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THE EVOLUTION OF THE IMAGE OF MAN FROM REALISM TO POSTHUMANISM: A FORMAL – HISTORICAL APPROACH

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Презентована нижче розвідка представляє формально-історичний ракурс еволюції образу людини, що мала місце останні три століття. Від епохи до епохи цей образ трансформується залежно від вірувань, розуміння світу, власного світогляду та того чи іншого аспекту людського існування, що перебуває у фокусі людських занепокоєнь. Об'єктами зацікавлення автора розвідки стали реалізм,

модернізм, постмодернізм, а також історіографічна металітература та постгуманізм. Зрештою, у сатті робиться спроба визначити й охарактеризувати ті зміни, що мали місце у сприйнятті образу людини у контексті сучасної художньої літератури різного стилю.

Ключові слова: реалізм, модернізм, постмодернізм, історіографічна металітература, постгуманізм, образ людини.

Представленная ниже статья фокусируется на формально-историческом ракурсе проблемы эволюции образа человека за последние три столетия. От эпохи к эпохе этот образ менялся в зависимости от вероисповедания, понимания мира, мировоззрения и того или иного аспекта человеческого существования. Объектами интереса автора статьи выступают реализм, модернизм, постмодернизм, а также историографическая металитература и постгуманизм. В статье делается попытка определить и охарактеризовать те изменения, которые имели место в восприятии образа человека в контексте разнообразной современной художественной литературы.

Ключевые слова: реализм, модернизм, постмодернизм, историографическая металитература, постгуманизм, образ человека.

The following essay gives a formal-historical presentation of the evolution of the image of man which has taken place for the last three centuries. From époque to époque, this image has varied depending on what people believed in, how they understood the world, what they actually could say about the world and which aspect of human existence they were concerned with. The Author discusses realism, modernism, postmodernism, historiographic metafiction and posthumanism. Then, he attempts to pinpoint and elaborate on the changes in the perception of man in the contemporary narrative literature of different conventions.

Key words: Realism, Modernism, Postmodernism, Historiographic Metafiction, Posthumanism, the Image of Man

Eclecticism is the degree zero of contemporary general culture: one listens to reggae, watches a western, eats MacDonald's food for lunch and local cuisine for dinner, wears Paris perfume in Tokyo and "retro" clothes in Hong Kong; knowledge is a matter of TV games. (Loytard)

One of the distinctive features of humanity is certainly its ability to take a self-reflexive stand. Literature has ever since its rise been an outstandingly useful means of self-analysis, which could take different forms and one of them has been the presentation of the image of man in a given time. From époque to époque, this image has varied depending on what people believed

in, how they understood the world, what they actually could say about the world and which aspect of human existence they were concerned with. The present essay offers a study of the image of man in the most contemporary periods in the development of human culture and the ones which had the greatest influence on the image of man in modern culture.

Three Main Channels of Communication

If one treats literature as a means of communication, it seems legitimate to assume that there must be some channels which the author uses to convey his/her message. To provide the most general division, one could enumerate three major ways which may serve this purpose. Firstly, some ideas can be expressed in a very direct fashion by the words spoken by the characters, the narrators or the lyrical subjects [Teske, 22]. In her study, Joanna Teske mentions also the implied author as an entity whose statements the author may use to communicate his/her message [22]. This one will be excluded since as Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan quotes after Seymour Chatman, “[u]nlike the narrator, the implied author can tell us nothing. He, or better, it has no voice, no direct means of communication. It instructs us silently, through the design of the whole, with all the voices, by all the means it has chosen to let us learn” [87]. Secondly, the author may convey his/her message through the presented world, which may serve as the model of the world and “which interprets the real world by means of imitation and distortion” [Teske, 22]. Thirdly, the author may use formal means of expression to communicate his/her message to the readers. In this category, one can find metafiction, stream of consciousness technique or unreliability of the narrator, to give just a few examples.

Certainly, the author may use the above channels to convey all kinds of ideas. For instance, Teske in her study treats them as the ways in which the author may communicate a philosophical message. In the present study, however, I will try to recover the image of man which is conveyed via the above channels. Even though, all of them will be taken into account, my attention will focus mainly on the formal means of expression which are used to present the image of man. The choice to put much more emphasis on this aspect is justified in the approach assumed in this essay, which is largely formalistic.

Realism

Probably one of the most prominent achievements of the late 18th century was a redefinition of individualism. Since antiquity there have been many people who could be called by the name of an individualist like Julius Caesar

or Dante Alighieri. This term would refer only to those who “were egocentric, unique or conspicuously independent of current opinions and habits” [Watt, 60]. What is crucial here is that in the late 18th century individualism gained a slightly new meaning. It came to be understood as “individual’s intrinsic independence from other individuals and from that multifarious allegiance to past modes of thought and action denoted by the word ‘tradition’ – a force that is always social, not individual” [Watt, 60]. It seems needless to say that if individualism had not developed in this direction, realism and the realistic novel would never have worked out one of its dominant principles that is to describe the life of an individual. This is not to say, though, that at the end of the 18th century individualism became extremely prominent. Society still enjoyed a higher status than an individual. Realism was innovative only to the extent that it recognised the problem of individualism but it was not until modernism that an individual became a prominent entity in the universe.

One of the main reasons for the shift in the understanding of the human being, as Watt suggests, was the development which Western civilisation had undergone since the Middle Ages. As Watt observes, if the world picture in the former époque was unified, the late 18th century presented an almost exact opposite. As he states, at the time of Defoe, Fielding and Richardson, the authors were especially concerned with “particular individuals having particular experiences at particular times and at particular places” [31]. Apart from technological breakthroughs of that time and ensuing social development, as Watt further claims, social changes were triggered by the birth of empirical realism of René Descartes, John Locke and Thomas Reid [qtd. in Teske, 55]. As Watt reports, “[o]nce Descartes had given the thought processes within the individual’s consciousness supreme importance, the philosophical problems connected with personal identity naturally attracted a great deal of attention” [18].

Locke “defined personal identity as an identity of consciousness through duration in time; the individual was in touch with his own continuing identity through memory of his past thoughts and actions” [Watt, 21]. This was developed by David Hume. Basing his understanding of the human being on Locke’s, he asserted that “[h]ad we no memory, we never should have any notion of causation, nor consequently of that chain of causes and effects, which constitute our self or person” [qtd. in Watt 21]. As a result many realistic writers chose to explore “the personality as it is defined in the interpretation of its past and present self-awareness” [Watt, 21]. According to Watt, these considerations brought about several considerable changes in the formal aspects of writing.

The priority was now to show an individual against the social background and define him or her in terms of their relations with other people. As a result, the narrator of realist fiction became an extradiegetic one to encompass social panorama. Typically, s/he would be heterodiegetic with omniscient knowledge about the presented world and the characters. This position to the story would enable the narrator to, first, describe the characters in terms of their relations with other characters and, second, to pass moral judgement on them [Teske, 56]. This state of affairs was the effect of an interest in an ethical element. "Man's social life involves choices of a moral character" [Teske, 57]. The world presented in the story was explainable in terms of religion, rules of nature or social life [Teske, 57]. The presentation itself was reliable, objective and the world presented resembled the real world. The narrator's descriptions of characters would feature direct definition and indirect presentation. As a result of all the above mentioned formal elements, the characters were presented as living in a world where they could reach some objective truth, which made their lives meaningful and logical. Life here was not so much a mysterious experience which must be explained but an experience which should be lived through. Man was a social animal and society was indispensable for him/her to exist and develop. That is why social interactions were so crucial for characters in realist fiction. They created a sphere without which they could not realise their humanity to the full.

To sum up, what the readers witness in realist fiction is the birth of individuality. Notably, though, individuality does not come to replace society. In fact, man is shown and defined against social background. The image which is thus presented confirms that man is a coherent and logical entity operating in a world based on social bonds. The character may be in agreement with or at odds with society but the panoramic view encapsulating the character's life proves that one's life makes sense in the long run. When it comes to art, it "is concerned with the moral assessment of man's choices" [Teske, 57].

Modernism

Just as the birth of empiricism contributed greatly to the appearance of realism, there were certain factors which contributed to the development of modernism. In general, the evolution of fiction from the realist kind to the modernist one can be described in terms of the change of the dominant¹.

¹ McHale quotes the explanation the concept of "the dominant" after Juri Tynjanov: "The dominant may be defined as the focusing component of a work of art: it rules, determines, and transforms the remaining components. It is the dominant which guarantees the integrity of the structure . . . a poetic work [is] a structured system, a regularly ordered hierarchical set of artistic devices" (9).

If in the previous case the dominant element was ethical assessment of characters, which I have tried to emphasise, here the dominant is epistemological. The questions which modernism tries to answer are the following:

How can I interpret this world of which I am a part? And what I am in it? . . . What is there to be known?; Who knows it?; How do they know it, and with what degree of certainty?; How is knowledge transmitted from one knower to another, and with what degree of reliability?; How does the object of knowledge change as it passes from knower to knower?; What are the limits of the knowable? And so on. [McHale, 9]

Still, one could ask what the roots of this change are. It would probably be difficult to determine all of them. Certainly, though, two sources can be pinpointed quite easily. Firstly, the birth of modernism can be traced back to the weakening of previous religious, scientific and social beliefs which took place at the turn of 19th and 20th centuries [Teske, 58]. Secondly, what seems to be unique to the modernist shift is the rise of psychoanalysis and empirical psychology which proved that the interior life is more conflicted, ill-structured and chaotic than people had previously thought [Matz, 220].

This discovery certainly increased the interest in the self and changed art's main task from moral judgement to the exploration of human nature [Teske, 59]. Thus, for example, Virginia Woolf encouraged artists to describe:

the atoms as they fall upon the mind in the order in which they fall, let us trace the pattern, however disconnected and incoherent in appearance, which each sight or incident scores upon the consciousness. Let us not take it for granted that life exists more fully in what is commonly thought big than in what is commonly thought small. [394]

It was no longer a principle to show a character in relation to society, let alone judge morally. S/he cannot have been for the very reason that there was no external voice to pass the verdict. The point of focalisation now was placed in the character's psyche and that is why objectivity was replaced by a character's subjective perspective. Jesse Matz may be exaggerating in claiming that modernist characters lapsed into solipsism, this state being rather typical of postmodernism, but he seems right in saying that modernist characters showed first symptoms of losing integrity. As he explains, "unified selves fragmented into such a welter of perceptions, motives, memories, and desires that fictional people ceased to have the fixed, standard 'qualities' that had made them engaging and memorable in the novels of the past"

Aspect of narration	Realism	Modernism	Postmodernism
The position of the narrator with reference to the diegesis	Extradiegetic	Intradiegetic	Variable
Extent of participation of the narrator in the story	Heterodiegetic	Homodiegetic	Variable
Extent of the narrator's knowledge	Omniscient; passes moral judgment	Reveals (explicitly or implicitly) the limits of his/her cognition	Self-conscious metafictional narrator
Degree of perceptibility of the narrator	Depending on the type of realism, the readers may expect different degrees of overttness: Victorian realism with a relatively prominent narrator or 20 th -century realism with covert, non-intrusive narrator	Covert	Overt (highly prominent)
Reliability of the narrator	Reliable narrator	Fallible, often misleading the reader without intending to mislead him/her	Playful, untrustworthy
Focalization: position relative to the story	External/internal	Internal	External/internal
Focalization: degree of persistence	Rather stable	Frequently changing/ multiple subjective perspectives	Variable
The accumulation of characteristics	Direct definition and indirect presentation	Indirect definition	Both with irony
Type of character	Plausible, life-like, typical, mediocre interacting with other characters against social background	Chaotic, unreasonable, atavistic, internally conflicted, emotional, a mystery to itself, focused on itself	Humanoid, historical figures or characters from other works of fiction, agents which defy natural laws (and the principle of verisimilitude), characters are cancelled, erased

Продовження таблиці

The means of expression favoured by the author to convey the image of man:	The author appears to take advantage here mostly of direct presentation of ideas and the presented world which is perceived as the model of reality. Firstly, since human being in realism is a social being, moral judgements on the part of the characters and the narrator are crucial for the image of man. Secondly, the authors of realist novels usually try to build a vast social panorama which functions as a background against which characters are described and which is meant to prove that man's life is logical in the long run.	The author resorts to directly presented ideas and formal means of expression. The world as such loses the function it has in realism. Modernist characters are very often alienated from the world and it becomes the model of reality only in the sense that it is a dangerous and hostile place. Instead, the characters create a world of their own inside their minds. This world can also become a model of the world. Characters' words become much more important here as characters are very often the narrators themselves. Formal means of expression gain importance: authors very often resort to different forms of the stream of consciousness technique. Narrators become unreliable.	Postmodernist novels usually appeal to their readers emphasising that they are artefacts. This is done by means of metafiction, which gain prominence here. The world and the characters become disintegrated and cancelled. Parodic play and irony often make the narrator's and character's words ambiguous.
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[220–221]. That is why what the readers seem to be left with in modernism is T. S. Eliot's invitation verbalised in "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" in a direct way which can barely be found in any modernist novel:

Let us go then, you and I,
When the evening is spread out against the sky
Like a patient etherized on a table;
Let us go through half-deserted streets,
The muttering retreats
Of restless nights in one-night cheap hotels . . .
Let us go and make our visit.

The visit is to the human mind covered with "the yellow fog". Since it was actually the human mind which was the main point of interest for writers like Eliot and Woolf, modernism almost immediately surpassed realism in the amount of attention paid to an individual. "[T]he characters' inner life (life experience) [became] of primary importance; meaningful details of life replace[d] the former panoramic vision" [Teske, 58]. As it has been mentioned, although realism did notice the problem of individualism, it was modernism which really gave prominence to the individual. At the same time, it turned out that an individual is no longer a coherent entity that it used to be in realism. Still, as Virginia Woolf believed, "her 'ghostly' characters [were] far more true to life. For her and the like-minded writers, dissolving selves were an opportunity to focus on the essence of selfhood – to turn away from merely material identities and discover anew the very process of soul-making" [Matz, 221; emphasis in the original].

Foregrounding the exploration of the self as the main point of interest of fiction called for changes in the formal shape of novels. Unlike in the previous convention, in modernism the most frequent type of narrator is an intra-hodiegetic one who makes it clear that s/he is fallible. The picture of the presented world and character which is conveyed by him/her is very often distorted, fragmentary and unreliable. In other words, there is little objectivity in the world of the modernist novel and there is no certain truth which the characters could gain. Very objective and matter-of-fact narration is here replaced with impressionistic style of writing and the stream of consciousness technique. All of these have one purpose: to present the world and the characters as indeterminate, vague, mysterious and morally ambiguous. What often accompanies these strategies is a highly poetical language which constitutes an evident departure from realism. This register also helps to emphasise the disintegration of the self which in modernist fiction remains

a mystery to itself, internally conflicted and emotional. As Matz asserts, the moderns "replaced omniscience with fixed or fallible perspectives, broke their chapters into fragments, made sex explicit, and dissolved their sentences into the streams and flows of interior psychic life" [215].

To repeat once again, the modernist convention is a departure from the realist one in many formal and thematic aspects, which is the effect of the "movement inward" [Matz, 220]. This direction brought about changes in the total understanding of the world presented in fiction. What was previously objective, logical, coherent and explainable by the laws of religion, nature or society, now becomes subjective, illogical, fragmented and hard to explain. Such is also the image of man: "chaotic, unreasonable, atavistic, divided" [Matz, 220], internally conflicted, highly emotional and focused on herself/himself. The outside world becomes obscure, unreachable and incomprehensible and there remain very few ways of communication with it. What is more, the true essence of the self also appears quite remote [Teske, 59]. The self is not presented in the context of social relations but as an immanent world in itself, and a world at constant war with itself.

Postmodernism

The change from the modernist convention to the postmodernist one can also be described in terms of the change of the dominant. Whereas realism was mainly concerned with ethics and modernism with epistemology, the postmodernist fiction devotes its attention to ontology [McHale, 10]. That is why typically postmodernist questions are as follows:

What is a world?; What kinds of world are there, how are they constituted and how do they differ?; What happens when different kinds of world are placed in confrontation, or when boundaries between worlds are violated?; What is the mode of existence of a text, and what is the mode of existence of the world (or worlds) it projects?; How is a projected world structured? And so on. [McHale, 10].

Even though there are considerable difficulties with defining postmodernism², a recurrent element which is mentioned by many critics is that, first, it is a reworking of modernism [Nicol, 569; Hutcheon, 20] and, second, that postmodernism takes a step further the disintegration of the world and the character which first appeared in the former *époque* [Hawthorn, 103].

² As McHale explains, "[n]othing about this term is unproblematic, nothing is entirely satisfactory. It is not even clear who deserves the credit – or the blame – for coining it in the first place: Arnold Toynbee? Charles Olson? Randall Jarrell? There are plenty of candidates. But whoever is responsible, he or she has a lot to answer for" (3).

In effect, postmodernist art undermines the audience's "ontological security" [Egginton, "Reality is Bleeding..." 212] of one's space which should be essentially different from that of a work of art. In this way, it questions the difference between fiction and reality. The lack of clear distinction between reality and fiction, in turn, leads straight in the direction of radical scepticism and solipsism.

Hesitation as to the nature of the world and its ontological status leaves its mark on the understanding of an individual. First "discovered" in realism and further explored in modernism, individuality is now deconstructed and alienated. The source of this alienation is explained by Nicol as follows:

The consequence of living in a postindustrial, media-saturated world, according to theorists of postmodernity, is that we become alienated from those aspects of life we might consider authentic or real . . . we spend most of our time at our desks in front of a computer screen processing "information" of one kind or another. What we engage with are effectively symbolic representations rather than real, tangible objects. [566; emphasis in the original]

Probably the most comprehensive explanation of this deconstruction of the world and the characters is given by McHale. The critic claims that postmodernist characters and postmodernist world are under erasure, they are cancelled: they both are and are not [97–111]. This postmodernist paradox is visible in Saleem Sinai's words:

I mean quite simply that I have begun to crack all over like an old jug – that my poor body, singular, unlovely, buffeted by too much history, subjected to drainage above and drainage below, mutilated by doors, brained by spittoons, has started coming apart at the seams. In short, I am literally disintegrating, slowly for the moment, although there are signs of acceleration. [*Midnight's Children*, 43]

The literalised metaphor which Salman Rushdie uses is very symptomatic of postmodernism. To use McHale's idea, Saleem both exists, after all he is the narrator and the main protagonist of *Midnight's Children*, and he does not exist. He is disintegrating and asks the readers quite plainly not to take this expression as a mere metaphor. His body is falling apart. He ceases to exist.

As in the case of realism and modernism, also here the change of the dominant and the new understanding of the human being altered the formal shape of the novel. Whereas it was fairly easy to describe, for example, the type of narrator in realism or modernism, here it becomes complex in the sense that it is difficult to determine the default situation. For instance,

as far as the position of the narrator with reference to the diegesis or the extent of participation of the narrator in the story are concerned, all that can be said is that they are highly variable. If the extent of the narrator's knowledge is taken into account, on the one hand, s/he can claim that he/she is omniscient. On the other hand, though, this narrator, having gone through half of his/her story, may arrive at the conclusion that whatever s/he said is make-believe or that, as a matter of fact, the story happened in a completely different way. What is certain, then, about the narrator in the postmodern fiction? S/he is very often a self-conscious, metafictional and highly prominent type. S/he is definitely not reliable. The world and the characters which are described by him/her often turn out to be social constructs, untrue and fragmented. When it comes to the construction of characters, the narrator may employ elements of both realistic and modernist strategies [Teske, 60-61]. At the same time, though, s/he will use parody to distance himself/herself from the picture s/he is presenting. As Patricia Waugh explains "[t]he well-worn conventions of realism or of popular fiction are used to establish a common language which is then extended by parodic undermining . . ." [64].

The image of man which is presented in this way could be described as the amplified version of the modernist type. Terry Eagleton asserts that "[f]rom modernism proper, postmodernism inherits the fragmentary or schizoid self, but eradicates all critical distance from it, countering this with a pokerfaced presentation of 'bizarre' experiences which resemble certain avant-guard gestures" ["Capitalism, Modernism and Postmodernism", 373]. To return to the epigraph to this chapter, the postmodernist image of man is the product of eclecticism which is a sum of various elements having little in common and fragmenting a human being to the extent that it is finally cancelled.

To sum up, the dominant of postmodernist fiction is ontological. The novels and their narrators become highly self-conscious. As such, they employ and rework the former literary conventions to show the artificiality of the world and people who live in it. All social reality is a social construct, as postmodernism claims. In this sense also the self and its individual identity seem to be a construct. The concept once coined by realism and expanded by modernism, is proven faulty and broken down. The features enumerated above will find their reflection in historiographic metafiction which, as Hutcheon claims, "would characterize postmodernism in fiction" (ix). Before discussing this category of fiction, I wish to include a table summarizing all the elements described above, which may be of help in later analysis.

Historiographic metafiction

As Nicol states, postmodernism developed “fondness for ‘historiographic metafiction,’ a self-reflexive version of the historical novel which teaches us that history is not a given, but something which always comes mediated through writing” [569]. Even though Nicol’s definition seems to be one of the most understandable attempts to define historiographic metafiction, still it fails to explain certain details. For instance, one will not find here any explanation as to what it means for history to be self-reflexive or mediated through writing. Similarly, Nicol does not elaborate on what he understands precisely when he claims that history is not a given. To begin with the very name of the genre, it consists of two major components, one connected with history and the other connected with metafiction. Let us use this division to explain the way historiographic metafiction works.

To understand better the treatment of history in the genre in question, it seems indispensable to analyse the principles which govern the use of history in the classic historical novel. McHale suggests that three major constraints on using history as a subject matter can be distinguished. The first constraint says that historical figures and events can be introduced only in such a way that they comply with “official” historical account of what happened. As McHale admits, defining what should be regarded as the official version is somewhat problematic. He seems to feel satisfied, though, with the assertion that “we do operate with intuitions about what is an accepted historical ‘fact’ and how far any fictional version deviates from that ‘fact’” (87). The constraint seems to be somewhat more liberal as far as so called “dark areas” are concerned. An illustrative example of “dark areas” are interior lives of characters. Barely described in official historical records, “dark areas” leave space for a writer to imagine without lying to history. Obviously, creating something which is not confirmed by historical documents is to some extent fictionalising historical figures. That is why the alternative solution in the classical historical novel is that inner life of historical figures is inaccessible and, because of it, it should not be described. The second constraint is called by McHale “a constraint on anachronism” [88]. Not only the historical events should remain in agreement with the official version, but also the whole material culture and *Weltanschauung* of the époque must not be at variance with *Zeitgeist* of the époque in question. In other words, for example, a 17th-century historical figure appearing in a historical novel should not have the consciousness of a late 20th-century one. The third constraint, as McHale explains, refers

to the logic and physics of the presented world. “[H]istorical fictions must be realistic fictions; a fantastic historical fiction is an anomaly” (88; emphasis in the original).

What is the treatment of history in historiographic metafiction, then? It begins with a series of seemingly simple questions which turn out to be revolutionizing. One of the most basic ones is about the very word “history.” A quasi-etymological analysis of the word divides it morphologically into two parts, namely his-story. An immediate question is why it has to be his story, not, for example, her story (Robertson). This realisation points to the fact that the “narrators” of the world history could be described as white, male, upper class and necessarily from the Mediterranean or western culture who usually were the colonizers of the rest of the world. A follow-up question could be whether the colonised should have a lesser right to their version of history and whether their version would be the same. It suddenly turns out, then, that there is hardly one version of history. History is multiple. Scholars like Hutcheon will also claim that “[t]he epistemological question of how we know the past joins the ontological one of the status of the traces of that past” [122]. In other words, according to Hutcheon, people should not be particularly enthusiastic about the truthfulness of the evidence of the past since it is by no means certain whether this evidence is in any way valid. The term “official history” then loses its internal logic since it is not possible for postmodernist writers to have one history. What the authors of historiographic metafiction do is not only breaking the constraints mentioned by McHale. They actually create the impression that their narrators and characters are fully aware that they are doing it. As McHale asserts, “[t]he postmodernist historical novel is revisionist in two senses. First, it revises the content of the historical record, reinterpreting the historical record, often demystifying or debunking the orthodox version of the past. Secondly, it revises, indeed transforms, the conventions and norms of historical fiction itself” [90; emphasis in the original]. The way historiographic metafiction does it is, precisely, by breaking the constraints which a classic historical novel would consider important to obey and creating “apocryphal history” (90).

The second element which should be discussed is metafiction. In most general terms, metafictional novels are self-conscious novels. As Waugh claims, these are narratives which draw the readers’ attention to their fictionality and artificiality. At the same time, they ask about the difference between a work of art and what is typically understood by the term “reality.” The suggested answer is that this boundary is very thin, if perceptible at all. As the critic

explains, metafiction is “a term given to fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality” [2].

As the main features of metafictional writing Waugh enumerates the following:

- a celebration of the power of the creative imagination together with an uncertainty about the validity of its representations
- an extreme self-consciousness about the language, literary form and the act of writing fictions
- a pervasive insecurity about the relationship of fiction to reality
- a parodic, playful, excessive or deceptively naive style of writing. [2]

This type of fiction tries to answer the same questions which postmodernism, in general, addresses. What world do I live in? Which version of the world do I live in? Is the world which surrounds me reality or is it just a dream dreamt by somebody else? These are the questions often asked by the narrators and characters in postmodernist fiction. Obviously, the authors cannot stick to neat and logical realist standards of constructing the presented world. The narrators and characters have to, as if, transgress and go beyond the world which they know. The characters become self-conscious to the extent that they start crossing narrative levels, for example, to reach the narrator³. The narrator, in turn, may pretend to be the author of the book. S/he may even discuss the choice of the title for a chapter. After all, though, it turns out that the narrator's level is only another level of diegesis and there is yet another, greater constructor. The objective is achieved, though. As William Egginton explains throughout his article, the ontological boarder between the audience and a work of art is broken [“Reality is Bleeding . . .”, 212].

³ The instance of the transgression of narrative levels is called by McHale after Gérard Genette *metalepsis*, which he briefly explains as “the violation of narrative levels.” As he further explains “[p]ostmodernist examples could be multiplied, all of them having in common the foregrounding through metalepsis of the ontological dimension of recursive embedding. They are of varying degrees of complexity. Simplest are metalepses like those in *Continuity of Parks* or Robbe-Grillet's *Maison de rendez-vous*, where for example, the fat man narrates his ‘classic story of white-slave traffic,’ which includes a party-scene at Lady Ava's, at which the fat man himself is narrating this very story. These metalepses involve only a single ‘jump’ of level; by contrast, those in Simon's *Tryptique* tend to be more complex, involving several jumps in the same Strange Loop. For example, in the novel's closing passage, we begin with a group of boys examining individual frames of a strip of movie film; the frames they are examining develop into an animated sequence in which a fat man completes a jigsaw puzzle depicting the village in which the boys live. This already constitutes a Strange Loop; but next comes a further twist: at the moment of his completing the puzzle, the film in which the fat man appears comes to an end, and proves to be not still frames in the hands of a group of boys but a film being projected onto a screen. The audience exits from the theater into the street of an urban scene which (final twist) had appeared earlier in the text on movie ads posted in the boys' village!” [120].

A peculiar joint venture of history and metafiction baffled many critics who, as Hutcheon states, failed to notice in it a genre of its own. As she explains, metafiction draws attention “only” to a very weak boarder between reality and fiction, whereas historiographic metafiction would rather “install and then blur the line between fiction and history” [113]. Elaborating on the relation between the last two, Hutcheon asserts that “theoretical self-awareness of history and fiction as human constructs (*historiographic* metafiction) is made the grounds for its rethinking of the forms and contents of the past” [5]. What is often emphasised by both Waugh and Hutcheon is that the critical distance is often built by means of parody. Waugh points out that “[p]arody, as a literary strategy, deliberately sets itself up to break norms that have become conventionalized” [65]. To paraphrase the principles of metafiction presented by Waugh so that they fit better and summarise historiographic metafiction, we can formulate them in the following way:

- a celebration of the power of the creative imagination capable of inventing new versions of history; an uncertainty about the validity of historical evidence
- an extreme self-consciousness about the language, literary form and the act of writing a history of the world
- history can be learnt mostly by textual evidence which is enough only to form a very fragmentary picture
- a pervasive insecurity about the relationship of fiction and history
- a parodic, playful, excessive or deceptively naive style of writing.

The construction of the image of man in historiographic metafiction will to a large extent follow the logic of this image in postmodernism. However, historiographic metafiction added to this image something new, namely the idea that “our sense of identity suffers because we are unable to place ourselves in a properly *historical* context. History has become simply a matter of ‘styles’ which can be pastiched in the latest retro clothes or ‘theme pubs’ or in ‘nostalgia films’” [qtd. in Nicol, 566; emphasis in the original]. Man who appears in historiographic metafiction to a large extent is described in a way similar to the postmodernist one. The self is “no longer assumed to a coherent, meaning generated entity” [Hutcheon, 11] and, as Frederic Jameson claims, man verges on “schizophrenia, hysteria, nostalgia, paranoia, and a more general ‘waning of affect’” [qtd. in Nicol, 566]. This kind of man found his/her place within the postmodern version of the historical novel. Obviously, such an image could not have been conveyed by, for example, a type character appearing in a romance or a standard historical novel. Hutcheon explains that: the

protagonists of historiographic metafiction are anything but proper types: they are the ex-centrics, the marginalised, the peripheral figures of fictional history . . . Historiographic metafiction espouses a postmodern ideology of plurality and recognition of difference; ‘type’ has little function here, except as something to be ironically undercut. [114]

The conclusion is that the image of man in historiographic metafiction on the surface may be very similar to realistic or modernist ones. Sooner or later, though, this image is contested by postmodernist parodic play. Only a few elements differentiate the image of man conveyed by means of characters in historiographic metafiction and postmodernism. First of all, in historiographic metafiction one will find either “marginal figures of history” whose account was never heard, e.g. *Foe* by John Maxwell Coetzee, or historical and biblical figures which are shown in a completely different way than they are known from historical accounts, e.g. Noah as presented in *A History of the World in 10 S Chapters* by Julian Barnes. These characters will very often act as the narrators who claim that they are actually in the process of writing the story which the readers are reading. As such these narrators/characters may serve very well as a model of man presented in a given text. Second, one of the major roles of these characters is to give or validate versions of history which have been unheard so far.

To recapitulate, the purpose of this chapter was to show how certain developments in the understanding of a human being found their reflection in literary conventions of realism, modernism and postmodernism. The main aim of this analysis was to find what specific techniques are used in these conventions since some of them are exploited by the convention of historiographic metafiction.

Posthumanism

To draw a complete picture of the evolution of the image of man since the end of the 18th century, it seems necessary to give an account of fairly recent developments in the understanding of a human being introduced by what came to be known as posthumanism. In this case, though, it appears to be much more difficult to determine whether the dominant is ethical, epistemological or ontological. It is so because questions which seem to summarize posthumanism in the most concise way, that is “what does it mean to be human?” or “what are the borders of humanity?”, happen to contain the same degree of each of these dominants. I believe that, for instance, asking about the essence of humanity is ontological in the sense that by this question one asks what a human being is as an entity. At the same time, this question

reflects potential epistemological problems with understanding what a human is, even though posthumanism happens to have quite efficient tools which help understand that and which will be explained below. Still, posthumanism appears to be to a large degree concerned with ethics which can be proven with films such as the famous *Blade Runner* or *Eve of Destruction* with their androids which do not really differ from humans but which are devoid of any human rights.

In this very modest contribution to the understanding of a human being as presented by posthumanism, it seems to be most appropriate to use the book by Bruce Clarke titled *Posthuman Metamorphosis. Narrative and Systems*. The reason to do so is, firstly, because the approach which he assumes in this study is to some extent similar to the approach governing this essay in the sense that his starting point is precisely traditional narratology. What he, later, attempts to do is to adjust it to the needs of posthumanism and, as he often emphasizes, to create posthuman narratology. Secondly, Clarke states what posthumanism is about in the possibly most succinct way. As he mentions, its purpose is “to relativize the human by coupling it to some other order of being” [3]. Seemingly this statement may not explain too much but it can become more clear the moment one understands systems theory which undeniably constitutes the foundation of posthumanism.

Discussing systems theory, Clarke elaborates on the abovementioned thought in the following way:

The “structural coupling” of different systems and the “interpenetration” of different kinds of systems – these matters lie in the cybernetic domain and, in this sense, cybernetics is the technoscientific forethought of the contemporary posthuman . . . The “self-making” formal operations of autonomous living systems – autopoiesis and reproduction – are the literal biological grounds of the cultural figure of bodily metamorphosis. [4]

At least a few elements should be explained with regard to this excerpt. One of them is probably autopoiesis or “autonomous living systems.” The term autopoiesis was first used by Valera and Maturana in their biological study and that is why Clarke speaks of “biological grounds.” As Luhman explains, Maturana understood autopoiesis as “a system which can generate its own operations only through the network of its own operations. And the network of its own operations is in turn generated through these operations” [qtd in. Luhmann, 150]. This, rather paradoxical, statement gave Luhmann an incentive to form his own definition of what a system is. What seems to be important for him in this definition are two main characteristics of systems, namely

self-organization and autopoiesis, both of which are governed by operational closure [Luhmann, 143]. Self-organization is understood here as the creation of system's structures by means of system's own operations. Autopoiesis, in turn, is "the determination of a state that makes further operations possible by means of the operations of the same system" [144]. To sum up, an autopoietic system is a system which creates its own structures on the basis of its own processes. What is crucial to emphasize is that a given system is to some extent independent of its environment in the sense that it does not import any structures from this environment.

Having understood what Luhmann meant by a system, one can go back to Clarke's "coupling [the human] to some other order of being" [3]. What posthumanism seems to herald is a new type of "eclecticism," alienation and deconstruction of a human being. By eclecticism one should understand here combining a human being, one autopoietic system, and another being such as an animal, second autopoietic system, or simply enhancing a human being with mechanical parts. The moment the two systems or orders of being are coupled they interpenetrate each other creating a new quality which unavoidably relativizes our idea of what a human being actually is. New propositions to understand this entity, even more than in the past, question our ability to define humanity, an individual human being and, when all is said and done, what life is. One of the most famous and illustrative examples of this coupling is certainly *The Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka. In fact, the book could be described in terms of a case study of a structural coupling of an insect and a human being. The story opens in the following words:

One morning, when Gregor Samsa woke from troubled dreams, he found himself transformed in his bed into a horrible vermin. He lay on his armour-like back, and if he lifted his head a little he could see his brown belly, slightly domed and divided by arches into stiff sections. The bedding was hardly able to cover it and seemed ready to slide off any moment. His many legs, pitifully thin compared with the size of the rest of him, waved about helplessly as he looked. [1]

Even though a structural coupling which relativizes the image of man is grounded in systems theory, it appears to be more connected with the thematic layer of novels or films. Thanks to Clarke's posthuman narratology, though, the same relativization can be observed in the way authors, especially of science-fiction works, use formal devices. Initially, in his discussion, Clarke concentrates on very traditional approaches to narratology and so he offers a presentation of structuralist two-component structure. Then, he moves

to Gérard Genette and Mieke Bal. He openly admits that what he prefers is Bal's division into text, story and fabula. The critic also seems to favour Bal's understanding of focalization which is also of crucial importance in the current study. Summarizing his argument when discussing *The War of the Worlds* by H.G. Wells, Clarke states:

In this reconstruction, the Martians momentarily occupy the epistemological position of scientific observers, figures licensed under positive modern regimes of objectivity to control the gaze and take it as far as their instruments can go. Yet in the same gesture the narration takes control of and renders them as objects mastered by the narrator's virtual gaze. [36]

The reason why this observation appears to be useful here is that it proves that looking at the humanity from a cosmic perspective shows how little and possibly insignificant it is. The "double gaze" [36] as Clarke himself calls it, even strengthens this impression. It is not only that an alien civilization observes the Earth. It is that the readers can see the narrator observing an alien civilization observing the humanity. This second order observation provides the readers with a great deal of relativity which is ascribed to the place humans occupy in the cosmos. There are no great human achievements, no millennia of history, no wars. Humanity appears to be just a tiny spot in the universe.

To recapitulate, posthumanism teaches us a completely new lesson about the image of man. It relativizes a human being by redrawing the borders between man and animal, man and machine, man and the world. To some extent, this approach is the heritage of postmodernism which also tried to deconstruct man as it has been explained above. The difference here, though, is that posthumanism in a fairly open way calls for the redefinition of man. That seems to be an interesting stage of man's development. Realism helped define man as an individual. Modernism took it to a more advanced stage and put much more emphasis on individual thought processes. Postmodernism saw man as an entity barely capable of any internal coherence. Historiographic metafiction, in turn, tried to discuss man in the historical context. What posthumanism seems to draw the attention to is, first, irrelevance of previous definitions of man and, second, an attempt to give man new meaning.

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НЕНАРОДЖЕНА ДИТИНА В СУЧАСНИХ ГУМАНІСТИЧНИХ КОНЦЕПЦІЯХ

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У статті автор аналізує явище гуманізму та його трансформацій з точки зору життєвої позиції "право на життя". Описуються різні типи статевого виховання, яке є одним з основних факторів стимуляції розвитку контрацептивної ментальності; автор наводить приклади "прогресивних" термінів. Вводиться поняття "про-життєвого гуманістичного парадокса" і пояснюється його суть. На прикладі творів художньої літератури ХХ – поч. ХХІ ст. автор показує трактування літераторами поняття особи.

Ключові слова: гуманізм, постгуманізм, трансгуманізм, життєва позиція "право на життя", науково-технічний прогрес, парадокс, особа, аборт, ненароджена дитина, художня література ХХ – поч. ХХІ ст.

В статье автор анализирует явление гуманизма и его трансформаций с точки зрения жизненной позиции "право на жизнь". Описываются различные типы полового воспитания, которое является одним из основных факторов стимуляции развития контрацептивной ментальности; автор приводит примеры "прогрессивных" терминов. Вводится понятие "про-жизненного гуманистического

парадокса" и объясняется его суть. На примере произведений художественной литературы ХХ – нач. ХХІ в. автор показывает трактовку понятия личности литераторами.

Ключевые слова: гуманизм, постгуманизм, трансгуманизм, жизненная позиция "право на жизнь", научно-технический прогресс, парадокс, личность, аборт, нерожденный ребенок, художественная литература ХХ – нач. ХХІ в.

In the article, author analyses the phenomenon of humanism and its modern concepts from the right to life standpoint. Different types of sex education which is the main factor of contraceptive mentality development are described; the author gives examples of the "progressive" terms. The concept of "pro-life humanistic paradox" is introduced and its essence is explained. The author shows writer's interpretation on the notion of a person giving examples of the ХХ – beginning of ХХІ century works of fiction.

Key words: humanism, posthumanism, transhumanism, right to life standpoint, scientific and technical progress, paradox, person, abortion, unborn child, ХХ – beginning of ХХІ century works of fiction.

Науково-технічний прогрес, розвиток високих технологій у світі стрімко зростає. Запровадження таких технологій у різних сферах життя викликає гострі дискусії морального й філософського характеру. Однією з таких проблем виступає дискусія щодо права ненародженої дитини на життя.

Виникають питання:

- що вважати початком життя – народження чи запліднення?
- чи є ненароджена дитина особою?
- чи поширюється на неї право на життя?
- яким чином (і чи взагалі) науково-технічний розвиток впливає на формування життєвої позиції людини?
- чим виступає людина в сучасних гуманістичних концепціях?

У 1979 р., отримуючи Нобелівську премію миру, Мати Тереза сказала: *"Найбільшу загрозу для миру на землі становить аборт. Якщо ми здатні знищувати життя, що дає нам Бог, якщо мати здатна стати катом своїх дітей, чи є сенс говорити про інші вбивства і війни у світі?"* [5]

Сьогодні актуальною є проблема трансформації гуманізму. Серед науковців, що досліджують це питання, українські філософи Кам'янська Ю.В., Табачковський В.Г., Шинкарук В.І., Яценко О.І.; російські дослідники Дубнов А.П., Лекторський В.О., Назаретян А.П. та інші; іноземні науковці Е. Тофлер, Е. Фромм, Ф. Фукуяма, С. Хантінгтон, К. Ясперс та ін.