

THE PROBLEM OF ATTRIBUTION OF THE NIGERIAN EMIGRANT WRITERS' WORKS

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When studying modern Nigerian literature, a number of problems arise with attribution of works: which cultural tradition should they belong to – African/Nigerian or American. In the XXI century, the boundaries of American literature are blurring, and it is difficult to find a clear cultural attribution of works created by emigrants. The latter leave Nigeria in order to get a European or American education, and then bring a part of the national identity into the subjective vision of modern literature. The **purpose** of the study is to analyze the problem of attribution of texts by Nigerian emigrant writers. The **relevance and novelty** of the work lies in the fact that in post-Soviet literary studies there is no strict approach to the definition of the newest generation of African authors living in the United States. Modern literature is expanding its boundaries, and African authors are becoming more and more popular: the 2021 Nobel Prize is given to Tanzanian author Abdulrazak Gurnah (*1948*), and the Booker Prize – to South African novelist Damon Galgut (*1963*). Therefore, it is necessary to clearly distinguish the traces of different ethnic groups in cross-cultural literature, understanding hybrid identity as the key to the emerging global society.

Material and methods. The **material** is novels by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (*1977*). The chosen **methods** are historical comparative studies of Nigerian and Afro-American culture, structural analysis of similar schemes of both cultures.

Findings and their discussion. At the beginning of her career Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie writes about the problems of the civil war in Nigeria that affected her own early life and the further socio-political development of the country. The leitmotif of the writer's novels is the role of a woman in colonial and postcolonial Nigeria, and then life after emigration to the United States, a clash with racism, male chauvinism and stereotypes. The creative path of the writer coincides with the plot of her main novel «Americanah» (*2013*), in which it is told a two-part story before and after moving to America [1].

On this example it is possible to face the difficult task for criticism of attributing the texts of Ch. N. Adichi to a specific national literature. It is impossible to talk about the conditional «Nigerian» and «American» periods in her work: all the novels were written and published in the USA. However, the chronotope of the first works is Nigeria during the Civil War. The last novel «Amer-

icanah» is heterogeneous and consists of several storylines: the action takes place in Europe, America and Africa.

If the term «African-American literature» is considered to have strengthened, then it is necessary to find the moment at which this happened and the definition became commonly used. It is known that slaves were exported from Africa to America during the XVII–XIX centuries. On the territory of the colony, they mix with Europeans, thus becoming perverse «emigrants». American War of Independence becomes the start point in the formation of a new nation, unable to give up cheap slave power for a long time. But in parallel with the formation of American identity, the worldview of Africans is being transformed, they are gaining a voice, at first imperceptible, but then developing into a full-fledged means of expressing thoughts – first of all, artistically. Orientation to the cultural paradigm of thinking can be explained by the fact that creativity and fantasy are inherent human abilities that cannot be taken away from a slave. The «voice» of slaves living in the United States is unique: it embodies ethnic identity, the tragic experience of separation from home and adopted European (later American) traditions. After the Civil War, slavery is officially abolished, but the process of segregation is deeply rooted, the abolitionist movement is not able to instantly resolve all stereotypes, there is a slow and gradual overcoming of prejudice. There are more black writers becoming carriers of new ideas, and the identity of a US citizen is formed almost completely and approved in the form of the famous dogma «American dream» – the US are willing to absorb other cultures. Then there is a confusion as the term «African-American» arises, demonstrating the hybrid concept of «groups of people living in the United States and having black skin color». Their struggle for rights continues to this day, but culture, and, more importantly, language, have adopted a new definition. The term «African-American literature» has a long history. Important periods in the development of African-American literature are the Harlem Renaissance and the Black Renaissance of the 1960s. The most famous example of African-American literature is the novel «Beloved» (1987) by Nobel laureate Toni Morrison (1931–2019).

Patrick Parrinder (1944) in the book «Nation and Novel» (2008) uses the concept of «imagined communities» introduced by Benedict Anderson (1936–2015), an example of which is any emerging nation. Here is what he writes about it: «The communities represented in fiction are, necessarily, imagined communities; but if a novel is a representation of an imagined community then so, as many recent writers have argued, are our ideas of nationhood. The nation, that is, is not a material entity like a country or state. It is an invisible and (at least partly) theoretical construction which elicits powerful emotional and imaginative identifications. Patriotism or love of country, according to this argument, may imply an attachment to real things, but nationalism is loyalty to an idea» [2, p. 15]. That is why national literature is embodied with almost a magical function: «In the transition from medieval to modern Europe, national literatures

written in the vernacular took the place of the unified canon of ancient Greek and Latin authors. National literatures are therefore plural and exist in relation to one another; translation and cross-cultural adaptations have always been commonplace, and literary genres do not respect linguistic boundaries» [2, p. 17].

If we proceed from the detailed chronology of the formation of the African-American nation described above, we can draw up a short conditional scheme: emigration – assimilation – hybridization – fusion. When projected onto culture, the following sequence arises: culture A and culture B (dominant) – culture A and culture B (equal to each other) – culture AB (synthetic variant in which signs of both cultures are visible) – culture B (a new ambivalent culture in which it is difficult to trace the source material). It should be understood that this scheme applies not only to America and Africa, but also to any countries to which emigration takes place and where primary identity is formed.

The term «African-American» cannot be applied to the work of writers-emigrants from Nigeria to the United States. This term is consistently used for native black residents of the United States who write about minority issues, slavery and racial segregation. It is logical to assume that at the current stage, the new culture of emigrants from Nigeria is relives hybridization: Nigerians have already left their native country, learned the language and accepted cultural differences, and are now trying to bring national character into the emerging identity. At the moment, the USA and Nigeria are operating within the framework of a cross-cultural situation: significant intersections of ethnic groups seeking to enter into a single parallel stream of development, modify two different paradigms into a single hybrid, and then completely eliminate the differences. For Nigerian writers who have moved to the United States, it is now important to emphasize their own authenticity, it is necessary to identify themselves with «non-Americans», «non-African Americans», or, if to combine the previous terms, with «African-non-Americans».

Conclusion. Thus, it can be concluded that for such Nigerian authors as Ch. N. Adichie, it is obligatory to use the term «Nigerian-American literature», while preserving the dual origin of writers. It is correct to change adjectives at the beginning of the creative path of writers («American-Nigerian literature») in some places, indicating the priority of cultures, as the process is reversed with the course of hybridization. The latter is explained by the fact that the United States represents a space for the future fusion of cultures, providing more opportunities for emigrants.

1. Adichie, Ch. Ng. Americanah [Digital resource] / Ch. Ng. Adichie. – Mode of access: <https://clck.ru/Takaf>. – Date of access: 06.03.2021.
2. Parrinder, P. Nation and Novel [Digital resource] / P. Parrinder. – Mode of access: <https://clck.ru/YYi86>. – Date of access: 31.10.2021.