

Artistic Synthesis of Satire and Elegy in “Old Years in Poshekhonye” Chronicle by M.Y. Saltykov-Shchedrin

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Abstract

Background/Objectives: The study investigates the insufficiently explored problem of one of the most important stylistic features of M. Y. Saltykov-Shchedrin’s writings as a complex synthesis of satirical and elegiac art techniques. **Methods:** The materials of such Shchedrin’s works as “Provincial Sketches”, “The History of a Town”, “The Golovlyov Family”, “Old Years in Poshekhonye” demonstrate the intertwining nature, junctions and interrelations of satire and elegy in the context of the evolution of this synthesis as a result of the author’s deeper discourse associated with the complexity of the foundations of his ideological and philosophical stances predetermined by Shchedrin’s alternating standings during different periods of his life. Shchedrin’s works that are the pinnacles of his creative activity and that are most representatives in this specific context have been selected to help resolve the issue above. **Findings:** The dominant stylistic idea of Shchedrin’s poetics gives way for defining the depth and originality of his thesis-free moral standing that has been predetermined by his deep and complex nature as well as by the uniqueness of his epoch. The philosophy of man and of the world, the inner doubts concerning the future, the contradictory opinions on his contemporary environment and on the principal ideological disputes and discussions led Shchedrin to his specific, unrevealed and barely visible through his cryptography attitudes toward the past, the present and the future of Motherland and the people; to the attitudes that were necessarily aimed at the eternity and conversant in faith. **Applications/Improvements:** The results of the study can be used for further theoretical research investigations of the peculiar stylistic features of M. Y. Saltykov-Shchedrin’s writings.

Keywords: Artistic Discourse, Elegy, Evolution, Ideological Standing, Lyricism, Poetic Manner, Satire, Synthesis

1. Introduction

For quite a long time the science of Shchedrin, being captivated by the depth and the multifaceted complexity of satirical craft of the writer¹⁻⁶ paid little attention to the other side of his poetical manner, namely, to the latent elegism of his works. Meanwhile, under the mask of affected severity, this Great Russian classic used to hide the fine spiritual constitution of a man who knew and adored the art, who aimed at beauty in everything he did. Even Shchedrin’s contemporaries noted that the “sword of thought” in his works was always accompanied by deep elegiac emotions; the sharpness of his satirical temperament was always interwoven with the author’s deep feelings. When Shchedrin died, I. S. Turgenev wrote: “I liked this man very much. No matter how hard he rolls

his eyes, he is very naive and kind; and so he shouts and curses only because he is overfilled with these merits”...

1. Concept Headings

Before Shchedrin, Russian satire had reached its last peak in the 30-40s of the 19th century with N. V. Gogol. The next huge step in its development was made by Shchedrin who endowed satire with the conscious interpretations of the dark sides of Russian social life from the perspectives of the ideology of the enlightenment. His work has not only inherited the Gogol-specific intertwining of satire and elegism, thus making the author’s discourse by far more complicated, but it also represented the development of the techniques of some sort of “balance”, of the equilibrium of the satirical and the elegiac origins as a specific

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Shchedrin's system of expressing not only wrath and hatred but also love, pain and compassion towards man.

The intertwining of satire and elicism was most vividly revealed for the first time in "Provincial Sketches"¹⁵ which was noted in the articles of Chernyshevsky and Dobrolyubov that were dedicated to this first ripe creation of Shchedrin, where the critics saw not only wrath, but also the author's heartache disguised and shadowed by the sharpness. In his essays, V. G. Korolenko noted the "lively affection" of the author toward a man. T. Shevchenko appealed to the author that he should give voice "for this rabble, for this poor, defiled serf". The young author was taken as a sorrowful and indignant writer.

Shchedrin follows the experience of his predecessors who described the social tragedy of "a person of no consequence", particularly, that of Dostoyevsky revealed in his work "Poor Folk" when he describes the clear nature of man mutilated by the circumstances of living in the underworld of the capital. Simultaneously with Shchedrin, the "pain of the heart" and the "want that sucks out" the people is also reflected by A. Pechersky in his short story "Poyarkov". Some common points can also be found later in "Provincial Sketches" and in "Manners of Rasteryayeva Street" by Gleb Uspensky. Thus, here it is possible to trace some certain motif in the approach to the folk subject matter and in the author's attitude towards it.

In "Provincial Sketches" the subject of Motherland emerges in a youthfully open and passionate manner: "Yes, I love you, the faraway, pristine land! Your spaciousness and the simplicity of your inhabitants are dear to me"¹⁵. In his sketch "Madam Muzovkina" the narrator makes a confession: "...for all that, I can always find these dear grayish hues of my Motherland everywhere, because I keep them in my heart anytime and at any place, because my soul guards them as its best possession"¹⁵.

In Shchedrin's sketches the "untidy" small town of Krutogorsk "is trying to make a feat of eliminating the energy, thought and will" of man. Searching for the origins of this evil Shchedrin turns to the human nature, thus at once discovering the right direction, the ethical principles of the people rooted in the distant past as its class or social estate status. And in province this becomes most apparent. "Oh, province! – reads the sketch named "Boredom", – you corrupt people, you eliminate all independence of mind, you cool down the movements of the heart, you destroy everything, even the very ability to wish!"¹.

Shchedrin's poetics is still at the stage of its formation, the original "tool" has not been found yet; the root of the

evil is just groped after. There is a clear division between two main social estates of Russian society that explains the difference of style; here the author starts developing his views on the specifics of the internal contents of masters and slaves as of social groups.

The wrath directed at the "fruits" of the "power of the things" is combined here with the compassion toward the people whose genuine feelings of love and magnanimity are either dead or distorted by the very ways of their lives. Thus, in sketch "Princess Anna Lvovna" the good feelings, the tender soul of the heroine are mutilated regardless of her own will and the suffering girl turns into a "spider of a woman". The psychological conditions of the people are described at almost metaphysical level: Nervousness, inadequacy of actions, lazy sleep, indifference to the surrounding world, unconsciousness – represent here the transformation of the universe, of being into the concept sphere of sick consciousness. However, the author has also seen "how much light there still is in the very twilight" and "how much beauty and goodness are still smoldering under the dark veil that has been thrown over the life".

The tone of compassion for people is caused by the sounds that "resonate sorrowfully and painfully in the soul of the author": "I generally extremely like our beautiful people, ...our folk crowd is seething with..., there is a sudden gush in my heart and my eyes are covered with fog", – one reads in the sketch named "Pilgrims, travelers and passers-by". Reasonable love of man gives "the right to penetrate into the innermost depth of his soul".

Elegiac tone of "Provincial Sketches" represents the manifestation of the author's intimate and personal perception of and his feelings toward the depicted scenes; thereat, the vital origin of the lyricism is predetermined by the conscious objective of the author not to separate the awareness of man from his life.

Almost simultaneously with "Provincial Sketches" the author creates "Satires in prose" where there are even deeper thoughts on Russian history represented as slovenly "cold soup" deprived of any logic and where the author just starts formulating the idea about history as of the process of civilization development, of human race improvement. Ten years passed and in 1870 "Letters about the Province" come from print where Russian history is called the "scrambled eggs" that move around the vicious circle. At the same time Shchedrin is working on his masterpiece, the novel of the new type "The History of a Town", where Russian history is represented as the one that has been set free at the mercy of all elemental forces

of the omnipotent evil, the one that is deprived of reason and its natural run.

“I, – says the chronicler, – want to tickle the vanity of my dear citizens of Glupov (or Stupid Town) by showing to the world their deeds of high resolve and that benign root which gives life to this famous tree...”⁸. Natural strivings of the people for order in their lives that is supposed to be arranged by a reasonable ruler made them, on their free will, call for the authority (“Be our master!”) and the “masters” started the struggle against the human nature taking their inspiration from the love of power, from creed and hatred of nonconformity. As a result, there emerged the “morass” full of “devils” (“All the year round”). The “devils” that got in the “morass” were funny and despicable, while the “morass” itself was neither pathetic nor ludicrous.

The sense-making significance in the novel is attached to the expression “sedimentary atoms”. The inhabitants of Glupov, says the novel, – are “the people like any other peoples, with one exception only, namely, that their natural qualities have become overgrown with a mass of sedimentary atoms, and nothing can be seen under them”⁸. The power of the authorities, their oppression, implants these atoms into the consciousness of man.

The leading principle of the government is represented by “deliberate elimination of the natural” aimed at both the subjects and the rulers themselves⁹. Therefore, the well-being of the people becomes inversely proportional to the energy of the insane ruler who tries to remake the nature of man (Ugryum-Burcheyev “has personally crushed down the whole congregation of thinking creatures”). The “morass” has also eliminated the human nature of the rulers themselves: The last town governor even fights against the natural in his own family. He used to feed his wife and his children only once a day with just bread and water supplied through the iron bars. Upon his disappearance “in the basement there were found some unknown naked and completely wild creatures who bit, screamed, sank their claws in one another and snarled at the people around them...<They - G.A.> attacked the food with such beastly avidity that they fed themselves sick at once and expired”⁸.

The blistering satire that addresses the authority covers up the deep pain of the author who observes the drama of the insane man on the throne, when he tells about the sincere desire of some of the town administrators to introduce municipal improvements in Glupov and about the failures that are caused by the debility of

the rulers inherited according to their social status. The author’s compassion for the “devils” that die tragically is covered up with the openly resonant wrath directed at their explicit barbarity.

Using all the means at their disposal the authorities beat out of the people their innate ability to think; therefore, the people are credulous, obedient and subservient and often base (as in the case with Yevseyich). While earlier the Inhabitants of Glupov did understand at least something, then later when Organchik (Music Box) came the “careless, good-natured and merry” Glupov became woebegone. The people “only felt terrible fear and unconscious awe; late in the evening Glupov stood completely still. Hungry dogs were the masters of the streets, ...dense darkness wrapped the streets and the houses”. Under Borodavkin, the people of Glupov were mad with fear: “It was almost heard that someone was trembling somewhere”, some strange shadows were crossing the fields; the ear caught some strange sounds”. The whole Streletskaya settlement was moaning: “There was an unclear but continuous humming, ... that was, in the whole of its aggregate, a pain in the heart that could hardly be endured”. Vasilisk Borodavkin “was the embodiment of so much shouting, ...that many of the Glupovites became forever afraid for themselves and for their children alike”. However, from time to time, through those “sedimentary atoms” the human thought and the human will did come up, though checked in the bud by the authorities at once. Under Negodyayev (or the Blackguard), the nobleman’s son Ivashka Farafontyev used to utter the “blasphemous words” suggesting that those who eat too much should share their food with those who eat less; and therefore, he was enchained and, being enchained, Ivashka “met his death” because of “fear and pain” as well as Aleshka Bespyatov also “met his death” because of the unbearable “inquisitive speeches” under Benevolenskiy.

The work has been written “in a style that meets the requirements of the subject matter”; it is not double-styled but rather stylistically synthetic. Here the sharp sarcasm and the soft, sorrowful humor are intertwined in the complex pro rata manner. Both stylistic lines are equalized, one gets into another with satire or elegism being dominant now and then.

In the middle of the 70s the stylistic manner of Shchedrin evolved toward more acrid satire; and, simultaneously, there appeared the preconditions for deeper elegism. Thus, in sketch “Cousine Mashenka” from the collection called “The Well-Meant Speeches” the artistic “Me” of the author,

given the sharp criticism in the characterization of the vamp, also reveals the bitter regret concerning the initial ability to think that has been lost by this "doll": Mashenka has no idea what she has turned into.

In 1880 the novel called "The Golovlyov Family"¹⁰ came from print where the "morass" that gives birth to the "devils" proves to be indestructible and immortal, ready to bear the new unviable fruits. The image of the estate has been created with the huge critical power; the people are mutilated by it, they are aimed at mutual and self-destruction. "Golovlevo estate is the very death itself, mean and barren; this is the death that is eternally awaiting for its new prey... All the deaths, all poisons, all ulcers come from here"¹⁰. Everything that lives loses the connections with life, people, world; man sinks into the emptiness. The personages are caught by "dyings", but the very "order of things" that has once been established in the course of life never dies but starts its circle anew making this morbid place to reproduce itself. This is some kind of a family tree that is growing in the rotten soil that has imbibed the poisonous saps and has sprung off the sick branches that give birth to the new harmful off-springs and rotten fruits¹¹. The inhuman way of life can bear nothing but the things that used to exist and that are dead now. The aggregate of the forces that have been accumulated over the process of historical life strangles everything human; under these conditions it is easier to die than to live. By the finale of the novel, Galkina, a relative of the Golovlyovs, curiously observes the empty "nest" of the Golovlyovs and is preparing to come to replace them as a new victim.

"Not a single feather is left of the nest". Arina Petrovna represents the very spirit of the old order. Corrupted with property, she spoiled the life of her husband, hounded his old helpless sisters to death and mutilated the lives of those sufferable children and favorites. "A somber decoration" of domestic literature – this was how Y. Aykhenvald¹² described the image of Iudushka (the Little Judah).

In the novel the satire has been intertwined with elegy; and, as compared to "The History of a Town" the share of elegiac origin has been increased considerably. Shchedrin is convinced that a man naturally tends to beauty, strives for the truth, love, good; he is conscientious¹³. The compassion of the author even reaches so far as to enwrap Iudushka who has understood his crimes in the end. His physical and moral corruption came to the end of rope making him unfit for his earlier malevolence. The gleam of conscience has been awakened by the fear of death, by the wish to repent, "to petrify with the cries of death agony"

at the grave of his mother; but the conscientiousness that has been awakened too late excludes the possibility of revival. Nevertheless, by the finale of the novel the severity of the author is alleviated and the author reveals the compassion for the inveterate liar, because Iudushka has understood his guilt. The bright hue of reconciliation is expressed by the disappearance of this wild moniker Iudushka; he is called now "landlord of the Golovlevs", "Porfiriy Vladimirovich".

Elegiac line has been "attached" to all personages of the novel because of their relative innocence of being "devils". They are naturally beautiful and talented, but the understanding of the reasons for their endless "dyings" comes to them too slowly and with too much difficulties. Arina Petrovna is a gifted, strong personality. Defending, protecting her dear "acquisition", being deprived of her idol and icon, she tries to perceive the reasons for the crush, she cries helplessly, obstinately, bitterly and desperately. The strokes of misfortune "have illumined in her area of thought some corners... that have never been visited by her thoughts before". She seems to recover her sight as she gets closer to her grandchildren, pities them and discovers in the darkness of the present environment the "gratifying ray" of life that inevitably attracts the man, the "known aspirations" of people. The weak-willed, helpless, obedient but kind landlord Pavel, this "apathetic and mysteriously gloomy personality", loses himself into drinking in his estate; the clever, persevering Stepan tries to escape death, but it catches him up nevertheless. The beautiful, energetic Aninka was spoiling for beauty, joy, bliss and noble labor. Set free and having left her native nest, she goes under the trial of being free from the prejudices and she fails. The exterminating conditions of the estate have undermined her moral fiber, the stogy chaos used to be mistaken for the joys of life; the stale philandering was believed to be a feast. Sick, miserable and exhausted, upon having come to Golovlevo to die there, she is awakened from the horror dream of her life and at the grave of her grandmother, she gets sober and suffers endlessly; and the pain of the author resounds here at the top of its voice. Aninka's sister Lyubinka, the weak creature, typical "little man of Golovlevo", "undernourished puny creature", meets her death after the first encounters with real life. Huge craving for joy that she never saw in her family made her recklessly unsuspecting. Affectionless family upbringing and military service killed off the best makings in Iudushka's sons, urged them to the criminal ways; the father proved helpless at the decisive point and

they have fallen victims of the conditions of life. Faithful, simple, devoted to her family Yevprakseychka does not see the drama of her life; the outlook of the servant makes her take all her grief for granted.

The imaginative system of the novel highlights that similar to the State in “The history of a Town”, the family and the private property are false fetishes. There are families, says the novel, “whose representatives from the time they were born... receive nothing from the household Penates but the deadlock misfortune”¹⁰. Beauty, love, conscience are always present in man, but these lucid and good forces are oppressed by the lumber of life that is accumulated because of the unreasonable arrangement of one’s living.

Shchedrin endures the reactionist epoch of the 80s steadfastly, he “continues at his post not prone to hesitate or to betray”. In 1884 his pet project, *Otechestvennye Zapiski Journal*, the concentration and the school of Russian literature under his editorship, was banned. The only pulpit left him to address the society was now narrowed down to his creative writings, where in an acceptable manner he could express his opinions on the contemporary environment. Shchedrin feels the urge to draw the conclusions of his long years of contemplations on the principal events of Russian social life^{14,15}. From the perspectives of the problem under consideration this period could be characterized by the cycle of sketches “Abroad”, “Letters to Auntie”, “Small Things in Life” where Shchedrin’s critical intonation becomes somewhat softer; keen irony dominates over sarcasm. He becomes even more convinced that the roots of the real evil are hidden somewhere in the remote past and he knows it better than anyone else. It is there, in the depth of Russian history that the ideological postulates have been formed that govern over us up to now.

3. Results

The artistic realization of Shchedrin’s ideological position was embodied in “Old Years in Poshekhonye”,¹⁶ his farewell work that he created in the torturous end of his life when, however, the creative gift of the author was still alive, fresh and young. He has chosen a difficult genre that required combining the severe truth with subjectively existing poetry of being. The style of this work is characterized by the domination of autobiographical aspect over the historical and the urgent. Grand picture of the whole way of life contains both the negation of the things that

have to pass away and the reassertion of the things that are new; and this fact explained the synthesis of the style of the chronicle. The author’s lyricism involves irony and elegism in different proportions; hence the intonation is calmer. The old spite, as it was dying away, poisoned the new one with its sight; the essence, however remained intact and proceeded hampering the movement of the free human thought. The origins of modern ideology of mental squalor that oppresses the future of the nation are hidden within the beastly image of the past within the life itself that was arranged long ago, on monumental and very stable basis.

In the chronicle, the earlier “morass” has acquired material incarnation; the “devils” have become human beings. Malinovets estate is the repugnant country of wilderness and barbarity, the soil that generates poison, the kingdom of spiritual death and the immovable, frozen, sleepy world. Here, from time immemorial the monolithic forms of life have been established, of life that is strange and looks like the wound up mechanism. The illusion of something haunted emanates from the antiquity and strength of the principles that have been developed, approved of and tried by the rulers.

The locality of Poshekhonye seems “as if meant by the nature itself for the mysteries of the serfdom”. This is an oasis isolated from the external life and living according to the laws of its own that alienate everything without and that moves only in a circle (“magic circle” of interrelations, talks “about marriages”, “circulating” visits to neighbors). The people go round this magic circle of lies, hypocrisy and vulgarity. The still life of the suspended time represents the infinity and the unchanging nature of the “morass”. The personages pass away, but the time stands still; one can barely perceive its slight moves. The immovable is paradoxically combined with the petty intrigues, with lot of fuss about nothing “in the stale mess” of the house of the landlord. The rotten morass is sinking ever deeper in the blue haze with its suffocating stench and its buzzing blood suckers.

The unchangeable way of life is concentrated on the “demand of the belly”; “the culminant pinnacles of the backstreet expanse” are represented by the ball at the governor’s house, the Cheesefare Week with its endless pancakes when month upon month the “backwoods were eating, drinking and buzzing like bees in the hive”. Much concern and great hustle, as if the Doomsday is getting closer, the feasts and the entertainment take all efforts and all capabilities, all available time and all energy.

The artistic images of the masters and slaves have been created based on the ideas of the author about the world and man that he, a child in a village, obtained from the Gospels that are called in the chronicle the strong and hot life-giving ray. A number of deep and strong images have been depicted in the process of their ideological corruption; in some cases the people were corrupted by all-permissiveness, in other cases the corruption was caused by the deprivation of rights. The author tries to understand the human nature. The character of the masters consists of some wild concoction of avidity, lies and despotism. Provincial middle class landowners were larger in their number as compared to the landlords of the cultured strata, and they used to embody all the rudest traits of the representatives of power. Vulgar entertainment, unequalled laziness, self-indulgence, unlimited parasitism, stupid and avaricious devouring of food, stamping on it and picking up trifling rows – such is the life of the masters. Having nothing else to do they contrive at dirty tricks (like filthily fornicating “mischief” Urvantsov); the reason for their longevity often used to be represented by their “mental and moral imperturbability”. Here were planted the rotten seeds of personal corruption from within, when the “brains got black with smoke” and “were rendered unable for perceiving any kind of impressions except the disorderly ones”. The characters of the people “acquired special constitution, and the life got infused with some certain habits”.

The mother is angry with her dependents, the sisters of her husband (“came here you spongers”), with the mischievous old woman Marya and with Olga who is rumored to be clever. Marya drew the crosses on the doors and windows with chewed bread, then danced on the most “live” floorboard, walked around the icon stand with the burning candle pretending that she was a bride and sending air kisses to Joseph Prekrasniy (the Beautiful) or drew moustaches and horns in the portraits.

The house serfs have to suffer this everyday horror. “The maidservants’ room” has become the “refuge of sorrow”. According to the narrator, he left his vegetable existence as early as during his adolescence and started to recognize himself as man; therefore, the right for this kind of awareness he used to carry with him “in the maidservants’ room, in the dining room, where dozens of desecrated and tortured human beings were suffocating”. They were allowed to breathe solely “for the sake of unconditional obedience”. Restrictions on the marriages of the house serfs reduced them “to the level of ever

coveting bests”. They got pregnant, paid for it by being beaten, humiliated or sometimes killed. “The unfortunate creature not only humbly accepted scolding and beating, not only suffered all day long from the unbearable work, but it also personally had to bear all the consequences of one’s awakened instinct”¹⁶. “Nefarious and miserable” Matrenka was put out of the house in the frost and died sitting in the snow at the porch. Barber Vanka-Cain, the jester and merry-maker, says: “...there are some who never saw as many stars in the sky as my back saw the birch-rods!”. In the autumn he got weary anticipating a misfortune and it did come when he was drawn to the color as a soldier: “...they awakened me at dawn, tied my hands as I was half asleep and brought me into the draycart, my legs in the wooden blocks”. After several years he returned looking like a skeleton. “There is not a single live joint in me, – says he, – it’s high time to die”.

The masters are unreasonably cruel toward the house serfs who are doomed for exhausting hustle and trifling bustle. They are tortured by Fiska, a snake of a woman who “pinches” the maids sick, goofs on the cook making him eat the cockroach that has fallen in the soup. All this is narrated with keen satirical intonation that sometimes drifts to sarcasm. Thus, it tells about one of the bankrupt masters who became a waiter abroad: “...what a wonderful success is achieved by Russia proving convincingly that the sons of hers will never lose face as waiters”¹⁶!

Satirical hues of the gloomy intonation of the narrative create the general rugged style to describe the eternal twilights of the weary and slow life. However, the critical attitude of the author is often expressed not as sarcasm but as slight, jesting humor that sparkles with the whole variety of colors. Thus, the self-made governor Strunnikov “was notable for ...excellent stupidity and... invincible laziness”, used to live in “doors and soul open” manner. The face of this glutton is “a spitting image of a pug-dog”. Upon the peasant reform he panicked: “...the abyss of bankruptcy loomed dark and frightening before his eyes with all the horror of poverty. He was seating, his eyes fixed on something far and invisible and his lips uttered some incoherent words”. The refuge was found abroad where he looked jolly, active and spry. His round head “looked as though it has just come off the lathe”. There is a lot of humor in the description of the mischievous tricks of Urvantsov who used to steal vegetables from the peasants’ kitchen gardens at night, made the house serfs shear the peasants’ sheep or milk their cows.

The creative thought of the writer could not avoid the problem of upbringing the children. In Poshekhonye the children are brought up in the same way as their parents were before them. The premature sluggishness of the hearts, the minds unheated by any ambition for anything good put the children into ignorance “their hands full of everything unwanted”. They do not have any idea about the truth. The children are surrounded by nature, however “they knew animals and birds... only salted, boiled or fried”. Young martyrs who knew no caresses were engaged into “the system of spying and tale-bearing”. The children do not have any ideas about kinship, thus the visit of the Zatropezniys (or the Unkempt) to their relatives in Moscow was as humiliating as it was hard: “On the face of it, everything looked friendly...inside the hostility was boiling”. Religious element was reduced to simple rites: “The knees were bent, the foreheads touched the flood with a bang, but the hearts remained dumb”. It was for a good reason that in his letter to G. Z. Yeliseyev dated December, 18, 1884, Shchedrin, his heart aching, wrote: “My children will be unhappy; no poetry in their hearts; no rosy remembrances, no sweet tears; nothing but skits and buffoonery”.

4. Discussion

The style of the chronicle is imbued with elegism, with the expression of that intimate and personal origin that can be called the author's love of man, his pain for one and the feelings of the writer towards all the personages he depicted irrespective of their social standing. Out of the mire of everyday life there emerge human dramas, which description attaches elegiac nuances to the work of art. The types of the women enjoy special compassion of the author. In this respect the image of Nadin Zatrapeznaya who is brought to Moscow as a bride is especially notable. She “can go off in a swoon” and present “hysterical exercises”. Mother calls her charmless daughter “lanky girl”. Moscow routs did not prove successful; Nadin hardly escaped the deceit of Esper Kleshchevinov, the fop; the match-making wit the first “serious” groom was a failure and the mother made her decision to leave Moscow before time. Answering her request: “Get the lady packed...tomorrow morning we go back to Malinovets!” the daughter prays: “Oh mother darling!... but the Cheesefare Week...how come!”. “The tempest...was accompanied by several, may be even

real, swoons”. Next day early in the morning “the cart successfully managed to come out of the gates bound for the turnpike”. The fate of Nadin was found in the province and it was personified by one-handed district police inspector Golovastikov (or Tadpole) who “with his one hand grabbed so much that it would be hard for another one with his two hands”; in return, Nadin “gave birth to his children and was the first lady in the town”. The intonation of the narrator resounds with a deep sigh for the death of pure feelings, for the frustrated dreams of womanly happiness, cruel deception of rosy prospects. The general satirical picture is intertwined with keen elegism expressed through the precisely selected set of intonation-marked words. The really tragic atmosphere enwraps the image of Klavdenka, the daughter of Slepshkina, a widow who drank herself sick. The daughter is a slim seventeen year old lady attached passionately to her mother and feeling very much pity for her¹⁴. The hereditary disease has overcome Klavdenka; no recovery could be hoped for. She is living her last autumn, but the “thirst for life was so strong that even in her hardest moments she never lost faith and hope”. When she was no longer strong enough to move she was seated in the arm-chair by the window out of which she could see the small garden, the grove of acacia trees, the wooden house nearby. Late in the autumn the street was covered with snow. Worn out with her sleepless nights, Klavdenka who failed to accumulate any internal contents imagines the yawning abyss ready to swallow her. “How can fate be so cruel, indeed! – her weary heart was complaining continuously, – is it possible that it has not prepared any joys but just death alone?” In spring her sick imagination shows her the pictures of her native village, fields, meadows, the sun, the spaciousness and a huge mass of the air. The death came when the mother was drinking hard and hardly understood that her daughter was gone. Setting all her peasants free and leaving her estate in their full possession she committed suicide cutting her throat. The funerals were attended by the whole village; the neighbors congratulated each other with the “strange” orders of the landlady concerning the estate and even made jokes: “Welcome on board! There are new landlords in our village!” The subject matter of love sounds here in elegiac manner as the unattainable dream, as physical and moral health, as the unwanted hereditary diseases, as inferiority of human nature predetermined by the conditions of life. In restrained language the story also reveals the tragedy of the dependents, the sisters of the

narrator's father who, in the course of time "became something like mummies; forgotten and forlorn in the stuffy kennel, deprived of any inflow of the fresh air, they even ceased to understand their own helplessness and lived their lives in dumb stupidity like in a coffin"; their miserable shelter "they held with all the force that remained in their petrifying hands". The images of the children are created by the author with the uncovered love and pity. "Poor, miserable children!"; "I pity the children for their own sake"; "unfortunate prisoners" – these bitter words are not disguised with any metaphor. When the author tells about the adult representatives of the provincial gentry some certain words in the text seem to somehow partially relieve them of their guilt of their own inhumanity. Thus, the belly idyll, the paradise of the stomach and all-permissiveness make the masters "the convicts" of the inhumanity. Hence the dirty pranks of Gribkov, sadistic tortures of Fiska the snake, the gluttony of Pustotelov (the Empty Body) and base interests of Milochka Cheprakova. In the course of the continuous misery of their existence the people do not seem to participate and the wrath of the author is alleviated, his critical attitude is expressed ironically, sarcasm is replaced with humor, a smile of a joker and keen irony (the masters were getting angry because the servants "tended to make people angry"). Absolute idleness, satiety of vulgar pleasures "instigates" the masters to crimes in search for more thrilling pleasures.

Within the gentry there sometimes appear bright personalities as well, such as, for example, honest and kind idealist Valentin Burmakin or clever, proud, independent, masterful, adored by the children brother Fedos at whom the sympathy of the author is clearly directed. However, they do not stay long in this environment. The intonations of perplexity used for describing these personages may be considered to be a part of Shchedrin's cryptography. It seems that the author cannot specify directly the proper way they ought to pursue. "Fedos the troublemaker has disappeared, disappeared into thin air, without any trace left; vanished like smoke. Did he annoy anyone? Or did he just sink into the air roaming fruitlessly around the world?" This tale manner of the narration shows the deep sorrow of the author; the intonation of bewilderment expresses his bitterness as regards the homelessness of the normal people in the abnormal society.

Similar specific features of Shchedrin's style can be observed when he describes the oppressed masses;

however, there are much more elegiac nuances rather than satire; they are expressed openly through the direct words of the author. Hard and cruel serfdom made the narrator closer to the oppressed people. The humiliation of the slaves was reduced to the abuse of the human image. The feelings of the oppressed are deep and complex, they are capable of deep and sacrificial love (Mavrusha of Novotorzhsk), they understand and take for granted their deprivation of rights and try to vindicate it by turning to God (Annushka). Deep thoughts engulfed the whole essence of Satir the pilgrim and the vagabond who collected money for the bell. His heart was breaking to pieces as he felt sorrow: "Sacrificed to the disease he was tossing in his death bed trying in his solitude to solve the problem: to what purpose could he serve in this manner". Sergey the son of the gardener has drunk "the whole bitter cup of the apprentice". "The cheerful spirit was gushing in his heart inexhaustibly", but there has never been "a hand or a birch-rod or a stick that has not touched him". He became a vagabond, hid in Moscow and got beaten for theft. Konon the barkeeper dies of osteomyelitis suffering awfully; the masters, however, remain indifferent to his sufferings. "Maybe, – says the chronicle, – the pain was very torturous, because only now people guessed that Konon could feel and suffer". Servility is called "the innermost world outlook that hides by itself in the nooks of the human soul that are never lighted with by the rays of consciousness". But then this ray flashes in the soul of man, and this is exactly what the book tells most passionately. Thus, Mavrusha of Novotorzhsk rebelled: "I will never do the master's work! I will not bend before the masters! I am free!" Falling in love with the serf she also became a serf on her own free will to be together with her beloved. She was charged with baking bread. After her rebellion Mavrusha got flogged, the execution was performed by her husband and then she came to hate him and hanged herself. Fiska the snake was strangled with pillows by the mud room maids. Gribkov was lynched in a terrible fashion: The peasants set his house on fire and hanged the master by his feet inside the burning house. Those were just separated efforts to get rid of the "sedimentary atoms" of the unconscious and those efforts are most dear to the author. Both masters and slaves are "convicts" and are "instigated" by the order of things to the unconsciousness. The paralysis of the will shows itself through the disease of inertia and automatism. All social estates are organically inter-related based on the principle of mutual influence that is predetermined by the way of life.

5. Conclusion

Thus, among the pinnacles of Shchedrin's works there emerges a cryptographically expressed ideological standing of the writer whose satire has always been finding its subjects in inhumanity of the people crushed by the order of things. Ideological mastership and ideological slavery mutilate the originally clean nature of man. There is a task to wash man from these "sedimentary atoms", where the "atom" of the unconscious is one of the most strong and adamant; the people should be returned to their natural reasonable existence with no oppression by those who try to decide their fates. The work of healing the society should commence with the rulers who have been called upon to arrange life to the benefit of all citizens. Social consciousness of masses has to develop a single ideology of healing human thoughts and feelings.

Shchedrin believes that there is no necessity for conjuring up any new ideals; it will be enough if the eternal fundamental sanctities of the Orthodox Church are preserved and cherished. He goes up to clairvoyance, intuitive foresight and prophesy when he talks about "underground springs", "shadows of the things to come", "points of light that flicker in the perspectives of the future", "breath of the ideal" and when he expresses his views through the conventional forms of figurative art. Free thought corresponds to the natural striving of man to fulfill one's potential as a thinking being. And that is what accounts for the unconditional significance of Shchedrin in today's world.

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