

АКТУАЛЬНІ ПРОБЛЕМИ ЛІТЕРАТУРОЗНАВСТВА ТА ЛІНГВІСТИКИ

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M. Volkova

М. Ю. Волкова

М. Ю. Волкова

Oles Honchar Dnipro National University

Дніпровський національний університет імені Олеся Гончара

Днепропетровский национальный университет имени Олеся Гончара

STYLISTIC EMBODIMENT OF DICHOTOMY NATURE VERSUS CIVILIZATION IN M. ATWOOD'S NOVEL "SURFACING"

СТИЛІСТИЧНЕ ВТІЛЕННЯ ДИХОТОМІЇ ПРИРОДА – VERSUS ЦИВІЛІЗАЦІЯ В РОМАНІ М. ЕТВУД «ОСЯГНЕННЯ»

СТИЛИСТИЧЕСКОЕ ВОПЛОЩЕНИЕ ДИХОТОМИИ ПРИРОДА – ЦИВИЛИЗАЦИЯ В РОМАНЕ М. ЭТВУД «ПОСТИЖЕНИЕ»

Having been developed recently, Canadian literature reached rapid results and its representatives gained international popularity. In the article the tendencies at Margaret Atwood's creative works in the contemporary literary science as one of the most popular among the Canadian writers of the XX-XXIst century are studied. Her works, unfortunately, are still poorly studied on the territory of our country. Her novel "Surfacing" made her famous as a writer to whom the embodiment of such true-Canadian topics as a woman's look to the problems of modern society, dichotomy woman-man, a person as an embodiment of civilized society in contradiction with nature, the search of personal "I" lost in the modern society, the problem of selfidentification as an individual and national identity of a Canadian. M. Atwood became famous for her personal look to the reality: by the eyes of the woman who does not want to live like that, wants to deprive the feeling of a victim. Such a character reflects M. Atwood's ideas. Studying the peculiarities of the novel, stylistic embodiment of the main topicality helps to find out the peculiar features which influence the Canadian writers' creativity, distinguishing national peculiarities which are expected and influenced the individual style due to the use of different stylistic devices: antithesis, parallel constructions, repetitions, polysyndeton, metaphors, epithets, simile, alliteration, gradation, use of colloquialisms and vulgarisms, short sentences, etc. It was found out the scholars who deal with M. Atwood's creative works thematic and stylistic peculiarities in Ukraine and abroad.

Keywords: topicality, analysis, stylistic means, a woman's look, survival, victimization, selfidentification.

В останні десятиріччя література Канади досягла великого розвитку, а її представники отримали міжнародне визнання. У статті було розглянуто тенденції щодо вивчення творчості М. Етвуд в сучасному літературознавстві як однієї з найвідоміших канадських письменниць ХХ-ХХІ століття, літературне надбання яких, на жаль, і сьогодні залишається маловивченим на теренах нашої країни. Роман «Осягнення» приніс їй успіх як письменниці, для якої характерно втілення суто канадських тем: жіночий погляд на проблеми сучасного суспільства, дихотомія жінка – чоловік, людина як уособлення цивілізації у боротьбі з природою, пошук втраченого в сучасному суспільстві особистого «я», ізольованості людини, проблема самоідентифікації себе як індивідуума та національного визнання себе як канадця тощо. М. Етвуд стала відомою завдяки втіленню особистого

погляду на реальність: очами жінки, яка не бажає такого існування, прагне позбутися самовідчуття жертви. Така героїня є носієм та виразником думок самої М. Етвуд. Вивчення особливостей роману М. Етвуд «Осягнення», зокрема стилістичного втілення головної тематики, допомагає у з'ясуванні особливостей, які впливають на творчість письменників Канади, та уточненні національних особливостей, які є визначними й відбилися на її індивідуальному стилі завдяки використанню різних лінгвостилістичних прийомів: антитези, паралельних конструкцій, повторів, полісиндетону, метафори, епітетів, порівнянь, алітерації, градації, вживанню коротких речень, колоквіалізмів та вульгаризмів тощо. Визначено науковців, які вивчають тематичну та стильову своєрідність романистики М. Етвуд в Україні та за кордоном.

Ключові слова: тематика, аналіз, стилістичний засіб, жіночий погляд, виживання, жертвність, самоідентифікація.

В последние десятилетия литература Канады достигла быстрого развития, а ее представители получили международное признание. В статье были рассмотрены тенденции в отношении изучения творчества М. Этвуд в современном литературоведении как одного из наиболее известных канадских писателей XX–XXI столетия, литературное наследие которых, к сожалению, и сегодня остается малоизученным на территории нашей страны. Роман «Постижение» принес успех автору, для которого характерно использование исконно канадских тем: женского взгляда на проблемы современного общества, дихотомии женщина – мужчина, человек как олицетворение цивилизации в борьбе с природой, поиска утраченного в современном обществе собственного «я», изолированности человека, проблемы самоидентификации себя как индивидуума, национального признания себя как канадца и т.д. М. Этвуд прославилась благодаря использованию собственного взгляда на реальность: глазами женщины, которая не желает так жить, стремится избавиться от ощущения жертвы. Такая героиня – носительница и выразительница мыслей самой М. Этвуд. Изучение особенностей романа М. Этвуд «Постижение», особенно стилистическая оригинальность тематики, может помочь в выяснении черт, которые влияют на творчество писателей Канады, а также прояснить национальные особенности, которые являются признанными и отразились на индивидуальном стиле писательницы благодаря использованию разнообразных лингвостиллистических приемов: антитезы, параллельных конструкций, повторов, полисиндетона, метафор, эпитетов, сравнений, аллитерации, градации, использованию коротких предложений, коллоквиализмов и вульгаризмов. Были определены ученые, которые занимаются изучением тематического и стилистического своеобразие романистики писательницы в Украине и за рубежом.

Ключевые слова: тематика, анализ, стилистический прием, женский взгляд, выживание, жертвенность, самоидентификация.

M. Atwood's novel "Surfacing" (1972) is a peculiar book which embodied the essence of the Canadian literature. Right after its publication some difficulties in the perception of the Canadian literature and Atwood's creative works appeared.

It should be noted that M. Atwood's books are still considered to be poorly studied in the XXIth century. Among contemporary scholars who scrutinize the English-Canadian author's works one can single out the following surnames: J. Rosenberg, V. French, L. Hanchon, R. Brown, R. MacGrigor, S. Prescott, S. Belov, N. Paltsev. In Ukrainian literary science novel "Surfacing" as well as the Canadian literature on the whole does not have a widespread popularity. Among the most famous Ukrainian scientists are N. Ovcharenko, T. Tarasenko, I. Holysheva, O. Zlobina.

It was problematic to percept the title of the novel in its true meaning. There are several variants of its translation into Russian: «Всплывая на поверхность» «Поверхностный взгляд», «Постижение». The same novel was translated into Ukrainian as «Осягнення» which corresponds the problems of the peculiar Canadian world perception embodiment. The process of the main character's perception of her inner self and the surrounding reality is reflected by her diving deeply into the lake and the inner chaos as well as the floating to the surface of the reality. A key problem of the novel is

constant for all M. Atwood's works. It is character's loss and searching of her inner self, her identity".

The character of the novel and the narrator at the same time is a nameless young lady whose appearance is not given. At first she does not differ from her contemporaries. The author gives a reader a chance to look at the problems of modernity as if he/she were her. With such a type of narrative the image of the author is put aside a bit but we can feel her ideas as for the main problems of the novel and the loss-search for identity, moral survival of a person in terms of contemporary civilization, preserving humanity, the problem of nature-man, man-woman correlation.

The reader meets the character when she escapes from home into a distant deserted lake district having known about her father's disappearance that used to live on a small forest island which symbolizes the found paradise, opposes a civilized city.

The language gives much cold, accurate enough information about the narrator. Impersonal style controls the character's feelings, reflects the chance to a new life: «I thought, I suppose I knew it from the beginning, I shouldn't have tried to find out...» [4, p. 164]. Anaphoric repetition of personal pronouns, "I" in particular, helps to illustrate inner suffering, dissatisfaction with her life.

The novel narrative is a certain set of descriptions, observations, scrutinizing and retrospective memories. There is a tendency to the change of her ideas all the time in accordance with the associations she gets while observing, thinking, recollecting. Complex syntactic units underline her disorientation, inner chaos. The character is incapable to explain her behaviour, she tries to substitute her inner torture by the physical one. Hiding herself in the forest, the woman enters a secure life.

Syntax intensifies non-linear type of narrative: with the help of short phrases connected with the help of commas, semicolon, the woman describes the reality – an example of mixed ideas and behaviour.

The dichotomy nature versus a person is scrutinized in the context of "elimination of differences between inner and biological side of a person's life, the ethic sphere falling behind in comparison with technological progress" [3]. Native places, nature that surrounds the personage since her childhood gives her a chance to realize her inner part, leads to the estuary of her real being.

Sh. Grace, a scholar who scrutinizes M. Atwood's creative works, believes that novel "Surviving" became popular among the readers owing to the rich system of images, many of them "become symbols, the images of nature are of outmost importance here" [5]. One of such symbolic images is water (lake) that is taken in psychoanalysis for the symbol of something self-conscious. Metaphor of water takes an important place in the novel: for the main character the lake is a power that feeds, cures, purifies.

The climax of the novel is when the woman dives into the lake where she finds her father's corpse: "the outlines of his body were vague but he had eyes, opened eyes – this is the thing I know about the dead" [4, p. 142]. The author uses the stylistic device of repetition of word 'eyes' to draw the reader's attention to the part of the face through which one can peep into the person's inner world.

Right at the bottom of the lake where, as we can feel, the personal memory of her killed baby-embryo is buried. Surfacing the lake is symbolic as well as diving deep into the water. It personifies not only the loss of personal 'I' but also the process of self-searching, diving into the depth of her consciousness. Thus, the lake becomes a symbol of rebirth and a mirror variation that reflects a real being.

Margaret Atwood uses the image of water as “a symbol of purity; she gives the accurate senses of purifying psychology” [1, p. 187]. The reader witnesses changes of the character who feels her heart to come alive, reunite “two halves of her: a girl who used to live with her parents in the forest with regard to her heart feelings and a lady who had been trying to live with regard to the laws of a cosmopolitan city. Those halves used to be her body and soul, catharsis: going deep into the atmosphere of inner chaos, she surfaces the reality but changed. This is a meeting of two sides of the novel: “diving” and “surfacing”. On returning to nature, the woman gets a chance to look back at the own life, to understand its useless, her own dislike to follow such a life.

Novel “*Surfacing*” as a certain embodiment of Margaret Atwood’s ideas was addressed to the Canadians who felt to be the victims of society. The author touches upon not only the problems of the character’s survival but also “the question of her healing” [3]. The woman tries not to become a victim, opposes people’s selfishness and indifference, she does not want to come to terms with the fact that the natural beauty and resources of her native land are consumed by “the businessmen” among whom are her “Americanized” compatriots who lost the connection with nature that both for the heroine and M. Atwood means the break with national tradition. Staying alone on the island the character practices psychoanalysis. Thus, she comes to the conclusion that she could not learn to be “civilized”: “I tried for all those years to be civilized but I’m not and I’m through pretending” [4, p. 195]. M. Atwood uses the stylistic device of repetition and parallel construction to make the emphasis her character’s psychological tension. She makes a life choice: the world of nature which cures the soul opposes people’s civilization which ruins a person’s individuality.

Nature helps the woman to feel the harmony with the surrounding, gives a certain life power. The author uses a number of epithets describing nature to illustrate details, to draw the reader’s attention to the beauty where a person can really renovate the lost identity.

The metaphor of a person’s rotting in the contemporary society is realized by way of drifting along the lake that is metaphorical by itself: it is a certain quiet way that the character goes trying to find her lost self. Countless enumerations and short sentences create the rhythm of Atwood’s narration, the accent is made on important details and symbols.

The topic of nature is among the key ones that characterizes the literature of the North American region. It became an integral part of a Canadian novel poetry, the background that demonstrates social motifs. However since the time when the Canadian literature appeared, the image of nature has had two meanings. On the one hand, it is an antipode to a crucial civilization, harmonic atmosphere where a person can calm himself down. On the other hand, it is severe Canadian nature that the first settlers tried to conquer and as a result many of them died. This fact influenced the nature depicted as secret powers that threaten a person’s life.

On the background of such contradictory the image of nature in the Canadian literature a person with the complexity of his feelings and problems is illustrated; the landscape becomes a method of psychology. One should remember that in western philosophy “a man is a creator” of civilization whereas “a woman provides the connection with nature”, thus, she is an “intermediate power between a man (civilization) and nature” [2, p. 70].

In Atwood’s books a woman is compared with natural phenomena. She is illustrated to be a defenseless victim who feels the pressure of the powers. So, in the nature the

nameless character finds out her inner self: "I go along near the trees, boat and arms one movement, amphibian, the water closes behind me, no track... I'm safe, hidden in the shore maze" [4, p. 193]. Atwood uses indirect repetition, comparing her to an amphibian, the lake shore with a maze where one can hide from people.

Staying on the island the heroine feels free. In nature she feels appeasement and fear at the same time. She takes the island for mysterious and scary powers. There are many repetitions and parallel constructions in the author's descriptions. She compares the woman with waves, steps using gradation in order to describe the person's fear from inside. Nature lolls, recalls that the person cut off his harmonic bias long ago, and now tries to renovate this tight connection ruined by a civilized society.

The image of the narrator opposes other images of the novel – her friends from the city on the background of whom she looks different, gets additional new features. She often neither understands nor supports their behaviour as well as emotional state. All characters are just marked by some details, there are very few portrait descriptions. However the use of definite image-creating lexemes (pink cheeks, brassiere-shaped breast, auburn moustache, etc) with expressive elements strengthens the imagery. Such expressive means in the novel becomes similes and accurate epithets. Similes here have the function of not only the image clarification but also depicting subjective-estimational, emotional attitude to the speaker. Thus, Joe's fury back is compared with a teddy-bear's one (with teddy-bear's fur) that, on the one hand, gives the impression of good attitude to him and, on the other, it is the heroine's perception of him as to a toy – she plays with his feelings. Comparison of a baby's lose with a Siamese twin sister emphasizes her psychological suffering.

The Americans become an embodiment of aggression for her: they trace the samples of their aggression everywhere – a killed heron, dead fish. Observing the way they take pictures of themselves with the killed bird, the heroine comes to the conclusion in fear that all the things people do to the animals they can do to one another as well. J. Rosenberg believes, M. Atwood tried to reflect a true Canadian character that does not support "ill reining of all-consuming technical progress" [9]. Aggression bears evil: the Americans who do not have any sympathy to the virgin nature call for anger in these four young people, who label them as «bloody fascist pig Yanks» [4, p. 43], "rotten capitalist bastards" [4, p. 12]. The use of vulgarisms creates the effect of non-respect to the Americans as to the nation that ruins. In the novel they are the symbol of threat to everything alive; Canada for them is a "hunting place" both in its direct and indirect meaning: «I wanted them not to say anything about the fish: if they do, this part of the lake will be swarming with Americans,.. like ants about sugar, or lobsters» [4, p. 78]. The author compares the Americans with ants overwhelming everything around.

Trying to embody in a literary form one of the key problems of Canadian reality, M. Atwood generously uses epithets trying to demonstrate Americans' feelings and gestures: "When they were even with us their mouths curved open, showing duplicate sets of teeth, write and even as false ones" [4, p. 139]. This demonstrates the character's hatred to them.

The Americans are depicted as "the alive dead" not because they kill everything alive using technical devices, but because they do it unreasonably" [6]. All this gives the character a chance to realize the depth of her deed – a killing of a non-born baby. She puts this in the same line with the useless killing of everything alive by the Americans. Thus, there is no difference between her and them: "Instead of preserving this saint creature I let them take it. I could say "No" but I didn't; that's why I am the one of them – a

killer” [4, p. 203]. M. Atwood uses antithesis to underline incorrect life position of the woman in the past. She led the reader to the idea that the evil is deeply inside of every person who loses moral values in the modern technical world.

Joe, David and Anna are typical products of modern civilization and their names tell about it: one can find them in any country of the world. M. Atwood is ironical about male professions: teaching “Communication” for adults they cannot do it themselves. Their speech is an example of how people should not communicate: vulgarisms are abandoned in it which speaks of the low level of education («Up your ass»; «Holy shit»; «Shut up»; «Bullshit»; «Okay, twatface») [4, p. 156]. Irony becomes an integral part of the novel, demonstrates ordinary people’s pretentious to high intellectualism.

Landscapes in the novel are used both in direct and metaphorical meaning. Through the descriptions of the wild nature the author tries to raise the question of the American consumer correlation with the Canadian natural wealth. The death of birches is metaphorically taken as a technological disease brought from the USA. The main character finds the features of the Americans’ invasion and the Canadians are the same: they support American values of material progress without paying attention to the negative influence to the surrounding. She wants the Canadians to be different: “It would have been different in those countries where an animal is the soul of an ancestor or the child of a god, at least they would have felt guilt” [4, p. 147], metaphorically representing an animal as a soul of the ancestors, the God’s baby. In other words, for M. Atwood the USA associates with aggression, a male type of behaviour while Canada – with patriarchal, female type. However such a division is rather vague. V. Ivasheva underlines the paradox: feeling hatred to everything American, David, Joe and Anna follow the American style of life which is reflected in their language, attitude to people, details of their behaviour. For a long time the same style of life was a sample for the main character as well though she hated it. Thus, M. Atwood tries to create an image of a person who ruins the harmony of nature despite his national identity. This idea is given by means of the main character with the use of numerous repetitions, parallel constructions and polysyndeton.

The heroine understands different sides of her soul: one of them is real that is closed inside, the other is artificial, incorrect life of “a smiling woman” that she had for a long period of time: “...I’d allowed myself to be cut in two. Woman sawn apart in a wooden crate, wearing a bathing suit, smiling, a trick done with mirrors; only with me there had been an accident and I came apart. The other half, the one locked away, was the only one that could live, I was the wrong part, detached, terminal” [4, p. 124]. The contradiction of two parts of a person is embodied with the help of antithesis. Along the novel the woman tries to find harmony, the way out for better part of her, which was impossible to renovate living in a crucial civilized society. Nature pushes her to the deep self-analysis.

Indifferent society for M. Atwood is not only the thread to nature but also the reason of alienation, people’s separation, the break of family and friends’ ties, real value of which becomes clear to the heroine when she tries to understand her father’s isolated life: “He didn’t dislike people, he merely found them irrational; animals... were more consistent...” [4, p. 65]. Double negation which is not peculiar for the English grammar is used to create emotional state. Using antithesis, M. Atwood opposes people to animals, having more sympathy to the later.

To depict her character’s alienation from the society the author uses personal pronoun «they» as a cliché to the modern consumer society that the character uses describ-

ing her friends, family, village dwellers and the Americans: «I like them, I trust them, ..I wish they weren't here. Though they're necessary» [4, p. 13]; «If they were searchers they will go back and say maybe that they saw me, maybe that they only thought they did...» [4, p. 219]. Pronoun «they» helps in the creation of the character's inner alienation.

M. Atwood does not finish her novel with happy end – the character returns to the city. Living over inner catharsis, spiritual rebirth, she is ready to come back into the world enriched with the truth of life that she has realized. The woman understands the necessity to revive the inner part which she used to conceal – the necessity of maternity: “It might be the first one, the first true human; it might be born...” [4, p. 222]. Repetition of word ‘first’ indicates the renovation of her life.

Alliteration as a repetition of separate sounds is a peculiar feature for the novel: «claws clinging» [cl]; «brassiere-shaped breasts» [br]; «jam jars» [j]; «bread and butter» [b]; «crudely carved» [c,r]; «purple-black pebbles» [p, l, b]; «might mistake me» [m, t]; «I'll light the lamp» [l]; «Teenie Town, Tog's for Toddler's Tots» [t]. Definite sounds strengthen the effect which is created by the content of what is said. For instance, [l] adds softness, [c, r] – sharpness.

The author uses different types of repetitions in stylistic function of emphasizing: «No monsters, no wars, no explosions, no heroism» [4, p. 104] – deviations of ruining activities strengthen contextual absence of heroism as a result of these actions, indicate the absence of the Canadians' active social position.

Additional emotional intensifying is created by use of inversion: «What impressed him that time, he even mentioned it later, cool he called it...» [4, p. 31]; «...am I worried that they'll come back for me, if they do I'll have to get out quickly» [4, p. 213]. With the help of chiasmus the author makes the accent on another emphatic part of the saying: «Here I am, I'm here» [4, p. 199].

The author supports philosophic concept of individuality the basis of which is the scrutinizing about the internal connection between a person and nature. M. Atwood believes that in the Canadian literature nature is depicted as “something dead or alive, indifferent or negative to a person. The result of indifferent nature is an isolated person, a result of hostile nature is a dead person” [4, p. 54].

As a result, we can see that in her novel “Surfacing” M. Atwood tried to embody in words the process of national self-identification. First of all, this process is demonstrated in correlation “a person versus nature” that determines the national identity of literary consciousness in the Canadian literature; in connection with the USA which always strive to dissolve in their culture everything that differs; in connection to the Canadian history; in contradiction of the past and the present which helps to determine the parameters of contemporary moral and spiritual life of the country. The protagonist searches for the estuaries of good and evil, sense of being that is possible only in the natural surrounding; its aim is to renovate the loss of identity. M. Atwood continues to develop a peculiar for her books victimization topic concentrating on the person's psychology according to which he/she denies becoming an “ant of an anthill”, a social victim. The author leads the character to the idea of self-perception in connection with the nature as a part of it, not a master. Paradigm «Americans contro wilderness» finds its traditional but unique solution, the essence of which lies in the use of anaphoric repetitions, parallel constructions, alliterations, chiasmus, metaphors, epithets, similes and antithesis.

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