

UDC 811.111'42:821.111(73)Док7Рег.09
DOI <https://doi.org/10.24919/2308-4863/48-1-25>

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MUSIC IN E. L. DOCTOROW'S NOVEL "RAGTIME"

The article is devoted to the theme of music in the novel by E. L. Doctorow «Ragtime». The novel was published in 1975, became a bestseller and got a screen version. The writer turned to the events of the beginning of the XX-th century not by chance, as at that time in the USA people greatly admired rag not only as a kind of jazz, but as a style, a way of living. The novel immediately arose discussions, was translated into many languages and got numerous reviews both positive and negative. Literary criticism, theory of literature defined the role of the writer, his peculiar outlook. The connection of the novel with the music of ragtime had been analyzed from the point of view of literature study, whereas the linguistic aspect needed further investigation and that became the aim of the given article. A key word ragtime, its origin and usage, the functions in the sentence help understand the peculiarities of the novel. One of the protagonists Coalhouse Walker Junior is a professional pianist. His fate and his beloved Sarah's fate are tragic, he stands up to defend his honor, but perishes in unequal battle. The writer combines real figures, documentary materials with imagined, artistically reinterpreted ones. Music terminology, words belonging to lexico-semantic group «Music» describe America of that time, they occur in the contexts where author with their help uses stylistic devices: epithets, metaphors, similes. Music becomes the background of the depicted events, influences the development of the plot, shows the characters and describes the appearance of the leading and supporting protagonists of the literary work, makes the narrative true-to-life, enlivens old times. The novel is characteristic of peculiar syntax that corresponds the rhythm of ragtime. This is created by the reiteration of extended and unextended sentences, anaphoric repetition of personal pronouns, enumeration, sometimes very extended. In the novel phraseological units connected with music were not fixed. Music in the novel is opposed to other sounds that are far from being melodious, but are sharp and bothering. The destinies of protagonists are intertwined and the ragtime itself disappears as does the sound of music. Perspectives of investigation may be the comparison of the novel with other literary works of the novelist who in his literary activity was constantly looking for new ways, experimented with the material and never repeated what he had already achieved.

Key words: ragtime, music terms, stylistic devices, syntax, novel.

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МУЗИКА У РОМАНІ Е. Л. ДОКТОРУ «РЕГТАЙМ»

Стаття присвячена темі музики у романі Е. Л. Доктору «Регтайм». Роман був опублікований у 1975 році, став бестселером та був екранізований. Письменник звернувся до подій початку ХХ століття не випадково, оскільки у той час в США спостерігалось захоплення регтаймом не лише як різновидом джазу, але й стилем, способом життя. Роман одразу ж викликав дискусії, був перекладений на багато мов та отримав багаточисленні рецензії, як позитивні, так і негативні. Літературна критика, теорія літератури визначила місце письменника, його своєрідність. Зв'язок роману з музикою регтайму було проаналізовано з точки зору літературознавства, в той час як лінгвістичний аспект потребував подальшої розробки, що і стало метою даної статті. Ключове слово ragtime, його походження та вживання, функції в реченні допомагають зрозуміти особливості роману. Один із персонажів Колхаус Воркер Молодший – професійний піаніст. Доля його та його нареченої Сари трагічна, він відстоює свою гідність, але гине в нерівній боротьбі. Письменник поєднує реальні постаті, документальні матеріали з вимислом, художнім переосмисленням. Музична термінологія, слова, що відносяться до лексико-семантичної групи «Музика» зображають тогочасну Америку, вони зустрічаються у контекстах, де автор з їх допомогою використовує стилістичні засоби: епітети, метафори, порівняння. Музика стає фоном зображуваних подій, впливає на хід розвитку сюжету, розкриває характери та зовнішність головних і другорядних персонажів твору, сприяє достовірності оповіді, оживляє давні часи. Роман характеризується своєрідним синтаксисом, що відповідає ритму регтайму. Цьому сприяють чергування поширених та непоширених речень, анафоричні повтори особових займенників, перелічення, подекуди дуже розширені. У романі не зафіксовано фразеологічних одиниць, що мали б відношення до музики, яка у творі протиставляється іншим звукам, зовсім не мелодійним, а різким та набридливим. Доля персонажів перелітаються, а сам регтайм зникає, як і звук музики. Перспективами дослідження можуть бути співставлення роману з іншими творами письменника, котрий у своїй літературній діяльності постійно шукав нових шляхів, експериментував з матеріалом і ніколи не повторював уже досягнутого.

Ключові слова: регтайм, музичні терміни, стилістичні засоби, синтаксис, роман.

The issue under discussion. E. L. Doctorow's novel «Ragtime» once being very popular is rightfully cited among the now classical novels to which a lot of literary critics, world literature majors and linguists alike turn their attention. Whereas this novel is thoroughly discussed, it is still underinvestigated from the point of its language and style.

The novel appeared in 1975, but the events described refer to the beginning of the XX-ieth century. The title itself speaks about its main idea – the novel is devoted to the time of rag. Literary critics at once noticed and described its association with music of the time shown by the author calling the novel original, unusual, innovative and created

according to the rules and principles of ragtime. But the vocabulary, syntactic build-up, stylistic devices need some further investigation.

E. L. Doctorow considered that the traditional structure of the novel did not correspond the changes and development of life that literature reflected and tried his hand at writing the novel of some new approach to fiction. He melted it with documentary introducing real figures of that time, events which happened, profoundly changing them.

The analysis of the literature on the subject.

The theme of music and the image of musician of the English prose literary works were thoroughly investigated by M. L. Kopylenko. The author points

out the increasing tendency of interconnection between literature and other kinds of art, music in particular. This process includes the borrowing of methods and devices of other forms, but only to the extent of implementing it in a word, an utterance, in the language of prose. There is a kind of diffusion, synthesis in one certain genre which opens before the writer some new possibilities (Kopylenko, 1987: 118). The author argues that «due to its nature music brings into the novel additional emotionality, defines the culmination, creates the necessary generalizations. Finally music plays an important conceptual, compositional part» (Kopylenko, 1987: 138).

Several articles published in the journals, some afterwords by A. M. Zverev provide the description of the main peculiarities of the novel «Ragtime». They may be given as follows: a) it is hard to single out the main idea, the leading principle, they are hidden in the polyphony of plot situations, characters, conflicts. The dominant motive is lost in the diversity of outer features of the narrative; b) special retro technique, metaphoric character of the plot foundation, no central event, reality and fiction is combined; c) protagonists are characteristic of discomfort, they are constantly on the road, without any clearly outlined map rout, their destiny, all hopes are ruined for some, yet for others life changes bring success; d) the composition consists of some fragments, sewn into one story, characters are schematic on purpose, some of them have no names, no faces, they resemble theatrical masks, they are some social tendencies personified into current flow of everyday life, forever changing the psychology and outlook of the ordinary people. Specific character of retro technique is manifested by the words that later on were out of date, songs and sensations long forgotten, naive beliefs, rites, customs, tastes of the beginning of the century. The device makes the narrative true to life (Zverev, 1984: 222–225).

Both translators and literary critics unanimously state that the novel was innovative in its form and experimental in its structure. And Doctorow himself agreed to that statement (Doctorow, 1988: 221). But out of all interviews with the writer, literary criticism of his novel, commentaries of the translators one source is especially valuable for our analysis as it deals with the role of music in the novel «Ragtime» (Korolyova, Sheynker, 1985). The authors of the article mention the popularity of the book being a bestseller, its translations into many languages, dozens of reviews and articles, special interest to the novel, some opposing points of view on it. Critics pay attention to the specific rhythm of the sentences and events in the novel, their verbal equivalency to ragtime. The

authors consider that the literary work is not written in a «retro» style. Due to the 200th anniversary of American revolution with the beginning of the 70-ies the melody of ragtime resounded throughout the country. Ragtime was not only music, it was lifestyle: disharmony rushing rhythm, instability of music performance corresponded the spirit of Americans, reflected the instability of life. The devices used by the novelist are also discussed in the article, among which the authors mention the principle of variationality, the usage of many nuances in the description of one and the same object. Another device is a free accentuating of the characters and events which is also an important feature of ragtime. The principle of free accentuating is used throughout the novel, too. The main purpose of the writer is, according to the literary critics, to emphasize the «epoch of ragtime», when everything is mixed up, to show that great and base are close to each other. «Ragtime» is full of polyrhythmic effects, repetition of phrases. It uses mixed rhythm, contradiction between the motive and measure, polychronomy of motives and phrases. The authors of the article draw the attention to the construction of the sentences, anaphoric repetition, irony in the novel which reflects the music record of ragtime and cite the examples to illustrate it. Doctorow experimented with rhythm both in micro and macro texts (Korolyova, Sheynker, 1985: 142–151).

The interviews with E. L. Doctorow, critical articles, some afterwords published in the journals and books, commentaries to the novel throw the light on the principles of the writer's creative activity in general, and his understanding of the «Ragtime» in particular. But the literature on the subject mostly analyzes the novel from the point of view of history of world literature, literary criticism, literature study and theory of literature. **The aim of the given article** is to analyze the text of the novel from the linguistic point of view. The first step was to select from the text of «Ragtime» all words and word combinations connected with music, state which of them belong to the sphere of music terminology and which – to the corresponding thematic group. Then to find the phraseological units, belonging to music, if any. Further on came the stage of syntax and its peculiarity. For better understanding of the role of music not only separate lexical units were analyzed, but their usage in the context, their role in creating some stylistic devices. For general picture to be complete music should be analyzed from the point of view of its place in the structure of the given literary work, in the events described, characters shown, developments presented.

Discussion. The Key music term is the title of the novel. Rag, or ragtime is propulsively syncopated

musical style, one forerunner of jazz and the predominant style of American popular music from about 1899 to 1917. Ragtime evolved in the playing of honky-tonk pianists along the Mississippi and Missouri rivers in the last decades of the 19th century. It was influenced by minstrel-show songs, black's banjo styles, and syncopated (off-beat) dance rhythms of the cakewalk, and also elements of European music. Ragtime found its characteristic expression in formally structured piano compositions. The regularly accented left-hand beat, in 4/4 or 2/4 time, was opposed in the right hand by a fast, bouncingly syncopated melody that gave the music its powerful forward impetus. Scott Joplin published the most successful of the early rags, «The Maple Leaf Rag», in 1899.

Cakewalk is a couple dance that became a popular stage act for virtuoso dancers as well as a craze in fashionable ball-rooms around 1900. Couples formed a square with the man on the inside and, stepping high to a lively tune, strutted around the square. They were eliminated one by one by several judges. The last remaining pair was presented with a highly decorated cake. The cakewalk originated earlier among American black slaves who used it as a subtle satire of elegance of white ball-room dances. It contributed to the evolution of subsequent American and European dances based on jazz rhythms, and its music influenced the growth of ragtime.

One of the protagonists of the novel is a black ragtime professional pianist Coalhouse Walker Junior. Unlike some other characters whose names are not given (Mother, Tateh, Younger Brother), he is introduced with his own name and the most memorable part of the story is his performance at the keyboard of the piano when he came to the house where his fiancée lived, to beg forgiving and whom he planned to marry. The writer describes how his long dark hands seemingly without any effort produced the clusters of syncopating chords and the thumping octaves. «This was a most robust composition, a vigorous music that roused the senses and never stood still a moment». The impression is rendered through the feelings of the boy who perceived the music as light that glowed Ch. II.21. p. 149. Father, who was not knowledgeable in music thought that Negro music had to have cakewalking. Younger brother was the only person who understood this music. Ragtime is mentioned in connection with Evelyn Nesbit who had gone off with a professional ragtime dancer Ch. II.14. p. 108. The real person Scott Joplin is connected with a character created by a writer – Coalhouse Walker Junior by means of a short sentence telling about Walker's past: As a young man he had known and admired Scott Joplin and other St. Louis musicians

and had paid for his piano studies with money he earned as a stevedore Ch II.24. p. 171. Then the name of a famous composer appears in the text in connection with tragic events of Coalhouse Walker's life. But the great ragtime musician could not help him being in the last stages of a terminal illness. Ch. III.29. p. 205. When the family came to the sea resort for rest Mother suddenly sees a brass band of Negroes stoutly playing a rag, remembers it ringing from her piano at home under the fine hands of Mr. Coalhouse Walker. She was almost overcome by music Ch. III.33. p. 230. In the end of the novel the writer states the fact of ragtime becoming the thing of the past: and by that time the era of Ragtime had run out, with the heavy breath of the machine, as if history were no more than a tune on a player piano. Ch. IV. 40. pp. 290–291. It is followed by one sentence that sums up the fate of minor protagonists.

Music terms used in the novel are names of the instruments, music pieces, names of musicians: oboe, piano, harp, tuba, trumpet, cornet, saxophone: rhythm, overture, song, chord, keyboard, piece, melody, octave, ensemble, concert, soprano, chorus; pianist, cornetist, trombonist, violinist, drummer. Some words are used to show the way music was listened to: victrola – a kind of record-player. Compounding with assonance may be observed: hurdy-gurdy – a string music instrument like a lute, colloquial synonym of violin in the name Till the Tiddler, word combinations such as player piano, basso horns, band concert, string orchestra, tenor voice, piano player, banjo player, coon songs, minstrel show, piano stool, piano case, snare drum. Among music instruments there is an ancient name such as Aeolian (The Aeolian had never made such sounds), meaning Aeolian harp. Aeolus was the Greek god of the winds. It is a stringed musical instrument played by the wind, made of wooden sound box that is loosely strung with 10 or 12 gut strings that is made of animal guts, gut scraper being a humorous name for violinist. These strings are all of the same length but vary in thickness and hence in elasticity. The strings are all tuned to the same pitch. In the wind they vibrate in aliquot parts (i.e. in halves, thirds, fourth...) thus sounding the octave, 12th, second octave and succeedingly higher harmonies of the string's fundamental note.

The text of the novel includes some names of famous composers both American and world ones: Scott Joplin (1868–1917) American black composer and pianist known as the «king of ragtime», Frederic Chopin (1810–1849) Polish-French composer and pianist, best known for his solo pieces for piano. His Minute Waltz is mentioned in the text, Sousa (1854–1932) whose byname was the March King,

an American bandman and composer of military marches, Franz Liszt (1811–1886) Hungarian virtuoso and composer. His Hungarian Rhapsody is mentioned in the novel. Some more names are Victor Herbert (1859–1924) Irish born American composer of operettas and light music, Rudolf Friml (1879–1972), composer of operettas showing strong European music influence and suggesting pre-World War I European lightheartedness.

Some names of popular singers can be found in the novel: John McCormack (1884–1945) Irish tenor who was considered to be one of the finest singers of the first quarter of the 20-ieth century. Al Jolson (1886–1950) byname Asa Yoelson, popular US singer and blackface comedian of the music stage.

No phraseological units connected with music could be found in the text of the novel, instead there are some very vivid examples of stylistic devices that include music terms. Among them are epithets of different kinds: shiny trumpets, vigorous music, infamous pianist, thumping octaves (single); uncanny animal song, a high sweet thin voice, awesome unalterable rhythm of the ocean (string); a ten-thousand-throated chorus (phrase). Metaphors may be illustrated by the following example: her voice rang, similes include words of the thematic group of music: The ice floes came together with great cracks, like the sound of cannon, and rumbled underfoot like the voice of the ocean itself; as if he were a diva at the Metropolitan; they may also include music terms: gulls crying like oboes; our spirits touch each other like notes in harmony; struck his heart like a chord; small clear chords hung in the air like flowers. The melodies were like bouquets. The text provides examples of onomatopoeia: liners tooted their basso horns, the trolley hummed along the dirt roads, alliteration: little lead liberty lells.

Music follows protagonists in their happy and unhappy days. When Sarah died the hearse was a custom Pierce Arrow Opera Coach, the mourners were mostly musicians, associates of Coalhouse in the Clef Club Orchestra. People heard a fanfare and there came up the street to take its place in the procession an open omnibus with a five-piece brass band in tuxedos. Coalhouse Walker paid for the funeral with the money he had saved for his wedding Ch. II.26. p. 181.

It has already been mentioned that syntax of the novel corresponds the rhythm of rag. Extended sentences are followed by unextended ones accompanied by numerous types of repetitions, mostly anaphoric and enumeration: But somehow piano lessons began to be heard [...]. They sang.

They told jokes. The family lived in one room and everyone worked: Mameh, Tateh and little Girl in the pinafore. Ch. I. 3. P. 23. The conductor sang. He was a robust big-bellied man with a tenor voice. Ch. I.12. p. 91.

The division into chapters is also unequal, the last part being the smallest of all. Here less examples of music words can be found. Coalhouse Walker Junior was carrying out his vengeance, violence and bloodshed had nothing to do with music: he wanted no music in the basement quarters. No instrument of any kind. Ch. III.32. p. 225.

Music is opposed to different other sounds: a fearsome roar, automobiles honked, police on horseback blew their whistles, the distant bell of the North Avenue streetcar tolled its warning, the scratching of the steel pens, horns blew at one another, bells ringing, wind whistling. Against the background of such sounds ragtime music manifests itself even more beautiful and refined.

Conclusions. «Ragtime» proved to be an innovative and experimental novel. E. L. Doctorow tried and achieved a rare effect of correspondence between the kind of music popular at the beginning of the XX-ieth century and the composition, chapter division, vocabulary, syntax and style of the text. Literary criticism analysis has rightly explained the place of the writer and his bestseller in the literary process, but the linguistic and stylistic aspects have not been sufficiently elucidated. Music plays an important role in the text of the novel. The key word is ragtime, one of the protagonists being a professional musician, a pianist. He is shown in the novel as a fighter, as a person who opposes injustice, but his means of violence brought his beloved and himself to a tragic end. The words of music thematic group, music terms, minor and major episodes of the novel where they are used create the effect of truthful depiction of life and circumstances, revive the atmosphere of that time. Music vocabulary can be found in creating certain stylistic devices: simile, epithets, onomatopoeia. Enumeration, sometimes consisting of 14 elements, repetition, especially of personal pronouns, anaphoric repetition in particular, reiteration of extended and unextended sentences create the effect of ragtime structure.

The perspective of investigation might be the linguistic comparison of the novel «Ragtime» with other literary works of the writer, as he constantly changed his manner and style, to better understand the most popular novel written by E. L. Doctorow, some parts of which have been included into the standard textbooks for advanced learners of American English.

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