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EUGÈNE SY'S HISTORICAL NOVEL AS A FORM OF SOCIO-IDEOLOGICAL DISCOURSE: ARTISTIC RECONSTRUCTION OF THE PAST AND NTERPRETATION OF SOCIAL CONFLICTS

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Abstract: The article examines Eugène Sy's historical novel as a specific form of socio-ideological discourse in which the artistic reconstruction of the past is combined with the interpretation of contemporary social contradictions. The study focuses on the novels Jean Cavalier, or The Fanatics of the Cévennes and Latréaumont, where historical events function not merely as objects of narrative representation but also as instruments for analyzing power, religious fanaticism, social inequality, and moral responsibility. Particular attention is paid to the discursive nature of historical narration, which is manifested in the interaction of historical fact, artistic fiction, authorial evaluation, and ideologically significant meanings. From a comparative perspective, the article identifies the distinctive features of Sy's historical fiction in relation to Walter Scott's tradition of the historical novel and Honoré de Balzac's socio-realist prose. It is argued that Sy's historical novel occupies an intermediate position between the classical model of historical fiction and the socially critical novel of the nineteenth century. The study concludes that Sy's turn to the past performs not only a reconstructive but also an analytical and interpretative function, which makes his historical novels a significant object of literary and humanities research.

Keywords: historical novel, Eugène Sy, social discourse, ideological discourse, artistic reconstruction.

The historical novel occupies a special place in nineteenth-century European literature, since it combines the representation of the past with the interpretation of social, political, and moral conflicts. In literary studies, the historical novel is usually considered not only as a genre aimed at reconstructing historical events, but also as a form of cultural memory and ideological reflection. Through the depiction of the past, writers often address the contradictions of their own time, transforming historical material into a means of social analysis.

The works of Eugène Sy are particularly significant in this regard. Although Sy is more widely known as one of the major representatives of the French social novel, his historical fiction also demonstrates a pronounced critical orientation. In his novels, history becomes a space in which the problems of power, oppression, fanaticism, social inequality, and moral responsibility are artistically interpreted. Therefore, Sy's historical novels cannot be reduced only to the reproduction of past events; they should be examined as complex discursive structures that reveal the relationship between literature, ideology, and society.

The relevance of this study is determined by the need to reconsider Sy's historical fiction from the perspective of discourse analysis and comparative literary studies. Such an approach makes it possible to reveal how historical narration functions as a form of social and ideological interpretation.

The material of the study consists of Eugène Sy's novels Jean Cavalier, or The Fanatics of the Cévennes and Latréaumont. These texts were selected because they clearly demonstrate the interaction between historical subject matter and socio-critical interpretation.

The research is based on the following methods: historical-literary analysis, comparative analysis, elements of discourse analysis, and interpretative textual analysis. The historical-literary method allows the novels to be considered in the context of nineteenth-century French literature. The comparative method is used to identify similarities and differences between Sy's historical fiction, Walter Scott's classical model of the historical novel, and Honoré de Balzac's socio-realist prose. Discourse analysis makes it possible to examine how historical events are transformed into ideological and axiological meanings within the narrative structure.

The historical novel in the works of Eugène Sy represents not only a form of artistic reconstruction of the past, but also an important instrument of social analysis. His works demonstrate that turning to history serves as a means of interpreting the social contradictions of the author's own time, as well as shaping the reader's value orientations.

The discursive nature of Sy's historical novel is especially clearly manifested in Jean Cavalier, or The Fanatics of the Cévennes, where the depiction of the Camisard uprising is accompanied by the author's pronounced evaluative stance. In the novel, religious fanaticism is presented not simply as a historical phenomenon, but as a destructive ideological force capable of deforming human consciousness and social relations. Through this representation, Sy moves beyond the limits of historical reconstruction and transforms the narrative into a reflection on the nature of ideological violence.

In another aspect, the novel draws attention to social inequality as one of the sources of conflict. The narrative logic of the text shows that when oppression reaches its limit, resistance becomes inevitable. Thus, historical material is used by Sy to model universal patterns of social development. The past becomes a symbolic field through which the author interprets the mechanisms of conflict, resistance, and social transformation.

In the novel Latréaumont, the discursive orientation is intensified through the analysis of power and morality. Sy presents power as a phenomenon that requires moral limitation; otherwise, it inevitably turns into tyranny. This position reflects the writer's characteristic tendency to reveal the moral foundations of the historical process. At the same time, it demonstrates his critical attitude toward social institutions that justify violence, inequality, or domination.

The comparison of Sy's work with the tradition of the historical novel established by Walter Scott makes it possible to identify both continuity and fundamental differences. Scott regarded the historical novel as a means of recreating the national past and sought to present historical reality in an objectified and balanced manner. In his works, for example in Ivanhoe, the harmonization of social conflict and the idea of historical continuity often come to the fore.

Unlike Scott, Eugène Sy significantly strengthens the socio-critical component of the narrative. While Scott's historical novel is aimed at reconciling social contradictions, Sy's fiction, on the contrary, emphasizes their sharpness and unresolved character. His texts are oriented not so much toward the reconstruction of the past as toward its interpretation in the light of urgent social problems.

No less revealing is the comparison of Sy with Honoré de Balzac. Within La Comédie humaine, Balzac creates a large-scale picture of contemporary society, focusing primarily on the analysis of the present. Sy, by contrast, transfers social isSys into the historical past, which allows him to examine social phenomena from a more generalized perspective.

At the same time, both authors share a tendency toward the typification of characters as bearers of social patterns. However, whereas in Balzac typification is realized within the

framework of a realistic depiction of contemporary life, in Sy it acquires a historical-discursive character. Sy's characters become mediators between the past and the present, expressing universal social conflicts and ideological tensions.

Thus, from a comparative perspective, it becomes evident that Eugène Sy's historical novel occupies an intermediate position between the classical model of the historical novel represented by Scott and the socio-realist prose represented by Balzac. It combines the reconstruction of the past with an active interpretation of social reality, which makes it possible to regard it as a developed form of social discourse.

The analysis shows that the historical novel in Eugène Sy's works performs a complex literary and ideological function. Historical material is used not only to recreate events of the past, but also to evaluate, interpret, and include them in a broader social and ideological context. In Jean Cavalier, or The Fanatics of the Cévennes and Latréaumont, the past becomes a means of understanding the problems of power, fanaticism, inequality, violence, and moral responsibility.

The comparative analysis demonstrates that Sy develops the tradition of the historical novel, but at the same time transforms it by strengthening its socio-critical and ideological dimensions. Unlike Walter Scott, who tends toward the harmonization of historical contradictions, Sy emphasizes their conflictual and unresolved nature. In relation to Balzac, Sy's originality lies in the fact that he transfers social analysis into the historical sphere, thereby giving contemporary problems a more universal and generalized meaning.

Therefore, Eugène Sy's historical fiction may be regarded as a form of social and ideological discourse in which the artistic reconstruction of the past becomes a means of interpreting social reality. This feature determines the scholarly significance of Sy's historical novels and opens further perspectives for their study within comparative literature, discourse analysis, and nineteenth-century French literary studies.

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