

“CONFESSIONS” BY J.-J. ROUSSEAU: TECHNIQUES OF AESTHETIC INFLUENCE AND STRATEGY OF READER’S RECEPTION

Olena K. Cherniavska, University of Customs and Finance (Ukraine)

e-mail: chelena2076@gmail.com

Iryna Ye. Rozhdestvenska, University of Customs and Finance (Ukraine)

e-mail: rozhdestvenska@umsf.dp.ua

DOI: 10.32342/2523-4463-2024-1-27-11

Key words: *autobiography, confession, the horizon of reader expectations, the horizon of the text, literary communication, J.-J. Rousseau, reader.*

The study aims to explore the specific features of the modern reception of J.-J. Rousseau’s “Confessions”. The theoretical framework of the research is grounded on the ideas advanced by T. Avtuxovych, M. Czermińska, M. Głowiński, W. Iser, R. Jakobson, H.R. Jauss, P. Lejeune, Yu. Lotman, V. Tjupa, Zh. Starobinskiy and other scholars. The researchers describe the semiotic model of literary communication and the theory of the text by Yuri Lotman. The research was conducted using historic-functional, hermeneutic, receptive, and theoretical analysis *methods*. An attempt is made in this paper to show how the process of “decoding” the meanings intended by the author in the text takes place. In particular, the authors study how Rousseau’s “Confessions” functions in the structure of modern literary communication. The specific objectives of the present study are the meanings of “Confessions” are read by the contemporary recipient and which ones are relegated to the background compared to the literary communication of the eighteenth century.

The common discourse code of the author and the reader is the key to successful communication and understanding of the specifics of the project of Rousseau’s life writing. At the same time, the success and specificity of artistic communication are influenced by the difference in discourse code meanings related to the time distance between the author and the recipient and the layering of new historical and cultural patterns in the reader’s consciousness. At the thematic level, three main themes are considered, including: a) the social origin of the autobiographical subject, b) his conflict with society, and c) the protagonist’s intimate self-disclosure.

Thus, the article provides a detailed examination of the motif of the social origin of the autobiographical character. On the topic of the social origin of the character, instead of the plebeian’s right to public attention for the contemporary reader, the value of education and knowledge, freedom of speech and individual liberty are being actualised. Of particular note is the theme of the conflict between a character and society, the idea of the human right to otherness, the right to personal liberty and the right to choose the concept of one’s own life comes to the forefront. Thus, a literary text realises the social function of literature.

The reading of the character’s self-disclosure by an attentive reader (from Rousseau’s contemporary to modern readers) has a twofold purpose: first, to encourage everyone to live the experience of the character and thus to think about themselves, and second, to reflect on society as a whole. It testifies to the fact that in the aspect of self-disclosure of the meaning of “Confessions”, the transformation of confession as an external form of a religious rite of repentance addressed to God into the narrative genre of confessional autobiography addressed to a human reader of the story is actualized. The study demonstrated a need for continuation of the study in the aspect of reader reception to contribute to the perception of its place in the contemporary literary and cultural space.

References

Avtuhovich, T. Ye. (2006). *Ritoricheskie proekcii avtorskogo “Ja” [Rhetorical projections of the author’s “self”]. M. M. Girshman (ed.). Literaturovedcheskij sbornik. Problema avtora: ontologija, tipologija, dialog [Literary Studies Collection. The Problem of the Author: Ontology, Typology, Dialog]. Donetsk, DonNU Publ., vol. 25, pp. 12-32.*

Bieńczyk, M. (2015). *Przezroczyść [Transparency]. Warszawa, Wielka litera Pybl., 334 p.*

Czermińska, M. (2020). *Autobiograficzny trójkąt. Świadectwo, wyznanie i wyzwanie [The Autobiographical Triangle. Testimony, Confession and Challenge]. Kraków, Universitas Publ., 432 p.*

Dzhyhun, L. M. (2018). *Dyskursywny analiz ponyat’ treveloh, shchodennyk, literaturnyy portret, spovid’ [Discursive analysis of the concepts of travelogue, diary, literary portrait, confession]. Suchasni problemy movoznavstva ta literaturoznavstva [Modern Issues of Linguistics and Literary Studies], vol. 23, pp. 109-113.*

Głowiński, M. (1998). *Dzieło wobec odbiorcy. Szkice z komunikacji literackiej [The Piece to the Recipient. Sketches of Literary Communication]. Kraków, Universitas Publ., 423 p.*

- Hudinova, I.L. (2017). *Literaturna spovid iak zasib podolannia posttravmatychnykh rozladiv* [Literary confession as a way to overcome post-traumatic disorders]. *Aktualni problemy psykholohii* [Actual Issues of Psychology], vol. XI, issue 15, pp.113-120.
- Iser, W. (1974). *The Implied Reader: Patterns in Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett*. Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 328 p.
- Iser, W. (1979). The Current Situation of Literary Theory: Key Concepts and the Imaginary. *New Literary History*, vol. 11, issue 1, pp. 1-20. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2307/468868>
- Janion M. (2001). *Marzenia samotnego wędrowca: jedność życia i tekstu* [Dreams of a lonely wanderer: the unity of life and text]. In *Archiwum cyfrowe Marii Janion* [Maria Janion Digital Archive]. Available at: <https://janion.pl/items/show/35> (Accessed 29 April 2024).
- Jauss, H.R. (1980). *Czytelnik jako instancja nowej historii literatury* [The reader as an Instance of a New History of Literature]. *Pamiętnik Literacki: czasopismo kwartalne poświęcone historii i krytyce literatury polskiej* [Literary Diary: a Quarterly Journal Devoted to the History and Criticism of Polish Literature], vol. 71, issue 1, pp. 319-339.
- L'Aminot, T., Labro, C. (eds.). (2012). *Rousseau Studies*. Genève, Slatkine Publ., 390 p.
- Lejeune, P. (2005). *Rousseau et la révolution autobiographique* [Rousseau and the Autobiographic Revolution]. Available at: <https://www.autopacte.org/Sur-les-pr%E9ambules-de-Rousseau.html> (Accessed 29 April 2024).
- Lotman, Yu.M. (1977). *Tekst i struktura auditorii* [Text and audience structure]. *Uchenye zapiski Tartuskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta. Trudy po znakovym sistemam* [Scientific Notes of the State University of Tartu. Works on Sign Systems], vol. 9, issue 422, pp. 55-61.
- Lotman, Yu.M. (1992). *Mozg – tekst – kul'tura – iskusstvennyy intellekt* [Brain – text – culture – artificial intelligence]. In L. Kiseleva (ed.). *Izbrannye stat'i. Vol. I: Stat'i po semiotike i tipologii kul'tury*. [Selected articles. Vol. I: Articles on Semiotics and Typology of Culture]. Tallinn, Alexandra Publ., pp. 25-33.
- Lotman, Yu.M. (2009). *Do pobudovy teorii vzaiemodii kultur* (semiotychnyi aspekt). [Toward a theory of cultural interaction (semiotic aspect)]. In D.Nalyvaiko (ed.). *Suchasna literaturna komparatyvistyka: stratehii i metody* [Modern Literary Comparative Studies: Strategies and Methods]. Kyiv, Kyievo-Mohylianska Akademiia Publ., pp. 195-213.
- Lotman, Yu.M. (2001). *Universe of the Mind. A Semiotic Theory of Culture*. A. Shukman (transl.). London & New York, I.B. Tauris Publishers, 308 p.
- Ludwisiak, M. (2007). *Postać Jana Jakuba Rousseau i jego wpływ na współczesnych* [The person of Jean Jacques Rousseau and his influence on the contemporaries]. *Acta Universitatis Lodzianensis. Folia Historica*, vol. 81, pp. 87-108.
- Mitosek, Z. (2006). *Strukturalistski orientatsii v literaturoznavchykh doslidzhenniakh* [Structuralist orientations in literary studies]. In D. Ulytska (ed.). *Literatura. Teoriya. Metodologiya* [Literature. Theory. Methodology]. Kyiv, Kyievo-Mohylianska Akademiia Publ., pp.198-216.
- Hébrard, J. (2016). *Mizh oralnictiu i pysemnistiu* [Between oral and written]. P. Rodak (ed.). *Pysmo, knyzhka, lektura. Rozmovy: Le Hoff, Shartie, Ebrar, Fabr, Lezhen* [Writing, Book, Lecture. Conversations: Le Goff, Chartier, Hébrard, Fabre, Lejeune]. Warsaw, Warsaw University Publ., pp. 105-204.
- Rousseau, J.-J. (2014). *Spovid* [Confessions]. Kharkiv, Folio Publ., 665 p.
- Rousseau, J.-J. (1959). *Oeuvres complètes. Les Confessions. Autres textes autobiographiques* [Complete Works. The Confessions. Other Autobiographical Texts]. Paris, Gallimard, 1969 p.
- Rueff, M. (ed.). (2022). *Annales J.-J. Rousseau* [Annals of J.-J. Rousseau]. Genève, Georg Éditeur Publ., 653 p.
- Starobinsky, J. (2000). *Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Przejrzystość i przeszkoda oraz siedem esejów o Rousseau* [Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Transparency and Obstruction and Seven Essays about Rousseau]. Warszawa, Wydawnictwo KR Publ., 306 p.
- Stetsenko, A. (2019). *Spovidalna modalnist frantsuzkoho romanu doby modernizmu: dialog literatury ta muzyky*. Diss. kand. filol. nauk [The confessional modality of the French modernist novel: a dialogue between literature and music. Cand. philol. sci. diss.]. Kyiv, 201 p.
- Shevtsiv, H.M. (2017). *Literaturna prezentatsiya dytynstva v yevropeyskomu spohadovomu pysmi: vid Prosvitnytstva do romantyzmu* [Literary presentation of childhood in European memoir: from the Enlightenment to romanticism]. *Literaturny svitu: poetyka, mentalnist i dukhovnist* [World Literature: Poetics, Mentality and Spirituality], vol. 10, pp. 213-223. DOI: https://doi.org/10.31812/world_lit.v10i0.1045
- Shevtsiv, H.M. (2006). «*Dichtung und Wahrheit*» *Hete u konteksti zhanrovoyi tradytsiyi* [“Dichtung und Wahrheit” in the context of the genre tradition]. *Visnyk Zhytomyrskoho derzhavnoho universytetu imeni Ivana Franka* [Bulletin of Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University], vol. 28, pp. 228-232.
- Tyupa, V.I. (2017). Reader's Skill. *SibScript*, vol. 4, p. 219–224.

Yakobson, R. (2002). *Linhvistyka i poetyka* [Linguistics and poetics]. In M. Zubrytska (ed.). *Slovo. Znak. Dyskurs. Antolohiia svitovoi literaturno-krytychnoi dumky XX st.* [Word. Sign. Discourse. Anthology of World Literary Criticism of the Twentieth Century]. Lviv, Litopys Publ., pp. 465-487.

Yauss, H.R. (2009). *Retseptyvna estetyka i literaturna komunikatsiia* [Receptive Esthetics and Literary Communication]. In D. Nalyvaiko (ed.). *Suchasna literaturna komparatyvistyka: stratehii i metody* [Modern Literary Comparative Studies: Strategies and Methods]. Kyiv, Kyievo-Mohylianska Akademiia Publ., pp. 138-194.

Одержано 11.09.2023.