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LINGUAL AND POETIC ACTUALIZATION OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CONCEPTS IN GEORGE GORDON BYRON'S POETIC DISCOURSE

The article represents the study of the specificity of literary concepts actualization that delineates the social parameters of national universe in Byron's poetic discourse through the analysis of imagery poetic forms semantics. Byron's poetry conceptual space is construed through the prism of the categories of national identity and within the general context of romantic literary world defined as a system of universal artistic principles which are embodied in the text, inform it with a definite aesthetic perspective and integrally represent the entire epoch characterized by a special type of cognition and the unity of values. The article focuses on the analysis of semantic, pragmatic and semiotic aspects of anthropocentric images of poetic texts. In Byron's poetic discourse the dominating means of poetic conceptualization are: application of precedent names and phenomena, allusions and reminiscences of historic events that in the imagery and compositional structure of the poetic work promote the development of the above mentioned literary concepts in several literary-semantic planes: national policy, national interests, ethnic self identification, national heroism and treason, venality of pseudo national elite, false patriotism, generate the problem of interrelation between the power and people; saturation of the poetic context with metaphors, metonymies, similes, epithets and oxymorons of ambivalent evaluative semantics; development and intensification of symbolic potential of ethnically specific notions and realia. The processes of metonymisation and metaphorisation, in this way, intensify the semantic diversity of lingual and cognitive texture of poetic discourse.

Key words: Byron, literary concept, Romanticism, poetic discourse, national identity.

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ЛІНГВОПОЕТИЧНА АКТУАЛІЗАЦІЯ ПОЛІТИКО-СОЦІАЛЬНИХ КОНЦЕПТІВ У ПОЕТИЧНОМУ ДИСКУРСІ ДЖОРДЖА ГОРДОНА БАЙРОНА

У статті розглянуто специфіку лінгво-поетичної актуалізації художніх концептів, які відображають соціальні параметри національного буття у поетичному дискурсі Джорджа Гордона Байрона, шляхом аналізу семантики поетичних форм. Концептуальний простір поезії Байрона зображено крізь призму категорій національної ідентичності та в межах загального контексту романтичного світу, який визначено як систему універсальних художніх принципів, що формують у тексті відповідну естетичну перспективу художнього напрямку, відображають відповідний тип художнього мислення та систему індивідуально-авторських та колективних цінностей національної спільноти. Основна увага приділена аналізу семантичних, прагматичних та семіотичних аспектів антропоцентричних образів поетичних текстів.

Ключові слова: Байрон, художній концепт, романтизм, поетичний дискурс, національна ідентичність.

Creative personality of George Gordon Byron is the mirror of romantic epoch with its artistic and philosophic principle of ideal sense of life, sincerity of a “noble hero”, powerful and free from social constrains. Scholars intensify the domination of social motives in Byron's poetry determined by the development of social philosophy of protest with all its consequences and paradoxes which, according to S. Pavlychko, influenced the reception and interpretation of Byron's poetic heritage. For his contemporaries as well as the modern readers and critics the ideological and artistic system of the poet remains controversial and ambiguous and, thus, inexhaustible [9, c. 153].

Foreign and domestic critics tend to closely relate poet's creative and social activity with his personal, biographic and even intimate life exaggerating in this way the “personal factor” in the development of artistic and conceptual worlds of the author – the so called “Byronic model” which aesthetics outstands the general context of romantic worldview [5, c. 10; 11, c. 5; 6, c. 243-259].

Unequivocal definition of poet's creativity in the domestic literary criticism of previous decades (contrary to highly ambivalent reception in Anglophone world [6; 14, c. 193-194]) fostered the consolidated image of the poet-revolutionary with the aura of stable attributes identifying the “Byronic type” as cosmopolitan mode of cognition that irradiated the principles of literary images development and poetic motives into European and world literature [1; 3; 4; 5; 7].

The aim of this paper is to define the specificity of literary concepts actualization that delineates the social parameters of national universe in Byron's poetic discourse through the analysis of imagery poetic forms semantics. Byron's poetry conceptual space is construed through the prism of the categories of national identity and within the general context of romantic literary world defined as a system of universal artistic principles which are embodied in the text, inform it with a definite aesthetic perspective [12, c. 3] and integrally represent the entire epoch characterized by a special type of cognition and the unity of values.

Poet's biographers and researcher of English literature have performed a comprehensive analysis of the circumstances that accompanied the creation of practically all Byron's poems. The attention to the theme and motives of each work, to the public feedback that it provoked considerably outnumbered the interest to its lingual and aesthetic peculiarities, to poetic forms of representing political, axiological, emotional constituents of literary concepts – monarch, aristocrat, national and military leader – that mirror the controversial character of political and ethnic processes in the country and Europe, the conflict between the monarchical policy of

national consolidation and Anglo centrism, expansionism and ethnic intolerance, the general spirit of the epoch that saw the reformation of social-economic and political relations between the aristocracy and bourgeoisie.

Alongside with the dominating features of the “Byronic hero” Byron’s poetry by verbal means of embodiment of the main anthropological images and by the dynamics of all possible associations, conceptions, impressions and evaluations embodied in the slightest shades of poetic word “provides” the reader and interpreter with informational resources that display the general context of the epoch, specificity of national and social comprehension of the general historic processes, behavioral characteristics, cultural and ethnic stereotypes, modes of perceiving and experiencing life, axiological response to the events of the national history. As a result, the poetic conceptualization of a human being becomes the way to address important philosophic generalizations of national identity issues – as an interpretation of national and world mythology, development of the concept of national hero, political leader, the character of interrelations between the power and people, social and political activity of an individual considering status and individual-psychological characteristics.

Byron’s poetry is rich in images that create the concepts representing concrete ethnic traits, features of national mentality, individual and collective attitude towards the key political and ethnic concepts such as POWER and PEOPLE related to other anthropocentric concepts of FREEDOM, MOTHERLAND, FOREIGN (STRANGE) LAND, FATE, images that embody the idea of participation or indifference in the fate of the country and nation, personal responsibilities, moral duty, loyalty and devotedness, betrayal and the choice of life and creativity. Literary-semantic plane of human phenomenon conceptualization in this way encompasses a set of features that highlight poet’s deep generalization about a human as a bearer of definite ethnic and ethical characteristics, poet’s reflections over the unity of individual and collective fate, historic choice of the people and nation.

Ideal pathos of Byron’s poetry was nourished by the conviction about the finitude of any forms of tyranny and despotism because the world history demonstrated that any forms of tyranny and oppression include the germs of their own destruction. These ideas crystalized in artistic cognition of the poet through the richness of symbols, employment of mythological themes and elements, reminiscences from world literature and history.

Specific historic details enshroud the content of the poem *Lines to a Lady Weeping* (1812), which implies wide social reaction caused by political discussions among the representatives of English aristocracy about the policy of the Prince Regent concerning the “Irish question”. The abstract poetic nominations daughter of a royal line, Sire implies the personalities of the Prince Regent, the deputy of the incapable King George III and his daughter Charlotte. The metaphoric epithets A Sire’s disgrace, a realm’s decay; , a father’s fault refer to definite historic political documents initiated by the Prince Regent with the aim of further intensification of reactionary policy against Ireland, the doctrine of ethnic assimilation. The epithet these suffering isles hints at the multiple political senses and simultaneously expresses author’s evaluation and social hostility to the personality of the future King of England, George IV, as immoral and cruel person, intolerable towards his own family, subordinates and servants which undermined the prestige of the monarchy (a realm’s decay):

Weep, daughter of a royal line,
A Sire’s disgrace, a realm’s decay;
Ah! happy if each tear of thine
Could wash a father’s fault away!

Weep--for thy tears are Virtue’s tears
Auspicious to these suffering isles;
And be each drop in future years
Repaid thee by thy people’s smiles!

The cited poem as an aesthetic-emotional conception of reality transforms the fact existing outside of realm of art into an unexpected artistic discovery that under the influence of poetic context generates senses both in the immediate “surface” peruse and in the subtext creating emotional, axiological (very often including opposite features of the object), associative, ideological degree of textual saturation that shape it’s definiteness and boundlessness of it’s outline. The eight lines of the poem simultaneously embody opposite evaluations of the concept MONARCHY – negative (the king-tyrant, the cause of sufferings, object of national hatred, implied in the image of Prince Regent) and positive (defender and protector, patroness, object of national love and gratitude, implied in the image of Princess Charlotte).

The poet brings forward ideological, political senses in the process of poetic conceptualization of power, monarchy and aristocracy as a determinant discursive device of his political poetry. Thus, a specific conceptual and thematic continuation of the poem *To a Lady Weeping* is *Lines Composed On The Occasion Of His Royal Highness The Prince Regent Being Seen Standing Between The Coffins Of Henry Viii And Charles I, In The Royal Vault At Windsor* (1814), based also on well-known historic episodes from the biography of the Prince Regent and the allusion to the personalities of English kings Henry VIII (1491-1547) and Charles I Stuart (1600–1649), other historic personalities and events. In this poem the person of George, the Prince Regent, embodies blemish and vice of his predecessors, the doubled tyranny which on the level of verbal realization are secured by nuclear elements of imagery-associative field ‘despot-tyrant’ and by the system of explicit poetic means united by common negative semantics reflecting both personal, individual characteristics (lack of conscience, heartlessness) and national, state notions (injustice, break of the oath, attitude towards the people and nation, abuse of power). The quintessence of negative evaluation and the expression of disdain is represented through the metaphoric transference “a human being – a thing: the king – the thing” in the nomination of the protagonist (another sceptered thing – / It moves, it reigns – in all but name, a king) and by the metonymy ‘sceptered’ which performs the role of axiological attribute and favours the intensification of poetic image’s syncretism. The processes of metonymisation and metaphorisation, in this way, intensify the semantic diversity of lingual and cognitive texture of poetic discourse.

In Byron’s political poetry the usage of poetic word as a means of expressing personal and social reaction on a certain event of political life became a stable discursive tendency, dominant feature of artistic manner that results in the accentuation of definite perceptive-semantic planes of personage’s poetic image, named and easily recognizable by the readers. Thus, the monarchs and

aristocrats, lords and ministers, historic and political facts of the epoch as precedent names and phenomena are the source of features-aspects of a specific literary concept profiling [2; 8], its cognitive basis.

Precedent names in Byron's poems are involved in the process of creation of negative and positive features of concepts POWER, MONARCHY, ARISTOCRACY. The Irish Avatar (1821) written as a continuation of Irish theme and dedicated to the policy of expansion promoted by the odious king George IV abounds in famous names of English-Irish history, allusions and reminiscences of historic events that in the imagery and compositional structure of the poetic work promote the development of the above mentioned literary concepts in several literary-semantic planes: national policy, national interests, ethnic self identification, national heroism and treason, venality of pseudo national elite, false patriotism, generate the problem of interrelation between the power and people.

Political portrait of the English monarch and moral aspects of his activity are created by a set of language means that include the following:

- Vocabulary with negative evaluative semantics (Is it madness or meanness which clings to thee now? / Were he God--as he is but the commonest clay, the idol of brass), metaphor with ironic meaning (George the triumphant, the Messiah of royalty comes!, He comes in the promise and bloom of threescore; that long-wither'd spot; The fourth of the fools and oppressors call'd 'George!') the application of mythological eponym of Ireland in the context of addressing to and nomination of the king (Lo! **Erin**, thy lord!/ Kiss his foot with thy blessing, his blessings denied! Spread--spread, for Vitellius, the royal repast, / Till the gluttonous despot be stuff'd to the gorge!) in order to intensify the emotional effect of the utterance, to achieve the effect of grotesque by confrontation of elevated and low expressions;

- Emotional saturation of the text with emotional words terror, brute, curses, jeers, gore, murder, oximorons: 'Hal is the rascaliest, sweetest young prince!', similes and semantic parallelism between historic personalities of the roman Empire and contemporary kings and reigning Irish elite as an object of damnation, the source of the evil (The cause of the curses all annals contain, From Caesar the dreaded to George the despised!; pread--spread, for Vitellius, the royal repast, / Till the gluttonous despot be stuff'd to the gorge!; But let not his name be thine idol alone/

On his right hand behold a **Sejanus** appears! /

Thine own Castlereagh! let him still be thine own!

A wretch never named but with curses and jeers!)

allusions to the ancient mythology Let the wine flow around the old Bacchanal's throne, / Like their blood which has flow'd, and which yet has to flow; actualization of symbolic potential of zoonims in a set of metaphors: the reptile which crawl 'd from her earth; See the cold-blooded serpent, with venom full flush'd,

Still warming its folds in the breast of a king!;

- Inexhaustible potential of implicitness of expressions that describe the states of the subject of poetic reflections their external manifestations which creates bright diverse imagery and increase the social topicality of the theme.

In order to intensify the effect of poetic expression Byron extensively applies pertaining to the Romanticism stylistic device of personification of abstract notions of 'freedom', 'slavery', 'famine', 'pain', 'poverty' which are for the people the result of the police of oppression: And the famine which dwelt on her freedomless crags/ Is extending its steps to her desolate shore. Then might freedom forgive thee this dance in thy chain, персоніфікація свободи

And this shout of thy slavery which saddens the skies. Feasts furnish'd by Famine! Rejoicings by Pain!

Addressing Ireland in his poems Byron resorts to the device of personification – the embodiment of the state in the image of either a living being or goddess from ancient Irish legends, naming her by a poetic name 'Erin', that informs the poetry both with solemnity and intimacy: Then might freedom forgive thee this dance in thy chain; And this shout of thy slavery which saddens the skies; Is it madness or meanness which clings to thee now?

In poetic personification of Ireland the poet embodies the senses 'goddess-patron of her people' and a 'living being that gives birth to her children', either famous and honorable heroes or dishonourable traitors: Till now, when the isle which should blush for his birth, / Deep, deep as the gore which he shed on her soil,

Seems proud of the reptile which crawl 'd from her earth,

And for murder repays him with shouts and a smile.

Without one single ray of her genius, without

The fancy, the manhood, the fire of her race / The miscreant who well might plunge Erin in doubt / If she ever gave birth to a being so base. / Not thus did thy Grattan indignantly flash

His soul o'er the freedom implored and denied.

Ever glorious Grattan! the best of the good!

So simple in heart, so sublime in the rest! I have known noble hearts and great souls in thy sons... Till now I had envied thy sons and their shore...

The main means of the concept PEOPLE actualization in the compositional structure of the analyzed poem are metonymy Ireland, Erin, country, lexemes people, nation as components of epithets, similes and metaphors which semantic content encompasses the artistic-semantic plane "people – a subject of collective actions, feelings and responsibility". In the metonymies (Gild over the palace, Lo! Erin, thy lord! / Kiss his foot with thy blessing, his blessings denied! and thy country convince / Half an age's contempt was an error of fame; Shout, drink, feast, and flatter! Oh! Erin, how low / Wert thou sunk by misfortune and tyrann), epithets (servile and sore nation) and similes (My contempt for a nation so servile, though sore, / Which though trod like the worm will not turn upon power) the poet embodies the idea that submissive collective humiliation, tolerance to the evil and tyranny is the cause of contemporary state of the country and people, expresses in poetic form his denunciation of the policy of national pseudo elite.

Byron's poetic representation of the concept PEOPLE in the analyzed poem is complex and heterogeneous in respect to its semantic filling because it simultaneously encompasses and opposes the notion of the national elite, national aristocracy and the lower stratum of population which in most poetic contexts are displayed through the set of definite psychological, emotional, behavioral and mental characteristics, appear either as subject or object of power's policy. The analysis of lexical and stylistic devices that verbalize the defined notional aspects of the literary concept, the specificity of their contextual embodiment and implications enables to

reveal poet's axiological priorities, the peculiarities of reconstructing objective social processes, to determine the general tendencies of semantic and associative development of images that belong to a certain imagery paradigm. Semantic and cognitive analysis of images in the poem *The Irish Avatar* made it possible to define in each constituent of the concept PEOPLE the following conceptual features:

NATIONAL ARISTOCRACY: Devotion: servile devotion might shame him away; Let the poor squalid splendour thy wreck can afford (As the bankrupt's profusion his ruin would hide), Gild over the palace, Lo! Erin, thy lord! Kiss his foot with thy blessing, his blessings denied! **Power:** Each brute hath its nature; a king's is to reign, To reign! the steps of enslavers; **State:** roar in his train; let thine orators lash Their fanciful spirits to pamper his pride; the roar of his drunkards; Shout, drink, feast, and flatter! Thy welcome of tyrants hath plunged thee below The depth of thy deep in a deeper gulf still! **Reward:** Will thy yard of blue riband, poor Fingal, recall/The fetters from millions of Catholic limbs?

NATIONAL ELITE: Glory: Ever glorious Grattan! the best of the good! So simple in heart, so sublime in the rest! With all which Demosthenes wanted endued, And his rival or victor in all he possess'd. noble hearts and great souls in thy sons, the glory of Grattan, and genius of Moore! **State:** the patriot band

Who are gone/ For happy are they now reposing afar, Thy Grattan, thy Curran, thy Sheridan, all their fetterless clay/happy are they in their cold English graves!

Their shades cannot start to thy shouts of today/ Though their virtues were hunted, their liberties fled/ There was something so warm and sublime in the core/ Of an Irishman's heart, that I envy--thy dead. **Mission:** Who, for years, were the chiefs in the eloquent war, /And redeem'd, if they have not retarded, thy fall.

POPULATION: Devotion: Thy welcome of tyrants hath plunged thee below. The depth of thy deep in a deeper gulf still!/
Slavery: army of slaves! this dance in thy chain, And this shout of thy slavery which saddens the skies. chain-kissing slaves/ The fetters from millions of Catholic limbs? **State:** Till they groan like thy people, through ages of woe! The slaves, who now hail their betrayer with hymns?

Wert thou sunk by misfortune and tyranny... **Emigration:** he flies from his hearth; Tears fall on his chain, though it drops from his hands; **Poverty:** beggars and helots. **Home:** For the dungeon he quits is the place of his birth.

The policy of pseudo national elite, their blind devotion and loyalty to the monarch (conceptual feature **Devotion**) for the sake of obtaining power (conceptual feature **Power**), enrichment and increase of social status (conceptual feature **Reward**) receives unambiguous negative evaluation. Whereas the author's attitude towards the population and poetic reflection of its destiny is highly contradictory. The poet deeply sympathizes with the Irish people, its slavery state (conceptual feature **Slavery**), its abject poverty, loss of motherland and involuntary emigration (conceptual features **Emigration**, **Poverty**), religious pursuit, intolerable sufferings (conceptual feature **State**) at the time when the upper classes of society are gaining wealth and comfort at their expense. O. Selivanova points out to a considerable semantic load of the predicate in the structure of metaphor "because the predicate is the center of the action, the semantics of its denotation becomes the conceptual filter of transformation of literal information into figurative one" [10, c. 358]. The semantics of the predicates denoting communicative actions roar (and the accompanying image associates (Shout, drink, feast, and flatter!, welcome of tyrants), used to reflect the attitude of national pseudo national elite to the monarch, and groan, used to reflect the existential state of the people, crates the basis for the interpretation of axiological component of the corresponding anthropocentric imagery of the poem. However, the people partially shares the responsibilities for this situation with their authorities, because the slaves that hail their tyrants, erect palaces for them and kiss their own fetters (conceptual feature **Slavery**), turn their own motherland into prison (conceptual feature **Home**).

Metaphor created on the aesthetic actualization of the semantics of the word 'slave', 'slavery' in ambivalent in terms of its referential relations. Because the notion 'slavery' pertains not only to the distressful and long-suffering Irish people who is forced to leave their country because of economic, religious and political reasons (To her desolate shore--where the emigrant stands) but also to the national aristocracy who voluntarily enslaved themselves for the sake of promised benefits and honours: The slaves, who now hail their betrayer with hymns?

The real glory to the motherland are the representatives of national aristocracy of talent, represented in the context of the analyzed poem by the names Henry Grattan (1746–1820), John Philpot Curran (1750–1817), Thomas Moore (1779–1852), Richard Sheridan (1751–1816). Byron named them 'a handful of patriots', the acme of Irish spirit embodiment (an Irishman's heart), three of them at the time of the creation of this poem had been dead (the patriot band Who are gone). Their personalities whose value is compared to the personalities of famous Ancient thinkers represent the glorious page in the national history, which unfortunately, as the poets believes, has no dissent continuation in contemporaneity of the people (reposing afar, in their cold English graves!). "I envy – thy dead", – Byron concludes in the final lines of the poem.

Recreating in the poetic form the mission of the above named representatives of the national elite of talent and their value in the centuries-old Irish struggle for its independence (the chiefs in the eloquent war, And redeem'd, if they have not retarded, thy fall) Byron resorts to the significant and historically veritable detail, embodied in the figurative expression cold English graves. For in fact, they spent the main part of their lives outside Ireland in England (where they were buried), with their names inscribed not only into Irish but also English history, literature, philosophy and political science which once again demonstrates the inevitability and irreversibility of continued Anglo centric ethnic assimilation processes on the British Isles.

Consequently, the dominating principle of lingual and aesthetic actualization of the nationally specific concepts in Byron's poetry is the transformation of the fact existing outside of realm of art into the means poetic conceptualization that under the influence of poetic context generates diverse emotional and axiological senses. In Byron's political poetry poetic images applied to express personal and social reaction on a certain event of political life are endowed with pragmatic function to evoke and display evaluations, attitudes and emotions toward the object of poetic description represented within definite perceptive-semantic planes. As a result, the poetic conceptualization of a human being becomes the way to address important philosophic generalizations of national identity issues – as an interpretation of national and world mythology, development of the concept of national hero, political leader, the character of interrelations between the power and people, social and political activity of an individual considering status and individual-psychological characteristics. In Byron's poetic discourse the dominating means of poetic conceptualization are: application

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