

*In memory of V. I. Karavashkin, PhD
of V. N. Karasin Kharkiv National University*

THE INFLUENCE OF THE BIOGRAPHICAL FACTS ON THE PECULIARITIES OF CREATIVE WORK OF SIEGFRIED LENZ

The article deals with the research of Siegfried Lenz's biographical facts which had a significant influence on his creative style and composed the main themes of novels and short stories.

Key words: *biography, childhood, criticism, debt, father-son relations, prototype, self-consciousness.*

May the attention to some details of the writer's biography add anything new to his creative works comprehension? The answer of the classic literary criticism is generally negative. B. Tomachevsky noted ruefully in the 1920^s that for many researchers an attempt to interpret creative work through the prism of biographical method is "the scientific contraband from the backyard" [2, p. 6]. But some other researchers, e.g. in his teaching aid O. Krivzyn made such a conclusion that the research of writers' biographical systems allows to find new points of contact and mutual conditionality of creative work with the dominants of the general cultural processes [1, p. 241]. We share this opinion and have made a comparative analysis of Lenz's biographical facts and his work contents.

Siegfried Lenz doesn't lift the curtain in his personal life willingly, during the interviews he refuses to comment on private questions. Only in his autobiographical rough copy "I for example" (Ich zum Beispiel) the writer presented to the world some sketches of his childhood, school years and his short-term part in military operations. But all this information is scrappy. There is hardly any information about Lenz's parents. Whereas his colleagues Walser, Grass, Kempowski, Kunert told the society their biographical stories in details, Lenz comes to nothing more than silence. The motives of such behavior are, in our opinion, emotional injuries in his childhood, such as family disruption. Interesting is the phrase of Marcel Reich-Ranicki's speech when Lenz was awarded Thomas Mann Prize. He stated that the prize-winner "closed down" his biography after the appearance of his first novel.

In youth Lenz traveled a lot around the world, took part in the election campaign of German Social Democratic Party (SPD), was a member of Group 47, but while getting older he differs from his co-workers in his wish to remain a mystery for the public. During the last years his only statement was about his negative attitude to the orthography reform. Lenz follows Thomas Mann's example and devotes all his time to writing. They were both in his life – tremendous success and rough critique. Lenz deals with criticism in his easy-tempered manner, his main motto being: "No sorrow for yourself... there is only one way – forward" [3, p. 9]. All his characters have such life philosophy.

Siegfried Lenz was born in Lyck, his parents were Luise and Otto Lenz. The writer tries to conceal the details of his unhappy childhood, which influenced his future works greatly. There is no information about his father. It is known that he was the customs officer and he didn't maintain relations with his children and their mother and died in the 1930^s. Such subject as the complicated relations between a son and a father can be found in many Lenz's works, it was the replacement of his fatherless childhood through literature. When the writer was a child he had weak contacts with his sister and mother. In his story about Lehmann ("Lehmanns Erzählungen oder So schön war mein Markt") written in 1964 there are mentions about the protagonist's younger sister, for her prototype was the author's sister. It is known that she was a teacher in Thuringia. Nowadays the woman communicates with her famous brother. Lenz's mother left her house after the break with her husband and moved with her daughter to Braniewo and built another family there. Small Lenz spent his childhood with his grandmother. The picturesque nature and grandma's stories influenced his future creative work. One can find a lot of descriptions of the same landscapes and the echo of granny's tales in writer's novels and novellas, such as "The heritage" ("Heimatumuseum") and "Geschichten aus Suleyken". Grandmother stirred love for reading in the boy. In his interview to Pavel Kohout Lenz told that his favourite books at the age of 9 – 10 were novels about Rolf Topping's and Jörn Farrow's adventures in the exotic countries. It developed the boy's imagination, he found new entertainments on the lake and then he would "remember" all this fun in his "Heritage". Interesting is the explanation of the unusual text structure, it is fragmentary and abrupt, one plotline is cut by another, it is so because Lenz – when being a young reader – liked to read each new chapter beginning with its end for he was eager to get to know ahead of time, that the hero would survive the challenge. The first writer who inspired Lenz was Hans Warren with his Rolf Topping's adventure novels; it is obvious from the imitation of Warren's arrogant and pompous wording in Lenz's first novels, especially in "Duell mit dem Schatten".

The following episodes in boy's life and in the life of small Lyck will also find the reflection in his works. The colonization of Masuria by Knights' Orders is described in "The heritage" and "Training ground" ("Exerzierplatz"). When the writer was 10, he was like other children a member of Hitler Youth (Pimpf). It was a new adventure for the boy, he imagined himself to be a Cossack from grandmother's stories, he liked gatherings near a campfire, songs, the uniform and that no teacher was allowed to punish him with a stick at school from then on.

Lyck was situated 18 kilometers from the border with Poland; there were always friendly relations between neighbors, but in September 1939 unexpectedly for the citizens German soldiers started to move towards Poland. Lenz remembers what he thought as a child: "Probably our soldiers had to fine the sly farmers, who sent us the Christmas geese" [3, p. 18]. In the novel "Heritage" he describes these geese; they are the symbol of the first victims of the war. On the border the German aircraft attacks the train with Christmas geese and the white cloud bleed in broken coaches.

A new period in Lenz's life started with a journey to Szamotuły (Poland), the ending of his childhood in Lyck and entering the secondary school. This stage of his formation as a person and writer is also unknown. Lenz didn't mention it in his article for Marcel Reich-Ranicki's collection (1984), which sheds light on school-days of the famous writers in the Third Reich. And it leads to a quarrel in 12 years between the writer and the critic, because of the statement by Marcel Reich-Ranicki that Lenz visited the national-socialistic elite school at that time. It is only known about some two significant persons in high-school who had a great impact on Lenz's outlook and on his further writing activity. The first one was Professor Adolf Paul – the German language teacher, he was a representative of the opposition and was like a stepfather for Lenz. He was the one who inculcated a liking for writing in Lenz. With a group of three students, two of them were Lenz and the future journalist Dieter Gütt, the professor conducted "another" German lesson without Hitler's and Rosenberg's works, but with Thomas Mann's "Buddenbrooks" and Heinrich Heine's "Germany: A Winter's Tale" and Gotthold Lessing's "Nathan the Wise". These lessons were very important for Siegfried Lenz, his teacher showed him the path of creative work and he followed it with Paul's directions. The teacher told that one can't write anything about other people without telling the readers about himself – Lenz remembered this advice more than once when writing. All his works have a biographical background. Another significant lesson which the young author learned thoroughly was about suffering. "The writer should suffer", so he can write and his mission is "to give the grief an opportunity to speak" and "if the literati "evaluate" your sufferings you overcome your disaster". Lenz followed the Professor's instructions throughout all his creative life. The other person who had an influence with the German writer was his English language teacher – Margarethe Wittram. Her lesson of English presented millions of readers with Lenz' unique style and his recognizable sentences in a complex manner. Lenz's knowledge of English also saved the writer's life during his stay in an English prisoner-of-war camp, where he worked as an interpreter.

Lenz recalls that his friends and he were upset because the war might end and they would never take part in it, for them the war was like a grandiose game, a competition, an adventure, but not something serious. During the holidays there was a military training at school; the future writer met his first love, a schoolgirl, who was trained there, she was a member of the League of German Girls (BDM). She turned down the young boy for she didn't want to deal with romance when she was in a uniform. The object of his love told him about "the dept" and the duty for fatherland. It was the first time when Lenz was faced with such a concept as "dept", dept – above the human feelings. The young activist girl "gave" Lenz the main topic for many of his further works – "The German lesson", "The Lightship" ("Das Feuerschiff") and "The War ending" ("Ein Kriegsende").

By the age of 17 his school-years were over and the writer, who liked the sea adventures, was recruited to the Navy. The May 2nd 1944 was the day when Lenz stepped on board of the battleship "Admiral Sheer". The greenhorn saw the wounded and dead people for the first time; he realized the horror of the war. His military service on the board did not last long, the ship was breached and Lenz went to the land. But it was only the beginning of the writer's misfortune; his troop received the order to protect the bridge between Seeland and Falster. When the soldiers learned about German's capitulation and that the war was over, they tried to escape, because all of them finished with killing people. Lenz wrote about it: "The deserters had to be executed. They (he meant the government) needed the killed soldiers to remind of their power, they needed them because of pedagogic and discipline reasons, I understood it and woke up" [3, p. 30].

These developments were the reason for many disputes. Michael Jürgs, a journalist and writer, wrote that Lenz was ordered to shoot his friend, but they both deserted. Critic Reich-Ranicki informed that Lenz was executed in Denmark. True are only the facts about Lenz's desertion and that he was taken prisoner near the German-Danish border. He used his recollections for the novels "Brot und Spiele" and "The German lesson". He worked as a translator for an English military unit and settled with it in Hamburg. He worked and studied Literature, Anglistics and Philosophy at the University. His salary as a translator was cigarettes and tea, but he needed money, so he carried on business. The writer resold the stuff at the black market, this activity is described in "Lehmans Erzählungen" or "So schön war mein Markt: aus den Bekenntnissen eines Schwarzhändlers" (Lehmann's stories or So well was my market: the confession of one profiteer). The last subtitle "The confession of one profiteer" was borrowed by Lenz from Thomas Mann "Bekenntnisse des Hochstaplers Felix Krull" (The confession of an adventurer Felix Krull). The first chapter begins with the phrase that imitates Felix Krull: "The lack – was my best period. I understood early, which opportunities give the deficit..." [5, p. 5].

Such business wasn't profitable though, and Lenz's income was soon cut. He could hardly make both ends meet, but hunger and poverty are the starting point of great creators. In the winter of 1945-1946 the German writer created his first text "Die zehn Gebote", it was published in the British newspaper "The World" (Die Welt). It was a "green" work, but it already possessed Lenz's typical style: a meaning, an unexpected ending, a dept-theme and the influence of the past on the present.

These are, of course, not all biographical facts and persons who took part in the formation of German classical author Siegfried Lenz, and we are planning the further research of other biographical facts of the writer and their reflection in his works. In our opinion, it will help understand and analyze his texts more thoroughly.

Використані джерела

1. Кривцун О. А. Эстетика / О. А. Кривцун. – М. : Аспект Пресс, 2000. – С. 234–241.
2. Томашевский Б. Литература и биография / Б. Томашевский. – М. : Книга и революция, 1923. – № 4. – С. 6.
3. Maletzke Erich. Siegfried Lenz. Eine biographische Annäherung / Erich Maletzke. – Hannover : zu Kampen Verlag, 2006. – S. 7–50.
4. Lenz Siegfried. Brot und Spiele / Lenz Siegfried. – München : Deutscher Taschenbuch-Verlag, 2005. – 240 S.
5. Lenz Siegfried. Lehmanns Erzählungen oder So schön war mein Markt / Lenz Siegfried. – München : Deutscher Taschenbuch-Verlag, 2006. – 104 S.
6. Reich-Ranicki Marcel. Meine Schulzeit im Dritten Reich – Erinnerungen deutscher Schriftsteller / Marcel Reich-Ranicki. – München : Deutscher Taschenbuch-Verlag, 2006. – 272 S.

Шаронова А. В.

ВПЛИВ БІОГРАФІЧНИХ ФАКТІВ НА СВОЄРІДНІСТЬ ТВОРЧОСТІ ЗІГФРИДА ЛЕНЦА

Стаття присвячена дослідженню біографічних фактів життя німецького письменника Зігфріда Ленца, які мали значний вплив на його творчість і стали основою при виборі тематики його романів та оповідань.

***Ключові слова:** біографія, взаємовідносини батька та сина, дитинство, критика, прототип, самоусвідомлення.*

Шаронова А. В.

ВЛИЯНИЕ БИОГРАФИЧЕСКИХ ФАКТОВ НА СВОЕОБРАЗИЕ ТВОРЧЕСТВА ЗИГФРИДА ЛЕНЦА

Статья посвящена исследованию биографических фактов жизни немецкого писателя Зигфрида Ленца, которые оказали значительное влияние на его творчество и составили основу при выборе тематики его романов и рассказов.

***Ключевые слова:** биография, взаимоотношения отца и сына, детство, критика, прототип, самоосознание.*

Стаття надійшла до редакції 26.06.14