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REPRESENTATIONS OF SOCIO-CULTURAL STEREOTYPE “BACHELOR” IN MURIEL SPARK’S NOVEL “THE BACHELORS”

РЕПРЕЗЕНТАЦІЇ СОЦІОКУЛЬТУРНОГО СТЕРЕОТИПУ «ХОЛОСТЯК» У РОМАНІ МЮРИЕЛ СПАРК «ХОЛОСТЯКИ»

РЕПРЕЗЕНТАЦИИ СОЦИОКУЛЬТУРНОГО СТЕРЕОТИПА «ХОЛОСТЯК» В РОМАНЕ МЮРИЕЛ СПАРК «ХОЛОСТЯКИ»

Об’єктом дослідження в даній статті є репрезентації соціокультурного стереотипу «холостяк» в романі Мюріел Спарк «Холостяки» в контексті національної британської картини світу. Художній текст розглядається нами як репрезентант мовної картини світу автора, на базі якої читач може скласти уявлення або судження про ментальні, поведінкові і мовні стереотипи, які домінують в тій чи іншій національній культурі. Хоча розглядаються вигадані образи холостяків, виявляється, що вони співпадають з стереотипами реального життя. Їх об’єднує в цілому несхвальне ставлення громадської думки до цього класу чоловіків, яка асоціюється з такими негативними рисами як незрілість, егоїзм, розпуста, безвідповідальність. Холостяки роману мають деякі спільні риси, але в той же час виявляють розмаїття складних індивідуальних особистостей. Детальна репрезентація соціальних і психологічних типів холостяків з їх поведінковими звичками, комплексами, традиціями, практичними навичками робить роман Мюріел Спарк живою портретною галереєю репрезентацій британського стереотипу «холостяк».

Ключові слова: стереотип, художній портрет, ментальний стереотип, поведінковий стереотип, мовний стереотип, аутостереотип.

Объектом исследования в данной статье являются репрезентации социокультурного стереотипа «холостяк» в романе Мюриел Спарк «Холостяки» в контексте национальной британской картины мира. Художественный текст рассматривается нами как репрезентант концептуальной и языковой картины мира автора, на базе которой читатель может составить представление или суждение о стереотипах сознания, поведения, языковых стереотипах, доминирующих в той или иной националь-

ной культуре. В работе анализируются художественные типы холостяков, но при этом обнаруживается их корреляция со стереотипными представлениями о них в реальной жизни. В целом их объединяет неодобрительное отношение со стороны общественного мнения, основанного на таких характерных или приписываемых холостякам негативных чертах как незрелость, эгоизм, распущенность, безответственность. Холостяки в романе Спарк имеют некоторые сходные черты, но при этом обнаруживают разнообразие сложных индивидуальных личностей. Детальная репрезентация социальных и психологических типов холостяков с их поведенческими привычками, комплексами, традициями, практическими навыками делают роман Мюриел Спарк живой портретной галереей репрезентаций британского стереотипа «холостяк».

Ключевые слова: стереотип, художественный портрет, ментальный стереотип, поведенческий стереотип, языковой стереотип, аутостереотип.

The main objective of this study is to examine representations of socio-cultural stereotype “bachelor” in Muriel Spark’s novel “The Bachelors” in the context of the national British picture of the world. Fiction text is understood here as a translator of both author’s worldview and language on the basis of which the reader can form an opinion or make a judgement about mental, behavioral, language stereotypes dominant in this or that national culture. Our main focus is on how the bachelors of the novel represent themselves in their dialogues and inner speech.

Though they are fictional portrayals, the bachelor-personages of Spark’s novel correspond to stereotypes in real life. Bachelors of the novel and real life bachelors share the overriding public sentiment towards them – disapproval. They often carry with them negative overtones of immaturity, selfishness, lechery and irresponsibility. The analysis has revealed that the bachelors of the novel show some common features, but also manifest a variety of complex individual personalities. A detailed representation of bachelors’ social and psychological types with their basic characteristics, modes of behavior, habits makes the novel a live portrait gallery of British stereotype of bachelorhood.

Keywords: stereotype, fictional portrayal, mental stereotype, behavioral stereotype, language stereotype, autostereotype.

The notion of stereotype came into language studies not so long ago, but it has already been applied to various branches of linguistics like lexicography, semantics and pragmatics. The term was introduced into the social, cultural and psychological studies by the American writer Walter Lippmann in his book “Public Opinion” in 1922. He saw stereotypes as mental concepts, pictures in our heads which simplified reality: “[Stereotypes] may not be a complete picture of the world, but they are a picture of a possible world to which we are adapted” [3].

Stereotype was first considered as the subject of linguistics in the studies of the American philosopher Hilary Whitehall Putnam in his papers “Is semantics possible?” (1970) and “The meaning of meaning” (1975) [4, 5]. A short history of the

study of the notion stereotype in linguistics can be found in E. Vilinbakhova's article of 2013 [7]. In particular, Vilinbakhova analyses the role of stereotype in lexicographical descriptions and even compiling of dictionaries mostly based on stereotypical information. She also mentions the use of stereotypes as a tool to analyze certain linguistic phenomena, such as tautologies, or as an independent object of the research, for instance, "the Image of Poles in the German language" examined by Polish linguist J. Dabrowska [2].

We can also add one more field of linguistics not mentioned by Vilinbakhova – text linguistics, which studies, in particular, the reflection of social stereotypes in various kinds of texts within the frames of certain national language picture of the world. Fiction text with good reason can be considered the translator of both author's worldview and language, and through his language one can make a conclusion about the language picture of the world of this or that nation.

The majority of researchers agree that social stereotypes reveal themselves as *stereotypes of consciousness, behavioral and language stereotypes*. The *stereotypes of consciousness* are culturally conditioned, stable, schematic, emotionally colored mental images of groups of people, objects and phenomena. *Behavioral stereotypes* are commonly understood as stable long-lasting patterns of people's actions. The culturally-conditioned stereotyped forms of behavior include: habits, practical skills, moral norms, etiquette, social roles, rituals, customs, traditions, fashion, social movements. *Language stereotypes* are verbal judgements, figurative expressions, idioms that grow to become fixed speech habits, and that reflect people's stable view of life [9].

The purpose of this article is to examine representations of the socio-cultural stereotype "bachelor" in Muriel Spark's novel "The Bachelors".

Traditionally two varieties of stereotypes are distinguished: autostereotypes (how we represent ourselves) and heterostereotypes (how others represent us). In our study we concentrate our attention on bachelors' of the novel selfrepresentation.

Muriel Spark's main focus – investigation of the phenomenon of bachelorhood – is indicated in the headline of the novel, then in the very first sentence of Chapter I: "Daylight was appearing over London, the great city of bachelors"[6, p.7] , and, at last, in the concluding paragraph of the novel: "He walked round the houses, calculating, to test his memory, the numbers of the bachelors – thirty-eight thousand five hundred streets, and seventeen point one bachelors to a street – lying awake, twisting and murmuring, or agitated with their bedfellows, or breathing in deep repose between their sheets, all over London, the metropolitan city" [6, p. 215].

The bachelors of the title – almost the only men we meet in the narrative – are the thirtysomething male barristers, teachers, art critics and museum attendants of a small area of West London. They lead inturned lives, pottering between grocers, coffee-houses, bedsits and the houses of their mothers and aunts.

They are bachelors "of varying degrees of confirmation" [6, p. 19]. One of them, Ronald Bridges, aged thirty-seven, an assistant curator at a small museum of handwriting in the City of London, is a confirmed bachelor. He and his friend, Matthew Finch, London correspondent of the Irish *Echo*, who is thinking of getting

married, often discuss marriage question. Here are two fragments from one of their dialogues:

"Do you want to get married at all?" Ronald said.

"I can't say I do," Matthew said. "It's the duty of us all to marry. Isn't it? There are two callings, Holy Orders and Holy Matrimony, and one must choose."

"Must one?" Ronald said. "It seems evident to me that there's no compulsion to make a choice. You are talking about life. It isn't a play."

"I'm only repeating the teaching of the Church," Matthew said.

"It isn't official doctrine," Ronald said. "There's no moral law against being simply a bachelor. Don't be so excessive"

...Matthew said, "Do you want to marry?"

"No," Ronald said. "I'm a confirmed bachelor."

"Why don't we want to marry? It isn't as if we were homosexuals."

Matthew said, "I suppose most people would say the confirmed bachelor is a subconscious homosexual."

"Impossible to prove," Ronald said. "You can only deduce homosexuality from facts."

"I'm only saying," said Matthew, "what people say. They say all bachelors are queers. Hee hee. Or mother-fixated or something."

"Oh, what people say! They always look at what might be, or what should be, never at what is."

"It's fear of responsibility that puts me off marriage. Responsibility terrifies me. I feel immoral as a bachelor. Do you ever feel immoral?"

"Not very often," Ronald said. "I've got my epilepsy as an alibi." [6, p. 76-77].

Here stereotypes reveal themselves both as stereotypes of consciousness and behavioral ones. For Ronald Bridges (an epileptic) the question of marriage is rather speculative than practical, while Matthew Finch's attitude to marriage depends to a great extent on prescriptive social and cultural norms, customs and traditions: his moral and religious views (he is Catholic) do not allow him to take a detached philosophical position – it includes moral and behavioral aspects. (*"I feel immoral as a bachelor"*, *"It's a fear of responsibility, that puts me off marriage. Responsibility terrifies me."*).

This especially concerns the question of sex outside marriage. The incompatibility of Matthew's religious views and behavior is the object of author's irony which becomes evident in the following fragment:

"One can't go on sleeping with girls and going to confession."

"That's a different question," Ronald said. "That's sex: we were talking of marriage. You want your sex and you don't want to marry. You never get all you want in life."

"I'll have to marry in the end," Matthew said, gazing at the tea-leaves in the bottom of his cup. "The only way I can keep off sex is by going to confession and renewing my resolution every week, and sometimes that doesn't work. It's an unnatural life if one's a Christian." [6, p. 77].

Here language means representing stereotyping are the following: lexical determiners – the pronoun *all* (“It’s a duty of us all to marry”), the adverb *only* (“I’m only repeating the teaching of the Church”), pronouns *you* and *one* referring to everyone (“You never get all you want in life”, “It’s an unnatural life if one’s a Christian”), grammatical structures beginning with impersonal *It* and *There’s no* (“There’s no compulsion to make a choice”, “There’s no moral law against being simply a bachelor”) – all having the meaning of generalization.

Another stereotype of bachelorhood is represented by Patrick Saton, a charismatic medium. He lives with a woman who is pregnant by him. He lies that he will marry her as soon as he gets divorce from his wife, though he is not a married man. He represents the type of bachelors who use lonely women often defrauding them of their money. Patrick has been convicted many times on the charge of forgery, larceny, fraudulent conversion before. His attitude to marriage is formulated in a fragment of his dialogue with detective-inspector Fergusson:

“Tell me, Patrick,” said big Mr Fergusson, “did you never think of getting married? It might have made a man of you. It might have kept you straight.”

“I’ve always believed in free love. I’ve never believed in marriage,” Patrick murmured. “Why should man-made laws...”

Fergusson tilted back his chair and heard him out: man-made laws, suppression of the individual, relics of the Victorian era.... Patrick’s thin voice died out “...and all repression of freedom of expression and self-fulfillment....” It sounded good-class reading-stuff [6. p. 91].

Cliché phrases “man-made laws”, “repression of freedom” and the like together with adverbs *always* and *never* as well as metonymy *good-class reading-stuff* are generalizing elements which are the indicators of stereotyping in this fragment.

Patrick counts on women being weak. He always stresses that he is not “a person of convention” and “lives by the life of the spirit”. He recites poetry to the young girls and older ladies and they are usually enchanted. Then he gets away from them with their money to another part of the country. Muriel Spark portrays this personage with exceptional skill and acid irony.

Martin Bowles, a barrister of thirty-five, is another type of a bachelor which is the object of author’s detailed consideration. He lives with his mother and is often complaining to his friend Ronald Bridges of his mother being a tyrant:

“I am not a possessive woman,” his mother always said to him. “You are perfectly free. Just use the house as a lodging and come and go as you please.... I don’t want you to be tied to my apron strings. Don’t think of me, I’ve had my life. I am not a possessive woman” [6. p. 136].

This stereotypical mother-grown-up son relationship finds its reflection in stereotypical language forms: the use of a set expression “*to be tied to one’s apron strings*”, emotional intensifier “*perfectly*” in the phrase “*you are perfectly free*”, repetition of the phrase “*I am not a possessive woman*” at the beginning and at the end of the paragraph – repetition adds a slight semantic shifting that takes place within the framing, making the reader aware of what mother really means and what she pretends to conceal.

Ronald criticizes Martin for living with his mother, expressing the generally accepted stereotype of the time: *“You shouldn’t be living with your mother, at your age. It makes a mess of a man. It makes for a mean spirit, living with mama after the age of thirty”* [6, p. 109].

Martin is Isobel Billows’ lover and is also her financial advisor, and, in his legal capacity, handles her property. He knows that Isobel (a well off woman) depends on him a lot and he is afraid of losing control over her. (Ronald suspects him of misappropriating Isobel’s money). Martin felt panic when he got to know that Walter Prett, the art critic, had visited Isobel and she thought that he *“could be interesting”* and *“different from anybody else”*.

Martin *“had often felt the only safe course would be to marry her, and felt this now, with fear, because she did not always attract him, and he was not sure she would accept him. At the times when she stood out for her rights, not crudely, but with all the implicit assumptions, he thought her face too fat and found her thick neck and shoulders repulsive”*. *“At this moment, finding himself without the right to question her about the frequency of Walter Prett’s visits, he thought her jaw was too square and masculine. He saw it would be safer to marry her”* [6, p. 140].

The words *“the only safe course”* stress Martin’s material interest in his relationship with Isobel, especially taking into account physical repulsion he sometimes feels towards her.

In Ronald Bridges’ view the attitude to women unites Martin Bowles with Patrick Seton who is charged of fraudulent conversion and Martin is the prosecuting councilman in Patrick’s case. In the following fragment, describing Martin’s concluding speech in the court and Patrick listening to it, this parallel becomes evident:

“You will recall that this man [Patrick] affected a certain delicacy in revealing his intimate relations with Mrs Flower. Yet he did not hesitate to defraud her....”

Ronald, heavy with the effects of his fit, sat with his eyes on Martin.

“He did not hesitate to rob her, he did not hesitate to exert his influence by means of those intimate relations with Mrs Flower.”

With Isobel Billows, thought Ronald.

“And yet he stands here and poses as her protector. You observe the irony, ladies and gentlemen of the jury”.

The irony, ladies and gentlemen, thought Ronald” [6, p. 210].

This coincidence of situations is used by Muriel Spark as an artistic strategy to foreground the idea of the existing stereotype of male-female relationship when the materialistic aspect is predominant.

Another variety of bachelor stereotype is rather psychological than materialistic and is represented in the novel by Ewart Thornton, grammar school master, who was a spiritualist. He is of the working class origin and often boasts of this fact. At Isobel Billow’s cocktail party, after his fourth Martini, Ewart’s deepest pride emerged *“to enchant Isobel and make her feel she was really in the swing by having him at her party”* [6, p. 100].

Being a member of a spiritualist circle which met in Marlene Cooper’s flat, he how refused to witness for Patrick, the medium, in the court. Marlene who tried to

organize collective evidence in Patrick's favor was extremely disappointed by his refusal and began crying. The following passages describe Ewart's feelings and behavior: "*She was crying, and it satisfied him to see her cry and to think that he had brought about this drooping of her stately neck, the leaning of her head on her hand, the tremor of her jade ear-rings, the resigned dabbing of her eyes with her handkerchief...*" [6, p.142]. "*He looked at Marlene with an overpowering stare until he perceived her submission.*" [6, pp. 143-144]. "*He stood up like a righteous husband*" [6, p.145]. "*He touched her arm consolingly as a man of integrity a woman who could not be expected to understand integrity.*" [6, p. 146].

Here we feel both, Ewart's revenge for his underprivileged past and sexist treatment of women in general (One can recollect his attitude to Isobel and Mrs Flower). He tries to exert psychological control over them.

To conclude, the described bachelor-personages of Muriel Spark's novel, though they are fictional portrayals, correspond (to a greater or lesser degree) to the existing stereotypes in real life. Bachelors of the novel and real life bachelors share the overriding public sentiment toward them – disapproval. Both fictional and real bachelors carry with them negative overtones of immaturity, selfishness, lechery, and irresponsibility.

Charles A. Waehler, in his examination of psychological type of a bachelor in his book "Bachelors: The Psychology of Men Who Haven't Married" singles out such "disapproving images" which a bachelor usually evokes:

womanizer
woman hater
marriage hater
mama's boy
nerd
narcissist
sexual deviant
immature person
miser
workaholic" [8, p.4].

Bachelors of the novel show some common characteristics, but also manifest (and this what makes Muriel Spark's novel a proper material for our investigation) a great variety of complex individual personalities. A detailed representation of bachelors' social and psychological types with their basic characteristics, modes of behavior, habits and customs, makes the novel a live portrait gallery of British stereotype of bachelorhood.

The prospects of this research are seen in a detailed analysis of heterostereotype representations, that is, how other people, in particular women personages, consider bachelors and what is the function of their characteristics in Muriel Spark's novel. Special attention should also be paid to patterns of speech behavior of bachelors of the novel and their correlation with those in real life.

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