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FORMATION OF MODERN ENGLISH POETRY IN THE LATE XIX AND EARLY XX CENTURIES

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Annotation.

English poetry of the late XIX and early XX century endured many changes not only in its form and traditions but also in its values, ideas and images. In this work we tried to analyze those turning points for English poetry, to discuss the main shifts of the period, commonly called the "Anglo-American Poetic Revolution." Prominent authors of the period, their role and contribution into the formation of new, modern poetry are discussed.

Key words:

Poetic revolution, Victorian poetry, romantic tradition, Georgian poets, "trench poets", "romantic revival", modern poetry, younger generation.

Introduction

We refer to the period of English poetry when the XIX century ended and the XX century began. This period is often called the "poetic revolution" as there were changes that largely determined its development for modern English poetry. Moreover, the changes consist not only in the emergence of new poetry but also in the revision of the attitude towards the poetic heritage. The desire to break with the dominant tradition was accompanied by the search for another tradition that could become the basis for new poetry.

The Victorian tradition was dominant in the early XX century. Victorian poetry was romantic in nature. She inherited her traits from poets such as Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Keats, and Shelley. However, for more than a hundred years, the rich soil of the English romantic tradition was exhausted. The language of old poetry fell into disrepair, despite the attempts of later Victorians - Kipling, Georgian poets - to abandon some clichés, archaisms, to enrich rhyme.

Besides, the crisis of the romantic tradition was not only about the predictability of poetic language. Another era was approaching. Ideas and values, images and categories that lay in the basis of the old poetry, did not correspond to the new attitude.

Main part

It cannot be said that the poems of such poets as Walter de la Mar, Edward Thompson, Rupert Brooke or Alfred Edward Housman are bad. It is real, full-fledged poetry. But the XX century did not begin for these completely original poets. The two most significant major poets of the 1900s, Thomas Hardy and W.B. Yeats, influenced the further development of English poetry in the XX century. But at that time the influence of Victorian poetry was still too strong.

The war that shook England, in a sense, brought English poetry back to real life: "When the war came to England in 1914, poetry was among the first volunteers." [1] The young poets who found themselves in the trenches were exposed to a new reality, the reality

of universal carnage instead of rural idyll. So poetry, still old, Victorian in form, was filled with new content. "Poetry is in pity," writes Wilfred Owen, who died a week before the truce. [1]

However, it was not the "trench poets" who created the new English poetry. Once again, the need for change was caused primarily by a change in attitude, the emergence of new ideas and images. "The need to reject the usual, insipid, harmless poetry of that time served as the strongest motive and incentive that you can imagine." [1, 54] Over time, the romantic belief in nature as a divine revelation, as a temple, as the ideal of divine harmony was lost. Attempts to comprehend the divine through the involvement of its secrets resulted in doubts about the existence of such a secret.

Already in Tennyson, even in moments of despair, nature appears as an "empty echo". [2, 68] And Matthew Arnold in the famous "Beach of Dover" writes that in the world that seems to us a magical country, there is neither "joy, nor love, no light, no confidence, no peace, no consolation". Along with the belief in the meaningfulness of the world, mimesis, "rhetorical imitation of the world as ideal proportionality" also disappears. [2, 72] The cult of nature among the early romantics was replaced by the cult of art, turned into aestheticism among many of the later Victorian poets.

Discussions

Do not forget that nature in the English romantic tradition was not only an aesthetic category but also a kind of "supplier" of images, a way of revealing lyrical experience. Both early romantics and Victorian poets often think in images of nature, landscape is correlated with the state of mind, nature in a lyric poem is the "reflection" of experience. Thomas Hardy very often uses a rural landscape in his poems, but Hardy's nature only emphasizes the gloomy determinism, the poet's despair, representing a kind of landscape of the soul.

Besides, the role of poetry itself was changing. John Keith saw the purpose of poetry as "uplifting the thoughts of people," and Matthew Arnold suggested that poetry could become a *magister vitae*, a "teacher of life". Victorians wrote for the general public, trying to educate their taste by offering poetry as their ideal or denouncing the mediocrity and commercialism of this public. [4, 89]

However, by the beginning of the XX century, against the background of the "uprising of the masses", the futility of these attempts becomes obvious. A. Thwaite, an authoritative scholar of English poetry, writes of this period: "It became difficult to be simple: it is almost impossible for a poet to find confidence or desire to lead, to set rules or to give prescriptions." As a result, the most prominent English poet W.H. Auden states: "Poetry makes nothing happen", "poetry changes nothing," and the famous work of Frank Raymond Leavis, dedicated to English poetry of the early XX century, begins with the words that "in the modern world, the importance of poetry is not great". [4, 109]

Although these are figures for mainstream Victorianism, they do not in any way allow us to speak of a break with Victorianism. In addition, in the XX century, the "last romantic" Yeats lived, worked, and had a powerful influence. Close to Pound's poetic laboratory, he was able to achieve a unique synthesis of romantic tradition and innovation in the field of the form. By adopting the technical innovations of the Imagists, by updating the language, Yeats did not share the views of Thomas Ernest Hulme or Eliot.

Having lost its former vocation "to teach entertaining", poetry became an experimental space for the intellectual elite, a kind of "glass bead game" that presupposes a serious erudition. Poetry became not popular. Moreover, it became "antipopular."

Trying to hinder the linear development of the tradition, the poets of the 1910s - 1920s provoked a search for an alternative. If the development of English poetry of the XIX century

can be still imagined as progressive, then at the beginning of the XX century the picture complicates as much as possible. Eliot, speaking of tradition as "one time series", voices an attempt at a synchronous, paradigmatic understanding of tradition as a certain aggregate, in contrast to the diachronic view, where tradition is, first of all, literally "traditio", transmission in time. [5, 16] If the late Victorian poets "belonged to the era," then in the new poetry the eras already belong to the poet. An attempt to find a connection between all the assets of human culture, to tie them together, the desire not only to find harmony in a distant and someone else's word, but to "invite" it into a new text is a symptom of the XX century. Mythologization, which is often spoken of in connection with modernism, also "borders" on the search for tradition. [2, 63]

Conclusion

As a result, the XX century in English poetry became the century of "anachronisms" - it is enough to recall the unexpected appearance on the forefront of modern poetry by the Victorian J.M. Hopkins, awakening interest in the poetry of metaphysicians. This is largely the merit of Pound, Eliot and their anti-romantic "campaign" - claiming that romanticism has exhausted its possibilities both ideologically and from the point of view of poetics. The new poets instead proposed to "transplant" modern poetry on another soil.

However, it would be a great mistake to believe that the "Poetic Revolution" did away with the Victorian legacy once and for all, given that English poetry is often divided into "before" and "after" Pound, and Eliot. Let's not forget that the XIX century was five generations of English romanticism, and this era possessed the most powerful inertia. Both Georgians and trench poets write within this tradition. In the 1920s, the influence of this poetry is still strong, and its popularity is great. At the same time, the echoes of Victorianism in the XX century can be very different - and not necessarily from the pen of epigones. Hardy and Yeats are recognized as the most influential figures for poets of the XX century from Auden to F. Larkin and C. Heaney. Hopkins provided more than one generation of new poets with the technique of verse.

So the essence of the "romantic revival", which is spoken of in XX century English poetry, is not that romanticism was forgotten, but that a new, younger generation of poets managed to rethink the romantic tradition already in the context of the XX century.

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