

THE GENRE OF “HISTORY” IN THE ENGLISH LITERATURE OF THE 19th CENTURY

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Abstract. The article discusses the special genre of "history" in the English literature of the 19th century, the originality of which is manifested in the integration of history and literature. Analyzes the "history" W. Scott («Tales of a Grandfather being the History of Scotland from earliest period to the Battle of Flodden in 1513»), Charles Dickens («A Childs history of England») and William Thackeray («Miss Tickletoby's Lectures on English History». «The History of the Next French Revolution»). Art concept known writers is mapped to the concept of English historians T. Carlyle, J. Mill, T. Macaulay. The conclusion is made that Scott and Dickens create a fictional story, and Thackeray – a parody of the genre of historiography. The relevance of the article is connected with the increased interest in the problems of national identity and national myth, national image, and other. Materials Presented can be used in the course "Children's literature" and "History of foreign literature of the XIX century".

Keywords: genre "history", a fictional story, a parody, a synthesis of history and literature.

The Victorian era is characterized by a peculiar synthesis of historiography and historical genres in literature. Novelists filled in what was not covered by historical works proper, little-known or forgotten pages of history, carefully studying historical documents, striving for scientific accuracy in describing the culture and customs of distant eras. At the same time, elements of artistic creativity penetrate into historiographical and historical-philosophical works. In domestic and Western European literary criticism, the problem of the genesis and theory of the English historical novel is considered by many researchers, we note the works of recent years (G. Shaw, V.M. Vekselman, E.V. Somova, M.A. Maslova) [18, 1,10, 6].

According to D. Simmons, historians of the 19th century. viewed history primarily as a narrative ("narration"), and not as a scientific study. T. Carlyle develops the idea of history as a narrative drama ("narrative drama"), calling the historian a storyteller ("teller"), recreating the past in a visible dramatic manner. S. Dale in the works of T. Carlyle notes a kind of synthetism, a fusion of history, philosophy and poetry [15, p.78]. D. Simmons singles out among the creators of historical novels of the 30s and 40s. XIX century school of "historical novelists" - F. Palgrave ("Truth and Fiction of the Middle Ages: The Merchant and the Monk", 1837), E.J. Howard (Sir Henry Morgan, Pirate, 1842), C. Macfarlane (Refugee Camp, 1844), depicting only genuine historical events recorded in documents that exclude folklore elements and anachronisms from the narrative. Their

novels are characterized by factual accuracy and “scholarship.” The emergence of “historical novelists” was facilitated by T. Carlyle and T. Macaulay, who, in contrast to the abstract, analytical, stylistically “dead” history of S. Turner, J. Mill, G. Hallam, created history “as a narrative drama” [19, p. 39].

In the first third of the 19th century. history, although it has become an independent science, continues to closely coexist with literary creativity. The genre of the historical novel, created by W. Scott, influenced not only literary prose, but also the way of creating a historiographical work. Leading English historians J.S. Mill, T. Macaulay, T. Carlyle, choosing the principle of documentary accuracy, combine scientific and artistic principles in their research. T. Macaulay argued that “an impeccable historian, following the facts, must at the same time have an imagination strong enough to make the narrative exciting and picturesque” [5, Vol. VI, p. 48].

In the 19th century the experience of creating “history” belongs to the outstanding novelists of the era W. Scott (“Tales of a Grandfather being the History of Scotland from the earliest period to the Battle of Flodden in 1513”, 1827–1829), Charles Dickens (“History of England for the Young” (“A Childs history of England”, 1851-1853), W. Thackeray (“Miss Tickletoby's Lectures on English History”, 1842, “The History of the Next French Revolution”, 1844). Moving, according to A. Fleishman, along the path of “integration of history and literature” [16, p. 134], writers turn not only to the novel form, but also choose special genre varieties. According to B’s observations. Colloms, one of the features of the work of novelists of the mid-19th century is the love of experimentation, when the variety of artistic forms allows one to reflect the complex processes of time and era [14, p.365].

B.G. Reizov notes that V. Scott, unlike the “antiquarian” historians (S. Turner “History of the Anglo-Saxons”, 1799–1805), who understood history as a description of tools, clothing, and ancient monuments, follows the romantic concept of the historical narrative of I.G. Fichte, when history does not present facts in chronological order, but takes contemporaries into the historical past [8, p.152]. W. Scott and C. Dickens are developing a special genre form - a novelized story, in which the narrative includes not only references to historiographical works, but also little-known facts, interesting details, historical anecdotes, texts of folk ballads, and legends.

W. Scott’s task in “The History of Scotland from Ancient Times to the Battle of Flodden 1513” is to present a general picture of national history, recreating the most striking and important events. In the preface, V. Scott notes that his history is “a collection of retellings or adaptations of some stories from Scottish chronicles,” which, nevertheless, “gives a holistic picture of the history of the country” [9, p. 23].

The book was created for W. Scott’s grandson J.H. Lockhart, which is why W. Scott also calls it “A Brief History of Scotland for Young People.” Later, a similar name will be used by

C. Dickens. V. Scott’s model was the popular at the beginning of the 19th century. J. Crocker’s book "Episodes from the History of England".

For W. Scott, it is important, as B.G. Reizov, “the moral meaning of the historical process” [8, p. 177], when the activity of a historical person must be subordinated to the requirements of duty and

justice. "We should not do evil, even if it promises to lead us to good" [9, p.116]. At the same time, V. Scott refuses the category of fate, fate, striving to see expediency and regularity in the historical process. This can be seen from the description of the clash between two civilizations: "The Norman conquest, which became a monstrous misfortune and catastrophe for those who lived through it, ultimately made England a more civilized and powerful country... There are many cases in history when, by the will of God, great good came from what at first glance appears to be the blackest evil" [9, p. 70].

The first pages of W. Scott's "History of Scotland" are devoted to the stay of the Romans in Britain and the conquests of Julius Caesar. The protective rampart built by the Romans, stretching across the territory from Newcastle to Carlisle, is mentioned as one of the oldest monuments. In accordance with the romantic concept of history, V. Scott recreates the past with the power of imagination, shows vivid and accurate pictures in detail, creates colorful, detailed descriptions of the spiritual makeup, feelings and thoughts of his heroes, includes in the narrative not only references to historiographical works, but also folk texts ballads, legends.

In the second half of the 19th century. the experience of creating "history" belongs to the outstanding novelists of the era, Charles Dickens and W. Thackeray. In addition to historical novels ("Barnaby Rudge", 1841; "A Tale of Two Cities", 1859), Charles Dickens turns to the past of England in the collection "Mr. Humphrey's Hours" (short stories "The Broken Sword", "Confession of a Convict Found in an English Book") prison during the time of Charles II"), which tells about the times of the Middle Ages, about the cruelty of morals, and religious fanaticism. In 1851–1853 A History of England for Young People appears.

In many ways, Charles Dickens inherits the traditions of W. Scott, as well as the historical novel of the 20s. XIX century, a genre developed by French romantics. This is proven by the similarity in views on historical truth and the features of plot construction. In romantic aesthetics, imagination is recognized as a means of knowledge; in a historical novel, the writer, with the help of imagination, recreates the color, the general spirit of the era, a certain higher truth, which is often not reflected in monuments and documents. A novelist, depicting historical figures of the past, can rely on legends, traditions, songs, beliefs, since "great figures," writes B.G. Reizov, "live in people's memory longer than events and customs. Legend creates them anew, regardless of documents and chronicles, in accordance with the desires of the people, with the laws of history" [8, p. 21]. An example is the image of Richard I by W. Scott ("Ivanhoe"), more of a hero of a legend or a folk ballad than a real historical figure.

Charles Dickens addresses the issue of historical truth in the novel "The Antiquities Shop." The hero, reflecting on the past, is contrasted with pedantic historians, "archaeological scientists," who mercilessly tear off "from the beautiful truth the light veils that time and ardent human imagination love to throw on this goddess and which sometimes become very suitable for her and give new charm , awaken interest and inquisitiveness in a person, and not a feeling of boredom and indifference" [4, Vol. VII, p. 454].

Dickens metaphorically calls oral traditions and legends "flowers of the field, artless and fresh," crowning historical truth. Proving that "the legend does not sin against the truth" [4, Vol. VII, p.

454], Dickens cites as an example a “local” legend about a woman executed by order of Queen Elizabeth for satisfying the hunger of a Catholic monk who collapsed on her doorstep. We are talking about the war between England and Spain in 1588, when the monks of the Jesuit order were persecuted. The bachelor denied greatness

the queen and gave glory to a woman, perhaps the most inconspicuous in all the royal domains, but endowed with a sympathetic and kind heart. The epitaph should perpetuate the memory of “only those people whose deeds should have outlived themselves” [4, Vol.VII, p. 455]. Later, Charles Dickens would turn to this idea in *A History of England for Young People*.

The idea of the historical process is associated in the artistic world of Charles Dickens with symbolic images of time. In the “Antiquities Shop” in the old church, signs of the all-conquering time are visible: collapsed arches, exposed wall masonry. All creations of God and man share a common fate and are equal before the slowly flowing centuries. Another motive - the eternal renewal and rebirth of life - is associated with the idea of the cyclical nature of time and is revealed through appropriate images and metaphors: a gravedigger-gardener at the church, for whom one craft is inseparable from another; flowers and trees growing from decay and dust [4, Vol. VII, p. 452].

Thus, Charles Dickens, for whom ethical moments are important in history, connects the idea of perpetual motion, repetition, and cyclical with the moral lessons learned by descendants from the history of previous generations. At the same time, the moral principle, ideas about mercy, justice, and virtues embedded in the legend should be valued as highly as true facts and evidence about historical events and outstanding personalities.

Starting from his early works, the work of Charles Dickens includes in various forms elements of legends, oral traditions, ballads, anecdotes related to a particular event or hero of history. The correspondence indicates the novelist's interest in hoaxes on historical topics. In a letter to J. Forster, Dickens communicates his desire to begin a satirical series under the guise of translating the chronicle of some barbarian state with a description of legal proceedings in this fictional country and an account of the deeds of its sages” [4, T. XXIX, p. 49]. Charles Dickens's work on adapting the New Testament for children (1849) and the creation of “*A History of England for Young People*” (1851–1853) gave the writer the opportunity to turn to the origins of Western European civilization and national history.

Charles Dickens wrote “*A History of England for Young People*” for his own children, and it opens with a dedication: “To my dear children, with the hope that in the near future it will help them read thicker and more valuable books on the same subject” [3, p. 5]. Charles Dickens develops a special genre form: this is not an objective, scientific view of a historian, and not a historical novel, but a novelized history. The narrative includes little-known facts, interesting details, and historical anecdotes. In addition, the author gives a very subjective assessment of the character and actions of historical figures, their manner of governing the state, the writer builds a gallery of outstanding statesmen, monarchs and generals: William the Conqueror, Richard I, Elizabeth, Mary Stuart, Charles I, Cromwell and brings the story to the revolution 1688

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The idea of the immutability of human nature was characteristic of the philosophy of D. Hume, his thoughts expressed in the "History of England" (1754–1762), which was known to Thackeray: "Mankind is to such an extent the same in all eras and in all countries that history does not give us nothing new or unusual in this regard" [12, Vol. II, p. 84]. Thackeray's historicism synthesizes the idea of identity and originality, the interconnection and interdependence of historical phenomena, and the conditionality of the present by the past. This concept brings Thackeray and Scott together. As R. Chapman notes: "Thackeray's immersion in the past is neither an escapism nor a utopia. He does not take refuge from the past, like Carlyle...He takes the recent past as a convenient position for viewing and criticizing the present" [13, p.152]. However, Thackeray doubts the expediency of history, because man's efforts in the fight against Fate and circumstances are in vain. The results of this struggle often do not correspond to the aspirations and desires of people. This reveals the irony of history. Why was the French Revolution carried out if it brought "no other benefits" than replacing the white flag with a tricolor one? In the parody essay "Paris Letters," Thackeray puts into the mouth of the statue of Emperor Napoleon his ironic attacks against the government of King Louis Philippe, not seeing the difference between the changing political systems: "The tricolor flag flutters over the Tuileries, exactly as in my time. The French are probably happy to see their glorious banner again in the place of the old white flag, banished forever... gentlemen, you have received freedom of the press... You have a republic, but God forbid you to speak disrespectfully about the king! The same thing happened in my time. You are free, but in order to keep you in line, seventeen fortresses have been built for you... And in general in Europe there are plenty of threats, expulsions, exiles, murders, taxes, gallows" [11, Vol. II, p. 222-224]. History laughs at people's subjective desires and plans. One tyrant was replaced by another, and the slogan of the French Revolution was "Liberty, equality, fraternity!" - turned into "war for the whole world!" [11, T.II, p.393]. Thus, in the parody "History of the Next French Revolution," where the action takes place in the future (1884), Thackeray laughs at Louis Philippe, talks about the civil war in France, and predicts the revolutionary events of 1848.

Charles Dickens in "A History of England for Young People" introduces a special artistic time, contrasting the eternity of the majestic universe with the vanity of man and the futility of his aspirations: "In ancient times, long, long ago, even before our Savior was born into the world, these islands were in the same place and the stormy sea was deserted and sad. The islands stood alone among the endless waters. Foamy waves beat against their rocks" [3, p.6].

“Miss Tickletoby's Lectures on the History of England” by W. Thackeray and “A History of England for Young People” by Charles Dickens are similar in their grotesque view of the world and ironic attitude towards the historical process. The difference is manifested in the assessment of prospects, the emotional dominant. Unlike the skeptical W. Thackeray, Charles Dickens believed in social and moral progress. W. Thackeray, without denying the good consequences of civilization, still sees in the forward movement of history the repetition of the same mistakes and atrocities and does not share T. Macaulay's conviction that history is “the physical, moral and mental improvement of man” [5, T.VI, p.3].

Despite the fundamental difference in the assessment of the historical past of England by Macaulay and Thackeray, there are provisions that bring the historian and the writer together. Reviewing Macaulay's Critical and Historical Essays, written for the Edinburgh Review, publ. 1843, Thackeray pays tribute to his talent, his fascinating way of presenting facts, which provided the historian with “both political and literary success” [20, p.229-231]. Macaulay's understanding of the tasks of the historian, which he first substantiated in the article “On History” /1827/, is closer to the method of a historical novelist than to a scientific historian. The subject of research for the historian and novelist is the same - society and its laws. But the historian

relies on facts, the writer perceives everything through a person, his feelings, conjecturing historical facts. However, in the article “On History,” T. Macaulay argued that “facts are the slag of history, a damp pile awaiting the hand of a creator.” The historian, in his opinion, is not a judge who must maintain impartiality, but a lawyer passionately interested in events.

In his History of England, Macaulay defines his task as a historian as follows: “I would perform the task undertaken very imperfectly if I began to describe only battles and sieges, the rise and fall of ministries, palace intrigues and parliamentary debates. I will try to tell the history of the people along with the history of the government... to depict the morals of successive generations... I will gladly endure the reproach of humiliating the dignity of history if I manage to present... a true picture of life...” [5, Vol. VI, p. 3]. However, as researchers of Macaulay's legacy note, he often sins against historical truth, arbitrarily treating important facts [2, pp. 33-37]. Macaulay also advocated that in historical works “commanders and statesmen” should not be “devoid of all individuality.” It is precisely in “ignorance of the most ordinary phenomena of human nature” that Macaulay reproaches the newest historians, reviewing their works [5, T.IV, p.388]. Thackeray also justifies the approach to history as the history of morals. In the series of essays “English Humorists of the 18th Century” (1851), he claims that “more truth is dissolved in fiction” than in a historical treatise, “claiming that absolutely everything in it is pure truth” [11, Vol.VII, p.583 -584]. Thackeray developed this understanding of the specifics of the “history” genre under the influence of the educational writer G. Fielding, whom he considered his teacher. Fielding explained in detail what “history” should be and how it differs from official historiography [7]. Later, on the first pages of the novel “The History of Henry Esmond,” Thackeray will state that “I would prefer an everyday story rather than a heroic one,” and in the preface to “The Four Georges” (1855), the writer will once again confirm his position: “... I was reproached for that I have not written a learned historical treatise, although I never had such an intention. I'm not going to talk about battles, not about politics and politicians, not about state affairs, but... to amuse you with stories about what the world was once like...” [11, Vol.XI, pp.511-512]. The positions of Macaulay the

historian and Thackeray the writer largely coincide. At the same time, as A. Fleischman notes, “Macaulay comes close to the traditional sphere of the novelist: a person in society with his individual originality and psychology... On the part of Thackeray, there is a movement towards the integration of history and literature” [16, p.134].

Important in the historical concepts of both Dickens and Thackeray is the position of the moralist, expressed in the author's digressions, in addressing readers, in a direct assessment of a particular historical phenomenon. By denying the history of “heroes” and “heroic deeds,” writers turn to the question of the personal moral responsibility of historical figures. State officials appear in the image of Charles Dickens and W. Thackeray, first of all, as people who brought good or evil through their rule, who observed or violated commandments and moral principles.

“A History of England for Young People” by Charles Dickens is divided into chapters, and historical events are given in chronological order. The writer chooses a free form of narration and the principle of selecting facts. In a letter to J. Staples, Charles Dickens explains why he abandoned a large number of dates: “A fascinating form of presentation of historical events will arouse interest in them among young readers and will contribute to a deeper study of history” [4, Vol. XXX, p.360].

The first pages of history are devoted to the Roman conquests in Britain. The events of battles, uprisings and years of peace are recreated, the names of Gaius Julius Caesar, the commanders Aulus Plautus, Hadrian, Severus, and Caracalla are mentioned. Dickens, following the idea of mutual influence of nations, is convinced that, despite the years of bloody wars, the Romans did a lot for the benefit of the Britons: they paved roads, built fortifications, improved weapons, that is, “noticeably civilized them” [3, p. 14]. Charles Dickens mentions archaeological finds indicating the presence of the Romans in England.

“A History of England for Young People” has a clear structure: each chapter is devoted to the activities of a specific ruler, named accordingly (“England under the rule of William the First, the Norman Conqueror. From the year 1066 to the year 1087”; “England under Henry the Fifth. From the year 1413 to the year 1422.””; “England in the times of Elizabeth. From the year 1558 to the year 1603”, etc.) and always ends with a message about the death of the king or queen and a brief assessment, often very subjective, of the character and actions of the historical figure, his manner of governing the state.

When depicting historical figures, Charles Dickens relied on principles developed in artistic creativity. The characters in Charles Dickens's novels were largely created under the influence of theatrical art and pantomime. This is manifested in a certain one-dimensionality, straightness of characters, the correlation of portrait characteristics with a “speaking” name, the use of leitmotif details, and repeated epithets.

A subjective view of history, a clearly expressed author's position, is also manifested in following the thesis “legend does not sin against the truth,” expressed in “The Antiquities Shop.” Charles Dickens includes little-known facts, interesting details, and historical anecdotes in the story. Legends, according to the writer, preserve the memory of folk heroes longer than the works of

historians. In Chapter XVI, Charles Dickens notes that the Scottish patriot William Wallace will live in the songs and tales of the English land until the last singer and storyteller of Scotland dies.

The originality of the presentation of historical events in Charles Dickens is also due to the fact that the writer, without striving for accuracy of facts and figures, tries to reproduce the general flavor of the era. In the depiction of the Battle of Crecy, the focus is not on the movement of troops, but on the description of a solar eclipse, perceived as a grim omen. "It was the day of a solar eclipse. The sky suddenly turned dark and a thunderstorm broke out. Frightened birds with desperate cries flew over the heads of the warriors" [3, p. 196]. Charles Dickens includes in the narrative surviving legends about forebodings and signs from above. The silver knob that fell off Charles the First's cane alarmed him, as if it foreshadowed that his head would fly off his shoulders. Or Mary Stuart, leaving the French harbor, saw how the wave swallowed the boat, and said: "Oh, Lord, what a bad sign for the road!" [3, p. 353].

Thus, "A History of England for Young People" represents a special genre variety, including elements of a novel, farce comedy, and author's digressions that give the style a journalistic touch.

The experience of turning to the genre of "history" by the creators of historical novels, W. Scott, E. Bulwer-Lytton, C. Kingsley, C. Dickens, W. Thackeray, shows that in the English historical and literary process of the 19th century. There is a rapprochement between historical science and artistic creativity. Historiographic and chronological accuracy, fidelity to historical facts penetrates the artistic narrative (W. H. Ainsworth, E. Bulwer-Lytton, W. Collins, C. Kingsley). At the same time, T. Macaulay, T. Carlyle, D.S. Mill, possessing the mastery of eloquence, combines the talents of a historian and a writer in historical research. Elements of artistic creativity - psychological details, descriptions, inserted stories, discussions about moral problems, landscape sketches, attention to composition - bring historical works closer to the genre of the novel.

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