

Sukhomlinsky News

No. 58

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A literary canon?

Dear readers,

This month's extract from Pavlysh Secondary School focuses on literature, and on the selection of a list of works to be recommended to students for extracurricular reading.

The selection of works to include in any literary canon will always be contentious and thought provoking and reflect the personal interests and preferences of those compiling the canon. Sukhomlinsky's selection is influenced in part by Soviet ideology, but also by his own broad interests and artistic sensibilities, and no doubt by those of his staff.

A large part of this week's newsletter is devoted to two lists of books recommended by Sukhomlinsky. The first list includes works of literature of the peoples of the USSR. As well as many well-known classics of Russian literature, it includes literature from other languages and cultures in the diverse republics of the Soviet Union. The second list is compiled of works from the remainder of world literature, with an emphasis on Western literature, but with the inclusion of some works from Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America.

Sukhomlinsky managed to ensure there were multiple copies of all the works on these lists in the school library—no small feat at that time.

Best wishes,

Alan Cockerill

Studying language & literature

In this issue we continue to translate extracts from the fifth chapter of Pavlysh Secondary School, on intellectual education.

Mastery of one's native language determines the richness and breadth of a person's intellectual and aesthetic interests. We seek to ensure that teachers of all subjects enrich children's active vocabularies, teach them how to think, how to make use of inner speech, how to express their thoughts orally and in writing. We direct children's thought to what they see, do, and observe. A striving for clarity and precision of thought facilitates the more accurate reflection of reality: students strive to better understand the links between facts and phenomena, to understand their role in the life that surrounds them. To teach how to speak properly is a whole area of educational work, upon the success of which, to a great extent, the spiritual life of the community depends....

....Literature, to use Gorky's expression, clothes ideas with flesh and blood. In literature the subjective factor is of great importance, as social and moral ideas and aesthetic principles, incarnated in artistic form, are deeply reflected in one's personal spiritual world, in one's convictions and actions. A knowledge of literature is closely connected with a person's moral development. Only those for whom literary works have become textbooks for life and a benchmark for morality, truly know literature. In this connection two factors take on great significance: firstly the judicious selection of works for reading and study, and secondly that a teacher of literature should be an educator of character, who understands and senses a pathway for students' moral development. A rigorous selection of works for reading is a significant prerequisite for the formation of rich spiritual interests and personal impulses and of a moral ideal. Thanks to such a selection, students develop an understanding of the most important stages in the spiritual life of humanity.

[Continued on the following page]

Language and literature (continued)

We have already described how a list of books that have entered the treasure house of human culture have been presented in an attractive wall display: two pages, framed with the portraits of great writers (Homer, Shakespeare, Pushkin, Shevchenko, Goethe, Hugo, Dreiser, Jirásek, Mickiewicz, Nexø, Rustaveli). The list is preceded by the following exhortation: 'Students! Here is a list of books that have become immortal and earned a place as treasures of world culture. Humanity will read them forever. You should not just read these books, but reread them, seeking wisdom and beauty, and finding joy and aesthetic pleasure. "Books gather pearls of human thought and pass them on to our descendants. We will return to dust, but books, like monuments of iron and stone, survive forever."' (Oybek)'.

As we attach such significance to the selection of literature for reading during adolescence and youth, we cite this list in full.

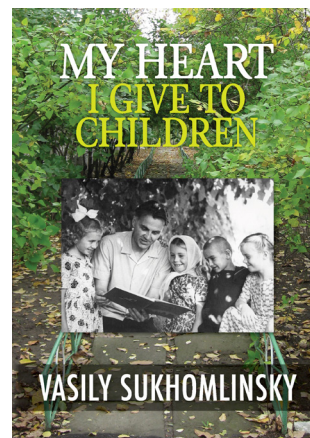
Russian literature and literature of the nations of the USSR:

'The tale of Igor's campaign'; 'The knight in a panther's skin' (Rustaveli); 'Daredevils of Sassoun' (Armenian epic); Ukrainian epic poems; 'Kalevipoeg' (Estonian epic); 'The minor' (Fonvizin); 'A journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow' (Radishchev); 'Svetlana' (Zhukovsky); 'Woe from wit' (Griboyedov); 'Eugene Onegin', 'The bronze horseman', 'Poltava', 'Ruslan and Lyudmila', lyrical poems (Pushkin); 'A hero of our time' (Lermontov); 'Songs' (Koltsov); 'Evenings on a farm near Dikanka', 'Mirgorod', 'Dead souls', 'St. Petersburg tales' (Gogol); 'Letter to Gogol' (Belinsky); 'Fathers and sons', 'Rudin', 'A nest of the gentry', 'Torrents of spring', 'A sportsman's sketches' (Turgenev); 'Who is to blame?' (Herzen); 'Who is happy in Russia?', 'The railway', lyrical

poems (Nekrasov); 'What is to be done?' (Chernyshevsky); 'What is Oblomovism?' (Dobrolyubov); 'The Golovlev family', 'The history of a town' (Saltykov-Shchedrin); 'The storm' (A.N. Ostrovsky); lyrical poems (Tyutchev); 'Crime and punishment' (Dostoevsky); 'War and peace', 'Anna Karenina', 'Resurrection', 'The death of Ivan Ilyich' (Tolstoy); 'Kobzar' (Shevchenko); 'The cherry orchard', 'The three sisters', 'Uncle Vanya', 'The steppe', 'In the ravine', 'Ward No. 6' (Chekhov); 'The blind musician', 'The wood murmurs' (Korolenko); 'Layla and Majnun' (Nava'i); 'Farhad and Shirin' (Nava'i); 'Borislav is laughing' (Franko); 'Blow, wind!' (Rainis); 'Wandering stars' (Sholem Aleichem); 'Forest song' (Lesya Ukrainka); 'Fata morgana' (Kotsiubynsky); 'The poor man' (Ayni); 'The lower depths', 'Mother', 'My childhood', 'My apprenticeship', 'My universities' (Gorky); poems by Aleksandr Blok; poems by Sergei Yesenin; 'Moloch', 'The duel' (Kuprin); 'Songs' (Musa Cälil); 'And quiet flows the Don', 'Virgin soil upturned', 'The fate of a man' (Sholokhov); 'How the steel was tempered' (N. Ostrovsky); 'The young guard' (Fadeyev); 'The road to Calvary', 'Aelita' (Aleksei Tolstoy); 'The fisherman's son' (Lācis); 'The spring of light' (Prishvin); 'The Russian forest' (Leonov); 'Vladimir Ilyich Lenin', 'All right!' (Mayakovsky); poems by Hovhannes Tumanyan; 'The flagbearers' (Honchar); 'The death of the squadron' (Korniychuk); 'At the crossroads' (Yakub Kolas); 'A pedagogical poem' (Makarenko); 'Tsushima' (Novikov-Priboi); 'Sevastopol labours' (Sergeyev-Tsensky); 'The story of a real man' (Boris Polevoi); poems by Suleyman Stalsky; poems by Jambul Jabaev; poems by Galaktion Tabidze; 'Distant countries', 'The blue cup', 'The drummer's

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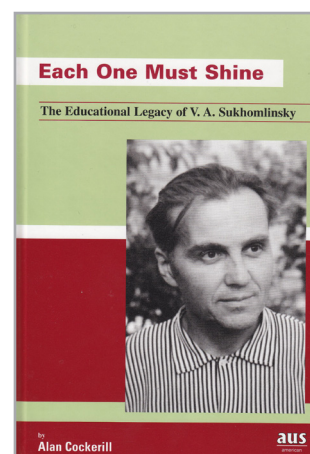
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fate' (Gaidar); 'The story of my childhood' (Gladkov); 'An unusual summer' (Fedin); 'The living and the dead' (Simonov); 'Plutonia' (Obruchev); 'The Andromeda Nebula' (Yefremov); 'Jump into the void' (Belyaev); 'Argonauts of the universe' (Vladko); 'Daytime stars' (Berggolts); 'Silence' (Bondarev); 'Cruelty' (Nilin); 'Vladimir villages' (Soloukhin); 'Not to their liking' (Tendryakov); 'Tanya' (Arbuzov); 'The ice book' (Smul); 'Zoya' (Aliger); 'Dark blue hussars' (Aseyev); 'Blood and ash' (Marcinkevičius); 'Man' (Mieželaitis).

World literature:

'The Iliad', 'The Odyssey' (Homer); 'Prometheus bound' (Aeschylus); 'Oedipus Rex', 'Antigone' (Sophocles); 'Medea' (Euripides); 'The knights' (Aristophanes); 'The Ramayana' (Indian epic); 'The song of Roland' (French epic); 'The song of the Nibelungs' (Old German epic); 'Kalevala' (Finnish epic); 'Edda' (Icelandic epic); Irish sagas; 'Shahnameh' (Ferdowsi); 'The divine comedy' (Dante); 'Romance of Tristan and Iseult' (Bédier); 'Gargantua and Pantagruel' (Rabelais); 'Don Quixote' (Cervantes); 'King Lear', 'Hamlet', 'Othello', 'Romeo and Juliet' (Shakespeare); 'Sonnets' (Petrarch); 'Emilia Galotti' (Lessing); 'Fuenteovejuna' (Lope de Vega); 'Le Cid' (Corneille); fables of La Fontaine; 'Tartuffe', 'The miser', 'The bourgeois gentleman' (Molière); 'Paradise lost', 'Paradise regained' (Milton); 'Robinson Crusoe' (Defoe); 'Gulliver's travels' (Swift); 'Faust', 'The sorrows of young Werther' (Goethe); 'The robbers', 'Intrigue and love', 'William Tell', 'Wallenstein' (Schiller); 'The sin of M. Antoine' (George Sand); 'Songs' (de Béranger); 'Ivanhoe', 'Quentin Durward' (Walter Scott); 'Childe Harold's pilgrimage', 'The prisoner of Chillon', 'Don Juan' (Byron); 'Les misérables', 'The hunchback of Notre-Dame', 'The man who laughs', 'Toilers of the sea' (Hugo); 'The red and the black', 'The Charterhouse

of Parma' (Stendhal); poems by Freiligrath; poems by Weerth; 'Gobseck', 'Father Goriot', 'The magic skin', 'Eugénie Grandet' (Balzac); 'The Pickwick Papers', 'Oliver Twist', 'David Copperfield' (Dickens); 'Vanity fair' (Thackeray); 'Pan Tadeusz' (Mickiewicz); 'Book of songs', 'Germany' (Heine); 'Brand', 'The doll's house', 'Peer Gynt' (Ibsen); 'The blue bird' (Maeterlinck); 'John the valiant' (Petöfi); 'The legend of Thyl Ulenspiegel and Lamme Goedzak' (Charles De Coster); 'Ancient Bohemian legends' (Jirásek); 'Emperor and proletarian' (Eminescu); 'Sentimental education', 'Madame Bovary' (Flaubert); 'The wandering Jew' (Eugène Sue); 'Pillar of fire' (Kinoshita Naoe); 'Germinal', 'L'Assommoir' (Zola); 'A life', 'Bel ami [Dear friend]', 'Dumpling' (Maupassant); 'Tartarin of Tarascon' (Daudet); 'Nobody's boy' (Hector Malot); 'The adventures of Tom Sawyer' (Mark Twain); Hans Anderson's fairy tales; 'Uncle Tom's cabin' (Beecher Stowe); poems by Walt Whitman; 'The deerslayer', 'The pathfinder', 'The last of the Mohicans', 'The pioneers', 'The prairie' (Cooper); 'The headless horseman', 'The boy tar' (Mayne Reid); 'A captain at fifteen', 'Twenty thousand leagues under the sea', 'Captain Grant's children' (Jules Verne); 'Treasure Island' (Stevenson); 'Pan', 'Victoria' (Knut Hamsun); 'The war of the worlds' (Wells); fairy tales by Charles Perrault; 'Children's and household tales' (brothers Grimm); 'Fairy tales' (Wilhelm Hauff); fairy tales by E.T.A. Hoffmann; 'The wreck' (Rabindranath Tagore); 'The True Story of Ah Q' (Lu Xun); 'The gadfly' (Voynich); 'The song of Hiawatha' (Longfellow); 'An American tragedy' (Dreiser); 'The loyal subject' (Heinrich Mann); 'Penguin Island' (Anatole France); 'The Buddenbrooks' (Thomas Mann); 'The Forsyte saga' (Galsworthy); 'Morten the Red', 'Ditte, child of man' (Nexø); 'Martin Eden', 'An odyssey of the north'

(Jack London); 'Jean-Christophe', 'Colas Breugnon' (Rolland); 'Under fire' (Barbusse); 'The good soldier Švejk' (Hašek); 'The mother', 'War with the salamanders' (Čapek); 'Playing with fire' (Pujmanová); 'The Oppermanns', 'The sons / [The Jew of Rome]', 'The Judean War' (Feuchtwanger); 'The seventh cross', 'The dead stay young' (Anna Seghers); 'Notes from the gallows' (Fučík); 'The old man and the sea' (Hemingway); 'Spartacus' (Giovagnoli); 'Ballad to him who sings while being tortured [Gabriel Péri]' (Louis Aragon); poems by Pablo Neruda; poems by Nicolás Guillén; poems by Johannes Becher; 'A heart entrusted to storms' (Khosro Roozbeh); 'The adventures of Werner Holt' (Noll); poems by Julian Tuwim; 'The Germans' (Leon Kruczkowski); 'The good person of Szechwan' (Bertolt Brecht); 'Three comrades' (Remarque); 'Wind, sand and stars' (Saint-Exupéry); 'Georgia boy' (Caldwell); 'The winter of our discontent' (Steinbeck); 'Catcher in the rye' (Salinger).

The vast majority of our students read these books during adolescence and youth.

The power of an artistic image depends not only on how we teach, but also on what motivates community life. If the spiritual life of the community is rich and diverse, if students really know how to read, then the creative work of teachers bears fruit. As they prepare for their lessons, they reflect on what thoughts and feelings should excite the students, on how to direct their reflections. The study of a work of literature begins with independent reading of the primary source. The most striking passages, extracts from major works, are read aloud during lessons.

Literature teaches us how to live, and becomes a textbook of life, because artistic images awaken aesthetic and moral feelings in close association with each other.



Stories

Let me be yours, grandma...

On the edge of the village lives old grandma Marina.

'She doesn't have a soul in the world,' Mariika's mother often says to her three-year-old daughter. Mariika and her mother live across the road from grandma Marina.

Mariika gets up in the morning and sees the grandmother sitting on a chair in her yard, warming herself in the sun, and looking at her.

Mariika runs over to grandma Marina.

'Good morning, grandma.'

'Good morning, Mariika,' answers the grandmother joyfully. 'Sit next to me, my child.'

Mariika sits next to her for a little while and listens to a story, but she cannot sit still for too long. The meadow is calling to her. There are so many butterflies fluttering there. The creek is also calling to her. There is such clean sand on the bank of the creek, and such warm water.

Mariika gets ready to leave, and the grandmother lets out a sigh.

'Why are you sighing, grandma?'

'Because I have no-one to talk to. I'm all by myself...'

'Let me be yours, grandma,' whispers Mariika quietly, and kisses her wrinkled cheek.

'All right, dear, you can be mine,' smiles grandma Marina.

All day Mariika runs in the meadow, bathes, and admires the butterflies, but she does not forget grandma Marina. She runs around the meadow, then runs to the grandmother's yard and whispers, 'I haven't forgotten that I'm yours, grandma!'

Grandpa and Andreika

Andreika is attracted by some dark berries. He climbs up on the mulberry tree and eats to his heart's content, but then it starts raining.

Andreika sits out the rain in the thick branches of the tree. When he is ready to climb down, he notices that Grandpa Petro is sitting under the mulberry tree. He has come out into the garden after the rain in his white shirt, with his hair as white as snow.

'What should I do?' wonders Andreika in alarm. 'If I climb down from the mulberry tree I will shake water on to grandpa. He will get soaked and fall ill.'

Andreika sits there, hugging a branch and afraid to move. He is waiting for grandpa to go inside, but grandpa is in no hurry.

At last he gets up heavily from the bench. He looks up and sees Andreika. Grandpa is surprised and asks, 'What are you sitting up there in the tree for, my boy?'

'I don't want to shake water on to you.'

Grandpa moves away and Andreika climbs down from the mulberry tree. The grandfather hugs his grandson and gives him a kiss.

'Why is grandpa so kind today?' wonders Andreika.

My mother's eyes

I close my eyes and see the eyes of my mother. Wherever I am, whatever I think of, I see them everywhere. In them I see kindness, affection, and love. I am happy when my mother has joyful, kind, smiling eyes. When I come home from school, mum looks me in the eye to see how I am, and sees everything: how I am feeling, whether everything is OK.

But sometimes in my mother's eyes I see sadness, anxiety, confusion. Sometimes I see reproach, hurt feelings... I would surrender all my happiness, just to see peace in my mother's eyes, so that she should not feel sadness or suffering.

My mother's eyes are the first thing I became aware of in the world. They were the first ray of happiness and the first ray of thought. Our homeland begins with a mother's eyes.

I want to be like dad

Three-year-old Sonya is very much like her mother. Everything is just like her mother's: dark blue eyes, black eyebrows, blonde pigtail, a straight little nose, pink lips, long eyelashes. She even has a little black birthmark under her left ear, just like her mother. Sonya even smiles like her mother: screwing up her eyes and lifting her eyebrows very high, as if surprised.

Everyone who comes to visit tractor driver Stepan Petrenko says, 'Gee your daughter is like her mother...'

Sonya is surprised. Why is she not like her father? She asks her mother, who says, 'When you grow up a bit more, you will be like dad as well.'

But Sonya does not want to wait.

Each evening, when Sonya's father returns from work, he washes, changes his clothes, and sits at the table. Sonya and her mother wait for him and they all have supper together.

Today, as usual, Dad comes home, and washes himself in the yard near the well. Sonya goes over to the washbasin and begins to wash herself as well.

'Why are you washing, Sonya?' asks her mother in surprise.

'I want to be like dad.'