

LITERATUREDOI <https://doi.org/10.30525/978-9934-26-311-8-4>**GENRE PECULIARITIES OF THE I. MURDOCH'S NOVEL
“THE ITALIAN GIRL”****ЖАНРОВІ ОСОБЛИВОСТІ РОМАНУ А. МЕРДОК «ІТАЛІЙКА»****Aliseienko O. M.**

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Included in the group of “Gothic” works, the novel “The Italian girl”, (1964), in which the atmosphere of “literature of secrets and horror” is organically felt, where the dominant is *suspense* – forcing inexplicable mysteries and fear, did not become the subject of the exhaustive analysis in literary science, although this novel is an important stage in the development of Murdoch's excellence. In English literary criticism, a more detailed analysis of this work arose. In the 1960s and early 70s, this novel was often interpreted via the Freudianism. L. Kriegel calls it a “Freudian novel”, the theme of which as he considers is the hero who identifies himself through returning to his childhood home to attend the funeral of his mother, whose death allows him to discover his father in himself [1, p. 77]. It seems that the reduction of this work to Freudianism is vague and impoverishes its meaning. Lewis Martz [2] interprets the novel in a similar way, highlighting the themes of maternal dominance and sexual disappointment among its problems, which allows him to attribute the work to the tradition of D. H. Lawrence whose influence he observes in the depiction of artistic space in the novel. L. Martz defines the novel as “a Gothicized version of D. H. Lawrence's story” [2, p. 79]. It seems that although the influence of

Lawrence cannot be denied, this problem is looking for its detailed investigation, particularly, the manifestation in the use of pastoralized space. However, it is hardly possible to see in it only a “version” of Laurence's story as the writer's artistic thinking is characterized by pluralistic intertextuality rather than focus on any particular work or writer.

Most researchers define the “The Italian Girl's” genre as a “Gothic” novel (L. Marz, F. Baldanza, D. Johnson). D. Johnson notes that the novels “The Unicorn”, “The Italian Girl” and “The Time of the Angels” depict events taking place in a closed space, where strained and terrible family relationships are played out from the point of view of “devil's triangles”, in which the drama of Oedipus is often embodied [3, p. 65]. One of the aspects of which, namely, the motif of monasticism, the black dress, mask, secret vice and an imaginary demonic role, allows us to speak of an indirect associative allusion, addressed to a more erudite reader, to the famous classic gothic novel by Ann Radcliff “The Italian” (1797). However, Murdoch “overturns” the traditional codes of the gothic novel, the demonic villainess is not the real one, and the Italian theme acquires a different tune.

In the construction of the plot, the Gothic category of *suspense* (intense expectation) is realized: an indirect (delayed) exposition is used – from the beginning of the story, the reader does not know anything about the hero, the motives of his behavior are unknown. The past is revealed gradually, in small fragments, which enhances the atmosphere of mystery and intrigues the reader. Artistic space and time in “The Italian Girl” carry an important ideological load, they are merged in a peculiar way. At the beginning of the novel, the hero returns home, which means a return to his past, from which he fled many years ago; in the end – he leaves the house again, reconciled with the past and found the love – at the end of the novel, the hero is no longer alone. The circled composition of the novel allows us to trace the transformation of the hero's personality under the influence of psychological shocks.

The action of the novel is attached to the space of the old house, alienated from the “big world”, its rooms and stairs form a labyrinth full of mysteries. An ominous atmosphere arises in the mind of the character – it is a dark Gothic house-prison, where victims of violence and evil languish; the crypt house, where the mother's grave stands and her presence is still felt, where Elsa also dies. The fire in the house and the semantics of black and red color (the walls of the house are made of red brick, blackened by the wind from the coal mines) correspond to the motif of hell, the underworld.

Nature in the novel appears picturesque, evoking emotions, it is an uncultured nature. It, on the one hand, opposes the civilization, mundanity and triviality with which a person has surrounded himself, on the other hand,

with his “uncultured”, deliberate irregularity (a huge overgrown garden with a capriciously flowing stream is the result of the work of an unknown architect, and not a natural formation; this is a stylization under naturalness) refers to the aesthetic tastes of romantics.

For the character, the whole world is a cultural sign, it seems that the lake and the waterfall “live” in the 18th century: “It was a deliberately miniature scene in the jungle, exactly the kind that would have pleased Henry Rousseau’s eye, and indeed , all my anxieties and the feeling of great pain receded into the background, my breath was taken away from me at that moment, I could not help but see a distant pattern of sharp bamboo leaves bordered by birch trunks, as a perfect subject for engraving” [4].

“The cascade was not large, but it had such good proportions in relation to the pond that it seemed that it neglected the vulgar dimensions of real size and rather gravitated towards art that did not attach importance to dimensions” [4]. Such temporalization refers to the time of the emergence of the “Gothic novel”, as if it gives the key to the genetic source of many elements of the poetics of “The Italian Girl”. Murdoch’s landscape, as well as subject imagery, spatial and temporal details, is, on the one hand, specific (the vegetation predominant to the north of England is described in detail: camellias, thistles, elder, heather, dog-rose, etc.), on the other hand, without losing its concreteness, acquires a symbolic meaning.

Murdoch uses fascination and sensationalism, the technique of *suspense*, as the fundamental features of the genre of the Gothic novel whereas there is an intellectual direction: the writer distances herself from the concreteness of the Gothic cliché, making it a sign that possesses the multi-meaning of a symbol. This is a game of Gothic canons, during which the writer tries to investigate a complex of philosophical and ethical questions concerning the categories of good and evil, the role of rational and irrational in a person – Gothic clichés give the author the opportunity to actualize these problems. Signs referring to the Gothic tradition become functional elements of Murdoch’s philosophical and intellectual prose.

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