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English and Russian poetry of the early 20th century

Poetry is one of the important parts of the cultural development of a person in any country of the world. The 20th century, both in Russian and English poetry, was filled with many new trends. Some of them are similar while others are completely different.

In the poetry of the 20th century, you can find a lot of experiments and innovations. Many poets were of the opinion that poetry should change over time. However, there were poets, mostly belonging to the beginning of the century who adhered to traditions and combined them with new trends.[1] The main influence on the change of poetry was exerted by the world wars. During the First World War, the Georgian movement was born in English poetry. Poets treated the modern world with great contempt. In addition to nature and industrial life, Georgian poets were characterized by other features - local patriotism, love for animals, villagers and children. [2]

"Abraham Lincoln" by Drinkwater

Jennings: Naturally. A man is sensitive, doubtless, in his first taste of office.

Seward: My support of the President is, of course, unquestionable.

In 1908, the imagist movement emerged. The famous American poet Ezra Pound invented the term "imagist". Imagists were influenced by Poe's ideas and preferred to write, excluding explanatory, narrative and descriptive materials from poetry and concentrating on short poems.

Imagists wrote in free verse, and it was their skill that made this art so popular. They aspired to the clarity and concentration of classical Chinese lyrics and Greek epigram, but did not realize that these forms grew out of highly civilized societies in conditions that did not exist in England at the beginning of the twentieth century.[2]

Goodbye! by Richard Aldington

Come, thrust your hands in the warm earth
And feel her strength through all your veins;
Breathe her full odors, taste her mouth,
Which laughs away imagined pains;
Touch her life's womb, yet know
This substance makes your grave also.

The next movement was surrealism and a new romanticism or a new apocalypse.

The apocalyptic were called the new Romantics because they bear a certain resemblance to the famous romantic poets, and, like them, the apocalyptic offered dreams, myths, fantasies and terrible desires. Neo-Romantic poets emphasized that dreams, myths, and obscure terrible desires should be controlled by sanity so that the whole person could be expressed, not just his depths.

The neo-Romantic movement expressed its sense of rebellion against the cult of the machine and did not agree with the opinion that art should be completely limited to political and social goals. [2]

The beginning of the 20th century in Russian poetry was called the Silver Age[4]. This period has a number of distinctive features. Most of the poets respected the literature of the past, played with ancient images and poets of the Golden Age, left hints and allusions to other poets between the lines.

The first movement of Russian poetry of that time was symbolism. Symbolists wrote with symbols because they were passionate about idealistic philosophy, saying that everything and every concept on Earth has its symbol in the metaphysical world. [3]

The second generation (or "Junior Symbolists") were mystics who appealed to the symbol of eternal femininity, which could manifest itself as an ideal beautiful stranger or a holy ephemeral being.[3]

"Ветер принёс издалёка" by A. Blok

Робко, темно и глубоко
Плакали струны мои.
Ветер принёс издалёка
Звучные песни твои.

The next movement is acmeism. Poets strongly opposed other symbolists and their artistic methods. Acmeism was about real things, objects and details. In their metaphors, they compared nature with inanimate objects and even with man-made ones.[3]

"Две розы" by N. Gumilev
Перед воротами Эдема
Две розы пышно зацвели,
Но роза - страстности эмблема,
А страстность - детище земли.

The third trend was futurism. Poets were radical and tried to undo everything that had been invented in poetry before them. They wanted to destroy all rhymes, texts, forms, and even the words themselves. They constructed their poems in the form of geometric shapes and used very bizarre metaphors.[3]

"Звёзды" by Severyanin
Вино шипело, вино играло.
Пылали взоры и были жарки.
"Идеи наши, - ты вдруг сказала,-
Как звёзды - яркие!"

Like English poets, Russian poets adhered to imagism. This movement was formed in Moscow after the revolution by Anatoly Mariengoff, Sergei Yesenin and the playwright Nikolai Erdman. These people were loyal to the revolution and inspired by the new freedom. They extolled cynicism and lack of morality and did not hesitate to criticize and deny religion.[3]

"Марш революций" by A. Mariengoff
Конь революций бурно вскачь
Вёрст миллионы в пространствах рвы,
Каждый волос хвоста и гривы -
Знамя восстаний, бунта кумач.

To sum it up, in English and Russian poetry of the beginning of the 20th century there are both similarities and differences which are characteristic only for a particular country.

Литература

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