

**IDEOLOGICAL AND ARTISTIC WORLD
IN THE NOVEL BY A. NOTHOMB “MÉTAPHYSIQUE DES TUBES”**



@ Mariia BELYAVSKAYA

PhD in Philology, Associate professor

Department of Romance Philology and Translation

V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University

4 Svobody Sq., Kharkiv, 61022, UKRAINE

e-mail: petiteleila24@gmail.com

ORCID: 0000-0002-8920-766X

Abstract

Works by the Belgian Francophone author Amelie Nothomb (born Fabienne Claire Nothomb) (in 1966), the author of more than thirty works, honoured with the range of literary awards. Poetological analysis and studies of A. Nothomb idiostyle contributes to the research of those changes that take place in modern literature. Analyzed the peculiar genre-gender transformation that predetermines the specificity of the work and involves diffusion of features of epic and dramatic genders and genres synthesis. A communicative authorial intention, that is realized in dialogic modus of narration, topical interest of ideological-thematic layer and method of deep psycholization of images, is stressed out as well as a formation and functioning of intrigue as the author's device of plot formation. The analysis of plot in the work testifies that the author goes back to the classical model of a plot. A. Nothomb creates to the character of a man in search of the “truth” that on plot and ideological levels forms the unity in the formation of genre matrix of the novel initiation. The individual psychological situation of personality in authorial vision becomes the reason of a plot conflict that hangs over substantial type.

Keywords: A. Nothomb, poetic peculiarities, communicative intention, genre transformation, image, novel initiation, character, psychologism.

A contemporary novel cannot be viewed from the same perspective as the novels of great classics. Nowadays, it is inappropriate to put the index of comparison between these units as if of the same genre, so multifaceted and synthesized appears its implementation at the turn of the 20th – 21st centuries. It offers a reader a dual panorama: author's attempt to reproduce a picture of the world that is totally different from the "yesterday's", or vice versa, a search for ways to be compared with classical literary works, to find its place in tradition and to become perpetuated in eternity, continuing it.

The novels by a Belgian francophone writer are notable for a specific synthesis in the theme-problem circle, which contributes to their ideological peculiarity. Such characteristic can be explained by the peculiarities of the writer's personal life experience, in which it is impossible not to emphasize the most significant milestones because their responses can be observed in almost all novels. So, in an early childhood, from birth to two years, the writer experiences a period of autism, which she explains by her mother's heavy and prolonged labour. Amelie was born with a cord entanglement that caused asphyxia. She remains completely indifferent to the outside world, deprived of a sense of hunger and thirst, of any desires. This life experience in a form of a novel is introduced in the book "Métaphysique des tubes".

The idea of a confrontation between the East and the West, which is observed in most of the writer's novels, is biographically determined and reflects her own internal national uncertainty. She spent her first years of life in Japan under the supervision of a Japanese nurse, who became closer than her mother permanently infuse ambiguity as a doubt of national identity.

The writer skillfully implements the idea of paradise childhood into the plot, and duality becomes a feature of her creative method, which is based on the formation of a contrast between the images of youth and old age, beautiful and terrible, sinful and holy, pure and "unclean", as well as dualities in one image.

The novel "Métaphysique des tubes" thematically proceeds previous works by the writer, developing the topics of childhood, the worldview of the child's morbid psyche, the East-West opposition, but in the context of her own psychoanalytic practice. The problematic of the novel outlines a number of private-psychological issues: a construction of identity with mental defects, a problem of parents and children, an opposition of the child's idyllic picture of the world to adult dogmatism, an existential crisis as a psychological non-conformist reaction. The poetics of the title of the novel refers to Aristotle's homonymic works, the subject of reflection is

the thing that can be comprehended only beyond matter. It reflects on everything, finds a connection in the course of change. Among central categories of metaphysics are the teachings of being, the Universe, existence of a man, existence and essence of God, etc. The writer's question about being and not-being, something and nothing, God, matter and spirit, is the subject of the study of metaphysics and constitutes "indisputable need" of a man according to I. Kant and "insatiability" after Amelie Nothomb.

In the novel, one can notice the writer's attempt to reproduce versatility of the child's world perception. A depiction of the peculiarity of the child's worldview is achieved by the author thanks to the chronotopic strategy of the "boundary". The first time-space antithesis, on the brink of which little Amelie becomes self-aware, is a divine and profane space. In the opening of the novel we are told about the birth of a baby, intertextually involving a myth of the creation of the world in a narrative manner: "Au commencement il n'y avait rien. Et ce rien n'était ni vide ni vague: il n'appelait rien d'autre que lui-meme" (Nothomb, 2000). The parallel between a child and God, who she continues to associate herself with, forms a desacralized mythical space, deprived of specific greeting markers. In the text it is measured by the "existence" of God: "Dieu ne vivait pas, il existait" (Nothomb, 2000), "<...>Le tube n'avait aucune conscience de la durée. Il atteint l'âge de deux ans comme il eût atteint celui de deux jours ou de deux siècles" (Nothomb, 2000).

A secular world that is opposed to it – is the world of ordinary people who surround this little girl and whom she wants to understand – has realistic time-space characteristics, among which we find the place of the main events in the plot – Kansai, a region in the west of Japan (Nothomb, 2000), time of the depicted events – 1968-1970 (Nothomb, 2000), updating toponymic and historical markers – daily earthquakes in Kansai (Nothomb, 2000: 10), mentioning of warfare on the territory of Japan in 1945 (Nothomb, 2000), the events in Vietnam in 1970 (Nothomb, 2000), calendar and daily markers of time: "ce matin-là", "avril au Japon" (Nothomb, 2000) etc.

The second antithesis of time-space models, on the brink of which Amelie realizes herself is the world of adults and the world of children. A child has the features to understand the world of adults from birth, but, in order to save realism in the reproduction of the child's picture of the world, she, as it is right for babies, has no possibility to speak. However, it seems that for her age she has undergone the most critical conditions of the adult world: "Mort! Comme si je ne savais pas!" (Nothomb, 2000). Amelie also "exists" between the Western world, being Belgian, from birth,

and the Oriental world, where she is raised by a Japanese nanny. She understands Japanese from birth, as if it is her native language. The girl gives her "eastern" existence an absolute advantage by talking to her nurse Japanese, earlier than French with her parents and relatives. Amelie felt like a Japanese because this country became the first image of beauty for the girl: "J'étais Japonaise. A deux ans et demi, dans la province du Kansai, être japonaise consistait à vivre au cœur de la beauté et de l'adoration" (Nothomb, 2000). Having two governesses, Amelie feels between two poles – between the good embodied by Nisio-san and the evil personified by Kasimo-san. If Nisio-san, worshipping a girl, was subjected to the game of her imagination of God, then Kasimo-san did not want to accept this "religion" and worship the child, as it rooted her image of the evil in Amelie's eyes. But the central chronotopic opposition is life and death. The birth of the girl was accompanied by complications, which resulted in her being born with a certain mental defect. Until two years she is in an autistic state, without showing any interest in life. The only manifestations of the child's life activity was nutrition and defecation: "Les parents du tube étaient inquiets. Ils convoquèrent des médecins pour qu'ils se penchent sur le cas de ce segment de matière qui ne semblait pas vivre" (Nothomb, 2000). However, it was impossible to say that she was dead: Votre enfant est un légume. C'est très préoccupant. Les parents furent soulagés par ce qu'ils prirent pour une bonne nouvelle. Un légume, c'était de la vie" (Nothomb, 2000).

As time passes, the pleasure of a chocolate taste brings her out of life "not-being". However, the boundary states between life and death are observed throughout the plot. So, Amelie drowns at sea, enjoying every moment of transition from life to death: "Bientôt, je n'eus plus la force de bouger mes membres et je me laissai couler. Mon corps glissa en dessous des flots. Je savais que ces moments étaient les derniers de ma vie et je ne voulais pas les manquer <...> J'en oubliai d'avoir peur de la mort. Il me sembla rester là des heures" (Nothomb, 2000).

Subsequently, she decides to look around through the window and drops out of it at night: " <...> je tombai. Il y eut un miracle: j'eus le réflexe d'écartier les jambes et mes pieds restèrent accrochés aux deux angles inférieurs de la fenêtre. Mes mollets et mes cuisses étaient allongés sur le léger rebord du toit, mes hanches reposaient sur la gouttière, mon tronc et ma tête pendaient dans le vide" (Nothomb, 2000). Then the girl again experiences drowning, this time in the pond, but just as admiring the existence on the verge between being and not-being: "Délicieusement sereine, j'observe le ciel à travers la surface de l'étang. <...> Je me sens bien. Je ne me suis jamais sentie aussi bien" (Nothomb, 2000).

The epilogue of the novel also states "not-being", which followed her leaving Japan: "Ensuite, il ne s'est plus rien passé" (Nothomb, 2000). Thus, the chronotope of the novel is formed by the laying of the internal chronotope of the character, which in its turn includes mythical time-space and models of "boundary" existence, on a realistic, recognizable by time and space markers. The novel also has features of artistic autobiography and memoirs, because, firstly, we find in it a significant amount of biographical information from the writer's life, and secondly, a narrative strategy of the first-person diegetic retrospection.

The plot of the novel "Métaphysique des tubes" is based on the biographical facts of A. Nothomb's life and presents readers a story about the child's outlook formation. The duration of the described events is two and a half years – from the birth of the girl named Amelie until her family left Japan. It should be mentioned that according to the characteristics the plot of the novel tends to the genre of the novelette, covering not all the life of the character, as a certain, meaningful, in the author's opinion, period, concentrating exclusively on the inner world of the character and her temper. Among the characteristics of the plot there is a lack of acute intrigue in the novel, instead, there is a great number of life collisions that reveal's character's nature, forming her position to the surrounding world. However, the plot is clearly structured and linear. The opening of the novel is a neo-mythological representation of the character's appearance, thematically and in a narrative way involving a myth of the creation of the world. The narration resembles a myth, from a third person, describing the desacralized image of God, his appearance and existence in the profane world. The chain of central events of the plot, that form the child's worldview, begins an initializational metamorphosis of the character: thanks to the guide in the world of the unknown, little Amelie's grandmother, the girl learns the truth, the meaning of life, which lies in the sense of pleasure. "Rebirth", or rather, Amelie's real birth, as a normal living creature, opens to her the impossible borderlines of life that she begins to experience with this greedy pleasure. Her "late" birth is difficult to explain to herself: "Comment expliquer cette naissance postérieur de deux ans à l'accouchement?" (Nothomb, 2000). But now life for her finds its meaning, that is depicted by the writer in a series of life collisions, which little Amelie draws a certain ideological conclusion from. It is after the "rebirth" from the existence of a "plant" into the life of a child, Amelie identifies herself as a pleasure, and also realizes the existence of her own memory: "En me donnant une identité, le chocolat blanc m'avait aussi fourni une mémoire: depuis février 1970, je me souviens de tout. A quoi bon se rappeler ce qui n'est pas lié au plaisir?" (Nothomb, 2000).

The climax of the novel opens a centre of the plot, in which Amelie learns that she will not be able to spend, whatever she wishes, her whole life in the country of her dreams along with Nisio-san. The news transforms her consciousness and makes her doubt about the possibility of further happiness. Further events reinforce the child's emotional background of doubt and despair, which leads to suicide. The falling action tells about Amelie's survival, that is, has a positive final on the level of events, but shows the girl's full disappointment and her return to a state of indifferent existence: "Ensuite, il ne s'est plus rien passé" (Nothomb, 2000).

A number of metamorphoses in the novel can be found through the change of narrative instances. At the beginning of the novel, we can see a third person narration and we are told about the appearance of the world and first years of the character's life, who indirectly identifies herself with God. Since the child was born in the autistic state and did not show any other signs of life except nutrition and defecation, people call her a "plant": Ils l'appelèrent gentiment "la Plante" (Nothomb, 2000). But the narrator, for this period, is not yet known to the reader, does not agree with this definition, because a child can be completely apathetic to life, unlike plants: "En quoi tous se trompaient. Car les plantes, légumes compris, pour avoir une vie imperceptible à l'oeil humain, n'en ont pas moins une vie. Elles frémissent à l'approche de l'orage, pleurent d'allégresse au lever du jour, se blindent de mépris lorsqu'on les agresse et se livrent à la danse des sept voiles quand la saison est aux pollens" (Nothomb, 2000). Because of the lack of any manifestations of life, the child is called in a strange way: "Les seules occupations de Dieu étaient la déglutition, la digestion et, conséquence directe, l'excrétion. Ces activités végétatives passaient par le corps de Dieu sans qu'il s'en aperçoive. <...> Dieu ouvrait tous les orifices nécessaires pour que les aliments solides et liquides le traversent. C'est pourquoi, à ce stade de son développement, nous appellerons Dieu le tube. <...> Le tube, lui, était passivité pure et simple. Rien ne l'affectait, ni les changements du climat, ni la tombée de la nuit, ni les cent petites émeutes du quotidien, ni les grands mystères indicibles du silence" (Nothomb, 2000). And only a sense of satisfaction, self-perception for the character, as a personality, who at the narrative level turns the narration into a first person narration: "La volupté lui monte à la tête, lui déchire le cerveau et y fait retentir une voix qu'il n'avait jamais entendue: – Cest moi! C'est moi qui vis! C'est moi qui parle! Je ne suis pas 'il' ni 'lui', je suis moi! Tu ne devras plus dire 'il' pour parler de toi, tu devras dire 'je'" (Nothomb, 2000). A sharp and still unfamiliar feeling of pleasure releases girl's brain from autistic indifference and settles in the mind a will to live: "Ce fut alors que je naquis, à l'âge de deux ans et demi, en février 1970, dans les montagnes du Kansai, au village de Shukugawa, sous

les yeux de ma grand-mère paternelle, par la grâce du chocolat blanc” (Nothomb, 2000). The girl still recognizes herself as God, but now from the first person singular. At the forefront of the conflict field in the novel “Métaphysique des tubes”, A. Nothomb puts a conflict of self-identification and a person's attitude with a confused consciousness. Born with a developmental defect, Amelie is deprived of the possibility to realize life processes for two and a half years. The manifestation of ungained personality in the text is the narrative movable instance of the narrator: from “nothing” to “just at once” – from the third indirect person, through unity with the reader (s), to the decisive “I”, which the character associates with God. A confusion of the girl's consciousness varies from the diagnosis made by the doctors “apathie pathologique” (Nothomb, 2000) to “irritation pathologique” (Nothomb, 2000). Reflecting what could cause this case, Amelie justifies the theory of accidents, but with an unusual side for humanity – as an engine of evolution. However, in her understanding, these are not ordinary accidents that occur every day: “Si quelqu'un osait dire: ‘C'est par accident que, vers l'âge d'un an, j'ai fait mes premiers pas’ ou: ‘C'est par accident qu'un jour, l'homme a joué au bipède’, il serait aussitôt considéré comme fou” (Nothomb, 2000). Instead, she means “internal” accidents that occur in the human mind, that determine her further behaviour: “Il y a les accidents physiques et les accidents mentaux. Les gens nient carrément l'existence de ces derniers: on n'en parle jamais comme moteur de l'évolution. <...> Il peut aussi arriver que l'accident mental soit sécrété par le cerveau lui-même: ce sont les accidents les plus mystérieux et les plus graves. Une circonvolution de matière grise, sans motif, donne naissance à une idée terrible, à une pensée effarante – et en une seconde, c'en est fini pour toujours de la tranquillité de l'esprit. Le virus opère. Impossible de l'enrayer. Alors, contraint et forcé l'être sort de sa torpeur. A la question affreuse et informulable qui l'a assailli, il cherche et trouve mille réponses inadéquates. Il se met à marcher, à parler, à adopter cent attitudes inutiles par lesquelles il espère s'en sortir. Non seulement il ne s'en sort pas, mais il empire son cas. Plus il parle, moins il comprend, et plus il marche, plus il fait du surplace. Très vite, il regrettera sa vie larvaire, sans oser se l'avouer” (Nothomb, 2000). Therefore, the child painfully accepts everything that happens to her: a lack of attention from adults is compensated in her mind by a complex of greatness, carps in a pond, whose jaws reminded her a pipe, stirred up the girl's memories of her own “tubular” existence that frightened her until she lost a sense of reality. A similar fear of losing Japan, and with it a “manifestation of good” – Nisio-san, entrenches in her the absurdity of existence in general and the lack of fear of death. The falling action of the novel takes the character's conflict to a

substantive level, where Amelie's life returns to an existential form "not-being", however, this time, with her full awareness of her own "non-existence".

Among the motives that determine the originality of the plot of the novel "Métaphysique des tubes", one should distinguish an autobiographical motive of the childhood, depicted by the writer in an inextricable connection with the motive of its divine nature. Even a child with autism is compared with God throughout the novel: "Dieu avait les yeux perpétuellement ouverts et fixes. <...> Dieu était l'absolue satisfaction. Il ne voulait rien, n'attendait rien, ne percevait rien, ne refusait rien et ne s'intéressait à rien. <...> Elle ne croyait pas en moi. C'était l'unique Japonaise qui n'acceptait pas la religion nouvelle. Elle me détestait" (Nothomb, 2000). It seems that such an attraction to exclusivity, solipsistic world perception is a result of the child's loneliness who unknowingly tries to compensate both her birth defect and the lack of attention. Having learned the pleasure, the girl reveals all the verges of life. She eagerly tries to catch up with the time, lost in "not-being". The motive of pleasure is introduced into the plot of the novel in the form of a Belgian white chocolate that the only one is able to "move" the consciousness of Amelie-plant: "ça fond sur la langue, ça tapisse le palais, il en a plein la bouche – et le miracle a lieu" (Nothomb, 2000). A sense of satisfaction plays a major role in the character's self-awareness and makes sense of her life: "A quoi bon se tuer à naître si ce n'est pour connaître le plaisir?" (Nothomb, 2000). Amelie enjoys everything that surrounds her: Nisio-san, who allows the girl to get closer to Japan, nature: a sea, a pond, a moonlit night and a barking of a dog, etc. However, the only thought about the possibility of losing "Japanese happiness" again deprives her of the opportunity to feel pleasure and triggers in her mind skepticism to life that grows in hatred and gravity toward death. A mortal motif, present in all the novels by A. Nothomb, here is infused with the existential world perception. The girl's life begins with "not-being", through pleasure she perceives the world, that separates her from the environment, and deprived of pleasure and bliss, she again returns to the starting point, unable to reconcile with everything that is real for others. The motive of death also affects secondary images of the heroes: Amelie reflects on her grandmother's death, on the stories told by Nisio-san about bombing that extinguished people, on the death of Nisio-san's sister. Then, the idyllic world in the garden is filled with a sense of death: "Il n'est plus cet écrin qui me protégeait, cet enclos de perfection. Il contient la mort" (Nothomb, 2000). Three times being saved from physical death, Amelie does not avoid existential crisis by means of which the writer ends the novel.

The novel is full of the oriental motive inherent in most of A. Nothomb's works, which depicts the elegance and majesty of everything Japanese, then grows in confrontation with the Western world order, dualizing the character's consciousness.

The image of the Amelie's character in the "Métaphysique des tubes" takes on the features of an autobiographical hero, narrating certain moments of the author's life experience, and a tragic hero who faces her own inability to adapt to the existing world order and loses interest in life. The writer gives a phenomenal and mystical image of Amelie, which results in an existential motive. From the very birth of the hero named Amelie turns to be special for her environment. The author symbolizes her appearance with the beginning of the world, giving her, in such way, a particle of the divine as the primary force. Specifically reproducing a biblical myth about the creation of the world, the author returns to the literary heritage boundaries of the turn of the 20th – 21st centuries a connection with literary and religious tradition and appeals to the general human consciousness. The prologue depicts a desacralized image of God, metaphorically close to the tube. At the same time, she reveals firmness of the divine image, because she does not move, though she can: "Dieu avait la souplesse du tuyau mais demeurait rigide et inerte, confirmant ainsi sa nature de tube" (Nothomb, 2000).

But later it becomes clear to the reader that the narration is from the first person, that is, on behalf of the character, which indicates a complete and clear consciousness, to an awareness of her condition and things that surround her. Thus, the writer endues an image of the child with extraordinary qualities of thought, analysis and reaction that is beyond adults' understanding. The main principle of childhood in the novel is a pleasure of life, which is opposed to the rational manner of being an adult: "Il existe depuis très longtemps une immense secte d'imbéciles qui opposent sensualité et intelligence. C'est un cercle vicieux: ils se privent de volupté pour exalter leurs capacités intellectuelles, ce qui a pour résultat de les appauvrir. Ils deviennent de plus en plus stupides, ce qui les conforte dans leur conviction d'être brillants, car on n'a rien inventé de mieux que la bêtise pour se croire intelligent" (Nothomb, 2000). The writer emphasizes that children have a sense of beauty, which is determined by an infant trust. The factors that subsequently spoil relations between people are a subjective life experience, stereotypes and clichés, as its consequence. It is also important that the child believes in herself in the absence of negative lessons in the past, as well as belief in supernatural, not even knowing what it is. The girl's natural state of the environment is presented as a result of its supernatural properties: "Un soir, j'avais dit, à une tige surmontée d'un bouton: "Fleuris". Le lendemain, c'était devenu une pivoine blanche en pleine déflagration. Pas de doute, j'avais des

pouvoirs" (Nothomb, 2000). A first trip to the sea becomes one of the most important and most striking impressions of the writer, experienced in childhood. In the novel, a sea expresses a perception of the child as a divine principle: "Le fluide s'empara de moi et me jucha à sa surface. Je poussai un hurlement de plaisir et d'extase. Majestueuse comme Saturne avec ma bouée pour anneau, je restai dans l'eau des heures durant. Il fallut m'en retirer de force" (Nothomb, 2000). A sudden accident that happened with the child, underlines the fearless and voluntary acceptance of death, a feature, which Titans and superhuman beings have in mythology. Gradually, Amelie realizes that childhood, as time of carelessness and eternal rest, will pass. Ahead – anxieties and trials. Raised in an atmosphere of love and temper, she freezes with changes and possible challenges. She feels like a ruler who is taken from the beautiful Garden of Eden. Perceiving this as the end of life, she formulates a certain, similar to the old conservative postulate: "Ce qui t'a été donné te sera repris: c'est la règle" (Nothomb, 2000).

During the first three years of life, Amelie, the main character, demonstrates an unchildish psycho-emotional organization, she experiences crisis conditions from insults, a desire to commit suicide because of injustice and lack of understanding of her own nature by adults. In the falling action of the novel, after attempts to die of her own hand, she realizes: "L'existence ne m'a jamais ennuyée, mais qui me dit que cela n'eût pas été plus intéressant de l'autre côté?" (Nothomb, 2000). Child's reflections on the value of life show a huge gap in the understanding between parents and children that resulted in loneliness and fatality of the child's consciousness, where fear of an adult life originates.

Analytical analysis of the novel "Métaphysique des Tubes" proves generic and genre transformations at the level of the overlap of epic literature and drama including genre features of a novel and a short story; highlights the functioning of the intrigue as a semantic and a plot-organizing author's device to establish communication with the reader; reveals the evolution of the image of the character Amelie in the light of the idea of the individual's self-realization: overcoming the inner deep psychological conflict of personality; emphasizes a new type of a hero, created by the author as a specific tragic-dramatic image, the tragedy of which is unveiled through the device of psychologization, and drama – in its evolution, which, unlike the epic hero, is most clearly implemented in the falling action through moralistic load.

The novel "Métaphysique des Tubes" differs by a specific thematic and problematic synthesis, which is based on the author's own life experience: writer's psychologically tense childhood, aptitude to Oriental culture as the result of the unforgettable

impression in the childhood, the East-West opposition, that reflects author's subjective national uncertainty, an experience of having deep depression and morbid psyche. The theme of violence, coercion, is determined by the experience of living in totalitarian countries, is present in all the writer's works, in particular at the level of psychoemotional background of the plots. Autistic states of depression, bipolar disorders are embodied in the writer's works in the idea of the existence of "another", as she calls it, the inner enemy in the consciousness of everyone, who the conflict will be infinite with, to the last drop of one's blood.

The analysis of the originality of the novel code in the novel by Amelie Nothomb reflects the expressive process of the genre-generic synthesis, which extends their image-expressive features. Genre and stylistic features of the novel "Métaphysique des Tubes" are derived from difficult chronotope, created by mapping and antithesis of time-space layers. The writer opposes realistic and idyllic chronotopes, building artistic reality at their borders. A realistic chronotope in the novel has usual daily characteristics, lasts monotonously and routine, creating a sense of intolerance of existence and existential crisis of a personality. An idyllic chronotope, opposed to it, represents the author's vision of happiness, harmony and freedom, when time slows down, every minute of life is sensibly marked. Author's time-space organization of the novel is complicated by chronotopic models of art, love and metamorphosis transformation of the characters of the novel often occurs under conditions of chronotopic delirium, agony, catharsis... All of this suggests the presence of the features of existentialistic world perception that distinguishes the novels by A. Nothomb of popular literature. The plot of the novel tends towards the classical structure, which, of course, includes exposition, rising action, climax, falling action and epilogue, where the writer often formulates her final, insitative for the reader opinion. It is linear, structured and is close to concentric type. The plot of the novel is full of psychological conflicts and metamorphoses, which predetermine the evolution of images.

The study of the conflicts in the novel shows the weakening of the tendencies of a historical, social or everyday conflict. Instead of this, the writer focuses on a profound psychological, biographically determined conflict of the personality. The motif analysis of the novel distinguishes the core motif of the childhood, which even acquires the features of the meta motif of the writer's creative work. A. Nothomb proves the significance of this period of life for the formation and development of the characters' temper. In the novel, one can find the motive of death, which serves as the logical premonitory sign of the final stage of "initiation" (physical or symbolic

death), as well as the motif of art, that raise a question of the ambivalence of talent and recognition, genius and villainy, cultural evolution or regression.

Every image, created by A. Nothomb embodies definite social or private psychological phenomenon of human destiny, and it is precisely its embodiment in the image of a particular person that helps to consider it as a general problem, stimulates the search for an answer that the reader must find for himself. Extension of the images is achieved by adding elements of clinical psychology. The writer covers dominant installations and their sources, such as religion, science, power, civilization, society, family, etc., indicates the mechanism that distorts individual's perception. She claims that in the process of formation, establishment and realization of a personality, among key factors are: correct sexual education, ethnocultural and national identity, social and gender recognition of personality.

The analysis of the character's image confirms the presence of the matrix of novel-initiation. As the initiating genre code requires, a character is an embodiment of not "playing" personality, but the person in search of a certain "truth". Skillfully created, the image of the girl evokes empathy of the reader, successfully implementing the communicative idea of the writer, which determines the psycho-emotional impact on the recipient. Intensive psychologization shows author's confidence: the illnesses of the individual are caused by the drawbacks of the society, and the person has almost nothing from the genetic heritage; it is the product of education, training and social reflexes.

The analysis of the novel, at the level of problem and composition, revealed a leading matrix that corresponds to the genre code of the novel-initiation, which involves three obligatory stages: preparation for tests, basic tests for the purpose of obtaining higher knowledge and symbolic death with subsequent rebirth. Writer's choice of the ideological and genre concept of the novel-initiation is seen as the result of the strengthening of the personal origin in the literature at the beginning of the 21st century, coming round to the search of the truth and meaning of life.

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