

**Pragmatic aspects of content in Ingeborg Bahmann's  
textual structures**

*У статті висвітлено змістову конфігурацію малої прози Інгеборг Бахманн на матеріалі оповідань «Юність в одному австрійському місті» («Jugend in einer österreichischen Stadt», 1959) та «Ви, щасливі очі» («Ihr glücklichen Augen», 1972).*

**Ключові слова:** австрійська мала проза, творчість Інгеборг Бахманн, прагматика текстових структур, жанр, образ, мотив, інтерпретація.

*The article concerns the analysis of Ingeborg Bachmann's short fiction configuration. It is based on the material of her short stories «Youth in an Austrian Town» («Jugend in einer österreichischen Stadt», 1959) and «Your happy eyes» («Ihr glücklichen Augen», 1972).*

**Key words:** Austrian short fiction, Ingeborg Bachmann's short stories, pragmatic aspects of textual structure, pragmatics, genre, image, motif, interpretation.

A systemic understanding of features which delineate the relational paradigm of «author-character-reader» is essential not only in the dimension of its strategic content perception on a receptive esthetics level, but also with respect to pragmatic aspects of content in textual structures. «Each highly artistic literary work», as reasonably emphasized by an authoritative Ukrainian literary scholar Grygoriy Klochek, «is a unique phenomenon, adapted to express an inimitable art sense». Thus, the links between its components are also unique. The cognition of a highly artistic system in literary works «always comes as a revelation» [Клочек 2012: 10]. This problem may be disclosed through a relational prism, which is further interpreted by the established kind of a narrative contact between the author, character and reader. Such contact is directed toward its defining line, which is centered on a dialogue. Qualitative understanding is implied here – and in a broader sense – the manifestations of a dialogue as an array with its contentual and semantic features. It can be stated with a high degree of certainty that dialogue's philosophy, having its origins in antiquity,

gains strong ground where the artistic communicative significance is of prime importance. It specifies the organic relationship and its logics, which leads to a dialogue within the concept of «author-character-reader». A. Levidov's (1895 – 1968) work is worth mentioning here. It states the systemic nature of an aforementioned combination, where character is an intermediate between the reader and the author, as the creator of a literary text [Левидов 1977:335–336]. The latter manifests itself as a certain pattern when it comes to genre and style features in the works of an outstanding Austrian writer Ingeborg Bahmann (1926 – 1973).

I. Bahmann debuted in the Austrian literary periodicals at the turn of the 40s - 50s after publishing prose miniatures «The Steam» («Die Fähre»), «The Great Game» («Das schöne Spiel»), «In Heaven and on Earth» («Im Himmel und auf Erden»), «The Shore» («Das Ufer»), «The Sphinx's Smile» («Das Lächeln der Sphinx»), «The Mannequins of Ibycus» («Die Mannequins des Ibykus»), «The Caravan and the Resurrection» («Die Karawane und die Auferstehung»), «The Commandant» («Der Kommandant»), «I also Lived in Arcadia» («Auch ich habe in Arkadien gelebt»), «The Shop with The Dreams» («Ein Geschäft mit Träumen»), «A Cripple» («Der Hinkende»), «The Window on the Ethna» («Ein Fenster zum Ätna»). The documentary «I Cannot Live among People. In the Footsteps of Ingeborg Bachmann» («Der ich unter Menschen nicht leben kann. Auf den Spuren Ingeborg Bachmanns», 1980) presents an interesting piece of evidence about the reorientation of her artistic and aesthetic principles. The author – the German film director, poet and literary critic Peter Hamm – edited I. Bahmann's frank confessions about the total loss of attraction to poetry in her artistic beliefs, as she reached the limits of traditional capabilities typical for this writing mode. It was prose and its genre modifications that turned to be most suitable for adequate reproduction of contemporary atmosphere characterized by the crisis of moral values. As W. Weiss has precisely observed «Ingeborg Bachmann combines her new metaphorical speech form with finding the sense in human life under threat or with elegiac complaints about its loss. She never separates avant-garde from history and traditions» [Weiss 1979: 206].

Although I. Bachmann's contemporaries adopted a certain distance, while analyzing her prose works, they were constantly in the

center of literary debate within the German-speaking area. It is worth emphasizing the fact that in 1968 she was awarded the Great Austrian State Prize in Literature. It was a real precedent in the matters of recognizing her heritage at home. The writer was able to form a new aesthetic thinking in Austrian literature [Krzysztoforska-Weisswasser 2002: 307], which had a significant impact on Elfriede Gerstl, Elfriede Jelinek, Barbara Frischmuth, Marlen Haushofer, Marianne Gruber, Anna Mitgutsch, Elisabeth Reichart, Margit Hahn [Зимомря 2011: 193].

The artistic effect is a manifestation of creative intuition and at the same time «the way of poetic painting» (I. Franko). It plays a significant role in realising a fact of modelled visions. A similar approach makes it possible to understand and interpret I. Bachmann's creative phenomenon. Her artistic intuition – in the matters of active contemplation – causes a specific empathy effect, the perception of eternal as opposed to «unstable» truths. All this relates to the aesthetic, ethical and artistic functions.

Profound understanding of human life, man's present and future, his individual psychology, aspirations and continuity create the foundations of I. Bachmann's art. The writer's attention is attracted to the impact of social environment on identity formation (e.g. «Barking») and by the particularised man's place within the society in the face of emotional, volitional, rational and irrational elements in his inner world.

The author avoids conformist approaches and established views in her quest to find and perceive the general truth and historical events, to undertake an individual assessment of reality. She chose the difficult path, not only regarding the contentual configuration of her literary works, but also in the aspect of psychological completeness of images. Thus – the interest in the markers of personal otherness. Their variety outlines the comprehensive relationships between people, languages and cultures.

In the artistic universe of I. Bachmann this otherness doesn't acquire the features of a privileged state, but it remains largely out of comprehension and understanding outside a near reach. In the story «Your Happy Eyes» («Ihr glücklichen Augen», 1972) a physical defect – an almost complete blindness – becomes Miranda's inseparable component of a harmonious existence. She isolates herself from the

outside world that offers only the marginal position prescribed for a disabled person.

The links to the operating images of limited reality that Miranda multiplies due to their separation into perceptual nuances is a guarantee of her melancholic, sad and yet peaceful existence. Dissolved in personal doubts, anxieties and pain, the character shuns any dislocational changes in her «I». She believes in charms that «this exact vision has bypassed and therefore her sense cannot be distorted and weakened» / «dieses genaue Sehen ihr erspart bleibt und ihr Gefühl dadurch nicht beeinträchtigt und geschwächt werden kann» [Bachmann 1991: 78]. The vision of filtered reality, revealed as a hostile space through the lens of her glasses, causes an instinctive feeling of alienation and rejection. Thus, sensory experience – together with intense aesthetic impressions and life illusions – creates for Miranda the basis for her false sense of well-being, as well as some optical and visual images – for the prospects to face borderline situations, «to look into hell» [Bachmann 1991: 78], to observe an «unhappy, perfidious, doomed, covered with crime or abased faces, sleepy mugs» [Bachmann 1991: 79].

I. Bachmann's work reflects, in an original way, the ideas of a prominent German philosopher and sociologist Georg Simmel (1858 – 1918). A number of his works had as their subject the description of otherness in society. The founder of the so-called «conflict sociology» («Konfliktsoziologie») defended the idea that the otherness expresses increased objectivity of its carrier, for it lives in a «synthesis of the near and far» [Simmel 1992: 766].

Such a view on social conflicts was particularly relevant to I. Bachmann. She experienced a mental distance to Austria as her homeland and expressed a desire to learn the related (German, Swiss) and unrelated (Italian, Slovenian, French, American) cultures throughout her life. At this, the writer aimed at emphasizing the features of their identity.

The interest in a symbolic meaning of cultural and regional identity can be explained to a great extent by I. Bachmann's birth place – the city of Klagenfurt in Carinthia, on the border between Austria, Italy and Slovenia. This fact greatly influenced her artistic worldview formation. «My youth – recalls I. Bachmann – was spent in Carinthia in the south, on the border, in a valley that has two names – German and

Slovenian. The house, where my ancestors have lived for generations, – Austrians and Veneds – has a strange name. So, there is another boundary against the borders: the linguistic one; I was at home here and there, among the stories about good and evil spirits of two or three countries, since there starts Italy across the mountains, within an hour's travel» [Bachmann 1978: 301].

It should be added: this extraneous feeling in Austrian social and cultural life was typical for a number of prominent figures. Among them – I. Aichinger, H. K. Artmann, P. Handke, G. Jonke, G. Rühm. Similarly to I. Bachmann, they consciously went into exile and had to adapt to different socio-political and cultural systems as expatriate writers.

I. Bachmann's characters are not just objects of art but also subjects at «I am a person» level. Therefore, the author's position is not accentuated, and mostly remains in the subtext. Based on its significance, the reader himself has the opportunity to finish building the episodes, thoughts and states of aesthetic series typical for the characters. The Austrian writer did not set a goal to explain to the reader the social principles. In terms of psychology her vision is built primarily around the immoral nature of dominance influencing the actions of characters. Thus, narrator's emotional input is minimized. This leads to a visible loss of motivation in the majority of situations, as well as characters' impulsive outbursts.

The means of depiction are suited for a specific purpose, namely to embody in fiction the ideological and aesthetic vision so that it acquires realistic and artistic credibility. Associative relations and contemplative moods play a symbolic role in I. Bachmann's small prose. «Remembering spaces – as reasonably remarked by L. Tsybenko – presents itself as important in shaping the writer's mental dimension (I. Bachmann – I. Z.), and in forming the conscious space of a creative personality, which is defined by one's world horizons. «The mental landscape of childhood» [Цибенко 2008: 232] occupies a prominent place among them.

A motivated combination of the examined factors is exemplified in I. Bachmann's story «Youth in one Austrian City» («Jugend in einer österreichischen Stadt», 1959). This early text is devoid of linear and concise storyline presentation. Its connection with reality is emphasized by the use of toponymic proper names: Durchlassstrasse,

Henzelstrasse, Bethovensstrasse, Kreuzberg and more. While focusing on fulfilling the purposes of art, the author did not present just a realistic reflection, but mastered the living material from an aesthetic perspective. In her artistic universe creativity differs in shape from the one prevailing in the real environment, with its social and psychological temporal and spacial laws and regularities. The narration is performed in accordance with the dictation of personal childhood memories, which leads to a concealed and innuendo element. It is achieved by the fragmentation of sentence structures, that are drawn onto the epic poetry or lyrical prose verge. Children's perception of the world is not disturbed by visible interferences in the textual fabric coming from the position of a mature man and his prevailing worldview. They have as their source the transferable records as well as associative chains of images and pictures that prompt the recipient to build their own reflection. There emerges a dense image of critical moments in author's life, who witnessed violent events that unfolded during the war in Klagenfurt.

In the «Youth in One Austrian city» I. Bachmann combines the impersonal narrative type with conventional «now» in the temporal plane. The mechanism of memory reconstructs the experienced by reproducing past impressions in the mind, and gives it an immediate perspective from the narrative point. The originality of time perception enables I. Bachmann to emphasize the relative nature of human life and its fullness as accurately captured by the psychology of a moment. In general the mentioned approach is typical for literary practices of iconic 20<sup>th</sup> century Austrian short fiction creators, such as T. Bernhard or I. Aichinger. According to O. Astafyev's convincing statement, «it covers resources of the memory, the policy of reconciliation and understanding – proceeding from ideology and sociology to art and culture» [Астаф'єв 2011:342–343].

The analyzed story opened the collection «The Thirtieth Year» («Das dreissigste Jahr», 1961). It is noteworthy that the author didn't make use of open and didactic accents. Instead, there are parable-like philosophemes full of existential meaning. They are characteristic of other texts, which build the structure of I. Bachmann's debut prose book. The writer has inscribed into her stories the original concept of human relations with the environment. Its starting point marks the process of freeing the individual consciousness of «I» from the regulating powers coming from outside. However, I. Bachmann gave no universal

formula to eliminate the tensions within the complicated matters of aesthetic, ethical, political and ideological dimensions. Instead, by making language tools more compact, she suggested to the reader a series of branching conflicts: a breakdown in generational relations between «parents» and «children» as a sign of afterwar transformations which were social in nature («The Youth in One Austrian City»), disharmony between the actual and the desired («The Thirtieth Year»), parents' self-fulfillment in children («All»), the search for harmonious coexistence in the same-sex relations («Step towards Gomorrah»), the devaluation of universal values («Between the Murderers and the Crazy»), the dehumanization of gender relations («Undine Goes»), the diminished efficiency of the established speech norms and semantic relationships («Wildermuth»).

I. Bachmann is an active follower of ideological positions outlined by the Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889 – 1951). She persistently emphasized the following statement in her prose samples: the world order must be restored in the process of structuring a language as a communication of truth; verbal codes can improve, correct, balance, assess, condemn, verify the reality. Proceeding from this, complex social and political issues can be positively resolved or aggravated through the use of language, which gives them a clear or vague outline. In this sense, a reference should be made to the Austrian novelist and critic Ferdinand Kürnberger's (1821 – 1879) statement that L. Wittgenstein used as an epigraph to his book «Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus» (1921): «...everything known, and not only casually heard, can be pressed in three words» [Wittgenstein 2003: 5]. Hypocrisy is an obstacle to bringing a language up-to-date in a postwar period, hidden in adaptation, conformity and conventionality. «With an updated language, – said I. Bachmann – a meeting with reality is always realised where there is a moral, cognitive breakthrough...» [Bachmann 1978: 192]. The author's collection «The Thirtieth Year» contains a warning: the society is doomed to gradual demise without the revival of moral values. Hence - the aggravated problem of subjective (preferably favored status of «I») and objective («I» actual status) identity as a unit of society. This topic is closely related to the implementation of an aesthetic code within I. Bachmann's creative output. On the one hand, there was the fame in literary and artistic circles, as well as among the readers, which

came with the first works. On the other hand— internal alienation, estrangement and isolation.

The writer's search for personal identity was accompanied by dramatic conflicts and collisions in life. Thus, individualistic disturbances and presence of doubt played a major role in her works, including her short fiction. The Austrian writer treated her artistic strategies in the same manner as the internal organization of the texts belonging to short epic form. This was dictated by her experience: according to the logic of cultural and historical situation that was developing in Western Europe in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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*В статті розкрито змістову конфігурацію малої прози Ингеборг Бахманн на матеріалі розказів «Юність в одному австрійському місті» («Jugend in einer österreichischen Stadt», 1959) і «Ваші щасливі очі» («Ihr glücklichen Augen», 1972).*

**Ключові слова:** австрійська мала проза, творчість Ингеборг Бахманн, прагматика текстових структур, жанр, образ, мотив, інтерпретація.

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### **Національна популярна шекспіріана у дискурсі американської культури XIX сторіччя**

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*Стаття актуалізує проблематику історико-літературного осягнення важливої складової національного дискурсу Сполучених Штатів XIX сторіччя — драматургії Вільяма Шекспіра, трансформованої за популярними стереотипами тогочасного масового демократичного театру. Розглянуто ще непомічені дослідниками взаємодії шекспірівської класики і масового, популярного мистецтва. Увіражено значущість популярної шекспіріани у духовому житті країни, процесах національного самовизначення і формування американської демократичної культури.*

**Ключові слова:** шекспіріана, дискурс, популярний театр, масова література, північноамериканський романтизм.

*The article actualizes the issues of historical and literary comprehension of the essential component of the national discourse of the United States of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century — the dramatic art of William Shakespeare, which was transformed in accordance with the popular stereotypes of mass*