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M.M. Bakhtin and the Soviet literary establishment: the end of a myth

The current state of Bakhtin studies poses before researchers a large number of very different questions - from global to specific. With all the diversity of views on M.M. Bakhtin and his legacy, approaches and interpretations, the researchers of Bakhtin's creativity are unanimous in one thing - in the understanding that by today there have been several images of Bakhtin: what we can conditionally call "real or historical Bakhtin", "ideal Bakhtin", and, of course, "the 21st century Bakhtin".

The idea of the 21st century Bakhtin or Bakhtin for the 21st century, which has been sounding more and more clearly in recent years, prompts us to ask new questions and to comprehend the old, still unresolved problems of Bakhtin studies in a new way.

In my opinion, one of the most important tasks facing Bakhtin studies is rereading Bakhtin. In this case rereading implies not just one more reading of Bakhtin's texts from his collected works or a small number of other sources (here I mean, first of all, *the Bakhtin Circle* texts but that which for some reason was not included in the collected works), but a new reading-interpretation, complementing and clarifying what was done in the brilliant commentary to the seven-volume edition.

Two examples can easily confirm the validity of this idea. First of all, I will refer to Professor Vitaly Makhlin, who repeated more than once that Bakhtin "has not yet been read and will not be read soon". Alongside I will put a wonderful phrase by Professors E. Jane White and Michael A. Peters about the need to "reading Bakhtin educationally", which provokes an understandable series of productive developments from the point of view of linguistics, psychology, sociology, semiotics, history, etc. Thus, we can say that the understanding of the need for a new reading of Bakhtin is present throughout the entire space of Bakhtin studies from Russia to Australia and New Zealand.

I would like to emphasize that the new reading of Bakhtin as the basis for his understanding includes not only reading Bakhtin's texts, or, more precisely, not only reading Bakhtin's texts as texts. It can be proved by a successful project of Svetlana Dubrovskaya, the Questionnaire of the *Bakhtinsky Bulletin*, which coincides with the 125th anniversary of Bakhtin, the Bakhtinological community has an understanding of the urgent development of biography of the thinker from academic point of view.

Despite the tremendous work and undoubted achievements in this area of Michael Holqvist and Katharina Clark, Viktor Duvakin, Semyon and Larisa Konkin, Nikolai Pankov and Nikolai Nikolaev, this task is still not fully resolved and remains relevant. I note that every year it becomes more and more important, because, unlike the Bakhtinists of the older generation, younger researchers in Russia and abroad have difficulty in understanding the realities of Soviet life, the conditions of Bakhtin's existence in Russia in revolutionary and post-revolutionary, Stalinist, Khrushchev and Brezhnev times, the conditions of academic, cultural and pedagogical life of those years, etc.

If most of the myths of those Bakhtin biographies which have already been published arose from a simple ignorance of specific circumstances, the absence of documents or Bakhtin's own myth-making and his circle or their opponents, today it is also the lack of understanding of the modern generation about the life in that epoch, a lack of understanding of the historical and political conditioning of certain events of Bakhtin's biography and, as a result, the generation of biographical ideas that have nothing to do with real biographical facts and the time of Bakhtin's life.

The main goal of my presentation is to show the reasons for the emergence of the myth about Bakhtin, the "outcast" of Soviet literary criticism:

- based on the newly discovered documents to show the real place of Bakhtin in literary life, including the official life of Leningrad in the 1920s - early 1930s, in the academic and educational space of Saransk and Moscow in the mid-1930s - early 1970s;

- to outline his relationship with the leading representatives of Soviet literary criticism of both the older generation (conditional peers of Bakhtin) and the middle and younger generations and Bakhtin's influence on the latter;

- to identify the forms and ways of integrating Bakhtin and his ideas into Soviet literary theory at the turn of the 1960s – 1970s, by analyzing the activities of Vadim Kozhinov and Sergei Bocharov and their associates in restoring the name of Bakhtin in Russian humanities. Through their efforts, Bakhtin appears in the consciousness of the literary community not only as the author of works about Dostoevsky and Rabelais, but also as a leading theorist of the novel.