

**Ulas Samchuk's private letters of 50-70's of the 20th century
as an indicator of literary époque**

**Приватне листування Уласа Самчука 1950-70-х рр.
як індикатор літературної епохи**

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ABSTRACT

The article deals with researching of Ulas Samchuk' private letters of 50-70's of the 20th century with famous artists. Special attention pays to writer's life and art peripeteias through the prism of his epistolary. The peculiarities of certain literary discussions of Ulas Samchuk in his letters of the 50's and 70's of the 20th century were found; on the basis of a specific textual analysis a description of the main life and creative peripets of the writer is given; revealed aspects that require further study. Studied and researched the époque in which U. Samchuk lived and worked, through the prism of his epistolary.

Letters of writers is an invaluable source of evidence about the life and work of masters of words and their correspondents. The special value of correspondence is that they reflect a particular moment in the life of the writer, his thoughts, beliefs, literary preferences.

The famous writer Ulas Samchuk left a pretty significant epistolary heritage that extremely deepens our knowledge about the era in which he lived, about features of his literary and private life.

Despite some achievements in the field of research of epistolary, it is still not sufficiently studied the social functions of correspondence, the character of depiction reality in them, their content and other features.

Particularly noteworthy studies of L. Vashkiv [Vashkiv, 1998: 26], M. Kotsiubynska (Kotsiubynska, 2001: 53), V. Kuzmenko [Kuzmenko, 1998: 34], Zh. Liakhova (Liakhova, 1984: 45), H. Mazokha (Mazokha, 2008: 42), V. Sviatovets (Sviatovets, 1981: 17) and others. However epistolary heritage of the writer, it is worth noting, needs still quite considerable attention.

Thus, the relevance of our scientific exploration contained in the material of the research and its problems.

Key words: *letter, correspondence, epistolary, literary process, diaspora.*

Introduction

The purpose is to study and research the era in which U.Samchuk lived and worked through the prism of his epistolary. Realization of this goal requires the following tasks: to find out some specifics of literary discussions of Ulas Samchuk in his letters of 50-70's of the XX century; on the basis of specific textual analysis give characteristics of the main vicissitudes of life and creative writer; identify aspects that need further study.

Correspondences of outstanding individuals certainly attract and hardly ever stop to attract attention. Perhaps letters, as well as other literary documents contain very rich historical, actual, real material needed for understanding the life and work of the writer, artist, critic, thinker.

Studying carefully collected, saved by time and circumstances correspondences of U. Samchuk, we gradually narrows the actual field of view, our perception is exacerbated – and “other” secret life, unbiased, closed by the curtain of artist's life appears as if from nothing (Мовчан, 1993: 29).

Reproducing some moments and creative activity of the outstanding writer of Diaspora Community of Ukraine, posting or commenting on documents illuminated new page of life and achievements of U.Samchuk, it is important not only confined by private observations, never forget that the acquisition is dictated by the writer and the circumstances of time and peculiarities of thinking of the writer. Ulas Samchuk belongs to the cohort of masters of words for which the spiritual image of Ukraine, “Ukrainian idea” carrying aesthetic and ideological nature. His understanding of Ukraininism and its vision found expression not only in journalistic and artistic works of the artist, but also in his epistolary heritage. “I’m a writer of Ukrainian people not because I can write. So I writer, that I feel a duty to the people. God has put in my hands the pen. Let it be permitted to use it for good, to the required”, – wrote Samchuk about himself and his role in the history of Ukraine (Polishchuk, 1993: 86).

Materials and research methods

Analysis of the correspondence of Ulas Samchuk allows us to trace not only the various ups and downs of his life, literary work, but also complicated

relations and sociable relationship with Yu.Shereh, I.Bahrianiy, O.Shtul, D.Duchynskiy and others.

Bright pages of letters full of pathos struggle, devoted to practical cases and contain strict, aphoristic in form, high in content writer reflection on the purpose of the task of literature. Comrades, friends and colleagues, close and friendly association of writers that was broken with an iron hand of fate – all this tragedy arises from the pages of correspondence of U.Samchuk in full growth, and again we are able to experience the phenomenon of his immortality-balanced chronicle of culture as a phenomenon, that by its nature is unique.

Results and discussion

Correspondence of U.Samchuk – is a complex, multifaceted process that penetrated by many internal offs, is an important factor of his epoch, which requires special study. His influence on the development of literature, the state of public opinion and so far not adequately appreciated.

At the turn of epochs – realism and modernism – conceived the idea, one of the initiators of which was U.Samchuk, to combine all artistic forces that were then as “wandering comet” in the “stratosphere camps” into one, even “without consent in family” organization. Such an organization was the Artistic Ukrainian Movement (AUM) and therefore in the history of Ukrainian literary process of the XX century – a unique phenomenon – literature of AUM period. Besides U.Samchuk, who led the association, at its origins were such prominent masters of words like Yu.Shereh, I.Bahrianiy, V.Petrov (Domontovych) I.Kostetskiy and others. In total, around the organization come together over a hundred Ukrainian writers.

U.Samchuk continuously exchanged letters with members of the AUM, sometimes written in a confessional tone. The most intense and sometimes seems untouched and literary-critical issues is correspondence of U.Samchuk with I.Bahrianiy. In the letters sound sharp, but at the same time moderate and informed judgments about issues in the literature. And it was not easy, because each respondent was sure that he is right. These are, for example, epistles of U.Samchuk to I.Bahrianiy written in 1950's. In a friendly tone, balanced, relaxed conversation sometimes there is some discontent of U.Samchuk by different political passions of I.Bahrianiy that simultaneously does not prevent him (U.Samchuk) to admire the literary talent of the writer, his incomparable artistic talent and discuss with him the range of common issues and interests. This, in particular, shows the following letter dated 30.I.1950: „... And another one. Recently, Basil Levitsky called me and asked me to send you greetings, as also requested that you did not use in your humoresques English-Ukrainian lingo. I join to his thought as well. We can not enter this “fashion” even when it comes to humor. Anglo-Ukraine [ing] lingo is one of the most vulgar and absolutely not inherent to us. From that, later, can be serious language complications, and most importantly, I feel sorry for you as the author, because believe me – it will not gain you the right to literature. You will just miss your

abilities. Write, work... You will be the first-class humorist, but not at the expense of the cheapest. You could give a humorous novel, something more. Have many topics. In America people like humor. Good thing could be translated into English. And all your “humoresques” that printed in “Freedom”, will not go further than “Freedom”. I beg you - do not be angry at me, I say this with respect and love for you ... Because I am convinced in this ... “ (Samchuk 1950: 320).

U.Samchuk and I.Bahrianiy often sent their manuscripts to one another, looking forward to a rigorous, balanced, but friendly assessment. And they did not mistake in their calculations. In letters of both respondents often sound testimonials about submitted on paper or manuscript, testimonials were concise and more detailed, but always reasonable criticisms. Mutual exchange of experiences and thoughts in letters like curtain gives us a creative workshop of both writers.

Correspondence of U.Samchuk and Yu.Sherch conducted in another area. The dominant of correspondence was only literature. Because of this, letters are purely private and business nature. Both respondents consider suggestions and comments of another one.

Yu.Sherch as a professor at Columbia University also belonged to AUM. U.Samchuk did not hide his positive attitude towards him, in this we can make sure from the following letter to Yu.Sherch dated 30.01.1979.: „... Your “Second turn” (meaning literary works of Yu.Sherch, systematized in three volume edition – M.P.). My opinion is that this book and your article about “Styles of modern Ukrainian literature in exile” go down in history of our literature as examples of classics of the genre. Even my poor man Sheremeta honored to be carefully pulled apart and goodly laid back, but what for the others ... Marvelous. Thank you for these things forever and ever. “ (Samchuk 1979: 873).

In the letter of U.Samchuk to Yu.Sherch dated 11.03.1979 we find other evidence of Samchuk’s commitment to linguist: “Your life, Yuri Volodymyrovych, in my vision, seems rich, kind of creative. All you have done will enrich very significantly the means of our culture, for me you are very amazing with your sharp talent to see and to understand this with word. Somehow it happened that, for example in our literature, I can not find equal to you in the area of critics and seems unfortunate that you could not devote to this case your whole life ... “ (Samchuk 1979: 873).

In correspondence of U. Samchuk, taking into account the historical-literary, socio-psychological and literary-household subtext, we are able to trace the main stages of the creative evolution of the writer. His inner, spiritual growth proceeded difficultly, not at all unilaterally and not straightforward. The distance in time allows us thoroughly and comprehensively trace this process of intellectual and spiritual growth of the artist, which was due to the natural course of history and time. Time has brought some changes to the literature, while distributing the demand for the book market, the critical

delimitation and confrontation between journalists, readers and writers. U.Samchuk acutely felt all the hardships, was forced to be in an environment dictated by time, which covered all and was against all. The writer was a very strong, unusually cheerful person. Many of his respondents gave him such a force, whose letters certifying about it. In particular, he notes in correspondence to D. Duchynsky dated 2.12.1958.: „... Such letters give me moral support in the fight against those who can not or do not want to understand my plans and those problems that I try to touch in my literary works. Meanwhile, these problems require us, writers, an explanation. I'm not sure if I'm doing it well, so reader's feedback gives me the ability to control myself. Please do not forget me again – I try to find the means and the opportunity to write and publish the third book from this trilogy” (Samchuk 1958: 487).

Life displaced an idyll. Persistently, all the same question arose about the appointment of a writer, a worthy reader; the controversy about this passes through all the correspondence of U. Samchuk and is observed in particular in the epistol to O. Shtul dated from September 8, 1965: “From the time we met, my overall situation changed considerably. I had to leave my writer's work, I went “to someone else”, purely for the sake of dry bread... There was no way out. All my attempts to hold on to the literature did not yield any results. It was a jubilee, I got rewards and lots of words, but no means for life. Our campaign for the publication / re-publication / “Volyn” did not give any consequences... Our audience was completely indifferent to literary matters, and to that, joined a long-running upheaval on me with a very broad front from the Bolsheviks, through Dontsov, the various parish parties up to Kosach... Everyone prefers to see me as a “member” of a parish, but not a writer. And from this comes a whole disaster...” (Samchuk 1965: 879).

In many works Ukrainian emigrant writers paid the greatest attention to Ukrainians in the conditions of Soviet reality. Such is the work of Todos Osmachka “The Rotunda of Murderers”: a terrible and at the same time an artistically true image of the Ukrainian people, crucified by the Stalinist system.

Ulas Samchuk, in addition to the trilogy “OST”, “On solid ground”, has also created a number of memoirs “Five to twelfth”, “On a white horse”, “On horseback raven”, “Planet “D-P””. In each of the prose works of U. Samchuk there is a certain stage of the great epic of the Ukrainian man who began the campaign from “Volyn”, and finished in the work “On Solid Earth”. In his letter to I. Vovchuk, dated from March 4, 1958, the writer resorted to his own interpretation of his creative works: “The author has never complained to the end of his writing. Therefore, it is ready to rewrite it to the infinite (meaning the work “Why not burn the fire” – M.P.). I sat down to rewrite, I have not finished yet, but I hope to finish it soon. Basically, my personal preference / essay will be interesting. I would very much like to finish the work on Chuprynka and the third volume of “Ost”. That would be the end of my literary act. Three volumes of “Ost” would be a product in our literature unique and once it would have great significance” (Samchuk 1956: 391).

In our opinion, the letter to Ye. Malanyuk dated from March 11, 1958, in which the author of “Mariia” shares his own conception of understanding literature: “And what about “realism” and “rationalism” is not only our peasant. This is the only style of the entire world literature of wide canvases. Whether it’s Galsworthy, be it DurGar, be it Mazo de la Roche, Steinbeck, Folkner or Michez – I would have brought you dozens, including classics like Balzac, Tolstoy – all of them were realists in saying, in thought, in the planes. Depths and heights without a terrestrial perspective, no depths and no heights... It is understood – there are still mystics, symbolists, or simply people of the Ezopian word, but this is not always the most and deepest. Sometimes ordinary and even clowns fall to throw some pizza incidents, but which would not be that casuistry – it will never engage in wisdom, clarity, logic. Unfortunately, I sometimes think that, in particular, we, Ukrainians, love casuism more than wisdom. Confess philosophy is not wisdom, but tricks” (Samchuk 1958: 639).

Ulas Samchuk tried to resist anything in the creative process because he believed that his works would once again be recognized by world literature: “Please understand: all this for me is only a nuisance, but it is the only means in our present conditions when we have neither the publishers nor the reader to give our literature new works and thereby illuminate the creative process of our culture outside the iron barrier under free conditions. Is our tragedy, but what should we do? Raise our hands and surrender? “ (from letter of U.Samchuk to P.Bilosiuk dated from 27.09.1955) (Samchuk 1955: 343).

The documents testify that Ukrainian cultural figures outside the Soviet Union closely followed the events in Ukraine, their constant creative connection with the Motherland is obvious. The physical absence of artists on the territory of Soviet Ukraine did not mean their actual indifference to their native land and its cultural development. The writers of the Ukrainian exile were not indifferent to historical events.

Abroad artists had the opportunity to print in their own magazines, which helped to understand and support each other. For example, in the early 20’s in Prague and Berlin, the literary magazine “New Ukraine” operated, it helped to make newbies debut and print their publications to the older generation of authors. Minor proportions of articles and works preserved to our time by such writers and poets as V. Vynnychenko, O. Oles, Yu. Kosach, T. Osmachka, H. Zhurba, P. Bohatsky, M. Voronyi, O. Olzhych, O. Teliha, U. Samchuk, Ye. Malaniuk and many others clearly testify that the writers never broke the spiritual connection with Ukraine. According to V. Kuzmenko, “these correspondences are not only critical of the current literary process, not only information about themselves and creative ideas. Very often we will assume in them also a certain dose of a typical emigrant “bile”, generated by a not so unpopular situation in a foreign country, as a different nature of quarrels in emigration, where each group considered the only correct only its path “ (Kuzmenko 1998: 150).

Conclusions

An analysis of the epistolary heritage of Ulas Samchuk makes it possible to draw some conclusions: writer's correspondence is a source of a multifaceted, rich in details of life that allows closer, more direct contact with U. Samchuk and his epoque;

– correspondence leads to both autobiography and creativity, to all manifestations of the spiritual life of the writer;

– U. Samchuk's privately-friendly correspondence arose as a synthesis of a private and, at the same time, friendly letter, and reflects the spontaneity, vividness of the process of creating an epistol that carries the imprint of creative talent and features of the nature of the writer's prose;

– letters and correspondents of the writer are brilliant examples of the epistolary style, which characterize the high level of literary connections between the writer and his entourage. The relations between the correspondents in private-friendly letters are marked by sufficient substantive freedom;

The correspondence of U. Samchuk and his contributors are living pages of history, history of literature, history of public opinion, history of literary life and social struggle. Correspondence of U. Samchuk is an arena of historical and literary polemics, which contributed to the ripening of the spiritual strength of the writer, his perception of himself as a literary fighter for the highest ideals of national and universal culture. The analysis of the correspondence of the writer gives all grounds to consider them an integral part of the literary heritage of U. Samchuk.

In the process of studying the epistolary heritage of Ulas Samchuk, a number of aspects have been identified that require further analysis: it is necessary to study the artist's letters from the point of view of their artistic and historical value, as well as to determine the nature and functions of the writer's correspondence in the literary process of the second half of the 20th century.

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АНОТАЦІЯ

У статті розглянуто приватні листи Уласа Самчука 50-70-х років ХХ століття з відомими митцями. Особлива увага приділяється життю письменника і художнім периферіям через призму його епістолярії. Виявлено особливості окремих літературних дискусій Уласа Самчука в його листах 50-70-х років ХХ століття; на основі конкретного текстового аналізу дається опис основного життєвого і творчого шляхів письменника; виявлені аспекти, які потребують подальшого вивчення. Вивчено і досліджено епоху, в якій жив і працював У. Самчук, через призму його епістолярію.

Відомий письменник Улас Самчук залишив досить значну епістолярну спадщину, що надзвичайно поглиблює наші знання про епоху, в якій він жив, про особливості його літературного та приватного життя.

Незважаючи на деякі досягнення в сфері досліджень епістолярію, до нині недостатньо вивчені соціальні функції листування, характер зображуваної реальності в них, їх зміст та інші особливості.

Таким чином, актуальність нашого наукового дослідження міститься в матеріалі дослідження та його проблемах.

Ключові слова: лист, листування, епістолярний, літературний процес, діаспора.

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