

# ПРОБЛЕМЫ ПОЭТИКИ ЗАРУБЕЖНОЙ ЛИТЕРАТУРЫ

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УДК 821.111-31(Скотт В.)  
DOI 10.26170/FK19-02-24  
ББК Ш33(4Вел)5-8,444  
ГСНТИ 17.07.29  
Код ВАК 10.01.03

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## SIR WALTER SCOTT'S *THE ANTIQUARY*: CULTURES, HISTORY, ART AND NARRATIVE ALLIANCES<sup>1</sup>

*Abstract.* One of the least known to Russian readers novels of Sir Walter Scott is under analysis. Russian critical thought of Scott does not speak of the novel as it should since *The Antiquary* (1816) is the novel which demonstrates the movement of the writer's artistic method towards more complex and realistic depiction of characters and circumstances. The authors of the essay analytically concentrate on the talk of the artistic structure of the novel as a wholeness that is characterized by quite harmonious alliances which eliminate various antinomies and dichotomies. The authors argue that the central role in the artistic wholeness of the novel are played by such antinomies as 'historical fact – imaginative (fictitious) fact', 'man as a private individual – man as a social being', 'past – present', 'historical novel – social novel', 'historical novel – novel of manners', 'socio – psychological novel – romance', 'realism – romanticism', 'realistic – gothic', 'dramatic – comic', 'Scottish – English', 'grassroots culture – high culture', etc.; the movement of the narration towards bright resolution of them is revealed in the essay. The authors of the essay also show the role and specificity of ethnographical peculiarities of the Scottish life in the late 1790<sup>s</sup> as they were seen and narrated by the writer.

*Keywords:* historical novels; irony; the comic; French revolution; English literature; English writers; literary creative activity; literary plots; literary character.

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## РОМАН ВАЛЬТЕРА СКОТТА «АНТИКВАРИЙ»: КУЛЬТУРНЫЕ, ИСТОРИЧЕСКИЕ, ХУДОЖЕСТВЕННЫЕ И ПОВЕСТВОВАТЕЛЬНЫЕ АЛЛЯНСЫ

*Аннотация.* В статье анализируется мало известный российскому читателю роман В. Скотта, без обращения к которому, по мнению большинства историков литературы, трудно представить динамику как жанра исторического романа, так и эстетической мысли В. Скотта на пути от романтизированного мировоспроизведения к реалистическому типу письма, к которому приходит писатель в конце 1810-х гг. Роман «Антикварий» анализируется в статье с точки зрения целостности его художественной структуры, выстроенной писателем на основе содержательных, жанровых и нарративных «альянсов», таких как «исторический факт – вымышленный факт», «человек как частное лицо – человек как социальное существо», «прошлое – современное», «исторический роман – социальный роман», «исторический роман – нравоописательный роман», «социально-психологический роман – любовное романтическое повествование», «реалистическое – романтическое», «реалистическое – готическое», «драматическое – комическое», «низовая (народная) культура – высокая культура» и т. д. Авторы статьи показывают также роль и специфику этнографического начала в этом романе о Шотландии 1790-х гг., каким их понимал Скотт.

*Ключевые слова:* исторические романы; ирония; комическое; Французская революция; английская литература; английские писатели; литературное творчество; литературные сюжеты; литературный характер.

*Для цитирования:* Проскурнин, Б. М. Роман Вальтера Скотта «Антикварий»: культурные, исторические, художественные и повествовательные альянсы / Б. М. Проскурнин, Е. А. Токарев // Филологический класс. – 2019. – № 2 (56). – С. 181–185. DOI 10.26170/FK19-02-24.

*For citation:* Proskurnin, B. M. Sir Walter Scott's *The Antiquary*: Cultures, History, Art and Narrative Alliances / B. M. Proskurnin, E. A. Tokarev // *Philological Class.* – 2019. – № 2 (56). – P. 181–185. DOI 10.26170/FK19-02-24.

<sup>1</sup>The essay is written on the basis of the paper read by the authors at the Eleventh Scott Conference 'Alliances, Antagonisms, Authorship' held in Sorbonne University, Paris, 10<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> July, 2018.

*The Antiquary* (1816), as Walter Scott said, completes the series of narratives which *Waverley* (1813) opens and *Guy Mannering* (1815) continues; this series depicts Scottish mores of the three different periods. Scott in his *Introduction* writes: 'Waverley embraced the age of our fathers, *Guy Mannering* that of our own youth, and *The Antiquary* refers to the last ten years of the eighteenth century» [Scott]. These three novels show the main Scott's concern, as Ian Duncan rightly stresses in his *Scott's Shadow: The Novel of Romantic Edinburgh* (2007) – formation and development of national character [Duncan 2007: 98]. It is a well-known fact that *The Antiquary* was one of the Scott's favorite novels; it is difficult to say the same in regards of readers. In Russia it is one of the least read and referred works of Scott though Russian Scotiana is quite a big one as it is rightly stressed in the essay on Russian reception of the writer in the volume of *The Reception of Walter Scott in Europe* published within the project *The Reception of British and Irish Authors in Europe* in 2007 [See: Altshuller 2007].

In this paper we will try to talk about some imaginative, genre, cultural, and social alliances which exist as dialectically comprehended dichotomies and antinomies which structure the novel's artistic system: the very existence of these alliances determine synthetic genre and narrative characters of *The Antiquary* (as critics define Scott's novels on the whole: see [Belskiy 1968: 208–217]). In the paper we will look at the novel through the role in its artistic wholeness of such antinomies as 'historical fact – imaginative fact', as Ian Duncan stresses in his work of 1992 [Duncan 1992: 51], 'man as a private individual' and 'man as a social being' (as he stresses in his essay of 2017 inspired by Frederic Jameson's 'Antinomies of Realism') [Duncan 2017: 388], 'novel – romance', 'realism – romanticism', 'realistic – gothic', etc. Walter Freye wrote as back as 1902 about gothic elements in Scott's imaginative world: 'Though Scott has given ample proof of his universality of taste, ever since his youth his whole character inclined to the Gothic school of poetry' [Freye 1902: 1]).

When we speak about *The Antiquary* we arrive to one of the oldest and still much discussable aspects, at least in Russian works about Scott: time distance between the moment when a novel is written and the time when the events of this novel take place, in other words, what time gap 'allows' to nominate the novel a historical one (we understand that not only this factor is a decisive one to include a novel to historical ones). The events in *The Antiquary* take place in July and August of 1794. It is not easy to find real historical figures in the novel (they exist only as side mentions in the course of narration). The novel seems to have quite a serious historical backdrop – the French Revolution, but the event itself and its possible spread over Britain is given in a rather mock way. Nigel Leask in his essay of 2017 while speculating on genre aspect of *The Antiquary* appeals to a variety of opinions on the matter. Thus, he stresses that Penny Fielding describes *The Antiquary* as 'unhistorical historical novel', that some critics think of this novel as 'the mock heroic narration' and that David Punker thinks of *The Antiquary* as the work which 'is more concerned with the making history than with history itself' [Leask 2017: 189].

The novel in its many parts produces comic effect which is peculiar for the whole tone of narration (in brackets we would like to notice that this comic component is very much

organic and determines substantial move of the whole aesthetic of the novel towards realism). This tone to much extent exists due to the figure of antiquary Jonathan Oldbuck and its central position in the narrative. We'll concentrate mostly on his character made of interesting antinomies and alliances. Avrom Fleishman in his *The English Historical Novel. From Walter Scott to Virginia Wolf* (1971) asserts that *The Antiquary* 'has the makings of a historical vision of the present' and it happens due to the fact that Jonathan Oldbuck's perspective is narratively dominating (with the author's existence through irony) [see: Bowden 2016: 128]. Ian Duncan, in the book of 2007 in Chapter 5 which is rather metaphorically titled 'After History', quite metaphorically writes about this novel: *The Antiquary* submerges historical plotting, at the end of history, in the pacific medium of 'normal change', the temporality of common life' [Duncan 2007: 138]. In other words, the very figure of Oldbuck is focalization of many antinomies and alliances. All plot lines circulate around his figure: Lovel's fate and love, Arthur Wardour's unlucky enterprise, tragic love story of Lord Glenallen and Lady Evelyn, Maklbeckets' tragedy, comic situation of German charlatan Dousterswivel. Oldbuck's views much as though ironically presented by the narrator are the 'prism' through which we see the majority of the characters and plot events, at least in the beginning of their plot-existence. It is a well-known fact that his image has a prototype – Scott's father's old friend George Constable. At the same time it is obvious that there is a lot of the author himself in this image, Oldbuck's obsession with history and its facts and dates and even his mockingly depicted 'hatred' towards women and his anticipation of inevitable damage of everything they touch which is an ironical and comic characteristic of Oldbuck who in reality adores and values female beauty. They say that this aspect in the novel is based on Scott's reminiscence of his unhappy first love. Protagonist Lovel's love to Miss Wardour is, to some extent, an alternative, happy love, full of romantic fleur, heroic move towards happy alliance in the end of the story.

The central alliance of the novel in terms of plot-making is sincere affection that emerges between Oldbuck and Lovel (future Lord Geraldin). These two images are very much connected; their meeting at the stagecoach station in Edinburgh and their closeness that appears immediately is a starting point of the whole narrative and goes on through the plot. Affection that exists between these two is jokingly compared with that of Falstaff and Prince Harry from Shakespeare's famous chronicle *Henry IV*. Though Lovel traditionally is called protagonist, his image is more from romance; at the same time this image symbolizes heroic nature of young people which awakes due to the possible invasion of the French, but the fact that this image is transferred mostly into spheres of romance and narration of mystery of birth and discovery of his social status shows that the narrative in many respects turns into, by Ian Duncan, much cited today, 'the mock-heroic narration of a conflict that does not take place' [Duncan 2017: 189]. We may say that the image of the nephew of Oldbuck, captain McIntyre, and the story of his duel with Lovel is of the same origin: ironical reference to the bravery and heroism wasted. The relationships of Lovel and McIntyre are a very important part of the love-story, romance, and this plot-line is marked by Scott's good psychological approach.

But it is Oldbuck who brings in real life, often ironically and humorously, and not only real life of the past times: Oldbuck is always in the centre of any event which happens in life *now and here*. At the same time he is depicted as a fanatic lover of any artifacts of ancient Scottish history which more than often mean for him so much that shield him of real life or even replace it. This enthusiastic passion of Oldbuck for Scottish history is obvious both in his deep, practically encyclopedic knowledge and in his obsession with collecting material evidences of the old times and events. His overwhelming desire by all means, figuratively speaking, to touch history through artifacts is a peculiar characteristic of his, and it makes us simultaneously admire him and smile at him. Sir Arthur Wardour with whom Oldbuck are on terms of both endless competitive dispute about history and deep respect and faithful friendship (one more antinomy or alliance in the system of characters), acknowledges his friend's extraordinary erudition in history though considers it as 'a sort of pettifogging intimacy with dates, names, and trifling matters of fact – a tiresome and frivolous accuracy'. One can't help noticing Oldbuck's great desire to be ahead of any other lovers of antiquity in possession of any artifact of the old times:

"Then to dazzle the eyes of our wealthier and emulous rivals by showing them such a treasure as this" (displaying a little black smoked book about the size of a primer); "to enjoy their surprise and envy shrouding meanwhile, under a veil of mysterious consciousness, our own superior knowledge and, dexterity these, my young friend, these are the white moments of life, that repay the toil, and pains, and sedulous attention, which our profession, above all others, so peculiarly demands!" [Scott 1893].

It produces ambivalent feelings in readers: on the one hand we are amazed by Oldbuck's collection and his enthusiasm about history, on the other – we smile when understand that in his wish to be a real discover and better than other collectors (including professionals) he, like Don Quixot, takes *windmills for fearsome giants*; the nearest example is that of taking the ruins of barn built by peasants and destroyed just several years ago for earthen ramparts of former Roman encampment.

Oldbuck is full of desire to demonstrate his total awareness, acuity of his mind and potentiality to find nontrivial explanations of some historical riddles which were too tough even for professional historians:

"It is astonishing how blind we professed antiquaries sometimes are! Sir Robert Sibbald, Saunders Gordon, General Roy, Dr. Stokely, – why, it escaped all of them. I was unwilling to say a word about it till I had secured the ground ..." [Scott 1893].

His wish to make a great discovery to astound other antiquaries and historians, his stubborn concentration on details quite often are the reasons of his ignoring and not noticing some crucial facts which are obvious even for unsophisticated observers. As a result he makes silly and ridiculous mistakes or does some things which may seem for people around strange and extravagant. The bright example of it is his exchanging a piece of fertile land for an area of wasteland just because he was strongly sure it was the field where Romans and Picts fought. Remarkably (and this is an example of another 'alliance') despite his often gaffes which lead to some serious financial losses Oldbuck has

reputation of quite practical, thrifty and economical man. We read in the novel: 'I question if there's a dealer's clerk in Fairport that can sum an account of interest better than Monkbarne's' [Scott 1893]. Thus, antiquary, on the one hand, is a rational and critical thinker in the spirit of Enlightenment with its trend of research, scientific and analytical approaches, with urge to accuracy in search for truth, interest to facts. On the other hand, he oftener lives in the past than in the present, and what is more – in the past which is lost and reconstructed by his, often too personal and arbitrary, imagination and interpretation of facts and events. The alliance of these two sides of his character forms the image of this antiquary.

The view of his 'sanctum sanctorum', his study, and his safe haven is a better characteristic of him. That was, as we know from Scott's description, a sort of 'den his friend had constructed his retreat':

"It was a lofty room of middling size, obscurely lighted by high narrow latticed windows. One end was entirely occupied by book-shelves, greatly too limited in space for the number of volumes placed upon them, which were, therefore, drawn up in ranks of two or three files deep, while numberless others littered the floor and the tables, amid a chaos of maps, engravings, scraps of parchment, bundles of papers, pieces of old armour, swords, dirks, helmets, and Highland targets" [Scott 1893].

The colours Scott uses to describe Oldbuck's 'den' underline how far from actual life and its swift pace this den is. Its muted atmosphere is made by plenty of dark colours: 'partly clothed with grim old tapestry'; 'The rest of the room was panelled, or wainscoted, with black oak', in the room there lived 'a large black cat, which, to a superstitious eye, might have presented the genius loci, the tutelary demon of the apartment' [Scott 1893]. This plethora of dark shades contributes some gothic into genre palette of the novel. This is the space where Oldbuck keeps his collections of antiquities and where he spends more time than anywhere else. This space separated from outer world by 'a piece of tapestry with which it was covered' is a kind of another world. Nevertheless, we can't say that Oldbuck is a sort of anchorite who deliberately cut himself off all secular ties and relations. On the contrary Oldbuck is a person easy to contact, who likes to meet people, who cherishes good food (Scottish, preferably), fine wine and nice company. It is another matter that rather often his 'table talk' is only about history, Scottish past glory and etc. with stunning details, dates, facts; thus ironical effect of the image emerges.

Ian Duncan, whom we quote today a lot, in his work of 1992 notices that 'Waverley Novels' has 'a movement of sympathy, the subject's moral grasp of a historical community and thus entry into membership with it'. He points out, 'sympathy becomes effective when it signifies, usually by a donation of money, having rank and property: inclining towards the Dickensian figure of charity' [Duncan 1992: 96]. He emphasizes that in the image of Jonathan Oldbuck this 'comic-elegiac relation between property and sentiment' is expressed remarkably interesting. When we start speaking about this alliance of 'property' and 'sentiment' we come to social component of the novel which is presented in the ethical and aesthetical wholeness of the novel in a very peculiar way. (We remember that by M. Bakhtin every piece

of literature has its ethical-aesthetical message it is intended to bring to readers.) Social relationship between laird Monkbarns and fisherfolk who live on his land are based on the principle of paternalism rooted in old times. This sort of thing is mostly vivid in the scene of Stini Macklbecket's funeral, when Oldbuck's participating in the mournful ceremony is full of many sincere sad feelings ('turns feeling into gesture by taking the head of the coffin'). It is obvious that Oldbuck suffers of this loss though at some point the author notices: 'thereby laying patriarchal claim over them'. At the same time, Oldbuck's sympathy and condolence to the Maklbeckits, his presence at the funeral, his offer for the father to have a day free of work because of this great grief, his money tribute, etc. are the marks of his special closeness to his tenants, it 'affiliates him to their world' [Duncan 1992: 96], it is the mark of his 'reintegration into community' [Duncan 1992: 97].

Here we must notice that Walter Scott depicts Scottish society at the times of the French Revolution at the moment when Jacobins lead it (remember the phrase of Oldbuck at the dinner when Lord Glenallen, who knew the real tragic story of his mother's try to ruin his happy alliance with Evelyn, came to his house for moral support):

'There were many men in the first Constituent Assembly,' he said, 'who held sound Whiggish doctrines, and were for settling the Constitution with a proper provision for the liberties of the people. And if a set of furious madmen were now in possession of the government, it was,' he continued, 'what often happened in great revolutions, where extreme measures are adopted in the fury of the moment, and the State resembles an agitated pendulum which swings from side to side for some time ere it can acquire its due and perpendicular station. Or it might be likened to a storm or hurricane, which, passing over a region, does great damage in its passage, yet sweeps away stagnant and unwholesome vapours, and repays, in future health and fertility, its immediate desolation and ravage' [Scott 1893].

Scott's attitude to the French Revolution, as we know, was quite ambivalent, and to much extent the phrase of Oldbuck reveals it. As far as *The Antiquary* is concerned, the French Revolution helps Scott to keep his narrative balancing, thematically speaking, and as Ian Duncan asserts, 'on the uncertain borders between what always happened and what never happened' [Duncan 2007: 140] (meaning Scottish traditions, everyday life, mores and habits, on the one hand, and French invasion which many people were waiting to happen but it did not happen, on the other). At the same time, Scott shows that the French Revolution does not sharpen social relations of the upper and lower classes in Scotland; on the contrary it acts as a catalyst of social and national alliance and unity. One of the picturesque and very Scottish personages, Edie Ochiltree says on the matter:

'Me no muckle to fight for, sir? – isna there the country to fight for, and the burnsidies that I gang daundering beside, and the hearths o'the gudewives that gie me my bit bread, and the bits o' weans that come toddling to play wi' me when I come about a landward town?' [Scott 1893].

It is no wonder that full of national defense feelings speeches from the lips of Blue-Gown Edie Ochiltree, the very image of whose, his status of a person who belongs to the whole Scottish world but not to a definite family or clan are very much symbolic. (Scott gives a substantial ex-

planation of the phenomenon of those Blue-Gowns in the first chapter of the novel and sees in them incarnation of a very spirit of ancient Scotland). Being so called 'a Royal beggar' and have no property to bother about, being free in his speeches and crossing the social borders, Ochiltree acts as a voice of the nation when speaks of the readiness of all to defend the country. We may definitely say that Scott shows socially sliced Scottish society but it is united both by still existing and steady paternalist paradigm and by the danger of the enemy invasion.

Feudal, paternalistic structure of the Scottish society at that time, being not yet much poisoned by bourgeoisness, rejection of which by community is depicted in Dousterwevel's case, though inevitability of coming of new life order is foreseen in the economic collapse of the Wardours, Greenhorn's and Greyderson's activities, and decay of the Glenallans, is represented not only through relationships of Monkbarns (Oldbuck) and fisherfolk. We are speaking here about relations between Joscelind Glenallan and her maid Elspeth Macklbecket. They are depicted by Scott brightly, with some obvious gothic patina, and they are a sort of reverse side of their paternalistic paradigm, it shows some extremes of this social paradigm. Elspeth acts as an executor of insidious, ruthless, vindictive will of her Lady, and does it without any outer pressure, just being absolutely sure that she should do it because it is the way to show her unquestioning, vassal fidelity to the house of the Glenallans. 'I was not hae spared the blood of my body, or the guilt of my soul, to serve the house of Glenallan' [Scott 1893], she explains to Lovel. Clearly understanding severity of her deeds, understanding that it might lead to murder, let alone moral suffering she put her allegiance above all other imperatives, and Christian as well. She is ready to endure all sufferings and all tragic occurrences, which sent to her and her kin as divine punishment for the unrighteous deeds she committed but she is not ready to call into question her Lady's order and will.

'She could not speak mair plainly,' answered Elspeth, 'without confessing her ain fraud, – and she would have submitted to be torn by wild horses, rather than unfold what she had done; and if she had still lived, so would I for her sake. They were stout hearts the race of Glenallan, male and female, and sae were a' that in auld times cried their gathering-word of Clochnaben – they stood shouter to shouter – nae man parted frae his chief for love of gold or of gain, or of right or of wrang. The times are changed I hear, now' [Scott 1893].

Speaking about alliance of gothic and realistic component we argue that the whole situation with Elspeth and her Landlady just seems to be fully gothic. No doubt this part is written by the hand of a great master of narration; this part of the story impresses a lot, but similarity with gothic novel is only of outward character: there is nothing irrational and mystical in the behavior of both Lady Glenallan and Elspeth; especially it concerns the motives that Lady Glenallan pursues, they are quite worldly: she does not want to give up power of any sort in the family and she deeply, fanatically despises her husband's clan.

As many of us know the remarkable *idée de fix* of Oldbuck is to have real Scottish literary epic 'Caledoniana' because he is, put it mildly, rather skeptical about authenticity of 'Ossian' by James Macpherson. Scott is half-serious

and half-joking when put this skepticism and hesitations if 'Ossian' is a mystification in the words of the Antiquary: 'And did you believe', asked the aroused Antiquary, 'did you absolutely believe that stuff of Macpherson's to be really ancient, you simple boy?' [Scott 1893]. As a contrast to this dubious attitude to the poem which means a lot for the Scotts, the writer describes Hector McIntyre's attitude to the poem, a young and brave and full of national pride and honour man who takes the ideas of *Ossian* (first of all Celtic ideas) as a national emblem and who 'would have fought knee-deep, or forfeited life and land, rather than have given up a line of them [Scott 1893]'. Jonathan Oldbuck when suggesting Lovel to write this 'Caledonian' based on deep and scientifically proved facts of ancient

Scottish history (which he, Oldbuck has a lot and is ready to provide), demonstrates very peculiar views on literary work about history: '...you are the poet – free of the corporation, and as little bound down to truth or probability as Virgil himself – you may defeat the Romans in spite of Tacitus' [Scott 1893]. Estimating Macpherson poems, Oldbuck as a historian is not ready to accept its authenticity, but being a man of letters he allows himself (and others) to have some liberty in presentation the material and in interpretations some facts. Here we come to one more alliance – of academic and artist (in broad connotation of the word). This alliance is very much characteristic for Sir Walter Scott and his historical novels. *The Antiquary* is not at all an exception in this respect.

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