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Cross-cultural Dialogue in the American Literature of the XX –XXI centuries

The article deals with the cross-cultural dialogue in the American literature of the XX –XXI centuries; mechanisms of creation of “other” culture image in the “boundary” type of literature.

Keywords: *multicultural literature, intercultural dialogue, dialogical relations, boundary literature.*

В статті розглянуто проблему міжкультурного діалогу в американській літературі XX –XXI ст.ст., механізми створення образу «інокультури» в так званій порубіжній літературі.

Ключові слова: *мультинаціональна література, міжкультурний діалог, діалогічні відносини, порубіжна література.*

В статье рассмотрена проблема межкультурного диалога в американской литературе XX-XXI вв, механизмы создания образа «инокультуры» в так называемой «пограничной» литературе.

Ключевые слова: *мультинациональная литература, межкультурный диалог, диалогические отношения, «пограничная» литература.*

The notion of a "dialogue" has many definitions in science, that of philosophical (A. N. Veselovsky, M. M. Bakhtin), semiotic (Y. M. Lotman), culturological (K. Girts) and that of religious (M. Eliade). We are particularly interested in the intercultural dialogue within the literary text. The theory of archetypes, developed in the writings of philosophers, philologists and linguists might be the ontological basis for the creation of such a dialogue (Carl Jung, V. Humboldt, M. Eliade, K. Girts, R. N. Fray, E. Meletinsky, V. Toporov) because archetypes are "the manifestation of a deeper layer of the unconscious, in which universal, original characters and motives slumber" [2]. As a means of conveying the experience of ancestors the archetype is common for all humans, but it is also nationally-biased. Literature is also of a "boundary" nature, when "a writer thinks in terms of one ethnic culture, but writes in the speech patterns of another ethnic culture" [3].

The importance of analyzing "boundary" texts is determined *firstly* by the necessity of taking a fresh look at present day fictional texts from the standpoint of methods and techniques of constructing multicultural space within the American text in the first place, and by lack of methods for analyzing "dialogue" international cultural relations in a literary work; and *secondly*, by extra literary aspects: modern literature is a reflection of many typological features of our reality, and the solution of the so-called "issue of the inter-ethnic relations" on different levels - from the political to the cultural –is one of the most urgent tasks for every multinational country. One of the greatest challenges of our time is to understand the fundamental postulates of "other" culture, to find ways of combination of different national traditions in the cultural field of one language. Studying the principles of constructing the field of multicultural literature, "intercultural dialogue" might, in our humble opinion, play a significant culturological role.

The aim of the article is to investigate the mechanisms of image creation of "other culture" within the American literary language and clarify the semantics of its intercultural dialogue.

The principles of intercultural dialogue in American literature of the 20th–21st centuries are presented in three sections.

Different approaches in **the history of the studying of intercultural dialogue** has proved that within the literary criticism the problem of interference of different national cultures in the aesthetic field of particular national literature started to be treated more specifically only in the 20th century. Numerous works are devoted to the relationship of the various national literary traditions and all of them are rather different, but it is possible to single out several lines of research.

First of all, the specific features of literature of the nationalities and the internationalism of the multinational American literature has been discussed. The researchers analyzed the works of particular writers which included the elements of national culture presented in the form of references or comments. They did not aim to develop the principles and methods of analysis of the interaction of different national traditions in American literature, that's why the aesthetic qualities of literary works, which include the elements of cultural and everyday life of other nationality haven't been analyzed. Basically, the studies are not very profound and even lack the *elements* of analysis techniques used for the research of the ways of combining of different cultures within the boundaries of the literary text.

The second line of the research is connected with the introduction of such categories as "*national character*" and "*national style*". Analyzing the works of particular writers as well as the whole branches of national literatures, the scholars limited their aim by the need to develop the ways of analysis of cultural traditions of different nations within the text in the foreign language, but they, actually, did not aim at the solution of that task.

The third line of the research of multicultural texts is the *search of methodology* which would provide the possibility to distinguish the basic techniques and methods of comparison of different national and cultural traditions within the English language. But the whole system was not established, there are only some separate *elements*, often unrelated to each other.

In recent decades the question of bilingual literature and writers has been actively debated (Ch. Guseynov, M. Chertorizhskaya, A. Girutsky, E. Vereschagin, E. Zhuravleva, L. Krysin, N. Mihaylovskaya, Y. Karaulov, B. Hasanov, U. Bahtikireeva etc.). These researches formulated distinctive approaches to the understanding of bilingualism. In a broad sense, it is a special kind of art, involving contact and interaction of national languages and cultures, i.e. the translation is automatically included in the concept of bilingualism [3]. In a narrow sense, it is art, based on the interaction of different languages and cultures.

Firstly, we disagree with the wide sense of the term "bilingualism", which includes the studying of literary translation, because we don't view the translation as an independent literary phenomenon. Secondly, the phenomenon of American multicultural literature is not limited to using only linguistic, grammatical and syntactical devices of "foreign" language, but involves a complex of appeals to national and cultural foundations of the ethnic group, the representative or representatives of which catch the writer's attention and participate in the creation of the artistic image of the world of "foreign culture " within the English language.

Specialists in literature tried to find techniques and methods of creating an image of the "other" fictional world on pages of American literary works. However, we must agree that the complex analysis technique of "intercultural dialogue" and ways of its implementation in American literature has not yet been developed.

The concept of "American literature. We believe that strict definitions such as "American - English", "American - French" or "American -Spanish" literature etc are theoretically unproductive as they split up the artistic phenomenon. The concept "American literature" is broader; it includes all literary branches of other cultures. We can as well mention other kinds of "national-language" literature: German-language, French-language, English-language etc. The language, in which the text is written, becomes the basic concept, and the culture at which the language is oriented is the specific concept. That's why we use the concepts of "American literature", "English-speaking writer" as a basis. Actually, with the help of synonyms we can define such concepts as "multicultural literature", "bilingual literature", "boundary literature".

The ways of establishing of intercultural dialogue in the American literature. We offer a methodology of analysis of the national and cultural relationships in literary texts. We used the works of the writers of the 20th – 21st centuries as the material for the research.

We can distinguish *three stages* of combining of "foreign cultures" in literature:

1) The total dominance of one culture over another. Elements of reality of "foreign culture", such as names of objects of everyday use, weapons, terrain, clothes etc., are only intended to create a general image of foreign nation or to show the peculiarities of national life. These elements are optional and play a minor role in the dialogue between national cultures; they are only an outward feature of the ethnic character.

2) The writer introduces the character into unfamiliar culture on purpose. As a result we can observe the interpenetration of different cultures in a literary text written in English. At this level, the author can create several different models of world perception, "testing" them in situations of collision with each other and reality.

3) The writer uses the English language as a means of presenting the image of other nation to the reader (no matter if it is one nation, the whole range of familiar cultures or subcultures of some particular region). The author draws the world of another culture or subculture in the text. His task is to show the peculiarities of thinking and speaking of representatives of particular linguistic culture with the help of another language (in our case English).

The first stage, to some extent, can be called superficial, as only the image, which characterizes a nation conventionally, is created. The second and third stages are more complex. Writers use all the features of various literary and folklore cultures to establish the dialogue between them.

Depending on the aspect of combining of different national traditions, we can suggest the following levels of analysis of "the dialogue between foreign cultures":

1. Lexical Level (the level of external word form)

Foreign culture cannot be perceived statically, but only in the process of some activity, for instance, in transferring the sense of the notion with a word (it has been established that the word is congruous to the meaning and connected with labor activity or any other kind of human activity, environment etc.). There is an ongoing process of "reformulating" of foreign culture reflected in the terms, definitions of its own linguocultural experience. Therefore, the lexical level "marks" the presence of foreign culture, makes the speaker "translate" the notions into his mother tongue; a peculiar role is played here by the word "foreign" (different from English) language, which is introduced into the texts in a variety of ways.

- A foreign word is included into the text without any explanations on the part of the author or the protagonist, its meaning has either very close ties in the American tradition so there is no translation needed or it is can be easily extracted from the context. In this case the foreign word becomes a protagonist's marker representing non-American nationality, creates the atmosphere of presence of the image of the other culture strange to the English language, but not completely strange for the notion defined by this word not to have analogies in the English language or it is not that significant for the understanding of peculiarities of the text content, produces only an external layer of a "strange" world (which is basically can be replaced by any other linguistic layer).
- A foreign word is given with "metaphrase". The author consciously includes a foreign word into the speech to impart national coloring to the protagonists' speech as well as to the text in general. In this case the author consciously generates interlingual "dialogues", setting one culture against another one. If we speak of so called subculture of the national region then the text includes dialectal words for the characterization of the speech of the representatives of the mentioned subculture. They can be used without a "translation" or can be

interpreted by the author, if their meaning remains obscure for the reader and is not deduced from the context.

- Loan translation of national word combinations with the help of linguistic means of the English language.

In fact, the level of the external form shapes the level of expressive devices which in their turn “work” for creating of more complicated level – the formation of the national world’s image. There is a worldview level in the centre of every world model, the basis of which has been developed in national mythology and folklore. Consequently, there is the following level of analysis.

2. *The level of mentality of the protagonist or narrator (the level of internal form)*

- The usage of archetypes of the “other” national consciousness in the context of the American world perception and linguistic culture. Metaphors, metonymy, similes and other tropes have the national character as they are determined by national environment, national social experience. Within the framework of the foreign language they are clearly marked with non-involvement in the habitual linguistic, metaphorical field.
 1. Combination of various national archetypes, i.e. the search of similar images, model of existence, perception of these models by representatives of different national cultures, supplement of these fields-symbols with contiguous elements but in the dimension of another national mentality, and eventually – the creation of “boundary” world model by combination of different national archetypes. E. g., the image of the Moon is perceived by many nations similarly: as a symbol of the world of the dead, the eyes of the dead, watching the live.
 2. Stylization of foreign legends, true stories, mythologems on the analogy of the American literary or folklore fairy tales. Such legends, tales, folk tales make it possible to stylize the narrator’s storytelling manner who is addressing the listener sometimes distracting from the plot in the process of narrating. On the contrary, the creation of such “stories” “works” for the formation of the image of the folklore thinking of the narrator and produces the image of “outsider’s” consciousness.
- Introducing of certain “other-national” folklore motive, image, the whole genre into the literary text (these elements have been transferred without any alterations and adaptation to the literary work with citations). In this case such small folklore genres as proverbs, sayings, by-words, couplets, songs are mostly used directly. Such inclusion not only portrays the protagonist as a member of the nation, but in the first place conveys his national cultural “experience”.

Folklore “miniatures” have become an integral part of the life of any nation. Therefore, the reflected experience expressed in the extremely brief metaphorical way, shows the level of outlook of this or that nation. By using folklore genres in the text (or their imitation) authors try to create certain associative field, which is directly connected with the realia of our life that is naturally different for each nation.

Each writer appealing to the national theme tries to create an image of national worldview, national culture. It can be understood only by making the reader “clash” and “unite” various national traditions in his mind, one of which is always English.

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