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THE BIBLE IN THE NOVELS OF SYLVIE GERMAIN

Summary. The proposed article examines one of the key aspects of the work of the modern French writer Sylvie Germain, namely, her focus on leitmotifs, in particular, on the leitmotif of the Bible. Sylvie Germain developed such a structural component as a leitmotif in the form of a plane of accumulation of many philosophical meanings, changing in her own way the classical idea of the structural structure of a philosophical novel. Among the leitmotifs to which the French author turns most often is the leitmotif of the Bible. The article proves that the leitmotif of the Bible is first stated in the novel «The Book of Nights» by Sylvie Germain, but as a kind of narrative «engine» it is manifested in another of her works – «The Amber Night». In the end, the authors of the article prove that the peak manifestation of the leitmotif of the Bible is found in the novel «Immensities» by Sylvie Germain, the entire narrative structure of which can be interpreted as the author's paraphrase of the first sentences of the Gospel from St. Apostle John that «God was the Word». Sylvie Germain's favourite artistic techniques – quotation and allegory – are analysed separately. The article also outlines an important point – the «unorthodoxy» of the writer's interpretation of biblical motifs, due to which she was criticized by the Catholic Church in the past. From the writings of Sylvie Germain, it is quite clear that the Bible plays a key role not only as the «building material» of her books – it is truly the foundational Book of her life. The French author «lives», interprets, accepts or does not accept every moment of the Holy Scriptures. In the conclusion of the article, it is outlined that the leitmotif as the main narrative form of Sylvie Germain's novels encompasses the entire depth of the philosophical nature of her texts, and the cross-cutting motives of her work are imbued with deep philosophy, presenting in the person of the writer a person with an optimistic worldview who wanted to write a new, postmodern version of sacred history as humanity in general, as well as each individual person in particular.

Key words: leitmotif, Bible, book, intertextuality, quote, allegory, narrative.

Introduction. The writer Sylvie Germain (born in 1954) is a brilliant representative of contemporary French literature, who cannot be attributed only to women's prose as such. The complex artistic world she has presented in her novels cannot be interpreted

only on the basis of gender literary researches, as this would impoverish its content.

One of the most distinctive features of her writing is her focus on leitmotifs. Sylvie Germain has invented the structural component (the leitmotif) as an area of accumulation of philosophical meanings, having completely changed the classical idea of the structure of a philosophical novel. Therefore, the analysis of such an artistic structure should be carried out based on the characteristics of the new philosophical prose that we, in fact, for the first time suggest to consider as the methodological approach in the analysis of the French philosophical novel. Among the leitmotifs to which Sylvie Germain refers most often is the leitmotif of the Bible.

The methodological basis of our research is the thematology and philosophy of literature, as well as hermeneutics and narratology.

The theoretical basis of our research is the concept of fragmentarity of the postmodern novel form by D. Zaton'skyi, T. Denysova, V. Fesenko and the concept of actualization of marginal thematic elements of the text in the works of M. Abrams, M. Bakhtin, G. Bashlyar, T. Bovsunivska, N. Zykhoivska and others.

The practical significance of the research consists in the analysis of one of the key leitmotifs of Sylvie Germain's prose, and more broadly in the presentation of her creative personality on the Ukrainian cultural ground.

The main outline of the research. Sylvie Germain first states the leitmotif of the Bible in the «Book of Nights». Meanwhile this leitmotif has furthermore been extended in another novel, the «Night of Amber». One of the epigraphs to the novel is also taken from the Bible, notably from the Book of Genesis. From direct references to the Bible, the writer makes the allegorical interpretations of the events from the global sacred history of mankind perspective, which are relevant to biblical texts. Sylvie Germain's interpretation of the Bible is distinguished by its allegorical nature and is reflected in fragmentary forms of the intertextuality. The sacred attitude to the Holy Scriptures in her works does not cause denial anywhere, but it should be noted that the writer willingly interprets the old texts, and reveals in them the secrets, the universal codes, which became the basis of her textual mystification.

In the epigraph, Sylvie Germain uses the biblical text to explain the origin of the Peniel family. By the way, only the epigraph explains the author's choice of the Peniel family, because it reveals their sacred chosenness. Moreover, the place where they live is the place where a human being has seen the God. The Biblical quotes are well embedded into the night vision of Tade, who is in awe of love. In the novel the sacred lines are continued in the ancient pagan dance of the Great Mother, which is the humble combination of a Christian sacral text with a purely primitive understanding of the divinity. The deepening and complicating of the biblical text at the expense of the fantastic fragments of the present is one of the hypostases of the textual mystification formation.

The writer interprets the biblical legend about Noah and his ark in a non-traditional way. The ark is loaded with soldiers going to Algeria for war. This scene outside the biblical interpretation would remain realistic, even politicized, would never go beyond the realistic mode of writing.

Meanwhile Sylvie Germain intervenes in this human flock and forces the reader to realize the parallel between Noah's ark and the new one. By quoting the Bible, she focuses the reader on the epochal nature of what is happening and emphasizes the reverse paradigm of the of the new ark content, as Noah's ark was created to save the God creatures, and the new one was aimed at bringing people to Algeria for murder. And now, the new ark ceases to be a political action of France, and becomes a mystical ship into nothingness. In this case, the function of transforming the text and its mystification was performed by a quote from the Bible accompanied by the writer's comment. In the terrible war routine, the writer cries out with a mystical voice about God's revenge for the caused death: «They have left their land and crossed the sea, like the animals taken by Noah on board. But, in opposition to Noah, who ran from wickedness to restore the covenant between God and the flesh on the earth on the other side of the flood, they went to fight with others and even unwilling it, not even realizing it, they have confirmed the forgiveness of the covenant and the complete loss of brotherhood. «And only I will desire your blood from your souls, I will desire it from the hand of every beast, and from the hand of man, from the hand of every brother, I will desire the human soul». The war could completely change the place, change the form, change the weapons and soldiers, however its adjective was always unchanged – every time and for everyone – to steal the soul from the hand of man, from the hand of his» [1, p. 128].

Sylvie Germain reveals the mystical truths of the divine word, she stands up for the sacred in man. The quoted fragments from the Bible made the structure of her novel even more fragile, but this only concerns the problem of shaping the form from the point of view of classical novel patterns. As for the meaningful coherence of the novel, the frequent quotations from the Bible clearly harmonize the text, directing the reader's consciousness to the only true path of the knowledge of the world, guided by the sacred indicator. This is mystical path to the truth that the characters do not notice. It becomes visible only to the reader, which is one of the paradigms of the mystification of the text by Sylvie Germain. The mysticism grows here on the basis of the contextual interpretation within the leitmotif of the Bible. The leitmotif of Noah's ark also appears from the image of Ornkar: «The people are like the Noah's ark, and everyone carries within himself a sample of every kind of animal» [1, p. 201]. Ornkar, who thought he was a metamorphic animal, suddenly returns us to the semantics of Noah's ark in order to

emphasize the mystical nature of the man and his dependence on the sacred history of the mankind.

The figure of Ioz is constantly accompanied by biblical motifs and direct quotations, as he is in a state of testing human nature, he is forced to commit murders that are disgusting to him, he is forced to see the consequences of the war, he is forced to hate and seek for blood. Watching the eleven bloodless bodies, Adrien heard an immaculate scream and «let him into his anger», asking for revenge. The anatomy of human cruelty and crime of murder, is analysed in the novel through Adrien's worldview. Sylvie Germain forces the reader to go through all the paths of his wartime suffering, motivating the appearance of the feeling of thirst of enemy blood and the desire to kill. She seems to rewrite a biblical story, since Adrien is accompanied by a quote from the Bible. At the moment of his anger, the author cites the following: «Because his blood is among him, he placed it on the rock, did not pour it on the ground to cover it with dust. To raise the fury, to take revenge, I will give his blood to the rock, so that it will be uncovered» [2, Esdras, 24: 7–8].

Finally, the biblical semantics of the stamp of Cain appears in the novel in relation to the image of the Night of Amber-Fiery Wind». Cain's leitmotif appears when the hero begins to realize the depth of the tragedy hidden in the crime he committed by murdering Roselen. The Night of Amber-Fiery Wind cultivates the fields, but nothing grows, he works in the garden, but there is no harvest, the earth recoils from him. The earth became his most sincere witness. No man was willing to make him responsible for his committed crime, only the earth can do that. God's Judgment is higher than human judgment. Having prevented the judgment of man the Night of Amber cannot bypass the God's Judgment. Cain's forgiveness burns his soul: «The Cain's forgiveness, from which he so wanted to escape, still reached him, the fields rejected his hands' work, the roads dropped his footsteps, the animals fell ill» [1, p. 298]. It becomes infertile, the bodyness of the Night of Amber turns out to be connected with spirituality, the waste of which results in limiting the functionality of the flesh. The mystical turns out to be stronger than the visible and real: it is more real and inevitable.

The image of the Night of Amber is also related to the rethinking of the biblical thesis that «in the beginning was the Word». The first day of God's creation of the world is described through the birth of light: «And God saw the light, that it was good, and God separated the light from the darkness» [2, Matthew, 1: 1, 4]. The black soul of the Night of Amber rewrites the Bible in its own way, re-creates the world where the darkness becomes dominant: «In the beginning there was the Darkness, and this darkness contained the Mountain Night and the Valley Darkness in the chaos of its black womb. One tore the other apart, fertilized it with its desire, rage and scream. In the beginning there was the Darkness. It never started, and it started constantly and to the infinity. In the end there will be the Darkness. The end, which is always here, forever and ever» [1, p. 182]. Here we have, so called, biblical poetics vice versa, where the positive component of the «light-darkness» dichotomy is replaced by the negative one. The eternal book written by the hero's soul can only be filled with darkness, so the world synthesized by him also plunges into eternal darkness, into eternal chaos. The pro-biblical stylistics of this piece of text is a deliberate formation, since the character thinks of himself as a co-creator of the world, but the world he created has the characteristics of nothingness, deprived of the solar worldview. This is the world of a person who experienced a crisis of divinity and fell out of the sacred

history of mankind. This anti-Bible is written by a man who himself is a darkness.

In the novel «Immensities» (1994) by Sylvie Germain, the semantic development of the anti-Bible motif reaches its peak. The word, as a moment of creation, is interpreted by the dissident Prokop Pope: «Written words, which had an amazing density, materialized already at the moment of reading. Every word was turned into a drop of rain, sun, wind and became a flower – a flower made of pebbles, lichens and ivy» [3, p. 34]. The creative power of the living word is the only thing that Prokop, being neglected by society, believes in. After all, he can only believe in the power of the word. Even the thought of the value of words carries the hero into the world of meditation, to the world of magical transformations of essence. In the system of his worldview, the word becomes the area of creation, it is both the demiurge and the object of creation. The philosophy of the word as a creation in the novel «Immensities» grows on the basis of cultural studies, because the hero loves exquisite literature, he loves world literature because it also represents the plane of his own freedom. According to Procopius Pope, the word in culturogenesis always becomes an act of creation if it is filled with a living spirit, regardless of man or God.

Conclusions. The leitmotif as the main narrative form of Sylvie Germain, covers the entire depth of the philosophy of her texts. The cross motifs of her works are imbued with cosmogonic-level philosophy and represent the writer as a person with a generally optimistic (or moderate) worldview who wanted to write a new, postmodern version of the sacred history of mankind.

References:

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Баняс В. В., Баняс Н. Ю. Біблія в романах Сильві Жермен

Анотація. У запропонованій статті розглядається один із ключових аспектів творчості сучасної французької письменниці Сильві Жермен, а саме – її зосередженість на лейтмотивах, зокрема, на лейтмотиві Біблії. Сильві Жермен розвинула такий структурний компонент, як лейтмотив, у вигляді площини накопичення багатьох філософських сенсів, по-своєму змінивши класичне уявлення про структурну будову філософського роману. Серед лейтмотивів, до яких французька авторка звертається найчастіше, є лейтмотив Біблії. У статті доводиться, що лейтмотив Біблії вперше заявлений у романі «Книга ночей» Сильві Жермен, але як своєрідний наративний «двигун» він проявлений в іншому її творі – «Бурштиновій ночі». Зрештою, автори статті доводять, що вершинний прояв лейтмотив Біблії знаходить у романі «Безмірність» Сильві Жермен, усю наративну структуру якого можна інтерпретувати як авторський парафраз перших речень Євангелія від Св. Апостола Івана про те, що «Бог був Словом». Окремо аналізуються улюблені художні прийоми Сильві Жермен – цитата й алегорія. Також у статті окреслено важливий момент – «неортодоксальність» осмислення письменницею біблійних мотивів, через що вона в минулому зазнавала критики від Католицької Церкви. Із творів Сильві Жермен цілком очевидно, що Біблія відіграє ключову роль не тільки як «будівельний матеріал» її книг – це справді основоположні Книга її життя. Майже кожен момент Святого Письма французька авторка «проживає», осмислює, приймає або не приймає. У висновку статті окреслюється, що лейтмотив як основна наративна форма романів Сильві Жермен охоплює всю глибину філософічності її текстів, а наскрізні мотиви її творчості пройняті глибокою філософічністю, презентуючи в особі письменниці особу з оптимістичним світоглядом, яка захотіла написати нову, постмодерну версію сакральної історії як людства загалом, так і кожної окремої людини зокрема.

Ключові слова: лейтмотив, Біблія, книга, інтертекстуальність, цитата, алегорія, наратив.