

God and three basic virtues in Christian teaching. The Three Heads of Satan in Dante's «The Divine Comedy» symbolize the balance between divine forces and those of the enemy of the human race. This is marked in the text with a description of the mosaic on the wall of the Florentine baptistery: «On his head he had three faces ... his three chins gushing a bloody froth ... his three mouths used as grinders ... gnashing sinners three at once. That Satan's evil was threefold, Langdon knew, was fraught with symbolic meaning: it placed him in perfect balance with the threefold glory of the Holy Trinity» [4, p. 324].

In D. Brown's novel, professor Langdon interprets the image as a symbol of the Black Death, which wiped out a third of Europe's population in the Middle Ages: «See this three-headed, man-eating Satan? It's a common image from the Middle Ages – an icon associated with the Black Death. The three gnashing mouths are symbolic of how efficiently the plague ate through the population» [4, p. 86].

Having analysed different ways of interpreting the notion of allusion, we have concluded that allusion is a reference to certain events, facts, personalities, characters of other texts. Like any other phenomenon, allusion possesses some key features. It increases the volume of «sources», allows the use of other stylistic means and can express the content explicitly and implicitly. The extensive usage of allusions is the peculiarity of Dan Brown's novel «Inferno». The most adequate classification is the one of the source of allusions that includes historical, biblical, literary, scientific, mythological and art allusions.

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#### **THE ROLE OF FIRST-PERSON NARRATION IN FEMALE PROSE OF THE VICTORIAN ERA**

The Victorian Era is regarded as a period in the British and world history that has brought dramatic changes to economic, sociocultural and scientific life of British society. It covered almost the entire nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and corresponded approximately the years of Queen Victoria's rule (1837 – 1901). This correspondence is quite inaccurate. But the influence of the Queen's reign on the development of British society and the literature created at that time is obvious and direct.

Before becoming Europe's most stable and prosperous country, Great Britain had to face a lot of alterations which set the path for the next generations. These changes were the challenge for all the classes of society and spread to almost all spheres of its life. The industrial revolution, urbanization, the railway age, financial crisis and colonization were the impulses that nearly brought the country to its knees, but at the same time gave it a chance for growth and development.

Along with all the mentioned above turbulences a lot of positive changes were brought, most of which were going to shape the future of society and the evolution of that age. It was manifested in the expansion of borders, technological advancements and medical breakthroughs. Being almost

extremely exhausted and not accepting everything happening around, people had to realize that they were citizens of the most powerful state in the world.

New notions of science changed the thinking patterns of people and cast doubts on their religious beliefs. As a result, not only the social life of the state but also the worldview of the nation changed. It had a great influence on the way in which Victorian literature developed. The Romanticism was replaced with the realism. The writers of the Victorian age tried to portray life as it was refusing to follow the set of romantic traditions. Their goal was to follow the society and present the reality. Novels particularly attracted attention with the increasing number of libraries. People wanted to read stories which could entertain them without expecting them to be exceptionally intelligent. That is why authors desired to convey the social problems in their works so that common people could realize what was happening around them.

Among the most famous writers of the Victorian era there were novelists such as Charles Dickens, William Thackeray and Thomas Hardy. But no less noteworthy is the women's literature presented by such authors as Elizabeth Gaskell or Anne, Charlotte and Emily Brontë. However, their careers as the writers were somewhat different from those of male authors. This may be explained by the general situation in the country and the role of women in society, which was still governed by strict norms and rules but already had glimpses of feminist rebellion and rejection of inequality of rights.

The gender played an important role in hierarchical Victorian society and naturally determined almost every aspect of an individual's potential. This stated that men and women were different not only in their biological nature but legal rights as well. While men were independent, women always depended on their husbands. Men could participate in politics and in paid work, while women were meant to run households and raise children. Usually shifting this balance provoked a negative reaction. The same applied to education. Not to mention the attitudes to the sexual relationship, especially by puritans, whose elevation of marriage and the family into something sacred was incompatible with a frank acknowledgement of sensuality. But the process of female identification was set up and it could not be stopped.

Boarding schools for girls were being opened in increasing numbers. Women of strong character began to open up professions unavailable to them before that time. They became writers, journalists and nurses. The step was also done to achieving economic independence at a low level: in such professions as workers in factories. The phenomenon of female Victorian prose emerged. The domestic experience which formed the basis of Victorian woman's knowledge found an appropriate form in novels as the best genre to describe the joys and sorrows of affection or domestic troubles of life along with woman's attempts to identify and self-affirm. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar initiated a feminist approach that celebrated female literary authority as an "essential process of self-definition" in the face of both a patriarchal tendency to define women and a traditional association of the creative act with a masculine production or begetting [4, p.153].

Starting an artistic career meant for women to accept a challenge and to be prepared for prejudice and criticism through the lens of hierarchical stereotypes. In 1862, Gerald Massey pointed: "Women who are happy in all home-ties and who amply fill the sphere of their love and life, must, in the nature of things, very seldom become writers" [5, p. 81]. Some female writers were not ready to reveal to the world the authorship of their works. Even though some women were published under their real names, there were some of them who chose to write under the male pseudonyms. An example of a writer who turned to the method of writing under a male pen-name George Eliot was Mary Ann Evans. She was motivated by a desire to be taken seriously and to protect her private life from unwanted attention and condemnation from society, which would never accept her relationship with a married man.

George Eliot herself was one of the people who criticized that time's habits in female literature and speculating about the psychological and moral impact of women's experience on the structure and content of the novel. She found most of the feminine literature of her day inept and derivative, and wondered "how women have the courage to write and publishers the spirit to buy at a high price the false and feeble representations of life and characters that most feminine novels give" [2]. She considered some of the literature inauthentic, "an absurd exaggeration of the masculine style, like the swaggering gait of a bad actress in male attire" and wished women to substitute "the hard drudgery of real practice" for feminine fantasy and self-indulgence [2].

Publishing under the male pseudonyms was also applied by the Brontës. Charlotte Brontë's novel "Jane Eyre" became famous as the text of Currer Bell. But the writer's ambiguous style in the work attracted the critics who were puzzled with the features in the novels that could not be defined at once as masculine or feminine. Early critics of "Jane Eyre" were obsessed with discovering the sex of Currer Bell. As it was said by Elizabeth Gaskell: "The whole reading-world of England was in a ferment to discover the unknown author.... Every little incident mentioned in the book was turned this way and that to answer, if possible, the much-vexed question of sex" [3, p. 271]. It should be noted that such a reaction was quite expected if we pay attention to the type of narration in the book. The novel is not only a story about Jane Eyre – it is the story by Jane Eyre who performs the role of narrator relying on her own experience that has an impact on her growth into an independent and strong-minded woman. These autobiographical elements of the book remind us of first-person narration, a form which became especially popular in the Victorian era.

First-person narration is a mode of storytelling in which the narrator appears as the 'I' recollecting his or her own part in the events related, either as a witness of the action or as an important participant in it. The term does not mean that the narrator speaks only in the first person. There are also descriptions of other characters where the third-person point of view is used. This variant applies to "Jane Eyre". She not only tells the reader about the characters in the book, she is a central one. The plot is focused entirely on her and contains the events which are directly or indirectly connected with her physiological, sociological and psychological development. First-person narration lets us understand the character both through her life story and through the way she chooses to tell it. We can learn not only heroine's life story but comprehend the way she describes and perceives herself, her own behaviour and feelings in different age periods as well. In other words, first-person narration helps the author to show protagonist's attitudes toward surroundings and herself as an individual in general and woman in particular. Paying attention to Victorian gender psychology, it is doubtful that a male writer would be able to portray a woman's consciousness with such depth.

When the author of "Jane Eyre" was finally known to be a woman, the evaluation and the tone of criticism noticeably changed. Probably, Charlotte Brontë was hurt to discover the reaction to her realism. She was hostile to critics in the prefaces to her books and even wrote directly to reviewers and journals in protest: "To you I am neither man nor woman. I come before you as an author only. It is the sole standard by which you have a right to judge me—the sole ground on which I accept your judgment" [1, p. 30]. On the other hand, we can assume that Charlotte's writing skills were not judged but afraid of. As Ruth Robins points out, "one of the reasons that the novel has been so often discussed in feminist literary criticism and theory is that it appears to announce a possible female victory under the restrictive and related conditions of patriarchy, capitalism, and imperialism" [6, p. 43]. Therewith the way "Jane Eyre" was written contributed to a Victorian reassessment of personal identity and made Charlotte Brontë's work a display of female self-definition and authority.

Emergence of female fiction in the Victorian age was accompanied by numerous difficulties in the historical and social context. Female authors had to face the problem of neglect and rejection, along with the need to conceal their true authorship. The use of the first-person narration played an important role in the development of female prose, as it became a manifestation of rebellion against the canons of that time and a requirement to recognize a woman to be worthy of being called a writer.

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