

A. AVERCHENKO - THE SATIRIST OF THE SILVER AGE

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ABSTRACT

The article is devoted to the work of one of the prominent satirists of the early twentieth century, A. Averchenko. The main attention is focused on the early works of the satirist and on the study of critical articles by V.P. Polonsky, who was one of the first to recognize the giftedness of the satirist, revealed the features of his work. And also the place and role of A. Averchenko in Russian satirical prose are determined.

KEYWORDS: *Literary Critic, Russian Literature, Short Story, Satire, Humor, Type, Hero, Themes, Problems, "Satyricon".*

INTRODUCTION

This work, in our opinion, is of interest, since the literary activity of A. Averchenko is little studied and unknown to a wide range of readers, and at present, the course "Literature of the Russian Diaspora" has been introduced in higher educational institutions at philological faculties.

Arkady Timofeevich Averchenko (1880 - 1925), one of the recognized classics of Russian satire of the first third of the twentieth century, from 1908 to 1913 A. Averchenko was the editor and author of the popular magazine "Satyricon", and from 1913 to 1918 - "New Satyricon".

The satirist worked very fruitfully. From four books in 1910 to nine editions in 1913 were published per year. Only from 1910 to 1920, in ten years, 40 collections of short stories were published in Russia and 13 books abroad. His collections were published in large editions and reprinted many times.

Since 1920, Averchenko's works have not been reprinted in Russia, and only during the Thaw period in the 60s of the twentieth century did his name reappear. In 1962, the story "A Rat on a Tray" was published, and in 1963 a short film of the same name based on this story was made (director and screenwriter Andrei Tutyshkin). A number of works of the satirist were published: in the journal "Science and Life" in 1964, the story "Occult Sciences", in 1965 - "Telegraph Operator Nadkin" and others. Since the end of the 20th century, a special interest in the work of the "king of laughter" has reappeared, studies of the activities of A. Averchenko have appeared, numerous editions of his humorous and satirical stories in print, books in online reading, and audio books have become popular.

There are studies of A. Averchenko [1], D. A. Levitsky [2], V. D. Milenko [3], L. A. Spiridonov [5], A. Khlebina [6]. This article contains critical material of his contemporary V.P. Polonsky

[4], who was one of the first to highly appreciate the stories of the satirist and called him “the king of laughter”.

V.P. Polonsky, a talented and sensitive literary critic of the early twentieth century, was able to recognize the talent of novice writers, identify the features of their work and predict that they would take their rightful place in literature, predetermining their future fate, among them was the satirist of the Silver Age A .Averchenko.

Before becoming a writer, Averchenko changed many professions, and in 1908 he became a secretary and then editor of the new magazine Satyricon. And here his talent as a satirist is clearly manifested with his own view and style of depicting events and heroes in humorous stories.

And therefore, the release of two collections by A. Averchenko, a still unknown writer, under the title “Humorous Stories”, published by “Satyricon” and “Stories” - “Wild Rose”, made a special impression on V.P. Polonsky, and he gives them a high rating: “I'm afraid to be partial to this writer, I'm afraid to exaggerate the scope and depth of his talent. But right, rereading his stories, this is not the first time (most of them were published in the Satyricon and other publications), I am convinced that these books represent a major literary phenomenon” [4, p.98].

According to the observations of critics and writers of contemporaries A.Averchenko, V.P. Polonsky, M.A. Kuzmin, K.I. Chukovsky, A.I. Kuprin, A. Averchenko's humor, on the one hand, is associated with the traditions of M. .Henry, from another early AP Chekhov.

In the article "Laughter and bitterness" in 1910 after the release of the above stories, V.P. Polonsky writes: "Both of them ... speak of the author as a major literary force, which, perhaps, is destined to become the Russian Twain..." [4, p.98].

So, we see that V.P. Polonsky, one of the first critics, noticed that Averchenko's humor has much in common with Mark Twain's humor: he is also good-natured and contagious. The critic emphasized the amazing variety of plots, inexhaustible imagination, resourcefulness, pictorialism, riskiness - and all this is at ease, with remarkable ease and rare tact, and great persuasiveness, and most importantly, fun, funny, witty.

The literary critic was able to identify the features of Averchenko's humorous stories, in most of which there are no funny events, humorous plots characteristic of an anecdote. “That’s what Averchenko’s natural humor affects,” Polonsky notes, “that in many actions, phrases, habits that are so ordinary and natural for us, he manages to see the funny side without stretch, and, most importantly, to show us this funny in such a way, that we, too, cannot help laughing and wondering how we ourselves did not notice this” [4, p.98].

V.P. Polonsky subtly noticed another feature of the satirist: in his books, humor did not turn into simple sneer, which speaks of the great artistic tact of the writer.

The critic emphasizes that in two small books Averchenko presented a whole gallery of living, unforgettable people, absurd, outlandish, sometimes incredible, sometimes sweet and gentle, and with such art over several pages he reveals the human soul, and so probably and believably, incredible things happen with him. and implausible things - that you admire with admiration this craftsmanship, laconic and colorful, in which there is nothing superfluous, where everything is in place.

Polonsky notices an interesting feature of Averchenko and the ability to create convincing and plausible things from the most implausible situations. This is precisely the comic of many of his stories. And it is written in such a way that the reader believes him and does not notice the author's invention. Considering the characters of Averchenko's stories, Polonsky emphasizes the individuality of each of them, their dissimilarity to others, living their own lives, speaking their own language. Will it be a drunkard, horrified by the monotonous hum of a lantern, or a young "Hottentot - Kolya Kinzhalov - who fits entirely in one phrase: "Pardon-s, pardon-s, let the lady go ahead" in the story "A trip to the theater", or "glorious child", capable of infuriating with his pranks. Each hero has his own soul, his own psychology - and many times you have to marvel at the variety of images flashing in books, and the richness of observations, the accuracy of the language, expressive, concise and free.

Another feature in the works of the satirist is that he does not have a specific pre-set goal. Everything is accidental, unexpected, and this is explained by the gift of Averchenko and therefore "his stories can be called crystals of laughter, they are all so distinct and beautiful" [4, p.102].

The writer's work is multifaceted: these are lyrical, psychologically subtle stories, and a tendency towards the "theater of the absurd".

The subject matter of the stories is amazingly diverse. In the works of the "king of laughter", as he was called, the life of Russia, a big city, is displayed, all its negative aspects of life are ridiculed: law and life, bribe-takers and hypocrites, human vices, relationships between fathers and children, inherent in our time.

The bright talent of A. Averchenko is so necessary for the reader and so many joyful experiences can bring him that it is extremely annoying to lose him, especially since, in addition to all the positive aspects, laughter is also a powerful tool in the fight against all sorts of vulgarity, narrowness, which are still found in our reality. The satirist sees the funny and laughs at it. But at the same time, Polonsky is concerned about whether Averchenko will be able to notice what is not funny in life, but sad, terrible, outrageous, which no longer causes laughter, but anger and indignation. And, as time has shown, Averchenko the satirist justified the hopes of V.P. Polonsky: the writer ridiculed the ridiculous aspects of real life, and thus his work is still relevant today.

Thus, A. Averchenko made a significant contribution to the development of satirical prose of the twentieth century, and V.P. Polonsky played a certain role in the development of the writer, one of the first to determine the features of his humor.

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