

Echo of Russian Literature

Following Works of Slavic Writers of the 19th Century

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Abstract—The Russian-Slavic interrelatedness have been in the research focus of many Slavic scholars (Marina Yu. Dostal, Natalia K. Zhakova, Igor I. Kaliganov, Lev Kishkin, Georgy P. Melnikov, Zoya S. Nenasheva and other). In the 19th century, the Slavic peoples witnessed formation of a new kind of culture with the dominant national and patriotic ideology; with addressing common Slavic traditions whereby the culture of related peoples is perceived as their own. It is no coincidence that works of the Russian literature met a broad response among the Slavs. They are reconceiving the literary works of Alexander Pushkin, Nikolai Gogol, Leo Tolstoy and others in the context of new social phenomena. The article calls attention to the fact that Slavic cultural professionals has marked the humanitarian, democratic and patriotic principles of the literature, its ideas of "all-encompassing unity" that demands no sacrifice of the national spirit of each commonwealth.

Keywords—*echo; national resurgence; literary work; heroes of Russian classics of the 19th century; Slavic artists*

I. INTRODUCTION

"Echo – repercussion, sound from afar, response to something" (Sergei I. Ozhegov "Russian dictionary", 18th Edition, - M.: Rus yaz., 1987. P. – 404).

In the course of the centuries-old history of humanity, the times of cultural isolation of certain countries and peoples gave place to the days of their active teamwork and interactive learning. Today's realities such as the destruction of true values, revision of history and centuries-old traditions – all this makes us re-examine the interrelations with our immediate neighbors and be conscious of the intercultural dialogue between ourselves as a priority.

Being the largest cultural hub of the Slavic world, Russia had always attracted attention of the Slavs, and had been always felt by this world differently, being the national superpower and political muscle, because of the differentiation of the Slavic peoples among the European civilization.

Yet, the Russian word – creating, merciful, ireful, compassionate, and condemnatory – had echoed in the Slavic soul.

Russian literature, by "opening up the world and oneself through love" (Alexander Kazin), by reflecting upon true and right; by being carried away by heroism and talented people; by narrating about agonizing moral quest of heroes; by

unveiling diversified sides of life in Russia, became that infusive force, which all Slavic cultural professionals addressed to.

Many well-known Slavists (Marina Dostal, Natalia Zhakova, Igor Kaliganov, Lev Kishkin, Georgy Melnikov, Zoya Nenasheva and other) have inquired into the Russian-Slavic relationship issues. Owing to the large volume of materials, I would like to recall just certain evidence of how Russian classic works by Alexander Pushkin, Nikolai Gogol, and Leo Tolstoy had influenced Australian Slavonians in times of their national resurgence.

II. PECULIARITIES OF THE TIME OF THE SLAVS' NATIONAL RESURGENCE

In Europe's history, the 19th century manifested a cascade of landmark events: triumph over Napoleon, revolution in 1848-1849, Russian-Turkish war of 1828-1829, another war of 1876-1877, etc. This period witnessed the national rebirth that fostered formation of a new kind of culture with dominant national-patriotic ideology.

The time had set before cultural professionals great tasks: the cultivation of literature language, artistic thinking, mastering of the European literature history and such. Formation of the people's unity as a national team became the dominating feature of the resurgence period. Efforts of writers and progressive-minded people of that day furnished the fusion of the national language, thinking and history.

Here a large part was played by the idea of Slavic mutuality, theoretically substantiated in the treatise "On the Literary Bonds Among the Slavs (1836)" of the Slovak Jan Kollar. This idea ensured the Slavs' preservation as the ethno-cultural integrity. Fundamentally, this thought incited the Slavs' development and provided the basis for a full-scale exchange of cultural values.

In his poem "The Daughter of Slava" (1824) Jan Kollar fortified Russia's positive image as the leading Slavic commonwealth – the only at that time independency of the Slavs.

Folklore presented one of the most essential components of the literary fusion that reflected particular qualities of the national identity. For example, in Czechia the heroic and epic genres were the most popular. In 1829 in Paris was published the book "Echoes of Russian Songs" by Frantisek

Celakovsky (1799-1852), which began with the song "Ilya Muromets".

Over the rising hills,
Over those forests deep
Young bright falcon went sky-high
On its quick wings right to the clouds...

Epic heroes Ilya Muromets, Churilo Plenkovich presented to Czech readers an example of courage, true patriotism and selfless service to the Motherland.

Earlier, Celakovsky – the Slavic folklore collector and scholar – had visited Russia and seen the openness of the people. He remarked, "If they (Austrian authorities) had not to look back at the Russians, the Slavs' Germanization and depopulation would have reached such dimensions, that anyone would hardly hear a Slavic word – and if the squalid policies forbid us from expressing this love, the more we shall apply ourselves to spreading out faith in them everywhere and everywhere".

"The Echoes of Russian Songs" became the manifestation of faith to the Russian land, the epic homeland of fabled warrior heroes and kind, selfless and industrious nation (Julius Dolansky) [1].

III. SLAVIC WRITERS' UNDERSTANDING OF ALEXANDER PUSHKIN, NIKOLAI GOGOL AND LEO TOLSTOY

One of the first names that the Slavic world learned about was Alexander Pushkin; his romantic works were translated first, while the prose was translated after. The Serbian poet Vojislav Ilic called Alexander Pushkin "the iconic poet of new Russian literature" [2]. Having studied the Russian language on his own, Ilic was addressing the great poet's works during all his life: "these were the days when poor Tatiana fluttered in a young heart, romantic Lensky beside her. When night after night I was dreaming about charms of woman's beauty and was shy of Onegin" [3].

Pushkin's heroes are being reconsidered in the context of new social phenomena. In the 50s, Czechia experiences the struggle for new literature ideals. The realist writers (Jan Neruda, Vitezslav Halek and other) are speaking for tight connection of the literature with life and national development needs. It is time of knowledge of the reality and finding new heroes. In 1858, Jan Neruda writes the tract "We have", dedicating it to Alexander Pushkin. He addresses the hero of Pushkin's novel to reflect upon the state of Czech literature. Neruda aspires to create an earth-shattering masterpiece of art similar to the Russian novel: "I wish to glorify... to you your Onegin..." The Czech poet asks himself is there is any storyline for a hero in Czechia whom Eugene Onegin could be equal to? However, he cannot find the such-like hero either among the pseudo-patriotic youth or down in the country [4]. The hero of the Russian novel in this particular case had served as the starting point for contemplation on the Czech literature's fate and fortunes and the current state of the society.

The Slavic public figures were highlighting the humanistic nature of the Russian classics' works. For

instance, the Galician Ivan Franko, Ukrainian poet and a man of great knowledge, in his article "The Formal and Real Nationalism" (1889), contending against the opponents of learning the Russian literature, remarks that while the French, English and German literatures have formed our aesthetic sense, the Russian literature' efforts have awakened our conscience, love to the wounded [5]. The Czech Jan Neruda agrees with these considerations. In all deeds of a man, even in his wickedness, the Russians are trying to see and show the intrinsic humaneness.

The works of Nikolai Gogol were of a particular attractiveness. His writings were very similar to the national heritages of the Slavs. A community's life, clash of the patriarchal world with emerging capitalism – such processes were taking ugly shapes, resembling stories as described in Gogol's "The Government Inspector". That is why the Russian writer's comedy was so popular with the Serbians. The playwright Branislav Nusic spoke of this play in the following words: "Our society of that day, and especially the bureaucrats, and "The Government Inspector" heroes were so much alike that we reckoned Gogol to be our national writer" [6]. Serbia needed "The Government Inspector" the same as Russia needed it in the past. Nusic writes a comedy play called "A Suspicious Person" (1870) that had the subtitle "Gogoliada" in two acts. Thuswise, Gogol's comedy provided the word-picture and creative impetus to depiction of Serbia's reality with all its pressing challenges.

Slavic writers are addressing the works of Mikhail Lermontov, Ivan Turgenev, Dmitry Pisarev, Feodor Dostoevsky, Mikhail Saltykov-Shchedrin and other, paying special tribute to the Russian writers' achievements in reflection of topical phenomena of their present-day reality. In particular, analyzing Ivan Turgenev's writings, Ivan Franko distinguishes the genesis of such Russian literature's phenomenon as the "superfluous people". Ukraine's essay writer stresses that this type of "flamboyant barren fig-trees among Russian intellectuals" was first described by Alexander Pushkin; later this portrait gallery was continued by Mikhail Lermontov, while in a series of his artistic sketches Ivan Turgenev demonstrated the timeline of the "U-turn in the intellectuals' life: from a sheer divorcement from the people to serving this very people" [7].

The Czechs and Slovaks got to know Leo Tolstoy in the 80s through his stories, novels, and philosophics.

Dusan Makovicky (1869-1920), one of the well-known Tolstoians was the Russian writer's personal physician who left us a detailed diary about life of Yasnaya Polyana. Through Makovicky Leo Tolstoy got interested in the personality of Petr Khelchitsky, in whose writings he saw the convergence with his own reflections upon the sturdy rebellion, moral opposition to the Church and secular authorities [8]. Leo Tolstoy had included some selections from the treatise of the Czech philosopher of the 16th century into his "Circle of Reading" for the children. In 1907, he reconsiders the medieval story about Jan Palicheck, fool of the Czech king George from Podebrady. The Russian writer does not aspire the historical credibility of the time of Jan Palicheck's living. He is more preoccupied by the idea of

brotherly unity. In 1907, in his diary he writes that the truth is when one ought to love everyone and build all his life is such way that provides for such love for everyone. Note that the story "The Fool Palicheck" was translated into Czech many times. The hero of the Czech story, reconceived by Leo Tolstoy, became one of the Czechs' national unity symbols.

IV. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I wish to stress that the Slavic public figures were distinguishing the "omni-humaneness" of the Russian literature. The Venerable Justin Popovic, Serbian philosopher of the 20th century, was writing that a Russian man had a living need for all-encompassing unity with a complete respect to national specifics of other peoples; this unity through love was ensured by living illustration and indeed [9].

The creative power of the word, true values, selfless service to the Truth, all-mankind embracing love for others – are what the Russian writers spoke about in their works, following the precept: "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" [10].

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