

INTERTEXTUALITY IN THE NOVEL "NICE WORK" BY DAVID LODGE

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"Nice Work" (1988) is the final novel of the campus trilogy, which includes novels "Changing Places: A Tale of Two Campuses" (1975) and "Small World: An Academic Romance" (1984). But unlike the previous two novels, David Lodge describes the British society of the 1980s, throwing together two people who have absolutely nothing in common. They are representatives of two different worlds, far apart. The leading characters are separated by the social background, as well as educational and cultural levels. Vic Wilcox is the manager of an engineering firm, and Robyn Penrose is a feminist university teacher specialising in the industrial novel and women's writing. Yet, the circle of Robyn's scientific interests is not a random choice of the writer. First of all, David Lodge himself worked as a professor at the University of Birmingham, where he taught English literature being particularly noted for his lectures on Victorian fiction. Besides, it is a delicate hint at the intertextuality of the novel.

According to O. Antsyferova "Nice Work" is, in fact, a unique synthesis of the academic and industrial novels [5]. These two worlds – the academic humanitarian world and the technical industrial world come in contact. Patricia Waugh, in her turn, considers it to be "a wryly, self-conscious intertextual condition-of-England novel" [2, p. 34].

It is widely known that the genre of industrial novel was popular in the Victorian literature. David Lodge alludes to it not just because he specialized in Victorian fiction, but because at the end of the XXth century many English writers were strongly reminiscent of the Victorian era. In his book "The Modern British Novel" (1993) Malcolm Bradbury referred to this phenomenon in the following way: "Retrospective fiction now became highly popular; indeed the return to the past began to assume near-epidemic proportions during the decade...In a time when Mrs Thatcher sought to restore "Victorian values", and Charles Dickens and Victorian classics enjoyed a striking publishing revival, a good number of writers...took to revisiting the era when individualism seemed stronger, the social realities clearer, and our modern history was shaping, frequently pastiching past novels or writers in this recuperative process." [1, p. 404]

Thus, the novel "Nice Work" is a fine intertextual game with industrial novels of the XIXth century, which mostly alludes to Elizabeth Gaskell's novel "North and South". Russian literary critic N. Solovyova even asserts that David Lodge rewrote the novel by E. Gaskell preserving its problematics and the main characters [6, p. 479].

In fact, Victorian industrial novel enters the text of the novel by David Lodge in two ways – by means of direct references to prototypical texts, and by means of academic novel itself (which is represented by Robyn Penrose, who interprets Victorian industrial novel in the spirit of feminist criticism). In "Nice Work", as in "North and South", the author develops two parallel narrative lines – the lines of Vic Wilcox and Robyn Penrose. Like E. Gaskell, D. Lodge focuses his attention on how human attitudes are changing under the influence of beliefs on the part of other people. The division of Britain into two camps – the northern (industrial) and southern (agricultural) in the novel by E. Gaskell develops in the novel "Nice Work" into the dispute between university and industry, "two nations; between whom there is no intercourse and no sympathy" [4, p. 9], as the one of the epigraphs to the novel concludes. Therefore, the novel by David Lodge is a contemporary "condition of England novel", which presents a modern view of how Britain is divided into two binary opposed camps.

In the meantime, the dominant type of intertextuality in the novel is intertextuality at the level of names and titles. For instance, both the author and the character of Robyn repeatedly refer to such novels as "North and South" by Elizabeth Gaskell, "Hard Times" and "Little Dorrit" by

Charles Dickens, "Shirley" by Charlotte Brontë, "Wuthering Heights" by Emily Brontë, "Sybil" by Benjamin Disraeli, "Felix Holt" by George Eliot, "Alton Locke" by Charles Kingsley, "Howards End" by E. M. Forster etc. A constant reference to these literary works raises the acute social problems of the formation of the industrial proletariat, and the industrial crises of the 1820th and 1830th, and consequently leads to a continuous relationship with the socio-economic situation in the United Kingdom in the mid 1980s.

The scene of the novel is the industrial city of Rummidge, a prototype of which is Birmingham, where the writer still lives. It is much like Milton in the novel "North and South", and Coketown in "Hard Times" (the prototype of both of which is Manchester). The main characters Vic Wilcox and Robyn Penrose are very similar to John Thornton and Margaret Hale ("North and South"), Robert Moore and Caroline Helstoun ("Shirley"), and Henry Wilcox and Margaret Schlegel ("Howards End"). The scene of strike as an essential element of industrial prose of the XIXth century also plays a crucial role in relations between the main characters of the novel "Nice Work", promoting their convergence. Plot schemes of Victorian novels, the contrast between the two worlds, the two types of thinking, technocratic and poetic (town and gown), parallelism in the presentation of the main characters – all this makes "Nice Work" close to the classical samples of industrial novel.

An extremely strong intertextual load can be also found in the dialogic modality of text. It is presented by epigraphs that precede each part of the novel. The writer deliberately structures epigraphs in a certain sequence: a double epigraph from "Poly-Olbion" by Michael Drayton and "Sybil" by Benjamin Disraeli precedes the entire novel, echoing the main idea about "two nations; between whom there is no intercourse and no sympathy". Moreover, each of the six parts of the novel is preceded by epigraphs from "Shirley", "North and South", and "Hard Times". Thus, on the one hand, epigraphs are an indispensable attribute of English novels of the XIXth century. Therefore, David Lodge partly resorts to stylization of Victorian novel, building up his work according to the Victorian canons. On the other hand, epigraphs allow the author to introduce the background of the narrative which implicitly accompanies the storyline and interweaves with it.

According to David Lodge "proper names in fiction are of course never neutral: they always signify, if it is only ordinariness." [3, p. 103] Thus, it is possible to assume that it is not a mere coincidence that the secretary of Vic Wilcox is called Shirley. The name of the protagonist of the novel Victor is combined with his old-fashioned views on marriage, and its meaning "winner" is ironic in relation to the finale events in the novel (where Robin is a kind of the winner). His surname Wilcox is an allusion to rich capitalists the Wilcoxes, personages of the novel "Howards End", who are very suspicious of any expression of emotions. And the male name of the leading female character Robyn Penrose perfectly fits this feminist heroine, at the same time ironically echoing the personage of Robin Hood – a well-known rebel, and a fighter for justice.

Many researchers have frequently mentioned that "Nice Work" is a very specific parody of the Victorian industrial novels, a mixture of comic irony and concerned seriousness. It is also the first attempt to bring together the genres of academic and industrial novels that existed separately in the history of English literature. XIX century novels serve as a muted ironic backdrop for the course of events in "Nice Work". Therefore, modern British writers regard Victorian intertext as an integral part of the narration, which brings new opportunities for expanding the cultural space of the text and complicating its decoding.

Literature:

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3. Lodge D. The novelist today: still at the Crossroads? (The Practice of Writing) / David Lodge. – Harmondsworth Penguin, 1997. – 352 p.
4. Lodge D. Nice Work / David Lodge. – Secker & Warburg, 1988. – 384 p.
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