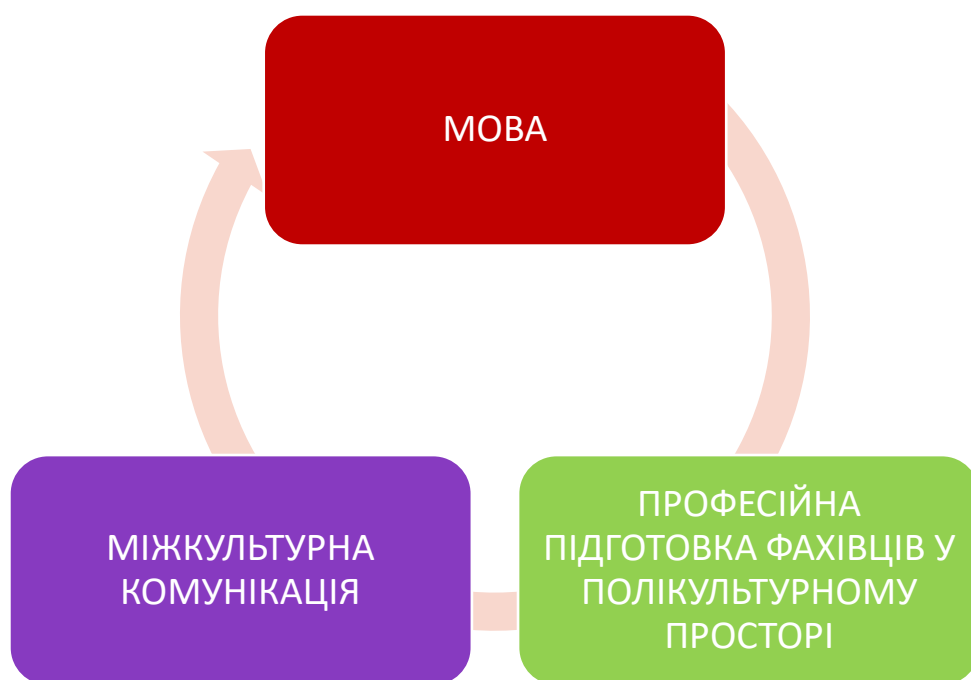


**АКТУАЛЬНІ ПРОБЛЕМИ ФІЛОЛОГІЇ І ПРОФЕСІЙНОЇ
ПІДГОТОВКИ ФАХІВЦІВ
У ПОЛІКУЛЬТУРНОМУ ПРОСТОРІ**



ХАРБІН – 2022

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І ПРОФЕСІЙНОЇ ПІДГОТОВКИ ФАХІВЦІВ
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THE PLOT OF “LITTLE WOMEN” BY L.M. ALCOTT: BETWEEN PATRIARCHALISM AND THEATRICALITY

Key words: L. M. Alcott, text interpretation, identity, patriarchalism, theatricality

The triple strategy of text interpretation (“rereading-reclaiming-redirection”), introduced by L. Paul in her article “Feminist Criticism...” under the influence of feminist theory [8, pp. 98-108] was targeted predominantly at the texts underestimated by official literary criticism. From this point of view L. M. Alcott’s “Little Women” became an ideal object for contemporary analysis, since it had been marginalized as a sample of both sentimental prose and children’s literature. The non-canonical status of the text deprived scholars of the ability to find and decode progressive ideas, hidden in L. M. Alcott’s story under the layer of moralizing and didactics. Thus, “Little Women” was probably the first American book to bring the word “teens” into children’s literature [9, p. 30] combined with the representation of corresponding psychological challenges.

If to consider the characters’ uncertainty when reflecting on self age or gender position, the attention of contemporary critics to the problems of identity represented by the text seems logical. While a developed identity is always a sign of a mature personality, the age 11 – 18 is depicted by Erikson as the key period of the selection between the positive pole of self-recognition and the negative pole of role confusion [5, p. 15]. Still, since an identity crisis often depends upon generational problems, one can feel a contradiction between a psychological validity and the patriarchal idyll permeating the discourse. M. Bakhtin was among the first scholars who noticed the compliance of a family novel with the idyllic type of the spatial and temporal relationships [4, p. 75]. In L. M. Alcott’s text the elements of the idyll build a traditional scheme represented by:

- The cyclicity of time covering the period from one Christmas to the next;
 - The dualism of the children’s world where the “alien space” (the school, front, hospital, Washington – all the locations associated with negative feelings of fear, sorrow, humiliation, grief) is opposed to their “own space” with its perspective for a young girl to sustain the integrity of her life [4, p. 75];

- The availability of “a house with history” [4, p. 77], the focal point of the child’s “own space”. L. M. Alcott’s narrator draws a clear line separating the March family mansion (“shabby”, and “old”, yet marked positively according to the Victorian system of values) from the external environment devoid of such positive characteristics: “a lonely, lifeless sort of house” [1, c. 48-49]. Since the territory adjacent to the building can be viewed as a part of the house “paging the curtain of the plot” [4, p. 82], a low level fence suggests the opportunity of crossing the boundary between the spaces;

- The existence of “loyal servants”. Taking shape in the personality of a negro servant Hannah (whose wits, strength and ability to act in a crisis are contrasted to the Victorian ideal of the divine feminine), this attribute skillfully combines the patriarchal component and the latest abolition tendencies of the Civil war;

- The cult of nutrition. M. Bakhtin proved that there is a close relation between idyllic narratives and physiological phenomena, among which food intake holds one of the premium positions. The disruptions of this cult – a symbol of the family unity in L. M. Alcott’s text – are the precursors of trials and the child’s further improvement; being such, they are usually used for the sake of moralizing.

Because of constant focusing of the novel on a young reader, the patriarchal nature of the text thickens, condenses, acquiring gradually the signs of theatricality.

The external manifestations of the concept “theatricality” are implemented in a motif of Christmas pantomimes – a classical entertainment for the 19th century children. Considering the fact that acting is a child’s ancient tool of the world investigation and the most fundamental component of a person’s development, the introduction of drama elements in the text contributed to the psychological credibility of the story. P. Hollindale noticed that “theatrical metaphors” are widely used by adults in everyday speech to control the behavior of the younger generation: “Don’t *act* so silly”, “Stop *dramatizing*”, “There is no need to *make a scene*” [6, c. 204]. According to the scholar, such terms imply “the continuity of drama in children’s lives” [6, p. 204]. On the other hand, P. Hollindale’s argument makes it possible to suggest that a child’s involvement into the field of drama (not only as an actor but also as a playwright) equalizes the child in rights with adults. This aspect had to mitigate the dogmatic tone of the narrative, fostering the process of young readers’ identification with their favorite characters, and contributing to fulfilling the ideological aim of the book. However, since the sentimental content of the girls’ performances contradicts L. M. Alcott’s ironic discourse, it can be viewed as the protest against societal criteria of women’s literary work.

The inner, moral dimension of theatricality is connected with the Pilgrim’s Progress game – the allusion to a popular Christian allegory “The Pilgrim’s Progress: From This World to That Which Is to Come” (1678) by J. Bunyan [3]. The title emphasizes the main plot line of the text – the protagonist’s dream journey to a Celestial City, his struggle against allegoric obstacles (a demonic creature Apollyon, the Valley of Humiliation, the temptations at the Vanity Fair, etc.) complicated by the burden of sins the Christian had to carry. The idea of spiritual pilgrimage, represented in the symbolism of Pilgrim’s game (“We are never too old for this..., because it is a *play we are playing all the time*” [1, p. 15]), acquires in L. M. Alcott’s

novel the status of the sacral core structuring the text. Among 23 chapters explicitly allusive ones prevail: “Playing Pilgrims”, “Burdens”, “Amy’s Valley of Humiliation”, “Jo meets Apollyon”, “Meg goes to Vanity Fair”, etc. The way through sufferings and mistakes to salvation can be compared with the one defined by Ju. Stepanov when the concept “spiritual pilgrimage” was under the scholar’s analysis (Koncept «duhovnogo strannichestva», 1996). The cross is the basic element of the concept, since to carry one’s cross means to carry the burden of one’s fate. It may be expected that the Christian idea of personal development via renunciation (“the eternal play throughout life” [2, p. 164]), encompasses the notion of “woman’s destiny” – the patriarchal commitment of a woman to the family and society, her strict compliance with social regulations. This aspect gains a priority meaning in L. M. Alcott’s novel, hence the first episode of the Pilgrim play is introduced by the process of the children’s familiarization with the father’s letter from the front where the gender aspects of Mr. March’s pedagogical doctrine are explicitly highlighted: “I’ll try to be what he loves to call me, “*a little woman*”, and *not be rough and wild*; but *do my duty here instead of wanting to be somewhere else*”, said Jo”. [1, p. 14-15].

The interdependence between patriarchal and theatrical components of the discourse is vividly expressed in the scene of the girls’ listening to a fairy tale. Initially created by Jo, the tale obtained a moralizing accent in Mrs. March’s version of the story: “*Once upon a time, there were four girls, who had ... a good many comforts and pleasures, kind friends and parents, who loved them dearly, and yet they were not contented. (Here the listeners stole sly looks at one another, and began to sew diligently.)*” [1, p. 47]. The structure of a fairy tale with its archaic “once upon a time” contributes to the patriarchal tone of the text. Indeed, Ye. M. Neiolov proved that “there is nothing... longer than “once upon a time” – a conventional phrase, considered by A. Shaikin as an evidence of life stability, its “constant and normal movement” [7, p. 116]. The teenagers’ representation as the characters of their own story enforces their attachment to definite roles; the decorative effect of the details (four sisters are engaged in needlework, listening attentively to their Marmee’s advice) fosters the profound symbolism of the episode.

The interconnection between the concepts of patriarchalism and theatricality reveals the ambivalent nature of both. Facilitating explicitly the stability of patriarchal cult, theatrics adds the accent of irony to the narration. The inevitability of the lifetime play implies a chance of pushing the boundaries and changing the role perspective. The conceptual cohesion provides the background for the rise of a new girl character in American children’s literature of the 19th century.

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THE ROLE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTOR IN INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Keywords: *intercultural communication, national cultures, means of communication, psychological factor.*

It is well-known, that each nation has its own cultural traditions, customs and its own national character. Even neighboring peoples, such as the peoples of the former Soviet Union, had significant differences in language, customs and even religion.

Therefore, it is clear that the peoples of East and West may have many difficulties in communicating. These features are the most important, for example, in business communication. In America, you will not jeopardize the agreement if you do not shake hands with the most senior member of the delegation or simply slap him on the shoulder or back. But your deal could be thwarted if you do so in China, a country that is rapidly gaining business but is mysterious and incomprehensible. Therefore, national characteristics are very important because the values, customs, traditions that were learned in childhood and adolescence which depend on nationality and country of residence create serious problems in negotiations between people of different cultures. Our research is devoted to the peculiarities of intercultural communication between the peoples of East and West in the business sphere, as well as in the so-called psychological factor that arise in communication. These issues are considered in the works of G. Hrushevytska, S. Ter-Minasova, T. Kolbina, V. Kudashina, M. Heidegger and others. But despite a number of works on intercultural communication, there are still many issues that need detailed and comprehensive coverage, because the world is intercultural and the issue of dialogue with other peoples and cultures is always relevant.

Such methods as descriptive and comparative ones were used in the process of our research. The descriptive method was focused on general characteristics of intercultural communication peculiar to East and West nations. The comparative