
The History Of Russian Law And Literature In The Critical Works Of N.S. Gumilev

Viacheslav Nikolaevich Krylov¹, Zhanett Orsholya Sopper²

¹Kazan Federal University, Doctor of Philological Sciences, Professor of the Department of Russian Literature and Methods of its Teaching, IFMC, krylov77@list.ru

² Kazan Federal University, Postgraduate student of the Department of Russian Literature and Methods of its Teaching Alexander Sergeevich Alexandrov² – Candidate of Philological Sciences, Researcher at IRLI RAS (Pushkin House)

¹Kazan Federal University

² Institute of Russian Literature (Pushkinskij Dom) of the Russian Academy of Sciences
E-mail: krylov77@list.ru

Abstract

The relationship between literature and law has always been a special and important relationship and no one can deny the profound effects of literature on law. These two are humanities fields and it should be mentioned that humanities fields are all related. One of the most important reasons for the dependence of the field of law on literature is that in order to write clear, explicit and executive laws, lawyers need literature, especially in the field of writing and grammar, so that they can include laws that, in addition to solving the judicial problems of the society, have Eloquence and eloquence are necessary and should not be a source of conflict. The more literary teachings permeate the thoughts of a lawyer or law student, the more likely the legal system of a society will pay attention to human values and emotions. The critical work of Nikolai Gumilev is valuable not only in terms of the coverage of the most important events in the literary process of the 1910s and Gumilev's interpretation of them, but also in terms of its content: Gumilev's critical and theoretical works raise and solve many pressing problems of Russian literary criticism, including contemporary one. The article makes an attempt to reconstruct the history of Symbolism in the reception of N.S. Gumilev's criticism. Unlike other studies on the subject, the study does not emphasize on the problem of justification of the struggle between Acmeism and Symbolism. The author proves that Gumilev-critic in practice overcomes the program declarations formulated in the manifestos. Talking about Gumilev's attitude to Symbolism, it is clear that he was not hostile to Symbolism even after its extinction, and the negative assessment was exposed not so much symbolism as the lack of new ideas and talentlessness of the authors. Gumilev's views on Symbolism and the Symbolists, taken as a whole, suggest that the critic paid tribute to the work of the Symbolist generation in freeing poetry from its didactic overlay, appreciated their contribution to the use of musical possibilities of the word, but could not accept their aestheticism, idleness and escapism from life.

Keywords: law, Lawyer, Literature, Symbolism, Acmeism, N.S. Gumilev, criticism, review, interpretation, V. Bryusov

Introduction

Modern literary criticism recognizes the urgent need to create a true history of the most important trend in Russian literature of the early 20th century, Symbolism - without preconceived schemes, without omitting certain names, with identifying the internal logic of formation and development of Symbolism, bringing a huge mass of literary phenomena into the system. This task includes a contemporary view of the theory of Symbolism and its historical poetics.

In this regard, of great interest are the first attempts to conceptualize Russian Symbolism "from the outside". As you know, the 1910s are marked by the destruction of the main myth of Symbolism - the idea of recreating the world through art. [1]. The Symbolists themselves are actively comprehending their own path, in the words of Blok, calling upon "the help of memory" to point out "perhaps to themselves more than to others, their origins, the country from which... have come from"[2]. In their interpretations of their own path (with all the differences in the positions of Vyach. Ivanov, V.Bryusov, A.Belogo, A.Blok, Ellis and others) an element of self-rehabilitation is significant; one can see attempts to outline a new utopia. Symbolism attempted to create a new legend of its path, while rejecting attempts to tell others about itself, because, from their point of view, only a symbolist can comprehend the inner connection of events.

Acmeism, the first post-symbolist movement, which was in a complex dialogical relationship with its predecessor, gave its own version of the history of Symbolism. Such an attempt is made by N.S. Gumilev, who was associated with Symbolism at the beginning of his creative path, then stood in opposition to it. Of course,

therefore, Gumilev cannot be regarded as an unbiased "historian" of Symbolism. V. Brysov, in his review of *Letters on Russian Poetry* (1923), saw in Gumilev's book of reviews "not alien to partiality the Acmeist's judgment of all literature". At the same time, Brysov observes such a peculiarity of Gumilev the critic: "The Party-Acmeist point of view" is felt more sharply when it comes to the Acmeists themselves and those close to them than in the evaluations of the Symbolists. "[3] This peculiarity deserves closer attention to Gumilev's judgments of Symbolism than it usually manifests.

Methods

Most of the works devoted to Gumilev's literary and critical articles focus on the problem of justification of the struggle between Acmeism and Symbolism. However, as G. M. Friedländer rightly pointed out, Gumilev's literary criticism and theoretical speeches "do not fit into the framework... The literary programme of Acmeism". "[4] A detailed reconstruction of Gumilev's conception will, in our opinion, allow us to examine the very mechanism of Gumilev's perception of symbolism by his nearest literary receptor, to understand the most mysterious, exciting and inspiring current in Russian post-symbolism (as Omri Ronen calls Acmeism), and may also provide new impulses for the study of the little-studied topic "Gumilev and Symbolism". Gumilev's judgements should be considered not only in the context of journal polemics, but also in personal relationships with symbolist poets (Brysov - Gumilev - Blok), in connection with Gumilev's own evolution, taking into account the specific goals and objectives of his critical speeches. Note that the aim of the article is not to investigate the problem at the level of artistic texts.

This study relies on the basic principles of philological analysis of Gumilev's critical prose [5-8], modern aspects of the study of Russian Symbolism [9] In Western literary criticism Gumilev's activity has been considered mainly episodically. In addition, the study uses historical-functional method in the general characterization of the critical heritage of the Silver Age [10], the method of comparativism [11].

Results and discussion

The advantage of Gumilev's view is that he grew up in the atmosphere of symbolism as a person and a poet, and then "overcame" it. The latter statement, which came from Victor Zhirmunsky, itself needs to be corrected because, on the one hand, Gumilev repelled from Symbolism, is sceptical of its attempts to cognize the irrational, and on the other hand, continues its traditions. Thus, for example, the early Gumilev is known to assimilate the imagery and techniques of the Symbolists, and then in his later collections, contrary to the theoretical settings, researchers found "touching the world of the mysterious, breaking through into the world unknowable"[11]. Although Gumilev made his debut as a critic only in 1908, he followed the work of Symbolists for a long time. The correspondence between Gumilev and Briusov has preserved the greatest trace of such interest. We learn how eagerly Gumilev, a "faithful reader," wanted to meet with Balmont, but what disappointment awaited him when the answer to his letter, he had not received ... Gumilev is an attentive reader of *Libra*. In letters to Brysov from early October 1907 and February 7, 1908, we learn about the interest that Gumilev shows in the numbers of "Libra", which published Brysov's novel "Fire Angel": "Do not buy Number 11 "Libra", which was not delivered to the post, because I need to know how relates Renata to the wounded Ruprecht. [12] A brief review of the novel in a letter to Brysov, which already reveals an Acmeist approach to the Symbolist novel: "First of all, I can hardly recall anything equal to it in its elaborateness and harmonic clarity and brevity of lines, except Rodin's *Danaiida* from the Luxembourg Museum. Secondly - the hallmark of a thing of the era - it appears to everyone as his own biography (real or possible, all the same) and I have already met people who said "I am like Ruprecht..." (175-1176). (pp. 175 - 176). In letters to Briusov, Gumilev reveals his interest in the history of Brysov's development, and speaks of the consonance of his innermost thoughts with the words expressed in Brysov's poem "To the Poet". Soon he found a turning point in his view on creativity, which he informs Briusov in a letter sent before leaving for Egypt. At this time, Gumilev inclined to agree with Boysov on the issue of symbolism, expressed in the article "On the "slave speech" in defense of poetry: " We completely agree with the theoretical part of it, also with the polemical part when it comes to Vyacheslav Ivanov, but We understand Blok's article somewhat differently. Therefore, one can assume that Brysov's views expressed in the article about Symbolism as an historical phenomenon, as a literary school, free from untypical goals, also characterize Gumilev's initial position in the period of ideological disengagement and regrouping among Symbolists. This position he will remain faithful to the end (although the specific assessment of symbolic poetry will be ambiguous).

It is also important to note that the awareness of the need for new poetry will be shaped by an analysis of the current literary process, including observations and generalizations on the work of the Symbolists.

In his reviews of Brysov's and Blok's "Letters on Russian Poetry", Gumilev notes something that might be "the basis of a new school replacing Symbolism" [13] (p. 141). Thus, Gumilev sees new features of poetry in Brysov's collection "The Mirror of Shadows" (1912). He is attracted to "simple and infinitely noble lines... The completeness of each image, the absolute honesty with oneself" (p. 142). He sees it as a dream "for us, so recently freed from the path of symbolism" (p.142).

The scientific literature on Gumilev repeatedly emphasized the clarity and infallibility of his critical forecasts, as they were based on the actual development of literature, rather than on an abstract notion of a desirable path of development. The Symbolists themselves were later aware of the kinship, the peculiar totality of Acmeism in relation to Symbolism.

But let us turn again to Gumilev's own quest. As is well known, a significant place in the program of Apollo magazine was given to the treatment of symbolism. The debate about the precepts of symbolism was begun by I. Annensky, whose article "On modern lyricism" (1909) was perceived by many poets with resentment and hostility. Gumilev developed many of the ideas of his teacher. Long before the manifesto "The Legacy of Symbolism and Acmeism" Gumilev had been investigating the questions of the genesis of symbolism, the reasons for its dominance in Russian poetry in the early twentieth century. In the article "Life of Verse" (1910), Symbolism is for him "not the result of social upheavals as Romanticism, but the consequence of the maturity of the human spirit, proclaiming that the world is our representation". This thesis does not seem outdated to Gumilev; therefore, the article concludes with a conviction: "Now we cannot but be symbolists" (p.54). However, observations on specific poetic names made at the same time capture something else. In "Letters on Russian Poetry" Gumilev repeatedly returns to the question of the reasons for the decline of Symbolism. He examines the history of Russian Symbolism in general through the history of poetry in the journal "Vesi". In the critic's concept, the poets of *Libra* are divided into two groups: "a group of revolutionaries" and "a group of tradition keepers" (p. 105). Among the "group of revolutionaries" there are K. Balmont, V. Briusov, V. Ivanov and A. Bely, among the "custodians of traditions" there are S. Soloviev, B. Sadovskaya, V. Hoffmann and others. This sharp delimitation of symbolism, from the point of view of Gumilev, was one of the reasons of its crisis and extinction. Simultaneously Gumilev reproaches the management of "Libra" for "suppressing" I. Annensky. It is interesting that Gumilev in his review on "Cypress Casket" quotes from Annensky's poem "To the Other" where the poet defines his attitude to Russian Symbolism. "In his poems, - Gumilev comments on poet's lines, - captivates harmonious equilibrium between image and form, - equilibrium which releases both these elements, allowing them to aspire amicably, as two brothers, to exact embodiment of experience" (p.100). This comment is reminiscent of the outlines of the programme of Acmeism, which Gumilev sketched in the well-known Manifesto of 1913 (Russian Symbolism is a successive step in the development of European Symbolism, French and German), noted the completeness of its development, outlining its dead ends and the beginning of its "downfall".

This conclusion does not sound like a mere declaration in Gumilev's work, but is supported by a concrete analysis of the Symbolists' work. The critic seems to prepare readers for the conclusions of the future manifesto. He carefully examines the logic of the way of "older" and "younger" Symbolists. "And nothing is added to his glory those confused wanderings in the folklore of all countries and peoples, which he has engaged in recent times - said Gumilev on Balmont. The 1908 review concludes with an expression of expectation: "There has been much talk about whether his talent will be resurrected... The solution to this question we await from him himself" (p. 79). Almost the same end of the review (1908) on *The Urn* by A. Bely; "The reader will be dissatisfied with our review. He will certainly want to know whether we are praising or scolding Bely. That question will not be answered. The time for results has not yet come" (p. 82).

Summary

Gumilev's views on Symbolism and Symbolists taken as a whole allow to conclude that the critic paid tribute to the work of the Symbolist generation in freeing poetry from didacticism, appreciated their contribution to the use of musical possibilities of the word, but could not accept their aestheticism, inactivity, running away from life, "fraternization" with mysticism, theosophy and occultism. With his characteristic subtlety, he also drew attention to mythology in Symbolism: "Some of his searches in this direction almost came close to creating a myth" (p. 57). However, Gumilev emphasizes in his response to one of Annensky's dramas that the latter "feels myth deeply" rather than using ready-made ideas. In this way, the polemic to the bookishness, abstractness of the symbolist drama apparently appears: "He would never want to leave the existing, with its vivid, imaginative language and nuanced psychology, for dull abstractness". (p 177).

In most of his reviews Gumilev does not forget the numerous imitators of Symbolism, calling them "yesterday's children of yesterday" (p. 163). At the same time, he does not hide his ironic tone, even sarcasm: "Alexander Tinyakov is a disciple of Brysov, but how right Andrei Bely was when he said that Brysov's armor would crush weak intellectuals who wished to put it on. Tinyakov is one of those crushed" (p. 163). After all, "symbolism has penetrated into the crowd and has ceased to satisfy its thirst for the new" (p. 162). (p. 162).

Within the framework of this broad concept the critic's subtle observations on the evolution of the creative path of specific poets - especially V. Brysov, K. Balmont, A. Blok, F. Sologub - are of particular interest. In doing so, as a rule, Gumilev turned not only to the present stage of their work, but also to the past, when they were at the zenith of success. He sought to identify what new challenges the major masters faced on the eve of Symbolism's crisis. Russian Symbolists, from his point of view, not once shied away from their goals. For example, "Vyach. Ivanov's entire poetic oeuvre is an utter revolution, sometimes even against the canons

established by himself. (p.110). Inevitably Gumilev also underscores the contribution of this or that poet into the history of poetry (about K. Balmont: "So fragile, so immaterial in the first period of his creativity, passionately in love with things and above all he put the music potentially hidden in them" (p. 110). "The Letters" also testify to another feature of Gumilev's interpretations. Gumilev insistently justifies the new artistic principles, therefore often interprets the Symbolist poetry in the spirit of Acmeism.

At the same time, Gumilev never lost his sense of the enigma of Symbolist poetry. He probably felt that it could not be revealed only through the analysis of poetic "technique". Some remnant of the mystery is bound to remain: the beautiful poems, 'like living beings, come into the circle of our life; they teach, they call, they bless' ('Life of Verse' p.49). This was also a common feature of literary criticism - the paradoxical nature of critical practice in relation to theoretical programmes to declarations.

A reappraisal of symbolist aesthetics, a break with it could not lead to the oblivion of dear images. As a result, Gumilev speaks of Blok as a "miracle worker of Russian verse" (p.135), of the "eternally disturbing enigma" of Konstantin Balmont, the enigma of Vyachkov Ivanov, etc. Therefore, he gives from memory in an outline of article "Leaders of new school" (1918) the poem of Balmont "Why do I feel so stuffy...".

Conclusion

The scope of this article does not allow for a detailed analysis of Gumilev's interpretations of the works of Blok, Brysov, Sologub and others. Gumilev's interpretation of Symbolism does not suffer from one-sidedness, as Mandelstam did in his articles of the early 1920s. The main thing is obvious: Gumilev is characterized by an active attitude to Symbolism, the intensity of perestroika of many symbolist poets. Gumilev created a new school in poetry, based on an analysis of the trends in the literary movement, from Symbolism to Acmeism, while at the same time influencing the literary process of post symbolist decade.

Acknowledgements

This paper is performed as part of the implementation of the Kazan Federal University Strategic Academic Leadership Program.

Bibliography

- [1] N. Pustygina, To the Study of the Evolution of Russian Symbolism, Theses of the First All-Union Conference "Blok and Russian Culture of the Early 20th Century", 1975
- [2] A. Blok, On Literature, p.245, 1989.
- [3] V. Briusov, Among Poems: 1894. - 1924: Manifestos, articles, review, p. 628, 1990.
- [4] G. Friedländer, Gumilev - Poetry Critic and Theorist, Gumilev N.S. Letters on Russian Poetry, p. 16, 1990.
- [5] Davidson P. Gumilev's Reviews of Viacheslav Ivanov's Cor Ardens: Criticism as a Tool in the Politics of Literary Succession // Wigzell F. Ed. Russian Writers on Russian Writers. Oxford & Providence USA, 1994
- [6] Doherty J. F. Nikolai Gumilev and the Propagation of Acmeism: "Letters on Russian Poetry" // Irish Slavonic Studies. 1992. Vol. 13
- [7] Doherty J. F. Acmeist perceptions of Italy // Literary Tradition and Practice in Russian Culture: Papers from an international conference on the Occasion of the Seventieth Birthday of Yury Mikhailovich Lotman. Amsterdam; Atlanta, 1993
- [8] Kelly C. Sisters on the Sinister Side: Gumilev as Critic of Women Writers // Rusistika, № 11, 1995
- [9] Afanasev Anton, Breeva Tatyana, Domansky Jury, Gender Symbolism in the Cycle Faina by Alexander Blok//Journal of Research in Applied Linguistics, Vol.10, Is, 2019
- [10] A. Pashkurov, A. Razzhivin, "Literary culture: its types and lessons", European journal of science and theology, vol.12, №2, pp. 155-164, 2016.
- [11] R. Bekmetov, "Comparative studies of literature in Russia: Exploration of new paradigms", Journal of Language and Literature, vol. 6, № 2, pp. 141-145, 2015.
- [12] G. Struve, Gumilev's Creative Path // Gumilev N. Collected Works in 4 volumes. Volume 2, p XXXP, 1962.
- [13] N. Gumilev, In the Pillar of Fire, p.189,1991
- [14] N. Gumilev, Letters on Russian Poetry, p. 141, 1990. Hereafter, references to Gumilev's articles are given in the text.