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BINARY OPPOSITION EAST/WEST IN THE STORY BY S. MAUGHAM "BEFORE THE PARTY"

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ABSTRACT

The article analyzes the representation of the binary conceptual opposition "East/West" with a clearly expressed authorial modality. The story presents a new type of Englishman on the "edge of the empire" with a typical marriage story and a characteristic vice. The author is ironic in relation to the Skinner family, for whom external attributes and people's opinions are much more important than natural participation in the tragedy of the daughter.

Keywords: opposition "east/west", ritual, costume, landscape, social status "Englishman"

Introduction: Interest in the biography of S. Maugham, his special place among English writers does not subside in the modern world. Proof of this is the solid "Maugham Encyclopedia" (Rogal S. J. Somerset Maugham encyclopedia: Westport, Connecticut, London: Greenwood Press, 1997. - 376p.), which is a guide to the life of the writer: "The sections on his circle of acquaintances, on the places he visited are quite interesting - all this is reflected in the writer's works (Sedova 2010:12).

The list of the writer's eastern travels is impressive; Maugham visited some countries of the East more than once, saw the peculiarities of the quality of life, the uniqueness of the relationship between European officials and the local population, the degree of adaptation of the English in the spaces of the "outskirts of the empire". In the eastern stories, the author raises a complex problem (not from a social point of view, but from a psychological one) of the means of survival of a person subject to vice: "Dark secrets in the lives of heroes are revealed, the covers of external decency are thrown off, behind the hypocrisy of a smile, the emptiness of conversations and deeds lie deception and crime, suffering and tragedy" (Mikhalskaya 1989: 15).

In the story by S. Maugham "Before the Party" a family tragedy that happened in Borneo and the reaction to it in London of Millicent's relatives is shown. We believe that taking into account the experience of the traveler S. Maugham, his interest in such extraordinary stories, it is possible to single out the binary opposition "East/West" as the basis of the writer's conceptual sphere: "The artistic text is the space of the author's cognitive-creative self-determination" (Vitkovskaya 2012:48).

S. Maugham seems to collide two worlds: the family of a hereditary lawyer who followed tradition; rituals that did not allow a mistake in clothing, and the madness of a drinking son-in-law in Borneo. In the minds of the Skinner family, the East is exotic objects that the son-in-law brought as gifts. In this regard, in our opinion, the understanding of the concept of "East" by Millicent's family occurs only through exotic objects, a romantic perception of her upon arrival in Borneo, the high social status of the resident's wife, and then the bitter truth about her husband's vice. The concept of "West" is expressed in the story in many ways, which emphasizes the mentality of the Englishman: "concepts are those ideal, abstract units, the meanings of which a person operates in the process of thinking. They reflect the content of the knowledge obtained, experience, the results

of all human activities and the results of his cognition of the surrounding world in the form of certain units, "quanta" of knowledge. A person thinks in concepts" (Boldyrev 2002: 23-24). Therefore, we can conclude that S. Maugham thinks in terms of the concepts of "east/west", making their opposition plot-forming in the story "Before the Party". It should be noted that the translator E. Kalashnikova adds another shade of Anglicism to the title, the famous British ritual "An hour before five o'clock". It should be noted that S. G. Vorkachev notes "experience" among the characteristics of the concept (concepts must be emotionally experienced); semiotic density…. and synonymized symbols (works of art, rituals, behavioral stereotypes, objects of material culture", focus on the plane of expression" (Vorkachev 2001: 64). This quote is also a theoretical proof of our correct direction of the conceptual analysis of S. Maugham's story.

So, the concept of "East" in the perception of Millicent's family. The island of Borneo, where the son-in-law serves as a resident (the social status of an official), is perceived as a successful marriage of the daughter. Exotic gifts from Harold personify the island of Borneo: "She looked at the great wooden, hornbill, gaily painted… Malay weapons… and here and there on occasional tables pieces of silver and brass which Harold had sent to them" (Maugham 1990:121).During her first visit, Millicent perceives Borneo as a kind of fairy-tale country with beautiful landscapes and climate, friendly people, polite servants. S. Maugham emphasizes, that the heroine wants to stay in Kualo Solor, lived there for 8 years and studied Malay. Her husband Harold fits into the island's space with his knowledge of the language and his habit of wearing a comfortable sarong at home. S. Maugham in his cycle of "Oriental Stories" creates a certain type of official living on the "edge of the empire". This scandal ended with Harold's vows to stop drinking, as Millicent announced that she was expecting a child. S. Maugham seems to list all the periods of Millicent's long-term patience and Harold's constant breakdowns. The last straw in her struggle will be her return with Joan after her illness and the disgusting picture of an insane Harold. Emotionally, this is expressed in disgust, vocabulary: "You best... like a log": "He was lying on his back with nothing on but a sarong and there was an empty whisky bottle by his side He was drunk" (Maugham 1990:142).

The concept of the "West" in the story "Before the Party" is expressed in a variety of ways.

1. The professional status of the head of the family: "He was a lawyer, as his father had been before him, and he had offices in Lincoin's Inn Fields" (Maugham 1990:122).

2. His attitude to a certain dress code at the canon's reception: "Father asked if I thought he ought to were a tophat ? … you've put on your new trousers … I was wondering if I should wear a buttonhole" (Maugham 1990:123). It is noteworthy that this outward adherence to the ritual of an English gentleman emphasizes the lack of sensitivity of the father, who not only does not delve into the psychological state of his daughter, but also distances himself from her problems at the end of the story.

3. The family's status is also supported by the gardener, who plays a role in such formal outings: "put on his uniform and acted as chauffeur" 4. Millicent's mother and sister are equally meticulous in choosing clothes for visiting "five o'clock" in the canon. S. Maugham is ironic in relation to Mrs. Skinner, her internal monologue demonstrates philistine thoughts. Reflecting on her daughter's mourning toilet and her ruined complexion, she thinks about her supposed widowhood: "….but if he didn't he would never go out of weeds. Queen Victoria never had" (Maugham 1990:124).

As we see, the writer again emphasizes only the external manifestations of English decent behavior. Neither mother nor sister want to understand Millicent's psychologically depressed state; if it were not for the bishop, who said that Harold committed suicide and did not die of fever. The bitter truth about the drunkard son-in-law does not suit the family at all, disrupts its well-being, and most importantly, deprives others of respect: "In a place like this are bound to talk" (Maugham 1990:130). The family does not need the truth about Harold's death, it shocks them, because it undermines the foundations of "such a decent family", therefore S. Maugham needs the reaction of each family member to what he heard from Millicent. The writer creates a kind of gradation of remarks and reactions, which characterize the father-lawyer, who utters remarks "in an icy tone", not approving of such behavior of his daughter from the position of a lawyer. Millicent first says about her husband that he is a hard-drinker. The reaction of Mrs. Skinner and Kathleen is predictable: "Don't cry, mother... It'll make your eyes red and people will think it so funny" (Maugham 1990:128). The behavior of relatives who are afraid of the truth, but should hear it from Millicent, and not from the canon, makes the widow (after eight months of silence) ironically evaluate their reaction. S. Maugham emphasizes "the shadow of a smile, an ironic look, and finally, complete detachment from relatives: "... she looked at them as though they were mannequins at a dressmaker's".

S. Maugham seems to concentrate the events in a clear sequence of situations that Millicent was forced to voice. The voiced memories of the murder make the widow experience it again so strongly that her face turns red, darkens from a rush of blood, she is forced to cling to the armrest of the chair so as not to fall. The reaction of relatives to the confessions of the murder of their daughter's husband psychologically reveals them to be people devoid of compassion. The father continues to perform only the functions of a lawyer: "I am a member of the legal professional ... You're put me in a monstrous position" (Maugham 1990: 145). The mother also does not sympathize with her daughter, she is worried about trifles: "What is a parang?" At the beginning of the story, the writer points out that the parang hangs on the wall in their English house as an exotic object, therefore the process of slow understanding of the mother is emphasized, which is expressed in an involuntary reaction: "Mrs. Skinner stood staring at her wide startled eyes, her mouth open" (Maugham 1990:143). Kathleen is more cynical about the tragedy, she thinks about the publicity, how her friends will react. Therefore, the family must go to the canon as if nothing has happened. Kathleen's assessment of the event expresses unanimity with her parents, rather than natural sympathy for her sister: "Oh, I think the whole thing is such a frightfully bad form" (Maugham 1990:145).

The only fact in Millicent's story that does not cause objection is that after Harold's death "the government assigned her a pension". S. Maugham makes the narration so "dense", based on the specific time of the trip to the canon, you can not be late. We believe that each short remark of a family member on Millicent's story is a deep characterization of the heroes, expressing the author's modality. 1. Mr. Scanner, limited in his professional status and external framework of a gentleman, who dares to distance himself from his daughter's tragedy: "I ought never to have been told. I think it was most selfish of you" (Maugham 1990:146). S. Maugham emphasizes his negative modality in relation to all family members belonging to the concept of "west".

We can summarize: the representation of the binary opposition "east / west" is expressed in the story, based on the author's modality and S. Maugham's experience.! The concept of "East" is

represented by a character whose appearance in literature was dictated by historical time - an Englishman "on the edge of the empire", the landscape of Borneo.

2. The concept of "West" is expressed in the story in many ways, which is emphasized by the mentality of the Englishman: costume, status, ritual, dependence on the opinion of the people of the area.

3. S. Maugham emphasizes his negative modality in relation to all members of the Skinner family, belonging to the concept of "West", who prefer not to delve into the tragedy of their daughter, so as not to harm the status of the family.

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