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THE ROLE OF NATIONAL ONOMASTIC TRADITIONS IN THE NAMING OF LITERARY CHARACTERS

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Anthroponyms constitute an integral part of a literary text. They interact with all the components of a work of art, providing a full-scale transmission of the author's semantic attitudes and intentions. To extract the information that is transmitted by means of anthroponyms, it is necessary to penetrate into the deep essence of a work of art, as well as to analyze the national onomastic tradition, which the writer relies upon when inventing names for his characters. Since the subject of the research in this work is the use of anthroponyms in English literature, it is necessary to give an overview of the English anthroponymic system in general. As noted in the works of many researchers (K. B. Zaitseva, M. V. Gorbanevsky, A. V. Superanskaya, D. I. Ermolovich, O. A. Leonovich, L. M. Shchetinin and others), the constituents of the English anthroponymy are traditionally represented by nicknames, personal names, middle names and surnames.

The nickname is considered to be «the most ancient anthroponymic unit» [1, p. 22], the genetic source of other types of names. The semantics of nicknames usually corresponds to the actual characteristics of their original bearers. Since ancient times, nicknames have been used mainly in the oral folk tradition. The written registration of hereditary nicknames as verbal signs complementing personal names underlies the emergence of family names.

The personal name is the earliest documented onomastic category [2, p. 6]. The historical source is represented by common nouns used as nicknames to designate certain persons. Even in the pre-Christian period, a rather narrow circle of words and morphemes was formed in the Old English language, combinations of which were used as personal names. The number of these names became even more limited with the introduction of Christianity. Their composition periodically changed under the influence of various factors of a socio-historical and cultural nature. So, after the Norman Conquest in 1066, Germanic names (Richard, Robert, William) and biblical names (John, Thomas, Peter) became widespread. Puritans of the XVI-XVII centuries, in order to distinguish their own people from the mass of atheists, gave them Latin names of their own inditing (Beata → happy, Donatus → given, Desideratus → desired, Renovata → renewed) or English self-penned names (Much-Mercede → merciful, Sin-denie → move away from sin, Fear-not → do not be afraid). At the time of Oliver Cromwell, names derived from appellatives were popular: Comfort → comfort, Memory → memory, Ocean → ocean. Also in the 17th century, it was fashionable to assign widespread surnames as personal names to children when baptized, for example Pickering or

Збірник наукових праць

Wotton. In the 18th century, interest in Gothic increased and Old English and medieval names revived (Edwin, Alfred, Emma). In the 19th century, under the influence of literature, for example, the popular novels of Walter Scott, such names as Quentin, Guy, Roland, Rowena and Cedric came to life. The tendency of the twentieth century was the desire of parents to give their children the names of popular film actors, for example, Marlene (after the German actress Marlene Dietrich) or Gary (after the American film actor Gary Cooper). This process of anthroponymic creativity is likely to be continued today.

Geographical names, common nouns and artificial combinations of sounds are often used as middle names. But more often than not, middle names are the names of people after whom their children are named [3, p. 121]. O. A. Leonovich notes that all seven sons of Charles Dickens received the surname of a certain celebrity as a middle name, for example, one of the sons was called Henry Fielding Dickens (in honor of the English writer Henry Fielding) [2, p. 11].

Surnames represent the largest group of anthroponyms in the English language. Their predecessors are nicknames, as well as full and abbreviated forms of personal names. The first act of the emergence of a family name was the documentary registration of a personal nickname in 1086 during the First Census [2, p.21]. By that time, four types of nicknames had already developed, which formed the basis of the classification of surnames: 1) nicknames describing bearers according to their place of residence or birth (local surnames), for example, Brook → stream, Cliff → steep rock, Dale → valley; 2) nicknames describing bearers according to their professions or occupations (professional/occupational surnames), for example, Tailor → someone making fitted clothes, Smith → someone making and repairing things made of iron, Forester → someone in charge of a forest; 3) nicknames assigned to bearers according to their fathers' personal names (patronymic surnames), for example, Thomas, Peters, Willson; 4) nicknames describing bearers according to their appearance or personal qualities (descriptive surnames), for example, Whitehead → white-haired, Slyman → trickish or crafty [1, p. 23].

Let us consider the representation of the components of English national anthroponymy in the comedies of Richard Brinsley Sheridan «The School for Scandal» and «The Rivals». The study has shown that it is surnames that are most often used by the author to identify his characters (62.1%), for example, Mrs Pickle, Mr Faulkland, Mrs Candour, etc. The use of the combination of a personal name and a surname to identify the characters constitutes 24.3%, for example, Sir Thomas Splint, Sir Harry Bumper, Jack Gauge, etc. The smallest number is the use of personal names only (13.6%) for anthroponomination. It is known that the English anthroponymic tradition presupposes the use of at least two components in a real life anthroponymic model: a personal name and a surname [3, p. 119]. But due to the fact that a drama work is always limited in size, most characters receive only a surname, which, unlike a personal name, not only names the character, but also often characterizes him. In addition, the use of a surname makes even an episodic character significant in a particular situation. And since a play consists of situations replacing each other, in each of which its own secondary character may appear, in order to draw the reader's attention to this person and not to create confusion, most of the characters are named with the help of surnames. In accordance with the historically entrenched typology of English national anthroponomastics, surnames are always more original than personal names, the number of which is limited by traditions.

In the plays under discussion there are a lot of descriptive surnames. These surnames often indicate the specific features of a character's appearance, for example, Mrs. Pursy (pursy → obese), Miss Sallow (sallow → yellowish, sickly), Lady Slattern (slattern → a dirty and untidy person),

Text et culture. Bunyck 7.

Miss Simper (simper → a smug or silly smile), Mr De-la-grace (grace → elegance). The last name indicates not only the connection between the appearance and profession of the character (a dance teacher), but also the nationality (French). Contrasting pairs of anthroponyms are often used, the etymology of which enhances the comicality of the situation, as in the description below, where there is the description of the appearance of two ladies, one of whom skillfully hides the traces of time on her face (Mrs. Evergreen → evergreen → denoting a person that constantly retains good looks), and the other one does not pay attention to her appearance at all (widow Ocher → ocher → denoting a person with an earthy face colour):

Well, well, if Mrs. Evergreen does take some pains to repair the ravages of time, you must allow she effects it with great ingenuity; and surely that's better than the careless manner in which the widow Ochre caulks her wrinkles [4, p.26].

There are many descriptive surnames that indicate the main feature of a character's disposition or behavior which is reflected contextually, for example:

'Lord!' cries my Lady Wormwood (who loves tattle, and puts much salt and pepper in her prattle) [4, p. 12];

Lady Wormwood → wormwood → bitterness or the source of bitterness.

In the common course of things, I think, it must reach Mrs Clackitt's ears within four-and-twenty hours; and then, you know, the business is as good as done [4, p.13].

Mrs Clackitt → to clack → to talk a mile a minute or to talk loudly.

Thus, national onomastic traditions are always crucial for writers' choices of names for their characters. But there are a great many other factors which can change the traditional approach to naming literary characters. One of them is connected with genre peculiarities of a literary text. As has been mentioned above, the anthroponymic space of R. Sheridan's drama works is represented by such onomastic units as a surname and a personal name. The largest number of nominations is represented by surnames used by the author to designate his characters. Two-component nominations of characters (a personal name and a surname) are used less often, although according to the British anthroponymic tradition this method of naming people is the most common one. The smallest number of anthroponymic nominations is represented by personal names. Nicknames and middle names are not found in R. Sheridan's comedies. The predominance of surnames is due not only to the preferences of the author, but also to the peculiarities of the genre of drama.

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4. Sheridan R.B. The School for Scandal [play], London, 1898. 76 p.