

M.KOSTOMAROV'S PERCEPTION ON FOLKLORE IN THE RELATION WITH OTHER SCIENCES*

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ПОГЛЯДИ М.КОСТОМАРОВА НА ЗВ'ЯЗОК ФОЛЬКЛОРУ З ІНШИМИ НАУКАМИ

Микола Костомаров вважав вивчення фольклору окремою галуззю історичної науки і показав можливість проведення фольклористичних досліджень у зв'язку з іншими науками. Він особливо наголошував на зв'язку між фольклором та історією. М.Костомаров наполягав на тому, що метою фольклористики є дослідження минулого для моделювання майбутнього. Пояснюючи взаємозв'язок між фольклором та історією, літературою або мовою, він показав, що фольклористика є не лише додатковою наукою, але такою, що охоплює усі аспекти соціально-історичного життя.

Ключові слова: Микола Костомаров, Україна, фольклористика, етнографія, історія, література.

Mykola Kostomarov (1817 – 1885) was the first critical folklorist who shifted the focus of Ukrainian folklore study away from the collection of "old documents or rare folksongs", which was encouraged by patriotic and nostalgic affection for a disappearing world, towards the search for a pure national foundation from the past on which to build the society contemporary Ukraine. For Kostomarov, folklore study was a separate field of science; one whose goal was to uncover models from the past on which to shape the future. Furthermore, by emphasizing the relationship between folklore and other disciplines, such as language, literature, and history, he showed the other sciences that joint research with folklore was a possibility.

The term 'folklore' was not defined exactly by Kostomarov and was often replaced by the term 'ethnography'. The two terms were used interchangeably at the time. However, it is not difficult to deduce his perception of folklore by examining his writings. In "Ob otnoshenii russkoi istorii k geografii i etnografii", Kostomarov mentions that ethnography deals with "the representation of a people's life", in which the viewpoints of the people on their own lives is expressed. He also said, "Without this aspect, the study of history is just like describing the upper branches of a tree, but not dealing with the stem or the roots". Therefore, for Kostomarov, folklore or ethnography was the essential source of history as it contains the spirit of the people. In this study, I examine Kostomarov's point of view on folklore in the relation with other sciences, such as language, literature, and history.

1. Language and Folklore

As long as folklore is considered an important source of national character language will always remain an essential issue in folklore. Common feelings and common thoughts imply a common and single language in which they can be expressed and by which they can be communicated. In many of his works, Kostomarov claimed that people's thoughts and feelings are best expressed in their

own native language: "Many Little Russians felt that it was impossible to express in Russian that which can be expressed in Little Russian, therefore people began to use their own language"¹.

Accepting earlier folklorists' opinion on the difference between Ukrainians and Russians, Kostomarov insisted that Ukrainian language was not Russian "The language usually called Little Russian, which is spoken in the southwestern provinces of Russia and in the Galician kingdom, is not a recently developed dialect of the Russian language"². He continued to assert that both languages had developed separately over the centuries. According to Kostomarov, both had evolved from Church Slavonic, but they developed in separate directions when Rus' Split into western and eastern sections.

While Kostomarov claimed that Ukrainian is not a dialect of Great Russian, he still regarded Ukrainian as a general Slavic idiom: "it (Little Russian) has existed for a long time and exists today as a dialect (*narechie*) of the Slavic rott, occupying a middle place, in its grammatical-lexical structure, between the eastern and western idioms of the huge Slavic tribe, a correct, rich, and harmonious idiom and one which is capable of literary development"³. According to Ivancevich, at that time the term *narechie*, which is used to signify "dialect", could also be used signify "language" or any other spoken idiom⁴.

In "Istoricheskoe znachenie iuzhno-russkogo narodnogo pesennogo tvorchestva," Kostomarov divided Little Russian (or Southern Russian) into three dialects: Ukrainian (*ukrainskoe*), Polissia-Northern (*polessko-severskoe*), and Red-Russian (*chervono-russkoe*) or Rusin (*rusinskoe*)⁵. According to Kostomarov, in spite of the several differences in phonetics and grammar of these three dialects, speakers understood each other and did not regard themselves as different people. Therefore, any works written in Ukrainian in Russian territory could be also enjoyed in Galicia. However, as Kostomarov understood, unique local songs and variants existed in each dialect because of their differences.

In this regard, Kostomarov considered folksongs an important source of philological study. In fact, in his opinion, the study of variant and local peculiarities of folksongs is essential to the study of the history of the language. Therefore, for Kostomarov, another reason for studying Ukrainian folksongs was to reveal the distinct feature and the development process of Ukrainian. However, the study of the relationship between language and folklore was even more important for Kostomarov because folklore texts and folksongs reveal a people's soul and thought only when they expressed in their native language.

2. Literature and Folklore

The literature embodied in the language of any nation is one of the molds of its life, and one of the influences, which shapes its development. In this regard, Kostomarov emphasized the value of literature as a source of national character. According to Kostomarov, written literature and oral literature shared a very close relationship and influenced each other. For example, on the one hand, the former adopted the framework and motifs of the latter, on the other hand, the latter continued to imitate the way of expression of the former. However, for Kostomarov, definite differences still existed between them in the following aspects: authenticity or origin, means of transmission, and variations. He explained theses in "Istoricheskoe znachenie iuzhno-russkogo narodnogo pesennogo tvorchestva," by comparing Ukrainian folksongs to Western European folksongs.

For Kostomarov, folksongs were only those songs that are transmitted orally without a fixed type and never with a single author. On the contrary, popular songs, which are of literary origin, were created by well-known individuals. According to him, in Western Europe, collectors and researchers of folklore also included those songs, which were created by a single author into their collections. Therefore, he said, "their folksongs are those that are sung by the people, but our folksongs are those that are created by the people"⁶. Kostomarov referred to folksongs as original works, and popular songs as imitative and translated works. Even if the latter greatly influences the development of an educated society, he said, "One should not recognize in them such meaning as we can recognize in the original works"⁷.

Kostomarov admitted the great influence of literary on human life. He wrote that literacy completely changed the way and means of expression of poetic work. For example, if a literary person expresses

his inspiration in written language, it appears in a complete form and becomes his own spiritual property. "Even if other literate people love this work and begin to repeat it, they then realize that the work which has an effort on their spirit, does not belong to them"⁸. The written work is the property of the author and not of the entire mass. As such it does not reflect the soul and feelings of the whole people, but rather only the ideas and thoughts of the author.

According to Kostomarov, the transmission of folk literature is purely oral, and hence the idea of a fixed form was alien. During the oral transmission of a folksong, alteration and addition to the song take place under the influence of the poetic mood of another person. Thus the content and form of the song become more complete and larger, passing from one place to another. Here, Kostomarov found important differences between literary works and folk works. The characteristics of folklore – communal character, oral transmission, and limitless variation – distinguish folk literature from written literature which is literary in origin, written in a fixed form and belongs to an individual.

While Kostomarov mentioned the differences between written literature and folk (oral) literature, he also agreed to the idea that folklore is an integral part of written literature, not an intrusive element in it. It is something that may affect the language, structure and themes of outstanding works in both poetry and prose. Kostomarov tried to prove this opinion by explaining Shevchenko's role in Ukrainian literature in "*Malorusaskaia literature*." He said, "Up to the appearance of Shevchenko, Little Russian Literature confined itself to the representation of people's life in the form of stories and tales, partly in the form of drama, or to poems in the tone of people"⁹. He continued to say, "Shevchenko's poetry does not deviate from the forms and devices of Little Russian folk poetry: they are deeply Little Russian; at the same time their meaning is never local: they always introduce the interest of common people"¹⁰.

Influenced by contemporary Ukrainian writers, such as Hohol', Shevchenko, Kvitka, and others, Kostomarov himself began to write poetry and prose in Ukrainian, using the form, style and motifs of Ukrainian folklore. Kostomarov published his first Ukrainian poetry book – *Ukrains'kii balady*¹¹ (Ukrainian ballads) – in 1893. One year later another collection of ballads was published under the title *Vitka*¹² (Branch). Several poems from these collections mourned the disappearance of the Cossacks, which was a popular theme of Ukrainian folksongs. According to Ie. Shabliov's'kyi, "the poet [Kostomarov] really adapts folk tales, superstitions, and legends. He often utilizes folk ballads ("The brother and the sister," "The maple, the popular, and the birth," "Mr. Shul'pika") as the basis of his own works, uses the imagery and symbols of folksongs, applies folk style, and turns to rhythmical forms close to folk laments"¹³.

Besides poetry, he also wrote the tragic play, *Sava Chalyi*¹⁴ (1838), which portrayed a power struggle between Cossack elders during a struggle with the Poles in the seventeenth century. According to Shabliov's'kyi, "the theme of the well-known historical song, in which betrayal is condemned, forms the basis of this work"¹⁵. In 1841, Kostomarov published another tragedy, *Pereiaslavska nich*.

For Kostomarov, written literature is also an important as folk literature because written literature and language may give something to the national mind – or more specifically, it can unify the minds of the members of the nation group. In "*Malorusaskaia literature*," Kostomarov says, "Little Russian common people practically did not understand it (the written or book language). When talking to the common people, an educated Little Russian of the upper class had to lower himself to the common people's language, otherwise, they would not have been able to understand each other"¹⁶. Therefore, in Kostomarov's opinion, through the diffusion of education, the more the literary tradition of a nation becomes common in the minds of its members, the more is that nation united, and the more homogeneous is its life. Kostomarov emphasized the necessity of spreading education in Ukrainian among the masses.

Judging from the above analysis, it can be said that, for Kostomarov, both folklore and literature must have an influence on each other and develop together. On the one hand, folklore should influence the general direction of literature so that it would reflect the way of life of the people and their worldview in the written language. On the other hand, literature has to raise the level of folk culture. Kostomarov believed that this mutual relationship would contribute to national unity.

3. History and Folklore

Until the beginning of the nineteenth century, the status of folklore as a component of the study of history was not widely recognized. History and folklore were not necessarily considered as complementary studies. Historians denied the validity of folklore as evidence of history, and folklorists ignored the historical content in folklore. However, in Ukraine, while collecting and studying folklore for their artistic and historical value, several folklorists began to recognize the value of folklore as an historical science and use folklore for historical materials.

Kostomarov first tried to use folklore in writing the history of the common people in his second dissertation "Ob istoricheskom znachenii russkoi narodnoi poezii." After this dissertation, he continued to consider history and folklore as complementary studies and to write many historical works based on folk materials. Why did he continue to consider folklore an essential part of historical materials? And what was his conclusion as to the relationship between history and folklore?

For Kostomarov, the purpose of history is "to present an account of the movement of a people's life"¹⁷ because he placed common people at the center of historical studies. Therefore, the subject of history has to be "the means and the ways of the development of the power of a people's activities in all spheres in which living process of human groups appears"¹⁸.

Then he raised another question: What material is the most valuable to historical studies? During his early days in Kharkiv, Kostomarov had already realized that the historical records preserved from the past were incomplete. Documents preserved in public or private archives related only to such events that needed or commanded a written record, or to those, which interested ruling classes or the educated society. It was the detail of every-day thought and action that was missing. For Kostomarov, history needed to be filled by all that can be learned about the thought, ideas, beliefs, conceptions, and aspirations of common people. The source for this kind of information was folklore.

Kostomarov believed that folklore was the only means of discovering the earliest stage of the social and cultural history of modern man. In this regard, Kostomarov emphasized the significance of archeological folk materials: "The purpose of archeology is to learn the past of a people's life and of objects, and the purpose of history is to learn the life of a people and of the people themselves"¹⁹. Another branch of traditional folk materials was related to customs, beliefs, and rites. It also rested upon a solid basis of historical origin or fact²⁰. Finally, Kostomarov considered folk literature, especially folksongs, to be the most important folk materials for discovering the people's standpoint on their own lives.

For Kostomarov, the main purpose of using folksongs for historical writing was not to find historical fact but to understand the viewpoint of the common people on their own history. Kostomarov said, "these songs are generally more important for history in the representation of the way of life of the past and in the expression of the viewpoint of people than in the relationship with factual truth"²¹.

However, Kostomarov still believed that people's memories in folksongs contained significant information about the past that written materials did not have: "First of all, let us say that ... people's memory does not always correspond to written history. Many things, deemed glorious by historians, remain unknown to the people. Furthermore, many things, which the people glorify, are difficult to find in the written historical materials"²².

Kostomarov believed that folk materials would become useful only when folklore establishes a place among the historical sciences. Because folklore is a "study about the people," the subject of folklore has to be "the people themselves, not the external manifestations of their life"²³. In fact, until the 19th century, folklore was still a young discipline without satisfactory scientific credentials. Kostomarov criticized the earlier folklorists who restricted their works in noting and describing the tradition and customs of a people, and called for a consideration of folk materials as a product of past forces in that nation.

Thus, in Kostomarov's opinion, the historian and the folklorist have to be brought face to face with their own mandates in order to work alongside each other, and use each other's materials and conclusions appropriately. Kostomarov said that both ethnographers and historians often make the same error: "they considered the materials for their subject as if it were the subject itself"²⁴. Finally, he concluded that "an ethnographer should be a contemporary historian like a historian deals in his works with the ethnography of the past"²⁵.

Kostomarov regarded the study of folklore as a separate field of historical science and showed the possibility of joint research between folklore and other sciences. Especially, emphasizing the relationship between folklore and history, Kostomarov insisted that the goal of folkloristics was a research of the past for models on which to shape the future. Also explaining the relationship between folklore and history, literature or language, he showed that folkloristics was not a supplementary but rather a complementary study, and that folklore was a science that covered all aspects of socio-historical life.

¹ N.I.Kostomarov, "Obzor sochinenii pisannykh na malorossiskom iazyke," *Molodik* 10 (1861). – P. 123. Also see Kostomarov, "Maloruskoe Slovo," *Vestnik Evropy*. – №. 1 (1881); reprinted in *Naukovo-publitsystychni i polemichni pysannia Kostomarova*. – Pp. 267 – 271.

² N.I.Kostomarov, "Obzor sochinenii pisannykh,"; reprinted in *Naukovo-publitsystychni i polemichni pysannia Kostomarova*. – P. 375.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Anthony Mario Ivancevich. "The Ukrainian National Movement and Russification". Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University. – 1976. – P. 340.

⁵ N.I.Kostomarov. "Istoricheskoe znachenie iuzhno-russkogo narodnogo pesennogo tvorchestva," in various numbers of *Beseda* (1872) and *Rusaskaia mysl'* (1880 – 1883); reprinted in *Sobranie sochinenii N.I.Kostomarova*. – Book 8. – Vol. 21. – P. 434.

⁶ Ibid. – P. 429.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid. – P. 431

⁹ N.I.Kostomarov. "Maloruskaia Literatura", *Poeziia Slavian*. Ed. N.V.Gerbel. – St. Petersburg, 1871; reprinted in *Naukovo-publitsystychni polemichni pysannia Kostomarova*. – P. 243.

¹⁰ Ibid. – P. 244.

¹¹ This was Kostomarov's second book, published under the pseudonym Iieremiia Halka. This was a small collection of poetry based on historical Ukrainian songs and some translations. Iieremiia Halka, *Ukrains'kii balady* (Kharkiv, 1893), reprinted in Kostomarov. – *Tvory* 1. – Pp. 37 – 52.

¹² Iieremiia Halka. *Vitka* (Kharkiv, 1840), reprinted in Kostomarov. – *Tvory* 1. – Pp. 53 – 83.

¹³ Ie.Shabliovs'kyi. "Mykola Ivanovych Kostomarov, ioho zhyttia ta diial'nist'", in Kostomarov. – *Tvory* 1. – P. 11.

¹⁴ Kostomarov's first book, his historical drama *Sava Chalyi*, appeared in print under the pseudonym Iieremiia Halka. See Iieremiia Halka, *Sava Chalyi: Dramaticheskaia stseny na iuzhno-ruskom iazyke* (Kharkiv, 1838), reprinted in Kostomarov. – *Tvory* 1. – Kyiv, 1967. – Pp. 145 – 202.

¹⁵ Shabliovs'kyi, op. cit. – P. 12.

¹⁶ Kostomarov. "Maloruskaia literatura". – P. 240.

¹⁷ N.I.Kostomarov. "Ob otnoshenii russkoi istorii k geografii i etnografii", *Zapiski imperatorskogo russkogo geograficheskogo obshchestva* 12 (1863); reprinted in *Sobranie sochinenii N.I.Kostomarova*. – Book 1. – Vol. 3. – P. 719.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid. – P. 721.

²⁰ N.I.Kostomarov. "O tsikle vesennikh pesen v narodnoi iuzhnoruskoi poezii", *Maiak*. – Book 21. – Vol. 11 (1843); reprinted in *Etnohrafichni pysannia Kostomarova*. – Pp. 118 – 126. Through the study of the ritual spring songs, such as haivky and vesnianky, Kostomarov partly introduced the customs and rites of the spring season and also explained the historical origin of the name of these rituals.

²¹ Kostomarov. "Istoricheskoe znachenie". – P. 731.

²² Ibid. – P. 694.

²³ Kostomarov. "Ob otnoshenii russkoi istorii". – P. 721.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid. – P. 722.

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Key words: Mykola Kostomarov, Ukraine, study of folklore, ethnography, history, literature.

Николай Костомаров считал изучение фольклора отдельной областью исторической науки и показал возможность проведения фольклорных исследований в связи с другими науками. Он особенно отмечал связь между фольклором и историей. Н.Костомаров настаивал на том, что целью фольклористики является исследование прошлого для моделирования будущего. Объясняя взаимосвязь между фольклором и историей, литературой или языком, он показал, что фольклористика является не только дополнительной наукой, но такой, которая охватывает все аспекты социально-исторической жизни.

Ключевые слова: Николай Костомаров, Украина, фольклористика, этнография, история, литература.