

The Journey of Nikolaj Tikhonov along the Caucasus and the Representation of its Customs and Traditions in his Works

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ABSTRACT

In this article study the journey of Nikolaj Tikhonov along the Caucasus. It gives the analysis of the customs and traditions of the Caucasus people, whose daily life is objectively depicted in Tikhonov's works dedicated to the theme of Caucasus. An obvious bounding link between the romantic perception and the reflection of the reality of the main characters and their traditions is analyzed and how the author uses his artistic method to depict the national character of the Caucasus people. The works of Tikhonov embrace a wide range of such themes as the theme of the civil war, social rebuilding in the Caucasus, the image of ethnicity and geographical peculiarities of the land and the beauty of nature of the East. During his journey along the Caucasus in 1920-1930, the author shows a great desire to prevent the danger of the new war and calls to fight for peace and freedom. Tikhonov has made a great contribution to the Russian literature, enriching it with internationally related themes, promotion of peace and friendship dually motivated by the experience received from the journey along the land of Caucasus.

KEYWORDS

Geographical journey; romantic perception; international theme; Russian poetry; national customs and traditions

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Introduction

A modern literature paradigm proposes new ways of analyzing of the development of the artistic method of an author, search of the new problematic themes and interpretation of the familiar plots (Hapgood, 2016; Abisheva et al., 2016). The works of Tikhonov are framed with the abundance of various themes, peculiarities of the image-view perception of the surrounding world and simple presentation of details of the daily life and traditions of different folks. This peculiarity of his poetry is interpreted by his numerous trips to the East (Holt, 2013). Due to that fact we can see a distinct relation between his route along the Caucasus and the acts depicted in his works (Khalid, 2000; Layton, 1994). The actuality of this work

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is intensified by the new method of the reality perception and the idea conception proposed by the author.

Tikhonov started his literary carrier during the First World War (his first public works are dated 1918) when he entered the literary association "The Serapion Brothers" as a member (Kjajimov, 2010; Kosanović, 1985). In 20-30s of the XX century, he began to travel all over the Russia, especially the Caucasus. In 1924, he visited Ossetia, the place where the international theme of the Tikhonov work got even stronger. In 1928 the poet been to Teberda, and also with his wife Maria Konstantinovna, writer P. Luknitsky and other satellites got thought the Klukhori pass in Sukhumi. Next summer he made the trip to Ossetia, Svaneti, Armenia and Georgia with Wolf Ehrlich. In a year, his route laid through the Tvibersk pass to Svaneti, on the Svaneti and then on the Inguri, to Guards and thought Klukhori at the end. In 1933, he arrived to Dagestan and traveled on horseback. Tikhonov had over walked thirty-six Caucasus passes by 1936 (Shoshin 1960). Only in 1937, his way has gone through Pyatigorsk to Ordzhonikidze (Vladikavkaz), then on the Ingush villages, along Assinsky valley to Khevsureti, then on Dzherahovskomu canyon on the Georgian Military Highway, to Ossetia, Digoria by Ardon and Uruha, to Tseydon and Fiagdon before returning to Ordzhonikidze. The poet was highly inspired by that route for the new creations (Said, 2006; Kasieva, 2003).

Tikhonov was attracted by the diversity of Caucasus, against the background of its social changes in particular. His themes of the revolutionary changes are well described in a cycle "South", the story "From sea to sea" and the poem "The Road" (Greenberg, 1976; Tikhonov, 1986).

The problem of reproduction of the life experience of the author in his works remains one of the most difficult ones, yet not enough explored in national and world's literature practices. In this context a special interest is given to the exploration of Tikhonov's works in relation to his trips to Caucasus (Erkenova, 2011). It shows us the special author's vision to the latest tendencies in this land, peculiarities of traditions and daily life of the hill men, promotion of the new ideas and images (Gatagova, 2011). Only after a deep analysis of Tikhonov's impressions, feelings and emotions during his trip to the East and what influence they had on the creation of his image-view perception, we can interpret the combination of the general and personal in his aesthetics, development of his artistic method which is the important analysis factor in the contemporary world literature. This article shows us a complicated process of presentation of the little nuances of the land's ethnicity, folk traditions and customs, their mentality and ideas and surrounding nature.

On the contemporary stage, when due to the war conflicts at the end of the 20th century the Caucasus culture has lost its literature attractiveness, the appeal to this theme plays an important society role in diminishing the subtraction and confrontation between the two worlds. The objective of the article is to perform a profound analysis of the concept of the Caucasus in the works of N. Tikhonov (1986); to follow the interrelation of the author's trips to formation of the idea-image background on the example of some of his concrete works.

Methods

To interpret the theme of the Caucasus folk in the works of Tikhonov we use a wide range of literature methods to realize the objectives of the literature research. The main research method of text analysis in correlation to culture-historical one was taken for a basic one. It allows us to explore the author's poetry in connection to general political and cultural life of the epoch, to follow its influence on the mentality, customs, and traditions of the Caucasus folk, to redeem the artistic searches of the author and to imply them in the cultural potential of another country. Partly biographical method is used to show the influence of some biographical facts of N. Tikhonov (1986) (journey to the Caucasus) on his poetry images.

To interpret the objective and subjective levels of the text, the symbolic and metaphoric context the hermeneutic method is used. The descriptive and typological methods help us to explore the meaning of the Caucasus images in the artistic organization of verses, essays, stories and narratives.

Data, Analysis, and Results

Using as an example of the Soviet Caucasus Tikhonov opened the most specific features of the era of 30s of the twentieth century emphasized the importance of the Caucasus for the Russian poetry (Hapgood, 2016).

In 1933 in the volume "The first Fire" was published a story "Simon- the Bolshevik". The story was focused on the constructing of the Caucasian hydro power station. The critics point out that among all the works about hydropower the Tikhonov's one strongly stands out - it had been read with a thrilling interest. The average reader is fascinated by its pathetic.

The critics also have noted the fact that the Tikhonov's characters appeared to be people of a certain nationality. It was very significant. A number of fundamental flaws of literature in 20 - 30s is connected to the underestimation of the national element, what is required to fill the characters comprehensively emotional. Meanwhile, a departure from the patriarchal in our national does not entail a departure from the generally national forever. Referring to the study of different nationality reality, the artist should understand the features of the people spiritual life and the forms of its demonstration if he wants to penetrate deeper into the subject (Shoshin, 1976).

The writers engaged into the research about the theme of a different nationality studied folklore of the depicted people, because for many nations folk was even more alive component of written literature, rather than for Russian people (Gatagova, 2011). Before the revolution, folklore had occupied a key place in the literature of the USSR peoples and in the Soviet time began to study by a large number of writers.

Tikhonov hardly studied the highlander's folklore, was translating their folk songs. The author developed an international trend of literature combining romanticism and realism. The realistic and romantic are not opposed to it, but reinterpreted in its motion to the heroic, something that is rising from the everyday. The writer's combat with the exotic tradition lies in him removing the traditional opposition between the East and the West still covered in socialist construction.



In the story "Cavalcade", which is the first outline of a future novel about the Caucasus, Tikhonov describes in detail the life of the Caucasian people. Tikhonov skillfully recreates the national specifics of the mountain men, their hospitality and respect for the elderly. "Cavalcade" draws our attention to the shepherds, who become voluntary guides. Tikhonov also shows the originality of herders in their art of dance: "It was not movement of a human dancing to amuse the others, it was not a movement of an experienced dancer striking with his art, but it was the dance of the ancient mountaineer, who says in dancing what cannot be said by words" (Ershov, 1982).

In the works, dating by war years, Tikhonov also refers to the Caucasus, to its people. He stresses the importance of social changes in their life, what with unusual force affected them during wartime.

Tikhonov has been visiting the Caucasus almost every year since 1924 and Georgia influenced him even more. Georgia has become a new source of inspiration for the poet. People's life, of course, has a distinct national color and Tikhonov serves it in line with national traditions. The Tikhonov's cycle "Yurga" has been already noted as one with its tact and acuteness of penetration into non-indigenous element. However, for this cycle, the only non-indigenous cycle in Tikhonov style, which is preceding the "Poems of Kakheti," more inherent is not the image of an established way of life, but the overcoming of it, the emergence of new forms of social life. That is why the Tikhonov's "Poems of Kakheti" are particularly important development.

More characteristically is the fact, that the "Poems of Kakheti" (1935) by showing us the people's life reveal, above all, the modern its features. The Civil War themes and the themes of socialism building determine the social basis of the book. Namely, it is a combination of new sings and the use of traditional Georgian motives and images what is typical for the cycle "Poems of Kakheti."

Giorgi Leonidze (1959) said: "I know many wine-growers, miners, artists, painters, metallurgists, students, mountaineers in Georgia, who raise a grace-cup for" our Tikhonov" with love". He explained the reason for this recognition: "There is no such corner in Soviet Georgia - neither highlands nor the valleys, where the land is untouched by Tikhonov - a fellow, not a tourist. He came to Georgia not to search for orientalism and exoticism - came to us as a friend, to build with us a new life and a new poetry. He peered inquisitively into the life of the people, listened to the rhythm of its labor and creativity. His verse, which is rapid and sonorous, imbued with optimism, has a good affinity with Georgia for ages."

Tikhonov described Caucasus considering to all its national, ethnographic and geographic features and signs, thus making the East more lyrical.

Tikhonov was a supporter of the revolutionary ideas, what is clearly seen in his works, such as his poem "Sami". This poem consists only of 100 lines (seven verses, 16, 12, 20, 16, 12, 12, 12 lines) and was published in the journal "Virgin Red Soil" for the first time (1922, number 4). After that, the poem was included into the book "Braga", which was published in 1922.

The poem tells about the Hindu boy, who was sincerely attached to Lenin or as the Indians say – "Lenny". Using the image of Lenin, Tikhonov shows the spirit of a young boy - a fighter against the British exploiters. By the ideological propaganda in the poem, the boy is seen as a representative of the Indian people, as if Sami created an idea of the free socialist country. Tikhonov wanted to show

the world value of the coup, called at the time “The October Socialist Revolution” and Lenin's ideas. On a sample of Soviet Russia Tikhonov urging the workers of all nations to struggle for freedom in a small, but meaningful poem "Sami" proving his artistic talent by that (Kazimov, 2010). Despite the fact that this poem is outdated as one with the ideological features, and is interesting only for historical facts, it attracts by the poetic forms and genre specialties. A realistic picture of the truth characterizes the Tikhonov's works, devoted to the Middle East, South-East Asia and Afghanistan. Detailing the pictures of the national existence, the writer focuses on deep historical process.

Discussions

Tikhonov's works describe in details the traditional way of life of the Caucasus peoples in conjunction with the revolutionary changes of 20-30 years of the twentieth century. International Tikhonov oeuvre helped to strengthen the relations between the peoples of the Caucasus and the Soviet Union. Nikolai Tikhonov was one of the first, who paved the road of Russian poetry to the East, enriched Russian poetry with translations of the East poems. In his works, the declarative nature of ideological direction is also predominated (Kazimov, 2010). Strong commitment to the Soviet ideology restricted the creativity of Tikhonov, making it a one-way, not taking any ideas against the Soviet. The Tikhonov's work differs by the persistence of poet's interests. “Freedom of the peoples of all countries under the banner of world socialist revolution!” – that is the ideal, sung in his poetry in 1920s - 30s. The poetical pathos is characterized as enthusiastic, inspired, with revolutionary views and civil pathos (Ershov, 1982).

Conclusion

The carried out research work shows the specific character of the reflection of the geographic trips through the Caucasus in the works of N. Tikhonov (1986), where we can follow the tendency of shifting of the old socially mental elements to the new forms of socialism. His rich and various trip route is manifested in the new images of his poetry and stories. The writer is skilled in combination of the romantic and realistic interpretation of the Caucasus reality, following the Lermontov method. However, his works are marked with the revolutionary and civil pathos.

The main characters of the story are the prominent representatives of the revolution and simple hill-men – worker. The writer depicts the meaning of the social changes in their life and in the years of the war dangers. A great attention is given to the description of the marvelous nature of the Caucasus, indicating the concrete regional peculiarities of the local landscape. It allows making a reader familiar with the locality, sense and mental potential of the Caucasus. The writer appeals to the Caucasus folklore in order to transmit fully the cultural potential of the region, its true identification. On the example of the Caucasus N. Tikhonov showed remarkably the characteristic features of all the epoch.



Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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