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THE FUNCTIONS OF EKPHRASIS OF THE GONCOURT BROTHERS' NOVEL "MANETTE SALOMON"

The Goncourt brothers' novel "Manette Salomon" takes a special place among their other artistic works. The novel that was written in the middle of the XIXth century in the epoch of searching for the innovative methods of expressing the reality and the ideal of beauty, was built on the common problem of the Art renewal which agitated all artists, writers, sculptors and other creative people. The Goncourt brothers choose the artists as the characters of their novel and with the help of their discussions the authors strive to show the artistic atmosphere of the epoch. In the Ukrainian and Russian literary criticism the novel "Manette Salomon" was almost disregarded, it was mentioned only opportunely and the attention was focus on "Germinie Lacerteux", since the topic of a poor offended woman and her difficult life in the world of satisfied bourgeoisie fitted better into the framework of the realism. The Goncourts' appeal to use "the human documents" in artistic creation, and, in accordance with this, the story of their maidservant Rosa led to the formation of the naturalistic aesthetics. As the Goncourt brothers were influenced by the theoretical works of E. Zola, where the French writer explained the theory of a new movement based on the novel "Germinie Lacerteux", they became the founders of a new and very popular phenomenon. That is why their other works, which didn't line up with the naturalism, remained unnoticed by the researchers¹. So, it is proved one more time, that the French writers in each of their works sought for the new methods of

¹ Золя Э. Эдмон и Жюль де Гонкур. – Собр соч. в 26 т. – Т.25. – М.: «Художественная литература», 1966. – С.521-546.

expression, based them on reality, used new techniques to approach to the real truth of life as closely as it was possible.

A novel about artists provides the story about their work, their search for own identity in the art, and hence about painting. While studying the dialogue between literature and art, Valentina Fesenko, proves its asymmetry. “From the Middle Ages to the Romantic Era (XVIII century) literary text inspires painting, which serves religious and political functions, legitimizes itself in covering fundamental to civilization sacred and mythological texts. Since the nineteenth century painting has been seeking to break free from the pressure of word, literature”². Therefore, literature and painting of the middle of the nineteenth century are simultaneously seeking for methods of art renewal being inspired often by innovative searching of contiguous arts.

While analyzing the common and different in literature and painting V. Fesenko proves that the genre systems in these kinds of art differ. However, since the nineteenth century in literature and painting a gradual process of deheroization and return to the private story is in progress. “It goes through a gradual disintegration of the great History’s close ties (events, politics) and individual, aestheticized, personal life story of one person”³. In this regard artists of the mid-19th century look for answers to the question of the correlation between art and reality, try to find beauty in the surrounding, actual, modern world and give meaning to the human existence. So the central problem of “Manette Salomon” – the artist and art – unfolds in the novel through the interrelation of art, reality and beauty that heroes are trying to solve through their personal experience, talent, skills, self-improvement. The examples of the characters of the novel – the artists, who choose different aesthetic orientations, serve art faithfully or use it for personal purposes – demonstrate a search for balance between talent and skill, inspiration and persistence, form field for discussions and flow out in the plurality of opinions. Therefore, we agree with the French researcher M. Cruzet, who claims that the novel “Manette Salomon” is primarily “*une chronique de l’esthétique au*

² Фесенко В.І. Література і живопис: інтермедіальний дискурс: навч. посібник. – К.: Вид. центр КНЛУ, 2014. – С.4.

³ Фесенко В.І. – С.134.

milieu XIX siècle ”, which allowed Goncourts to create a para-history of arts, “*mêlant réalité et fiction, il offre des artistes imaginaires encadrés par le vrais, des personnages de fiction qui ont des répondants réels, qui incarnent des directions effectives de la peinture au milieu du siècle, mais aussi, une chose unique, ils ont inventé des inventeurs, ils ont représenté l’avenir de la peinture, imaginé des peintres à la fois possibles et originaux, contenant un potentiel de la réalité et d’avenir*”⁴. Unlike their predecessors and successors, the Goncourt brothers create the novel, which is not about the artist's life, but about the painful process of creativity, where the aesthetic quest becomes the main intrigue. This goal subordinates the structure of the work, because the artist lives to create, he implements his vision of art in his works.

In the novel about the artists the literary and pictorial norms are interlaced, painting terminology, verbal expression of painting techniques become the subject of theoretical discussion and daily conversations of the artists. In the third part the writers make a brief excursion into the history of art by opposing the painting techniques of the two most prominent artists of the Romantic Era *Delacroix* and *Ingres* in the search of modernity, by describing the expressiveness of showing the beauty of the first one and the return to *Raphael’s* harmony in the technique of the second one. Coriolis’ letter to Anatole from the East contains interesting observations about the difference of feeling the colors and light and his desire to express the local color in motion, smells fully. And after returning to Paris Coriolis reacts extremely sensitive to the orientalism of Descamps, showing to Parisians that the East is very different, and the sun of Egypt, Turkey or Syria can’t be depicted in the same way. People accepted the brutality and the savage desert landscapes of Descamps approvingly, but they didn’t approve Coriolis’s fine, full of nuances exotic East, which seemed to be shrouded in mist or evaporation and sparkled differently in the light. As follows, pictoriality permeates into the artistic underground of the prosaic work, which becomes a feature of the Goncourts’ writing.

⁴ Goncourt E. et J. *Manette Salomon*. Préface de M. Crouzet. – Paris : Gallimard, 1996, – P.26-27.

The French researcher of the Goncourts' creativity Stephanie Champeaux has made the detailed analysis of the writers' references to the paintings: a list of artists that are cited in the novel "Manette Salomon" is quite impressive – 128⁵. The authors of the novel demonstrate their knowledge of the history and the theory of art, seek to share their own opinion about the achievements of outstanding artists in the expression of reality and show their attitude to the brilliant paintings which are exhibited in the Salons of Paris. Verbal descriptions of works of art encourage the Goncourts to search for an appropriate representation technique to enable the reader to see and feel the aesthetic satisfaction from paintings, which are created by fictitious artists – characters of the novel and real masters of pictorial art, whose works have already become well known.

Among the most common methods of art transposition scientists point out the *ekphrasis* and *hypotyposis*. Basing on the research works of N. Bragina, P. Wagner, L. Geller, A. Heffernen and others, A. Yatsenko offers the classification of ekphrasis by the object, semantic dominant, subject, volume, quantity, breadth of pictorial information, time of appearance⁶. Taking into account the subject and issue of the novel "Manette Salomon", the number of directly and indirectly cited works of art, reminiscences and allusions, it can be affirmed that all types of ekphrasis are presented in this work. Without claiming on the completeness of the analysis we are going to focus on some of the most interesting ekphrasis. For example, the primary ekphrastic description of Coriolis's picture "Bain Turc" points referentially at the famous painting Chassériau "Toilette d'Esther", exhibited in Louvre in 1841. The Goncourts emphasize that: "*le peintre attaque le nu dans un cadre où il pouvait faire mouvoir la grandeur du corps humain... Sur la pierre moite de l'étuve, sur le granit suant, il plia une femme, sortant comme de l'arrosage d'un nuage, de la mousse de savon blanc jetée sur elle par une négresse presque nue, les reins sanglés d'une foutah à couleurs*"⁷. Detailed description of the picture composition, of the model's posture, elegance of her proportions, precision of lines and shadows of the foreground and muted women's

⁵ Goncourt E. et J. *Manette Salomon*. – P. 570-585.

⁶ Яценко Е.В. «Любите живопись, поэты...» Экфразис как художественно-мировоззренческая модель // Вопросы философии. – 2011. – № 11. – С. 47-57.

⁷ *Manette Salomon* – P.258.

forms on the background accented the apt solution of laws of perspective, the use of color range, which seemed to convey the movement of the model in evaporation of air and sun. This kind of ekphrasis can be defined as a mimetic one since it gives the reference to a certain picture, an accurate description of which authors seek to convey verbally. The second mention of the same picture is presented in the form of discussion – reactions of friends on the completed canvas that highlights the achievements of the artist as a colorist in depicting the human body and creates reflections on the role of light in the paintings of different art schools representatives, such as Rembrandt and Delacroix, encouraging Coriolis to retouch a picture and take a closer look at the model on a sunny day⁸. So the Goncourts do not just establish the achievements of the artists-painters and strive to express verbally semantic and emotional content of their art by the literature methods, but also unobtrusively recommend new ways of painting development. That is why Coriolis's picture became successful at the exhibition in 1853; it didn't imitate Delacroix and Chassériau, but suggested a new approach to the lighting: "*Tout le public était frappé de l'ensoleillement de ce corps de femme, d'un certain lumineux que Coriolis avait tiré de son dernier travail dans l'éclat du jour*"⁹.

The story with the Coriolis' pictures "Le conseil de Révision" and "Un mariage à l'église" is interestingly developed in the novel. They became masterpieces and brought recognition to the artist that he did not even expect. The ekphrastic description, by observations of Michel Cruzet, refers to Gavarni's and Courbet's creativity, and reminds more likely a complete opposite – "inverted picture" of Courbet's painting "Enterrement à Ornans". At the exhibition in 1855 Coriolis's painting failed, "*le patriarche de l'éreintement classique l'accablait sous ce cliché de sa critique*"¹⁰. Standing for the tradition, the critic appeals to the Roman school which does not let the barbarians join the art and strictly monitors the compliance of truthfulness. The irony is that the first of these paintings of Coriolis, that resembles Manet's work "Breakfast on the Grass", which was exhibited in 1863 and caused a public scandal and rejection, at the end of the novel

⁸ Manette Salomon – P.302-303.

⁹ Manette Salomon - P. 306

¹⁰ Manette Salomon - P. 429

was sold for a huge amount of money, which proves different preferences of the official critics and the real connoisseurs of art.

V. Fesenko says: “When a writer refers to the theme of the artist’s work and depicts the artist at work, he creates his own symmetrical image that reflects his personal ideals, aesthetic principles and worldview”¹¹. There are five painters in the novel “Manette Salomon” and each of them represents a certain type of artist. Coriolis expresses the artistic intentions of the Goncourts themselves – always to look for something new, do not stop, to assess the reality attentively, to invent new methods to convey the fullness of perception to the reader / viewer. However Coriolis turns out to be weak, he falls in love with a model, who gradually conquers him, turns him into an obedient husband, father and destroys him as an artist. Crescent was a talented landscape painter who sought to restore direct contacts with nature, to feel its completeness and poetry so simple and divine at the same time. The image of Crescent reminds us the representatives of Barbizon School. For the Goncourts he is a creator of everything which is spontaneous, happy in painting and in life, he is satisfied with his quiet rural life and works at his own homestead for living. Crescent always has his paints and palette ready, he tries to express every wonderful moment on the canvas. The downside of Coriolis and Crescent, the artists, who can be defined by this one word, are Anatole and Garnotelle. The first one is talented, but very lazy, the second one – is talentless, but hard-working and athirst of success, they complement each other in the forming of an image of the bohemia’s representative of that time, who uses the art for his own interests.

The Goncourts’ “alter ego” in the novel is Chassagnol, he is rather an art theorist than an artist. This weird character, passionate speaker who delivers inspired, contradictory, pathetic speeches, but never tells anything about himself, acts as a living personalization of paradoxical clown-parasite. He regularly appears on the pages of the work to confuse at critical moments the characters in the selection of their aesthetic or ethical priority, to discuss the ways of development of art, to compare the art schools of past and to predict the future, to draw attention

¹¹ Фесенко В. – С.198

to such complicated problems as tradition, talent, individuality and freedom of the artist, a social status and a public opinion. This caricature character with his looks and manners is the Goncourts' megaphone for expressing their own thoughts regarding to art. For example, his reaction to Anatole's intentions to take part in the competition and to be among the chosen for the Prix de Rome pours out with the exalted shouts about his madness. Chassagnol calls insanity the desire to choose the winners among the most different and most controversial on their temperament, vocation, skills and personal ways to feel, see and express, artists, *“ce qu'il y a de plus divers et de plus opposé, natures, tempéraments, aptitudes, vocations, toutes les manières personnelles de sentir, de voir, de rendre, les divergences, les contrastes, ce qu'une Providence sème d'originalité dans l'artiste pour sauver l'art humain de la monotonie, de l'ennui”*¹². So what is beauty? Can any institution grant a patent for beauty? Define it? The same is with the talent. With the help of Chassagnol's words the Goncourt brothers express their understanding of the talent *“c'est la faculté petite ou grande de nouveauté... qu'un individu porte en lui... cette faculté de mettre dans ce que tu fais quelque chose du dessein que tu surprends et perçois toi-même, et toi seul, dans les ligne présentes de la vie, la force et je dirais le courage d'oser un peu la couleur que tu vois avec ta vision d'occidental, de Parisien du XIX siècle, avec tes yeux... je ne sais pas, moi... de presbyte ou de myope, brun ou bleus... un problème, dont les oculistes devraient bien s'occuper, et qui donneraient peut-être une loi des coloristes... Bref, ce que tu peux avoir de dispositions à être toi, différent des autres...”*¹³. The fact, that there is not only one artist in the novel, but the representatives of artistic environment of different levels of talent, skills and worldview, forms the pluralism of artistic research. The Goncourt brothers insist only on the fact that everyone, who wants to be an artist, has to prove that desire with the hard work on the plots and with a constant improvement of their style.

So, painting is depicted as an object and a subject in the novel “Manette Salomon”, numerous descriptions of canvas express the desire of the author to transmit the visual images of art created by artists and can be seen in museums, at

¹² Goncourt J.et E. *Manette Salomon* – P. 140.

¹³ Goncourt J.et E. *Manette Salomon* - P. 141

exhibitions, which the reader may already know, and imaginary pictures that artists haven't created yet. The ekphrasis of the painting proves the fact of synthesis of arts, a desire to put into words what is perceived by eyesight, and moreover the verbal description tries to use the methods for achieving the similar effect with a visual image. Exploring the origin, definition and modification of genre of the ekphrasis novel T. Bovsunivska shows, that ekphrasis has made its way from the stylistic figure or the verbal emblem to the specific genre of the Postmodern era, and its "top function is the visualization". In the novel "Manette Salomon" the Goncourt brothers are trying to convey in words many pictorial paintings, therefore to encode the visual art into the verbal one.

The writers are seeking for an inspiration in paintings, together with the characters they are trying to find answers to the questions related to the understanding of Beauty. In a broad socio-cultural context of the era the Goncourt brothers are analyzing the artistic achievements of predecessors, contemporaries and providing the ways of art of the future. The typology of ekphrastic descriptions shows, that the writers were looking for verbal methods of expressing visual pictures, both real and imaginary. Painting terms saturate the semantic structure and are used for the definition of painting genres and literary ones as well (sketch, watercolor, collage). The Goncourts' ekphrasis plays an important role in the plot-compositional structure of work, the expression of visual artifacts develops the only thread of the plot, forms the narrative dialogism. Numerous reminiscences to works of famous artists, reflections on aesthetic priorities, searching for new technique and fixing it, transform the style of the novel into the pictorial one, that is, the pictorial references are getting into the verbal text implicitly, influencing the genre, compositional structure, and creating the unique painterly style – "the artistic writing" of the Goncourts.

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