday" [285]. Each of the mentioned episodes portrays the Christian symbolism of plums; the plum fruit represents faithfulness and independence; correspondingly, the plum cake at Timo's birthday is baked by Eeva, who is distinguished by precisely these characteristics, while for Jüri's birthday, it is baked by the Bocks' devoted servant Liisa¹⁰.

Leitmotif repetitions in the novel (of which there are not many overall) consist also of images of color. A particular series of these images is represented by the colors (or *patterns*) of the Bocks' clothing and home furnishings. For example, a plaid blanket is repeatedly encountered, as not only Timo, but also his son Jüri cover themselves with it (and, as it turns out, are sheltered by it): "Timo and Eeva sat together on the couch behind a small round table.... Timo's legs under the table were covered with a plaid blanket, Eeva poured the coffee into cups of blue Põltsamaa porcelain" [28]; "I looked around: little, tanned, snub-nosed Jüri slept soundly on the seat of the carriage, curled up under a plaid¹¹ blanket..." [9]. As is well known, in the culture of the novel's setting, plaid fabric was associated with noble birth.

Another set of repetitions is found in depictions of the eye color of characters both main and secondary. For example, Timo's eyes and those of the medical student Faehlmann (whose character is based on the historical figure of the doctor, writer, and folklorist Friedrich Robert Faehlmann) are both gray: "No, no, no!" cried Bock, looking at his father with shining, pale, pale *gray*¹² eyes" [14]; "Doctor Faehlmann looked at me excessively with large, dark *gray*

¹⁰ Interestingly, varieties of plum were quite rare in Livonia at the beginning of the 19th century; according to specialists, they grew mainly in greenhouses — that is, only in the holdings of people of means [Viires: 178; Hueck].

¹¹ In this sentence the original Estonian word, "plaid", is used, rather than the adjective chosen by Russian translator Olga Samma, "traveling".

¹² Here again the original Estonian word is referenced, as in translation it was changed to "light blue".

eyes" [53]. The Biblical symbolism of this color is connected with repentance (Timo, in fact, is the repentant nobleman), mourning, and death and spiritual immortality; this color parallel implicitly underscores the similarity between Timo and Faehlmann, who also sacrifices himself for the sake of others and thus secures himself a place in the memory of subsequent generations¹³.

Red is repeated in the descriptions of Anna (first Jakob's lover, and then his wife) and the interior of her home. Red symbolizes here not only the passion (*sensual* love), but also the tragedy (destructiveness) of Jakob's relationship with Anna, whom he does not truly love [170, 172].

Motifs found throughout the novel also inform the characterization of its protagonists by pairing them with world literary traditions and well-known Biblical stories. Thus, one of the most important recurring images, which correlates primarily with the narrator, is that of the mirror (or reflection)¹⁴. Jakob Mättik is a reflective person, analyzing not only the world, but himself as well. It is easy to uncover the deep kinship of the meaning of "reflection" held by all cultures (thought and mirrors are joined by the concept of cognition) and this attribute of Jakob. From the very beginning of the novel the image of the mirror is directly connected to the narrator, in Jakob's diary entry of June 4, 1827: "I went to Rõika to see Mr. Amelung's mirror factory. The director gave me (of course, out of obsequiousness) a large mirror with a frame of stained birch" [28]. On the one hand, this characterizing theme emphasizes Jakob's secondariness and lack of originality. For example, Timo wants to make him a *copyist* of Lehrberg's biography, and while serving in the army under the command of Colonel Tenner, Jakob *copies* topographical maps, rather than drawing originals¹⁵. The self-knowledge and understanding of the world gained by Jakob during his first years of study under Pastor Masing become, in a certain sense, a "reflection" (doubling) of Timo's intellectual world (and, in part, of Bock's teacher, Lehrberg, future academic and historian). Timo supplies Jakob and Eeva with books that he himself read during his years of study under Lehrberg: "It became clear that Timo had sent with us two or three boxes of books, the best of his juvenile library. In the books were annotations and explanations written in Lehrberg's hand, and several parts were underlined. Lehrberg was a teacher and governor to Timo and his brothers and sisters, and I knew then that Timo held

¹³ It is well known that the selfless conduct of Doctor Faehlmann during the epidemic shattered his health and became one of the causes of his death from tuberculosis. Regarding Doctor Faehlmann, see: [Bertram].

¹⁴ For another interpretation of the mirror motif in "The Czar's Madman", see: [Kirss; Valgemäe].

¹⁵ Nevertheless, even before serving in the army Jakob did draw "original" maps, when he surveyed Masing's parsonage [20].

him in highest esteem" [19]. According to N. Lyzhin, this hero's historical prototype, August Christian Lehrberg, was a particular admirer of Friedrich Schiller (see: [Льжин: 62–63]) and introduced to him his pupil — von Bock, Timo's historical prototype. Kross, familiar with Lyzhin's article (and probably with other sources that characterized Lehrberg's views), evidently is suggesting in the novel, however indirectly, that both Timo and Jakob are characterized by an interest in Schiller's "rebellious" work¹⁶.

This involvement in Timo's world (or Jakob's "reflection" of Timo's thinking and behavior) manifests itself in one of the most critical moments of Jakob's life: the moment when he refuses to continue his relationship with Jette, having discovered the true nature of her informant father. This is a highly important episode, not analyzed previously in the critical and research literature, in which Jakob repeats, in his own way, Timo's rebellion against autocracy, even though he as yet knows nothing of the contents of Timo's memorandum: "I stood on the stone slab in front of the fireplace. I closed my eyes tightly and turned to face the fireplace. When I opened my eyes, I saw between the candlesticks someone's portrait made of fragments of colorful stones in a very fine, round, bronze frame; if I am not mistaken, it was a portrait of Peter the Great, the Sovereign with a sharp little moustache and bulging eyes. I don't know when or how it got there. I grabbed it without looking. I squeezed it until I felt a sharp pain in my hand. Then I hurled the portrait to the stone floor and stomped on it hard with my iron-buckled heel. But it didn't break. I pounded it with my heel. I ground my heel into the imperial face and the iron grated against the fireplace. I gripped the stone slab and attempted to lift it, in order to increase the pressure. I remember gasping, 'Let it be damned! Let it be damned! The *violence!*' <italics Kross's> until the portrait broke into crunching¹⁷ powder" [64]. This passage describes the symbolic rebellion of the protagonist against autocratic violence in the Russian government. Although Jakob commits this act in the heat of passion and not publicly, it nonetheless main-

¹⁶ Y. M. Lotman (see: [Lotman: 69]) pointed out the Schiller theme in Kross's novel. In his article, "New Materials about the Beginning of the Period of Acquaintance with Schiller in Russian Literature", Lotman writes about the perception of Schiller's work in Russian at the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th centuries: "Schiller impressed with his rebelliousness, his revolutionary pathos, which allowed one to see him as a champion of the ideas of equality and brotherhood, successor to the traditions of the 18th century and contemporary of the revolution" [Лотман: 9]. In his diary entry of June 4, 1827, Jakob notes that he had laid Schiller's "Wallenstein" on the table and opened the play to the third act just before Laming entered his room [17]. The reference is to Schiller's trilogy, written in 1797–1799; possibly, Jakob opened to the third part of the trilogy, "Wallenstein's Death", which resonates thematically with the events taking place in Timo's life.

¹⁷ In the original: "crunching stone powder".

tains its similarity to Bock's relationship toward autocratic power. The above quote has overt plot similarities to a famous episode from Pushkin's poem, "The Bronze Horseman" (1833), in which the "poor" Yevgeny threatens the autocratic sovereign, Peter. Both Jakob's rebellion (having transformed the "wretched Finn, contrary to the assessment presented in Pushkin's poem) and the rebellion of Pushkin's "poor" (and "mad") Yevgeny, who has lost his beloved, are directed against the violator-emperor, who symbolizes inhumane power. Compare: «Кругом подножия кумира / Безумец бедный обошел / И взоры дикие навел / На лик державца полумира. Стеснилась грудь его. Чело / К решетке холодной прилегло, / Глаза подернулись туманом, / По сердцу пламень пробежал, / Вскипела кровь. / Он мрачен стал / Пред горделивым истуканом / И, зубы стиснув, пальцы сжав, / Как обуянный силой черной, / «Добро, строитель чудотворный! — / Шепнул он, злобно задрожав, — / Ужо тебе!..» [Пушкин: 262].

In addition to plot references to Pushkin's poem, the above passage from "The Czar's Madman" also contains lexical allusions to it, beginning with the *bronze* frame of the miniature portrait of Peter and ending with the repeated image of "iron" in the "iron-buckled heel", and "the iron grated along the fireplace;" compare in Pushkin: "O powerful ruler of fate! / Have you not above the very abyss / To the heights, with *iron* reins / Reared Russia to its hind legs?" Compare also the image of the portrait *crushed to smithereens*¹⁸, which actualizes, in the mind of the informed reader, the lines from Pushkin's "Poltava": "Thus the heavy hammer, / *Crushing* glass, forges steel" [Пушкин: 169]¹⁹.

In addition, the image of the mirror fulfills another important function: as a symbol of magic, it connects Jakob with the world of his sister, Eeva, who, despite her intelligence (rationality) and integrity, like Timo, is considered by Jakob to be "insane". Both brother and sister belong to the world of folk beliefs (Eeva to a much greater extent, Jakob less so). Jakob happens to be nearby when Eeva brushes her hair (a famously magical activity in folklore, connected with wish-making) and looks in the mirror before her trip to see Empress Maria Fyodorovna: "In the evening Eeva ordered that I be called up from my bay room to her bedroom in the main house. She sat before the oval mirror between the flames of two candles and brushed her coal-black hair, to the color of which I still could not become accustomed" [130]. Before his trip to his future wife, Anna, Jakob also brushes his hair at a mirror: "...I stand in the

¹⁸ In the original: "crushed".

¹⁹ It must be emphasized that the layer reminiscent of Pushkin characterizes not the consciousness of the narrator, but the author's position in the novel's text.

morning in my shirt and socks in the middle of the room ... arranging my hair with a comb and looking into the little fifty-kopek mirror hanging on the bleached log wall ... And in the mirror I see my mother paused at the threshold of the open door, looking at me" [177]. This occurs while Jakob is visiting his parents and distinctly realizes that he has had no real home for a long time. This episode also portrays another symbolic meaning of the mirror: the possibility of deepened self-knowledge. Refusing to allow his mother to polish his boots for him, Jakob suddenly discovers with fear that the reason for his refusal is not only the pain and shame arising from his estrangement from his parents, but also fear that his mother will rub his boots with lard, as is customary among peasants²⁰: "...I feel that her willingness to clean the boots of her once tattered little boy is one quarter proud joy for that boy and three quarters bashful pain for his estrangement. And right then I asked myself (the question arising suddenly in some latent part of my brain): in my refusal, did not some kind of vulgar undercurrent of apprehension flash by that she would rub my boots with pork lard, when I myself have already long cleaned them with Schreiber shoe polish?" [177–178].

The theme of *doubt* plays an important role in the characterization of Jakob, as it is one of his dominant emotional states. Doubt arises as a result of insufficient knowledge (*understanding*) of current events (Jakob was long in the dark about the secret of Timo's arrest) and as a result of the *uncertainty* of his social status²¹. Jakob begins to keep his diary in order to better *understand* the goings-on in Võisiku after Timo's return from the fortress. Most of all, Jakob doubts the insanity of Timo, or rather, his normality. Recall also that doubt is the immediate cause (the psychological undercurrent) of the break between Jakob and Jette: "And I felt *doubt* flood me <italics original>, as if my collar were splashed with cold water and all my clothes were soaked through" [62]. Characteristically, the change in Jakob's regard toward Bock (and toward the contents of his memorandum) occurs when Bock begins to need Jakob's help and grants him great *trust*: "My problem lies in the fact that Kitty believes I am healthy'. I replied, especially based on yesterday's conversation, almost truthfully: 'But you are in fact healthy'" [160]. After this confession, Jakob rereads

²⁰ The simultaneous description of several psychological motives for the character's action, followed by a "moral rebuke" from the narrator, can be traced most closely back to the psychological prose of Leo Tolstoy [Гинзбург: 287–288]. This same technique is found in a highly developed form in Jaan Kross's novel "Professor Martens' Departure", which gives cause to note Kross's attentive study of Tolstoy's creative methodology. Regarding the "Tolstoyan" layer of this novel, see: [Pild].

²¹ Regarding the uncertainty of the narrator's social status in this novel, see: [Laanes].

the memorandum and realizes that Timo was speaking the truth²²: “I came to the conclusion that everything that Timo writes here is pure truth, and that truth is clear, if not to everyone, then at least to many. The lie is only *what* he did with it. ... But, clearly, there was no insane act by Timo” [160]. In this moment Jakob’s doubt disappears — not so much his doubt in Timo’s sanity, but in himself. When Jakob gives Bock the advice to *believe* himself healthy, rather than ill, because it will be better for those close to him, he acquires, for a short time, mental balance and confidence in himself: “And so I suggest to you: if you are healthy, it will be appropriate to confirm that... If you are still ill, it will be appropriate, with the best of intentions, to deceive the whole world, and yourself”²³ [163]. Thus, in addition to bringing on agonizing self-awareness, Jakob’s doubt also plays a constructive role as it facilitates the improvement of his intellectual and emotional world.

Another important leitmotif, related to the just-discussed theme of doubt, involves images of “*swinging, swaying, and rocking*”, which, depending on the context, characterize the inner world of the narrator in both literal and metaphorical ways. These themes are connected by the general theme of uncertainty

²² The theme of “*truth*”, interwoven throughout the novel, is intended particularly as an allusion, in the mind of the Estonian reader, not only to the title of Anton Hansen Tammsaare’s novel “Truth and Fairness”, but also to the difficult searches for truth and *fairness* (historically unattainable for the Estonian people at the beginning of the 19th century) by the main characters of Tammsaare’s novel. It is as if in Kross’s novel, Jakob Mättik, as one of the pioneers of the Estonian intelligentsia, continues these searches for truth and fairness during the difficult process of forming an Estonian intellectual elite.

²³ Jakob’s reading aloud of Heinrich Heine’s poem from the collection “Buch der Lieder” (1827), brought from Tartu by Eeva (see [164]), becomes the direct impetus for his courageous behavior. Jakob quotes three lines in the original German from the second poem of the sub-cycle “Bergidylle” (the section “Aus der Harzreise”): “Jetzo, da ich ausgewachsen, / Viel gelesen, viel gereist, / Schwillt mein Herz, und ganz von Herzen / Glaub ich an den heiligen Geist. // Dieser tat die grössten Wunder, / Und viel grössre tut er noch; / Er zerbrach die Zwingherrnburgen, / Und zerbrach des Knechtes Joch. // Alte Todeswunden heilt er, / Und erneut das alte Recht: // Alle Menschen, gleichgeboren, / Sind ein adliges Geschlecht...” (quoted from: [Heine]). Jakob is unaware of Heine’s poetic world (he admits that he doesn’t remember who authored “Buch der Lieder”). Both Jakob and Timo were raised on the texts of high Romanticism. They take seriously all that happens and see, above all, the tragic side of events. Comedy and irony almost never determine their reactions to events. Jakob is freed for some time from his worry about his socio-cultural status not only by the real help he provides to Timo, but also by Heine’s poem, which, on the one hand, ridicules Christian ideas, but on the other hand, ironically ascribes people of any and every descent to the noble class; he feels inner freedom: “I fell silent and held my breath. I heard the sparrows twittering on the snow-covered hedge; I smelled the especially invigorating scents of horse manure and straw wafting from the open gates of the big barn across the snowy courtyard; morning coffee, shoveling snow, and those verses — ein adelich Geshchlecht — seemed to itch within me” [164].

or instability. The theme of rocking (which has a distinctly erotic connotation) arises in the novel in relation to the appearance of Anna — first Jakob's lover, and then his wife. Hiding from prying eyes, Jakob and Anna glide (*rock*) in a boat; surrounded by water, both the reed beds and this closed world become a unique reflection (or adaptation) of the image already noted above of the "pearl shell", which, according to Pastor Masing's words to Timo and Eeva, symbolizes the space occupied by two people connected by love and trust who are escaping the world of people hostile to them (in Jakob and Anna's case, it is also an escape from inner loneliness): "Naked in the greenish twilight of evening or night, we find ourselves in a rocking, isolated world" [180–181]. In the dream Jakob describes in his diary on November 2, 1828, he floats (rocks) in a boat, now not only with Anna, but with Jette and Emperor Alexander I, the main antagonist of his love-life drama (recall that Jakob breaks up with Jette, whom he loves, to avoid marrying a daughter of the spy Laming, Alexander I's double; but, by a twist of fate, marries one anyway — Anna, whom he does not truly love, is Laming's illegitimate daughter). When he has this dream, Jakob is not yet married to Anna and does not know that she is Laming's daughter. The dream turns out to be prophetic, foreshadowing later events. In describing it in his diary, Jakob compares himself to the prophet Moses. The comparison (which, according to his notes, came to Jakob in his dream) arises as a result of the association with the Old Testament story of the baby Moses floating down the Nile in a basket, where his mother had laid him to save his life: "And then I understood that it was a rectangular basket woven from green reeds. I'd never seen one like it in my life, but I remember imagining in my childhood just such a basket for the baby Moses, thrown into the reeds of the Nile" [193]. This comparison to Moses is critical for an overall understanding of Kross's conceptualization of Jakob Mättik's character. The author himself wrote a statement characterizing the protagonist-narrator of "The Czar's Madman". The conditional author (storyteller) of that statement describes Jakob somewhat condescendingly, but Kross himself, as author of the novel (actual author), also emphasizes Jakob's "metamorphosis", the deep changes that take place within the character throughout his narrative (see: [Kross 2003: 32]).

Thus, this character seems to be measured in two ways, the second of which, connected with metamorphoses (that is, inner changes), gives him a certain magnitude. The novel's projection of Jakob onto the prophet Moses is deeply meaningful. According to the Old Testament story, the prophet Moses, who led his people out of Egyptian slavery, nonetheless never saw the promised land, since God punished him for his disbelief (doubt). Possibly Jakob, too,

is punished (by Providence?)²⁴ for his doubts in Jette (who truly loved him) and refusal to join his life to hers. In addition, Jakob, like Moses, is undoubtedly one of many representatives of his people who gradually “led out” (in a spiritual sense) his people from “foreign captivity” (not only Russian), at the same time experiencing deep *doubt* in his thoughts and actions. And so, the fundamental themes characterizing Jakob (the mirror, doubt, and rocking/swaying) are internally unified in meaning, as they all interface with the image of Moses in one way or another, on whom the character of the narrator is oriented, however opaquely.

The image of Timo, the other central character in “The Czar’s Madman”, is also more deeply developed as a result of the interaction of several motifs. One in particular is presented in the very title of the novel. The word “madman” and its many derivatives (“insane”, “crazy”, “out of his mind”, “idiot”, “irrational”, “joker”, etc.) are used to characterize Timo by a wide variety of characters (beginning with Emperor Alexander I and Peter Mannteufel, who infuse the word with a deeply negative meaning, and ending with Eeva, sympathizing with her spouse, and even by Jakob, trying to find in these terms different faces and shades of meaning). As Jakob comes to deeply understand the true meaning of Bock’s memorandum, his interpretation of the mental condition of its author changes²⁵. In his diary entry of June 6, 1827, Jakob, assessing Timo’s idea about a possible union between the Baltic nobility and local peasants, calls his ideas childish and infantile. However, after Jakob learns of the oath given by Bock to Emperor Alexander, in addition to the image of “childishness” (“child”) in the original Estonian another adjective appears: “idiot”²⁶, synonym to “madman”.

The significance of this characteristic is deepened further if one takes into consideration the fact that Jakob and Bock heard a lecture by Professor Gustav Ewers in Tartu about the history of medieval Europe. Accordingly, he could have been aware of the meaning of the Greek-based word “idiot” in the middle ages: a person endowed with ideal features and deep spirituality (see: [Докторовский 1974: 394]). It is also worth noting that Jakob Mättik, like Bock, is a man of the Romantic era. It was the German Romantics that first upheld the

²⁴ To speak of Jakob’s disbelief (that is, his lack of faith in God) is rather difficult, despite the open skepticism he expresses in regards to religious questions. More than likely, he should be described as one who “doubts” (that is, who is inclined toward agnosticism).

²⁵ Regarding the shift in Jakob’s opinion of the contents of the memorandum, see: [Kissel’jova 2010: 323].

²⁶ In the Russian translation, this important to Kross lexeme (italicized in the original text) is for some reason translated as “fool”. It is rather difficult to agree with the several Estonian critics who also consider “foolishness” to be a synonym of “madman” as it characterizes Kross’s Bock.

child as the ideal creature, devoid of the defects and deficiencies inherent in adults. The pairing of the images of "the idiot" and "the child" (of course, on an authorial level, not in the characters' consciousness) points to Dostoevsky's novel "The Idiot"²⁷. Clearly, Timo, with his high religiosity and notion of Christ as an indisputable ideal, calls forth associations with Prince Myshkin, the "Christ Prince", as Dostoevsky dubbed his protagonist in his draft manuscripts of the novel; "the positively perfect man". "The Idiot", like many other works by Dostoevsky, was, of course, well known to Kross. Bock is also pulled closer to Prince Myshkin, "The Poor Knight", by his high opinions of the ethical and behavioral norms guided by the ideals of medieval knighthood, as well as by the obvious authorial projection of Bock onto Don Quixote.

It is well known that Cervantes' Don Quixote is one of the fundamental literary prototypes of Lev Nikolaevich Myshkin²⁸. In one of the beginning stages of familiarizing himself with the memorandum, Jakob characterizes Timo's behavior as "quixotic": "My God, did Timo really not understand that even if he could quixotically offer some kind of protection to the peasants (until he himself was freed), then the rest of the landowners — ninety-nine out of one hundred, well fine, ninety-five out of one hundred — would each in his own way be oppressor, thief, torturer and bloodsucker par excellence?" [104]. More than likely, "quixotic" was already an abased adjective, rather than a "lofty" one, in European culture at the beginning of the 19th century²⁹. Jakob, having read the works of the German Romantics, and particularly the works of Friedrich Schlegel, would have gleaned from them an interpretation of the image of Don Quixote that highlights the "idealism" of Don Quixote's behavior in the serious sense of the word. Heine³⁰ interpreted the image of Don Quixote ironically; however, recall that Jakob "forgot" Heine's name (that is, by all appearances, he read nothing by Heine except "The Book of Songs"). One more possible source of Jakob's word choice remains: the compositions of Russian poet Gavril Derzhavin, which Jakob himself admits to having read, despite his poor knowledge of the Russian language. One of Derzhavin's most famous compositions is his "Ode to Felica" (1782), dedicated to Empress Catherine II. It is this poem

²⁷ The connection between the plot structure of "The Czar's Madman" and another of Dostoevsky's novels, "Humiliated and Insulted", was noted in an article by Paul Rummo (see: [Rummo: 20]).

²⁸ In Dostoevsky's opinion, Prince Myshkin is Don Quixote himself, but serious, not ridiculous [Достоевский 1974: 312].

²⁹ See: "The myth of Don Quixote is a product of the Romantic era, and above all of the German Romantics ..." [Барно 2011: 34]. Regarding the reception of Cervantes' "Don Quixote" in Russia and Western Europe, see: [Барно 1988].

³⁰ Heine's conception of the image of Don Quixote is presented in his "Introduction to Don Quixote" (1837). For more about this, see: [Mühlmann].

that contains the verb “to wax quixotic” («ДОНКИШОТСТВОВАТЬ»), meaning “to behave erratically, wildly, recklessly” (and formed from the noun «ДОНКИШОТСТВО», in modern Russian «ДОНКИХОТСТВО»): “You do not much like masquerades. / And you never set foot inside a club; / Keeping your habits and customs, / You never wax quixotic” [Державин: 98]³¹.

Returning now to Dostoevsky, it is of note that Kross’s novel pays attention to the consequences of Timo’s actions, which, according to the narrator, bring not order but chaos and destruction to the world around him (at least at first): “... he wanted to amaze the enemy, but thereby cost his loyal man an eye. Later he wanted to make his beloved woman unprecedentedly happy, but he made her unhappy. And he, desiring to destroy blindness, vulgarity, and injustice in the Russian Empire, raised his hand against the very Emperor — and instead destroyed himself” [187]. Jakob comes to this conclusion after he finds out from his friend Tiit, Bock’s former orderly, that he had gone blind after Bock accidentally struck him. Approximately the same thing happens in Dostoevsky’s novel: the level of disharmony in their relationship increases significantly after the Christ-Prince’s arrival in Petersburg (see: [Обломиевский]).

Another correlation with Dostoevsky’s artistic world is found in two parts of Kross’s novel (based on the repetition of several images, the metaphorical image of “the baths” and the image of a “circle”) in which Timo relates the most frightening events of his imprisonment. First and foremost, the imagery of these passages ascends to the “hell” of Dante’s “The Divine Comedy” where the protagonist, led by Virgil, passes through the circles of hell, meeting famous historical figures along the way. The “circles” Timo runs around his prison cell metaphorically correlate to these circles of the hell in “The Divine Comedy”. Timo devises this activity in order to give meaning to his imprisoned existence, which is profound torture for him, full of bloody horrors and nightmarish analogies to “The Divine Comedy”, which he recalls³². Additionally, the correlation of the repeating images of “baths” and “the circles of hell” remind readers

³¹ However, Jakob undoubtedly could have simply heard this word somewhere; for example, in Moier’s house in Tartu.

³² For example: “One circle is one year. I began with the birth of Christ... eight circles is one warm-up, nothing comes to memory ... The ninth circle: the Cherusci Arminius in the Teutoburg forest are routed by Publius Quintilian Varus... Varus falls upon his sword... yes, yes. Just like his father in the battle of Philippi. A Varus family weakness, from which the Romanov family obviously does not suffer. The next five circles: the last years of old Augustus. Dying, he orders that he be declared a god. He, at least, waited to do this until his dying hour... his body begins to tingle. His forehead dampens... Tiberius is already the emperor... Oh! Endure, endure... Seneca kills himself on the emperor’s orders, Lucan kills himself on the emperor’s orders, Petronius kills himself on the emperor’s orders... Why are they all so weak? Why do they obey?!” [126–127].

of the passage from Dostoevsky's autobiographical "The House of the Dead" (1860–1861), in which the actual bath house in which the convicts bathe is likened to Dante's hell³³. The inclusion of this important subtext in "The Czar's Madman" gives the novel a broader perspective in time, which allows Kross's contemporaries to see in Timotheus von Bock not only Dostoevsky, who suffered under autocratic violence and was imprisoned from the end of the 1840s through the first half of the 1850s, but also, potentially, the inmates of the prisons and labor camps of the Soviet regime³⁴.

Another motif characteristic of Bock and found throughout the novel is *piano playing*, a metonym for the wider and more significant concept of *music*. In contrast to his historical prototype³⁵, the Timo of Kross's novel is an excellent musician (performer), but he does *not* compose. This change appears to be intentional, because the talent for composition has been redirect to another character — to La Trobe the "cosmopolitan by calling", who expressed his readiness to become a spy or informant when necessary. La Trobe is a deeply dual-natured character. He sympathizes with Timo and his wife, but only in those situations where he himself is not threatened. According to Kross, La Trobe's particular sphere of activity — music — is equally dual-natured. For example, Eeva suggests that La Trobe play the piano to defuse a tense situation arising in Moyer's house in 1817 after Timo gives an ardent speech regarding the Baltic aristocrats' lofty calling to free the Livonian peasants: "I saw that it was unpleasant for Eeva to hear all of this.... She took Timo by the hand. She said, with an almost happy smile, 'Today you have paid your debt'. And turning to the others present, 'Gentlemen, Monsieur La Trobe would like to play his new composition for us...' [36]. In this episode, on the one hand, piano playing is called to soften the possible conflict between Timo and his fellow noblemen. On the other hand, the "transcendent" nature of the pieces played seems to negate and dispel not only the lofty register of Timo's speech, but the very topic of the speech, making it appear an unnecessary reminder of the pettiness of the day-to-day.

³³ For example: "When we opened the door to the bath itself, I thought we had entered hell... There wasn't a handspan of floor space not covered with crouching convicts, splashing out of their basins. Others stood upright between them and, holding their basins in their arms, washed standing up, dirty water dripping from them straight onto the shaved heads of those sitting below. On the shelf and all the ledges leading to it sat, huddled and crouched, the already washed [Достоевский 1972: 98].

³⁴ Regarding allusions in the novel to the 20th century, see: [Kross 2003: 88–89].

³⁵ Compare: "Clearly, Bock himself was acquainted with the works of Russian writers, artists, and musicians (he was an avid lover of music, played the piano and composed)..." [Предтеченский: 19].

The duality of the image of piano playing also appears in one of the novel's key episodes, in which Timo relates how Emperor Alexander I "granted" him a grand piano in his cell at Schlüsselburg fortress³⁶: "Later, when he sent me the pianoforte, I touched it ... I could not resist this temptation" [110]. Playing the "imperial" piano undoubtedly helps Timo survive in the fortress; however, this is the one situation in which the protagonist, characterized by outstanding courage and resilience, succumbs to the emperor's onslaught. In this way, the "transcendent" and lofty realm of music becomes, for the duplicitous Emperor Alexander (as he is portrayed in the novel), a means of manipulation and a weapon of influence against his "up-start" subject.

Finally, the work of Ludwig van Beethoven, composer of "Missa solemnis", is ambiguously understood by Bock and La Trobe in a scene in which the latter shows his true two-facedness as he tremulously tries to convince Bock to read his denunciations — of Bock himself. While La Trobe is inclined to ignore the "rebellious" and "heroic" essences of Beethoven's compositions, these are the precise elements of the German's music closest to Bock: "And although La Trobe said that he wasn't particularly fond of Beethoven ('mighty, but for the most part rather uncouth!'), after lunch he nonetheless played us 'Close-ness to the Beloved', as he said, in memory of the Great Lover"³⁷; "at which Timo said that great lovers are also the greatest rebels, and that he wanted to play for us in honor of Beethoven, the great rebel" [148]. Significantly, as one of the most important realms of art, music is presented in "The Czar's Madman" in a Romantic light; that is, in the spirit of the German Romantics, it is simultaneously attributed a connection to both good and evil. Thus, La Trobe's comment that "God plays Beethoven"³⁸ is called to bear witness not only to "God's wrath", as if illuminating La Trobe's human baseness, but also, possibly, to the fact that "wrath" is realized simultaneously with both "good" and "evil" intentions (not without reason does the resilient and courageous Timo fear

³⁶ The original Estonian specifically references a grand piano.

³⁷ In Russian translation: «Близость любимого» и «Великий любимый». It appears that such a translation of the play's name (the title, apparently, invented by Kross) contradicts the context, as later in the novel there is mention of the unrequited love of Beethoven for Therese von Brunswick. As to the second phrase, in the original it is stated directly: The Great Lover (Suur armastaja).

³⁸ La Trobe utters these words in an attempt to soften the impression of those around him regarding his new role as an informant who has agreed to spy on Timo: "'Uh oh, the Lord God is playing Beethoven!' This was in reference to a clap of thunder that resounded overhead. 'Don't you see ... I'd like to speak with you!' He looked at Timo and Eeva" [106].

storms). Hence follows the idea that the Divine origin is dual in nature and inseparable from the diabolical³⁹.

Another group of motifs that define Bock's symbolic characteristics is related to the image of Christ. The correlation of Timo with Christ (by several characters) is found throughout the novel⁴⁰. Specifically, there is the episode of Jakob's dream about the impending crucifixion, in which Jakob unexpectedly finds himself to be Timo's double: "If I were sure that I were he whom they want to crucify... if I were sure, I would shove Timo away from me and yell, what is this nonsense! But I am ashamed to shout and protest, because, maybe, Timo is the one who should be crucified. And I, I in fact, do not know whether it should be Timo after all, perhaps I ought to suggest that they crucify me instead.... And although it would be unbearable pain and a slow death, to be crucified is honorable⁴¹. I don't know what to do" [229–230]. This passage demonstrates the closest symbolic and psychological connection between the two protagonists. On the one hand, this episode demonstrates the link to the series of motifs describing Jakob as Moses (one of the forerunners of Christ). On the other hand, here Jakob himself practically takes on the role of Christ, evincing not only high nobility and courage (his readiness to take on suffering

³⁹ The opinion that the nature of the Almighty is dual also characterizes Johann Köler, the protagonist of Kross's novella "The Third Range of Hills", who begins to see clearly a demonic beginning in Christ (for more about this, see: [Kisseljova 2011]). In this Kross follows the tradition found in Estonian folklore and literature (see, for example: [Undusk: 393]). The idea of music's dual meaning and its possible connection with Evil enters the novel with Thomas Mann's composition "Doctor Faust". Both the author and the narrator, Jakob, note the dual role of music in the lives of Timo and especially of La Trobe, in contrast to Timo himself, who is inclined to ignore this contradiction. Defining music as the "most ambiguous of the arts" [Mann], Adrian Leverkühn, the protagonist of "Doctor Faust", expresses the opinion of the author himself, Thomas Mann, that music can become a weapon of Evil if it is used to force the will of others to submission. The interrelation of Kross's novel with the prose of Thomas Mann has already been explored in the literature (see, for example: [Laanes]). This parallel is not unfounded, but deserves thorough research, given that Mann is one of the most famous writers of the "mythical novel" or the neomythological novel of the 20th century (worth mention above all are the works "Joseph and his Brothers" and "The Magic Mountain").

⁴⁰ By way of direct character speech, the text contains several hidden quotes from the Gospels that further strengthen the leitmotif of Bock as Jesus Christ. For example, the scene in which the peasants come to wish Timo a happy birthday (November 13, 1827) is projected onto the famous commandment of Christ: "Timo stood from his chair and accepted the gift. He thought for a moment and ordered Kasper to bring a candle. Kasper retrieved a wax candle from a drawer in the buffet. Timo lit it from the one already burning on the table and placed it in the candlestick he had been presented. Holding the candlestick with the burning candle in his hand, he turned to the men: "Thank you all. I promise, I will use your candlestick. Although I do not know whether it will be of very great benefit to you or to me" [143]. Compare to: "And, having lit a candle, do not place it under a bushel, but in a candlestick, and light everyone in the house" (Mark 4: 21).

⁴¹ In the original: "a matter of honor" ("aasi").

in place of Timo), but also his inherent deep integrity (crucifixion is also an honor, and in Jakob's opinion, only Timo is worthy of honor).

The groups of leitmotifs described herein not only deepen the projection of Bock's character onto Christ, but also draw his character from the context of world literature (Cervantes' Don Quixote and Dostoevsky's Prince Myshkin), thereby expanding the historical associations of the image beyond a certain time period and underscoring its "eternal" nature at the symbolic level of the narrative.

As has been demonstrated, Kross has creatively interpreted the fates of both Jakob Mättik and Timotheus von Bock in both the specifically historic dimension and in symbolic terms: all that happens to each character is projected onto the eternal. "The Czar's Madman" can be considered a neomythological text precisely thanks to this quality, achieved primarily through the use of leitmotifs.

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