

MODELING OF THE ARTISTIC WORLD OF CHILDHOOD IN MODERN ITALIAN LITERATURE ABOUT CHILDREN

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Abstract. The article investigates the problem of modeling the childhood world in novels by N. Ammaniti "I am not afraid", "You and me", "As God commanded", A. d'Avenia "White, like milk, red, like blood", a history by A. Nanetti "My grandfather was a cherry tree" when the first contact between a child / teenager and the world of adults appears. Identified microdominants for the world of children in these authors: existential measurement of home and family (N. Ammaniti, A. Nanetti), father-son relations (N. Ammaniti), categorical coloring of the childhood world and seeking oneself (A. d'Avenia), unbreakable unity childhood - adulthood - old age (A. Nanetti). The dysharmony of the world manifests itself in the motives of violence, suffering, uncertainty of the child, which makes hero actively seek his place in society and his identity. The subjective narrative "I" of the child reflects the catastrophic attitude of the 21st century, seeks salvation in adults, but finds the strength to resist evil in the world only in its pure soul. It was found: the destruction of the ordered childhood world with positive images of home, father and mother is the reality of the 21st century.

Keywords: world of childhood, child's identity, family values, literature on children.

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.23856/3406>

Introduction

The article deals with the problem of modeling the artistic world of childhood in novels by N. Ammaniti "I'm not Scared", "Me and You", "As God Commands", "White as Silence, Red as Song" by A. D'Avenia and a story by A. Nanetti "My Grandfather was t Cherry tree" when for the first time a child/ a teenager is confronted by the world of adults. These modern texts can be included in the category of literature about children, as opposed to the texts belonging to children's literature (or literature for children). Despite the continuation of the terminological discussion we rely on the position of receptive aesthetics (based on the addressees of the text to define this category as literature about children). In addition, there are no scientific studies of these texts, except some online publications that have published several comments, translations and reviews on these novels and stories.

The main constants of modeling the artistic world of childhood

The names of Alessandro D'Avenia, Angela Nanetti, Niccolò Ammaniti in modern Italian literature are mentioned aside well-known contemporary classic writers such as M. Mandzantini, A. Barricco, P. Giordano and others. In media the name of a young author N. Ammaniti is often associated with words talented and impressive. His popularity was facilitated by the adaptation of his novels: these are six films done by well-known directors. The lack of thorough research on the novels of this Italian writer (we can mention only the

article by A. Yampolska and the article of our authorship) has led to the involvement of this author in this research. The best novels by A. D'Avenia and by A. Nanetti are translated into a lot of European languages, but, unfortunately, they still do not have their researcher in Ukrainian literary criticism.

The novel by N. Ammaniti "I'm not Scared" (published in 2001) has a special place in the literature on children and childhood: the author speaks about friendship, charity, nobility and meekness, goodness and cruelty in a completely new way. The reader of the book feels scarified as while reading stories by V. Stefanyk "News" or "Maple leaves". The kidnapping of a child to obtain redemption in Southern Italy is not an invention of the author: such facts are often highlighted in the Italian media. The plot of the thriller serves to reveal the inner purity of the child. The main character Michele gives the reader his childish view of this history, which makes the depicted event absolutely impressive. The author has chosen the moment of maturation of a child: a sharp transition from childhood to adolescence. As for his teenage characters, N. Ammaniti observes that this age is interesting for him as the stage of transition, the transformation of the spirit and body, the farewell to the world of childhood and the transition to the adult world, it means that the age transference is combined with the articulation of questions and with the search for answers, which will form the character and his personal harmony through the tests of intellectual and psycho-emotional catharsis. At that time, the relationship between father and son passes through the trial period, which is the time of deprivation of archetypal parental authority and the choice of his personal position in the "hostile" society.

To understand the living values and inner potential of this boy a symbolic image of the lizard has been used. The character performs a children's bet to walk on the collapsed wall imagining himself a lizard. This animal has a wonderful ability to self-healing. It is a symbol of death and rebirth in Roman mythology. In the African tribes the lizard is a sign of finding a compromise in a difficult situation. For Michele it shows that one must seek harmony within himself as well as the forces to fight with himself to attend a new rebirth. "Lizards, when they cannot flee and feel that they are about to be captured, open their mouths, inflate and hiss trying to scare you, because they are afraid of you themselves, you are huge, and the last thing left for them is to try to escape. If you don't know they are good, you can do something wrong and you can touch them" (*Ammaniti, 2005:195*).

The correlation of the real world with the demonic and fantastic one is manifested in an episode with terrible monsters that is inserted into the text to emphasize human cruelty. Fearing fictitious monsters, Michele is fighting against much more terrible of them — the real kidnapers of children. For the boy the fantastic world coexists with the real one. He learns to overcome his fear by striving to deal with real danger, showing boldness and resistance. Child personality focus becomes a composite dominant for modeling the artistic world of childhood in this novel by N. Ammaniti. The character is tested to know his own self through the knowledge of the world and his father as "other". Bear-ticklers belong to the images of the demonic world, which scare children so there we have an interesting underlining of the main leitmotif of the novel: even monsters are afraid of the real kidnapers of children holding hostages in inhumane conditions. The stolen child Filippo believes: "The cubs of bear-ticklers are biting because they are afraid of people" (*Ammaniti, 2005:79*).

He considers his kidnapper to be a Lord of Worms and he perceives Michele as an angel. This point of view prompts Michele to help this kidnapped boy. The author says that evil is real: the father may be a criminal, a friend - an enemy, a neighbor - a traitor. In this difficult situation the father is shown to be weak, and the son is strong giving examples of

courage for adults. According to the draw, his father must kill the inmate Filippo. The story's end is tragic: Michele saves a friend from death when he learns that he is going to be killed by changing places with Filippo that's why he does not have enough time to get out of the pit. Father has shot his son in the dark when he was trying to escape, because he believes him to be Filippo. The story ends with pseudo-biblical words: "And there was a Father. And I was too" (*Ammaniti, 2005:220*). Reunification of the father and his son becomes the key to reconstructing the paradigm of joy that was first erupted.

This statement also works in the following novel by N. Ammani. In the novel "As God Command" (published in 2006), the analysis of the relationship between father and son continues. The novel illustrates the self-lonely existence of a teenager who deliberately seeks for solitude. The characters of Rino and Cristiano Zeno find understanding among themselves through the trials of life: it is a novel about the trust between father and son, which has been tested by a crime. The two poles of this character being (being-at-school and being-with-father) show the life of an ordinary Italian teenager with vulnerable consciousness and hyperbolic sensitivity to the environment. The last page shows the joy of discovering that the father did not commit a crime and became a victim of the situation. Character's need for love is realized through the discovery of family values and parental warmth.

The novel "You and Me" by N. Ammaniti (published in 2010) highlights the relationship of a teenager with his stepsister Olivia who is a drug addicted. Despite the indifference of the family, Lorenzo Kuni becomes the only one who tries to help the girl in the fight against this terrible illness. The age-transition of this character (adolescence as a time of searching for his own self, Lorenzo's just fourteen years old) raises doubts about the correctness of the system of values recognized by his parents, up to its complete destruction, because it functions just to please the others. In voluntary imprisonment in the basement with his stepsister, he experiences psychological and emotional catharsis on the way to finding his personal harmony.

The motto of the novel is a line from a song that shows it's not scary when I'm back with you in my childhood. The space of childhood is associated with the joy and security from hostile reality, where there are drugs, suffering and death. It is important to emphasize the translation of the title of the novel in Ukrainian, which changes the emphasis, putting "you" in the first place, because the implementation of "I" requires interaction with the other "you» not in opposition, but in complementarity (such translation from the Italian language we consider to be very appropriate). In this novel we have as well the psychological portrait of an Italian teenager of the twenty-first century, where the discovery of joy and self-identification on the way to maturity is realized through removal from society and parents, through the transition through a dramatic experience helping a thirty-three-year-old stepsister dying of overdose of drugs.

In the novel "White as Silence, Red as Song" by A. D'Avenia (published in 2010) the most important components of modeling the world of childhood is a Leo's first-person narrative and dialogue that contributes to the process of discovering the truth and the sense of being through the discussion of the problems such as love, life and death. The focus on the knowledge of one's selfness is the composite center of the novel. The author depicted the formation of a teenager at the critical moment of his life (the death of his beloved girl from leukemia), that's why the life of Leo has two poles: white (void is associated to school) and red (love is associated to life) in combination with blue (friendship). We read the confirmation of this statement in the text of the novel: "Beatrice is red. Sylvia is blue like all true friends. And the teacher in substitute is just a black dot in this irreparably white bottom" (*D'Avenia,*

2019). The devastating components of the world of childhood that repel the desire to live and to self-determine are being-at-school ("school is an amusement park full of people in exactly the same position as I am" (*D'Avenia, 2019*) and being-in-the-family ("What for is to describe the color to the blind? Mom does not understand" (*D'Avenia, 2019*). We would like to stress the recurring motives of a categorical vision of the world through two main colors (the idea of life and death); a teenager who does not want to adapt to the reality of "hostile" society to him; hyperbolic vision of the emotional experience of first love and vulnerable consciousness at the stage of transition to maturity: ("I cannot save the world. Spiderman will deal with it" (*D'Avenia, 2019*).

In the story "My Grandfather was a Cherry tree" by A. Nanetti (published in 1998) the process of modeling the artistic world of childhood is due to the symbolization of the space of the home through the symbol of cherry tree, which becomes the nucleus of the formation of a home hearth and unites for the second time all generations of one family. This tree is not accidentally called Felicia (from the Italian felice means happy). It was planted by his grandfather Ottaviano in honor of his daughter's birth. Cherry tree becomes a symbol of the spiritual affinity of generations of one family, a tree of life and knowledge for grandson Tonino helping him to overcome the crisis caused by the death of his grandparents, a real family tree. His grandfather Ottaviano reveals an important "secret" to his grandchild: "If you listen carefully and concentrate, you can see a lot of all sorts of things, just when your eyes are open. And now listen to the cherry breath" (*Nanetti, 2019*). In the world of Tonino's childhood there is a combination and interposition of two worlds: the real one (his childhood) and the imaginary one (being after death). Only their unification led the expected horizon of joy of childhood.

The story by A. Nanetti has intended to appeal not only to the child, the author analyzed by deconstruction an "adult" system of values with emphasis on the importance to preserve the "purity" of childhood in adult age. The history of the character Tonino is the story of loss, ranging from the death of his loving grandmother. However the book is about the most difficult loss in his life - the death of the beloved person, in the whole the story has carried life-affirming ideas such as gaining a better understanding with his family and supporting the closest people, as a result, it leads to finding Tonino's self-identification. The boy helps to change for the better his parents. His experience, of course, will be useful either children or adults in a similar situation. This is a simple story about the serious problem of relationship between three generations of one family (children-parents-grandparents). It delegates to the addressee the main message about the ability to empathize, about mutual understanding and support, and also it teaches to be kind to others, to beloved ones in particular. Through many witty moments full of irony and the children's view of the world and the problems this novel about the difficult life situation of the main character is read on one breath by any addressee (children or adults).

Conclusions and suggestions

In the article the problem of modeling of the artistic world of childhood in novels "I'm not scared", "Me and you", "As God commands" by N. Ammaniti, "White as silence, red as song" by A. D'Avenia, "My Grandfather was a Cherry tree" by A. Nanetti has been studied. All authors show the particular situation when the child comes into collision with the world of adults for the first time. Microdominants of the artistic world of childhood such as existential space of home and family, relationship between father and son, categorical coloristic of the

artistic world of childhood in red and white, search of identity, mutual connection between childhood – adulthood – senility have been defined. The lack of harmony in the world in the XXI century reveals itself in the texts in the main themes of violence, sufferance and vulnerability of a child.

The narrative subjectified child's "I" reflects the catastrophic world-view of the XXI century, seeking salvation in adults, but finds the strength to resist evil in the world only in his pure soul. That's why the child or the teenager became an active character who struggles for life changing adults around him for the better.

It has been stated that the destruction of an orderly world of childhood with positive connotations for images of the home, father and mother is a reality of the XXI century. The formal signs of the novels by N. Ammanity are determined: visibility, compositional perfection, sharp conflict to depict as from the middle of a complex emotional-psychological situation in which the character appears. The studied novel by A. D'Avenia is an example of a study about a teenager of the XXI century with his hyper-vulnerability, a categorical vision of the world through white / red and the need to find aims in life with the help of love and friendship. The story by A. Nanetti emphasizes the need to preserve family values and communication between all generations for the formation of a full-fledged personality of the child. To conclude we also emphasize the polyaddressness of literature about children.

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