

RUSSIAN LITERATURE AS THE SPIRITUAL AND MORAL FOUNDATION OF NATIONAL CULTURE AND A MEANS OF SHAPING THE HISTORICAL MEMORY OF THE PEOPLE FROM THE OLD RUSSIAN PERIOD TO THE PRESENT DAY.

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Annotation: The article explores the development of Russian literature from ancient chronicles to contemporary prose. It examines its role as a moral, philosophical, and historical phenomenon reflecting the nation's spiritual path. Special attention is given to key writers and works that shape moral values and national identity.

Keywords: Russian literature, spiritual values, national identity, philosophy, morality, Pushkin, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, contemporary prose

Аннотация: В статье раскрывается развитие русской литературы от древнерусских летописей до современной прозы. Рассматривается её роль как нравственного, философского и исторического явления, отражающего духовный путь народа. Особое внимание уделено ключевым писателям и произведениям, формирующими нравственные ориентиры и национальное самосознание.

Ключевые слова: русская литература, духовные ценности, национальное самосознание, философия, нравственность, Пушкин, Достоевский, Толстой, современная проза

Russian literature is not merely a part of the national heritage but a living fabric of history, the emotional state, and the spiritual self-awareness of the people. It originates in deep antiquity, in chronicles, hagiographies, religious prose, and oral tradition. Even at that early stage, the artistic word became an integral part of moral education, the preservation of historical memory, and the transmission of the nation's spiritual experience. Old Russian works reflect the worldview of their time, recounting the deeds of princes, saints, and defenders of the Russian land, glorifying heroism and devotion to the homeland [7].

Gradually, alongside the development of society and changing views on the individual and his place in the world, literature acquired philosophical, social, and pedagogical significance. It became a mirror not only of historical events but also of the inner world of the individual. Already in the eighteenth century, M. V. Lomonosov not only created models of the solemn ode, rhetoric, and scientific prose, but also affirmed the importance of the native language as the foundation of national culture. He regarded literature as a means of moral education, the formation of patriotic feelings, and the preservation of the national spirit [8].

D. I. Fonvizin's comedy "The Minor" is a vivid example of early social satire, exposing ignorance, hypocrisy, arbitrariness, and the moral decay of the nobility. In his work "Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow," A. N. Radishchev raised questions of popular suffering, social injustice, personal freedom, and humanism [10]. These works marked the beginning of the formation of social criticism as one of the main functions of Russian literature.

The nineteenth century—the Golden Age of Russian literature—became a time of the birth of great works in which the artistic word achieved exceptional philosophical and psychological depth. A. S. Pushkin, having laid the foundations of realism, reflected on the problems of personal freedom, moral choice, duty, and honor. His novel in verse "Eugene Onegin" is not

merely a love story but a philosophical meditation on human destiny, loneliness, disillusionment, and the search for meaning [9].

M. Y. Lermontov continued this line, creating the image of Pechorin—a hero of his time, a man without ideals, torn by inner contradictions. In the novel “A Hero of Our Time,” the writer explores the nature of human character, its tendency toward the destruction of one’s own happiness and the lives of others [6]. Lermontov reveals the drama of a person who has lost faith, the aspiration for higher ideals, and who finds himself captive to indifference.

N. V. Gogol used grotesque, allegory, and satire to depict the deformities of Russian society. His works “The Overcoat” and “Dead Souls” expose the soulless bureaucratic system, social indifference, and spiritual poverty. Gogol raises the question of the dignity of the “little man” and the meaninglessness of life without moral guidelines [4].

F. M. Dostoevsky became the philosopher of Russian prose. His novels “Crime and Punishment,” “The Idiot,” “Demons,” and “The Brothers Karamazov” explore questions of free will, guilt, repentance, and the struggle between good and evil within the human soul. Each of Dostoevsky’s characters represents an entire universe of passions, thoughts, and contradictions. The writer was among the first in world literature to pose the problem of the duality of human nature and make it the subject of philosophical analysis [5].

L. N. Tolstoy, in “War and Peace,” “Anna Karenina,” and “Resurrection,” combined the scale of historical narrative with the most subtle psychological analysis, reflecting on the spiritual evolution of the individual, the meaning of life, moral choice, and the true value of existence. Tolstoy asserted that the only path to happiness lies in following the moral law and loving one’s neighbor [11].

The twentieth century brought themes of catastrophes, wars, revolutions, and social upheavals into literature. The Silver Age was marked by a flourishing of poetry filled with philosophical meaning and a tragic sense of time. Anna Akhmatova, Marina Tsvetaeva, and Osip Mandelstam created images of inner freedom, pain, hope, and the resilience of the spirit in a world of political repression and spiritual crisis [1].

Soviet literature, despite ideological restrictions, gave the world masterpieces in which human dignity and the power of the moral word rose above circumstances. M. A. Bulgakov in “The Master and Margarita” created a myth about the struggle between good and evil and about the mystical dimension of human history. A. I. Solzhenitsyn in “The Gulag Archipelago” revealed the tragedy of millions and accomplished a literary feat of civic courage [2].

Contemporary Russian literature has not lost its spiritual depth. Writers of the twenty-first century—Ludmila Ulitskaya, Evgeny Vodolazkin, Viktor Pelevin, and Zakhar Prilepin—reflect on crises of identity, moral values, and the spiritual quests of individuals in a world of digital technologies and global change [3]. Their works become philosophical texts in which the theme of responsibility before history, conscience, and future generations is clearly heard.

Thus, Russian literature remains one of the most important means of shaping values, moral guidelines, critical thinking, and profound feeling. Through literature, the people have for centuries expressed their pain, faith, hope, resistance, and their understanding of good, justice, and freedom. It is a unique form of dialogue between epochs, between the individual and eternity. Literature helps a person discover the world, culture, and oneself, and to partake in the spiritual experience of humanity. Russian literature is not merely a source of knowledge or images but a powerful instrument of moral education, capable of teaching one to see more deeply, feel more intensely, and think freely. It rightfully remains part of the spiritual code of the people, their historical destiny, and their eternal striving for truth [3].

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