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ОСВІТА, НАУКА ТА ВИРОБНИЦТВО: РОЗВИТОК І ПЕРСПЕКТИВИ

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THE PERSONALITY OF OSCAR WILDE IN HIS NOVEL “THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GREY” IN THE LIGHT OF QUEER THEORY

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Today Ukrainian and foreign scientists are paying special attention to queer theory researches as a new stage in the development of neoclassical philosophy of the second part of the 20th century. Thus, the actuality of the research is in the necessity of studying and concretization of conceptual apparatus of queer theory as a new stage in modern literature.

The research aim is to analyze the novel ‘The Picture of Dorian Grey’ by Oscar Wilde in the light of queer theory.

Scientists around the world are interested in this theme because it is very popular and important in the light of last events in the world – equal rights of men and women, same sex marriage, openness in relations, demonstration of such kind of relations without fear of being condemned or punished etc. Thus, the methodological basis of the research is rather wide. Among the Ukrainian scientists the following should be called: D. Vershinina, A. Hizulina, O. Zherebkina, A. Kurovicka, N. Libakova, O. Obukhova, L. Pahulich, M. Stetyuha, V. Sukovata etc. There is also a wide range of foreign scientists such as B. Adam, L. Berlant, J. Butler, V. Depant, L. Fiol-Matta, E. Grosz, S. Jackson, A. Jagose, J. Kennard, A. Rich, T. Spargo, M. Umphrey, M. Warner etc.

The English word “queer” has different meanings: 1) a strange, unusual; 2) suspicious; 3) homosexual; 4) to be fond of somebody, to be delighted with somebody. According to M. Umphrey’s researches the word “queer” existed before the beginning of the 19th century and it meant “people from the gay” [1] but scientists began to use it in their work only from the end of 80s of the 20th century.

Oscar Fingal O’Flahertie Wills Wilde (1854-1900) is a famous English writer, Irish-born author of poems, stories, comedies, action stories, brilliant representative of aestheticism in the history of world literature. The most famous work of the writer is his novel “The Picture of Dorian Gray”. Oscar Wilde wrote this novel with the purpose to live through all that he hid from himself in his thoughts. In his confession “De profundis” he said: “What the paradox was to me in the sphere of thought, perversity became to me in the sphere of passion. Desire, at the end, was a malady, or a madness, or both. I grew careless of the lives of others. I took pleasure where it pleased me, and passed on. I forgot that every little action of the common day makes or unmakes character, and that therefore what one has done in the secret chamber one has some day to cry aloud on the housetop. I ceased to be lord over myself. I was no longer the captain of my soul, and did not know it. I allowed pleasure to dominate me. I ended in horrible disgrace” [3].

Oscar Wilde did not consider same-sex love as crime. He led a double life (a happy family man on Sundays and sensual decadent on the other days of the week), due to his unusual passion his soul was divided into two parts. And so the only solution was to write an essay in which all that was still regarded as a crime stopped to be it.

Thus the main character of the novel Dorian Gray is the personification of the author's identity. The two opposite characters - Lord Henry and artist Basil Hallward, - mentors of Dorian Gray, are represented as a reflection of contradictions in the Oscar Wilde’s soul. On the one hand, Lord Henry is a spiritual provocateur and seducer of Dorian Gray. He considers that “We are punished for our refusals. Every impulse that we strive to strangle broods in the mind and poisons us. The body sins once, and has done with its sin, for action is a mode of purification. Nothing remains then but the recollection of a pleasure, or the luxury of a regret. The only way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it. Resist it, and your soul grows sick

with longing for the things it has forbidden to itself, with desire for what its monstrous laws have made monstrous and unlawful. It has been said that the great events of the world take place in the brain. It is in the brain, and the brain only, that the great sins of the world take place also.”[2].

On the other hand, the artist Basil is a man with pure soul who condemns the pragmatic attitude to the world of his friend Lord Henry and tries to dissuade Dorian Gray’s evil thoughts and actions: “Dorian! Dorian! Don’t talk like that I have never had such a friend as you and I shall never have such another. You are not jealous of material things, are you? - you who are finer than any of them!” [2].

To sum up, Oscar Wilde constituted new literature and tolerant attitude to what had been sin before. Analyzing the novel “The Picture of Dorian Gray” in the light of queer theory we can conclude that this approach allows understand the nature, perspective, background and reasons of writing of such literary works better.

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