

JUAN MANUEL MARCOS' NOVEL
GUNTER'S WINTER IN THE
PERSPECTIVE OF
POST-MODERNISM OF THE
XXTH CENTURY

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Latin America literature is perceived in the minds of readers up to present days mostly as very exotic Creole writing of former European colonies. As the best possible variant, the reader might be able to name Marcos, Borges or Cortazar recalling the definition of “magical realism”. At this point the consumer-household introspection (the introspection of an ordinary reader, who is used to be called “mass”) of Latin America literature is actually exhausted while the home literary-critical scientific discourse is limited with mostly sporadic studies of creativity of the most famous representatives of Latin America literature. This is mainly Nobel laureates Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Miguel Angel Asturias, Mario Vargas Llosa, Pablo Neruda, Octavio Paz, whose most important achievements are translated if not into Ukrainian but at least into Russian. The authors mentioned above represent the culture of the mostly well-known South America countries - Colombia, Guatemala, Peru, Chile, Mexico. Meanwhile we have really little understanding of, for example, the literature of Paraguay. The

reasons are its geographic location (country is located inside the continent and is deprived of access to the ocean, which led to certain isolation even within the continent), and the political situation (military dictatorship, political isolation), and cultural remoteness (for the reader, brought up on Europe-centered literary model, the understanding of Paraguay's culture as well as the other Latin America countries, requires additional efforts and comments), and, finally, the actual absence of Ukrainian translations.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the publication of the novel of the well-known Paraguayan scientist, teacher, social activist and writer Juan Manuel Marcos "Gunter's Winter" (the first time published in Spanish in 1987, the Ukrainian translation was published only in 2014) remained without attention both on the part of the reader, and critic. The existence of some sporadic publications concerning the Ukrainian translation of this work in the Internet does not claim on the completeness of critical review of the text. So, the proposed article is the first attempt of scientific and critical reading of the novel *Gunter's Winter* in the context of postmodern culture of the twentieth century, as well as in the context of Spanish-language literature of Latin America.

By clearly seen with the unaided eye the juxtaposition of cultures (elements of the indigenous culture of the ancient Paraguay strangely integrate into modern Spanish and American cultural world), by the syncretism of the poetry of Latin America literature with the traditions of European intellectual prose of the twentieth century, by clear intertextuality, by style and narrative experimentation in the novel it may be guessed both personal life destiny of the author (the political dissident, exile, emigrant) and the history of the literature of whole South America. The latest one has passed the stages of dynamic development during the last century, from, in fact, its birth to the mastering of the aesthetics of modernism and

postmodernism and creating its own artistic, stylistic and aesthetic profile. This evolution of Latin America literature is customary expressed with the terms “boom” and “post-boom”. We will note that the latter do not carry any deep semantics, which would define the essence of the artistic phenomenon; but it is the definite indicator of the burst of increasing attention to literature and culture of practically very little-known continent from the side of Europe and the United States. Literature of the era of “boom” (chronologically, this is the 60 - 70-ies of the last century) is the writing a multi- ethnic and multicultural countries of Latin America, which is presented with the artistic practice of Miguel Angel Asturias, Julio Cortazar, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Carlos Fuentes, Mario Vargas Llosa and other writers. This is the period of formation of the modern literature of Latin America, the most characteristic features of which are the use of elements of a mythological worldview (mythology of the indigenous peoples of the continent is becoming the cornerstone of the outlook and a marker of cultural identity), accumulation of cultural codes of the ancient pre-Columbian epoch with the Spanish- Portuguese and even African influences, as well as various forms of religious belief (primitive religious cults are seamlessly integrated into the Catholicism of the Spanish conquerors), the nonlinearity of artistic time, the complication of the plot-compositional construction of works, the use of different narrative models, the lack of clear boundaries between the fantastic and the reality, etc. The specific of artistic expression of South America countries is rooted in, so to say, the geography and history of the region. Oksana Dacun's saying on peculiarities of Latin America literature on general, and Miguel Angel Asturias's creativity in particular is quite suitable on this occasion, “Latin America is a continent of anachronisms, the territory where the modern coexists with the past, the civilization with practically primi-

tive forms of social organization and way of life" (Daikin 2004: 3).

Subsequently, the term magical realism is attached to the literature of the era of "boom", which surprisingly accurately describes its poetics, aesthetics, stylistic options, and, what is mostly important, the desire to reconstruct, to assert its own identity. It is, in fact, about searching for special Latin America cultural identity, which was created on the basis of a synthesis of myths, legends, history, and culture of the indigenous peoples of pre-Columbian America to the present. In the end, the literature of the "boom" performed a powerful cultural mission – it became a way of presentation of Latin American art of the word in the civilized world, it is proper legitimization. The American researcher Donald Leslie Shaw was almost the first who clearly grounded this function in the Studio "The Post-Boom in Spanish American Fiction": "...the Boom had come to be a power-system legitimizing certain kinds of writing (and reading)..." (Shaw 1998: 173).

Since the 1980-ies, it is used to talking about the second wave of the popularity of Latin American literature ("post-boom"), associated with the names of José Donoso (Chile, referred to the period of "boom" as well), Manuel Puig (Argentina), Severo Sarduy (Cuba), Isabel Allende (Chile), Luisa Valenzuela (Argentina), Antonio Skarmeta (Chile), Rosario Ferre (Puerto Rico), Juan Manuel Marcos (Paraguay). Despite the differences in individual stylistic manner these writers have in common a kind of return to the aesthetics and poetics of realism (this line was quite accurately defined by another Argentinean novelist Mempo Giardinelli: "return to "realismo poético" and to colloquialism" (Shaw 1998: 10). In addition, the literature of the "post-boom" has recorded in itself the experience of political emigration (both internal and external, which was connected with the military dictatorships in many countries of South America and the persecution of dissidents),

and therefore the spirit of pessimism, despair, pointed experience of being, aloofness from society, the rejection of any ideology (which, incidentally, is typical of the postmodern era) and at the same time a metaphysical optimism, love for life in all its manifestations. The life and career of Juan Manuel Marcos just illustrates the fundamental principles of the prose of this period. Having suffered from political persecution and imprisonment (1973 – 1987), the author was forced to leave the motherland that influenced the formation of his attitudes and beliefs, and was embodied in the novel *Gunter's Winter*. It can hardly be called autobiographical (actually, the author was not aimed to write the autobiography), but with the plot it is easy to guess personal existential experience of the writer, worried for the fate of his country and the destiny of man, which was left all by himself with the system.

The literary space of the novel is extremely broad and vast, the collective outlook and a sense of loneliness, myth- thinking and high intellectualism, despair on the verge of hopelessness and historical optimism paradoxically coexists in it.

The author writes in a relaxed manner, building a chaotic composition of the novel, where it is held the arbitrary alternation and combination of temporal and spatial planes. It's safe to say that the chaotic composition of the artistic structure of the novel is similar to the South American society - deformed, nervous and immature. The plot interactions in the novel are greatly weakened, thus the novel splits into more or less independent pictures-episodes, among which we can find the lyric, epic, documentary, philosophical layering. Such multi- stylistics and great accumulation of artistic fabric of the work is aimed to reflect the multiculturalism and multiple aspects of life in Paraguay during the XIX-XX centuries. So the fact that the philosophical task of the novelist is the reflection on the past, the present and the future of Paraguay turns out to be obvious.

The formation of complex multi-semantic textual field occurs primarily due to the interaction of intellectual and cultural achievements. Literary interaction of cultural achievements is a special individual intellectual activity of the author and the reader. It is often figuratively organized and operates on objects, images, ideas, styles, thoughts that compose the cultural heritage of players and are clearly reproduced in their imagination. The game is carried out within certain limits of time and place of cultural-historical era, genre and content of the literary work.

In the process of literary reflexive game with the cultural heritage the mechanism of reflecting the original artwork from one cultural environment to another is in process. In the text the author and the reader code and decode spiritual and ideological determinants of philosophical and aesthetic doctrines of a particular literary trend or creative method. As a result of reflexive modeling of cultural heritage a constant feature of certain source material, which causes associative and symbolic image in the reader's mind, is moving to a new level of semantic development.

Reflective game is also observed within the content, form, composition, system of images, ways of presenting artistic material, expressive means. The plurality of mirror reflections can be noticed in combination of multiple images in one figure and provides a multi-layered textual organization.

This game can be seen on onomastic level when through the onym (a personal name of the heroine of the work as well as through a number of non-attributive quotes) the inclusion in the sphere of Federico Garcia Lorca's poetic world takes place.

Gunter's niece's name is Soledad Montoya - just like name of the beauty-Gypsy from "Romance on a Black melancholy"; here we can notice an interesting word-play: "Soledad" in Spanish means not only a woman's name but the word "lon-

ging”, “loneliness”. Black melancholy is the image of Gypsy-woman who lost her love. Since childhood Lorca heard the legend of the Gypsy Soledad Montoya, who had died of separation as of disease. Here, however, the myth takes on a new meaning: Soledad Montoya represents Andalusia melancholy, pain, sorrow almost on the cosmic level. She becomes the second “self” of the lyric hero, his own sense of loneliness and abandonment.

The image of Soledad’s friend Veronica Sarrià-Cirogi is associated with the heroine of another work of “Gypsy romancero”. In poetry “Somnabulistic romance” it is told about a dead girl and about love for her of two men who died: Green, as I love you, greenly. / The Green wind, the branches and green. // The dark ship on the sea / and the horse on the mountain. // With her waist that’s made of shadow / dreaming on the veranda high, // green the flesh, and the green tresses, / with eyes of frozen silver. Green color here represents the quintessence of loss, lost love, which is inevitably drowning in the past.

Thus in the area of the novel is thoroughly penetrated in Lorca’s discourse of love and death, in fact love-in- death. Lorca’s love is a natural force, unmanaged and beyond the human mind: neither to fall in love nor to stop loving on the good will is possible. And whoever would suffer from love – the fate exalts and equalizes even the least one. Garcia Lorca said: “In every other country death is an ending. It appears and they close the curtains. Not in Spain. In Spain they open them. Many Spaniards live indoors till the day they die and are carried into the sun. [...] but a country where what is most important of all finds its ultimate metallic value in death” (Lorca 2010: 11).

Love of Soledad and Veronica is bound in space, where rules NonFreedom, it is criminal, exiled and humiliated, but eternal and invincible in the poems of the young poetess.

Soledad's death is just her beginning that testifies the phantasmagoric scene at the end of the work, where Soledad is presented as an Indian seer and the chief of the kayguarani tribe: "You shall not allow a sorceress to live! comes the Governor's discordant squawk" [3, p. 194]. In her life-in-death, she embodies the indomitable desire for Freedom of her people, indestructible freedom of those who went in search of the Land-without-Evil, those who died for their country in the campaigns, fought against tyranny.

As powerful it also seems an existential discourse of the work, which is formed through numerous allusions of works of J.-P. Sartre, A. Camus, C. Pavese, etc. A man is depicted being burdened by his own existence, a bearer of inner loneliness and fear of reality. Life is meaningless, social activity is barren, and morality is weak. In the world there is no God, no ideals, only existence, destiny, to which the human stoically and unquestioningly obeys. Existence is a problem that must be accepted because the mind is unable to cope with the hostility of being: a human is doomed to absolute loneliness, his existence no one is able to share. The fact of having proclaimed the absurdity of human existence is also a characteristic one, as existentialism for the first time openly includes "death" as an argument of the doom of a human and of his exclusiveness.

And so in a constant race, trial to grasp, to hold, to realize the meaning of own existence is Eliza Gunter. The underlined eroticism, irrepressible life energy, a sharp mind and freedom do not save Eliza of emptiness: flashing cities, apartments, lovers turns into an endless series, a vicious circle. With the help of reflective modeling the author opens the semantic area of Jean-Paul Sartre's novel "Nausea". Eliza having no idea as well as Antoine Roquentin falls under the power of nausea, being natural for a scientist position of isolation. Nausea in Sartre's novel is a solid metaphor for the fear and loneliness of

existence, it is the search for own “self” and essence of life, the overcoming of self-loathing. As Antoine Roquentin explores the life of ugly “Don Juan” at the times of Marie- Antoinette Marquis de Albane as Eliza suddenly becomes interested in the life of Irish prostitutes Eliza Lynch, the mistress of Francisco Solano López (here, now, may be observed another reflection: Eliza has Irish roots, erotic, her full name is Eliza Lynch Gunter). Through onyms of Francisco Solano Lopez and Eugenio Ayala happens the output to the area of the historical past of Paraguay, namely its biggest and most bloody wars Paraguayan and Chako. So, the dictator Lopez was the commander- in-chief during the Paraguayan war in which the country has suffered many victims and lost half of its territory. Eusebio Ayala was the liberal President, who led the country during the Chako war and returned to his nation the territory in the size of California, and died, in spite of all, in exile.

Through the prism of Soledad’s death Gunter and Eliza found the lost meaning of life and own roots, found their own “selves”. Understanding of it comes to Elise in the Pantheon, where she views the graves of the heroes buried there: “Lopez died at the forefront of his exhausted army, composed after five years of struggle against the most powerful country of mainly children and women, dressed in tigers. “I perish with my country! He had cried, just before the coup de grace, and his call seemed still to ring in those mute chill walls of stone” (Marcos 183).

The author also gives a kind of onomastic twin to Eliza’s husband, the World Bank President Francisco Javier Gunter. This “twin” is General Francisco Javier Gonzalez, who committed suicide, being unable to bear the shame and guilt before Soledad’s family to whom he promised that she would be released unharmed.

Updated in the area of the work, the tragedy of Euripides

'Oresteia' has the effect of a double mirror: "Oresteia" – "Flies" by J-P. Sartre (the play that was decided not to be staged on the college-leaving party for the Pro-Communist views of the author) - "Mourning is Electra's destiny" by Y. O'Neill (the play which is put on the stage by Toto Azuaga; the main role, the role of Elektra- Lavinia plays Veronica). The parts of the "Oresteia" and "Mourning..." correspond as follows:

1. "Agamemnon" – "Return home";
2. "Choephoroi" – "Persecuted";
3. "Eumenidas" – "Obsessed".

Protagonists play their roles, wearing authentic Indian masks, so that, in the words of Toto Asagi "cease to be themselves but to become themselves." Life stages its play for all the heroes backwards: 1. "Obsessed" (the story of a passionate love of Veronica Sarria-Cirogi and Soledad Sanarbiya Gunter); 2. "Persecuted" (the arrest and torture of her friends); 3. "Return home" (the understanding of the tragedy and greatness of Soledad Montoya's love-in-death return to Eliza and Gunter their lost roots, they "cease to be themselves", rejecting their own past, to "become themselves" after returning to their motherland, having had it in a new meaning: "Life in his country was hard but happy. Eliza planted a turquoise lapacho at his gravesite, and stayed south to watch the sprouting of its wings" (Marcos 198).

Masks of jaguars (tigers), dressed to the Toto's actors are not accidental, in such way the ancient myth is interwoven with the national myth of the heavenly Jaguar (or blue tiger). For the first time we learn of it from Azuaga's lecture, read for students of the University of Oklahoma, but realize that this lecture introduces, first of all, the reader to the exaggeratedly original culture of Tupi-Guarani, the author has found interesting stylistic solution close to him as a teacher of the University.

"That world will be destroyed by fire and a "great celestial

jaguar, leaving the Guaraní Indians as sole survivors” – says Toto in his lecture [3, p.6]. If to trace how and when in the novel there appears an image of a Jaguar, it becomes clear to the reader that this deity represents the power and the desire for freedom, to the land-without-evil, and that the author is positioning this myth as fundamental. Several times the novel refers to the final battle with the Triple Alliance of the Paraguayan army, which consisted mainly of women and children, dressed in costumes of Jaguar. This event, despite the view of historical science, in Juan Manuel Marcos’ text is presented as an epic past. Mask of jaguars become the symbol of self-discovery for students in the final play. The killer of odious Larrain, dressed as a Jaguar, appears as the heavenly retribution. Soledad is accused of ability to turn into a Jaguar, she is considered to be the heir of the ancient knowledge of Guaraní’s shamans, that’s why her fantastic appearance in the body of the centaur with the head of the Jaguar is seen as the realization of the ancient myth - the overthrow of the odious regime and the possibility of realization of the dream of the land-without-evil.

The picture of the history of Paraguay, which we see in Azuaga’s lecture, in the memories of the heroes of the novel about the conquest of South America, about the war with the Triple Alliance and about Chako war and World War II, as well as the pictures of family and intimate relationships of the characters are united in a common mythologeme of nation’s self-consciousness, its past, present and future, is the conceptualization of the space of the text which is typical of postmodern literature.

A special role in this process plays self-citation, which is usually considered as a phenomenon of intertextuality of the work. And so the question arises of whether you can engage yourself in debate or dialogue, is it possible to send the reader to himself? In the novel reveals the manifestation of different

forms of self-citation. Our attention was drawn to quotes of Juan Manuel Marcos' poems. At the beginning of the second part, we read: "Why do the hours bear the color of fall? Who has dealt the cards for this harsh and bitterly long day? My lips do not know what words, kisses, and agonies await them, and yet they sing. Here is my voice, enemy of tyrants, friend of grapes, innocence, and life. These customary words. Use them. Grasp them in your fist" (Marcos 57). These are Soledad's verses written on notebook sheet, but from the commentary, the reader learns that this is an extract of their poem by the author with the symbolic name "My voice". And further on we are facing such a technique of transmission of his text of the poems to the hero of the novel, sometimes with a change of a person. Thus, the right to use simple words, to keep them firmly in hand, can be perceived by the reader in a split value, both as Soledad's call and as the author's permission to use his word, now his voice will be their idea.

The appearance of poems by Juan Manuel Marcos in the text is determined by the status of heroes and corresponds to the course of events. The poem "Schoolgirl" conveys the condition of the college student, her text is included in the text of the novel, when Azuaga meets Soledad Montoya. A story about ordinary life of a schoolgirl: "Yet her eyes hover serenely toward the window as if considering hypotheses and parallelograms, while the teacher watches unsuspecting. She knows the technique well. The notebook, in its fashion, replaces memory and writes the exam. But this form of cheating, this art learned in the harsh apprenticeship of school, is not without its difficulties, its risks of zero, or humiliation" (Marcos 61), is adjacent to the quote from "Poems about freedom" about the spy-informer, the obligatory character of all dictatorships, which arises as a threat to the sky in her eyes. Too often the author uses self-citation in the third part of the novel: "Elegy to Victor Jara", "Song of victory", "Poem of

requests,” “Julio Iglesias”, “Ancient blood”, “Poem about freedom”, “Handcuffs”, “Distance”, “Exile” - this is the sequence the poems occur in the text, and some of them even more than once. The events are fully consistent with the themes of the poems, memories of past victories and inflexibility of Soledad, Veronica, hero – Colonel, the hope for the possible liberation of girls and Soledad’s exile. In the novel previously written poems are likely to unite, and a collection “Poems and songs” becomes the text parallel to the novel.

It may be said that the main text reports the events, and the text of the poems reports the condition and reflection, thus, the author combines epic and lyric. A similar technique of text separation was used by Boris Pasternak in his novel “Doctor Zhivago”. Yuri Zhivago’s collection of poems, given at the end of the novel, is a lyrical reflection of the events, which gives us a glimpse on the inner life of the hero. However, it should be noted that all forms of the combination of the texts in the novel “Doctor Zhivago” and “Gunter’s Winter” are absolutely different. If Boris Pasternak chooses the successive writing of epic and lyric text, with some hints in the first part on the existence of the second, Juan Manuel Marcos introduces the texts in parallel, creating a multi-style polyphonic text.

Through the plot-story of the tangled fates of the main characters – Gunter, Eliza, Soledad Montoya, her friend Veronica, Simon Cáceres – Juan Manuel Marcos tries to show the way to fight exclusion and to achieve harmony with oneself and the world. So, love in all its manifestations, love that joins the fates of people and save from the emptiness of existence turns to be the rescue for the writer. By the way, the appeal to love, as an important component of human existence, here is very significant and characteristic. This is, in fact, a characteristic feature of all literature of “post-boom”, its transparent motive. One of the prominent representatives of the Latin

American literature of the second wave Isabel Allende not accidentally paid attention to the importance of the motive of love in the works of most writers of the “post- boom” period. The writer states: “...despite differences and geographical separation, writers in the Post-Boom stay in touch with each other’s work: a return to the love-ideal (as a part of existence) and a greater degree of optimism than before” (Shaw 1998: 10). The novel “Gunter’s Winter” is a clear evidence of that.

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