

## **THE TRANSFORMATION OF GENDER MODELS IN THE SERHIY ZHADAN'S NOVELS "DEPECHE MODE" AND "VOROSHYLOVHRAD"**

Gender issues have been extensively studied in literature. The problem about the relation between «masculine» and «feminine» is one of them. The combination of postcolonial and gender methodologies in the analysis of the texts is a perspective direction of research. It allows to reveal a number of national, cultural, social, historical, and political peculiarities in representation of gender, which writers show in their works. The reason of such combination is that, in the 20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup>, different social-political, cultural-historical situations and postcolonial context influence on the gender formation in the Ukrainian culture. During the last decade the detailed review of traditional construction and representation of gender was held in Ukrainian culture. Oksana Zabuzhko was the first to apply the analysis of society's colonial trauma in gender aspect.

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the peculiarities of transformation of gender feminine and masculine models in the novels *Depeche Mode* and *Voroshylivhrad*. To begin with, it should be mentioned that nation's colonial past is deeply rooted in its consciousness; it certainly has influence on self-sensation of a subdued nation. Metropolitan or empire country embodies masculinity, which means that this country only can acquire, possess, and administer the subdued nations. And the subdued nation in this way embodies femininity.

As a result of a large number of traumatic events in XX century a common features of male images were formed in Ukrainian literature: infantilism and homelessness (Hundorova, 2013). Moreover, Tamara Hundorova in this context uses the term "sick body". It is formed as a result not only in older generation, which directly lived through all traumatic events, but in younger generation too, which have to live in the situation of uncertainly and insecurity. Post-totalitarian experience influences the distribution of gender roles in a society. Describing the gender models in terms of post-colonialism, Oksana Zabuzhko notes that the woman is exposed to

“double feminization” and the man is feminized due to his awareness that he is a part of a subdued nation (Zabuzhko, 2009).

These features are in a lot of the characters of the contemporary Ukrainian literature. In particular, in the novels *Depeche Mode* and *Voroshylivhrad* Serhiy Zhadan represents gender model “infantile male / feminine-prostitute”. In psychoanalysis, masculine consciousness and behavior are the result of imitation and identification with the particular man – father or his symbolic image. However, characters’ parents in Zhadan’s novels are “homo sovieticus”, they are the embodiment of Soviet style of life with its constant oppression. That is why there is no one whom the characters can imitate in a positive way, so they continue behave as their parents.

Male characters in Zhadan’s novels are victims with childish behavior and fear of women and with indifferent attitude to life. Their infantilism causes problems which they have with women: men feel insecure, weak and vulnerable. The characters showed masculine traits of character only with other men – “brothers in arms”. In *Depeche Mode* they are Zhadan, Sobaka Pavlov, Vasia Komunist, Sasha Karbiurator, Kakao, Chapai; in *Voroshylivhrad* they are Herman, Kocha, Travmovanyi.

Male characters in Zhadan’s novels show their masculinity in seizure of football, and they perceive the loss of their favorite team as their personal failure. However, football was “the only thing that could be proud of” but it was destroyed with the collapse of Soviet system. To conclude, we can assume that the cause of gender model “infantile male / feminine-prostitute” is post-totalitarian Soviet legacy, which the writer’s characters have inherited. Infantilism, weakness, tenderness, passivity and fear of women show that men lost their masculinity. Women in term of male feminization become authoritarian with the masculine traits of character, which causes slutty behaviour.

However, in the novel *Voroshylivhrad* there are some changes in the behaviour of the main characters. In *Depeche Mode* the main character, narrator Zhadan, confirm the absurdity in any attempts to change something in his life, but in *Voroshylivhrad* Herman finds the meaning of struggling or even the sense of his life.

Moreover, the period of homelessness and migration ends for him. He finds his place in the world, returns to Motherland. Women also have changed: in *Depeche Mode* the only girl is actually prostitute; but in *Voroshylivhrad* female characters admit their weakness, and they are aware of the need for male attention and care.