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### **Borys Hrinchenko and “secondary” Ukrainian writers.**

Boris Hrinchenko's views on the work of “secondary” writers are analyzed on the basis of literary critical articles and his epistolary heritage, that prove his concern to the development of native literature on highly artistic base.

Key words: writers' series, genius, classics, “secondary” writers, criticism, literary process, imitation.

Literature of each epoch had its prominent writers, talented, even genius: “literary saints” (V.Shklovskiy), “generals” (Iu.Tynianov), “colonels and captains” (I.Aizenshtok), “pillars” (M.Plevako), “Napoleons” (S.Kormylov). But there were writers of medium level or few talented. Such form of ordering as “series” was created to classify sizes [11, 9]. In terms of values it often stands out higher, even if it isn't dragged to it and also more local, modest and even plain. Though, the quantity of (secondary, third ...) “series”, which are allowed by “literary process”, is not defined.

There is such a gradation of valuation that define the scale of artistic talent among the representatives of the “first” series: genius, great, famous, talented, prominent, known [14, 15]. Theoretical definitions for creators of literature of the “second” series aren't formed: they are called “secondary”, “private of literature”, less, small, petty talents, apprentices, literary artisans, imitators or the representatives of the “third” series. For example, the digger Bonaventura, the hero of the comedy “One hundred thousand” by I.Karpenko-Karyi, is the representative of the “third-rate” writer, he was thinking of finding treasure and will start writing a comedy – “Now everyone writes: steals from others and presents and owns and when I'll write – it will be the truth” [10, 98]. And he starts declaiming as if it has been his own comedy that starts with the words “Enei was a quick fellow”. S.Iefremov asserted that there are moments when we can notice a special influx of exactly such accidental figures among literary workers, these figures are far from literature but having got into the sphere of its gravitation, stuck to it, they give it a certain character. A giant and host of pigmies are often able to equal results, deflecting the literature from its habitual way, with the difference that leads to opposed: the first serves to the development,

second ones – to decline and humiliation [9, 104]. S.Iefremov is convicted that in developed literatures where high and low aren't almost intersected, such as Bonaventura, they remain unnoticed and don't influence its development, in spite of Ukrainian where they become a social phenomenon.

Borys Hrinchenko belonged to those, who disagreed substantially with compelled provincialism of Ukrainian literature, and made efforts to lead native writing out of cramped and offensive frames of “household usage”, strove for having less “Bonaventuras” there. He aimed at resistance of imitation wave, overcome the model of pre-Shevchenko's epoch that dominated in Ukrainian literature of 1870-90 y. The views of Borys Hrinchenko were subject to research of A.Pogribnyi, B.Iaremenko etc. The aim of the article is to pay special attention to the attitude of Borys Hrinchenko to not popular, secondary of third-rate writers that proved his concern to the development of Ukrainian literature, aspiration for seeing it highly artistic, competitive in the world. Borys Hrinchenko continued traditions of P.Kulish, I.Nechui-Levytskyi and I.Bilyk, having negative attitude to phenomena that didn't contribute to native writing. The last, in particular, payed attention not only to writing rhymers, but also to its social harm, calling the activity of secondary authors as ”literary crime” (article “Review of literary new”).

“There's literature and waste paper” [15, 378], - Borys Hrinchenko differentiated strictly between high art and graphomaniac attempts, calling the last ones as “rubbish”, “market literature” [15, 379]. His censure of literary works sometimes had too emotional character. The critic considered that “literary rubbish” is obviously harmful and he didn't see the necessity to persuade as to this. In 1891 he entered into polemics with M.Komarov, writing: “You say, that I probably think that it is worthless to keep bibliography. Inversely. It seems that it should be kept like this: two printed columns for Samiilenko; two lines for Kernerenko. So, as for the last something like this: “The book has been published. There's no way and structure, and no sense. It's fit for using of cover”. It'll be! It seems to me that we can't sting the Ustenkos and the Kerneks, and the vaudevillists Borakovskis who observe reviews: they have too thick skin. So, we have to destroy them! We mustn't talk about them in order not to take things in vain that could look as other works, or if we are talking

about them, we should do it in such a way that they would hiss with pain after that and wouldn't play with edged tools" [13, 95].

The appreciation of the works of V.Samiilenko by Borys Hrinchenko caused objections of T.Zinkivskii, who saw only "squalor of thought and color of poetical ... stilted, rough, sophisticated and deadly colorless language, simply chopped cabbage" in the early poetry of young writer [13, 94]. Borys Hrinchenko tried to prove his friend fallibility of such view and persuaded: "How small Sam[iilenko] was in your point of view, he's the best among all poets of 80-s" [13, 94]. The critic proved that it would be correctly to characterize the creative work of the definite writer is possible only on the background of his modern literature in comparison with "the production of other writers". He wrote arguing his thoughts: "What is strange when the person, dying among the rubbish of the Petrusivs, Kernerenkis, Shybytkis, Pylyptsis, Khutornychkys, Zharkis etc., having met the human word at last says: "Thank God! At last we see a human and human's word, we don't hear bleating!" [13, 94].

Borys Hrinchenko wrote reviews on books of secondary writers according to this conviction. "There isn't a bit of life truth, nor share. There isn't even good language ... Pity for paper and work for printing this worthless book" [3, 33], - he wrote about K.Vanchenko-Pysanetskyi's plays; "You can't read books, there's no sparkle and talent" [16, 196], - he noticed about T.Onoprienko-Sholkovyι's collected volume of poems; "You can't read without spitting" [15, 379], - he told about some vaudevilles of G.Borakovskyyi, noticing about the author as "a man with talent and education" [15, 379], who, however, used the genre that didn't meet the inner nature of his creative work and wasted literary abilities on nonsense; his vaudevilles were based on rough, even disgusting farcicality although he had "real dramatic talent" [15, 236]. The works of this apology for writer he contrasted with "Gatherer from native field" by Panas Myrnyi. He considered him "the first among contemporary writers" [13, 91] and called "the great poet of our time ... who would renew our writing and become in the first ranks of the great European writers" [5, 291].

Borys Hrinchenko criticized mediocre ungifted books, comparing them with high measures of the notable works of world writings. "But where did Hogol take these plots? – From folk legends, renderings – there is untouched and rich source of poetry.

Why don't our "authors" take the plots there, without repeating the old over and over again, as Hogol has done?" [13, 96] – the critic directed these lines against the comedy "May's night" of F.Ustenko-Garmash. "Poor, poor Hogol!.. – Who doesn't pull and spoil him! D.Ustenko puts the screw on one and ... wrote the whole "comedy"!" [13, 96].

Borys Hrinchenko characterized the methodology of writing of such works as literary theft, robbery of "someone whom meets first: having read Shevchenko – steals from Shevchenko: having read Lermontov in Russian reader – steals from Lermontov: steals, twists, adds something own and there will appear such worthlessness as, for example, "First lyric works" by Ia.V.Zharko" [15, 38]. Borys Hrinchenko asserted, if such authors write stories, they pay no attention at the plot band write something like "Summer beauty" by d.Tsarynnyi; if they write plays, they remake "untalented Hogol" ... or thousand times trodden plot of "Natanka Poltavka" or "Moskal the magician" (the thing is about the play "Boots" of Sventsytskyi) [15, 378]. But the most unusual according to B.Hrinchenko's observation is that even talented authors "don't escape this damaging influence, they are liable to this market literature and start writing in this way" [15, 378].

Borys Hrinchenko saw a threat for further development and prestige of Ukrainian literature in the wave of imitation. In spite of achievements he indicated that "our scant literature" and because of this "every untalented has more hope to glorify than in any richer literature" [6, 269]. That's why such "writers", every "Khutorchychka, Zharkiv etc" (the critic talks about them in plural, accenting his disrespect to them on the one hand and mass of graphomania on the other hand) in Ukrainian literature there is too much and the reader sees nothing strange that the creative work of such "poet" is represented in one collection along with I.Nechui-Levytskyi or D.Mordovets. That's why criticism had to pay attention at such phenomena and analyze thing that are artistically worthless, and that needed examination and talk because of its meaning for the development of our literature. Borys Hrinchenko thinks that it's worthless comforting with the appearance of such Ukrainian books: "it would be better to leave four pages white, than print four such poems on them" [6, 269] (the thing is about the works of the Dnieper gull of A.Konoshchenko and

I.Zaloznyi). He made a disconsolate conclusion in the article “Two books”: “Put them away (books that were published in 1880-s in the Western Ukraine) ... the works of Levytskyi, Kropyvnytskyi, Karyi ... one more-two books ... and the rest – look what’s this?.. What are these Khytornychky, Shybytki, Vanchenky? What do they write?.. What have we come to that Ystenky and Kernerrenky or even Shybytky with Onoprienkos heaped up all literature?” [15, 378-379]. Borys Hrinchenko considered that the ugliest feature of imitators’ writings is that they don’t know life about which they write. The attempts to strengthen Ukrainian writing with “patriotic” untalented variations “about Khoma and khvygy-mygy and about cossacks” the writer ridicules wittily in artistic works (“Envy”, “Donkeys on Parnas”, “Chimchy’s singing”, “Patriot” etc.). As for penmen they tried to compensate lack of artistic merit by national idea, B.Hrinchenko responded ill-disposedly. If at the beginning of 1890-s he saw low level of works that were marked with “ethnographic patriotism”, if the author expressed “needs of ukrainians”, in later reviews he doesn’t pay any attention at it. His “judgement” to the collection “Songs” of Ia.Zharko (1905) is worthy of notice: “Twenty “songs” and no interesting thought, no original image, no new topic. There’s a bit of patriotism. All the rest is on one topic:

He will talk to me,

Amiably kiss ...

Or wouldn’t kiss, sometimes becomes angry, sometimes betrays and wouldn’t come, sometimes does some other nonsense and gives the author possibility to overripen Zabyla, Shchogoleva, Grebinka or folk song in his “own” song”[12, 138]. And in reverse, the critic was more lenient to those mediocre works where social motives sounded. For example, he estimated poetry of K.Sokolovs’ka “At the country seat” as “propans tendency” of which “shields” by his words “even bad form and generally untalented author” [8, 103]. Borys Hrinchenko expressed positive opinion about poems of I.Manzhura, that had strong social sound, from the collection “Steppe singing and thoughts” but some works (“At the steppe and at hut”, “From earnings”, “At the good field”) he considered that they “can’t be called as poetry because they are more politically economical thoughts in poems, than poetry” [4, 235], he found a lot of Russian calques, mutilated words, that are not peculiar in Ukrainian and

according to the analysis of these poetries he made a conclusion that young writers in the language “stepped back from their predecessors and teachers – Kulish, Shevchenko, Levytskyi” [4, 235].

Very often Borys Hrinchenko’s critical “judgements” are sharp, categorical and aren’t just. In particular, he enlisted the works of Olena Pchilka and O.Konynskyi to literary dullards. I have an obscene Olena Pchilka (“Thoughts-embroideries”), “Iakovenko’s torn strings (pseudonym of O.Konynskyi) (are more obscene)” [13, 92], - he wrote to I.Zozulia. “They smell with nastiness, immeasurable harm” [13, 97], - he added his addressee. Borys Hrinchenko thought that its possible to read books of Olena Pchilka, whom he called aristocrat of literature, “but you may not read, it won’t be a disaster” [13, 96].

B.Hrinchenko blamed O.Kovalenko, the compiler of the collection “Amusement”, with littered all his collection, “while sowing wheat” he sowed a good few of “tares”. Along with real coryphaeus of Ukrainian writing, O.Kovalenko contained a good few of worthless things – “different “tests of pen and ink” of unknown writers or even known but not because of their works, that the compiler held in the collection” [1, 136]. Borys Hrinchenko considered irrelevant to contain the story “Dead body” of Raievskyi along with the works of Kwitka-Osnovianenko, Gulak-Artemovskiyi. To his point of view the collection of O.Kovalenko lost its value for lack of sense of proportion or extreme indulgence to secondary works.

Borys Hrinchenko wrote reviews on mediocre or untalented Russian writers. “Avsieienko is abhorrent writer of abject nonsense in belletristic form. It’s worthless to read his works and it’s not necessary. It’s worthless because reading of bad books spoils taste and sometimes views...” [7, 161], - he wrote to sister Apolinaria, reminding philosopher Shopengauer’s words: reading of any mediocre (or even bad) book is harmful. He hadn’t high opinion of historic novels of Lazhechnykov, Zagoskin and tales of Marlinskyi, that, to his mind, “sense only with the exception, waste paper” [13, 119].

The critic dreamt about times, when scores of “Levytskyi, Myrnyi, Kropyvnytskyi and even Strytskyi” will appear in Ukrainian literature [13, 91], when native writing will go out of “child’s period” [13, 91] and will compare with the developed

literatures of the world. Borys Hrinchenko had inherent to study all phenomena and creations of Ukrainian literary life, not only classics that was typical for representatives of cultural school in literary criticism (O.Pypin, M.Tykhonravov, I.Franko etc.). Now the interest to “secondary” literature renewed in literary criticism. It affirms the fact that several dissertations were defended on the topics of “secondary” writers, in particular, about those whom Borys Hrinchenko underestimated, treating them too subjectively or even unjustly: Ia.Zharko, O.Konynskyi, the Dnieper gull, Olena Pchilka etc. Now it’s obvious that, firstly, in literary works of “secondary” line instructions of the epoch can become apparent in the same extent or even more and, secondly, innovations of the great works appear more distinctly in comparison with the literature of secondary writers. That’s why Borys Hrinchenko’s estimations of the works of secondary writers are important now as contemporary’s reaction to literary process, as all know that, contain all written and published in the definite period – from the works of first-rate to the books of mass literature in their perception by readers and critics.