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**SEMANTIC TRANSFORMATIONS OF RUSSIAN CULTURAL  
HERITAGE IN THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF SOVIET ERA**

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***Abstract***

The paper analyzes the main trends in implementation of intertextual dialog between the 19th and the 20th century in conditions of globalization process in the Soviet culture on the material of reception of M. Yu. Lermontov's oeuvre. Various aspects in perception and semantic transformation of classical literary works of M. Yu. Lermontov in multi-ethnic environment are studied, namely: transformation of classics into national mythology, where the poet becomes an eternal image of the Russian literature and an “eternal satellite” of the Russian life. Methodological instrumentarium of intertextual and comparative approach allows juxtaposing the key motifs and images of selected authors, identifying typological correlations and differences between the prevailing principles in artistic thought of various writers, reveal dynamics and peculiarities in perception of the artistic axiology of M. Yu. Lermontov in the social and cultural context of the 20th century and showing the original features of complex, deeply nationally representative artistic world view, whose constants formed a foundation of the archetypal image of a Russian Poet. The questions of artistic reception are analyzed on the material that for the first time has become the subject of literature studies in this aspect. A conclusion is drawn about the spiritual unity of the Russian literature as a determinative factor of its national affiliation: Analysis of all the multitude of ethnic cultural interrelations in a diachronic aspect of the intertextual dialog that determines the modern literature process is a mandatory condition for national identification in the polysemantic space of the modern culture.

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## 1. Introduction

In 1925, Vladimir Mayakovsky in his poem *Tamara and Demon* ingeniously described a process by which a contemporary nihilist and victorious proletarian revolutionary falls under charms and reigns of Romanticism:

So this is the Terek  
    that has poets  
        in hysterics.  
And I hadn't seen it.  
    Big loss, I'm sure.  
    <...>  
What's so great about it?  
    A total wreck!  
Kicks and screams  
    like Yesenin in a police station.  
It seems Lunacharsky  
    on his way  
        to Borjomy  
botched the Terek's  
    organization.  
I want to turn up  
    my insolent nose  
and I feel it:  
    I freeze on the verge  
I fall under the sway  
    Of a strange  
        hypnosis,  
the effervescence of water  
    and foam (Mayakovsky, 1978).

These lines are a prologue to the topic of “Reception of Lermontov by the artistic consciousness of the Soviet era”. It is both logical and symbolic, that Futurists were the first ones in the Post-October-Revolution poetry to see Lermontov like this, being connected to Romanticism, thus confirming the unbreakable link between the revolution and Romanticism in both Avant-garde art and realia of the Soviet era.

Socialist Realist literature did not repudiate this heritage, but accepted it only partially, agreeing to Romanticist enthusiasm, but not to its artistic method.

Meanwhile, the myth of Lermontov in the Soviet literature was created following the canons of Romanticism as an artistic method. What is it that allows us talking about it?

In literature studies, there was once a concept that did not take hold: Lermontoviana, as a designation of artistic interpretations of life journey and artistic journey of the poet and poetic dedication to him (as an

analog to a commonly used Pushkiniana for works similarly related to Alexander Pushkin.) The concept of myth that replaces it here is, of course, understood broadly and to a certain degree provisionally. Not having an archetypal core, it assumes neo- prefix and a definition of Romanticist. The phenomenon of collective mythogenesis and the mythogenic potentials of personal and artistic biography of Lermontov were studied in a number of contemporary works in various aspects: Lermontov-related discourse of the Russian literature (Zhuravleva, 2001; Igosheva, 2001; Kudryashova, 2007), Lermontov's characters in the space of artistic culture (Dyakina, 2004; Somova & Svitenko, 2015a; Sizemskaya, 2016), Lermontov's works in the cultural dialog between the Western Europe and Russia (Dubnova, 2007; Kshitsova, 2014; Kirillova & Ulitina, 2017).

A well-known and unequalled formula of Romanticism as a depiction of exceptional characters in exceptional circumstances works to its full meaning in this case.

## **2. Problem Statement**

This research is dedicated to studying the problem of reception and mechanisms of literature mythogenesis of the image of Lermontov and poetological constants of the poet's works by the authors of the Soviet era.

## **3. Research Questions**

The subject of research in this paper is various forms of artistic reception of Lermontov-related intertext in works of fictions penned by classics of the Soviet literature.

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

The purpose of the study is to describe the nature of functioning of Lermontov-related intertext in the Soviet literature, identify forms and methods of dialog between the Soviet prose and poetry on the one hand and artistic works of Lermontov on the other side in the sociocultural context of the 20th century.

## **5. Research Methods**

Specifics of the stated problem appeals to a complex methodological approach combining comparative, cultural-historical, biographical, intertextual methods of research, allowing identifying and describing the “Lermontovian” code in the Soviet literature in the context of intercultural dialog of classical heritage of a major national poet and world view paradigm of Soviet wordsmiths.

## **6. Findings**

Having preliminary divided the exceptional circumstances of the poet's life into Lermontovian geography and Lermontovian biography, the authors may note the following. In the poetic geography of the Lermontov myth, Caucasus dominates absolutely (Somova & Svitenko, 2015b). Inevitable comparison with the poetic Pushkiniana of the 20th century, where the poet's geography is proportionally represented by Tsarskoye Selo, Saint Petersburg, Mikhailovskoye, Boldino, Chernaya Rechka only highlights the conceptual nature of such preference. Poets leave Moscow, Saint Petersburg and Tarkhany to philologists

and choose only Caucasus, which since Lermontov's time is perceived as romantic exotic location. Since then, the spirit of Lermontov apparently stayed there, and apprehension of meeting him and his characters never disappoints the poets attracted by recollections of him.

Where did he stand? Right here, where the monastery

Still lives fresh and large,

Where a small stone easily contained

The monk's great longing, Bella Akhmadulina wrote (Akhmadulina, 1997).

This non-accidental, moreover, inevitable location of his metaphysical being is the Mashuk mountain that acquires the attributes of a sacral topos. The Romanticist poet shall stay "At the birthplace of Beautiful Death, at Mashuk" (Velimir Khlebnikov). "Stay on the mountain!" is an incantational refrain in Bella Akhmadulina's poem Longing for Lermontov. The very name of this lyrical monologue refers the readers to Marina Tsvetaeva (cf: Longing for Motherland), her worldview and aesthetics, reminding the reader of the conceptual idea of Tsvetaeva's poetic mythology that the mountain is the poet's destined location, which he strained after and where he is rightfully resting after his death. Alternatively, the poet himself is seen as a mountain, a summit.

Bell tower of Ivan the Great transforms into Mashuk to the persona of Vladimir Mayakovsky's About That:

Arms like a cross,

I, like a cross,

at the peak,

I'm trying to balance

vigorously waving.

The night's getting thick,

I can't see a yard.

The Moon.

Underneath

There's the Mashuk, ice-covered (Mayakovsky, 1978).

A storm that accompanied the duel between Lermontov and Martynov is also mythologized, taking a number of symbolic meanings and functions. As a heavenly gleam and echo of the fatal shot, it heralds and pictures as if under a photographic flash, the return of the poet from antagonistic untrue earth to the heavenly space, from days into eternity:

To honor his death, heavy mountains banged away

The sky moaned his military honors with hundred lips,.

And flashes of storms were beautiful as the eyes of the murder victim (Khlebnikov, 2001).

The very death of the poet is moved by Velimir Khlebnikov into the category of natural phenomena and is doomed for eternal return and thus eternal life:

Until now, during a storm

highlanders say: "Those are Lermontov's eyes" (Khlebnikov, 2001).

The poem of P. Antokolsky The Storm in Pyatigorsk is in tune with the Khlebnikov's poem:

The storm broke out. Getting cool after the heat,  
Both Mashuk and Beshtau kneeled over the youth  
And dressed him in the icy greyness  
By breathing the dead with the freedom (Antokolsky, 1971-1973).

In Mayakovsky's *About That*, abuses from the crowd, his eternal enemy, whip the poet "harder than the rain, fiercer than the thunder" (Mayakovsky, 1978). D'Anthès and Martynov are ones of many, they are like "a hundred of runaways". With his typical hyperbolicism, Mayakovsky depicts the combat between the Poet and the Mob, one and all. The Romanticist conflict is the same, independent of time, in both its essence and spacial manifestation: not in a society, but against the background of earth and sky.

And from below:

– No!

You are out eternal enemy

We've already got one of you,–

A hussar!

<...>

From a hunderd steps

From a ten

From two,

point-blank–

bullet after bullet.

They stop only to breathe

And continue littering around with lead... (Mayakovsky, 1978).

Lermontov's biography in the poetry of the 20th century is like an electric art, a flash between two points, two duels.

Bella Akhmadulina in her essay *The Moment of his Seeing* writes: "There are four years between 1837 и 1841... Thus, he jumps into those four years to live the whole life... So: "He fell..." I know, it is an unjust predilection, to start with this moment and this line, but for me my orphan and hard love for him starts from there" (Akhmadulina, 1997).

Ye. Yevtushenko in his poem *Lermontov* says the following about the poet:

He is seeing his doom ahead,

Even before the Martynov's bullet,

With the one from D'Anthès in his chest, –

Ending with a declarative but true and commonly held poetic formula:

...Poets in Russia have been born

With D'Anthès' bullet in the chest" (Yevtushenko, 1975).

It is typical, that in poetic comprehension of Lermontov's biography there is no place for romantic plotlines. While poetic Pushkiniana traces many romantic lines of Pushkin's artistic biography, from

landmark (e.g., *Ballad of a Wonderful Moment* by P. Antokolsky) to more marginal ones (e.g., *Fragments from a small poem about Pushkin* by Bella Akhmadulina covers his affection with Karolina Sobańska). This lack of romantic theme in the collective poetic biography of Lermontov is characteristic from both the point of view of Romanticist aesthetics with its cult of personality, unlimited freedom and loneliness, and from the point of view of Romanticist poetics of monocentrism typical for the composition of the image system in writing.

At that, another Romanticism principle is implemented: characters in the works of the poet are perceived as the author's doubles. Deliberate separation that Lermontov demonstrated from his main character, Pechorin, is vastly ignored. Having believed Pushkin ("...Like if we cannot write about anyone but ourselves"), the public did not believe Lermontov ("Pechorin, gentlemen, is in fact a portrait, but not of one man only: he is a composite portrait, made up of all the vices which flourish, fullgrown, amongst the present generation. " (Lermontov, 1948, translated by J.H.Wisdom and Marr Murray) and stayed convinced that "the tragedy of the *Demon* is a gigantic projection into eternity of the tragedy of life of the poet himself" (Mayakovsky, 1978); that all his heroes are only "projection into eternity" of his own soul.

He shewed white as a lonely sail,  
Or rushed up the mountain as a fleet-footed steed,  
Or fighting a snow leopard and screaming, he rolled  
Into a mist-filled abyss.  
In the morning he revived,  
And walked through nearby Chechen mountain villages  
And exchanged daggers with a rebel leader (Antokolsky, 1971-1973).

Eyes are an absolute semantic dominant in a portrait of the Romanticist hero. Lermontov's eyes took in both his contemporaries and successors. Dmitry Merezhkovsky wrote, they said "Lermontov's eyes exerted magnetic influence... If he looked hard at somebody, such person involuntarily turned back. Isn't it the same as we now turn back to him involuntarily?" (Merezhkovsky, 1991).

Depending on the pathos of poetic address, the look of those turning back could be "acrimonious", "looking around like a leper" (Soviet poet Ye. Yevtushenko) or "heavy" (Russian émigré poet G. Ivanov), but one way or another, "the eyes of the murdered singer / till now live without death / in the mist of the mountains..., when the flying eagle is painting / the slow thick brows over the rock..." (Khlebnikov, 2001). This anthropomorphic landscape of Khlebnikov's is infinitely prolonged in the temporal perspective and in the cultural consciousness of the 20th century.

Ambivalence of Romanticist individualism lies in a combination of chosenness and proscription, being excluded. This very combination is the foundation for understanding Lermontov's personality. Lermontov's orphanhood, being felt as personal pain ("Not a son to his father and not a stepson to the century" (Antokolsky, 1971-1973) provokes a substitution plot: "extraction" of the poet from his era and transportation into present. In this way another ideological and plot-related dominating idea manifests itself: escape from the present into either the past, or the future. At that, two variants of assignment are established. The first is social and ideological, shaped in a relevant declarative style. "And the sky will be filled with stormy grumble, And agitating thunder will wake the sleepers. / Time? / Death? – The hell with them!

They were never with us. They aren't. And they won't", – this was written by P. Antokolsky (Antokolsky, 1971-1973). The second one is chamber, exclusively personal. B.Akhmadulina: "Stay on the mountain! Following your traces / I'll find you in the sun near Mtskheta. / I'll take you in with all my sight and keep, / And thus, you're saved, / Forever" (Akhmadulina, 1997). Selection of one of these variants by the poets correlates more with gender, than with ideology. For example, B.Akhmadulina decides to proceed with the level of a personal acquisition that only a woman is capable of. In her poem, Lermontov and a Child, there are two bearings and two births: that of her own child and that of her novella about Lermontov (Lermontov. <From the family archive of the R.s.>), in which the poet himself revived. Everything inside me has become confused. It was the same: Lermontov, or the one ascending from the darkness... (Akhmadulina, 1997).

Bulat Okudzhava most consistently implemented the Romanticist idea of escapism in his historical fantasy novel *Amateurs' Journey*. It is not Lermontov who is escaping in the novel (he died several years prior in the duel), but one of his seconds, count Myatlev. However, Lermonov is the cause and an unseen inspiration of this disobedient action: to run away from social life into the internal space of one's soul and personal life. The hero is forced to run away to the world's end (Lermontovian Caucasus) while unsuccessfully trying to keep his inner oppositional nature and personal integrity.

Romanticist Lermontov, thus, is equally congenial with both ideological agitational poetry (e.g., ballad "About the On the Death of the Poet Poem and Chief Gendarme" by Yevtushenko) and intelligentsia that is in dissent with the Soviet ideology. In both cases, that entrails the opposition to power characteristic of Romanticism (especially in its civic subtype), but Ye. Yevtushenko contrast the Tsarist era with the Soviet one, while B. Okudzhava sees a deep similarity between the two totalitarian systems.

Theomachy was among the attributes of Romanticism closest to the Soviet ideology. The poet who wrote such poems as *Demon* and *Gratitude* seemed the best candidate for the role of a theomachist hero, a subverter of both earthly and heavenly powers. For example, A.V. Lunacharsky in his 1926 article *Lermontov as a Revolutionary* highlighted two manifestations of the poet's rebelliousness: his opposition to Nikolai I reactionary politics and the rebellion of Devil against God. However, it turns out more complex than that. For example, in Yevtushenko's poem "About the On the Death of the Poet Poem and Chief Gendarme" it is the poet's trust in Divine judgement as an implementation of the highest justice makes Benkendorf an atheist:

The report was concocted in advance  
To send a certain M. Lermontov to the Caucasus,  
However, Benkendorf has lost his good sleep ever since.  
In all this nonsense of the royal court,  
Receptions, meetings, ceremonies,  
He heard "There is the Divine judgment..." in dismay.  
Thus, the department's head shook in fright,  
And turned into a secret atheist.  
He still attended all the prayers,  
While thinking in his office,  
That there is no God,  
And thus no Divine judgment (Yevtushenko, 1975).

Lermontov himself, however was not seen as an atheist, even during the times when “in every window you could see and atheist”. For example, in a poem Mikhail Lermontov written in 1964-68, Ya. Smelyakov creates an image of the poet that is buried “without a homily”, but rather under the cross “that Russia blessed itself with back then”. There is also a separated post scriptum quatrain:

He, this mighty Lermontov,  
A concentration of good and evil  
Like a luminous thundercloud  
Crossed the Russian sky (Smelyakov, 1979).

Good and Evil, Light and Darkness are the basic categories of the Christian ethics. However, Romanticism does not operate with ethical axiology on principle, substituting it with aesthetic criteria. Let us recall Lermontov's description of Demon in A Fairytale for Children:

A mighty image. Among other visions  
Alone, mute and proud he shone  
With such a magical and sweet beauty,  
That is induced fear... (Lermontov, 1948).

Thus, even when appropriating Lermontov, the Soviet literature does not try making him its hero. He is beyond the categories of Good and Evil, or more precise, above them. Closely echoing Ya. Smelyakov, Bella Akhmadulina writes about “the highest adolescent in the Universe”, who

Between the thunderclouds and the sun, between the Good and Evil  
Stood on top of a lonely mountain (Akhmadulina, 1997).

Ye. Yevtushenko creates an image of Lermontov’s “cell of his hermit soul”,  
Where, hidden in silence,  
A sister of your unkindness is breathing –  
An icon lampion of secret good (Yevtushenko, 1975).

Mysticism, characteristic of Romanticism, especially in its psychological subtype, also appeared in the Soviet myth of Lermontov.

For example, in Boris Pilnyak's novel *Shtoss with Life* (1928) centered around the last two years of the poet's life, its author's Romanticist aspirations to “clang with hearts of time” is embodied in imaginary dialogs with the poet seen in dreams; historical realia are combined with fantasy and personal emotional experience.

Imitation of memoir documentary nature combined with mysticism is also characteristic of Bella Akhmadulina's novella *Lermontov*. <From the family archive of the R.s.>. The sketchbook's author, a person of the 20th century, meets with a stranger at the location of Lermontov's duel; the stranger introduces himself as Aspid Nietovich Aploshkin, born in 96 (which is later revealed being not 1896, but rather 1796). An employee of the 3rd Section (secret police), who arrived to Caucasus to provide surveillance of the poet,

he followed his instructions and provoked a quarrel between Lermontov and Martynov. Later, having become enchanted with Lermontov's personality, he tries in vain to prevent the duel. Then he "named himself Aspid and started to appear in front of Martynov, which was a futile endeavor" (Lermontov, 1948). Having touched Lermontov's fate in a disastrous manner, he is destined to eternal life, eternal pangs of conscience and eternal longing after the poet.

The first Tale of Time written by P. Antokolsky and dedicated to Lermontov is a legend about the poet's Scottish ancestor, Thomas Learmont, meeting the Queen of Fairies and getting gifts of eternal youth, a harp and inheritable foresight. The gift, that in his descendant "revived with such a force that even the Queen of Fairies could not presuppose it" (Antokolsky, 1971-1973). In the tale Four Guests, Lermontov himself, shocked by Pushkin's death, sees a ghost that blesses him to fight and create. In the tale Demon, the Demon's ghost appears in turns in front of Lermontov, Gogol and Vrubel. In the last tale, titled Execution of a Murderer, Nicolai Martynov, being tortured by his consciousness, is praying in front of his saint, Nikolaos the Wonderworker. Suddenly it turns into an icon of "an irate olive-skinned warrior in a shiny armor and with a flaming sword, Michael Archangel" (Antokolsky, 1971-1973); he later dies without catharsis, seeing a ghost of Lermontov raising his duel pistol.

Romanticist in its content, the Soviet myth of Lermontov follows Romanticism in its artistic form as well, starting from the choice of genre (tale of P. Antokolsky, novella of B.Akhmadulina, ballad and prayer of Ye. Yevtushenko, sketchbook of B.Okudzhava, biographic novel of O. Forsh and B.Pilnyak, multiple poetic dedications) and ending with Romanticist style, with its expression, hyperbolicism, symbolism and a certain musical leitmotif, "sad and strange", "with a restless andante, with an unruly and frantic final, abruptly stopping at an acute subsided exclamation" (Okudzhava, 1980). However, a different stylistic trend, that we may conditionally title proletarian, was also strong. Having a task to modernize Lermontov and bring him closer to popular masses by means of poetic language, it nevertheless, damages neither Romanticist image of the poet, nor the Romanticist principle of style blending. Its origin and the most vivid example is V.Mayakovsky's poem Tamara and the Demon, ending in a symbolic descent of the heavenly poet into contemporary age:

Lermontov descends to us, despising the times.

The happy couple is shining!

I love to accept the guests. A bottle of wine here!

Pour a glass to the hussar, Tamara, darling! (Mayakovsky, 1978).

The results of the observations are far from unexpected. Romanticism as an artistic method is natural if the depicted subject is a Romanticist. At that, as noted by L.Ya. Ginzburg, a "Romanticist in his life". An adequacy of artistic form of a work to its content is a universal law of literature. M. Tsvetaeva formulated it in the following way: "a sea is written with a sea, granite with granite, each thing is written with its substance..." (Tsvetayeva, 1994).

On the other hand, there is a well-known consistent pattern in the history of literature: Romanticism, ceasing being a subject of creativity becomes an object of Realist reflection and revision, submitted to a hard-headed and often ruthless analysis. This includes Lermontov's "Romanticism in one's life" as well. For example, I. Turgenev, writing his memoirs in 1860s, was quite critical of Lermontov: "There were no

doubts that following the fashion of the period, he assumed a certain Byronic genre, with an admixture of other, much worse caprices and eccentricities. Thus, he paid for them dearly” (Guslyarov, 2003).

The history of reception of Lermontov's *Demon* in the artistic consciousness of the second half of the 20th century is a crescendo of critical mockery, culminating in appearance of *An Episode in the Life of a Neither Peacock Nor Crow*, a satiric miniature by Osipovich-Novodvorskyy, a narodnik writer. There, *Demon*'s unworthy progenies consisting of all the superfluous men gather around his deathbed. Only the Silver Age, the Russian *Fin de siècle*, revived Romanticist attitude towards Lermontov and his hero, admiring them, in words of Alexander Blok "impulsively, hot, silently and termulantly” (Blok, 1971).

The Soviets never tried to disprove Lermontov's *Demon*, despite their “concordance” being far from perfect, acknowledging:

There was an opinion:

"Ahead there is an abyss!"

However, the demon

Kept calling and calling.

The heavy shadow oppressed

and hindered...

It seems that there was some higher,

Alien truth in it (Vinokurov, 1976).

Lermontov was in great demand throughout the seventy years of the Soviets, but the ideological and emotional dominant of his reception changed through various periods. For example, Lermontov Encyclopedia notes: "If during the first post-Revolution years reception of Lermontov's image was painted largely with a heroic tone <...>, during the second half of the 20s it was sometimes paired with a feeling of disenchantment and tragedy..." (Lermontov Encyclopedia, 1999). On this basis, it is natural to assume that, for example, during the Great Patriotic War and in the works dedicated to it, another Lermontov is to be in demand, a Realist author of *Borodino*, *Two Giants*, *Valerik*, *Testament*. The one that sprouted the author of *The War and Peace* (his own confession), with his anti-Romanticist formula of “There is no greatness where there are no simplicity, good and truth”. However, in A.Fadeyev's novel *The Young Guard*, Uliana Gromova is reading her favorite lines of the poem *Demon* in a fascist prison cell, and those lines turn out to be in absolute concordance with the condition of the young characters. "These lines trembled in the hearts of the girls, like if speaking to them: "This is about you, about your unborn passions and buried hopes!" Remarkable is their discussion of the final episode where an angel carries away Tamara's soul. "Tosya Ivanikhina said:

– You see! Finally, the angel saved her. This is so good.

No! –said Ulya with the same blistering expression in her eyes that she had while reading. – No! I would rather fly away with the *Demon*... Just think of it: he rebelled against the God himself!" (Fadeyev, 1990).

The image of Lermontov's angel appears in an unusual concept in I. Utkin's poem *Quietness*, written in 1943. *Night. Intrenchment. "Blue abyss"*, lit with "orders of all constellations". And –

A pipe on the left flank:

Either a girl singing,  
Or a Lermontov's angel  
Continuing their flight.  
Then there is a shot –  
The sound of a string breaking.  
They are shooting at the song  
From the German side.  
The pipe on the left flank  
Ends abruptly into silence...  
As if the Lermontov's angel flying  
Accidentally dropped a soul (Utkin, 1975).

In K. Simonov's trilogy *The Alive and the Dead*, the soldiers are listening to Lermontov's Realist Testament and tremble from “an alarming power of these words that had too direct of a meaning for each of them, sitting next to each other...” (Simonov, 1989). At that, the person reciting the poem is adjunct Rybochkin, a youngish Romanticist fellow who tried hard to become front line volunteer.

We may see that in the war theme, despite attention to the Realist, patriotic perception of Lermontov's personality, its Romanticist dominant is not becoming weaker.

## 7. Conclusion

Generalizing the above, we may state that relentless craving that the Soviet literature showed for the person of Lermontov and its Romanticist perception were determined by multiple factors of various nature: a certain typological similarity between the Romanticism and the Socialist Realism (advocated by the proclaimer of the latter, M. Gorky); internal opposition to authority of a part of creative intelligentsia that formally were in the ranks of “Soviet writers”; powerful and “overcoming the barriers” (in the words of B.Pasternak) attractiveness of the Romanticist personality.

Love for Lermontov united such polar and incomparable names in the history of literature as A.Lunacharsky and N. Gumilev, M. Gorky and G. Ivanov, A.Fadeyev and B. Akhmadulina.

“He is not only approaching us, coming closer to us, but penetrates us. ...permeate our daily issues” (Merezhkovsky, 1991) – these are the words of Merezhkovsky in his essay titled *Lermontov. A Poet of Superhumanity*, meaning spiritual and religious quest of the Russian Symbolism. However, representatives of subsequent literary epochs could write their name under this quote independent of their ideological preferences. This is because you do not learn from “pure lyricists”, you “suffer because of them and for them” (Tsvetaeva, 1994), and “to understand Lermontov you shall love him. You shall love him like your mother, like your motherland! You shall love him more than you love your life.” (Astafyev, 2003).

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