

**THE AUTHOR, THE HERO, THE READER IN L. STERNE'S NOVELS: THE RIGHT FOR CREATIVITY**

Laurence Sterne's novels constitute a part of English culture in 18<sup>th</sup> century, so it is important for modern readers to find adequate contextual criteria for assessing these texts. Sterne was introduced to wide public in the «age of Johnson» or «the Romantic Age», when the values of classical aesthetics, that were established in the beginning of the century due to John Dryden, Thomas Rymer, Alexander Pope, had their influence and enjoyed the authority. But it was possible to feel how new intellectual and artistic tendencies were developed on the basis of further discoveries of the philosophers of sensualism (David Hume who tried to specify and contradict John Locke's arguments), co-existing with the tradition of moral sentimentalism (Francis Hutcheson, Adam Smith), including the works of Earl of Shaftesbury. They tried to penetrate into English aesthetics of 18<sup>th</sup> century that was characterized by freedom and rejection of limits for creativity processes.

Sterne acquired a reputation of an Artist who cultivated the aesthetics of novelty that is an alternative to the established traditions, offered a provocative behavior strategy in order to overcome readers' sluggishness. While developing the frame of the novels – «The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman» and «A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy» – that are frequently considered to be close to each other, «consanguineous», but not identical (W. Cross, A. Cash, Cl. Probin, F. Donohue, M. Tronskaya, K. Atarova, I. Bahakh and others), Sterne was a storyteller who rendered the relationship between the supposed interlocutor and historic and literary context putting it under the strain. It is necessary to notice that the frame text of the above-mentioned novels is stipulated by the etiquette of the age (including the author's name and title that are in strong conformity to the established patterns). It consists of a range of formal components (dedications, prefaces, epigraphs, annotations, subtitles) and coincides with the genre poetics. It is marked with the author's stylistic conformity (there is «a signal» about structural shift in the title – in the first case it is an indication of «opinion», in the second – the play with ambiguity of «sentimental» semantics), so it carries on an intrigue in communication with the supposed interlocutor.