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**VSEVOLOD SOLOVYOV'S OEUVRE IN THE SCIENTIFIC DISCOURSE
OF THE LAST DECADE OF THE 20th CENTURY**

Karpina O. S.

Candidate of Philological Sciences,
Associate Professor of the Department of World Literature
Horlivka Institute for Foreign Languages
SHEI "Donbas State Pedagogical university"
olena.karpina@gmail.com
orcid.org/0000-0002-4045-9938

АНОТАЦІЯ

Карпіна О. С. Творчість Всеволода Соловйова у науковому дискурсі останнього десятиріччя ХХ століття.

У статті розглядаються погляди сучасних дослідників на творчість Всеволода Соловйова – відомого російського історичного романіста ХІХ–ХХ століть. Установлено, що рецепція спадщини письменника літературознавцями

XX століття значно відрізняється від оцінок художнього методу белетриста сучасниками. Автором представлений аналітичний огляд деяких наукових робіт О. П. Ауера, Є. Вагіна, О. М. Шерман та А. В. Лексіної, написаних у 1990-ті роки. На основі аналізу розглянутих у статті праць виявлено недосліджені авторами грані великої творчої спадщини романіста.

Ключові слова: науковий дискурс, історична проза, белетристика, вальтер-скоттівський історичний роман, поетика, хронотоп, пенталогія.

SUMMARY

Karpina E. S. Vsevolod Solovyov's Oeuvre in the Scientific Discourse of the Last Decade of the 20th Century.

The article deals with the views of contemporary researchers on the creative works of Vsevolod Solovyov – a famous Russian historical novelist of the turn of the 19–20th centuries, whose artistic works that had been forgotten for about 70 years “return” to the reader only at the end of the 20th century. It is determined that the writer’s heritage reception by the literary scholars of the 20th century differs greatly from the assessments of the fiction writer’s artistic method by the contemporaries. Analytical review of some scientific works by A. P. Auer, E. Vagin, E. M. Sherman and A. V. Leksina is presented by the author. Their appearance in the 1990s indicates a renewal of interest in the novelist’s works of the professional researchers. It is due to these works that the writer’s name begins to fit into a wide historical and literary context. On the basis of the analysis of the papers reviewed in the article the verges of Vs. S. Solovyov’s extensive creative heritage uninvestigated by the authors are revealed. They are correlation between the historical fact and the artistic invention in the novelist’s historical prose, peculiarities of the author’s transformation of the Walter-Scott’s model of the historical novel, specificity of recreating the historical flavor by the fiction writer, historiosophical problems of “The Chronicle of Four Generations”, typology of the characters, imagological motives of the pentalogy. The genre originality of the family chronicle and the peculiarities of the representation of

the artistic time as the chronotope component of the writer's historical novels also require clarification.

Key words: scientific discourse, historical prose, fiction, Walter Scott's historical novel, poetics, chronotope, pentalogy.

The problem statement. Vsevolod Sergeyevich Solovyov is a famous Russian fiction writer of the turn of the XIX–XX centuries, the author of numerous historical novels. Despite great fame and readers' recognition literary and critical reception of his heritage by the contemporaries was rather ambiguous. Characteristic of the prose writer's literary activity by N. A. Engelhardt, A. A. Izmailov and P. V. Bykov was extremely positive. A. M. Skabichevsky and N. N. Sokolov, on the contrary, evaluated it negatively and spoke disdainfully of the novelist's artistic method. In the articles by K. P. Medvedsky who often wrote under the pen name K. Petrov diametrically opposite evaluations of the writer's oeuvre are presented.

In 1917 – a year of two Russian revolutions – the complete works of Vsevolod Solovyov in forty-two volumes accompanied with an introductory sketch by P. V. Bykov about the novelist's life and oeuvre were published. Since then, Solovyov's works were not issued for a long time and his popularity was gradually fading away. "He was not considered to be a forbidden, anti-Soviet writer, but it was as if disdainful evaluations of the prerevolutionary liberal democratic journalism put an end to all his oeuvre," wrote V. B. Muravyov [4, p. 244].

Soviet readers did not need Solovyov's novels. It was caused by the radical change of the social and political situation in Russia along with which new artistic trends came. Historiosophy of the revolutionary democrats who planned the global reorganisation of the world denied the past as such. Many historical facts were carefully hidden by them from the public. In addition, the novelist was inclined to idealise many Russian monarchs depicted on the pages of his novels, while tendentious criticism demanded that the past should have been depicted in black colours as justification and substantiation of the revolutionism.

Analysis of the recent researches and publications. At the end of the XX century, after many years of oblivion, Vsevolod Solovyov's oeuvre "returns" to the reader. A new stage of understanding his heritage began. The scientific approaches to the writer's works changed substantially. In the 1990s many prose writer's historical novels were republished and accompanied with biographical sketches, introductory articles and afterwords which characterised his oeuvre from a different perspective. Thanks to their authors – A. N. Sakharov, V. B. Muravyov, T. F. Prokopov, S. Sirotkin, I. Vladimirov and others – the writer's literary reputation was reconsidered.

S. Sirotkin calls Solovyov a brilliant representative of the so-called "cheap popular genre meant for mass demand which became widespread in the late seventies of the XIX century" [6, p. 5]. However, unlike K. P. Medvedsky and A. M. Skabichevsky, who stressed the artistic imperfection of the novelist's historical prose with the help of the epithet "cheap popular", the author of the preface uses it in a completely different meaning and implies a wide readership.

Doctor of Historical Sciences, Professor A. N. Sakharov in the shortcomings of the fiction writer's artistic method which were pointed out by the critics saw its advantages: "I think that his artistic weak points noted by the criticism were, to a certain extent, the writer's strength. It is this enthusiasm, passion and <...> straightforwardness in the depiction of his characters that attract, in addition to other strong points of his oeuvre, readers to him" [5, p. 9]. The scholar evaluated the works of the writer, who knew the historical material perfectly, extremely high.

In the 1990s the first research works, both entirely dedicated to the investigation of a particular aspect of the novelist's extensive creative heritage and those which contain only a few references to him, appear.

The purpose of the article is to give an analytical review of the most considerable scientific works written within the indicated period and to reveal the verges of the novelist's creative heritage uninvestigated by their authors.

Presentation of the main material of the study. A. P. Auer in his book "Saltykov-Shchedrin and poetics of the Russian literature of the second half of the

XIX century” (1993) notes an impact of Saltykov-Shchedrin’s poetics on Vs. S. Solovyov’s artistic system. In the author’s opinion, Solovyov comprehended the satirist’s creative heritage through criticism with its further artistic interpretation: “<...> at the beginning there is a critical delving into Saltykov’s oeuvre and then on the basis of this fictional revision of certain devices and motifs takes place” [1, p. 61].

Vs. Solovyov’s article “New stories of Mr Shchedrin under the general title ‘Well-meaning speeches’” is a critical essay on “Golovlyov’s subject” in which two story lines – the development of Porfiry Golovlyov’s character and the fate of his niece Anninka – are considered. It should be noted that the writer used successfully satirical exaggeration – the most widespread device of Saltykov-Shchedrin’s poetics.

In the novelist’s prose Shchedrin’s traditions were reflected in the narrative “The Old Man”. Solovyov’s character, like Shchedrin’s Little Judas, is ready to do anything for the sake of multiplying his wealth. Pushkin’s tradition is also obvious which is indicated by the corresponding reminiscence in the text. Since “genetic connection with the tragedy ‘The Miserly Knight’ comes through with great evidence” in “The Golovlyovs”, A. P. Auer makes an assumption that “it is Saltykov who brought Solovyov closer to Pushkin’s experience and suggested him a fair idea: it is impossible to become proficient in this tragic theme without Pushkin” [1, p. 63].

The development of Solovyov’s narrative plot almost completely duplicates the final collision of Shchedrin’s chronicle which draws the reader’s attention to “Little Judas’s torturous return to the human world” [1, p. 63]. Only being on the threshold of death, the old man is ready to say goodbye to his wealth which estranged him from people. But awareness of this fatal error comes too late: “There is no doubt that this Solovyov’s tragic grotesque is firmly connected with the final grotesque in ‘Golovlyov’s’ chronicle where life and death met in the last duel” [1, p. 64].

The scholar pays attention to the fact that there are also Shchedrin’s motifs in the final part of Solovyov’s pentalogy – the novel “The Last Gorbatovs” (1886). All the characters of “The Golovlyovs” “were met by Solovyov with an aesthetic delight” [1, p. 62], but it is the image of Anninka that made the strongest impression on the fiction writer. In fact, Grunya repeats the dramatic fate of Shchedrin’s heroine:

“passion for the theatre – disappointment – return home”. The community of plot and style bring both novels together, but the narrative manner slightly differs. Thus, Saltykov accompanies the story about Anninka’s theatrical life with a detailed description of everyday life, sometimes resorting to naturalization. Solovyov avoids detail and dissolves it in the subtext, retaining only a satirical metaphor – “the breath of everyday banality” [1, p. 64].

The article by E. Vagin “Vsevolod Solovyov and Vladimir Solovyov” (1994) deals with the problem concerning the interrelations between the brothers, each of whom, according to the author, “has played a significant role in the history of Russian culture” [2, Vol. 1, p. 195]. In the focus of the researcher’s attention is their common interest in the problems of mysticism. Analysing Vs. Solovyov’s mystical dilogy, including the novels “Magi” (1888) and “Great Rosicrucian” (1889), E. Vagin makes an assumption that the writer’s younger brother could be the prototype of the novels’ main character, Prince Zakhariyev-Ovinov. Some essential features of the philosopher’s personality, such as pursuit of the universal, are traced in the image of the Prince. Their reflections about the meaning of love coincide (the fiction writer’s novels are compared with the corresponding series of his brother’s articles). Portrait similarity is avoided by the author.

Count Cagliostro is sort of Zakhariyev-Ovinov’s “double” in the novel. The literary scholar sees in this fact a certain impact of F. M. Dostoyevsky’s poetics. The Prince’s cousin – father Nikolai – acts as his antipode. The opposition of two characters is, according to the author, “one of the main story lines of the novel and kind of predetermines Zakhariyev-Ovinov’s spiritual evolution” [2, Vol. 1, p. 203]. At the end of the dilogy he comes to the truly Christian conclusion: light without warmth, that is knowledge without love, is nothing, the heart is above the mind.

The Ukrainian researcher E. M. Sherman in her Ph.D. thesis “The artistic specificity of the Russian historical novel of the second half of the XIX century and the problems of the genre development” (Odessa, 1998) singles out four trends of the fictional historical novel of the 1870-1880s:

- 1) realistic novel (G. P. Danilevsky, M. M. Filippov, E. P. Karnovich);

- 2) semi-realistic novel (E. A. Salias, N. A. Chayev, D. L. Mordovtsev);
- 3) romantic, or Walter Scott's novel (Vs. S. Solovyov);
- 4) semi-historical, or Dumas's novel (M. N. Volkonsky).

The given differentiation is based on the similar division of the historical novels of the 1830s into three trends (didactic, romantic and realistic) depending on the tasks which were set by the authors [9, p. 6-8].

The first two trends singled out by the researcher came into existence under the influence of L. N. Tolstoy's oeuvre and are characterised by a sufficiently high degree of innovation. Representatives of the romantic historical novel were guided by the model created by "the father of the genre". In E. M. Sherman's opinion, it is Solovyov's oeuvre where Walter Scott's type of novel receives "the second wind."

In the article "Russian historical novel of the 1870-1880s: tendencies of development and problems of research" (1999) the literary scholar explains the phenomenon of the fiction writer's popularity by the fact that when creating his works, he relied not only on Walter Scott's novels but also on the contemporary realistic novels and the best examples of the classical literature. "The Scottish magician's" oeuvre underwent significant transformation in Solovyov's novels, but one of the most important principles – a serious attitude towards the history – is preserved by the fiction writer. His works are based on historical facts, consequently, they are written for the purpose of educating the readers [8, p. 79-80].

Summarizing the characteristics of the writer's heritage, the author of the article notes: "Solovyov's novels are a peculiar 'typical example' of the fictional novel, its peak and the beginning of the recession at the same time <...> After Solovyov Walter Scott's pattern can exist only at the lowest levels of the literary hierarchy – Solovyov's novels were its 'final rise' within the bounds of high-quality fiction" (my translation – E. K.) [8, p. 80].

In the article by E. M. Sherman "Vs. S. Solovyov's historical novel 'Tsar-Maiden' and Pushkin's tradition" (1998) the degree of influence of A. S. Pushkin's oeuvre is investigated by means of comparing his historical drama "Boris Godunov"

and Vs. Solovyov's historical novel "Tsar-Maiden". The author retraces the mechanism of the artistic borrowing and notes the presence of the direct reminiscences in the latter. The scheme of the main ideological and moral conflict of "Boris Godunov" is almost completely realised in the work of the fiction writer who used Pushkin's text as a model. Continuing Pushkin's tradition, Solovyov blames Princess Sophia who came to power through a bloody coup. The conflict is considerably simplified in comparison with Pushkin's creation. As a result, "philosophical tragedy turns into a banal story about the repentant sinner" under the novel's pen [7, p. 104].

The end of the XX century is marked by the defence of A. V. Leksina's Ph.D. thesis "Vs. S. Solovyov's historical prose (genesis and poetics)" (Kolomna, 1999), that is the appearance of the first major scientific work dedicated to the novelist. The purpose of the research is "identifying genetic connections of Vs. Solovyov's artistic system with individual works of Russian and foreign prose of the XIX century and analysing his poetics peculiarities in the context of the literary process of the 1970–1990s" [3, p. 7].

The author of the research motivates the necessity of considering the writer's biography by the fact that the biographical context predetermined some aspects of his works' poetics. In the literary scholar's opinion, factors of literary succession, that is the impact of the predecessors' and contemporaries' literary heritage on the fiction writer's historical prose, are more significant. That is why they are studied in detail.

The literary scholar divides genetic connections of Vs. Solovyov's historical prose into three types: contact, contrast and conflict. The division is based on A. S. Bushmin's conception. The predecessors' impacts are subdivided, in their turn, into direct (quotations, reminiscences, succession in the plot and composition structure) and indirect (indirect familiarization with this or that writer's oeuvre through assimilating artistic principles of the other).

A. V. Leksina singles out two trends of Vs. Solovyov's familiarization with the predecessors' heritage. The first trend comprises the writers the majority of whose

works are dedicated to the modern times and only some of them are written in the genre of the historical novel or story (A. S. Pushkin, N. V. Gogol, S. T. Aksakov, L. N. Tolstoy, F. M. Dostoyevsky, E. Zola, E. Bulwer-Lytton). The second trend includes historical novelists (K. P. Masalsky, V. I. Miroshevsky, E. A. Salias, G. P. Danilevsky). Interaction of Vs. Solovyov's historical prose with the artistic systems of Pushkin, Gogol, Aksakov, Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky is realised according to the contact type. Familiarization with Zola's traditions is realised according to the conflict type. Bulwer-Lytton's ideological and aesthetic views are assimilated according to the contrast type.

In the scholar's opinion, the impact of Walter Scott's oeuvre on Solovyov's historical novels was indirect: "If W. Scott's impact really took place, it was only at the level of genre forming and in terms of the adventure plot development in Vs. Solovyov's novels" [3, p. 75]. It is generally known that in the novels of the genre founder the main heroes are fictional characters. In Solovyov's works, on the contrary, historical figures come to the fore.

The author gives several striking example of creative reinterpretation of the historical events, described in the fiction writers-predecessors' novels, made by Solovyov.

The conceptions of N. M. Karamzin, S. M. Solovyov, the ideas of F. M. Dostoyevsky and V. S. Solovyov influenced the formation of Solovyov's historiosophical views. According to A. V. Leksina's observation, "both historiosophical views which can be defined as genetically dependent on the predecessors and the writer's own historiosophical constructs which emerged on the basis of all the previous cultural and philosophical heritage assimilation are combined in Vs. Solovyov's historical prose" [3, p. 99]. This observation is of particular interest to us because it is very closely related to the subject of our research.

The leading part in Vs. Solovyov's artistic method is assigned to everyday life description which is characterised by "detailing, a thorough description of the material and spiritual life objects, a frequent use of dialogues, discreteness and

mosaicity of the holistic picture of the world made of diverse everyday life scenes” [3, p. 68]. The purpose of the detailed everyday life description is “to reproduce the cultural background of the epoch, to convey a moral lesson learned from the history to the reader” [3, p. 157].

A distinctive feature of Solovyov’s historical works is “tendency to cyclization, uniting all the novels’ historical outline into a continuous stream of historical development” [3, p. 115]. The novelist’s retelling summary of the previous works of the cycle, that is the device of flashback, is indicated by A. V. Leksina via the term “summary method” [3, p. 117]. Solovyov kind of makes a summary of the novels which were created earlier, thereby reminding the reader of these or those events depicted in them.

Most of Solovyov’s works are written in the genre of the novel-chronicle. The pentalogy “Chronicle of Four Generations” is close, to a certain extent, to the genre of the epic novel because it “covers successively a whole epoch through the history of several generations of one family” [3, p. 102].

A. V. Leksina notes the following peculiarities of the poetics of “Chronicle...”:

1) There are all the components of the cycle – genre, ideological and thematic, stylistic, plot community, “prevailing” characters, successive depiction of the historical epoch.

2) In the poetics of “Chronicle...” the epic principle becomes apparent at the level of the depiction of “the history <...> of many human fates during a long period of time” which is, according to the definition of the epic, one of its fundamental characteristics.

3) The primary genre formation which structures the novels’ poetics is “family legends” [3, p. 118].

The peculiarity of the chronotope recreation in Vs. S. Solovyov’s historical prose is considered in the research. The historical time in his novels is discrete and inseparably linked with the biographical one. The artistic space is closed. A special

function is performed by the chronotope of the road and the chronotope of “the salon”.

The stylistic dominants of the novelist’s historical prose are descriptiveness and psychological insight (in the sphere of the depicted world) and also the use of historicisms, archaisms, substandard vocabulary, proverbs and sayings, idiomatic expression (in the sphere of the artistic speech). The leading syntactical figures are repetitions, rhetorical questions and addresses.

Research conclusions and perspectives for the further investigation.

Review of the scientific works considered above allows us to reveal the following aspects of the novelist’s creative heritage uninvestigated by their authors: correlation of the historical fact and artistic fiction in Vs. Solovyov’s historical prose, peculiarities of the author’s transformation of Walter Scott’s historical novel pattern, specificity of the fiction writer’s historical colour recreation, historiosophical problems of “Chronicle of Four Generations”, typology of the characters, imagologic motifs of the pentalogy. Genre originality of the novel-family chronicle and peculiarities of representation of the artistic time as the writer’s historical novels chronotope component also require specification.

At the beginning of the XXI century literary scholars’ interest in Vsevolod Solovyov’s creative heritage, especially in his historical novels, increases considerably, which is indicated by a number of defended Ph.D. and doctoral theses and published monographs and also numerous articles that analyse various aspects of the writer’s oeuvre. A detailed study of Solovyov’s oeuvre reception in the scientific discourse of the XXI century has helped us to outline the vectors of our further researches which are connected with the examination of the novelist’s historiosophical conception.

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