The Pioneers Of Russian Women Writers Essay, Research Paper

The Pioneers of Russian Women Writers

Thesis Map: Marina Tsvetaeva and Anna Akhmatova were two of Russia s greatest lyric poets, but the influences of their writing, their lewd love affairs, and how their country perceived them made them very different people.

For years, Russian women have been regarded as incapable of producing great literary works of art.

Such dismissive views of women s writing recur again and again in Russian history, their recurrence being partly explained by the extreme reverence with which educated Russian s regard to philosophical and aesthetic views of the past (Kelly 3).

Yet, two powerful women, Marina Tsvetaeva and Anna Akhmatova, forced Russia to take note of the skill of women writers. Along with other Russian women writers, they helped to pave the way for future women writers. Marina Tsvetaeva and Anna Akhmatova were two of the modern Russia s greatest lyric poets (Dybka), but the influences of their writing, their lewd love affairs, and how their country perceived them made them very different people.

Marina Tsvetaeva was recognized as an excellent poet when she was in her teens (Karlinsky 176). The meaning of her early works were derived form common family, friends, and life problems (175). Years later, as she matured as a writer, Tsvetaeva s theme in her poems reflected the occurrences in her

life. For instance, a poem from Poems to Chekia, Tsvetaeva discusses the effect of events surrounding Communism:

They took the sugar, and they took the clover

they took the North and took the West.

They took the hive, and took the haystack

they took the South for us, and took the East.

–1939, ( Trans. Feinstein 49)

On the contrary, a lot of Anna Akhmatova s writing stemmed form the political issues in Russia. Since Akhmatova believed in Acemeism, a movement that praised the virtues of lucid, carefully-crafted verse and reacted against the vagueness of the Symbolist style which dominated the Russian literary scene of the period (The Academy of American Poets), she was persecuted by the Soviets. Acemeism was not in accordance with the Communist rule (Dybka). During Stalin s rule, Akhmatova s son and ex-husband were arrested; her husband was later executed (Dybka). In hopes of getting her son out of prison, Akhmatova wrote gratifying poems about Joseph Stalin (Dybka). Her effort did not help her son (Dybka).

The relationships Tsvetaeva shared with significant others were not customary. As well as her marriage to Sergei Efron, Tsvetaeva had at least one extramarital affair with Sophia Parnok, another esteemed writer (Is Tsvetaeva a Lesbian Poet ). Her homosexual relationship with Parnok earned her the nickname Lesbian Poet (Is Tsv…). However, Tsvetaeva was not strictly a lesbian, she was bisexual (Is Tsv…).

On the other hand, Akhmatova had extramarital affairs, but they were only with men. Despite her success as a poet, her first husband, Nikolai Gumilev, became very jealous of her success and they had both been unfaithful (Dybka). As a result their, marriage fell apart (Dybka). Tsvetaeva married Vol demar Shileiko following her divorce from Gumilev (Dybka). Like his predecessor, Shileiko was also jealous of his wife s success (Dybka). This marriage did not last either (Dybka).

Initially welcomed by Russian writers and readers living in emigration,

She now faced exasperated editors of the ever-fewer migr journals

who judged her new poetry incomprehensible and therefore unpublishable (Marina Tsvetaeva s Biography).

Many critics did not like Tsvetaeva s work at all, namely, Maxim Gorky. He wrote to Pasternak in 1927, …It is difficult for me to agree with you in your high evaluation of Marina Tsvetaeva s talent. Her gift seems to me shrill, even hysterical. She is not a master of language. Language is her master (Descriptions by Tsvetaeva by those who knew her). Now, her popularity in Russian has increased in recent years (Marina Tsvetaeva s Biography). People admire her because of the tragic loses in her life that she tried to transcend (MTB). Unfortunately, the despair of loosing her family and the lack of motivation to write again was too much to deal with, so she took her own life in 1941 (Marina Tsvetaeva).

Anna Akhmatova was a relic; she represented the pre-Revolutionary Russian the style of writing that consisted of everyday speech and simple language (Dybka). One of Akhmatova s recurring themes in her books is love (Akhmatova, Anna). At the same time, she enjoyed writing about religion (Akhmatova, Anna). Consequently, the Soviets called Akhmatova half nun, half whore (Dybka).

Though Akhmatova was frequently confronted with official government opposition to her work during her lifetime, she was deeply

loved and lauded by the Russian people, in part because she did not abandon her country during difficult political times (Dybka).

Despite their differences, Marina Tsvetaeva and Anna Akhmatova exemplify the courage and strength women need in order to survive in a cruel world. Even though they were often criticized for their writing techniques and subject-matter, they did not let that stop them form doing what they love: writing.

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