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**THE MUTUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF LITERATURE FOR  
DENMARK AND RUSSIA THROUGHOUT THE AGES.  
A DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF THE SOCIAL IMPACT  
AND ARTISTIC AND LITERARY INSPIRATION  
BETWEEN RUSSIA AND DENMARK**

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Through a description of the social impact and artistic and literary inspiration between Russia and Denmark, this article examines the mutual significance of literature for Denmark and Russia throughout the ages. In the article, particular attention will be given to the period 1750-1945. Firstly, during this period, the literature in both countries was designed to the form of literature we know today. Secondly, in these around 200 years began Denmark and Russia to establish literary relations with mutual visits of writers, and thirdly, as well Danes immigrated to Russia as Russians immigrated to Denmark, in the mentioned period. Furthermore, it will be analysed how the literary inspiration has influenced the two countries' artist circles. Here will be distinguished between direct and indirect influence, the former characterized by either the Danish or Russian author's acknowledgement of such an influence and corroborative evidence in his writings and the latter influence going via an author directly influenced by either a Danish or a Russian author, respectively.

**Keywords:** Ivan Turgenev, Hans Christian Andersen, Leo Tolstoy, Ludvig Holberg, Martin Andersen Nexø, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Georg Brandes, Vitus Bering, Alexander Pushkin, Jakob Knudsen, Alexander Sumarokov, Literature, Rasmus Æresboe, Nikolay Karamzin, Maxim Gorky, Denis Fonvizin, Claus Seidelin.

**ВЗАИМНОЕ ВЛИЯНИЕ РУССКОЙ И ДАТСКОЙ  
ЛИТЕРАТУРЫ НА ПРОТЯЖЕНИИ ВЕКОВ.  
ОПИСАНИЕ И АНАЛИЗ РЕЗУЛЬТАТОВ  
ВЗАИМНОГО СОТРУДНИЧЕСТВА ДАНИИ И РОССИИ  
В ОБЛАСТИ ЛИТЕРАТУРНОГО ТВОРЧЕСТВА**

**Кристенсен К.С.**

В статье исследуется взаимное влияние русской и датской литературы через описание многовековой истории сотрудничества Дании и России в области литературного творчества. Особое внимание уделено периоду 1750-1945 гг. Во-первых, в этот период литература обеих стран приобрела современный вид. Во-вторых, в течение этих 200 лет датские и российские писатели выстраивали взаимоотношения. В-третьих, в это время датчане мигрировали в Россию, а русские мигрировали в Данию. Кроме того, в статье анализируется, как литературные интуиции стали источником вдохновения и влияния на творчество писателей двух стран. Разграничивается понимание прямого и непрямого влияния, где первое характеризуется авторскими заявлениями и совместным творчеством, а второе реализуется при посредничестве авторов из Дании и России соответственно.

**Ключевые слова:** Иван Тургенев, Ганс Христан Андерсен, Лев Толстой, Людвиг Хольберг, Мартин Андерсен-Нексё, Фёдор Достоевский, Георг Брандес, Витус Беринг, Александр Пушкин, Якоб Кнудсен, Александр Сумароков, литература, Расмус Эресбо, Николай Карамзин, Максим Горький, Денис Фонвизин, Клаус Сейделин.

**Prologue**

At the end of the 19th century the Swedish professor and literature researcher Henrik Schück (1855-1947) suggested that the Hamlet legend had its origins in Russia. However, this has never been scientifically proven. Other influences of Danish and Russian literature through the oldest times do not exist and until the turn of the 18th century. It has, therefore, no relevance to talk about a mutual direct

influence, even not an indirect influence between literature in Denmark and Russia.

1) The cultural differences, 2) few literary releases of local and not of international interest in both countries in the Middle Ages and 3) the fact that the difference in size between the two countries is so great, that an overview of literary influences is reminiscent of a fable of Æsop (620-564 BC) about a boy and a huge giant, were the reasons for the lack of interaction and influence between the two countries [3, s. 47-48].

Until the 1700s neither Russian nor Danish universities seem to have contact with each other. On the other hand the company of the Royal Danish Society of Sciences was established and in 1742, it established contact with the Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg ten years later. Fifty years before similar links are established with other countries, here is the exchange of fonts with the Russian company. In addition, a relatively large number of Danish scientists were working in Russia, several of them Germans of birth became foreign members of the Danish society. When emphasizing this contact, it was partly due to courtesy of a political alliance, partly because one of the company's energetic members, Christian Gottlieb Kratzenstein (1723-1795) had been employed at the University of St. Petersburg, before becoming a professor in Copenhagen in 1753 [14, s. 134].

Here it is worth mentioning two Danes, a father and his son whose profits in the big country were remembered for a long time. In 1792 father Johan Christian Dahl (1764-1821) after several educations and doctoral degrees in Germany was appointed physicist in Gatchina in the capital St. Petersburg and in 1804 appointed Director of Medicine in the Russian Black Sea Fleet. His son Valdemar (Vladimir) Ferdinand Dahl (1801-1872) was a famous name in Russian philology in the middle of the 19th century. His first work was a dictionary with more than 30.000 Russian proverbs and phrases. Furthermore, in an untiring collection work in the Russian provinces, he later created the first major Russian dictionary with more than 200.000 entries, widely used by the authors of the Russian literary golden age in the late 1800s. Apart from being one of the greatest Russian-language lexicographers ever, Valdemar Ferdinand Dahl was a founding member of the Russian Geographical

Society. In addition, he became a glowing Russian nationalist and was named the “Cossack from Lugansk”. Under this pseudonym, in the 1830s and 1840s, Valdemar Ferdinand Dahl recounted Russian adventures, put in the mouth of a popular narrator, seasoned with often rammed-minded twists and a bubbly mood. All his adventures are now part of the Russian Grimm [14, s. 133].

Furthermore, it was not wrongly claimed that in the 17th and 18th centuries Russia played the role North America was playing in the 19th century. Adventurous and talented young people who could not really develop at home went to Russia to create a career. In addition, Danish, Norwegians and Holsteins poured into Russia, where several of them made significant efforts. It was especially in the newly created Russian Navy that there were chances of earning up. While most of these emigrants belong to the military history, one went for the service of science: Vitus Bering (1681-1741). His famous letters, records, memories and various sources around him were all written in Russian in the 1700 centuries and are therefore on Russian archives today. For several years, the University of Copenhagen has been working on a project in which all these documents and writings are translated into Danish.

### **The 1700s**

The first writings and works of the 1700s from Danish writers about Russia are mostly records, translations, travel descriptions and memories. All writings were based on a Danish audience and received no attention in Russia. Among these writings are the memorabilia and records of the Russian czar Peter the Great and the Russian navy's visit to the Danish city of Nykøbing Falster in 1716 by the pharmacist Claus Seidelin (1702-1782). It was very vividly described how local residents were sent out on the Danish island Falster to harvest grass and stinging nettles along the roads and how they cooked green cabbage with herring in large boilers to the sailors. The herring would add flavour to the soup [3, s. 48].

The first Danish travel description from Russia was written by the civil servant Rasmus Æresboe (1685-1744). He was appointed secretary of the Danish ambassador Just Juel, who was sent to Tsar Peter the Great in 1709. Rasmus Æresboe became an excellent help and in his short-handedness and conduit, he made a good impression of

the not always perfectly comfortable situations they came into. It turned out that the theological candidate could also take a corps and grab the gun in the psychologically at the correct moment. Rasmus Æreboe used his eyes well and when the report, just returned from the return of Just Juel to the king, is so full of valuable information about the situation in Russia, it is due in particular to his well-behaved secretary. Rasmus Æreboe had language skills and learned very well Russian and was very well noticed in the higher Russian circles. A testimony of the depths of his interests is not only his phonetic assumptions, but also his transcript and translation of the Russian law, *Sobornoje Ulosjenije*, from 1649 into Danish, which today is in the Danish archives. When he was mathematically interested, he was particularly absorbed by the Russian coin system, which had already made the ruble divisible by 100 copies. He believed that other countries ought to follow this Russian example, which was the only one satisfying mathematical requirements. He even went on and suggested that all length, space and weight targets should also be subjected to the decimal system. A Russian researcher, who has written about the Russian coin system, suggests that von Haven's ideas inspired Tsar Peter the Great and his comprehensive monetary reform.

The successor to Rasmus Æresboe, the son of a Danish priest, Peder von Haven (1715-1757), came to Russia as secretary and preacher of the Norwegian-born Russian admiral Peter Bredal (1683-1756), and then became a minister at the Danish legation. He wrote in 1743 a great work "Travel in Russia". The book was published again in 1757 and was translated into several other languages. In 1747 he added "New and Improved Intelligence of the Russian Empire". Peder Von Haven was not satisfied with a travel report, but provided a thorough description of Russian conditions on many points [3, s. 48-49; 10, s. 154-155].

However, the first Danish author, who became known in Russia, was the Norwegian-born playwright Ludvig Holberg (1684-1754). The abovementioned travel descriptions were of very great importance to Ludvig Holberg's interest in Russia and he wrote a preface to the Rasmus Æresboe travel descriptions. Moreover, although some later Danish writers were to reach the Russian readers, no one got so much importance for Russian literature as the Danish playwright. The world-famous

Danish storyteller Hans Christian Andersen (1805-75) and the Danish author Martin Andersen Nexø (1869-1954) have been read and are still read by far more readers in Russia, but none of them got such a decisive influence on Russian poetry as Ludvig Holberg. He became a sort of birthplace for the Russian comedy, and the works he inspired came to form the example for later Russian comedy authors. In Russia could Ludvig Holberg measure up to that time's great literary French playwright superstar Jean-Baptiste Moliere (1622-73). Once introduced to the Russian theatre, the Russian "Jean de France" should have a popularity that lasted almost the whole century. It was no wonder that this Holbergian figure became a standing figure in the repertoire, whereas Jeppe, the talkative soldier and the Russian pedant, stood in the shade. Few places in Europe got the Gallomania as many victims as in Russia, where several aristocrats did not even speak Russian to their servants for the simple reason that they could not at all speak or write Russian but only French [3, s. 52-54].

Although Ludvig Holberg's direct influence was raised in the 18th century, it worked through his workers and imitators until the author Nikolai Gogol (1809-1852) and the playwright Alexander Ostrovsky (1823-1886) reached the end of the 19th century. A sign of his constant vitality in Russia is that a few years ago a new edition of selected comedies appeared in the Soviet Union. The Russians founded about 1750 acquaintances with Ludvig Holberg's comedies of "Jean de France" and "Jacob von Thyboe" through German translations. Then he was diligently translated into Russian. Just a few years later in 1757 translations into Russian began on the comedy "Don Ranudo de Colibrados", three years later "Henrik and Pernille". "Jean de France" was translated twice in the 1760s and "Plutus" and "Jeppe of the Hill" existed on Russian stages in 1765 [3, s. 50-51].

Ludvig Holberg was, however, for the Russian intelligence of the time not only the playwright, but like the Danish professor in literature at Aarhus University Adolf Stender-Petersen (1893-1963), who in a number of dissertations has described his influence in Russia as a representative of European rationalism. Therefore, you also found translated parts of his other writings of Ludvig Holberg. In 1761 his moral fables and the history of the kingdom of Denmark were published and in 1766

“Several Great Hero” followed in the next two years of the “Several Heroines”. In 1766 his “World History” came back, which was reprinted in 1797. “General Church History” was translated, but was never published and the Russian manuscript has ended at the Royal Library in Copenhagen [14, s. 136].

Some of his comedies, however, were so distant from Russian understanding of everyday life that they could be neither tolerated nor translated into Russian. For example, Danish religious conditions that were too remote for normal Russian religious conditions. The figure of comedy, Erasmus Montanus, or a Russian figure of an armchair politician or political tinker were both an impossibility or incomprehensible in Russia. Latin culture was not in fashion in Russia at all, and all kind of politics were in the hand of the Russian government, and it was not discussed. Therefore, no Russian armchair politics and no political tinker. Furthermore, neither a talkative barber nor silly and cowardly soldiers were possible comedy figures in Russian literature in the 1700s [3, s. 53].

Even before Ludvig Holberg's own comedies went over the Russian scenes, the first editions of him were available. As early as 1750 Alexander Sumarokov (1717-1777), who for a good reason was called the father of Russian literature of comedies, wrote two comedies, which are adaptations to Russian conditions of Holbergian comedies. The first, “Tresotinius”, largely follows “Jacob von Thyboe”, as it focuses on the pedant and not on the talkative soldier. In the second, “The Monsters”, the Russian “Jean de France” appears to regret that he was born as a Russian. However, neither the two characters in the comedy of Sumarokov, Jacob von Thyboe nor Tresotinus, had roots in the Russian soil. Even a genius like Alexander Sumarokov could not rewrite them to Russian conditions in 1700s [14, s. 135].

Not only Alexander Sumakorov, but also the Russian playwright Denis Fonvizin (1744-1792), who also by reading the comedies of Ludvig Holberg, had a strong impression of his excellent satire. Denis Fonvizin's first comedy “Le Brigadier” was a pendant to Ludvig Holberg's “Jean de France”. In addition, Denis Fonvizin translated several of Ludvig Holberg's comedies as well as prose books to Russian. In Fonvizin's own comedies, he kept the Dane's title hero, the basic features

of the actions, countless replies, and the whole fundamental to characterizing society and the people. Nevertheless, Denis Fonvizin did it all with a Russian background, so the comedies got the right relevance and reality in Russia in the 1700s [14, s. 137-139].

Next to Jean Baptiste Moliere, Ludvig Holberg has had the greatest influence on the development of Russian comedy and many experts do not consider it unlikely that the Danish comedy writer will not be in the first place. Literary connections between Ludvig Holberg and Moliere's comedies and the later Russian environmental comedy, which had to be developed at Nikolai Gogol, should have been demonstrated. For example, in the two plays of "The Government Inspector" and the "Dead Souls". The abovementioned Denis Fonvizin should have just inspired Nikolai Gogol, which was unthinkable without inspiration from Ludvig Holberg's comedies. Nikolai Gogol is also a prerequisite for Alexander Ostrovsky and for Anton Chekhov's (1860-1904) satirical comedies in the late 1800s. In this way, Ludvig Holberg's influence can be traced completely up fashion in the 20th century.

Ludvig Holberg's favourite translator, Jakov Koselskij (1728-1790) was a well-known but not a big name in Russian cultural history. He regarded himself as a child of the European and Russian Enlightenment in the 1700s with Francois Voltaire (1694-1778) as the main inspiration source. He was primarily employed as translator at the court of tsarina Catherine the Great. However, he did not only act as a translator and partly author, but also as a language teacher, ward officer, teacher at the cadet school of artillery and engineering groups and secretary of the Russian Senate. Several of these positions have given him good opportunities to follow and influence the political life of the period. Jakov Koselskij translated, among other things, Ludvig Holberg's "History of Denmark". In the preface, he expressed hope that Ludvig Holberg's work will inspire Russian writers to write a similar historical work about Russia. Nevertheless, in reality, Jakov Koselsky's purpose and purpose is a completely different one. Using this translation, the translator became one of the first in Russian literary circles that introduces political social criticism in Russia [11, s. 175-178].



Ludvig Holberg's book is filled with small footnotes and comments, all of which served as tools in current social criticism in the 1760s. In addition, parts of the history of Denmark are omitted, as in his notes; he criticized several Danish kings for their unevenness and their violent actions against the people and other kings who claimed the throne without actual scientific evidence. The translation was published shortly after tsarina Catherine the Great's accession in 1762 and the hidden criticism of Ludvig Holberg's book focuses primarily on the powers around her and of course herself. The precarious thing in the situation was that the Russian censorship was struggling to find the criticism, as the situation had otherwise been quite serious for Jakov Koselsky, a death sentence had not been unthinkable. In addition, without a doubt, he used the book as teaching material at the various schools he was employed.

The extent to which this societal criticism has been used and its impact in contemporary Russian society is hard to measure or to see the consequences of. Nevertheless, no doubt that the young cadets have been responsive to his criticism of the Russian society in the 1760s and 1770s. On the other hand, it is a measurable fact that Russian historians in the communist era from 1917 and far up in the 1900s were very interested in this first real social criticism in period of the tsars in Russia. Here again, it was interpreted subjectively, as Jakov Koselsky's criticism of the current perception of Soviet historians was a fundamental criticism of the then Russian feudal society. In addition, especially in Lenin's time, it was expected that an outbreak of Jakov Koselsky's nature was inevitable in a capitalist country. In this way, Ludvig Holberg's book was used and misused politically at two tempos. First of the translator and the side of the Soviet period historians. It is probably one of the more surprising features of the history of Danish-Russian literary relations that a work by Ludvig Holberg has been used as evidence of the emergence of capitalism in Russia and as a means of demonstrating the general validity of Marxism-Leninism. In addition, at a time when the word 'capitalism' was as unknown as the word 'mobile phone' [11, s. 194-196].

## **Romanticism (1800-1850)**

In the era of Romanticism the literary influence and artistic contacts between the literary circles in Denmark and Russia seems to be almost interrupted. Nevertheless, in 1789 the first meeting between a Russian historian and a Danish writer took place. It was the creator of the modern Russian literary language Nikolay Karamzin (1766-1826), who met the Danish poet Jens Baggesen (1764-1826) in the Swiss poet Johann Kaspar Lavater's (1741-1801) house in Zurich. They were both out on their romantic and sensitive education trip. The Russian, who had already heard a lot about the Danish poet, through one of Jens Baggesen's friends, was interested in the meeting, whereas the egocentric Dane did not seem to be sorely taken by Nikolay Karamzin. However, they gave each other promise to translate works by the Swiss naturalist Charles Bonnet (1720-1793). None of them kept it. Nikolay Karamzin came home from his great journey to Bornholm, and the view of the Hammershus ruins seems to have inspired him into the hyper romantic tale “The island of Bornholm”. In the story occurred a pale, melancholy and half-confused junior. In Danish he is singing about his unfortunate destiny that could be the one of Jens Baggesen. Also on the day when the ancient naturalist Charles Bonnet in Genève invited them both, Nikolay Karamzin describes in his tale. The story’s narrator, a Russian, rises ashore on the rocky island, where he is told that there is particular sympathy for the Russians because they are the tribal inhabitants of the Bornholm – the island's oldest inhabitants must have been slaves. Romanticism was more or less awakening in the European literature, and new Danish-Russian bonds were indirectly tied. However, you have to go until 1839 to find the first article on Russian literature in Danish scientific journals. In the Danish journal “Brage og Idun”, the Danish critic Peder Ludvig Møller (1814-1865) writes an article about Alexander Pushkin (1799-1837), who died tragically in a duel two years before. The article of Peder Ludvig Møller is very informative and furthermore he translates three poems by Alexander Pushkin [3, s. 55-56].

However, it was not until the late 1840s that the translations of Russian fiction really started. Denmark’s first diligent translator was Edvin Marius Thorson (1816-

1889). He had studied law, but gave up this study and began to study languages like Italian, Russian, Polish and Czech. As a translator his first Russian translations was Alexander Pushkin's novel "The Captain's Daughter" in 1843. Edvin Marius Thorsen continued with the Russian answer to the Scottish writer Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832), Mikhail Zagoskin (1789-1852), of whom he translated six popular images under the title "An Evening at Khopér". In 1855 the Danish translator issued a whole selection of Slavic aesthetic Literature, in which Nikolay Karamzin's "Island of Bornholm", a story by Valdemar Ferdinand Dahl, under the pseudonym K.V. Lugansky, and Alexander Pushkin's short story "The Undertaker". Nevertheless, more importantly, Thorson introduced Mikhail Lermontov (1814-1841) with a translation of his novel "A Hero of Our Time", which made such a big impression on the young Danish critic and scholar Georg Brandes (1842-1927). By Nikolai Gogol had the Danish writer Frederik Schaldemose (1783-1853) in 1847 translated the novel "Taras Bulba". In addition, Thorson added Nikolai Gogol's novel "Evenings on a Farm near Dikanka" [14, s. 140-141].

However, it does not seem that any of the translated Russians novels or short stories made a greater impression on Danish readers. Neither the anonymous translation of a few of the narratives of Ivan Turgenev's "Sketches from a Hunter's Album", which came in 1856 under the title "Russian Sketches" in Denmark, was remarkably noted. Nevertheless, Ivan Turgenev was the Russian author who was to exert the strongest influence on Danish literature. With the inspiration he gave Danish writers in the last third of the last century, the Russians paid back much of what they had received from Ludvig Holberg.

### **Ivan Turgenev – the 1870s**

Even though it would be unreasonable to make a real placement between the three major Russians writers Ivan Turgenev (1818-1883), Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910) and Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821-1881) in Danish literature, it may still seem strange that it was the least significant of those who played such a big part for it literary development at home. For although there is no doubt that both Leo Tolstoy and Fyodor Dostoevsky reached much further and took their minds to a much greater

extent than Ivan Turgenev, none of them got the literary historical significance that Ivan Turgenev had. It has also been important that Ivan Turgenev was known at home before they arrived [13, s. 54-55; 16, p. 17-18].

The Danish translator Hans Peter Holst (1811-1893) translated some of Ivan Turgenev's short stories and novels around 1870, but the actual introduction of the Russian writer and his realism was the Danish writer Vilhelm Møller's (1846-1904) translation of the German literature researcher Julian Schmidt's articles about Ivan Turgenev in the first issue of the new Danish scientific journal "Nyt Dansk Maanedsskrift" in 1870. Moreover, it was Vilhelm Møller, who from 1871 through the next 20 years by his conscientious and artistically translated translations and revisions of Ivan Turgenev (through German) created the prerequisites for the Russian poet to put such a deep mark into Danish literature. However, when these translations became so powerful in Danish poets, it was not only because Ivan Turgenev was a great writer who had found an excellent translator but also that he was introduced at the right time. He began to fill the void in Danish literature that had arisen after the romance had exhausted its possibilities at home and was sunk down in the epigone [6, s. 52-55; 14, s. 141-142].

What Ivan Turgenev brought, was realism, that at one time satisfied the demand for a more earthy truth, yet did not raise anxiety because it carefully avoided vulgar and crazy contexts. His prose's mark was accuracy in the description, which ran parallel to the scientific science of the time. The psychological insight and character study were characterized by precision. In addition, Ivan Turgenev's comprehensive figure, the superfluous person, 'the totally complete person', as the Danish writer and poet Holger Drachmann (1846-1908) translated it into, had to appeal to a Danish youth, who was in rebellion but could not break all the bridges. Ivan Turgenev introduced different types of contrast. The weak man against versus the strong woman should therefore become a main motive in Danish poetry, introduced by the Danish writer and novelist Jens Peter Jacobsens' (1847-1885) in his famous novel "Fru Marie Grubbe" to the Danish writer Harald Kiddes' (1878-1918) novel "Aage og Else". In the style it was inspiring the impressionist, mood-based

situation description and the Ivan Turgenev fascinated already the breakthroughs of the seventies. The Danish literature researcher Johan Fjord Jensen, who owes us an outstanding piece of work “Turgenev in Danish Spiritual Life”, has demonstrated that the stylistic revolution in Jens Peter Jacobsen's novel “Mogens” has gained his impetus in Ivan Turgenev.

Furthermore, the novel “Niels Lyhne” by Jens Peter Jacobsen is not the only novel or short story with the title figure and the problem, the generations contradictions, derived from Ivan Turgenev's ancestors and sons, but also with many other threads associated with the great Russians. The deepest marks of Ivan Turgenjev, however, carry Holger Drachmann, who, in lots of his works and writings introduced most of the Turgenev's features in Danish literature. Just from the works and writings of the Danish writers Vilhelm Topsøe (1840-1881), Sophus Schandorph (1836-1901), especially in his novel “Without a Centre” and the Danish Nobel Prize winner Karl Gjellerup (1857-1919) and in a straight line until Herman Bang (1857-1912) reflect the Russian influence. This could also be seen when comparing the Danish writings with several of Ivan Turgenev's works. When comparing Herman Bang's novel “Katinka” with Ivan Turgenev's novel “Home of Gentry” chapter for chapter can be found to be consistent. The entire structure of Herman Bang's excellent novel rests on his Russian model. Ivan Turgenev also played a small part in the 1890's Naturalism in Denmark. He became the incentive to the two Danish poets Viggo Stuckenberg (1863-1905) and Johannes Jørgensen (1866-1956), because of Ivan Turgenev is at once precise and elegantly coloured landscape images. Johannes Jørgensen's announcement that “Sketchers from a Hunter's Album” was a literary Bible that always lay ahead, so do not wonder. Finally, Turgenev was a teacher of the Danish engineer and philosopher Ludvig Feilberg (1849-1912) when he built up his natural philosophy.

### **Leo Tolstoy – the 1880s**

Leo Tolstoy was introduced in Denmark with the short story “Polikushka”, translated by Vilhelm Møller in 1875. Around 1879, the novel “Family Happiness” was published and in 1880s followed major world famous novels like “War and

Peace”, “Anna Karenina” and the translations of the moral writings. Since the 1880s, there has not been a year that has not brought new translations or publications of new versions of one or two of Tolstoy’s works. However, it is more his mythical figure, his passionate quest for truth, his service, which has spoken in Danish literature, than the artist and excellent writer of Leo Tolstoy. Perhaps his great novels, while spreading in vast panoramas, focus on quite a few problems had their significance for the Danish Nobel prize winner Henrik Pontoppidan (1857-1943), who knows that in his youth the great Russians took him up, first and foremost Leo Tolstoy and Fyodor Dostoevsky [13, s. 49-53].

Nevertheless, it is far easier to demonstrate how Leo Tolstoy's ideas have caught or contradicted Henrik Pontoppidan himself has in his novel “Muld” opposed violently against Leo Tolstoy's dream of returning to the earth and the primitive life, while Johannes Jørgensen, in spite of many reservations, understood his fatigue by the doubt and his bow to God, who was the only one who could free him from the horror of nothingness that nailed him all his life. Johannes Jørgensen understood it because it gave reverberation in himself. He returns to Leo Tolstoy repeatedly. Georg Brandes, on the other hand, had no ear for it, and how many admirable words one finds in impressions of Russia, partly in the articles of Tolstoy’s true faith, his historical imagination and epic art, it is clear that Tolstoy’s spirit is Brandes’ stranger. Leo Tolstoy's flight from home and his death at the Astapovo train station near Lipetsk made a huge impression in Danish literary circles. The Danish writer and critic Helge Rode (1870-1937) wrote lots of poems and writings that were inspired by the works of Leo Tolstoy. In his play “Count Bonde and his House” Helge Rode transferred Leo Tolstoy’s figures directly in his play. The result that of this transplant was not successful, Leo Tolstoy became transformed, as says an article about Leo Tolstoy and Denmark, to something between a village schoolteacher and a peasant from a local farm.

The world-famous Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) also played a smaller part in Russian literary circles in the 1870s and onwards. Russia was one of the first countries in the world where his works were translated. This

acquaintance with Søren Kierkegaard stems from the entry in 1871 into the service of the Northern Telegraph Society in Omsk of a Danish writer and translator, Peter Emmanuel Hansen (1846-1930), who lived in Russia under the name of Peter Gotfridovich until 1917. Having learnt Russian, Hansen began at the end of the 1870s to translate the works of Scandinavian writers. The interest in the Danish philosopher dates back to a correspondence between the abovementioned Peter Emmanuel Hansen and Fyodor Dostoyevsky in 1885. In his article of 16 October 1885, Peter Emmanuel wrote that he had translated Søren Kierkegaard's article "For Self-Examination", the first part of which "deals with the question of how the Gospels should be read. It is intended for Protestants but might after rewriting also be useful for the Russian reader". Very tellingly, for the Russian writers' perception of the Danish philosopher, it took about half a year before Leo Tolstoy responded to the Dane [15, s. 128-130].

In 1890 Peter Emmanuel Hansen travelled to Yasnaya Polyana, the manor and library of Leo Tolstoy, near the city of Tula. First, because his translations of Søren Kirkegaard's works, had a lot in common with the spirit of Leo Tolstoy. Even though the Dane had brought along several new translated books and Peter Emmanuel Hansen and Leo Tolstoy had long talks, Søren Kierkegaard has passed by Russia. So although we can find influence of Kierkegaard's existentialistic philosophy in some Russian philosophic writings the following years, neither in philosophical, nor in Russian literary circles, the Danish philosopher has gained a real foothold. Therefore, in contrast to the widespread interest in the post-war existentialists, relatively little attention has been devoted to Kierkegaard's play with ethical and aesthetic values in Russia, but it can nevertheless be affirmed that Kierkegaard has had a very definite effect on Russian thought, especially on its so-called "religious-philosophical" tradition [9, s. 183-186; 15, s. 128-130].

### **Fyodor Dostoevsky – the 1890s**

Fyodor Dostoevsky was one of the few of the very famous Russian writers that visited Denmark. Around 1854 the author visited Copenhagen after his involuntary exile in Semipalatinsk in Siberia. Here he visited his friend Baron Alexander

Wrangel, an admirer of his books, who had attended the aborted execution. They have met each other in Semipalatinsk, where Baron Wrangel was governor. No Danes in Copenhagen had the slightest idea that the lean and pale person who followed Baron Wrangel around the streets in the inner city of the Danish capital was one of the world's greatest geniuses as author in human depictions [5, s. 55-56; 13, s. 30-33].

Fyodor Dostoevsky began to appear in Danish literature and artistic circles in 1884. In that year Holger Drachman's sister Erna Juel-Hansen (1845-1922) translated the famous novels "Poor People" in 1886, "Humiliated and Insulted" in 1887, "The Idiot" and in 1889 "The Brothers Karamazov". Soon his smaller and lesser-known works also was translated and published in Danish, but it was only in the 1920s, that Dostoevsky was translated directly from the original language. The Danish translator and author Einar Thomassen (1881-1977), who also translated Dostoevsky's letters, performed this work and he wrote a passionate book about him. Dostoevsky's influence is even more hidden than Leo Tolstoy's. Dostoevsky has what one could almost call a very faithful congregation in Denmark and it has not diminished over the years. However, he was good for strangers and too strange, a spirit of too big dimensions, that his work could be a direct trace [4, s. 150-151; 7, s. 38-39].

The direct influence of Fyodor Dostoyevsky you will find in the poetry and novels in the end of the 1890s. In the novels "Asmadaeus" and "Hjemfalden" by Viggo Stuckenberg and "The Mill" by Karl Gjellerup. Other authors like Holger Drachmann, Jakob Hansen and Jørgen Nielsen are all very much inspired by Fyodor Dostoyevsky and his exploration of human psychology in the troubled political, social, and spiritual atmospheres that is very visible in their authorship.

### **Hans Christian Andersen**

The first and only Danish author of the 19th century, who directly influenced Russian literature, was the storyteller Hans Christian Andersen. Maxim Gorki has told how he, as a child, had read the wonderful adventures. In the communist era several Russian politicians and artists taught themselves Danish to be able to read Hans Christian Andersen's tales. Every day in the 1920s and the 1930s his tales were



performed at theatres, especially for children in Moscow. The adventure teller was an important part of the school's teaching materials in these decades

However, his first book in Russian was the novel "Improvisatore". It was abbreviated from Swedish and was published in 1844. The poet himself owned a copy of this translation and furthermore one in German. The Danish author was not fond of these translations. Nevertheless, Hans Christian Andersen could stay calm, for Russia's leading critic Vissarion Belinsky (1811-1838) had said in his review that the translation was very good. On the other hand, he was barely satisfied with the novel, which he thought could be read by young men and girls when they were not taken care of. He compares Andersen's portrayal of Italy with George Sands and exclaims: "The poor Andersen is getting hurt". In Russia one should also envy him. Vissarion Belinskij would by no means believe that there should be no poetic genius in Adam Oehlenschläger's (1779-1850) country. A Danish author that was more famous than Hans Christian Andersen in the beginning of the 19th century [14, s. 146-147].

One of the first Russians who understood to appreciate Hans Christian Andersen was Leo Tolstoy. On 1 January 1857 at a dinner with his friend the Russian essayist Vasily Botkin (1812-1869) he read his own translation of "Emperor's New Clothes", but as it did not fall in the friend's taste, he destroyed the translation. However, he always remembered this adventure, and as late as his 1910 year of death, he writes in his diary: "The revolution closed the eyes of the Russian people for how unfair it was treated. It is the adventure of the emperor's new clothes" [8, s. 62-63].

In 1863 the first edition of the adventures was published in a second edition in 1867 and expanded with a new volume in 1868. Furthermore, in 1868 two literary and philanthropic ladies Nadezhda Stasova (1822-1895) and Maria Trubnikova (1835-1897) wrote to Hans Christian Andersen about how popular he had become in their country of birth: "The Russian audience loves these "Story and Adventure", whose author is rightly considered to be the greatest poet of today". The letter was written in a dictionary, which appears from a passage a little further down: "This

company that ladies prays you most highly, honorable Mr. Professor, kindly wishing to receive attached copies of the Russian translation of your "adventure" as a sign of our sincere admiration to your rare talent, and also our gratitude for the poetic pleasures which Russia's rising youth and male years owe you" [14, s. 146-147].

Like other places in the world Hans Christian Andersen in Russia became first and foremost the children's possession. Illustrated booklets with one or more that the adventures are published year by year in a series of hundreds of thousands. These are both translations of Russian and more than thirty of the Soviet Union's numerous minority languages. But it has been difficult to get Andersen recognized as an author also for adults. Several Russian writers, such as Konstantin Paustovsky (1892-1968), the great old man of the Soviet literature, who wrote a very beautiful essay about Hans Christian Andersen, regrets that the adults do not see double-bound in the narratives. A particularly popular feature of the Soviet writer Eugenie Schwarz's (1896-1958) dramatization is that more than one of the fairy tales has come.

### **The 1900s**

Various Danish writers have sometimes enjoyed some popularity. At the beginning of the century Herman Bang and Henrik Pontoppidan were translated. Later the Danish author Karin Michaëlis (1872-1950). However, it is only in the very last years of the 1930s that there was a growing interest in Danish literature in the former Soviet Union. It has among other things evoked translations of Jens Peter Jacobsen's "Marie Grubbe" and Henrik Pontoppidans "Lucky Per". In the 1930s and 1940s modern Danish writers, including Hans Scherfig (1905-1979), Hans Kirk (1898-1962), Hans Christian Branner (1903-1966), Kjeld Abell (1901-1961), Hilmar Wulff (1908-1984), Knuth Becker (1891-1974) and Tove Ditlevsen (1917-1976), were all published into Russian. Lot of the authors were, furthermore, either member of the Danish Communist Party or they had communist sympathies.

The Danish critic and essayist Georg Brandes (1842-1927) was also, albeit in another way and in another format, an intermediary between Russian and Danish and between Russian and European spiritual life. His "Mainstreams" have been read in Russia with the same enthusiasm as in the other Slavic countries, for which he for

many years stood as the symbol of the best of Western European culture. A testimony of his Russian popularity is that his “Total Works” in 20 volumes translated by the Danish writer and translator Peter Emanuel Hansen (1846-1930) and his wife in the years 1906-1914 were published in two editions. His own reverence for Russia was not very big at first. It was Georg Brandes who once said that a square meter on the Roman Forum in Rome had a bigger story than the entire Russian empire. However, his journey in 1887, as he portrayed in “Impressions from Russia” (1888), revised his views to a certain extent. This book is still one of the best, if not the best, any Dane has ever written about Russia and Russian spiritual life. Although several of Brandes' assessments, such as of Leo Tolstoy and Fyodor Dostoevsky, are exceedingly subjective and characterized by the author's own position, few have been able to say so many important things about the country and its literature as Georg Brandes in this well-written book.

Georg Brandes learned to know several of Russia's leading personalities. To Peter Kropotkin (1842-1921) he was linked to a friendship that lasted for life. In a letter from 1905, Brandes wrote to Kropotkin for the revolution: “Enfin le peuple est éveillé, enfin on entrevoit L'Aurore de la Russie”. When Kropotkin returned to Russia in 1917, Brandes welcomed him with the following words: “C'est un grand bonheur pour vos amis de vous savoir enfin dans votre propre pays, libre et honoré...” However, his attitude towards the turn of the revolution in November 1917 was more negative and after the revolution he lost his interest in Russia [1, s. 275-280; 12, s. 36-38].

The second Danish writer who had influenced Russian authors directly and indirectly is Martin Andersen Nexø. He was already translated into Russian before the First World War, when the three volumes of the novel “Pelle the Conqueror” was published in a Russian journal. But his Russian breakthrough happened first in the 1920s. His novels, travel books and article collections came in a flowing stream and he was recognized as one of the great proletarian writers in the beginning of the 1900s. Martin Andersen Nexø was often mentioned in the same breath as Maxim Gorki. Strangely, the two authors, whose fate had so many similarities, only meet

each other in Gorki's last few years. Soviet criticism took Martin Andersen Nexø as one of its own. Soviet's first Minister of Education Anatoly Lunacharsky (1875-1933), who was also an excellent Marxist critic, celebrated Martin Andersen Nexø as a poet, who had gone into the great modern literature from the depths of the people. Lenin also appreciated his description of the workers' movement. In the 1950s Martin Andersen Nexø's total works in Russian were published in 10 volumes in a stock of 75,000 copies. In an act "The European Chronicle" as the famous Soviet dramatist Aleksel Arbusov (1908-1986) wrote in 1952 a readily recognizable portrait appears to Martin Andersen-Nexø under the name of Edvard Lyhne [3, s. 72-73; 14, s. 147].

Of the other Soviet writers only two have influence on Danish literature until 1945: the Nobel Prize winner Mikhail Sholokhov (1905-1984) and Ilia Ehrenburg (1891-1967). The Renaissance, which the Russian literature saw in the 1920s, almost passed by the Danish literary circles, except that Fyodor Gladkov's (1883-1958) novel "Cement" raised its mind when it appeared in 1927. Remembering Ilia Ehrenburg's more journalistic than poetic production has been of interest, but certainly his memories. Mikhail Sholokhov's novel about the fate of the Cossacks during the First World War and the Revolution *Tales of the Don* got an unprecedented success in the early thirties. That in this case it was not a 24-hour reflection, showing the constant reprint. Mikhail Sholokhov has acknowledged this popularity by conducting more visits to Denmark, where the admirer of the Russian steppe and rivers found an admirer in the Danish baroness and author Karen Blixen (1885-1962) at her manor Rungstedlund [2, s. 253-262; 7, s. 40-41].

### **Conclusion**

Many histories and literary works, which shaped Europe in the end of the 1800s and around the year 1900, could not have been written without taking into account Russia and Russians authors. Literary periods like Romanticism, Realism, Naturalism and Modernism would not have been possible without Russian literature. Therefore, the direct influence of Russian authors on Danish literature is so obvious in the end of the 19th century and that even though the contacts and visits of Russian authors in Denmark and vice versa were very rare. Especially Ivan Turgenev and to a

lesser degree, Leo Tolstoy and Fyodor Dostoyevsky, were very influencing and inspiring Danish literature fundamentally and changed Danish literature forever. On the other hand, in the 1700s and during the communist era in the 1900s, however, there was no direct influence from Russian literature on Danish literature.

The biggest Danish influence on Russian literature took place in the 1700s in the era of the playwright Ludvig Holberg. He has directly influence on Russian literature in many decades. This is well in line with the fact that there was much contact between the two countries in the 1600s and 1700s. In all realms of the Russian society, Danes could be found: in trade, crafts, the navy and in science. In the later centuries only two Danish writers could put their mark on the Russian spiritual life: Hans Christian Andersen in the 1800s and Martin Andersen Nexø in the 1900s. Not even the famous philosopher Søren Kierkegaard could leave his marks either in Russian philosophical or literary circles, but anyhow from 1880 until 1945, a considerable number of Danish novels and works were translated into Russian.

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