

ON THE CONFLICT OF PUBLIC OPINION: INTERPRETATION OF LITERARY CLASSICS

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ABSTRACT

Work is devoted to a question of reading literary classics and forms of its actual assessment in the modern public environment – both scientific and specialized, and connected with wide reader's audience. The Russian classical literature became object of consideration. Authors of article believe that in the Russian Post-Soviet society two tendencies determining nature of the attitude towards verbal art heritage of the past were shown. On one hand, inertia of former achievements has left, and the Russian public in general has stopped reading actively. On the other – in case of some improvement of living conditions the obvious social trend to being interested in book and journal products was found. The classics on this background takes very modest place. However a noticeable factor of strengthening attention to it is attempt of its poly-variable interpretation today (scientific and creative, figurative). Exactly here the conflict gaining lines of public and ideological opposition between "conservatives" and "liberals" lies. The first take a guarding cultural position. Classics for them – is a form of preserving national memory, the life-meaning reference points, mental code, expression of world outlook and style harmony. The second perceive the classical text as the field for semantic experiments, bright innovations, verification of the next methodological programs. "Conservatives" reproach "liberals" with a "deconstructive" partition of classical, with withdrawal from its live, organic element, with substituting it by dead, mechanical beginning. "Liberals", in turn, blame "conservatives" of stagnancy, desire to refuse poly-cultural approach and establish the only correct, monistic view. It is clear, that the opposite interpretation of classics is only part of the general ideological conflict, even more precisely – that dialectic fight which can be designated as collision "old" vs. "new" (we use these terms without any estimation, in neutral sense). The truth, most likely, lies in the middle, as in the antique tragedy, each of the parties conducting dispute of right and wrong at the same time. From this it follows that the method of overcoming difficult situation is in that clashing friend's friend gossip, having shown the best psychological properties. Otherwise the classics will be replaced by one-sided ideological interpretation (irrespective of origin sources), and instead of authentic interest in the past in society there will be a feeling of discharge and fatigue.

Key words: art, literary classics, interpretation, social environment, conflict of opinions, perception psychology.

INTRODUCTION

Art classics at all times – was a subject of infinite and heated debates. There are all bases to consider that dispute on classical heritage of the past to be an integral part of the heritage. Fully it belongs to the Russian culture and art.

Russian culture, as we know, is logo-centric. It means that its main core is the word which owing to the historical reasons is closely connected with Christian religious tradition. In Russia we always treated the word faithfully and therefore there is nothing surprising that from all arts literature became the expressor of the deep parties of the Russian national consciousness. We will consider also the fact that the Russian literature, at least since the 18th century, combined multiple diverse functions, subordinating actual tasks of the current public life to artistry. In this respect it was a loud-hailer not only of esthetic, but also social and philosophical, political and economic, ethic and legal ideas. It showed a rare example of genre and style versatility. In it interest in an eternal and passing, high ideal and terrestrial forms of its implementation is united.

Today the Russian classical literature endures the difficult period of social reception. Until recently, during the Soviet era, it was object of general reader's attention with all possible expenses among which – quite ideologized, tendentious interpretation of its central plots and pictures took place. On the practical level it led to hidden (latent proceeding) to the conflict when, for example, at literature lessons the capable school student could not express alternative opinion and if he had it and, moreover, articulated it in the creative composition (a popular genre of school literary criticism of those years), it influenced what grade the teacher could give. During a Post-Soviet era locks of political and civil liberty have opened, and have resolutely refused treatments of this sort. In exchange to a single view of literary works there was a poly-variable approach which included some extremes when the text of subjective interpretation was so free in estimates that it obviously distorted classics. Interpretation became prior to required work. From the methodological point of view it was proved by the concept of "death of the author" which was offered by Roland Barthes, the French researcher structuralist. He claimed that the idea of the writer as "sacred carrier of the supreme values" is the myth. The text is created by language as sign system, the author acts as its tool. From here – the significant role in forming meanings of a verbal art ensemble is played by the reader as an element of social environment. Interpretations are as many as there are readers (Barthes, 1989).

The problem, thus, consists in somehow to correlate two reader's strategies, having overcome pernicious extremes and having found optimum model. The situation is complicated by the fact that the Russian literary classics does not exist as a Kant transcendental object. It is indirectly involved in opposition of ideological systems and is used by them as required. One of them, traditionalist, conservative, professes a view according to which the Russian literature – is the keeper of "ground", basic foundations oriented to official orthodox belief. In such respect A.S. Pushkin, despite the freethinking (see the poem "Gavriiliada", 1821), – is the religious prophet, the speaker of sacral truth, and it alone. Another, liberal, not traditionalist, approves a priority of free circulation with the past, and A.S. Pushkin for him – is the poet versatile, not becoming isolated in one prepotent line, many-sided.

There are justified questions: how to read classics? whether it is necessary to consider the public and ideological moments in the course of reading? in what degree they are of interpretative value? whether new terms are important for understanding classical literature and art? whether the conflict of ideologies is surmountable in principle?

We will try to answer these with understanding that the questions formulated above cannot be carried to the category of simple.

METHODS

Corner research method is the system integrated approach connecting separate scientific acceptances. The greatest value in a specific case two methods have: 1) historical and cultural and 2) descriptive and sociological.

The essence of the first method is reduced to accounting of historical and cultural context as any public phenomenon does not exist without communication with the past diachronic vertical) and present (synchronic horizontal). Use of this method allows to see this or that phenomenon in internal evolution and – the most important – in dynamics of external contacts. We will emphasize also that literature is organic part of culture, and the identity of the interpreter of the verbal and art text matures under the influence of the cultural environment factors (education, intellectual development, emotional preferences, religious belief) too.

As for the second method, it is based on the analysis of social objects in their current chronological cut. Many practices of this method are taken by us from works of A.A. Zinovyev, the Russian sociologist of the 20th century (see: (Zinovyev A.A., 2008; Zinovyev A.A., 2014)). From his point of view, describing social object ("difficult, multilateral, differentiated, changeable" (Zinovyev A.A., 2008, page 56)), it is not always possible to consider all its properties: something should be disregarded. Besides, some object properties have no basic value, they can be neglected. It is important to cover a social phenomenon in its complete measurement to find an essence,

something invariable, stiffened, invariant. Literature and art in this foreshortening – are subject sometimes to the sharp ideological conflict, it is also necessary to understand what program lies in the base of warring parties that forces them to express such, but not different views on discussed.

If the art psychology already exists (see: (Vygotsky L.S., 1998)), the sociology of the Russian literature still develops. In the 1920th years in Russia contours of this discipline were planned, however they developed in line with vulgar-sociological consideration of the literary facts and have not found continuation. Now the cultural situation forces researchers to fill the formed lacuna with more or less new knowledge. On this subject there is not enough works; what there is, as a rule, is limited to traditional analysis of an inner world of an art work or its communicative aspect. See: (Amineva V. R. et al., 2014; Amineva V. R. et al., 2015; Amineva V. R., 2015; Bekmetov R. F., 2015; Gilazetdinova G. X. et al., 2014; Ibragimov M. I. et al., 2015; Khabibulina L.F., 2014).

RESULTS

It is considered that Russia of the Soviet period was the most reading country in the world. There are no exact social researches confirming this fact, however it logically follows from those cultural transformations which accelerated the new power, and among them – the policy of illiteracy liquidation performed (free compulsory school training became nearly the business card of this process). There was a cult of book, literary and art heritage, not only Russian, but also the world's. A.A. Zinovyev had all reasons to write about himself and the generation: "All apartment is filled with books. Books everywhere, even in corridor and toilet. It was typical for the average Russian intellectual... Admittedly, Russians spent for books a greater percentage of income, than other people of the world. The book was a deity for us" (Zinovyev A.A., 2014, page 13). At the same time huge interest in the book was followed by an interpretative monism when only one obligatory interpretation of work corresponding to Marxist understanding of public reality was allowed. So, the unique direction and creative method of literature and art - the socialist realism - oriented to the settled forms of the 19th century was recognized.

During the Post-Soviet period there was a revaluation of former masterpieces. Recent heroes "have been dumped from the present steamship", but in intellectual community it has caused contradictory reaction. On one hand, some consensus concerning those writers to whom the power patronized was formed; they either completely, or partially, have left school programs and anthologies. On the other hand, there were writers whose creativity was interpreted ambiguously. Among them – N. G. Chernyshevsky, the author of the novel "What to Do?". Long time it was estimated positively as V. I. Lenin was one of his main admirers, and then have considered that N. G. Chernyshevsky's text representing the allegorical image of socialist utopia does not correspond to spirit of liberal time. Nevertheless, after several years the author and his novel have returned to a book shelf: critics of liberal sense have seen in the novel something timeless, and in its context – the idea close to own representations. Really, N. G. Chernyshevsky believed that environment creates the person, therefore, to change the person for the best, it is necessary to change conditions of existence, to make them "convenient" for manifestation of the good features of personality. F.M. Dostoyevsky and L.N. Tolstoy, his contemporaries, as we know, stood up for moral self-improvement contrary to external circumstances.

We will note in this regard the following. In one of student's groups of the Kazan Federal University we have carried out mini-poll. It is, of course, is not representative in sociological sense of the word, but nevertheless gives the overview of a local situation from the point of the general tendencies view. In the course of heuristic conversations we have asked a question what Russian writers of the 19th century are preferred by the second-year students of Institute of Philology and Cross-Cultural Communication of Lev Tolstoy learning Spanish and why. The group, in general, was divided into two parts. One part claimed that F.M. Dostoyevsky as the person who has reflected "basic" sides of the Russian national thinking is the closest to them. F.M. Dostoyevsky is mysterious, strange, paradoxical, and he is capable to interest the thinking reader. Other part has paid attention to N. G. Chernyshevsky, having explained the choice with the fact that this writer

seems to be much more modern, than it is usually thought. (It is curious that during lifetime they were ardent antagonists, and the watershed of their views lay in a question of reality change methods. It is enough to tell that four dreams of Raskolnikov from the "Crime and punishment" of F.M. Dostoyevsky in other ideological and esthetic lighting correspond to four dreams of Vera Pavlovna from "What to do?" by N. G. Chernyshevsky). As we see, especially mechanical extraction of N. G. Chernyshevsky from the school program implemented no social and psychological reasons. It was a fashion tribute more likely, but also, the law of satiation worked: it was told about the writer very much and often, to the detriment of other subjects that of him as from sour grapes, have set the teeth on edge and as soon as possible have tried to get rid. N. G. Chernyshevsky does not leave indifferent both the reader of the "conservative" direction, and the reader of a "liberal" wave. To the first he is important as the creator of a grandiose utopia of which we dream at all times even if the utopia is wrapped in catastrophic crash. To the second he is important as the creator of the new hero, the revolutionary Rakhmetov subordinating life to conscious impulses, reasonable and strong-willed tension. (In the Russian literature the similar hero – is unusual occurrence, remarkable).

Post-Soviet era as the cultural text in the of development relies on philosophy of the western postmodern according to which reality is not monolith, and is as if weaved from various rags. Implementation of this philosophy is found in numerous attempts of free reading the Russian classics. From the elementary scientific examples – deconstructive analysis of the story of I.S. Turgenev's "Mumu" with implementation of the Freudian interpretation method (Kolotayev V.A., 2001). From creative and figurative, according to V. E. Halizev (Halizev V. E., 2001, page 194), examples – staging the play of the 19th century in present surroundings, in modern suits, without respect for elementary historicism. Naturally, in circles of traditionally conceiving readers it causes a certain and steady scepticism. Briefly it can be defined so: do we have the right to transfer modern conceptual terms framework to texts of the past? whether there are, in general, borders to such transitions? How far are they justified? The reader's public which is not encumbered with strict academism explains need of the addressing the new theory with spirits of the times; any researcher, in their opinion, is not able to overcome the borders set by social and psychological environment andera (the last determines a lot of things also in the behavior of people). However this answer clears up little; on the contrary – only strengthens the conflict which with special presentation is shown in the sphere of actual painting when instead of Christ's image on a sacred icon the animation hero as author's interpretation of the events in the field of social and religious the relations is shown. The conflict in art turns into an antagonism of outlooks.

We think that though the conflict of art (literature) and society is eternal, an interpreter task – is to look for points of potential contact. So, it is possible to explain that the classical literary text is not limited by historical era. It inevitably goes beyond its framework; otherwise it is not classics, but regular artifact. This means, we have the right to treat the classical text in a new terminological key, observing a measure, dynamic balance, golden mean, without breaking off at all with what is already reached. And the basic moment distinguishing liberal game from serious consideration of classics, the internal possibility of the interpreter will bear moral responsibility for the pronounced word. Under such condition, we are convinced, a complementarity, let of insignificant degree, is achievable. Its approachability, in turn, – is a guarantee of quiet conversation on difficult matters.

DISCUSSION

The subject touched by us demands factual lighting. We have given a small amount of illustrations. They prove existence in the characterized problem of methodological sharpness. The classics (not only literary) as it becomes clear, doesn't belong only to category of esthetic. It is an ideology, being the pulsing life of the public environment connected by a set of visible and invisible threads. It is not the silent museum rarity which is stored in dust rooms, but the carrier of the conflict beginning. Correctly, to overcome it without ruptures of times – is the purpose of the interpreting person.

CONCLUSIONS

The offered subject, thus, has the research prospect. We think that it would be useful to correlate public perception of the Russian literature to the Russian perception of classical literature of the Western world. What psychological trends work here, what names among readers dominate, whether there are obvious and hidden conflicts – here is only a small circle of questions which could become a subject of future consideration. The overall picture consists of private supervision and analysis.

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