
Books and Morality

1. Introduction

«The book gives a person the opportunity to rise above himself» Andre Maurois

Books are our guides to life. They guide us, when we are at the crossroads, support when we are ill, give advice, give us the experience accumulated by different generations. However, not all books can be attributed to the cornucopia of wisdom and morality. Many works either do not carry any purposeful idea or are echoes of topicality, vulgarity and bad taste. This quotation belongs to the English writer Oscar Wilde, who used it in the work "Portrait of Dorian Gray," describing certain aspects of human life in terms of morality and ethics. The author asserts that the book cannot but carry a moral message, but it can be written in such a way that the reader will not receive the value guidelines contained therein. That is, the book carries a certain symbolic conclusion, which is a reflection of the author's vision of being. In my opinion, this position is too categorical, although it also has the right to exist. In this essay I will try to consider the quoted from various philosophical points of view on the concept of morality, I will analyze some of them by examples. The work will focus on the search for truth and, subsequently, the formation of an opinion, so now, at the beginning of the work, I'm not ready to take a particular position with respect to the topic being studied.

2. Discussion

To begin with, I will reflect on the topic - can we consider the novel "Portrait of Dorian Gray" as an "immoral" book? I believe that the book cannot be attributed to either moral or immoral: truth, as always, somewhere in the middle. Saying, Wilde, is also not the ultimate truth, for Dorian Gray read the "poisonous" book that Sir Henry gave him, and it was the book which began the fall. A badly written book can not exert such influence. And the book that is immoral does not push crime. We can assume that the novel of Wilde, as claimed by his contemporaries, was a book like "poisonous". It seems that the book is not to blame. Determines the fate of man as he understands himself. This is an argument in defence of the book. We can assume that the book is immoral if it causes envy of those who work hard, but can not afford much of what Dorian has. In addition, the bohemian life, which leads Dorian, looks attractive, and vice in the face of a handsome young man does not cause disgust. Indeed, what kind of person you will become, depends only on you. Another argument for the immorality of the book may be that in it the author fired beauty, art from morality. But the author himself showed how this affects a person: in the final of the work Dorian Gray and his portrait die together because he was the

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personification of the hero's soul. So, can we consider the book immoral? As it turned out, there are arguments both "for" and "against". Acquaintance with the work requires hard spiritual work on oneself. And this is its undoubted benefit to anyone.

And what is the meaning of morals? Unwritten in official laws, the rules are designed to streamline relations between people, forming moral consciousness and moral beliefs of each individual and society as a whole. They are rather even one of the most accessible ways of comprehending people by the complex processes of social being. Moral norms and rules are formed and developed during the historical formation of society, they are based on historical, cultural, social, economic traditions. Consequently, moral norms and moral consciousness depend on the type of society and the inherent standards of naturalness. Morality unites people according to certain features of the people. Therefore, each people has its own morals, it is honed in the course of history individually, reflecting the history and destiny of its people, which in practice tests the fruitfulness and efficiency of moral norms. And let morality change with each new generation, the main thing is that they are guided in their actions, aware of the accepted moral rules of each people. Remembered about the past norms of morality, which is simple, for general development is useful. Otherwise, it will be chaos.

In this paragraph, I want to speculate a bit about what motivates a person to act morally, and what is immoral. Without a doubt, any question about moral and immoral acts cannot be unambiguous, because everything in our world is relative. For example, at one time the Inquisition was not considered evil, but for Aboriginal people, cannibalism was the norm. But the question what motivates a person to one or another of the actions in fuller can give a specific answer. In my opinion, can be both external and internal factors. To inner motivators include such concepts as conscience, some moral principles formed by an individual or unspoken laws, sometimes character traits (that is, in principle, I admit that some actions of a person can justify his temperament or, conversely, a judicious nature), as well as a person's feelings - fear, hatred, envy, which, incidentally, can be caused by external factors. As external factors can act as created by the state (enterprise, firm, etc.) laws, rules, norms or actions and the reaction of others. Now for a specific example. Mr N owns an enterprise and has the opportunity to make a big profit, but at the same time violating the law and deceiving his clients and employees. On the one hand, they will be guided by agreed for profit, easy earnings, in the end, a desire to improve the business of the store, that is, internal factors that induce it to commit an immoral act. On the other hand, he will be tormented by conscience, fear of the law, fear of condemnation of his actions close – these are also internal drivers, but urging not to commit this act. The internal motivator is just this law, which he will have to transgress, condemnation of his actions close, as well as a result of this act, the loss of the client base and the increase in staff turnover. So, a person constantly faces a choice to act immorally or so as not to be condemned, inside of him there is a struggle for inner feelings and beliefs. Unfortunately, or fortunately, it is not possible to answer this question, but this is our life: it all depends on what choice you make.

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The person himself chooses what is beyond him for morality.

All philosophers treated the concept differently. The overwhelming majority argued that morality is a certain spiritual and value norms of human behaviour in a society established from the standpoint of good and evil. (Aristotle, Plato, Kant, Locke, Hegel, etc.) (Rackham, 1926, 1098a), (Egunov, 2009, 332d), (Wood & Schneewind, 2002, pp. 9-21), (Locke, 1996, p.10), (Miller, 1989, p.111). Proceeding from the proposed definition and the works of the above authors, it can be concluded that such moral guidelines exist in society as a mass phenomenon and are present in the consciousness of each individual. They say that a person is reflected in his actions. They define it in society, they instil status and position, in this connection, people try to conform to the moral framework and act in relation to them. World religions provide us with their own particular interpretations of morality, which millions adhere to, and all their teachings boil down to the same thing: good and evil, of which choice must fall to the first. Based on such arguments, books really cannot be called moral or immoral, because any writer puts into the work of himself, his reasoning, attitudes to various aspects of life, his values. However, for a number of reasons, the author may incorrectly state his thoughts on paper, and in this connection, the reader will have an incorrect idea about the basic message of the read.

At the same time, there are other views on moral values. Nietzsche spoke of morality as the "greatness" of man in front of nature (Nietzsche, 1973, p.122). That is, this concept, in his opinion, is relative, and any action of the person on the result turns out to be insincere. Schopenhauer was also very interested in this. Society, in his opinion, not only does not ennoble morals, but on the contrary: it is in society that selfishness becomes anger, although human nature is inherently selfish, and natural drives acquire a perverse form and are included in the number of immoral manifestations of the human essence (Mann, 1948, 66). Both philosophers come to the conclusion that morality often contradicts man's real desires, restricts him, deprives him of freedom and openness. Thus, the author, investing part of his soul in any work, fills him with sincere motives, which, in turn, can go far beyond the moral fetters imposed by our social environment. In this case, the statement of Oscar Wilde cannot be called correct, since any work depends on the author and his value representations, and the role of morality in the written depends on him.

Let's try to speculate on this topic a little more. Personally, I view morality as a simulacrum. J. Baudrillard defined "simulacrum is a pseudo-thing replacing" agonizing reality "with post-reality through simulation." (Banks & Carson & Nelson & Nicol, 2001, p.3). In a more simple language, this is a representation of something that does not really exist. I believe that there is simply no morality. This is a concept that determines the norms of behaviour of people that are not themselves defined, such as norms concerning human rights and law. This is a very abstract concept, the content of which each person determines for himself. The norms of morality are very different in different societies. For example, in the Christian religion there is an established

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concept of cruelty, in it murder is unacceptable. Let's look at Islam, where the girl was baptized to the ground for treason to her husband, bound her hands and stoned to death. For many people, such a ritual will seem outrageous, but based on the laws of the Shariah, in which certain moral principles are also prescribed, this action, on the contrary, clears people from evil. People are vastly different in their views on life, something that is common for someone, the other will be hostile. In this regard, I believe that morality only creates an image of humanity, righteousness and spirituality, in fact, each person designs for himself only known to him the framework of moral behaviour. The conclusion from this can be that the morality or immorality of a literary work is determined both by the reader and by the author of the work, by its purpose, which he guided in the presentation of his thoughts on paper. Therefore, in my opinion, the statement we are discussing again is not entirely correct.

Many people believe that any erotic, and in particular erotic works, are obscene and immoral. Recall the work of Nabokov "Lolita", which is considered one of the outstanding creations of the 20th century. To a large number of readers and critics, this work was seen as immoral, as it contained an erotic context and adultery. However, despite this "immorality" and indignation caused by the society, this did not prevent the novel from entering the list of 100 books of the century. And now let's compare Lolita with the recently published novel EL James "50 shades of Grey", which does not carry with it a single drop of content, except for a stupid unreasonable primitive plot. The work made a huge sensation among readers, it became a bestseller, many consider it a modern literary phenomenon. But why? Could the erotic fantasies of graphomaniacs from the USA stand on the same level as the spiritual struggle and the inexorable desire to love and be loved, represented in Nabokov's work? The answer is simple: surely not. Simply at the moment, the popularity of books falls, people live in other interests, the world is progressing, changing. This leads to less selectivity in what we read, there is no filtering, separation of good and bad, good and evil. People take the majority of information as a fact, in connection with what, as the author writes and what he writes, loses its value. And in this context, morality is determined by public opinion, the development of social thought, which, in the end, leads to a simulacrum, called "morality". In this example, the quality of writing the book by the author is not a determining position, and in this connection, the statement of Oscar Wilde again appears incorrect.

3. Conclusion

So, after studying a large layer of literature, based on personal experience and the writings of various writers, we managed to look at the phrase Oscar Wilde from completely different angles. Considering morality as a good intention, the subconscious desire of a person to do good deeds and avoid immoral behavior, one can argue that each person, by its very nature, strives for a "correct", conforming to established principles and principles of behavior, and therefore, as a writer, he tries to convey moral message to their audience. To prevent him in this can only lack

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of talent or simply unsuccessfully chosen a way of communication with the reader. If you look at morality, as on norms imposed by a person who goes against his nature or is an insincere manifestation of spiritual integrity, then the author can put into his work his real, often immoral, promises that will lead to immorality of the book itself, after which his ability to convey information to the reader fades into the background and the main criterion in assessing the product by the audience will be the conformity of public values to the foundations proposed in the creation itself. Also, morality can be considered as a simulacrum, which manifests itself in a fake reality, the creation of a non-existent in reality mode of action. Here, for the basis of writing the book, the author's goal and the reader's values are taken, which together determine the quality of the work itself, which implies the existence in the evaluation of the book of such criteria as morality or immorality. Most of the arguments did not confirm his words about the impossibility of ranking books on moral and immoral, which in essence convinced me of this. However, one can not ignore the fact that human thoughts do not lend themselves to scientific research, and the author can not analyze the vision of the world by the author of the quotation to the smallest detail, which, in essence, leaves us still plenty of room for reflection on the proposed topic.

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