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## ЛИТЕРАТУРНАЯ ДЕЯТЕЛЬНОСТЬ БОРИСА ПАСТЕРНАКА В ЧИСТОПОЛЕ

Аннотация

Статья посвящена особому этапу в судьбе и творчестве всемирно известного русского поэта, прозаика, лауреата Нобелевской премии по литературе Бориса Пастернака во время его трехлетней эвакуации в годы Великой Отечественной войны в маленький провинциальный городок на Каме – Чистополь. Особое внимание уделяется периоду жизни Пастернака, который был ознаменован переводческой деятельностью. Уже через два месяца пребывания в Чистополе поэт переводит пьесу «Ромео и Джульетта» В. Шекспира, а затем и значительный цикл стихотворений Юлиуша Словацкого, поэмы и трагедию «Мария Стюарт» Шиллера. Одновременно он реализует яркий многолетний замысел – перевод «Антония и Клеопатры». Доказано, что наброски и черновые варианты романа «Доктор Живаго», являющегося вершиной его творчества, готовились также в Чистополе.

**Ключевые слова:** Борис Пастернак, переводы, язык, Великая Отечественная война.

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## LITERARY ACTIVITY OF BORIS PASTERNAK IN CHISTOPOL

Abstract

The article is devoted to the special stage in the life and work of the world-famous Russian poet, novelist and Literature Nobel Prize winner Boris Pasternak in his three-year evacuation during the World War II in a small town on the Kama River – Chistopol. Special attention is paid to the period of his life when Boris Pasternak was performing a lot of translation work. Within the first two months living in Chistopol the poet translated the play "Romeo and Juliet" by Shakespeare, and then the great cycle of poems by Juliusz Slowacki, runes, the tragedy of Mary Stuart by Shiller. At the same time he brings to life a great idea he had planned long before – the translation of "Antony and Cleopatra". It is also shown that the sketches and drafts of the novel "Doctor Zhivago" which is considered to be the peak of his creative work, had also been prepared in Chistopol.

**Keywords:** Boris Pasternak, translations, language, the Great Patriotic War.

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**I**ntroduction

During the war, the City of Chistopol by some quirk of fate became a haven for a cohort of over two thousand workers of culture, literature, art, as well as their families.

A special place in the military and literary epic of Chistopol belongs to the world-famous Russian poet, novelist and in 1958 Literature Nobel Prize winner Boris Leonidovich Pasternak.

The name of Boris Pasternak will stay in the history of literature forever. People will always need his spiritual, wonderful and full of life poetry, telling people not only of the common good, but also calling to do good to individuals no matter how small the good may be.

In the creative biography of Boris Pasternak, as in any poet's biography, there are milestones indicating important life changes. A special stage in the life and work of Pasternak were the years of World War II, his three-year evacuation to Chistopol, a small town on the Kama River.

**Method**

Methodology of literary activity researches is based on the analysis of literary sources, historical, comparative and biographical analyses, annotation and quoting, and general philology. The historical and comparative analysis is to discover the author's identity in literary discourse, annotation, quoting help to emphasize the originality of the author's writing style. Biographical analyses is used for the collection, interpretation of the author's life and the archaic documents. We use the historical, comparative and biographical analyses as the base methods of literary researches.

**Discussion**

Life in Chistopol during the war was not easy for the poet, but he was patient and enduring.

Despite the hard working conditions, hunger, the rough and tumble of life in the province, Pasternak felt better as he became more prolific and here he was free as "scary eyes turned away" [7, P. 85] from him. About his living in Chistopol Boris Leonidovich wrote that he lived differently, mostly happily. Happily meant that he lived "as far as possible", "tried to overcome all household emergencies and changes", he told, that he "worked and lived the winter months in his usual way: in vitality and purity..." [8, P. 155]. Nothing could stop him in that respect.

Unlike many writers who had been evacuated, Pasternak saw the Chistopol prison not as a punishment, but almost as poetry. In his letter to A. Pasternak he wrote, that there they were "much closer to the truth than in Moscow. Morally all have taken off the buskins and the masks, are feeling young again, and physically are terribly wasted away ...." (March 22, 1942) [1, P. 77].

Notwithstanding the unbearable cold and the Kama strong winds, Pasternak's creative work kept alive and came closer to reaching perfection. Fate having protected him from the necessity to participate in Great Patriotic War made him a beholder and he did not want to put up with it. He was strongly willing to challenge the life, to rush against it in a notoriously unequal fight, defeat in which was for him grander than victory. Under harsh living and working conditions during the war, the poet wrote articles and a cycle of "Poems and the war" ("Winter is approaching", "Old Park"), he started a cycle of poems dedicated to Marina Tsvetaeva, created translation masterpieces, was involved in

literature and art events, and attended writers' meetings. There he lived a tense social and spiritual life, saying that he had *"to work every day, otherwise I am ashamed of myself"* [10]. These words characterize him definitely.

### Results

Boris Pasternak performed a lot of translation work during the Chistopolsky period. *"My private creative work is over. I have started translating"* – wrote Pasternak many years later about this period of life. This translation activity was connected with personal circumstances: as Pasternak refused to praise collectivization, he could not get his works published, and it was extremely difficult to get his translations published as well. The writer had to earn money; he had to provide for himself and his family. Therefore, Pasternak had brought two translation contracts to Chistopol: "Romeo and Juliet" and a collection of poems by a Polish Romantic poet Juliusz Slowacki.

At the same time he brought to life a great idea he had planned long before – the translation of "Antony and Cleopatra" by Shakespeare which had been requested by the Maliy Khudozhestvenniy Akademicheskii Theatre.

Pasternak's translations are of high artistic quality, they reflect the inner core of what is happening in all its depth. He gave Shakespeare's texts new colors, combinations and patterns. Life in Chistopol, a simple provincial city, free from the hustle and ambitions of Moscow, must have contributed to the translation of the texts in all their *"unprecedented simplicity"* characterized by clarity of expression and a unique *"landscape painting"*. While translating Shakespeare's tragedies, Pasternak sought to be understood by any reader, and translate in his own way so that they were clear to everybody. If Shakespeare's language can be called embellished Pasternak mostly adheres to the "language of a provincial": colloquial expressions, with the use of vocabulary that is slightly sharp, frank, and stylistically reduced which gives the translation the features of national and ethnic mentality. Pasternak's style of translation combined both the desire to *"make Russian poetry"* and the strict adherence to the spirit of the original work.

The fact that Pasternak translated Shakespeare's works during the war was well-known, but only few people knew that he also translated poems (the collection was released only in 1943). Pasternak was accused of *"hiding behind Shakespeare"* [8, P. 160] from the horror of life around him in such a tragic time for the people.

Naturally, during the Great Patriotic War, Pasternak could not separate

himself from the fate of Russia, and performing only translations had become

contrary to all the principles of his life. During his life in Chistopol, Pasternak

dreamt of a real book – of serious prose.

Already during the first months of the war, Pasternak trying to comprehend "the course of centuries" in Russian history, wrote the play "In the Soviet city". Pasternak believed that the play would be an attempt to sketch the first features of a new historical type and the praise which was not caught by the Soviet literature that is the play would be written in a new way.

The content of the play was changed in Chistopol, moreover there the play got a more "speaking" name – "This world". Unfortunately, this piece of work was not destined to be known to the wider audience. The play was destroyed by the author. Perhaps he did not accept it relying on his artistic taste, perhaps its listeners would have been horrified by its "dangerous" content because it was written *"in a new way*

*and freely"* [7, P. 160]. Life in the play is shown without embellishments and evasions. Only the third and fourth scenes of the first act have reached us in a relatively intact form, later voiced in the novel "Doctor Zhivago". The protagonists of the play are Gordon and Dudorov. Later, they will appear in the novel environment of Yury Andreyevich Zhivago, the protagonist of the novel which was not printed in Russia for more than 30 years for the same reasons of displaying free thinking. The author initially predicted that *"the piece would hardly be intended for publishing and for stage. This gave me freedom once and for all ..."* [7, P. 165].

As for the novel "Doctor Zhivago" which is considered to be the peak of his creative work, Pasternak began to write it after the war in 1945 and it took him ten years to create it but the sketches and drafts of the novel had been prepared in Chistopol. The prototypes of the main characters of this unique novel are the citizens of Chistopol, and even the description of houses, streets, landscapes were copied by Pasternak from the city. It seems that the novel even describes the house in Chistopol where he lived: *"This is a house with an adjoined front garden that was located in a black desolated part of the park with an old semicircular alley entrance. The alley was fully covered with grass..."* [9, P. 180].

On June 25, 1943 Boris Pasternak said his final goodbye to Chistopol and went off to war. Chistopol stayed in his heart forever. He himself understood how important the touch of the Russian province was for him as a poet. He missed the "godforsaken town" and all those who were there with him for a long time. He often wrote about this in his letters to V.D. Avdeev: *"As everyone has departed Chistopol, and we will probably not be alive when a new war starts, there seems to be no apparent reason to think about a trip to your city. Meanwhile, especially because I do not cherish the present Moscow ... vividly and with all my heart I really only want to be in Chistopol and Oxford"* [8, P. 91].

For some people Chistopol remained a bitter exile but for Pasternak Chistopol meant returning to real life, it was the starting point in understanding himself.

The genius of Pasternak as a deeply Russian and folk poet and writer is that he, being an urban intellectual, appeared organically connected with his people in the fullest sense of this word because he felt the soul of the people and the soul of the land, which gave birth to this nation. The province "covered with sky as if it were a roof", an "animal-like" way of living in Poshekhonye, the wilderness of Chistopol that "soothes the soul", the charm "of an old book that has been read a hundred times" – all of this inspired him and became an integral component of Boris Pasternak's artistic experience.

### Conclusion

Due to the stay in a simple provincial town Boris Pasternak managed to keep the voice of conscience and inner freedom that were lost by many of his fellow writers voluntarily or involuntarily and most importantly, he was able to maintain and strengthen his moral position that eliminated any compromises. This phase of his life served as a reminder of his mission – to serve the truth and not to be unfaithful to it. He had to inform people about the need of atonement, redemption in this terrible war, which Pasternak considered retaliation and retribution for lying.

These unforgettable years of war during which B.L. Pasternak stayed in Chistopol were perpetuated on the 100th anniversary of his birth, on February 10, 1990, by the opening of a memorial museum in the house where he lived – on Volodarsky Street No. 75 (now Lenin str. No. 84). This is

the first state museum of Pasternak in Russia, which displays his personal belongings saved by the residents. Memorial Museum of B. Pasternak is a subdivision of MBUK 'Museum Association of Chistopol'".

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