

MYTHOLOGICAL WORLD IN D. LESSING'S DILOGY "MARA AND DANN"

Doris Lessing's name is strongly associated with the concept of feminism and a postmodernist method. Author's figure, her creativity and art style has become the ground for comparison D. Lessing heritage with the names such famous writers, as V. Woolf, S. de Beauvoir.

The main charters of D. Lessing's novel are mostly women, thuswise the writer carefully writes out the psychology of female images, outlines gender issues and explores the social role of women in society. Therefore, it is not surprising that the main aspect of studying the work of the author in foreign literary studies is the feminist approach (H. Bloom [8], S. Whilson [13], M. Galin [19], G. Green [10], L. Scott [12], P. Perrakis [11]).

Analysis of recent studies, which the problem is carried out. Scientific interest in the literary heritage of D. Lessing in national literary criticism studies has arisen relatively recently – from the time she became the Nobel Prize winner in 2007. In the Ukrainian literary discourse, D. Lessing's work was researched in a small number of dissertations, articles in which various approaches to the study of such novels as the "Gold Notebook", "Martha Quest", "The Grass is singing", the series of the novels "The Children of Violence" are revealed. The dominant approaches of creative studying the work written by D. Lessing are feminist and psychological. In particular, such scholars as M. Gorlach, L. Miroshnichenko, V. Savina, I. Shapovalova examine the novels of D. Lessing, using feminist approach. Some researchers study the artistic style of writing D. Lessing and note the influence of postmodernism on the creativity of the author. Ukrainian scientist V. Kramar notes that the postmodern poetry of D. Lessing's works, which, according to the scholar, is depicted at the narrative level: "free syntax, simple short sentences, stressed subjectivity of modernist speech, which manifested itself in the enactment with the components of the actual division of the sentence" [2, p. 52].

The scientific novelty of the research is that a comprehensive analysis of the mythical symbols of late novels by D. Lessing has been carried out, features of the author's conception of neomythologism have been studied. A special role of the colour gamma, which characterizes and "determines" the time-space of novels, is revealed. The analysis of the mythological aspects of these works will deepen understanding of the specifics of the artistic world of the of D. Lessing's works and determine the prospects for studying contemporary English literature, which determines the relevance of our study.

The mythological background in the works of D. Lessing motivates the saturation of the roman space with things and attributes, which are full of sacred content, hence **the purpose of the article** is to reveal the peculiarities of the mythological symbolism that functions in the artistic space of the diology "Mara and Dann".

The novels of "Mara and Dann", "The Story of General Dann, Mara's Daughter, Griot and Snow Dog" belong to the late period of author creativity and reveal the features of dystopia: the novel actions have been carried over into a distant post-apocalyptic future. The topos is the territory of the continent Africa, which name eventually changed to Irifik according to D. Lessing. "Mara and Dann" is an attempt to imagine what some of the consequences might be, when the ice returns and life must retreat to the middle and southern latitudes [3, p. 8]. The author's diology center around the crashed civilization and society, which is forced to return to the primitive order. The author interprets the classic fairytale story: the wandering of two orphans, a brother and a sister, Dann and Mara in search of a better life. So, the antique objects: clothing, architectural structures, books, inventions of the past, which are inherited from ancestors acquire a magical (mystical) value. Ancestor's household items become artifacts and architectural monuments of past turn into a place of pilgrims' journey.

The "Mara and Dann" diology characters' clothes items are symbolic. The colour spectrum is actualized in the function of the basic mythological opposition: "one's own"/"alien", since the criteria for the delineation of "own" and "alien" space is the norm/deviation from the norm, antinorma; nakedness/excess of clothes and so on.

In the mythological tradition, clothes perform an important function: it is the covering of human body and protection from external action, guard against evil deeds of others, and also a sign of the owner's social status. According to the researchers, the "alien" space tries to "take away" from the owner "his/her own" clothes, including shoes, hairstyle, headgear, ornaments and "requires" to remove "their" clothes to impose "alien" [4, p. 36].

Therefore, changing clothes means the symbolic transition of the owner to a new state and the acquisition of a certain social status.

The main character of the D. Lessing's novels, Mara, has been wearing a brown tunic, which she has inherited from past generations. It is impossible to damage this tunic, break it or "wear out" it. The brown colour is associated with the colour of soil, dirt, with a transition to the fall season with its sadness and autumn leaves. It contains the idea of decay, death. In the Christian tradition, the symbolism of brown colour is associated with smoke and ashes, with fire and the devil (Sodom and Gomorrah) [1, p. 127]. In addition, leather clothes according to biblical symbolism is a sign of the fall of mankind, and seamless clothes symbolize the suffering of Christ [7, p. 350]. "Looking down at her own tunic, Mara saw that it was brown; but when she lifted her arm the sleeve fell down in a pale shimmer that had black in its folds" [3, p. 52].

After escaping from their home, where they had the privileged status of the prince and princess, Mara and her brother had to dress in cheap clothes. Along with the loss of the kingdom, they forfeit their social status, therefore they have to hide and forget not only their own origin, roots but even their own names. Thuswise, changing clothing also indicates a turn in status: unchangeable, "eternal", clothing was an attribute of slaves, but the landlords preferred light materials and fabrics, which were a sign of the high status, a symbol of belonging to the royal family.

Mara's hatred of her own clothes is gradually increasing. While wearing it she feels like a slave, whose is wholly belonged to the Rocky Village, the outskirts that once were a place for the exiles, and now has become a hiding place for refugees. Thus, the clothing of the main character appears to be both her prison and salvation. After desertion from the army, Mara wears her old tunic in order for being less noticeable in the desert. Due to clothes endurance, which was in honor, Mara exchanges food and money. However, when the heroine leaves the Rocky village, she immediately strips herself of the cloth she has been wearing for many years. In this way, she gets rid of her external slave attributes, which marks her gradual transition to a new status and symbolizes an update: "After changing clothes, Mara felt that the end of everything was coming to an end, a new life begins" [3, p. 188].

In the second part of the dilogy by D. Lessing, two colours of the chlamys appear to be a sign of belonging to one of the two rival armies: the Dann's Army or the Kira's Army. Dann's subordinates wearing red chlamys arrive at the Center to join the army of the famous general because their common goal is seeking the path to the sacred space, where they would have a better life.

Kira's army consists of criminal mob and fugitives and is dressed in black. The contrast of "red and black colours reflects the essence of the "conflict" between two parties: the red is associated with the living characteristics, blood, power, strength, might, and black – with death, decay, guile. The Dann's Army is forbidden to take drugs or alcohol due to opiate past of general. The honorable right to wear red cloth should be deserved. But Kira co-opts everyone who is ready to fulfill her orders. To keep this mob under control, she encourages soldiers to drink alcohol and smoke opium. Kira doesn't even forbid her own daughter Rhea from taking drugs.

The technical devices of the ancestors are gradually falling to dust, because of almost non-existence of experienced people who can figure out how it works. The vestiges of strange cars become the object of worship. For example, a plane that once crashed in the desert, turned into a place of pilgrimage – according to the beliefs of local residents, the gods descended on it to the ground.

Coins, things of everyday use, clothes, that is, "the world of things" – everything that has been saved from ancient times is valued much more than modern analogues.

The greatest number of antiquity objects is collected in the Museum of the Center, the city located in the north, which once was the capital of the entire continent. However, like the whole city, the Museum is gradually collapsing. Exhibit items that are presented there are only primitive copies of copies, "simulacra", which have determined the insignificant existence of modern generations in comparison with the ancestors. A true treasure is the underground library of the Center, where all the preserved book of the continent are hold.

The colour spectrum also characterizes the artistic space of the dilogy and becomes meaningful as the main characters move from south to north. Infernal shades of brown-brown, rust, pale-yellow, gray, black and red are used to depict the dry south, the Rocky Village, cities of Majab and Helopse. The flashes of bright colours: green, blue, pink are displayed in ancient frescoes, clothing and so on. Due to global glaciation, a different type of climate was formed in the north of the continent: less arid than in the south, with high precipitation and high humidity. Therefore, the colour scheme of the north is fundamentally different from the south: where there are shades of green, blue, snow-white, colour of marsh.

An Anglo-American anthropologist V. Turner found out that in primitive society, the three main colours were considered the most important: red, black and white. According to the scientist, they have concentrated all the psychophysical experience of generations, which resulted in the "classification" of the environment [5, p. 80]. According to the scientist's definition, these colours encapsulate the individual bodily experience, other names of shades are only derivatives of the basic words [6, p. 26]. The colour symbolism is closely linked to the rituals of initiation: the red, on the one hand, appears to be the colour of illness, witchcraft, on the other hand, it is a symbol of strength and health. The black colour has negative connotations – "disease", "suffering", "death", "unclean". White is associated with purity, goodness, power, tradition, openness, and transparency.

The functioning of the solar mythological symbolism in the text of the dictation appears "ambivalent". Traditionally, the image of the sun is seen as a viable light, a source of heat that symbolizes the divine creative energy. Colour correlates of sunlight are yellow, red, orange, white.

Mythological semantics of yellow is binary. On the one hand, it is the colour of strength, wisdom, power and, intuition. The yellow colour is also a symbol of gold, wealth, luxury. On the other hand, pale-yellow colour is associated with illness, aggression, deceit. Pale-yellow clothes are associated with treason, treachery, calling this shade with the colour of Judas [1, p. 86]. The yellow colour also correlates with the other world, fallen leaves, sadness.

At the beginning of the first novel, the sun is depicted as a demolishing light with no salvation. The burning sun is associated with the image of “eternal desert”. The chronotope reveals signs of “stretching”/“sealing” of the time. The additional correlates of the sunlight are white and orange colours. White is a colour of innocence, purity. White is also a symbol of holiness. Clothes of light colour are sacred dresses in the Christian tradition. However, this colour also has negative semantics. White is a combination of all colours of the spectrum, that’s why it can be interpreted as the one, which has no colour of its own. In the east, white is the colour of old age, decay, sorrow, and also white dresses were worn during mourning.

It is the white cold colour, which is a colour correlate of sunlight in the second part of the novel. In the northern space, which is torn with eternal ice and frozen, a cold white and indifferent sun shines.

An important element of the symbolic dimension of dilogy is also the symbolism of water, which is closely related to the sacred category since water in the mythological tradition is one of the first elements that created the world. In mythological dictionaries, waters of the boundless ocean are compared with chaos. In the novels of D. Lessing the lifetime of the heroes of the novel is compared with the flow of water. Water simultaneously exemplifies a viable beginning and appears as the embodiment of evil, death, and the otherworldly. It is the lack of water that “forms” the special time-space of the novel. In the dry places, time stops or accelerates (the events storyline of the novel over a five years period is depicted within the one chapter); space depending on availability or absence of water sources is “sacred”.

Thus, in the novels of D. Lessing “Mara and Dann”, “The Story of General Dann, Mara’s Daughter, Griot and Snow Dog”, the objects of antiquity, the architecture of cities characterizing the roman space, are symbolic. Depending on the quality characteristic of the space (sacred/profane, “living”/“dead”), it is presented in the text of the novels with the help of coloured opposition: red – black (life or power and death), pale-yellow – white (contrast south and north), yellow – green – blue (infertility – vitality or drought – flood).

The functioning of the solar mythosymology in the text of the D. Lessing’s dilogy appears to be ambivalent. The image of the sun and sunshine in mythological tradition has double-natured semantics. On the one hand, the sun is associated with the birth, it is perceived as a nourishing source for all creatures in the world, symbolizing the divine creative energy, embodying knowledge and truth. On the other hand, solar symbolism can also embody negative semantics, associating with a scorching and destructive light that correlates with afterlife and non-existence. In the artistic context of the dilogy, a feeling timelessness is related to the mythological images of the “eternal” sun, the “infinite” desert, and so on.

The symbolic meaning of the colours also changes throughout the text, which is explained by the significant difference in climatic conditions of the south and north. The shades of blue in the south are synonymous (personification) of life, water, eternity, wisdom, the colour of the sky. In the north, the blue colour transforms, acquiring characteristics associated with the unknown and danger.

In the dilogy, the items of clothes and its colour spectrum are also symbolic. It actualizes the functioning of the basic mythological opposition: “my own/another”. Clothing and its colour spectrum gain a particular importance, since the dress and its colour is a reflection of the status of the owner, and the change of clothes means the transition to a “quality” new state, “rebirth”. The colour of the characters’ everyday clothes is embodied in pastel shades of light brown, pale yellow, and so on.

By contrasting the various colours of the spectrum, the embodiment of the complex initiation is unfold. A binary opposition “life – death” finds expression in the “confrontation” of red and black colours. Household item, ancient inventions, books, become sacred. “The world of things” of antiquity acquires magical features; some things become the object of worship.

The prospect of the research is seen in the further study of contemporary works of Anglo-American writers, whose texts reveal neomythologic features.

Bibliography:

1. Бидерман Г. Энциклопедия символов. Пер. с нем. / Общ. ред. и предисл. Свенцицкой И.С. Москва : Республика, 1996. 335 с.
2. Крамар В.Б. Постмодерністська поетика творів Джона Апдайка і Доріс Лессінг. *Видання ЧДУ ім. Петра Могили. Видання Філологія. Літературознавство*. 2011. № 164, вип. 152. С. 50–53.
3. Лессинг Д. Маара и Данн: роман, / пер. с англ. Ю. Балаяна. Санкт-Петербург : Амфора. ТИД Амфора, 2008. 463 с.
4. Новикова М.А. Символика в художественном тексте. Символика пространства (на материале «Вечеров на хуторе близ Диканьки» Н.В. Гоголя и их английских переводов) : учебное пособие. Запорожье : СП Верже, 1996. 172 с.
5. Тернер В.У. Символ и ритуал. / Сост. В.А. Бейлис и автор предисл. Москва : Главная редакция восточной литературы издательства «Наука», 1983. 277 с.
6. Тернер В.У. Проблема цветовой классификации в примитивных культурах (на материале ритуала ндембу). *Семиотика и искусствознание*. Москва, 1972.
7. Шейнина Е.Я. Энциклопедия символов. Москва. 2001. 592 с.
8. Bloom H. Bloom’s Modern Critical Views : Doris Lessing. New York : Chelsea House Publishers, 2003. 274 p.
9. Galin M. Between East and West: Sufism in the Novels of Doris Lessing. New York : New York Press, 1997. 280 p.
10. Greene G. Changing the Story: Feminist Fiction and the. Michigan : The University of Michigan Press, 1991. 302 p.
11. Perrakis P. Touring Lessing’s Fictional World. *Science Fiction Studies*. 1992. Vol. 19. Iss. 56. P. 95–99.
12. Scott L. Similarities Between Virginia Woolf and Doris Lessing Deep South. 1997. Vol. 3. No. 2. URL: <http://www.otago.ac.nz/deepsouth/vol3no2/scott.html>.
13. Whilson S. R. Storytelling in Lessing’s Mara and Dann and Other Texts. Women’s Utopian and Dystopian Fiction. Cambridge : Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013. P. 23–30.

References:

1. Biderman G. (1996). Enciklopediya simbolov [Encyclopedia of symbols]. Per. s nem. / Obsh. red. i predisl. Svencickoj I. S. Moskva : Respublika. 335 [in Russian].
2. Kramar V.B. (2011). Postmodernistska poetika tvoriv Dzhona Apdajka i Doris Lessing [Postmodernism poetics of the works by John Updike and Doris Lessing]. Vidannya ChDU im. Petra Mogili. Vidannya Filologiya. Literaturoznavstvo. № 164, vip. 152. 50–53 [in Ukrainian].
3. Lessing D. (2008). Maara i Dann: roman [Maara and Dann: novel] / per. s angl. Yu. Balayana. Sankt-Peterburg : Amfora. TID Amfora. 463 [in Russian].
4. Novikova M.A. (1996). Simvolika v hudozhestvennom tekste. Simvolika prostranstva (na materiale «Večerov na hutore bliz Dikanki» N.V. Gogolya i ih anglijskih perevodov) : uchebnoe posobie [Symbols in the artistic text. Symbols of space (on the material “Vechera na hutore bliz Dikan’ki” by N.V. Gogol and its English translations)]. Zaporozhe : SP Verzhe. 172 [in Russian].
5. Terner V.U. (1983). Simvol i ritual [Symbol and ritual] / Sost. V.A. Bejlis i avtor predisl. Moskva : Glavnaya redakciya vostochnoj literatury izdatelstva «Nauka». 277 [in Russian].
6. Terner V.U. (1972). Problema cvetovoj klassifikacii v primitivnyh kulturah (na materiale rituala ndembu). Semiotika i iskusstvometriya [Problem of colour classification in the primitive cultures (on the material of the ritual). Semiotics and artmetry]. Moskva [in Russian].
7. Shejnina E. Ya. (2001). Enciklopediya simbolov. Moskva. 592 [in Russian].
8. Bloom H. (2003). Bloom’s Modern Critical Views : Doris Lessing. New York : Chelsea House Publishers, 274.
9. Galin M. (1997). Between East and West: Sufism in the Novels of Doris Lessing. New York : New York Press. 280.
10. Greene G. (1991). Changing the Story: Feminist Fiction and the. Michigan : The University of Michigan Press. 302.
11. Perrakis P. (1992). Touring Lessing’s Fictional World. Science Fiction Studies. Vol. 19. Iss. 56. 95–99.
12. Scott L. (1997). Similarities Between Virginia Woolf and Doris Lessing Deep South. Vol. 3. No. 2. URL: <http://www.otago.ac.nz/deepsouth/vol3no2/scott.html>.
13. Whilson S. R. (2013). Storytelling in Lessing’s Mara and Dann and Other Texts. Women’s Utopian and Dystopian Fiction. Cambridge : Cambridge Scholars Publishing. 23–30.

Summary

**O. KRAVETS, N. PROSKURINA. MYTHOLOGICAL WORLD
IN D. LESSING’S DILOGY “MARA AND DANN”**

The article discovers the late creativity, written by one of the most famous feminist writers of the 20–21st centuries Doris Lessing. The object of the literary analysis are novels “Mara and Dann” (1999), “The Story of General Dann, Mara’s Daughter, Griot and Snow Dog” (2005). The novels reveal the peculiarities of mankind’s life after an unknown catastrophe on the continent of Africa. The art world of diology reveals the presence of the mythological context. The space and attributes of the novels are imbued with sacred content. The purpose of the article is to study the peculiarities of creating mythological world in the given novels. One of the leading means of creating an author’s artistic works is mythosymbolics. Therefore, the key areas are the study of the colour of the “world of things” and the space of diology, the solar mythological symbolism, the study of water symbolism functioning.

Key words: Doris Lessing, diology, novel, mythological world, mythological symbolism, colourism, neomythogism.

Анотація

O. КРАВЕЦЬ, Н. ПРОСКУРИНА. МІФОСВІТ ДИЛОГІЇ Д. ЛЕССІНГ «МААРА І ДАНН»

Стаття присвячена вивченню пізнього періоду творчості англійської письменниці-постмодерніста Доріс Лессінг, ім’я якої тісно пов’язане з розквітом феміністичного руху ХХ століття.

Об’єктом літературознавчого аналізу є дилогія «Маара і Данн»: романи «Маара і Данн» (1999), «Повість про генерала Дана, дочку Маари, Гріота і сніжного пса» (2005).

Метою статті є дослідження особливостей створення міфосвіту в зазначених текстах письменниці. Одним із провідних засобів творення авторського міфосвіту є міфосимволіка. Отже, ключовими напрямками аналізу є дослідження художнього простору дилогії і колористики «світу речей» у ньому, вивчення функціонування символіки води й водного простору, а також солярна міфосимволіка.

У результаті аналізу дилогії Д. Лессінг зроблено висновки, що предмети давнини, архітектура міст, що характеризують художній простір романів, виявляються символічними. Залежно від якісних характеристик простору (сакральний/профаний, південь/північ, «живий»/«мертвий») він актуалізований у тексті романів за допомогою опозицій кольорової гами. Семантичне навантаження просторових бінарних опозицій підсилюється завдяки контрасту в протиставленні кольорів: чорного/червоного, чорного/білого, жовтого/синього. Функціонування солярної міфосимволіки в тексті дилогії Д. Лессінг постає «двоїстим». Образ сонця, сонячного світла в міфологічній традиції має амбівалентну семантику. З одного боку, сонце сприймається як джерело для всього сущого на Землі, символізує божественну творчу енергію, уособлює знання, істину. З іншого боку, солярна символіка може втілювати і негативну семантику, асоціюватися з палючим і нищівним світлом, що співвідноситься з потойбічним світом і небуттям. У художньому контексті дилогії Д. Лессінг відчуття безчасся пов’язане з міфологічними образами «вічного» сонця й «нескінченної» пустелі.

Ключові слова: Доріс Лессінг, дилогія, міфосвіт, міфосимволіка, неоміфілогізм, роман.