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## SEMIOTICS OF THE INTELLECTUAL NOVEL IN THE CONTEXT OF “MAN IS A THING”

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**Abstract.** *The article under consideration deals with one of the most actual topics the modern society is suffering from nowadays. This is the lifestyle according to the principle “life is a fair”. This article is an attempt to analyze the concept “man is a thing (commodity)” in Ukrainian and English intellectual novels through the prospective of theme, idea, plot and character of the works of art.*

**Key words:** *semiotics, semiotic model, transformation, concept.*

**Introduction.** The period of the end of the nineteenth – beginning of the twentieth century, which we study in this article, is a time of turning points in human life, a time of reassessment of existing values and principles, the formation of a “new” morality, and the desire to achieve happiness at any cost. The artistic model “life is a fair” clearly manifests itself in the works of Ukrainian and English literature, based on the social orientation of those times.

The main line in the mechanism of functioning of “life is a fair” model is the semiotic constant “man is a thing”.

The Academic Explanatory Dictionary of the Ukrainian Language gives the following definitions to the words “thing for buying, goods, and commodity”:

– intended for exchange goods of labor, which have consumer and material value;

– all that is the subject of trade;

– human goods – people who were sold and bought in an exploitative society

[1].

**The Main Body.** In the concept of “man is a thing” we see the characters that have sacrificed certain human goods (beauty, health, reputation, dignity, family) to achieve the most secret goal: to be young and beautiful forever, to be rich, to succeed in spite of circumstances and so on.

The nodal “nerve” of the “life is a fair” model is the process of transforming a person into a living thing (commodity), the characters are sold to a cruel world, and then deeply disappointed because of it.

It is important to note, that the component “man is a thing” in each work is manifested in its own way.

The concept of “man is a thing” is vividly embodied in the novel “The City” (“Misto” (1928)) by Valerian Pidmohylnyi (1928), the author of which enjoyed the high authority of a writer-intellectual, brought up in the spirit of European and national classics, with a philosophical immersion in knowledge of the world and a man.

The fate of 25-year-old Stepan Radchenko appears in a fresh plot rhythm. But, in fact, Stepan Radchenko turns himself into a thing, he “sold” himself to the city for the sake of social status, material wealth, and urban comfort.

Thus, Stepan Radchenko, trying to succeed, is constantly advancing in education, in the tireless work of a lecturer and writer, trying to improve their living conditions by finding another room, buying furniture and accessories. But later, the young man begins to treat the city with disgust.

Stepan Radchenko’s positions on the mental and sensual are different. In the first days of his stay in the city, he believed that everything could be changed with the help of reason. His actions are controlled by the mind, but sometimes the animal (sexual energy) wakes up in it. The hero of Valerian Pidmohylnyi novel realizes his own sexuality (thirst, instinct) through relations with women. For a man, this relationship is an expression of his inner conflict between body and soul, frustration with the power of the mind.

The experience of city life convinces Stepan that the mind does not play a decisive role, and he chooses, unlike poet Vyhovskyi, sensual pleasure, happiness,

although it is limited. However, the protagonist can be happy only next to the woman through whom he perceives the world around him. In the subtext of the work, every new relationship with a woman for Stepan is not just a stage of changes in life and feelings, but also another step towards the conquest of the city.

Judging by the spiritual adaptation of a guy in a big city (Kiev), you can see how with the change of local spatial point (own place in the city at a certain stage) - housing, changed the woman he was in love with, and the course of relationships, their quality and duration. It is through the attitude to women that Valerian Pidmohylnyi expresses the changes in the inner world of his hero.

For the first time, having “sold out” himself to Tamara Vasylivna Hnidykh (having entered into an intimate relationship with her), Stepan feels victory over himself. For a young man, this relationship is seen as a trophy. Furthermore, for Tamara Vasylivna it was important to “buy” pleasure and affection from a young man, for Stepan it was to gain personal experience and self-confidence.

The relationship according to the principle of “life is a fair” awaits Stepan in the love story with Zoska. He sees it as a thing he buys for a movie ticket, a glass of red wine and unforgettable emotions. For Zoska, Stepan is also a thing to buy, thanks to the purchase of which the girl has the pleasure of life, which she so lacked before meeting him.

In Oscar Wilde’s novel “The Portrait of Dorian Gray”, the human being is also the central character of the work. At the beginning, the reader is presented with a handsome young man “with his finely-curved scarlet lips, his frank blue eyes, his crisp gold hair; all the candor of youth was there as well as all youth’s passionate purity. One felt that he had kept himself unspotted from the world” [7, p. 38].

The writer, on the example of Dorian Gray life, showed how a person with an “angelic” appearance can be filled with a diabolical essence. Overwhelmed with pleasures and carnal pleasures, he accepted the poison of permissiveness, which became salvation and death. It was such kind of pleasure that turned Dorian Gray into a thing, an immoral living organism that brought only suffering to all.

The hero, striving to have eternal beauty and youth, made a bet not so much with the devil as with time. When he stopped, time gave him a chance to live without losing his external attractiveness, and life's mistakes, pain and all the horrors of Dorian's syndrome did not affect him, but his portrait.

Becoming a hostage of his destiny, Dorian Gray is unaware of the mental suffering that awaits him. The fact that the principle of the "life is a fair" model governs the world is told to the young man by the educated Lord Henry: "Nowadays people know the price of everything, and the value of nothing" [7, p. 42].

In the final of the work, Dorian no longer has the strength to live in fear. The young man, despite the fact that he is over forty, decides to get rid of the portrait by cutting it with a knife. But he commits suicide, regretting all his actions. So, Dorian Gray paid for his life with the opportunity to achieve his goal.

**Conclusion.** Thus, the leading dominant of the functioning of the "life is a fair" model is the process of transforming a person into a living thing (commodity), the characters sell themselves to a cruel world, and then suffer severely because of it.

The analyzed works are united by a key plot line, which openly demonstrates the moral degradation of the main characters, their gradual "transformation" into a thing (commodity), when they are ready to do anything for the sake of material well-being. These demonstration vectors are represented by the names of Stepan Radchenko and Dorian Gray in Ukrainian and English intellectual novels.

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