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Учебник, указующий путь к русской классике¹

Аннотация: Статья представляет собой рецензию на учебник «Русская литература XIX века» в двух частях известного ученого-литературоведа, доктора филологических наук Юрия Владимировича Лебедева. Дается краткое описание издания, его структуры, указаны некоторые проблемы, поднятые автором, и основная концепция учебника, продолжающего целую линию книг автора, выпущенных для школьников и студентов. Ю. В. Лебедев подчеркивает уникальность пути русской литературы, особую миссию, которая всегда лежала на наших писателях, — быть духовными авторитетами, особенно в самые сложные для страны времена. В рассматриваемом учебнике представлены не только персоналии поэтов и писателей, его автор показывает целостный литературный процесс XIX в., тесно связанный с философской мыслью в России и жизнью общества. В своих учебниках Ю. В. Лебедев впервые в пореформенное время в России так ярко и точно говорит о возрождающей и преобладающей человека силе русской классической литературы.

Ключевые слова: русская литература XIX в., русская словесность, классическая литература, личность, национальное своеобразие, православные ценности, народ, историзм, общественная жизнь.

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Book Review

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A Textbook Pointing the Way to the Russian Classics¹

Abstract: The article is a review of the textbook in two parts under the title “Russian literature of the 19th century” by the well-known literary scholar Doctor of Philology Yuri Vladimirovich Lebedev. A brief description of the publication, its structure, some of the problems raised by the author, and the basic concept of the textbook continuing the whole line of the author’s books published for schoolchildren and students are given. Yu. V. Lebedev emphasizes the uniqueness of the path of Russian literature, a special mission that has always been with our writers — to be spiritual authorities, especially in the most difficult times of our country. In this textbook presents not only the personalities of poets and writers. The author of the textbook also shows the integral literary process of the 19th century closely connected with philosophical thought in Russia and the life of society. In his textbooks Yu. V. Lebedev for the first time in the post-reform period in Russia speaks so vividly and accurately about the reviving and transforming power of Russian classical literature.

Keywords: Russian literature of the 19th century, Russian literature, classical literature, personality, national identity, Orthodox values, people, historicism, social life.

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¹ Review of the book: *Lebedev, Yu. V. Russian Literature of the 19th century: A course of lectures for a bachelor of theology*. In 2 volumes, scientific. ed. priest Georgy Andrianov. Moscow, Church-wide postgraduate and doctoral studies of Saints Equal to the Apostles Cyril and Methodius, Publishing House “Poznanie”, 2020. (In Russ.)

2020 year has passed. It was a difficult year for Russia and the whole world when humanity faced with a new viral infection forcing many people to reconsider their attitude to the environment, to reassess their values. We entered the year 2021 with the same deeds and problems, we are still sometimes overcome by the momentary various vanities, we are still worried about unsolvable questions. Science has not yet been able to find an answer to these questions... Maybe science will never find it, but Russian classical literature surprisingly combined the image of the present, the illustration of reality with the striving for an uplifting and spiritualizing ideal knows the answers to these questions.

Amazingly that all of humanity still does not see these lessons of the Russian classics or does not want to see and perhaps cannot see because of its depravity, because of its superficial and one-sided view. I would compare Russian classical literature with a huge temple built on the holy Russian land. And it turns out that Russian classical literature needs servants — those people who would convey its ideas to humanity, become a lamp, a guide to this amazing world which keeps so much simplicity, kindness and truth and at the same time of course beauty and blossoming complexity.

I consider that one of the talented and gifted servants of this temple is Doctor of Philological sciences, Honored Scientist of the Russian Federation, a great scientist known not only in Russia, but also abroad, a wonderful person Yuri Vladimirovich Lebedev. He is the author of many textbooks, teaching aids on Russian literature for schools and universities. All of them have gone through dozens of editions and recommended by the highest expert authorities. Moreover, all of them are recognized and demanded among literature teachers. Yuri Vladimirovich is the head of a large scientific school. He has always taught and continues to teach his students to see life properly, try to look at it as Russian classics saw it in the best moments of their creative path. Of course, this is a view from the perspective of eternity: it does not reject the human, does not lower the values of this sinful world

but tearing away the earthly life in its divine primordial form not spoiled by sinful thoughts and spiritual illnesses.

More than one generation of philologists was formed on the books and textbooks of Yu. V. Lebedev, but an even more important mission of this great scientist seems to us that he is writing for young people, for those who are entering life. We are talking now about the fact that Yuri Vladimirovich manages to work both on scientific research that is significant in the academic environment and on textbooks. Yuri Vladimirovich combines rare gift of a scientist and a teacher freely addressing any audience: to the academic environment, to students, to schoolchildren and to all lovers of Russian words.

In 2020 a wonderful textbook for students of theological specialties in two parts by Yu. V. Lebedev was published. It is an impressive and grandiose work revealing the main features of Russian classical literature and its national identity. It is noteworthy that the textbook opens with a quote from N. V. Gogol and his appeal to young people: “Take with you in the way leaving soft youthful years in severe brutalizing courage, take with you all human movements, do not leave them on the road because will not pick it up later!” [Lebedev: 1, 7]. Following the classic Yuri Vladimirovich speaks about the importance of educating the younger generation, preserving the sensitivity that is inherent in youth and is so often lost later. But this deep and thoughtful beginning we also see another meaning: the whole textbook of Yuri Vladimirovich is a proof of the fact that a man who understands and loves Russian classical literature and lives its precepts even in later years will be young at heart, not indifferent, open to the world and its bright joy. Not unbridled fun, but joy and admiration for the correctly and wisely arranged the Divine world.

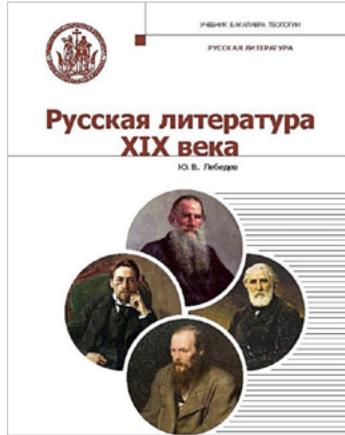
Despite the fact that we are separated from our classics of the 19th century on average by more than one and a half centuries Russian literature with all its deep content, the multitude philosophical problems it raises seems to the reader as alive and young and more relevant than ever. Yu. V. Lebedev says about it in the last paragraph of the textbook, which perfectly rhymes with its beginning: “The Lessons of Russian classical literature have not yet been learned or even fully understood, we are still making our way through to understand them passing through the bitter experience of historical upheavals of 20th century. And in this sense Russian classics are still ahead of us not behind us” [Lebedev: 2, 604].

The textbook consists of two large and heavy volumes or books beautifully published. Each of them with over 600 hardcover pages. There are four portraits of classics presented in small circles on the cover of each of the books. Further black and white portraits of writers (or reproductions, illustrations) precede each of the chapters.



Two volumes of the textbook contain 39 voluminous and informative chapters as well as an introduction and conclusion. The introduction sets a special tone for the textbook. The author of the textbook shows from the first lines that Russian classical literature cannot be entertainment and that reading it is an intense spiritual work. Yu. V. Lebedev calls readers to this work, which can open the way for the reader to the values and shrines of Russian classics. More precisely, he does not even call he takes the reader by the hand and leads him to the temple of Russian literature. Yuri Vladimirovich reveals the special attitude of Russian artists to the word, their high desire to transform the world around them. 39 chapters of the textbook are devoted to Russian writers and poets of the 18th and mainly 19th centuries. There are also separate generalizing chapters in the edition — “The Poets of the Pushkin Period,” “Russian literature of the 1840–1860s,” “Russian criticism of the 1850s–60s,” “Russian literature and social movement of the 1870s–1890s.” These chapters convey the features of the literary process of a particular period, the alignment of social forces in Russia, the originality of the literary critical views of various representatives of Russian criticism. In the end of the textbook we see

profound conclusions based on the study of different artistic worlds of Russian writers and poets. Yuri Vladimirovich says that Russian literature for the first time approved the idea of a new man and a new humanity: for our writers personal life separated from the people is only a miserable existence.



Among 39 chapters there are mostly topics devoted personalities — Russian writers and poets from N. M. Karamzin, V. A. Zhukovsky, K. N. Batiushkov to L. N. Tolstoy, A. P. Chekhov, G. Korolenko. Each of the 39 chapters of the textbook is a kind of small monographic research telling about the features of talent that or that writer, his course of life, formation, major milestones creativity, key works and images. Each chapter of the textbook is distinguished by the extraordinary depth of formulation of problems and at the same time the simplicity of their coverage. The knowledgeable reader can see what a tremendous amount of work has done by scientist in writing this text in a form accessible to young readers.

However, it would be a great mistake to think that this wonderful publication is intended only for students studying in the field of “Theology.” In our opinion, it is now the best textbook on Russian classical literature that can be consulted by people of all ages. The book that can help the modern reader to answer many problematic questions, choose the right path and join the values kept by the Russian people for centuries.

Yu. V. Lebedev shows that despite all the differences in the path of Russian writers they all looked at the world and man in the same way since this was

a view from the position of Orthodox-Christian culture rejecting all selfish manifestations. The author shows a special universalism characteristic of the classics of Russian literature, the peculiarities of the worldview of different writers, their spirituality. Yu. V. Lebedev notes both the strengths of artistic creativity and the human weaknesses of Russian artists, but at the same time pays the reader's attention to the path of their spiritual growth and formation that is reflected precisely in literary works.

The author of the textbook shows through numerous examples that all Russian poets and writers saw in artistic creativity not self-expression, but service. To whom? First of all to our neighbors, then to Russia, to all humanity and, of course, to God. "When carefully reading "Boris Godunov," it is difficult to get rid of the feeling that in addition to the visible active heroes of the tragedy there is another hero invisible, not personalized, but also acting constantly giving himself felt. Moreover, this invisible hero is precisely the supreme arbiter..." [Lebedev: 1, 227]. Based on the analysis of a number of masterpieces of Russian literature of the 19th century, Yu.V. Lebedev states that the connection of the writer with the religious shrine of his people is at the genetic level. It manifests itself not only in *what* the writer portrays at work, but also in *how* he sees the world. In other words, this connection is visible in the peculiarities of the *poetics* of Russian classical literature.

A great attention in his textbook Yu. V. Lebedev pays to the language of works. At the beginning of the first chapter of the first part of the textbook the author turned to the question of inheritance of Russian secular literature of the precepts of the Old Russian bookishness that was subordinate to educational and educational goals. The uniqueness of the path of our literature is in the fact that its secular nature according to Yuri Vladimirovich did not deprive the writer's work of its "religious aura".

Yu. V. Lebedev proves that sophisticated and complex hierarchy of values that organizes the Russian literary language is directly connected with the Word of Russian liturgical books and Orthodox Liturgy. Russian language naturally absorbed its high Spirit-bearing fundamental basis.

In turn, the language of the textbook corresponds to the high level indicated by Russian classics. All works of Yuri Vladimirovich are distinguished by the lightness of the style, clarity, consistency, logic, accuracy. It is worth noting how harmonious and evidence-based are all the quotes given by the author in the textbook. As we read the work, we get the impression that not a single line from the text can be either subtracted or added.

For example, the author of the textbook describes the positions of the various representatives of the populist and revolutionary movements comparing them with each other, — and the reader gets the whole picture illustrating the moderate and extreme representatives of populism. The author of the textbook shows us appeal of P. L. Lavrov to Russian intelligentsia, who set his contemporaries a question about the price of progress; the positive side of the populist ideology of N. K. Michalowskii; social position of M. A. Bakunin, who considered “the only fruitful and creative view of the struggle for liberation revolt, anarchist revolution” and the views of P. N. Tkachev, who saw the task of the revolution in the seizure of state power [Lebedev: 2, 59–60]. The author of the textbooks clearly, scrupulously and step by step examines the positions of public figures without what the reader will not be able to understand many of the heroes of the novels created by the writers in the 1870s–1880s. Everything here is very clear: dates, events, quotes, positions, but the textbook of Yuri Vladimirovich is unthinkable without poetry, without vivid comparisons that support thoughts and valuable observations. In order to the reader can once again appreciate and understand the power of spiritual love of peasant Darya to her deceased husband Proclus in the poem “Frost, Red Nose,” Yu. V. Lebedev compares cry of Andromache lost Hector and enumerating the troubles waiting for her in the “Iliad” of Homer and the cry of the Christian Yaroslavna crying not for herself but suffering for her husband. In the best works of Russian classics Yuri Vladimirovich emphasizes the amazing spiritual strength of the Russian people, their ability to forget about themselves in difficult times, to sacrifice personal ones in the name of the people and the happiness of the country.

All Russian writers and poets felt a special responsibility for the fate of the country. It is very interesting how skillfully and subtly the author of the textbook isolates the main motives of different periods of the creativity of this or that writer showing moments of joy, fascination and doubts that replace one another. Yu. V. Lebedev states that the questions of artistic skill for many classics were secondary since on the first plan was not the idea of recognizing the people, but the idea of helping the people, transforming life.

Two volumes of “Russian Literature of the 19th century” by Yu. V. Lebedev especially can be call a textbook remembering the main science that everyone should learn — the science of life, attitude to others. Yuri Vladimirovich teaches the younger generation to live according to the precepts of the classics who in their artistic images reflected the preserved Orthodox model

of life for centuries. Any change in this world as the author of the books shows must begin with the transformation of the human personality: there is no need to aim for grandiose changes it is worth starting with oneself.

It does not mean that Russian writers thought exclusively on the scale of a particular person. From chapter to chapter Yu. V. Lebedev reveals their deep philosophy of history showing an understanding of the Christian precepts: “Dostoevsky’s Christian ideal denies the concept of the collapse and failure of history. He does not accept the socialist utopia of an “earthly paradise.” In this utopia progress is made only in the social sphere and does not imply any ontological improvement of the world and man. For Dostoevsky, the Christian ideal presupposes the transformation of the whole earth and the entire nature of man” [Lebedev: 2, 368].

The textbook is not burdened with numerous references. In our opinion, it is one of the advantage of the publication. At the end of each chapter there are questions. In rare textbooks these tasks for testing students are formulated with such clarity and thoughtfulness, intelligibility. The reader taking up the book of Yu. V. Lebedev and starting to study it, without a doubt, will understand the author’s great love not only for Russian literature but also to all compatriots and to all the people whom the author says with feeling about the truth of life, love, kindness boldly condemning indifference that is so much now in our lives.

Yu. V. Lebedev strives for the correct understanding of the precepts of the Russian classics that still keep many secrets. He like many other authors of works worries about a superficial understanding of literature. For example, in the textbook he says about the reasons of Griboyedov’s painful mood despite the fact that his “Woe from Wit” was recognized, and the author got the opportunity to shine in the glory: “The reasons of deep dissatisfaction of Griboyedov were in another. Apparently, he was not satisfied with the “ease” of perception of the comedy that does not penetrate into the depth of the content, into the seriousness of the problems that were touched upon in “Woe from Wit” [Lebedev: 1, 165].

The painstaking work of Yu. V. Lebedev is amazing: the textbook of one researcher is devoted to a whole large course on the history of Russian literature of the 19th century. And the most important advantage of this book lies in the fact that after treatment to it the reader has a need to take a volume of A.S. Pushkin and L. N. Tolstoy (or any other writer) and start to read and make sure that the words of Yu. V. Lebedev said him about Russian classical literature are true.

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