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INTERPRETATION OF HISTORY IN THE NOVEL BY N. KOROLEVA “QUID EST VERITAS?” (“WHAT IS TRUTH?”)

To understand the creativity of N. Koroleva in general and each of her works, including the novel “What is truth?” you have to pay attention to the writer’s views to the most general problems of the past, which differ by notable individual identity. Brought together, they form a certain integrity, which can even consider the system – as a sort of spontaneously, subconsciously established, though not drafted accordingly to historical concept. If we talk about it in general, it should be noted that this system of views on the basis of historical essays of N. Koroleva, in particular, the novel “What is truth?” is definitely focused on legendarization of events of the past, their withdrawal for narrowly framed causal understanding and perception. The basis for such legendarization is not introduced to the text of the novel from “outside”, but logically grow on the soil of the historical narrative where author emphasizes the image of the original historic colors and saturation, and, perhaps, even partial, encyclopedically marked oversaturation of historical realities.

Under the oversaturation in this case, we should understand the presence in the text of work, starting even from each individual sentence, a large number of little – or even unknown to the “average” reader things and details, without a proper understanding of the contents of which it is not available to understand the meaning of the whole sentence or narrative fragments.

Significant, even from a purely quantitative indicators, part of novel space is filled with dialogues, descriptions of everyday details and pictures of the material world that gives a general impression of concentration of the narrator in the object-event side of image. But the first reading quickly reveals its limitations, gives an indication only of the external aspect of the ideological and figurative content that it is not limited.

On a deeper level of reception, the novel of N. Koroleva detects known from the experience of world literature different epochs of indispensable principle detection in everyday – eternal, the correlation of today with the history of humanity and eternity. As history, the author understands not only a certain set of documented information, but everything which was managed to become a legend for centuries and millennia, Koroleva perceives legends as information, as they are more reliable than any documents.

Events, objects, persons, in most cases, she elevates above realistic-household level of everyday life, enriches and complicates mythological or mystically-fantastic pathos. Fiction as revealing of the supernatural, in the existence and reality of which we can believe or not, complements the legend, gives it a new sound, as well as additional semantic layers and brings it to a qualitatively new level.

Visible and always present at any level, in any element of the ideological figurative contents of the work is also symbolic stream-oriented Christian model of the world. The symbolism of Koroleva’s work is distinguished by its depth, originality and correlation, as

well as Christianity, with historical attributes and realities, that is “materiality”. Symbolic, as shown by subsequent events described in the novel, exists in one of the first scenes of the work in which the architect Eventsyi during the earthquake was killed in his own amphitheater, which was transformed under the action of the elements (by the way, the section is called “The Movement of the Elements”) into an artificial lake.

Eventsyi quickly flies into the pool-lake and disappears forever in whirlpool that was formed on the place, where arena had been just situated. At the end of the novel, the same as Eventsyi, who had involuntarily dived under the influence (or, perhaps, pressure) into water, also Pontius Pilate died. He died to be reborn soon. It is significant that he will fly into the raging river as quickly as Eventsyi.

Any episode of work, regardless of its first reading, breaks up in the end as a component of the overall picture, which is based on the author’s interpretation of the past as the legendary days on the verge of prehistorical epoch and new time. Thanks to this, events and images of the novel acquire universal sound and content, begin to be perceived as a kind of a model, on the basis of which it develops everything, that was before.

For N. Koroleva legend, regardless whether it is the gospel or oral poetic, includes the most accurate picture of the past events. Thus, the writer specially emphasizes that all events and phenomena which are described in the novel, “are lit from the point of view of the contemporary world and it is not Christian, but pagan or Jewish” [2, 8]. This clarification reveals another characteristic of the author’s view of what is happening in this work: the discrepancy between the world of the gospel narratives and the world pagan concepts and beliefs, which, in principle, must give the novel the category of historical form of a certain dialectical integrity, although, of course, internally contradictory. “Legend is not history, it is not a paradox, as one of the later scholars said, one legend has more truth than history. The thing is to be able to extract the truth, as the metal from ore” noticed I. Franko [4, 11].

Obviously aware that for “normal”, that is unprepared reader, reliability of legendary events may appear questionable, the author of the novel “What is truth?” builds a system of documented scientific, which corresponds to each chapter of the novel. For the writer with her concept of the past it is very important to convince reader in “historicity” of the information, events, details. It is no coincidence, that quite often in her footnotes-annexes to the main text of the novel the author clearly specifies: “historical fact” [see, for example, footnote 22 and 29 Section 1, footnote 6, 8, 9, 19, Section II, etc].

At the same time, N. Koroleva does not exaggerate the role and importance of documented or recorded facts and information in history, which she gives to confirm certain moments of the main narrative. She notices that it is a story not a testimony of the witness, it is text where art still dominates. In N. Koroleva’s work gospel myths become history, and the function of myths perform legends and oral translations of the people and nationalities of her native Spain and southern France.

The novel “What is truth?” is built on the events of the past epoch, it often referred to as “prehistorical”, having in mind the lack of documentary written sources or too specific character compared to those sources that are considered “normal” in our “historical” time. Almost every one of those events allows the multiplicity of interpretations, provides for the

possibility of ambiguous understanding, filling various content, placement in different both synchronous and diachronic context.

M. Syrotiuk noted that “the problem of the historical truth connected with the ideological positions of the writer, his understanding of the past, his political likes and dislikes. What he saw in the past, how he understood historical sources, how he perceived and assessed the existing facts <...> – from this depends how he will depict historical phenomenon, and how the objective historical truth will be reflected in his work” [3, 49].

Offering own interpretation, N. Koroleva actually builds a coherent system of views and beliefs which is clear and finally emerges a general picture of the life of Jews during the reign of Pontius Pilate and the coming of the Messiah who radically changed the whole world. An important element of this picture should be the realization by the writer significance of the mystery of Christ for mankind. In only one fragment of the tragedy of the distant Roman province contains, according to N. Koroleva, the main formula of human life, destined to maintain its relevance and reliability over the next millennia.

The essence of this episode is, according to the author’s idea, in the material and spiritual conflict where the leading role belongs to the past. Extremely significant is the fact that the writer understood her work as “...an attempt to cover a part of the spiritual atmosphere that happened almost 2000 years ago...” [2, 8], this is implemented in the novel by various means, including an extensive system of biblical characters, which in the author’s interpretation stand as historic figures.

Images of almost all characters of the work are solved thanks to archetypes: each of them is interpreted as a timeless, universal model of collective consciousness, that manifests the ability to reproduce in new conditions. All her images are based on certain traits, that were characteristic to the heroes of the oral folklore of the European and Oriental nation.

The concept of the past in the novel “What is truth?” includes two, almost equal elements. One of them is the recognition of all events and persons described in the sacred Christian texts in real life, regardless of how they in their entirety (including, for example, elements of fantasy and mysticism) understandable and acceptable from the point of view of modern, predominantly logocentric views.

The second deals with the understanding of the events that are the basis of the plot lines of the novel as a specific temporary space that unites the distant past with modern times. N. Koroleva’s novel occurs at the intersection of global ideas and high impulses of the author, her quest of “eternal” values, truths, and specific historical world, in which her heroes live and act. Considering the peculiarities of the concept of the past of the novel “What is truth?” and the nature of the actual historical material, would be more accurate to define the world of her characters, not as a “concrete-historical”, but as “abstract-legendary”.

Truth, Faith, Love, Fear, Loneliness, Death along with some other concepts of metaphysical character, in N. Koroleva’s interpretation, become an ontology “frame”, the basis of human existence, and in some cases the final goal. Most of them are inextricably linked to each other: Faith becomes unreachable without Love, Truth dilutes and disappears without Faith, and, as a rule, leads to a deadlock without overcoming Fear, Loneliness, and

sometimes Death. But the essence and perception of them, in accordance with the author's concept of N. Koroleva, do not change over time, they stay very important for each individual, human collectives, and all mankind.

The writer do not differentiate the past and present events, they are, in her opinion, homogeneous, even when they are different. The past seems to be specific to a certain extent "distorted" (i.e. modified) continuation of the past, and present, in turn, is a continuation of the past. This understanding of the time continuum and historical process focuses author, first of all, on general terms of different eras, but not on what distinguishes them.

The basis of perception and understanding by N. Koroleva of the past is rules of the Bible as the most universal introduction of the system of views and beliefs, which were and remains for a large part of humanity the most adequate and relevant (also very interesting question is choosing one of the existing interpretations of biblical texts).

The N. Koroleva's concept of the past is primarily the concept of a person who is seeking the Truth and Faith. In art judgement of any of the events and phenomena of the environment writer comes from the personality and returns to its, appreciating all that has happened, from the individual point of view. At all levels of this concept, from understanding general regularities and processes of the global scale to look at a person and his private problems, the writer's concept remains holistic, individually particular, though and with a certain internal contradiction, it is absolute and does not pretend to cause discussion, however, it is difficult to formulate it as a clear and concise formula or specific set of formulas.

So, for example, proposed by the author in one of the fragments of the text formula: "There is no eternal Death, as there is no eternal Life", only at first glance may seem like the one that in the framework of the narrative claims to universality. Actually it, like many other expressions of a similar type, performs different functions, brings to the text clearly noticeable philosophical stream. The phenomenon is always more multifaceted from formula that supposedly reflect its essence, and, realizing this, N. Koroleva spends a lot of effort to describe, not focusing specifically on generalizations and searching of aphoristic statements.

Some of the statements of the concept of the past, which were offered and defended by N. Koroleva, complement and develop others. Final conclusions and indisputable truths do not exist for N. Koroleva, except those that have arisen from the postulates of the Christian doctrine of the Faith as a specific condition of the human consciousness that determines the essence and main characteristics of the person.

In its basis the concept of the past by N. Koroleva looks as subjective and idealistic, in this aspect it interferes well with storylines of the novel space. In the writer's opinion on the past, there is something, you may say, from Socrates, according to whom "I know that most things in human life and in the world are unknown and incomprehensible for me".

For N. Koroleva the world of the past remains unknowable until the end. Even Faith is not able sometimes to explain some of the things that are on the verge of real, fantastic or mystical. The writer says a lot of what, in her view, could cause the reader to some

difficulties in interpretation, however, does not seek to take on herself the role of omniscient commentator and a single interpreter of events.

However, despite the undeniable presence in the novel "What is truth?" "Socratic" start, leaning on which the author does not only describe, but as deeply as possible and clearly explains. In most cases such explanations appear when it comes to the characteristics of the inner feelings of the heroes, what happens in the depths of their consciousness or even the subconscious and what is not possible to reveal with the help of plastic descriptions.

The world of the novel is notable for a high degree of integrity. Everything that happens in it unfolds not chaotically, but orderly in accordance with its own domestic laws of temporary space, where one event logically and convincingly follows another, and predetermines the third. The interdependence of events in most cases is not only chronologically lined, but to some degree it has cause and effect character.

A large number of events that play an important role in the development of the plot, served in the novel not by direct descriptions, but through the perception of these events by those or other characters, that is often retrospective. It is in this way presents the reader with, to say, the court of Pontius Pilate over Rabbi Halyleiskyi, dinner of Rabbi in the house of Lazarus and his sisters, the resurrection of the Rabbi and the disappearance of the body from the tomb, the resignation of Pontius Pilate, etc.

The majority of characters of the novel refers to the type of tragic heroes, both due to the peculiarities of their inner world and the external circumstances of life: such as Pontius Pilate and Claudius Procula, to include many other heroes of different levels, that are present in the novel. The author interprets the life as pain, frustration, fear, even in the short moments as relative happiness and peace can see only the episodes that separate one disaster from another. The fates of many of the heroes of the novel are tragical, especially those that are related to the camp of the enemies of the Faith and Messiah. At the same time, those who were lucky enough to learn the Faith and believed in the teachings of Rabbi Halyleiskyi, overcame the tragedy of existence, opened new horizons and new opportunities beyond the purely physical existence: for example, when from the words of Rabbi or from the meeting with him recovered the sick and the blind received their sight.

N. Koroleva willingly enters into the text of her novel scenes and episodes, where it is said about such an unusual from the point of view of positivist views laws of existence of the world, in particular of the Truth through the acceptance of Faith in the omnipotence of the Messiah and of his divine origin. You can say that as in all N. Koroleva's works, there is a clear feeling of a priori and undeniable tragedy of the world and individual life personality in her novel "What is truth?".

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