

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF  
**WORLD LANGUAGES**

ДОБРЕДОЉОВТЕ WĒLLKOMM स्वागत छ  
VÄLKOMMEN FÄILTE VÍTEJTE HERZLICH ΚΑΛΩΣ ΗΡΘΑΤΕ  
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## International Journal of World Languages

Volume 3, No. 5, September 2023

Internet address: <http://ejournals.id/index.php/IJWL/issue/archive>

E-mail: [info@ejournals.id](mailto:info@ejournals.id)

Published by ejournals PVT LTD

Issued Bimonthly

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## CHEKHOV. THE WORLD OF CHEKHOV'S STORIES.

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Chekhov took to the road of creativity in the 80s of the 19th century; his predecessors and older contemporaries were Turgenev, Goncharov, Dostoevsky, and Tolstoy. With their names is associated with the rapid growth of Russian prose, the flowering of the Russian novel. The heights reached by the novelists served then as a measure of the achievements of all literature.

Chekhov also wrote prose, his talent developed in line with the leading literary trend. But among the written by Chekhov no novels, no large-scale works. The area of his activity - non-romantic genres: novels, short stories. The author of "Ward No. 6" and "Lady with a Dog" persistently strived for brevity, to a tight, dense narrative. Of course, brevity in itself is not an unconditional advantage and is not always "sister talent", praise for brevity implies the ability to few words to say a lot, to saturate the meager speech rich internal content. This skill is exactly what Chekhov possessed. Therefore, his small prose and stood in line with the great novels, marked a stage in the history of narrative art.

Chekhov tried his hand at humor; he made his debut on the pages of humor magazines of the time (from which modern publications like Crocodile trace their lineage). Such magazines required, first of all, stories-miniaturas, stories-"skits", designed for instant comic effect. Chekhov learns to extract laughter from familiar things, looking for the funny in the ordinary, in the familiar. His humoresques are like sketches from nature, his "sketches", in today's language, as if filmed with a hidden camera. The case in the theater ("Death of an Official"), a meeting at the station ("Thick and Thin"), a conversation in a train car ("Mysterious Nature"), a conversation at the dinner table ("The Triumph of the Winner") - these are typical situations for Chekhov-humorist. And a typical Chekhov character is a man of the crowd, one of many. He causes laughter not by any oddities or quirks, but, on the contrary, by his generally ordinary actions. Funny, but, as a rule, not anecdotal, makes you laugh, but does not amaze, does not amaze. The more essential is the question: what are we laughing at?

There are times when the occasion for laughter is given by an amusing incident, an innocent misunderstanding, as in the stories "Nalim", "The Horse's Name", "The Deluded". Humor here is close to a joke, to a merry prank. But this is not too often observed in Chekhov. The core of humorism form stories of a different kind - not cheerful, but mocking, and the mockery in them - prickly, poisonous. It is inherent in the sharpness of topicality.

Chekhov lived in a society where there was a ladder of ranks and ranks, where everywhere there was a rule "rank rank rank honor", on that - kept and the social order, and social relations, not only official, but often domestic, family. The idea of social inequality formed philistine morality: the Russian philistine from childhood was indoctrinated with the need to obey, obey, ingratiate, flatter. In the veins of the philistine flowed, in the words of Chekhov, "slave blood". This was almost the main object of Chekhov's laughter.

Chekhov proceeded from the idea of the absolute value of human dignity, and nothing in his eyes justified "deviation from the norm", i.e. morally flawed, unworthy behavior. Nothing means neither the position of a person, nor the level of his development,

nor the pressure of circumstances. In the world of Chekhov no one is no exception: all the same demand.

The hero of many of the writer's stories - unremarkable, "thin" official, belonging, in his way of life, to the social bottoms. His fate - to be in dependence, in eternal subordination. Chekhov remembers this, but this is not what he is talking about. When meeting lower with higher, subordinate with superior ("Death of an Official", "Thick and Thin", "Liberal"), the second does not force the first to bend his back - the first bends voluntarily. Here is the main thing: voluntarily. The origins of self-humiliation remain aside, we see only the fact itself, the very act that deserves ridicule. And Chekhov does not soften his laughter at all - does not allow a discount on the position of the "little man".

Or: barin and governess ("Albion's Daughter"). Social distance between them is indisputable. There is, however, no moral difference: he reveals a primitive shamelessness, she - prim tolerance, and as a result, both - equally ridiculous.

In the story "The Mask", the man in power is not just shameless, but outright aggressive: he is unashamedly boorish and insulting. But the more unsightly are the insulted, who respond to the boorishness with menial obsequiousness, again voluntary. The mockery does not weaken even when the boor uses his fists - for his victim does not suffer, but bliss ("The Captain's Uniform"). The tailor, having received a slap from the customer, from "his nobility", concludes with satisfaction: "Now you can see the real gentlemen!" Here laughter is already on the verge of mockery.....

The habit of servility, taken to the extreme, can take a dangerous form; this is how the figure of the voluntary overseer and informer ("Unter Prishibeev") emerges. Unter acts contrary to common sense, he looks like a laughingstock, a walking caricature, but from his dull zeal comes real evil. In Prishibeev, as in a crooked mirror, ugly reflected the very essence of the police-bureaucratic regime.

Clear vices, bad habits accompany, as usual, minor sins, and this is also food for Chekhov's humor. The gallery of comic persons are replenished by the teacher of the gymnasium, decorated, on the occasion of a dinner party, his chest with someone else's award ("The Order") and the clerk, compensating for his humiliation by visiting a dubious institution ("The Crow"), and a company of clerks, replacing playing cards with photos of coworkers and coordinated the rules of the game with the table of ranks ("Screw"). Miserable shenanigans quite satisfy the ambitions of the brave common man. By the way, the teacher is given a significant surname - Pustyakov. For his era, Pustyakovy were no less symptomatic than Prishibeyev.

Chekhov returns again and again to the subject that occupies him, and each time he finds new features and traits in it. The writer is true to himself, but does not repeat himself; the different in the one is a sign of true art.

The characters of Chekhov's humoresques are firmly remembered, and others, like Chervyakov or Prishibeev, have become part of the main fund of our spiritual experience. When comprehending life, life processes on the "sketches" Chekhov referred to no less willingly than the novels of Dostoevsky, Tolstoy. And not by chance: in the "skit" in front of us - full-blooded character, a complete image. Outwardly - a sketch from nature, but in fact - a deep artistic generalization. That, in fact, Chekhov and differs from his many fellow writers - from those with whom he appeared together on the pages of humoristic publications. The names of Leikin, Bilibin, Myasnitsky today are known only to narrow specialists, but they were not untalented writers and once enjoyed popularity. But, being able to make fun, they did not know how to generalize, could not speak to the reader in the language of images-characters, and therefore their works did not withstand the most important test - the test of time.

The situation in the story "Enemies" is even more complicated. We are faced with two men, each of whom is unhappy in his own way: one has a dead son, the other has a wife who has run away with her lover. Unhappiness, different, and different men themselves, different their appearance, their manners. One is nicer, more handsome than the other. But the point is not in this, but in the fact that their grief overshadows for each of them another's misfortune, and where, in Chekhov's mind, should have arisen rapprochement, there erupts enmity. "The selfishness of the unfortunate" - is still selfishness, and no matter how heavy, this spectacle, the author's assessment of it is unambiguously negative.

Chekhov grew up in a family of shopkeeper, where the reign of crude morals, where the soul of the child poisoned by vulgar, sanctimonious teachings, and for him to educate himself meant to overcome the impact of the environment, which has already become a regulator of everyday behavior. Not an easy task! It took tremendous effort to "squeeze out of himself a slave", to all possible and hourly encouraged "consciousness of his nothingness" to supplant - and irrevocably - "respect for the human person. It is this victory over himself was for Chekhov tax the formation and growth of his creative individuality and in no small measure predetermined the strength of his laughter, the weight of dramatic narrative.

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