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**CORRELATION OF MOTHERLAND / EMIGRATION IMAGES IN**  
**WORKS BY YOUNGER HARBIN POETS**

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**Abstract**

The paper studies the question of literary interaction of the image of the Motherland and the image of emigration in the literary consciousness of the younger poets of the Far Eastern emigration (Harbin, Manchuria). Based on the material of the lyrical works of young Harbin poets, the authors of the study analyze the features of their perception of emigrant reality, Russia as an idealized and mythologized image of a lost house, revolutionary events and reflection of the image of the Motherland through the prism of the corps of Russian classical literature and the “Silver Age”. The authors come to the conclusion that the general feeling of “groundlessness”, isolation from the Motherland became a unifying factor for the younger generation of the eastern branch of Russian emigration, although each of the poets found their own way of experiencing – and literary reflection – their emigre tragedy. The stories of relatives, family culture, upbringing and education, and almost to a greater extent, Russian literature had a great influence on the formation of the image of Russia in the consciousness of Harbin youth. The thematic opposition “Motherland-Emigration” was present in the works of emigrant poets of different generations, someone already in the early period of creativity, someone in more mature age. The authors of the paper find this trend natural, seeing its prerequisites in historical and cultural conditions in which there were white emigrants in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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## **1. Introduction**

In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the city of Harbin located in the heart of Manchuria became one of the cultural and literary centers of Russian emigration. The literary heritage of the Harbinians, represented by two generations of prose writers and lyricists, deserves special attention. Once in a foreign land, in the middle of an unfamiliar, incomprehensible land – Manchuria – Russian emigrants found a way to preserve themselves as an ethnocultural community, which was facilitated by an opportunity to communicate, study and write in their native Russian language, an interest in native history and classical Russian literature. The same factors influenced the formation of emigrants in the young population, for which Russia was either a vague recollection (unlike the older generation of Harbins who left Russia already in adulthood (Feng, 2020), or a fairy tale, myth, a special image of their Motherland, as well as the image of themselves as a person without a Motherland, without a soil under their feet.

## **2. Problem Statement**

The study is based on the specifics of the interaction and coexistence of the images of the Motherland and emigration in the minds of the young Far Eastern emigrants.

## **3. Research Questions**

Literary self-knowledge of the eastern branch of Russian emigration, the concepts of the “Motherland” and “emigration” in the literature of Far Eastern emigration, images of the perception of the Motherland and emigration in the works of the members of literary and artistic associations “Churaevka” and “Friday”.

## **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to consider the artistic correlation of images of the Motherland and emigration on the material of the lyrical works of the younger generation of Harbin poets (mainly students of Churaevka literary and art studio, who later formed the Friday creative association).

## **5. Research Methods**

The study uses the cultural and historical method, as well as the methods of lexical-semantic, immanent and contextual analysis of a literary text.

## **6. Findings**

For any ethnic consciousness the image of the Motherland is basic defining acts as “the center of national identity” (Zabiyako, 2002). For centuries, the image of the Motherland in the consciousness of a Russian person did not exist in a static state, its perception changed depending on a specific historical period, the concept of the “Motherland” was mythologized, and gained new meanings.

“In the consciousness of an ancient Russian person, the image of the Russian land combined both historically specific and mythological features”, writes Zabyako (2002), “The main thing in the mythological image of the Russian land was not its territorial and historical certainty, but qualitative characteristics – correct <... > arrangement, religious righteousness, divine presence and guardianship, purity, brightness” (p. 51). Since the late Middle Ages the quality of holiness characterizing the image of Russia has been particularly important (Zabyako, 2002).

Many Russian philosophers, writers, critics addressed the image of the Motherland in its various hypostases. The concepts of the Motherland acquired even greater sacrality at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century for those who were expelled by it and scattered throughout the world with the vague hope of returning – white emigrants. This statement is especially true in relation to the eastern branch of Russian emigration, whose representatives were in the middle of an unfamiliar, incomprehensible Russian mind of Manchuria focused primarily on European culture. In the conditions of continuous, daily collision with a foreign culture, the dichotomy of the Motherland – a stranger – begins to appear especially vividly. The feeling of detachment, longing for the lost Motherland is aggravated, the alien side is considered a prison – and this despite the fact that it was in China that Russian emigrants gained the most favorable living conditions, for a quarter of a century they were able to preserve pre-revolutionary life, lead an active cultural life and give their children a brilliant education. “In the ancient Russian mythological consciousness, the earthly space alien to the “mother of Russia” receives the meaning of the kingdom of the Devil, Satan, Antichrist, it – as the opposite of the righteously arranged Russian land – is considered the focus of an unrighteous structure, “curves” of orders and false teachings” (Zabyako, 2002, p. 42). In this situation, we refer not to a tough confrontation between emigrants and the population of Manchuria, but to the opposition of the native land rooted in the ethnic consciousness of most representatives of the Russian diaspora in China, with its “correct” culture and religion – and alien, “wrong” culture. As Zabyako (2010) notes, “The appeal to Russian and Russian history as a spiritual refuge and pledge of unity was fully strengthened in Harbin culture by the Chinese environment. Despite the illusion of “pre-revolutionary Russia”, “the most Russian image of Harbin”, the refugees realized that they were in China, in a foreign land” (p. 9). Stefanenko (1999) writes that at critical moments when a Russian person “is forced to realize his belonging to ethnic community”, his sense of Motherland is aggravated – which happened to the Russian intelligentsia forced to leave Russia in fear of being destroyed by the new regime” (p. 32).

In such a situation, the primary goal for the Russian diaspora in Manchuria is the preservation of ethnocultural identity, for which, of course, it is necessary to preserve own language, traditional religion, and cultural values. Literature has always been a stronghold of culture for the Russian intellectual, for emigration it has also become the most important component of cultural life. Among Far Eastern emigrants, classical Russian literature also performed another important function – creating the image of the Motherland among young people, which they either saw in deep childhood (N. Shchegolev, V. Pereleshin, N. Peterets, L. Andersen), or did not see at all (G. Granin, F. Dmitrieva, etc.). Many of the “younger” representatives of the Far Eastern countries noted the active mythologization of the image of Russia, which occurred, firstly, due to the youth’s romantic moods, and secondly, due to constant complaints of the older generation about the inconsistency of Chinese realities with what they are used to

in Russia (“Are these smells? Does Russia smell like herbs, flowers, trees! <...> Is that how birds sing! Is that the taste of apples, watermelons, melons! <...> And water, is that the taste of water? And bread! What a delicious, odorous one!”), thirdly, and almost to a greater extent – under the influence of Russian literature (Zabiyako, 2010).

Thus, having no memories of the Motherland, the young Harbin generation was forced to create the image of Russia (which was different for each of them) formed under the influence of family values, education, texts of favorite authors. The individual features of the perception and artistic “transformation” of the concept of the “Motherland” among various representatives of Harbin literary youth can be traced on the example of poems from the *Ostrov* collection, which included the results of poetic studies of former participants in the Harbin Churaevka, who moved to Shanghai with the arrival of Japanese invaders. In Shanghai, the literary life was not as rich as in Harbin, there were few literary associations. In 1943, Nikolai Peterets proposed organizing a poetry association called Friday. The members of the association met on Fridays for two years (Shtein, 1988). In order to regain inspiration, a game concept was invented. The draw (“from a glass”) chose one topic on which each participant had to write a poem during a week, which was then sorted out at the meeting. The result of the activities of the association was the anthology *Ostrov* (Zabiyako, 2014). One of the weekly topics of “Friday” was Russia. Of the 9 members of the association, six responded to it.

For Maria Korostovets, the fundamental in the perception of Russia was the mentioned dichotomy of “us-them” with the mythologized, “bright” image of the defender of Russia – and demonized, “dark” images of foreign invaders:

*И много светлых успокоилось,  
Тебя пришедших защищать.  
И много темных с дерзновением  
Искали троп, чтобы сломить Тебя... (Zabiyako, 2014).*

Yu.P. Kruzenshtern-Peterets compares the lost Motherland with the wonderful city of Kitej passing by the Russian exiles:

*... Неужели?  
Китеж!.. воскресающий без нас!  
Так – и так великая... Подите-ж! –  
А она, действительно, как Китеж,  
Проплывает мимо глаз» (Zabiyako, 2014).*

For Valery Pereleshin, Russia is “only a name, invented being” (as cited in Zabiyako, 2014). The poet himself was even proud of his non-standard, “erotic” (by the definition of N. Shchegolev) decision chosen for this topic (Pereleshin, 1989). The lines below served the basis for such a remark:

*Ужели в красоте раскосой,  
В обетованьях смуглых тел  
Голубоглазой, светлокосой  
Одной России я хотел?» (Zabiyako, 2014).*

The lyrical heroine Lydia Khaindrova perceives Russia as the edge of the desired space and freedom:

*Россия, твой ветер привольный  
Призывно и мощно поет,  
И радостно сердцу и больно,  
И просится сердце в полет»* (Zabiyako, 2014).

This land, however, is unattainable, the lyrical heroine bitterly comes to terms with the inevitable:

*И я не дойду – не узнаю  
Ни ласки, ни власти твоей  
И вздохом тревожным растаю  
Средь чуждых китайских полей»* (Zabiyako, 2014).

Nikolai Shchegolev perceives Soviet Russia as the successor to imperial Russia, revolutionary sentiments are clearly heard in his poem:

*Ярмо тяготело. Рабы бунтовали.  
Витала над Пушкиным тень Бенкендорфа ...  
Россия! Советской ты стала б едва ли,  
Когда б не пробилась – травую из торфа...»* (Zabiyako, 2014).

It is not surprising that Shchegolev eventually repatriated to the Soviet Union – he greeted the new Soviet order so passionately:

*Что может быть этого света прекрасней,  
Тобою, Россия, зажженного света?  
Она не исчезнет, она не угаснет,  
Она не померкнет – преемственность эта!»* (Zabiyako, 2014).

*Лирический герой Николая Петереца видит Россию глазами великих поэтов:*

*Встают сквозь смутный бред властей во много крат  
Россия Белого – пылающее море,  
Россия Тютчева – смирение и горе,  
Россия Гоголя – смятение и ад»* (Zabiyako, 2014).

All these images are extremely expressive, even eschatological. But despite this the hero ends his monologue life-affirming:

*Неоценимый дар – взглядеться до конца  
В лик Родины своей через ее искусство»* (Zabiyako, 2014).

It is worth noting that many representatives of the “Harbin youths” perceived their Motherland through the prism of metaliterature reflection – someone was impressed by the image of Russia created

by Lermontov or Blok, someone expressed his lyrical self through a monologue on behalf of his favorite lyricist. The young Harbin poets addressed Dostoevsky, Gogol, Lermontov, Pushkin, Blok in their poems... Zabiako (2007) identifies the following forms of appeal to Russian literature among emigrant poets of the younger generation:

- lyrical conversation with the classic. Thus, for example, N. Svetlov in the poem *On Incomprehensible* appeals to Pushkin, and the work is intertextually associated with poetic conversions of Blok and Mayakovsky:

Несравненный Александр Сергеевич!

Вы, гений нашей страны,

Вы, буян и бунтарь,

Вы, ловелас и скептик, –

Если вы так по-ребячески

Верили в непостижимое,

То что же делать мне,

Обычному человеку...» (Bashkirov, 2006);

- capturing the metapoetic thoughts of a lyrical subject over the text of the classic writer (*War and Peace* by N. Shchegolev, *Fat volume. Embossed - Gogol...*, *The third volume of Alexander Blok...* N. Peteretsa) (Zabiako, 2007);
- role-playing poem-monologue written “on behalf” of a writer or a poet of the “Golden Age” (*Lermontov* by N. Shchegolev, *Dostoevsky* by N. Peterets, etc.) (Zabiako, 2007);
- “poem-list” from iconic images of writers who formed the basis of Russian classics – as a replica of “all of Russia” (*Russia* by N. Peterets, *Abroad* by N. Svetlov, *Gong* by N. Shchegolev) (Zabiako, 2007);
- reliance on precedent texts through reminiscent weaving of various phrases, images, motifs of iconic works of Russian classics (Zabiako, 2007).

It is worth noting that in the collection *Ostrov (The Island)* a separate topic “fan” was dedicated to the great Russian writer, a tireless researcher of the mysterious Russian soul – Dostoevsky – however, only five of the authors responded to this topic. However, perhaps the works of some “islanders” simply did not enter the general meeting for one reason or another. Pereleshin (1989) in the book of memoirs *Two Substations* writes: Only five of the nine poets wrote about Dostoevsky <...>. Six responded on the topic “Russia” (“turned over” – or maybe wrote unsuccessful poems that were not included in the *Ostrov* – Andersen, Ievleva, Pomerantsev).

Larissa Andersen, whose poems open the vast majority of “fans” in the collection, really did not publish works about “Russia” and “Dostoevsky”. The topic of the lost and desirable Motherland in general begins to actively manifest itself in the work of the poetess in more mature years, then she will write about Russia:

*Россия – вздох.*

*Россия – в горле камень.*

*Россия – горечь безутешных слез» (Andersen, 2005).*

In young years, the poetess is more concerned about her own inner world, momentary bright impressions. However, already in the early poems we see the topic of emigrant longing slips – most likely felt subconsciously, intuitively:

*Каждой осенью плаксивой,  
Каждой радостной весной  
В сердце, – жалеющей крапивой, –  
Этот дух бродяжий мой»*

The theme of emigration is expressed by Andersen through the motive of vagrancy, recklessness.

Perhaps this feeling of vagrancy clearly or implicitly lived in the soul of each emigrant. They were all exiles, all carried this pain in their hearts. It was simply that the younger generation suffered differently – longing, not really knowing (or not remembering) the object of its longing. Y.P. Kruzenshtern-Peterets described a young Harbin emigrant: The type of Harbin student of that time is touching: during the day at work, often heavy, rude, in the evening in a clean jacket at the desk. When free time falls and a free dollar falls – Russian theater, Russian cozy, the only zucchini in the world with gypsies, restaurants with hot pews, where you can hear disputes reaching quarrels, and always about the same, about Russia (Zabiyako et al., 2015). Shegolev (2014) echoed her in his poem *Experience*:

*Эмиграция – да! – прозябанье в кругу иностранцев,  
Это та же тоска, это значит – учить про запас  
Все ремесла, языки, машинопись, музыку, танцы,  
Получая гроши, получая презренье подчас»*

The general feeling of “groundlessness” was often reflected in the lyrics of the “Harbin youth”. Nina Zavadskaya suffered from the absence of her Motherland as follows:

*Ни кустов смородины,  
Ни берез, о которых петь...  
И не знать той земли и родины,  
За которую умереть!» (Zabiyako & Efendieva, 2008).*

For Georgy Granin, who was already born in Manchuria, the emigrant reality became a reason for doubt that Russia, about which he listened, read, dreamed, ever existed: “*А вдруг и – вправду была Россия, / Россия: пламя, вихрь, огонь!* (And suddenly, what if there was Russia / Russia: flame, whirl wind, fire!)” (Zabiyako & Efendieva, 2008). Anaphoric repetition “and suddenly” creates a feeling of mirage, chimeras. Such uncertainty characterizes the general perception of the concepts of the “Motherland” and “emigration” in the literary consciousness of younger emigrant poets deprived not only of their native land, but even of memories of it.

## 7. Conclusion

Summing up the results of the study, we shall note the inextricable connection in which there were images of the Motherland and emigration in the lyrics of the younger generation of Harbin poets. The general feeling of “groundlessness”, the absence of the Motherland as a phenomenon, was a unifying beginning for young Harbinians, although each of them experienced this “emigrant tragedy” in his own way. Russian literature, which caused an abundance of metaliterative “projections” in the lyrics of the “Harbin youths” played an important role in the formation of the image of Russia in the minds of Harbin youth. The thematic pair “Motherland – Emigration” somehow manifested itself in the work of all emigrant lyricists – both older and younger generations. This trend is not surprising, it is natural and is caused by historical and cultural situation in which the Russian intelligentsia found itself in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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