

Literature of Russia's North Indigenous Peoples the Experience of Critical Thinking

Yulia G. Khazankovich

North-Eastern Federal University after M.K. Ammosov, Kulakovskiy str., 42. Yakutsk, 677000, Russia

Abstract: We set a goal to reflexively present the experience of critical reading of Northern Indigenous Peoples' literatures by researchers in the article. The need for "critical" excursion in this article is due to the actuality of the need to study the criticism in the regional and national specificity. Raising the question of criticism devoted to the literatures of Indigenous peoples, we are pursuing a practical purpose to make some observations about the nature of literary criticism functioning in Russia in the mid 1970-2000-ies, to identify assessment. Usually in Russia these peoples are called "ew-numbered", "small peoples of the North", "northern indigenous peoples", "indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East", "northern peoples" criteria in thinking of writing northerners' creative individuality. The combination of criticism socio-dynamic analysis (excursion into the world of critical genres) and the historical-typological approach will focus on theoretical problems of the Russian critics devoted to the Northern minorities.

Key words: Literature of Russia • S North Indigenous Peoples • Literary criticism • Prose • Poetry • Literati of the North

INTRODUCTION

Literature of few-numbered peoples of the North are the original area of development and functioning of national cultures. Nowadays primarily the domestic literary trends toward overcoming peripheral interest to them. One index of this process was the revival of research attention to these literatures both in Russia and abroad. The intense translating and propaganda work of the English, Hungarian, French researchers as the witness of it. Alexander Vaschenko and Claude Clayton Smith translated to the English language the of Native Siberian Literature [1]. Hungarian Peter Domokosh in 1978 issued the anthology of the Finno-Ugric literatures "The Bear Song" and co-section "Khanty Mansiysk literature" in the textbook "Our Uralic brothers"[2]. The intense propaganda work of French researchers as the witness of it [3], [4]. We set a goal to reflexively present the experience of critical reading of Northern Indigenous Peoples' literatures by researchers in the article.

From the middle of the last century, a great experience of the historical and comparative study of "small" peoples language arts has been accumulated in the writings of G.I. Lomidze, L. Yakimenko, M. Parkhomenko, N.N. Vorobieva, S.M. Khitarov, R.G. Bikmuhametova, A.V. Poshataevoy,

C.G. Guseinov, A. Vashchenko, N. Michael, E. Rogover, G. Jona, A. Mikhailov, A.S. Zhuleva etc. Taking into account the experience of domestic and foreign study of national literatures, we have set ourselves the task to identify conceptual and methodological approaches of the national literatures analysis and within that trace the history of studying the small peoples' literature in both critical and literary criticism aspects.

The need for "critical" excursion in this article is due to the actuality of the need to study the criticism in the regional and national specificity, which was put in the 1980's by R. Bikmuhametov in his monograph "The orbits of interaction". In the context of contemporary methodological study of the criticism it has the particular importance for the completeness of national literatures representations and their reflection. Raising the question of criticism devoted to the literatures of Indigenous peoples, we are pursuing a practical purpose to make some observations about the nature of literary criticism functioning in Russia in the mid 1970-90-ies, to identify assessment. Usually in Russia these peoples are called "ew-numbered", "small peoples of the North", "northern indigenous peoples", "indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East", "northern peoples" criteria in thinking of writing northerners' creative individuality.

Corresponding Author: Yulia G. Khazankovich, North-Eastern Federal University after M.K. Ammosov, Kulakovskiy str., 42. Yakutsk, 677000, Russia

Methodology. The combination of criticism socio-dynamic analysis (excursion into the world of critical genres) and the historical-typological approach will focus on theoretical problems of the Russian critics devoted to the Northern minorities.

Basis part. Regular critical articles about the northerners' creative works began to appear in the mid 1970's. Critical "recovery" has been associated with the processes that occur in literature: Nivkh B. Sangi, Chukchi Yu. Rytheu, Yukagir S. Kurilov and Nanai G. Khodzher, Evenki A. Nemtushkin, Mansi Yu. Shestalov, Nenets A. Nerkagi, whose works were included in the "Golden fund" of the Russia people's literatures, loudly announced themselves. A review with the emphasis on content became the main critical genre, allowing critics just to contour to outline the "special aesthetic world" of national literature, with its distinctive themes (Articles of E. Bogdanova, A. Martinovic, A. Omelchuk, Y. Shprygorova and A. Zhuleva about the collections of Nenets poets Ledkov B. and L. Lapsuy, Yukagir G. Kurilov - Uluro-Ado, Chukchi A. Kymytval, etc.).

A "socio-cultural approach" became typical for the criticism studies in 1970-80-ies. It has aimed to understand the "social nature" of Northern literature. The main problem of criticism of that time - its lack of clear evaluation criteria. In our opinion, A. Poshataeva, who first analyzed the prose of Yu. Shestalov in the context of traditions liro-epic prose [5] and Nivkh writer Vladimir Sangi, who is still working in Sakhalin, in the article "From folklore to contemporary fiction" [6] have designated it. Sangi came to the understanding of artistic and aesthetic phenomena from the very inside, because he deeply researched and knew Nivkh folklore and was already the author of several novels. But studies of this nature were an exception. Note that the regional criticism developed without total, socialist realism ideology. It was able to identify in time the weight of the artistic and aesthetic phenomena- this is undoubted advantage in the mid 1970's and early 80's.

The peak of the critical thinking of Indigenous Peoples of the Russian North literatures became in the mid 1980's. Critical and journalistic articles, reviews, literary portraits have appeared in that time. If previously the critical thought has been focused only on the axis of the "author-hero", later it moved into the plane of the problems of interaction with Russian literature at the level of fiction forms and traditions. Less productive "evaluative approach" backed by strengthening the analytical aspect in the reviews. In mid 1980's critics have increasingly turned to prose. So, V. Chalmaev devotes an article to creativity of Jeremei Aipin, Mikhailova – to

"New people" of Semen Kurilov, T. Komissarov explores the "prose of a poet" Alitet Nemtushkin and E. Khomutova analyzes the little-known novel by Alexander Latkin. Their work has made some contribution to the exploration of the concept of national literatures, put by analytical researches of M. Parkhomenko, C. Huseynov, R. Bikmuhametova, L. Yakimenko, M. Shprygorova, A. Vlasenko.

Deep socio-cultural and aesthetic interpretation of the works of northern writers, an attempt to study the theoretical aspect of the possible criticism of the second half of 1980 not only provide clear outlines of "aesthetic building" of the literature of small peoples, but also to apply to its detail, outlining the integrity of the perception of each artist creativity.

Criticism of the second half of 1980 - the mid-90's sets rather an episodic reading to the literature of indigenous peoples, it is associated with a number of objective reasons. During this period the approaches to the study of national literatures and literary-critical categories of consciousness dramatically changed. We have witnessed overcoming the inertia motion of the past, inertia of thinking, including the critical one. Criticism at that time got rid of ideological anchor, narrowing its research unit, the annoying "instrumental" perception of prose and poetry, which in fact allowed the criticism to reach a qualitatively different cultural level of the study and interpretation of the small peoples literature.

In this vein, the approach to a kind of expansive interpretations of the works was an article by Ogryzko of the epic V. Sangi's "Man of Ykh Myth". We find the position that V. Sangi through the artistic word opens the Nivkh ethnic world in all corresponding images and collisions, reconstructs the national character [7]. G. Gachev has been and remains the most striking representative of the culturological stream. His study of the works of the Evenki writer Galina Keptuke generally takes into account the literary and cultural context and a cultural experience of her the works. Drastic changes of critical thinking has contributed, in our view, not only "post-perestroika" atmosphere, but also the appearance of unusual in form and content of stories and novellas of Evenki G. Keptuke, A. Nemtushkin and A. Latkin, novels of Evens P. Lamutskiy "Spirit of Earth" and A. Krivoshapkin "Coast of Destiny", the story of a Nenets A. Nerkagi "Silent", novels of a Hunt Jeremei Aipin "Khanty, or Star of the Dawn" and an Itelmen George Porotov "On the outskirts of Russia", which all became a model of identity and artistic emotions to the national nature, national psychology and national mentality.

Criticism of the 1990-2000 years actualized yet another genre - the «socio-literary portrait of the writer or poet: critical articles by Ogryzko in the magazines “Northern vast”, “Peace of the North Literary Russia”, as well as articles by E. Dostovalov, W. Khristoforova, A. Veter, which came out in the magazines “Literary Review Northern Seagull”, “World of the North”. Their works are characterized by acute journalistic and they generally reflect the vibrant, pulsating process of literary development of “small” peoples.

Appreciation of the literary-critical thought overall state in decades, we should say that we have reached now, at the beginning of the third millennium, a very important milestone. The significance of the moment is that there is critical heterodox in studying the literature of northern small peoples. The combination of socio-cultural, aesthetic and cultural approaches can complement proper philological indigenous people’s literatures research.

Turning directly to the literary criticism aspects of the northern literatures study, we note that the problems of interaction with ethnic folklore and genre levels are the most studied (monographs Smolnikova I., Modern legends; Shprygov Yu., Youth of the Far North; Yakimenko L.G., On the century roads; Vorobieva N.N., Khitarov S.M., On the new frontier; Bikmuhametov R.G., Orbits interaction; Komanovskogo B.L., Youngest literatures, etc.). In contemporary study of national literatures it is already researched that the traditional folklore, spiritual culture in general and literature in particular play its role of ethno saving factor [8], [9]. In this regard, the study of spiritual culture, folklore and northern literature as a pivotal foundation for preserving and developing culture in comparative-typological perspective [10], [11], [12] and questions of historiography and poetics [13], [14], [15] is made more active.

Works of Vashchenko take a special place in the understanding of northern peoples literature. Typological study of epic folklore, Native Americans literature and some literary texts of a Nenets Yuri Valley, a Hunt Jeremei Aipin, an Evenki Galina Keptuke allowed critic take a fresh look at the “ethnic” literature of the Russian North Aboriginals [16], [17].

CONCLUSION

The range of topical issues of literatures, which require study, is quite broad: fine arts facilities, genre-style features to display rapidly changing national life. Prospects for studying the literatures of the northern

peoples lie primarily in the plane of reflection of scientific problems of national-cultural self-identification and identity. The idea of ethnic identity has articulated sufficiently in the works of Yukagirs S. Kurilov, Uluruo Ado – G.N. Kurilov, Evens P. Lamutskiy, A. Krivoshapkin, E. Bokova, Nanai G.Khodzher and P. Kile, Mansi Yu. Shestalov, A. Konkova and T. Moldanova, Evenki A. Nemtushkin, A. Latkin, N. Kalitin and others, especially in the prose and poetry, to understand and save self-identity, as well as spiritual and cultural identity.

Today, the northern peoples’ literature in its archaic looking focus on the world due to the preserved ancestral memory and the reception of mythological universals, particularity of which is caused by a direct link with folklore and vivacity of epic environments, in the bosom of which it was formed, represent the artistic and aesthetic phenomenon, the interest of which is extremely high not only in Russia but also in Europe and America. Indigenous Peoples’ literature, born in the early 20-th century and is actively developing in the field of folklore and Russian literature’s tradition, represents today a great interest for Russian and foreign researchers. Due to its author’s own world, the specifics of artistic thinking, a system of national and universal mythological motivation and their semantic nuances of the ethnic text, non-traditional issues, small peoples’ literature at the present stage represents interest to researchers and critics, not as “peripheral” artistic phenomenon, but as a part of the Russian and world culture art space and, accordingly, requires that a reevaluation and deepening of the already existing concepts.

Notes: There are 40 ethnic groups who occupy Siberia, the Far East and the northern part of Russia, whose population is less than 50 thousands and who hold the way of life of their ancestors: they are generously reindeer herders, fishermen, hunters. They are listed by Russian government’s Order of 17.04.2006 #536-r. Usually in Russia these peoples are called “few-numbered”, “small peoples of the North”, “northern indigenous peoples”, “indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East”, “northern peoples”.

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