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THE VIEW FROM THE EAST ON THE PROBLEM FIELD OF WESTERN LITERARY AND THEORETICAL STUDIES

Мета дослідження – з’ясувати стан сучасних теоретико-літературних дискусій в контексті наукових розробок теоретиків Китаю та Японії. *Методи* дослідження – компаративний, аналітичний. Зростання розуміння кризи євроатлантичної теоретичної думки в перші два десятиліття XXI ст. оформилося в публікації маститих фахівців у галузі літературознавчих досліджень, присвячених причинам її виникнення та таксономії напрямків і теоретичних інструментів її подолання. Що поєднує весь цей корпус обширних досліджень – це опосередковане або безпосереднє визнання кризи плідних теоретико-літературних пошуків, що настала після теоретичного прориву кінця 1960-х рр. XX ст. Водночас, відмова визнавати західну літературу за зразок, художньо-естетичну норму спричинила появу потужних голосів письменників, творчість яких безпосередньо не сформована західним літературним канонем. Започаткована постколоніальним дискурсом полеміка щодо епістемологічних перспектив західної літературної теорії в ситуації зіткнення з незахідним художнім текстом, на зламі XX–XXI ст. переросла в осмислення її онтологічного потенціалу. Мислителі і художники доби мультикультуралізму, які з одного боку спирались на постструктуралістський «прорив до трансцендентного», а з іншого – на філософську і поетико-естетичну природу східного мистецтва, продемонстрували, що комплекс питань, пов’язаних з майбутнім існуванням літературної теорії, що їх підіймає сама література, набагато складніший. Насамперед, ці процеси спричинені початком формування нових майбутніх горизонтів світової літератури, велику роль у якому відіграють митці зі східним художньо-естетичним досвідом і знанням. За освоєнням західного літературно-естетичного канону – досить тривалим періодом, коли творчість таких письменників була похідною в загальній парадигмі західних літератур – відбувається формування нової літератури, що опротестовує бабівську ідею мімікрії як способу виживання й адаптації колонізованого та демонструє своїм художнім джерелом канон незахідний. Епоха пост-теорії має засвідчити, що чутки про «смерть теорії» можуть бути надто передчасними, якщо подолання кризи теорії буде базуватись на літературному знанні, що йде зі Сходу.

Ключові слова: теорія літератури, пост-теорія, мімесис, Кодзін Каратані, Хомі К. Баба, трансцендентне, образ

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The early 21st century is the time marked by the understanding of a crisis of literary thought that arose after the “golden age” of high theory in the 1970s – early 1980s, when, according to the ironic statement of modern scholars, “the intellectual excitement of Poststructuralist High Theory has largely given way to the contingent random and rather more mundane ‘thick descriptions’ of the various new-ish historicisms” [Waugh, 2006, p. 31]. It is the time when venerable theorists, “dinosaurs”, as H. Bloom once described himself, retired from the theoretic stage. Despite some divergence in existing definitions of the mentioned crisis

introduced into literary theory – “theoretic dissent” by D. Patai and W. Corral [2005], “anti-theory” by V. Leitch [2014], “post-theory” by D. Elliott with D. Attridge [2011], and T. Eagleton [2004], “criticism of criticism, a recursive, self-reflexive activity” by P. Waugh [2006], as well as methodological approaches to overcoming it – the key component of these definitions is validation if not of theoretic calamity, then at least of theoretic silence that followed the breakthrough of literary theory at the late 1960s, named “Theory” (ironically, from its inception) at the early 21st century, which determined the direction of the research of the literary text in the long run. P. Waugh, having chosen a cheeky and humorous tone of analysis of the state of literary theory in the early 21st century, quite reasonably defines the Golden Age of literary theory in the second half of the 20th century as the “Copernican revolution”.

Feminism of the 1950s, with its critique of patriarchal culture, indeed anticipated Poststructuralism and Deconstructivism, which in their turn radically revised the European logocentrism and metaphysical consciousness as the cornerstones of European worldview. It may be said that the common core of these theories can be characterized, paraphrasing P. Haidenko, as a Poststructuralist “breakthrough to the transcendent” [Гайденко, 1997]. It stems from the reluctance to substantiate the discourse by any theory of a metaphysical nature, declaration of intrinsic multiplicity and instability, flexibility of meanings, and objectivation of epistemic uncertainty. In fact, they formed the basis for the changes that gradually began to form a new European worldview. The theory and literary practice of Postmodernism, Postcolonial theory, and Multiculturalism are closely intertwined in this new worldview. On this premise, the definition of the rise of Poststructuralist ideas as a “Copernican revolution” does not seem excessive.

At the turn of the 21st century, the powerful impetus given by Poststructuralism to the development of literary theory is gradually transformed into the lull of post-theory, the period “between theories”, when the theoretic silence is emphasized by “theoretic noise”. By this term, we understand various ideological and academic studies, in one way or another rooted in Poststructuralism, but prove unable to offer a new cognitive system of the principles of art and literary text, justify the methodology of its analysis and interpretation, develop research tools, etc. The understanding of the exhaustion of theoretic research was emphasized, particularly in the early 21st century, evidenced by F. Jameson’s article “Symptoms of Theory or Symptoms for Theory” in 2004. Arguing that “... for theory ... there is no longer a correct way of saying it, and all truths are at best momentary, situational and marked by a history in the process of change and transformation” [Jameson, 2004], the theorist summarized those studies that led to the actualization of the problem of the crisis of theory in the second decade of the 21st century: the main reason for exhaustion of the theory lies in the theory itself. Poststructuralist / Deconstructive proclaimed mistrust of grand narratives indeed led to the fact that literary theory as institutionally more or less coherent narrative in various periods of its history, as a result, was dispersed into theories – or rather “studies” – cultural, ethnic, disability, heliospheric, material (new materialism), ecocriticism, intimate critique, not to mention biopolitical, globalist or other “turns”, what formed the “theoretic noise” of the post-theory era at the early 21 century and what D. Elliott and D. Attridge ironically but prudently called “possible new beginnings” [Elliott, Attridge, 2011].

However, the reasons for the eclipse of the theory proclaimed by Western literary critics cannot be reduced to the self-exhaustion of the theory itself. Equally important in the Postcolonial and Multicultural epoch was the appearance of writings by the authors (a significant number of whom are attached to the scientific communities of leading universities) S. Rushdie, C. Achebe, J. Coetzee, W. Soyinka, D. Walcott. It cast doubt on the aptitude and adequacy of the literary theory as an epistemological project, and a bit later, when the Euro-Atlantic literary mainstream began to be shaped by the works of American and European writers of Asian background – Ruth Ozeki, Kazuo Ishiguro, Timothy Peter Mo, Aysel Özakın, Dai Sijie, Emine Sevgi Özdamar, Zafar Şenocak, etc. By the second decade of the 21st century, in particular, the writings by American authors of Asian background have finally jettisoned the status of the “other” and are claiming to shape the literary mainstream, emphasizing its genesis in the non-Western canon. The ideological basis of this process was declared by an African American writer T. Morrison: “I am writing for black people. ... I don’t have to apologize” [Hoby, 2015]. Esthetically, non-Western canon as an artistic unconscious has always appeared in the writings of Asian Euro-Atlantic authors at multiple levels of the text. The understanding of this has already shaped the discussions

in postcolonial studies about the aptitude and adequacy of Western theory in relation to the study of non-Western literary text. The works of writers with Eastern literary and aesthetic experience actualizes in Western literature the problem of theoretical and practical replenishment of key categories in theoretical poetics, such as image, genre, plot, conflict, etc. The need to answer these and other questions presupposes an appeal to the Eastern literary tradition, such as Tsubouchi Shōyō's speculations in "The Essence of the Novel" (1885–1886), Nakamura Muraō's "True Prose and Prose About the Inner World" (1925), Guo Shao Yu's "History of Chinese Literary criticism" (1936), Shiga Naoya's concept of rhythm and Akutagawa Ryunosuke's criticism of plot-shaped prose.

Among those Western scholars in pursuit of ways to a new theoretic heyday, we should mention V. Leitch, T. Eagleton, D. Attridge and some other authors of numerous publications, and a few others who have awarded Poststructuralist studies the status of Theory. For example, V. Leitch, in his monograph "Literary Criticism in the 21st Century. Theory Renaissance" [2014], presents his perspective of theory in the 21st century as one based on the coexistence and interaction of diverse, in some aspects far too diverse, vectors of the analysis of literary text, as well as its own ideological role in the theory rebirth, which consists in its conceptual and stylistic justification in the form of a "middle-way liberal centrist project". This monograph is important not only because its author tries to understand the causes of the phenomenon of anti-theory but also because of the heterogeneous style of analysis – sometimes academically strict, sometimes deeply personalized, obviously deliberately tested by the author as an example of a new approach to working with the text, which takes "middle" position between reading, analysis, interpretation and what M. Epstein¹ has defined as an essayistic method.

Developing speculative explorations in a wide range of principles, traditions and norms of text reading – from "pleasure reading" to "close reading", "cultural critique", etc. – the theorist stipulates (nevertheless, quite loosely) the inevitability of intimate critique, which is equally an "offshoot" of cultural and ideology criticism, and their "personalized fusion". "By intimate critique I mean the analysis of personal emotions and lived experiences linked with everyday social, political, and economic forces and antagonists" [Leitch, 2014, p. 45]. Leitch's text, as a demonstration of the declared principle of non-objectification of the analysis of the literary text, is primarily characterized by a deliberate rejection of the fundamental principle of theory as objective knowledge and its compensation by a highly personalized reading of the literary text. It is characterized by a certain plot of the presentation, autobiographical flashbacks, allusions ("Theory is not one thing" as a reminiscence of V. Woolf's "...nothing was simply one thing"), ironic remarks ("ten key rules of formalist close reading in the New Critical manner of Cleanth Brooks") and emotional assessments ("card-carrying antitheorist" – about S.A. Schwartz).

Deemphasizing details, it can be claimed that the Renaissance of literary theory that he envisions comes to the point of being formalized not as a theory per se, but as a much broader "program", not limited by an established framework of categories and concepts, definite principles and methodology that can be adjusted quite arbitrary or as V. Leitch sees it "invariably comes down to case-by-case decisions". It is challenging to fit intimate critique in such terms even into broad interdisciplinary research. The central contradiction of V. Leitch's work, however, lies in the inconsistency of the declared new impetus to the development of the theory, namely as the Renaissance, i.e. the flourishing, rebirth, and golden age. At the same time, intimate critique is positioned just as the other conformist option, which is essential for survival proficiency in modern conditions.

There is nothing left to do in the second decade of the 21st century but to acknowledge that the post-theory period, in fact, records the losses of theoretical enterprise, which has exhausted its development resource. Thus, in an interview with Professor Zhu Gang of Nanjing University, V. Leitch indeed confirms that, despite the significant changes affecting the literary process at the turn of the 21st century, the fundamental approaches of literary theory to text analysis,

¹ "The essayistic method consists in the fact that the subject of writing itself turns into a method of writing, into a starting point, a primary concept. A subject comprehended essayistically, as it were, creates a science about itself, from an object of methodology turns into a subject, from a conceivable concept into a thinking understanding of itself" ("Essayistics as a zero discipline") [Эпштейн, 1998].

its conceptual and terminological apparatus, despite all its contradiction, remains rigorous: “The literature I studied and the methods I learned in the 1960s – shaped by modernist literary aestheticism and critical formalism – were overturned within 15 years. Yet the scrupulous methods of formalist close reading exhibit a remarkable staying power, as do the core canonical literary works” [Leitch, 2014, p. 53]. Zhu Gang’s question based on the core idea of contemporary Chinese intellectuals regarding the commitment of Western theoretic thought to transform having consideration for non-Western scientific and artistic knowledge is at the centre of this interview. V. Leitch (and how masterfully Zhu Gang leads him up to it) states that non-Western literature in Western universities is inaccessible and absolutely nonindigenous (“appear like alien viruses”) and obtains a critically low presence (“injects”) in university literature curricula. The statement of this fact in itself is an apparent concession to the Chinese specialist in the field of Poststructuralist studies, generally recognized in the West. At the same time, one cannot help but notice that this rather a superficial response to the profound and multi-faceted pivotal question of Zhu Gang’s entire interview (its formulations, unlike all others, do not revolve around V. Leitch’s personal vision of the future of literary theory and criticism, like “in your view”, “you have promoted recent critical trends”, “you have read Derrida quite comprehensively”, “as a general editor ... you hold in complying such a volume”) clearly demonstrates the unpreparedness Western theorist to recognize that the Renaissance of literary theory is impossible without taking into account the philosophical and aesthetic fundamentals of non-Western literature.

The publication of “Theory After ‘Theory’” in 2011 (edited by J. Elliott and D. Attridge) is seen as a collective attempt, if not to understand, then at least to outline the contours of the current theoretic landscape [Elliott, Attridge, 2011, p. 2], to “map” the possible roots of future directions of theoretic and literary thought. After all, this is how the goals and objectives of the book are understood – instead of in-depth analysis, the main criterion for the value of the proposed theoretical research is originality, importance, decisiveness and intellectual commitment to the “project of theory”, as well as the consensus that modern theory “must now become something distinctly other than it has been before” [Elliott, Attridge, 2011, p. 2]. From the editors’ perspective, the theorists whose works are included in the publication equally deserve credit for shifting their interests from the key figures of Poststructuralism and Deconstructivism to their successors, G. Agamben or A. Badiou, whose speculations can only be considered among contributors to the fundamental theories of J. Derrida, G. Deleuze, and J. Lacan. For example, G. Agamben’s monographs “The Man Without Content” [Agamben, 1999], “Stanzas: Word and Phantasm in Western Culture” [Agamben, 1993] are considered a fruitful substantiation of M. Heidegger’s and W. Benjamin’s insights.

At the fringes of literary discourse, there are still the views of scholars who not only demonstrate the aptitude and non-versatility of the categories developed by Western theoretical poetics but also challenge the status of literary theory and its validity as a tool for extracting meaning from a text. Among these, we ought to name a Japanese literary theorist and philosopher Kōjin Karatani, the author of the monograph “The Origins of Modern Japanese Literature” published in 1980. The incipience of the phenomenon of K. Karatani, as we see it, can be regarded as a totally different, complete and profound reconsideration of the generally accepted concepts and fundamentals of the study of the Japanese literary process at the turn of the 20th century, as his ideas allow us to see those aspects that remained unexploited by Western theorists and Eastern literature researchers. K. Karatani’s academic papers are seen as an attempt to renew the inconsistencies that characterized the relationship between Japanese and non-Japanese – especially Western – universes of literary theory and critique. K. Karatani’s radical rethinking of Japanese literature of the post-Meiji restoration era (1866–1912) can be recognized as a desire to shed light on the premises underlying the understanding of the concept of “modernity.” Such terms as “literary history”, “modernization/modernity”, “literature,” and “structure” are represented in his analyses as ideological concepts. K. Karatani combines numerous links into an argument that reveals what remained unnoticed in the Western understanding of the reasons for the development of modern Eastern culture. The research of the Japanese intellectual questions the evidence of main Western hypotheses and core theoretic concepts, as well as their originality [Karatani, 1993].

K. Karatani’s contribution as a critic is in a deep literary analysis of modern Japanese literature through the prism of European and American literary concepts and the conviction that

its understanding within the framework of these concepts and established Western categories alone leads to the creation of a “construct” of Japanese literature, and thus, to its fallacious interpretations. Instead, he emphasizes concepts – or, rather, premises – that enable a deep understanding of Japanese literature: “subject and object”, “I-novel”, “landscape”, “confession”, “child”, etc. Each of the above premises becomes understandable through the prism of inversion (the *tentō* strategy). By applying this strategy, K. Karatani thereby carries out inevitable paradigm shifts, creating the illusion of times of depth and duration of the past. As it is seen by his translator and researcher B. de Bary, his methodology is a phenomenological transformation, the purpose of which is to raise all doubts “as one of ideology critique, of an aggressive defamiliarization” [Bary, 1993], that is, to present the generally accepted Western theoretical framework on which the studies of Japanese literature of the 19th–20th centuries were based, in a new perspective.

This study, published at the pinnacle of Western Theory, first and foremost questions the versatility and validity of Western literary theory as a logically constructed epistemological system monopolizing knowledge about literature. As an example, the author cites Natsume Soseki’s belief that, compared to creative writing, literary theory is unstructured and impractical speculations, something intimate, written about literature “from within”. Furthermore, this paradoxical for a Western literary critic vision of the theory was fully reflected, as K. Karatani highlights in his preface to the novel “*Kokoro*” (“The Heart”), which “... is written in an extremely personal style, which contrasts strikingly with the formal style of the work itself” [Karatani, 1993, p. 11]. However, K. Karatani’s scepticism towards literary theory is most clearly manifested in the use of a minimal number of categories and concepts specific to the metalanguage of literary theory. The ones that are present in the book do not pretend to be systematic, accurate or otherwise specific.

Secondly, the monograph revises the approaches to understanding the history of literature as a phenomenon of objective reality and refutes the universality of English and, more broadly, Western literature as an aesthetic norm. In this regard, the generally accepted thesis in Western literary studies about the key role of Western literature in the formation of Japanese literature during the Meiji Restoration is called into question. To agree that the discovery of landscape or the child in Japanese literature of this period is influenced by Western literature, for K. Karatani, means to acknowledge their existence before/after, but not within the literary text. Thus, to recognize them as the categories of literary history, not the categories of art and aesthetics. To declare the “discovery” of landscape by Japanese literature only at the end of the 19th century is to ignore the existence of both the *sansuiga* “mountains and water pictures” as one of the most prominent Japanese perceptions and reflections of sacred and idealized landscape, *kachō fūgetsu* (“flowers, birds, wind, and moon” i.e. elevated and sensitive description of images of nature) and *jokei* (“compositions about places”) as a poetic genre that K. Karatani pinpoints. To understand the processes that took place in Japanese literature at the moment of its discovery by the West, the scholar introduces the idea of “inversion” instead of the linear-historical model of literary modernization: “... we cannot describe the Japanese discovery of “landscape” as a process that unfolded in a linear pattern from past to present. “Time” has been refracted and turned upside down” [Karatani, 1993, p. 19]. For F. Jameson, inversion is nothing more than a semantic juggling, a “great laboratory experiment”, and a means of implementing “theoretical prestidigitations” [Jameson, 1993, p. ix]. For K. Karatani, inversion is a tool that reveals how superficial and mechanistic the understanding of philosophy and poetics of landscape in Japanese artistic practice by Western theory is and how little it takes into account the body of aesthetic ideals and principles that shaped the traditions of Japanese literature. These are ideals and principles, thanks to which any artistically significant phenomenon that falls into the sphere of Japanese literature will be reconsidered and crystallized in accordance with them. Unlike Western literature, in which, starting with the descriptions of nature in Dante’s “The Divine Comedy”, the landscape remains a non-plot element, an object for the artist and protagonist, the Japanese artist “is not looking at an object, but envisioning the transcendental”. In the book of Matsuo Bashō, according to K. Karatani, there are no descriptions of nature, and even what “looks like description is not” [Karatani, 1993, 21], and the man-landscape in the story “Unforgettable People” by Kunikida Doppo is an example that the landscape is not “outside” but “within the inner man” who seems indifferent to his outer surroundings, the understanding of which requires

a “fundamental inversion” of consciousness, and in this inversion one discovers Doppo’s landscape. The transcendence of the Japanese landscape takes it beyond the epistemological framework of Western literary theory and undoubtedly dispossesses the literary landscape of the ontological status of an “object”, depriving it of the meaning of studying it as a “means”, “method”, or “source”. “Once a landscape has been established, its origins are repressed from memory. It takes on the appearance of an ‘object’ which has been there, outside us, from the start. An object, however, can only be constituted within a landscape. The same may be said of the ‘subject’ or self. The philosophical standpoint which distinguishes between subject and object came into existence within what I refer to as ‘landscape’. Rather than existing prior to landscape, subject and object emerge from within it” [Karatani, 1993, p. 34] – in this sense, the landscape becomes an autonomous generating being. As seen, by revoking the status of an object and transferring the landscape into the category of the transcendental, K. Karatani indirectly confirms the validity of the Poststructuralist concept of the non-mimetic and non-representational nature of art and the exhaustion of the ideological and categorical principles of the theory of literature, which were based on mimesis as a key category of aesthetics. The difference is that while for Western theorists the discussions took place along the fault line of “mimetic/non-mimetic” literature, for K. Karatani this question makes no sense at all, obviously for the reason that the philosophical and aesthetic framework of Japanese literature wabi-sabi, mono no aware, yūgen is not about what is seen, presented or said, but about the elusive, unknowable, unheard, incomprehensible by word, about reflection on the unsaid, association with the unseen, that is, about the very Tao that cannot be expressed or explained, for it is different every next moment.

For theorists of Postcolonialism, the time of active opposition to the status of Western literature as a model or aesthetic norm, the question of revising not only the literary but also the theoretical canon becomes fundamental. If we leave aside the already irrelevant simplified and schematic ideological assessments of literary theory as one of the tools of Western neocolonialism [Zeng, 2018], then the central philosopheme of “resistance to theory” for the thinkers with an Eastern background is cynicism about its ability to conceptualize the literariness of a text that is not shaped by Western philosophical and aesthetic tradition. A central theorist of postcolonial discourse, Homi K. Bhabha, in his 1984 essay “Representation and the Colonial Text: A Exploration of Some Forms of Mimeticism,” formulates two theses that confronted the Western theoretical and literary canon, the importance of which was emphasized only in the early 21st century, with the emergence of literary scholars of Asian origin, such as Zhu Gang or Longxi Zhang, who do not only examine the system of Western literary concepts functioning closely, study and respond Western theoretical and literary pursuits, but also offer their own approach to the analysis of literary texts. Firstly, by understanding mimesis as one of the forms of linear knowledge, which is characterized by the presence of a subject prior to an object. In particular, he highlights that with regard to colonial (i.e., next to all non-Western) literature, the views of Western critics are shaped by the same epistemological assumptions based on the fact that mimesis is a key aesthetic principle of art. On the one hand, this Bhabhan thesis finds an agreement with the Poststructuralists’ criticism and denial of the mimetic nature of art (P. Ricoeur, R. Barthes, J.F. Lyotard), as well as the concept of art as a secondary modelling system. At the same time, the core of his scepticism towards mimesis is different and cannot be reduced to an iteration of Derridean criticism of hierarchical relations in the “nature-art” binary opposition. For H. Bhabha, the mimetic nature of art lies in the classical paradigm of subject-object knowledge, justified by the rational tradition of natural science, that shaped the idea of knowledge as a “reflection” and “recognition”: “It is a predominantly mimetic view of the relation between the text and a *given* pre-constituted reality. This entails the classic subject-object structure of knowledge, central to empiricist epistemology... From such a concept of textual reference, it follows that the representation – a literary text – becomes the image of the represented – the given reality – which as the essential, original source determines the form and action of its *means* of representation” [Bhabha, pp. 99–100]. Secondly, in the interpretation of H. Bhabha, the mainstream literary theory and criticism is described as some image-centred pattern of analysis of a literary text, the task of which is reduced to Hegelian recognition and comparison of an image as a mimetic centre of the narrative with its existing pre-constituted original.: “The ‘image’ must be measured against the ‘essential’ or ‘original’ in order to establish its degree of representativeness, the correctness of the image” [Bhabha, p. 100].

Bhabhan questioning of literary theory as a universal image-centered model for the study of literary text, based on the ontology of art, the aesthetic foundations of which are within the antinomy of mimetic – anti-mimetic, in the works of the recent scholars is reduced to a truncated ideological project. Among these, we can name, for example, Princeton University professor S. Gikandi, who attributes Bhabhan's ideas to the competence of only Postcolonial or Asian studies. Whereas an American literary critic, Pauline Yu, in her 1987 work "The Reading of Imagery in the Chinese Poetic Tradition", confers them with a more pragmatic dimension. Arguing the use of Western literary categories for the analysis of Chinese texts premised on fundamentally different aesthetic principles; her goal is to elucidate the nature and semantic scope of the concept of image and the capacity for existence of literary methodological principles to study the imagery of Chinese writings.

Yu, first of all, emphasizes that since the original meaning of the concept of "image" in Western literature is "imitation or copy" [Yu, 1987, p. 3], understanding the category of the image by Western literary scholars is impossible without realizing that mimesis itself is based on the ontological dualism between the assumption that there is a more truthful reality than the one in which we live, and that art itself is capable of reproducing the connection between these realities. Thus, the image is associated with "the artful embellishment and ordering of nature", and in no way pursues the aim of the "proto-photographic representation of sensible reality" or "offering a natural or truthful report of experience" [Yu, 1987, p. 6]. Comparing the Western and Eastern traditions of studying literary texts, Yu emphasizes that Western theoretical formulations are based on the foundations of ancient Greek approaches, which means, first of all, that all types of literary forms differ depending on "the method or subject of their mimesis". The Chinese philosophical tradition, on the contrary, is based on a monistic worldview: Tao is superior to any other phenomenon but is inherent precisely in our world, and there is no supersensible sphere that lies on the level of physical beings or is different from it. Whereas according to the Chinese worldview, "true reality is not supernal but in the here and now, and this is a world, furthermore in which fundamental correspondences exist between and among cosmic patterns and operations and those of human culture" [Yu, 1987, p. 32], such a perspective, as she says, promotes a holistic understanding of reality, where the boundaries between nature and humanity, spirituality and everyday life are blurred. It encourages the individual to seek harmony with the natural world and to recognise his place in the greater cosmic order, requiring the ability to rise above the mundane and reach a higher super-substantial level. Therefore, the meaning of words in a work of art goes beyond their direct meaning. Conversely, the meaning cannot be conveyed if the words are too unambiguous. It is easy to see that Pauline Yu's thesis regarding the comprehension of the image in Chinese literature, which consists in exceeding the capabilities of language when the meaning is hidden behind the text, like a "tacit echo", and even more – for the perception of the image, it is not the words themselves that are important, but the what passes through them – is based on the same "envisioning the transcendental" that K. Karatani discussed.

The perfect poetics of transcendence, according to the scholar, was described by Sikong Tu, who, in his reflections on the quintessence of poetic art in "Letter to Jipu", notes its ability to create the unknowable, an image outside an image, a picture outside a picture. Yu argues that by overcoming the limitations of language, the limitation of the literal meaning, Chinese medieval poetry creates the described Sikong Tu "incommensurability of the poetic image to both concrete object and also any actualization in the mind of the reader" [Yu, 1987, p. 209], underlying the transcendence of Chinese poetic text. Yu also notes that the association of images with meaning in Chinese literature, unlike Western literature, was unimportant. In turn, the culture was based on the acceptance of a number of stereotypical images, which led to the use of the same images in many literary works.

Pauline Yu's reflections are undoubtedly too rigid in the sense of depriving Western intellectuals of the ability to understand the philosophical and aesthetic fundamentals of Chinese literary classics and, accordingly, their ignoring them when developing the literary category of image. Among those who emphasized the importance of paying due consideration to them and whose ideas influenced the emergence of Anglo-American Imagist poetry was the American philosopher and orientalist E. Fenollosa. In his essay "The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry" (1919), he wrote: "...Chinese would be a poor language and Chinese poetry but a narrow art, could they not go on to represent also what is unseen. The best poetry deals not

only with natural images but with lofty thoughts, spiritual suggestions and obscure relations. The greater part of natural truth is hidden in processes too minute for vision and in harmonies too large, vibrations, cohesions and affinities. The Chinese compass these also, and with great power and beauty. ... the Chinese language with its peculiar materials has passed over from the seen to the unseen by... the use of material images to suggest immaterial relations" [Fenollosa, 1919]. The above words imply his understanding of the transcendental essence of Chinese verbal art. Despite the fact that K. Karatani, in the essay "Japan as Museum" (1994), ironically refers to E. Fenollosa's contribution to the West perception of the traditional art of the East: "Nevertheless, it was Fenollosa, and no one else, who 'discovered' this traditional art. What he introduced was a position from which to see Japanese art as 'art'. Art does not exist without being regarded as art, in other words, without a discourse on itself. Although Japanese art had long existed, its status as 'art' was asserted by Fenollosa: he singled it out as 'art'" (it is easy to see that these words sarcastically disclose the Western man's tendency to institutionalize everything) [Karatani, 1994, p. 33], it should be recognized that the American philosopher was one of the first to change approaches to not only artistic but also a conceptual reflection of the literary art of the East.

Thus, we see that the rejection of literary theory declared in the papers of Postcolonial theorists results in the idea of "colonial pressure and appropriation" of the text, which is generated mainly by the understanding that Western literary theory imposes a standard matrix of analysis of a work of art, compiled on the basis of the study of Western literary texts. Along with the refusal to recognize Western literature as a model, a norm, or an artistic mode, the polemic started by Postcolonial discourse on the epistemological perspectives of Western literary theory in a situation of collision with a non-Western literary text at the turn of the 20th–21st centuries, developed into an evaluation of its ontological potential. Intellectuals and writers of the Multiculturalist era who, on the one hand, relied on the Post-structuralist "breakthrough to the transcendent" and, on the other, on the philosophical, poetic and aesthetic nature of Eastern art, demonstrated that a body of issues related to the future existence of literary theory, raised by literature itself, is much more complicated. It concerns another radical revision and, more importantly, the construction of new approaches to the analysis of the text, the literariness of which is shaped not only by the Western, but also by the Eastern philosophic, poetic and aesthetic tradition. First of all, these processes are caused by the beginning of the formation of new future horizons of world literature, in which authors with Eastern artistic and aesthetic experience and knowledge play a significant role. After mastering the Western literary and aesthetic canon – rather a long period when the writings of such authors were derivative in the general paradigm of Western literature – a new literature is being formed. It challenges Bhabha's idea of mimicry as a mode of survival and adaptation of the colonized and manifests that non-Western canon as its artistic source. The era of post-theory must testify that rumours about the "death of theory" may be premature, and the resolution of the literary theory crisis is unattainable without the contribution of literary knowledge originating from the East.

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THE VIEW FROM THE EAST ON THE PROBLEM FIELD OF WESTERN LITERARY AND THEORETICAL STUDIES

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Key words: *literary theory, post-theory, mimesis, Kōjin Karatani, Homi K. Bhabha, transcendent, image*

The study aims to determine the status of modern theoretical literary debate within the context of scientific theorizing in China and Japan. Growing understanding of the crisis of Euro-Atlantic literary-theoretical thought in the first two decades of the 21st century took shape in the publication of works by venerable specialists in the field of literary studies devoted to the causes of its occurrence and the taxonomy of directions and theoretical tools to overcome it. What unites this whole corpus of extensive research is an indirect or direct recognition of the decline of productive literary theoretical research, which came after the literary theoretical breakthrough of the late 60s of the 20th century. At the same time, the refusal to recognize Western literature as a model, artistic and aesthetic norm caused the emergence of powerful voices of authors whose writings are not directly shaped by the Western literary canon. Simultaneously, the refusal to recognize Western literature as a model, artistic and aesthetic norm caused the emergence of powerful voices of writers whose work is not directly shaped by the Western literary canon. The polemic started with the postcolonial discourse regarding the epistemological perspectives of Western literary theory in a situation of clash with a non-Western literary text, which, at the turn of the 21st century, developed into a reflection of its ontological potential. Both intellectuals and artists of the age of Multiculturalism, who relied on the Poststructuralist "breakthrough to the transcendental" on the one hand and on the philosophical nature as well as poetics and aesthetics of art of the East on the other, demonstrated that a complex of issues related to the future existence of literary theory risen by the literature itself, is much more sophisticated. First of all, these processes are caused by the early formation of new future horizons of world literature, in which artists with Eastern artistic and aesthetic background and knowledge play a major role. Following the mastering of the Western literary and aesthetic canon – rather a long period when the writings of these authors were derived from the general paradigm of Western literature – the formation of a new literature takes place, protesting Bhabha's idea of mimicry as a way of survival and ad-

aptation of the colonized and demonstrating the non-Western canon as its artistic source. The era of post-theory should testify that the rumours of the “death of the theory” may be greatly exaggerated in case the overcoming crisis of theory, which is based on literary knowledge originating from the East.

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