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PROBLEMS

OF NEW HERO IN M. GORKY'S NARRATIVES "FOMA GORDEYEV"
AND "LOS TRES"

PROBLEMAS DEL NUEVO HÉROE EN LAS NARRATIVAS DE M. GORKY "FOMA GORDEYEV" Y "LOS TRES"

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ABSTRACT: This article analyzes the figure of the new hero in the novels "Foma Godeyev" and "Los tres" by M. Gorky. These works offer a rich and diverse picture ABSTRACT of Russian life and the vision of social and environmental problems from the point of view of the hero. From the analysis of texts carried out, it can be seen the reflection of the author's criticisms of the contradictions of the time, being the precursor of later writers.

Keywords: Maxim Gorky, searches of the hero, Russian literature.

RESUMEN: Este artículo analiza la figura del nuevo héroe en las novelas "Foma Godeyev" y "Los tres" de M. Gorky. Estas obras ofrecen una imagen rica y diversa de la vida rusa y la visión de los problemas sociales y ambientales desde la visión del héroe. Del análisis de textos realizado, se puede ver el reflejo de las críticas del autor a las contradicciones de la época, siendo precursor de escritores posteriores.

Palabras clave: Maxim Gorky, búsquedas del héroe, literatura rusa.

INTRODUCTION

In this article, a qualitative investigation of the new nuances of the figure of the hero is carried out from the novels of M. Gorky. From Gorky's narrative, "Foma Gordeyev" (1899) starts a new stage of his search for hero. Gorky (1955), in his letter to S. Dorovatovski expressed the idea of his narrative, in which he wrote about his desire to depict "*wide meaningful picture of contemporaneity*" on the ground of a man "*who must be energetic, healthy man, looking for a job fitting to his power, looking for a space for his energy*" (pp. 62-63). Such a hero must be Foma Gordeyev, a new ruler from merchant class who was thought to be a Titan, shattering the worldwide injustice. However, he did not appear typical for his estate and for his time. He alone rose against the whole world and was defeated because the young bourgeoisie in the person of merchant class was flourishing and was stronger than the person fighting alone was. Foma had neither support nor accomplice; even he had no firm ground under his feet, nor practical, life ideal in his soul. He had only hatred in his heart against all the evil of the merchant class world.

Moreover, Foma Gordeyev is a new type of hero in the creation of M. Gorky. Foma is the first hero of Gorky who rose not against a separately taken person, as for example, Aristid Kuvald, directing all his hatred against the merchant Petunnikov, or Kain ("Kain and Artyom") rising against his insulters, but against the completely mercantile world, against the whole system. However, this is another matter of things, that he was alone and powerless in his protest, and he had no idea of what to begin with, even he did not think to begin a certain systematic fight against the hated world. Nevertheless, the good point in him was that he did not perceive that world which was founded on injustice and mysteries, dirty crimes, the world to which he himself belonged.

Vice of the world, as a rule, first are seen by the leaders and humane representatives of the same world, the thing that happened with the hostility of the royal world, who in literature were called "unnecessary people". Protest of both of the "unnecessary people" and Foma derives not from the social, objects of daily life, but it derives from the morel enmity of this world. As V. A. Keldish noted, "*Gorky and authors before Russian revolution wrote about the resistance of environment, forestlands as incompatible antagonism between the environment and the inner world of the person, between him and his nature*" (Keldysh, 1971, p.435). Just this "nature of Foma Gordeyev could not put up with the fact, what happened around him, in his native merchant class world. That is why whatever they spoke or wrote against Foma Gordeyev, against his weakness and senselessness of his fight, in spite of all this, he was a new

hero, he was the beginner of the fight against all the system of unjust life. The following heroes of Gorky will know about the object and way of their fight and in their fight, they will go further than Foma Gordeyev.

The publication and appearance of the narrative "Foma Gordeyev" aroused great interest in the periodical press, and there appeared many critical reviews mainly against the main hero of the narrative. For example, N. Kaspiyskiy saw in Foma Gordeyev "*a type of pure Russian hooligan*", in vain surrounded by Gorky "*the eagle of self belonging pure Russian titans*" (Petrova, 1968, p.432). Another critic A. I. Bogdanovich approaching more favorably to the protest of Foma, noted that "*this is the personification of protest of the best power of human being against the reigning banality and lulling silence of standstill life*". (Petrova, 1968, p.432)

The critic of "Moscovskiy vedomostey" A. Basargin generally considered that Foma does not deserve to be called as the hero of the narrative, it might be better to name the narrative as "Yakov Mayakin". In the face of antipode Foma, critic saw Yakov Mayakin as typical representative of merchant class having woken "*hitherto as if dreaming self-consciousness of basically, sought for Russian merchant class*" (Petrova, 1968, p.433). After all enmity to the new hero of Gorky came from M. Chunosova, who called Foma as "*pitiful monster of mankind*". (Petrova, 1968, p.433).

In the soviet literature, study of the character of Foma was not highly valued either. It paid more attention to the episodically characters of workers, seeing in them inclination to future hero-fighters of Gorky and on the character of the main hero it was noted as "*romantic illusion of Foma is diluted with the prose of bourgeois reality*" (Mikhailovsky & Tager, 1969, p.42). Ovcharenko (1956); focuses his attention on the main hero, but on the characters of workers, who create before everything ground, but not the main plan of the novel. "*In the quality of positive powers, he notes, determining fate of the country, fate of each person, in the narrative by the character of Foma working people are confirmed*". (p.110).

DEVELOPMENT

The authors of "Russian Literature of the XX century" are true in mentioning that the narrative "Foma Gordeyev" in the first plan, the moral problem has been put forth.

The writer points out that "*true humanistic beginning contradicts hypocrisy, false and obviously cynical moral of capitalists*" (Enlightenmen, 1985, p. 44)

Character and fight of Foma in reality is determined morally but not socially. His fight against the world of merchant

class is conditioned not by life, by social necessity as a fight for existence but as a fight conditioned by moral requirements of soul and humane nature of hero. The hero as a human being is morally higher will not accept non-humanistic and criminal principles with which merchants live. The defeat of Foma lies just in this, just in this lies his tragedy, being a merchant, he rises against his own class. The representative of the merchant class itself refuses merchant class world within itself. That is why such a fight is doomed to failure. This is the defeat of morals, purely humane principles and values before the iron principles of merchant class world, the principle that is determined by Yakov Mayakin like this: *“the life of brother Foma is introduced very simply: either all is in dirt or lies in dirt.”* (Gorky, 1963, p. 89)

Why Gorky compared the world of merchants with its own representative, but not with the representative of any other estate, let us say, with intelligentsia or with lower middle class? It seems he did this for the reason that the writer had to point out not much of class, social fight, but he had to point out more moral damage and not fitfulness of merchant class. Class enemy is different from the moral enemy: merchant class with its principles is hostile not only to the working people, but also to the whole humankind, to the completely sound beginning. In the narrative “Foma Gordeyev, Gorky did not fully reveal the class determination of character and fight of his positive hero.

Different from his father Ignat Gordeyev who is a man of strong will seems to be of double nature, suspecting in the fact that he lives a correct life. In the formulation of his character there is on one hand, his father and his enterprise and on the other hand his aunt Anfisa and her tales, which made their influences. World of tales of Anfisa and real world of Ignat created turmoil and disharmony in the soul of young Foma. Whatever Foma did the work in his merchant enterprises and in his relations to women – in all he could remain pure pragmatic and merchant but in his activity and mutual relations with people, moral feelings are mixed up with. When Mayakin teaches him, how simply and roughly, it is necessary to treat woman, Foma tells him: *“Heart – a person possesses a heart!”* (Gorky, 1963, 94). The young man with his inexperienced mind searches for the sense of life, but cannot find it, for which he is angry with people and with him-himself, considering them and himself unnecessary to society. The questions how to live, what is the sense of life and what the sense of human life is torture him. *“River flows for the reason that people sail on it – he says, - a tree grows for the use of people, a dog-guards the house... All in life can be justified! But people – as cockroaches are quite unnecessary*

on the earth... All is for them but what are they for? In what is their justification?” (Gorky, 1963, p.146)

Tragedy of Foma lies in the fact that he cannot make out the complicated problems of life, find his place and his appointment in it. Life seems to him to be just cruel and ruthless process. It is as a mill, but people are as corns, dropping under millstone they turn to flour. In this elusive process, called life, Foma cannot make out the notion, which is called the sense of life. Management, money, trading etc., are for Foma a heavy burden from which he wants to emancipate. Foma somehow very early and very quickly gets upset in his life and his estate.

It is interesting to know why Gorky in the quality of such a merchant chose the man, being not experienced in the problems of living, even an unlearned man, not having read any book on merchant business. It is obvious that Gorky wanted to show that moral look of his hero was formulated not on the basis of clear bookish pieces of knowledge, modern theories, but on the basis of just the real life itself and natural inclinations of human nature.

Foma's soul is not distorted and is not spoiled by some strangers, by bookish, scientific impacts. His soul preserved its infantile purity and the born with him kindness, and he will not accept the life as it is, the things, which happen around him.

Foma's protest against the merchants and against the merchant world bears roughly spontaneous character and is expressed in rough critic and square curses. It is true, that one of the merchants, “a grey-haired old man” addressing to the merchants says: *“It is from the honor of word! It is nonsense! It is necessary to endure... prophetic accusation... they are sinful, aren't they...? Isn't it necessary to tell the truth, we are very, very.”* (Gorky, 1963, p.217] However, these “prophetic accusations” of Foma are expressed in the form of severe hatred to these double – faced and dangerous merchants. Alongside the honor in Foma spoke a great power and courage to tell them in the face all their falsehood. He prophited them not on the social matter of things, not the humanistic matter of things but Godly punishment. All these people, as to Foma's understanding are great sinners and they are all guilty before God.

Foma's hatred and his protest does not possess a hard basis in his soul and in his mind in the form of a certain ideal. He has no positive imagination about this ideal and on the other life. He has only the sense of injustice, of which he spoke and as if calmed down his hatred. *“He, with tiredness of struggle, powerless shame of defeat lay silently, furiously angry, smothered in dirt of something, tightly tied up on the hands and feet with a towel... something burned*

in him and it became darker, emptier in his soul". (Gorky, 1963, p. 218)

Foma understood and admitted his defeat and he did not expect more from this struggle. *"He only wanted to tell the truth... wanted to ease himself" his "head painted"; he "felt the truth"* (Gorky, 1963, 220-221). He says to Yakov Mayakin: *"And by all means you are guilty! You spoiled. You spoiled the life!... But though my truth against you is weaker, but still it is truth! You are damned! Let you all be damned"* (Gorky, 1963, p.221) against the possessed easy money, Foma opposed the possession of truth and it turned to be weaker than the system.

Possession of thirst for easy money and carelessness to all moral duties before God and people excites the soul of Foma and pours them all his hatred in the face, and while doing this, he is in the powerless, desperate despair, as if he is in a nightmare. His struggle appears to be if not weaker but at any case, the struggle of a man being powerless before this world.

It is not occasional, that L. Tolstoy's narratives "resurrection" and "Foma Gordeyev" written by Gorky appeared by the end of the 90^{ies} of the XIX century. In one case we see the completion but in the other the beginning of search for true hero. Tolstoy's Nekhludov found the truth, which was an old truth, but Gorky's Gordeyev did not find it, or he looked for a new truth. Nevertheless, Gorky's hero had something of truth, from which he acted, and which can be called as precursor of future truth for which other heroes of Gorky will long for. In this sense, just lies the plan of search for new form of truth and the new novel of Gorky "The three" can be considered as the continuation of the narrative "Foma Gordeyev".

Narrative "The three" was written at the beginning of the XIX century, in 1900-1901 years and can be called as a new stage in the search for heroes in the creative activity of Gorky. If Foma Gordeyev in his hostility to the existing order falls into the list of the unsatisfied with life, we can say, the people beaten off by the very merchant class itself, but Ilya Lunev falls into the list of people rising from below and up stands against them with the same reason as of Foma Gordeyev. In Gorky's both heroes, the protest against the unjust world is conditioned not by their social position, but it is conditioned by the moral state of their souls. In the both cases natural, humane beginnings will not accept social beginning, the soul of man cannot agree with the injustice, lawlessness, inhumanity that takes place in life.

"The main problem of narrative – as the authors note, of the Russian literature of the XX century" – is a choice of "the way of life" (Enlightenmen, 1985, p.49), though it might be exactly said that it was not a choice but poignant search

of "the way of life", or fight and tragic death of Lunev, it is difficult to call the choice of "the way of life". Before everything it could be said about the possibilities of choice and despair which brought the hero to suicide.

E.B. Tager noting the continuing link between the narratives "Foma Gordeyev" and "The three" and the "early stories of Gorky" determined their themes as *"the theme of tragic struggle of personality for the right to life and happiness, for the right to human dignity"*. (Tager, 1968, p. 240).

In the context of the investigated problem, it is worth mentioning that the heroes of the first big-volume works of Gorky including the narrative "The three" searched for, before everything, the sense and appointment in life. They understood life and happiness not as the growing merchants and buyers did, that is, they saw happiness not in the form of material prosperity and in richness, but in doing kindness and in active service to the others. Ilya Lunev with all his power achieved all; from the begging orphanage, he entered the list of merchants. However, he found no sense in hoarding and in gathering wealth.

Therefore, Gorky's hero does not search for his personal prosperity and maturity but he searches for activity that brings prosperity not only for himself, but also for the others. Nevertheless, Ilya could not find such kind of activity and that is why died tragically. In the "search for decent life", Lunev fell into the world of falsehood and hypocrisy, self-interest, scandalous injustice" (Enlightenmen, (1985, p. 49). His protest against Poluetkov, and then against his companion Avtonomova – in its essence was a protest against to himself, as the life of a merchant and a purchaser, cannot be called "decent". His suicide was the continuation and logical final of his hatred to Petrukh Filimonov, the death of moneychanger Poluetkov and, at last, the publicly exposure of the guests and the family of the Antonius. Hatred to the mean ideals embraced him himself into its orbit as well, which became the reason of his endless despair and suicide. Both in murdering and in suicide, the same idea was expressed – the idea of hostility to the existing order of life.

The investigators many times mentioned the roll-call of the themes of the narratives written by Gorky and moral suffering of his heroes with the themes and heroes of works written by L. Tolstoy's and F. Dostoyevski, particularly with the novel "Crime and punishment" written by Dostoyevsky. The theme of search for the way of life and moral sufferings of the heroes of Gorky and his predecessors coincide something in common. As one of the investigators of Gorky noted, the young writer *"not only praised this theme among his predecessors, but untwisted it, informed of its tensivity never having been before"* (Tager, 1968, p.240).

The essence of its tensivity lies in the fact that Gorky searched for the solution of the problem of the hero and the society not in the moral-psychological aspect, in the way Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky did, but he searched for the solution of the problem in the practical activity and struggle, the ways of which were not yet known either to the writer himself or to his hero.

The search of young Gorky and his heroes went on two directions: first, in the direction of search for the power and for the enemy against it was worth fighting; secondly, in the search of the heroes themselves and the qualities this hero must possess. Neither, Foma Gordeyev, or Ilya Lunev knew the roots of what they are fighting against and that's why their fight was doomed to failure. This is because of two reasons: they did not yet determine the root and initial reason of evil, which embraced the whole modern world, and second, these heroes, are not ready themselves to the systematic practical struggle against this evil. Their struggle is of too much abstract character: neither the aim, nor the means of struggle are clear to them.

Ilya Lunev knew and could not help knowing that it was of no use telling his girl companion and her guest's bitter reprimands for their false and dishonest life in the face and while doing this, he openly declares that he murdered Polutkov. What does it mean? What for? What is the purpose? Firstly, this is the endless state of the hero, who in the search of the way of life and for the aim of his existence, entered a dead – end from which he does not see a way out, and that is why he is in despair. Secondly, all this has been done for the objection of soul, for the suppression and satisfaction of his hatred to this world, for these by appearance seemingly prosperous and happy people, being in bliss in their moor of dishonesty and falsehood. Under the feet of this dirty life, only Ilya Lunev is visible, but these people themselves do not see its abnormality, as the worms of the moor do not see dirt around their lives. Thirdly, it is as to the chance of aim of Ilya Lunev's protest, - a concrete aim and programs of activities he did not possess. Coming to the Antonovs as a guest, he did not know that he would protest and burn all the bridges behind him. He did not know either that by calling at Poluetkov he would kill him. In all cases he acts possessed by hatred and passion for action. They are ruled over by emotions, but not by wit, or the latter was powerless to solve all the puzzles, which the life put before him. That is why his actions were ruled over and directed by the shortly appearing in him emotions, born with severe hatred to this world and with consciousness of his powerlessness before them. For seemingly senseless actions of Ilya, however one can find such a justification: with his thoughts and soul, he could not put up with shameful and unjust world.

The merchant Poluetkov and tavern-keeper Peter Filimonov, who personify this world, are just the bearers of his moral. Ilya easily manages and unpunished in the way as he lawlessly killed the first and beat the second. He does not know that the roots of evil are not in them, but are hidden rather deeply, than the amoral and grasping passion of these people, and that is why it is impossible to determine the reasons of this evil and kill all its bearers. Ilya's sense of struggle against all the bearers of evil and against the society of the Avtonoms in the birthday party of Tatyana lies in this – his girl-companion's struggle whose struggle is like Foma Gordeyev's struggle against merchant class. If Foma Gordeyev admitted his defeat after his riot and put up with it, Ilya goes till the end and being conscious of his defeat, ends his life with suicide, striking his head against the wall.

This death of the hero is symbolic, else evil stood before him as insurmountable wall, which is hard to smash, how it is possible to strike the head and break it.

The advantage of Gorky's new hero before the precedetors lies in the advantage of Ilya Lunev over Foma Gordeyev indicating the fact that Ilya came from aside, from a poor family of a peasant. If Foma was born and grew up in a prosperous family of a merchant, Ilya Lunev was a poor orphan, came to the city from a village being still a small child and in an unknown city felt all the hardships of necessity and poverty. He with his own strength alone joined the people and became a beginning merchant. But as Foma, Ilya too could not put up with injustice and immorality of this world.

In this case, Gorky as his predecessor L. Tolstoy's considers a deep social problem in the moral aspect. The hero acts against social order deriving from moral motives of his human nature, but not deriving from his social unreasonableness. Because of this, it appears that social contradictions deriving from moral criteria are impossible to solve. Perhaps, Gorky understands this, but the ways and means of solving social problems - even and he does even not know real, practical ways of struggle for building up just social society.

The autobiographical sense of the plot of the narratives written by Gorky is determined by Tager (1968), not as the description of the *"history of formation of personality under complicated influence of the surrounding environment"* (p.242) but as "any humanistic and false moral" which exit in this world and excites the pure, human soul of the young hero.

CONCLUSIONS

Both narratives – “Foma Gordeyev” and “The three” have been set up as the autobiographies of the main heroes, and in the both cases, the works begin since the childhoods of the heroes and in the both cases, the ways to their mental and moral formulation are observed. Gorky determined the surrounding environment not so much as to the character of the hero, but much of his will for struggle. Describing the environment, Gorky wanted to underline its nonconformity to the human nature.

The law of this environment, its principles and understanding on the justice completely contradicts to the moral principles of the human soul. Participating in the court for prostitute Vera, by the way, which reminds us of the court on Katyusha Maslova from the novel of L. Tolstoy’s “Resurrection”, Ilya flies into a rage by the fact that thieves and Villains, such as Petrukh Filimonov silently judge the thieves and villains. Tolstoy’s scene of court was aimed at changing the fate of the main hero as the guilty person of the misfortune under the jurisdiction. However, Ilya made two impressions from this court – in the tragedy of such people as Vera, the life itself is guilty and the system itself is guilty, in which thieves judge the thieves. That is why if the struggle of Tolstoy’s hero was directed against the hero himself, but the hatred and struggle of Gorky’s hero was directed against the society.

Nevertheless, it is paradoxical that the victim of this opposition of society and the hero become hero in the face of Ilya Lunev. If Dmitry Nekhludov knew what to do and against whom to fight Ilya Lunev does not know against whom to struggle and how to do it, or his enemy was elusive and almighty. Against such an enemy adequate social power was demanded on which Gorky will speak in his following works.

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