



## PHILOSOPHICAL AND AESTHETIC ESSENCE OF RUSSIAN ROMANTICISM

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### ABSTRACT

*This article provides an interpretation of the aesthetic features of the creativity of major representatives of the Russian classical school of romanticism, creativity.*

**KEYWORDS:** romanticism, aesthetics, art, tragedy, folk poems, truth.

### INTRODUCTION

Romanticism as an artistic method of aesthetic knowledge of life was formed in the continuation of the entire development of the culture of mankind. Romanticism as a method was expressed in understanding the world in the form of heroic folk poems, fairy tales and extraordinary stories, establishing the possibility in relation to reality, the uniqueness of the situation and human personality, the integrity of man and nature, the philosophy of the human soul and idealization of the depicted themes. European romanticism in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, as the best example of the romantic outlook, influenced the formation of the aesthetics of romanticism. This romanticism was expressed in traditional and institutionalized artistic methods.

### MAIN PART

It would seem from all of the above and, based on the totality of other features, it is possible to introduce certainty into such a complex phenomenon as romanticism. However, all the same, the definitions of romanticism are either very general and abstract, or they lack something. "There are several formulas of romanticism, but there is still no one that would be approved by all literary historians and would cover all the rest."<sup>1</sup>.

When generalizing to the majority of scientific research, in particular, the theory of art, research on the scientific heritage of artists, poets and writers, it becomes obvious that they paid attention to a kind of methodological aspect of romanticism. As a result of this, countless studies have arisen related to strong English, Russian, American, French and other varieties of romanticism.

In most cases, the clarification of the definition of romanticism was carried out

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<sup>1</sup> М. Горький о литературе. - Москва, 1953. – С. 311.



pointlessly, events and phenomena were considered, excluding their essence, that is, romanticism was interpreted not as a specific method of artistic understanding, but as a set of certain features. This method is not a full-fledged understanding of this term, but a designation of a circle of predetermined phenomena.

According to L. Timofeev: "The romantic art form ... is associated with the concrete assertion of the aesthetic assessment of truth by artists, with its comparison with their aesthetic ideals and denial or determination of the correctness of one side or the other ... In romantic art, there is a tendency to the desire to reveal such aspects of life genres that the artist cannot yet compare with real life, but wants to clarify, the desire to reveal those aspects that corresponded to his ideal was protruding. That is why, in romanticism, the power of criticism of reality and a sharp avoidance of real life have always contradicted each other, all the things that romanticism does not spare, with which it fights, enthusiasm, excitement of expressed thoughts, statements, truths that must be revealed, reach extreme hyperbole.

The romantic features of the life we live here: the fantastic, the conventionality, the uniqueness of the nature of events and phenomena - these are the conditions for generalization and approval, to which the artist strives ... However, these features cannot be an obstacle for romanticism in reflecting the real laws of life"<sup>2</sup>.

First, is not the existence of a "strict aesthetic assessment of reality, truth", "exacerbation of tendencies to strive to uncover life processes", "criticism of existing events and phenomena", "distance from life", "delight of thought" typical of realistic creativity? Secondly, "fantasy" and "conventionality" proceed from the ideas and ideal of the artist.

Thirdly, according to L. Timofeev, romanticism is characterized by subjectivism and exaggerated emotionality.

However, if we consider the work of romantic artists only as a manifestation of subjectivity, then the products of their work will not take a place in the history of art. Bulging emotionality is characteristic mainly of sentimentalists, but, on the other hand, the embodiment of the artistic image, in general, the emotionality of art cannot be imagined without imparting sensuality to the symbol.

If romantics are distinguished by subjectivism, strong emotionality, conventionality and

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<sup>2</sup> Тимофеев Л. О понятии художественного метода// Сборник «Творческий метод». - М., 1960. – С. 47-48.



fantastic manifestations, then how do they reflect the “laws of reality.”

If romanticism reflects the laws of reality, therefore, in their methods of artistic understanding and spiritual organization there is unity and conformity, that is, harmony, therefore we characterize romanticism as a certain type of creativity, a certain method of understanding life.

According to F.M. Golovenchenko, “Romantics are characterized by an interest in all exotic, unconventional and bright things, this contradicts the actual colorlessness and ugliness of the surrounding reality. Romantics had a great penchant for unusual characters in unconventional situations. Emotionality of the romantic method manifested itself in brightness, variety of colors, richness of language with metaphors, general elevation of creativity, elation of spirit. Conventional, fantastic, unusual characters and phenomena were the main feature of romantics in dividing them into types”<sup>3</sup>.

According to W.R. Fochta, “... the epistemological introduction of romanticism as an artistic method of romanticism is an intuitive introduction into being; favorable conditions in society for romanticism is a transitional period when living conditions change; the general ideological orientation of romantic literature is characterized by a critical examination of the surrounding reality, satisfaction with freedom, the desire to find an existing “other” truth and high emotional revival”<sup>4</sup>.

The controversy surrounding romanticism does not subside, but rather intensifies. It seems that changes are taking place in European romanticism's understanding of certain features. For example, many scholars agree with the opinion that romanticism as an artistic method took shape in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

According to N. Ya. Berkovsky, “By the middle of the century (XIX century), romanticism began to turn into a monument”<sup>5</sup>. N. Ya. Berkovsky admitted in the second collection Problems of Romanticism (Moscow, 1971) that “... we have a well-researched history of definitions of romanticism, but we do not have a definition given to romanticism itself, corresponding to the needs of modern thought”<sup>6</sup>. N. Ya. Berkovsky, relying on the opinion of German philosophers and poets of romanticism, puts forward the following

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<sup>3</sup> Головенченко Ф.М. Введение в литературоведение. - М., 1964. - С. 303.

<sup>4</sup> Фохт У.Р. Некоторые вопросы теории романтизма. (Замечания и Гипотезы)// Сб. «Проблемы романтизма». - М., 1967. - С. 85.

<sup>5</sup> Берковский Н. Я. О романтизме и его первоосновах// Сб. «Проблемы романтизма». - М., 1971. - С. 18.

<sup>6</sup> Берковский Н. Я. О романтизме и его первоосновах// Сб. «Проблемы романтизма». - М., 1971. - С. 5.



thesis: "... For romantics, reality, which can always exist, exists before reality."<sup>7</sup>.

Such an explanation, without pretending to reveal the true essence of romanticism, captures the existing feature of the romantic worldview.

At the same time, any creative personality of a realistic orientation strives to present the desired and possible reality in a "pure" form. If the existing reality, penetrating into the consciousness of a creative person and changing, would not take the form that is needed not only for her, but also for the reader, listener, then it would lose its aesthetic value. Soul dreams and goals are always in dialectical agreement with the truth.

In general, art, both romantic and realistic, always interprets dreams and desires as truth, while truth is portrayed as a dream. Otherwise, art will turn into a naked proclamation of the factors of truth and a soulless fixation of these factors.

The evolution of the views of one of the theorists of romanticism - I.F. Volkova. In his article "Romanticism" published in 1960, he gives the following definition: in various forms of aesthetic utopias "<sup>8</sup>.

Returning to the definition of romanticism after 10 years, I.F. Volkov deeper studies the foundations of his peculiar methods. If in the first definition he sought to abstractly capture the essence of romanticism, then in the second definition he concretizes his views on the concept of the romantic method, considers it a reflection of life in the form of people with high dignity. "Consequently, romanticism represents an artistic reflection of life in the form of valuable people who are free from the phenomena around them in terms of characters, they are oriented to a different, consonant world"<sup>9</sup>.

This definition, with some additions, may define European romanticism in literature. Indeed, "romanticism reveals a personality for literature not only with its unique individual characteristics, but also its rich inner world"<sup>10</sup>.

The heroes of the literature of romanticism are people whose inner impulses are precisely directed, they constantly strive to break free from the clutches of social, estate and

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<sup>7</sup> Там же. - С. 6.

<sup>8</sup> Волков И. Романтизм //Сб. «Творческий метод». - М., 1960. – С. 193.

<sup>9</sup> Волков И.Ф. Романтизм как творческий метод //Сб. «Вопросы романтизма». - М., 1971. – С. 61.

<sup>10</sup> Волков И.Ф. Романтизм как творческий метод //Сб. «Вопросы романтизма». - М., 1971. – С. 33.



class convictions. The romantic hero is spiritually rich, but this wealth was not visible behind his opposite - the individual unique "I".

However, this definition, which has a deep meaning, still does not cover all issues and aspects related to the romantic worldview. How can you understand the image of a panorama of reality in the form of people with high dignity? Or with regard to music, what is meant by "the interpretation of life in the form of people of high dignity"?

The aspect of romanticism, correctly captured in one form or another of artistic creation, cannot cover specific types of this method in other types or genres of art.

It is obvious that the concept of romanticism is characterized by a sharp pretentiousness and contradictory thoughts. Each researcher in the study of romanticism tries to combine and generalize one or a number of signs. A number of scientists recognize the main features of romanticism as subjectivism, violent passion, emotional irascibility, intuition, individualism, the predominance of feelings over reason, pessimism, immersion in one's inner world; the rest see the originality of romanticism in the idealization of the past, the desire for the ideal, the poor-minded strong desire of the soul for freedom, the rapid flight of fantasy into the sky, the pantheistic deification of nature, dreams of the future, interest in the East, folklore traditions, etc.

Almost all researchers in the method of romanticism by artistic generalization assert the presence of hyperbolism, fantasy, idealization, allegory, striving for symbolism, convention, maximalism, originality, titanism of heroes, rejection of classical traditions, wealth and variety of visual means.

Each of these signs is really inherent in romanticism. However, it is impossible to give a definition based only on the opinion of a few scientists. The important thing is to be able to clearly and clearly see the system and structure of the signs of romanticism, based on this, you can give an accurate definition of romanticism.

Along with this, it is wrong to generalize and combine all the properties and signs of romanticism. In clarifying the definition of romanticism, one should proceed from the attitude of romantics and romantic art to truth, it should be determined how, in what way, by what method a romantic artistic image was created. In this way, one can understand the philosophical and aesthetic goals of romantics and the artistic and expressive features of the images and works of art created by them.



In our opinion, romanticism is a certain type of artistic knowledge that seeks to show the boundless spiritual deep essence of humanity, in which idealized creativity prevails in the perception of truth. Hence follows the boundless breadth of the creative "I" based on the ideal perception of life.

Romanticism in philosophy is a pantheistic worldview; in sociology, romanticism is a utopian teaching about human society; romanticism in art is a certain method of artistic mastering of truth, based on the active creativity of a spiritual personality.

Romanticism does not accept truth as practice, does not assimilate it as sensory-human truth, but accepts it in the form of creativity, in the form of an object. This is what the ideological features and the main content of romanticism cover as a specific method of artistic cognition.

However, a question arises. If, in the understanding of truth, romanticism is limited to creativity, then how should we understand activity, dissatisfaction with life, the possession of volcanic feelings in the character of romantic heroes?

The fact is that if we recognize the creative attitude of a creative person to truth as the main property of romanticism, the interpretation of which logically presupposes such basic features as emotional development, the flight of fantasy into the past or the future, subjectivism and individualism, an extreme striving for the ideal or mysticism, lyrics, deification of nature.

Almost all romantics deepened the psychological characterization of the hero, singing the rebellion of the soul over freedom. But this characteristic is abstract and generalized. For romantics, life and its varieties were not the main theme; they considered lofty ideals, strove for universal scale, hovered on the wings of fantasy over life. But, regretting the sorrows of people, we went deep into the search for their objective reasons.

Romanticism as a form of artistic creativity, traditionally formed in the process of aesthetic understanding of truth, changed under the influence of the conditions of existence of society, based on the individual characteristics of the creative personality, and thus acquired an active or passive, progressive or conservative, reactionary or revolutionary character.

Combining all types of romanticism, A.M. Gorky wrote: "In romanticism, one should distinguish two large, different directions: passive romanticism - it changes the truth, seeks



either to reconcile a person with it, or, conversely, takes away from it, urging a person to delve into his inner world, makes him plunge into reflections on the "unfortunate mysteries of life", makes you think about riddles, which cannot be solved with the help of love, death, reason, creation, but can only be solved with the help of science. And active romanticism - strengthens a person's will to live, arouses a rebellion in him, a rebellion because of the truth and all kinds of oppression associated with it "<sup>11</sup>.

Romanticism is divided not only into active and passive types, it can be progressive and revolutionary. Even between progressive and revolutionary romanticism, there are significant differences. For example, Byron, Shelley, Pushkin and Lermontov always sang the hero of a wanderer dissatisfied with life. In all the works of progressive romanticism, the hero is the sole force that opposed a great society or psychological force.

The hero of revolutionary romanticism (mainly in the first works in the work of A.M. Gorky) opposes the ordinary way of life, injustice and untruth. However, in his struggle, there is a connection with a certain group, class or representatives of the people and a national folklore connection with mother earth. These heroes also perish, their struggle is not limited only to the demonstration of the spirit of "the mourning of the world", but is perceived as the first step on the way to the freedom of mankind. They turn into a symbol of the national hero.

On the other hand, romanticism fights against evil and protects good. But in this struggle between the ideal and life there was no true, strong connection, this expresses the artist's creative attitude to truth.

According to many researchers, romanticism first appears, and then it is replaced by critical realism. V.V. Vanslov believes that "Historically, romanticism has grown to the level of realism and prepared it. Many artists of the 19th century began with romanticism, in the future they developed their work in the direction of realism: Heine, Balzac, Gogol. In general, realism, in contrast to romanticism, was at a higher stage in the development of art, but at a certain historical period, both of these directions developed in parallel and were in solidarity with each other"<sup>12</sup>.

A.N. Sokolov wrote: "Romanticism has sunk into history, has freed its place for the

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<sup>11</sup> М. Горький о литературе. - М.: Советский писатель, 1963. – С. 311.

<sup>12</sup> Ванслов В.В. Эстетика романтизма. - М., 1966. – С. 381.



winner - realism"<sup>13</sup>.

If, based on the opinion of these writers, we accept their idea that “.. Romanticism arose in the interval between the 18th-19th centuries in the period of transition from feudalism to capitalism”<sup>14</sup>, then we come to the idea that in the 15th-18th centuries art was devoid of realistic properties, according to logic, neither in the Fayum portraits, nor in the portraits of Caravaggio, Velazquez, Rembrandt there was no realism, since romanticism historically passed into realism ...”

The study of this particular aspect of the problem of romanticism will be productive, since many creative personalities in their works talked about the harmony between the romantic and realistic features of creativity, observing the birth of an artistic image in their works.

For example, A. Stendhal said the following: “In reality, all great writers were at one time romantics ...”<sup>15</sup>.

Dovzhenko in his letter to Yanovsky says: “I have long been called a romantic. And for this I was reproached many times ... And you had a lot of trouble because of this. These people who do not understand the simple truth are very strange: after all, everything that I have written is the truth. I am a realist, but I cannot write in the style of Nechui Levitsky. I am much closer to Gogol's "Bulba", his style is even more poetic, larger, embraces high feelings. This is where my romantic realism comes from.”<sup>16</sup>.

D.D. Blagoy, exploring the creative evolution of A.S. Pushkin, makes the following important observation: “Already in 1823, Pushkin began to write the first two chapters of Eugene Onegin, and in the very first chapter, when not only appears, but also demonstratively proclaims, the artistic typification of the realistic method, the poet finishes one of his most romantic southern poems, this is the Bakhchisarai fountain, the work on this poem was carried out synchronously with the work on the first chapter of the poetic novel. In addition, in the following year, 1824, when Pushkin was completing the writing of three and a half chapters of Eugene Onegin, he created one of his important romantic poems, The Gypsies, which is considered a great discovery of world romantic art.

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<sup>13</sup> Соколов А.Н. К спорам о романтизме //Сб. «Проблемы романтизма». - М., 1967. – С. 37.

<sup>14</sup> Ванслов В.В. Эстетика романтизма. ...- С. 384.

<sup>15</sup> Стендаль А. Собр.соч. Том 1 или IX. - Л., 1933-1950. – С. 80.

<sup>16</sup> Овчаренко А.И. Социалистический реализм и современный литературный процесс. - М., 1968. – С. 195-196.





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Thus, romanticism and realism have always mutually docked, there is no realistic work that is not painted with romantic colors, and there is not a single romantic work that was not based on objectively real truth.

The romanticism of the 19th century differs from the romanticism of all historical periods and peoples. It reflects almost all the colors of the romantic attitude to life. V.G. Belinsky wrote that “... our romanticism is the organic completeness and wholeness of romanticism of all centuries and all phases of the development of the human race: in our romanticism, like the rays of the sun in the focus of a burning glass, all moments of romanticism that have developed in the history of mankind were concentrated and formed a new whole”<sup>18</sup>.

The theses of L. Timofeev concerning the realistic and romantic types of creativity are widely known. According to L. Timofeev, artists called realists have a predominant direction in the principle of reproduction in art, they strive to show the phenomena of reality as they are in life, the principle of perestroika prevails among romantics, which allows a creative person to withdraw directly from life. Then L. Timofeev makes the following conclusion: “The expression of a romantic, as it were, subjugates the image”<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> Благой Д.Д. От «Евгения Онегина» к «Герою нашего времени»//Сб. «Проблемы романтизма». - М., 1957. –С. 297.

<sup>18</sup> Белинский. В.Г Полное собр. соч. Том 7. – М., 1955. - С. 158.

<sup>19</sup> Тимофеев Л. О понятии художественного метода //Сб. «Творческий метод». – М.: Искусство, 1960. – С. 44, 47.



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