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УДК 821.161.1 (092) (571.12)

### **NORTHERN MYTH OF ANATOLIY OMELCHUK**

*SUMMARY.* The article deals with the poetics of the northern myth and reconstruction of Anatoliy Omelchuk's northern myth in his books «The North book» (2010) and «Yamal book» (2010).

*KEY WORDS.* Myth poetics, northern myth, northern text, cosmosophy of the North, non-fiction.

Anatoliy Omelchuk as a writer embodies the encyclopedic thinking, the unity of factual and lyrical approach in a non-fiction genre, and expressiveness of his language and style.

He is second to none in representing Siberia as a planetary, historical and cultural phenomenon in contemporary literature.

Northern theme, being originally autobiographic, is the major trend of more than ten of Omelchuk's books. His first book "Salekhard" (1978) was devoted to the North. Then the books about northern explorers and explorations followed («The Call of the Arctic», 1980; «The Knights of the North», 1982; «Towards Unknown Heights», 1985), on the exploration of northern oil and gas deposits («Arctic deposit developing», 1983; «Circumpolar Winds», 1983), on Tyumen oil-and-gas "Empire" («Great North», 1989; «Salty Arctic», 1989; «Great Urengoy», 2006).

Omelchuk's favourite characters are those whom he calls the patriots of the North, the pioneers, having once fallen in love with the North, remained faithful to it. Moreover, the fate and enigma of northern ingenious people who chose these lands to settle many centuries ago: their cultural and geographic origin and the purpose of their arrival have become most significant issues for the writer.

The book "Tender is the North" (2004) seemed to be the culmination of Omelchuk's private North exploration setting the limits to his northern myth. Yet however "The Book of The North" and "The Book of Yamal" appeared in 2010. The ability to write about the North for so long (for 32 years) provokes a question if there has appeared something new in his works and what cultural sense his works have.

Omelchuk's creative work has rather frequently been the subject of regional critics [1]. The best literary people of Yekaterinburg and Tyumen (L. Bykov, E. Zashichin, U. Meshkov, V. Rogachev, N. Rogacheva, G. Danilina, etc.) wrote about his works [2].

His creative work was distinguished in a separate research [3]. Nevertheless, there is no systematic study of the origin, evolution, structure, context and functioning of Omelchuk's northern myth, that is essential for grasping the author's creative activity and his place in literature.

It is known that the perception of the world common for at least the last two or three centuries is determined by the opposition of The East and The West, the correlation of which creates either the enigma of Russian soul or a specific Russian way in history.

Yet however on the turn of the XX century there are the attempts to review the traditional map of the Universe organized along the two vectors of civilization development: not only The East and The West, but also The North and The South.

Anyway, the activity of the North/South opposition (rich north — poor south, oil and gas deposits in the North — agricultural South, etc.) in our region at the turn of the XX century has dramatically altered the geopolitical borders and created the new economic and cultural basis for the life of the vast Tyumen region.

At the turn of the centuries new concepts appear and former concepts acquire significance: the northern pattern, the northern perspective of Russia and the world, the metaphysics of the North, cosmosophia, geosophia, the philosophy of the North, northern civilization, Nordic soul, a northern type of person, northern project, Polar Atlantis, New Hyperborea, Global North, etc. Radical optimists speak on a planetary, global shift towards Northern projects in the outlook of a contemporary person. [4], [5].

Scholars and scientists from Arkhangelsk, Novosibirsk, Salekhard and other cities reconstruct an ancient perception of the North, blending it with contemporary challenges. Nowadays northern culture is an object of both reconstruction and research [6]. It is impossible to imagine this culture without such writers as B. Shergin, Yu. Shestalov, A. Nerkagi, Ye. Aipin who have become heralds of their native northern land. The books by A. Omelchuk, in their turn, can undoubtedly be regarded as symbols of “Northern awareness” of a contemporary writer, and as a part of northern culture, yet his perception of Northern territory is different, he is one who came to discover the North and to explore it. The peculiarity of his outlook rests upon his way of thinking that of a professional journalist working in the sphere of news genre thanks to which his books have acquired the quality to have been written by an eyewitness and a participant of events. By the way, A. Omelchuk thinks the very opportunity to be a contemporary and a chronicler of the grand avantgarde Soviet project, connected with an exploration of the North, with “Great Exploration” one of his great life chances. In this regard works by A. Omelchuk can be treated to belong to a non-fiction genre, a trend in modern literature of a great demand.

Contrary to the author’s assertion that “North is not Geography and not a space” [7; 3] , the North in a new book of A. Omelchuk, is, undoubtedly, a space, though a specific one , a space that is topographically exact though its geographical names sound as melodies of the unknown world: Mangazeya, Taimyr, Yamal, Kharasavey, the archipelago of Novaya Zemlya, shelf Sharapov Cats, Cape Desire, Cross Bay, Baidarata Bay, Salekhard, Amguema, Egvekinot, Marr-Sale, Ust-Yuribey, Gyda, Konstantin Stone.

Yet, however, A.Omelchuk’s North is not only a Siberian but Russian land; moreover, it is multidimensional and, as the author asserts, boundless: it comprises such circumpolar countries as Norway, Finland, The USA, Canada, Iceland, Denmark, and Greenland, and an northern route “starts from Tibet”.

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Thus physical geography is turned into sacral geography, and the real North into a Northern Myth of Anatoly Omelchuk whose formula can be expressed by the oxymoron: The North is the highland of plains whose essence is mystery [7; 585].

It is evident therefore that the archetype of the way, the way to the North, is the most important archetype of Omelchuk's Northern myth. Moreover, most of his characters, like cultural heroes, are constantly on the road, i.e. they discover Northern territories, they explore and exploit them. Frequently this road is extremely difficult, being at the brink of their life, it is inexplicable. The Call of North is as imperious as it is mysterious. It is impossible to explain why numerous characters from Omelchuk's books left their homes for the North. Among them are: the first geographer, exploring Yamal coastline, Vasily Mikhailov a son of Selifont, a Swedish seafarer Nils Nordenschild, Arthur Chilingarov, a student of The Russian Academy of Sciences Vasily Zuev, ethnographer Natalia Kotovshikova, Viktor Muravlenko. There are hundreds of such characters in the «The Book of the North». They are mostly not only explorers, but they are creators, the pioneers of new lands, regardless of the century the event takes place either in the XVI or XXI centuries.

In the history of many centuries (XVII-XXI), moreover, the millennia of the North, with a special love A Omelchuk enters the long time history (many centuries, moreover, the millennia) of the exploration of the North (XVII-XXI) includes the pages devoted to the era of «Great Exploration» — 1970-1980 entered by A. Omelchuk with a special loving attitude. For him it's not just the time of «social colonialism», not «the dirt, sweat, nerves multiplied by the grandeur and austerity of the land», but mainly the beautiful time of beautiful people, the epoch of real men [8; 296].

In «The Book of Yamal» the most significant for the author are those aspects of northern and Siberian explorations, which help to interpret them as the Russian movement towards the Sun in its geographical, planetary and spiritual senses. A. Omelchuk writes about the special culture of Russian pioneers, being mostly orthodox, and their belief that any man is God's child. For the contemporary society it is interpreted as the connection of faith and ethnic tolerance.

The special part of «The Book of Yamal» is dedicated to the story of Vasily Mangazeyskiy, the first saint of Siberia. His death as a martyr in the beginning of the XVII century was the token of the fact that the way of a Russian to Siberia is the way of cross, that Siberia was to become Russian Golgotha, and that especially in the XX century it will house millions of innocent sufferers. Along with this, «the beckon light of Mangazeya» justifies the fact that vast Siberian land isn't just Голгофа, but a working orthodox cathedral, continuously conducting sermons since XVII century. «Great Exploration» of the 1970-1980-s turns out to be still the same way of cross of the Russians «towards the Sun».

The North where the polar night lasts hail a year makes a man value light whatever his origin might be — «the beckon light of the polar star», «the faraway light of Mangazeya», the non-setting sun of a polar day, the beaming of tundra in July, «inflamed purple» of autumn tundra, the heating light of the fiery depths of Yamal, or the light of boring frames. It is at the same time a paradox and a fact, that light (from the Sun, a star, the moon, the fire, man-made electric light) is one of the constants of A. Omelchuk's myth poetics, he likes to write about it.

He writes about the torch, «the eternal light» of Kharasavey, for instance: «Грызья землю и мерзлоту, он рассекает полярную тьму» [8; 263]; or about the light

of Novy Urengoy: «Многоцветьем сияли в полярном белом мраке постовые тундры — буровые вышки, а там, за леском, в небо поднимался огромный мощный сноп света» [8; 411].

Omelchuk's northern myth in the books of 2010 not only gets new contours, but also the new structure: the dominant position is taken not by the Pole star as it used to be before, but a river. «The Book of the North» introduces a specific genre — a river flow [7; 260]. This is undoubtedly due to the fact that the author has not vanished from his previous book «The River Returns» (2009), with the consciousness of the author, who considers himself a man of the river.

«The Book of the North» as well as «The Book of Yamal» is autobiographic, narrating of the whole life of A. Omelchuk, mainly its northern part. Here the most intimate is the connection of The North and his writing talent and his writing fate. In fact, in the ancient mythology no other than Apollo was the patron of the Hyperboreans, who considered themselves his priests and servants.

If one agrees with A. Omelchuk that «the world is winding, floating, and dominated by a circle. Loop. Turn», it becomes clear that the «The Book of the North», as well as «The Book of Yamal» is a new circle, or rather a new turn in the river of the life of the author, who can rightfully state about his new books: «It is me, Lord» [7; 296].

Byzantine scribes and their followers often compared a book with a meadow, flower garden, garden (vertograd). The most widely known are «Limonar» (The Spiritual Meadow) by John Moschus, «The multicoloured Vertograd» by Simeon Polotsky, «The flowers of St. Francis of Assisi». The biography collections and instructive stories were called as Limonar (Greek: a meadow, a flower garden), patericons, and vertograds.

At first there were the stories of monks, but over time their religious orientation was entirely replaced with the secular mood, as, for instance, in A.M. Remizov's «Limonar, a spiritual field», created in the XX century. The basis of such comparisons of books and various natural phenomena is the ancient metaphor: the world is a book created by the Creator, and the book is the world.

It is difficult to say whether A. Omelchuk looked back at the old tradition of book writing, but «The Book of the North», as well as «The Book of Yamal», may well be called the book of the tundra: Northern Patericon or Yamal Limonar.

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