

*of the first third of the 20<sup>th</sup> century can be characterized by the dominance of three types of temporality: linear time, cyclical time, and duration. The linear concept of time provides a clearly defined plot development from the setup to the resolution, concreteness of toponymy, attachment of the text to a particular historical epoch, finality of the text, "concreteness" and "reality" of images. Texts with the dominance of the cyclic time can be characterized by the virtual absence of the character's development, lack of fateful events or classical literary intrigue. In such cases the author describes the events within a certain period of time that is a cycle itself, so the described events appear not as disposable, unique acts, but as repetitive episodes. Texts with the dominance of duration as a temporal dimension can be characterised with intermittent plot where small events arise from an unexpected angle; the intense inner life of the characters which usually bares through the stream of consciousness; the denial of causality; the intensive work of memory; the denial of domination of the visual aspect; and the subjectivity of images of the characters arising through the other characters' consciousness. These three concepts of time the author considers on an example of novels by Franz Kafka, James Joyce, Marcel Proust, and Virginia Woolf.*

**Keywords:** linear time, cyclic time, duration, Kafka, Joyce, Woolf, modernism, Bergson.

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## ECPHRASIS, ARCHISEME, RHYTHM, AND GRAPHICAL MANNER AS THE TOOLS TO MODEL A LYRICAL SELF IN M. ATWOOD'S POETRY

*The article is a part of an ongoing project to establish Ukrainian-Canadian comparative literature studies. Grounded on the modern Canadian poetry, the paper defines the relations between the elements of poetic style and the models of lyrical self. The research hypothesizes a dependence between ecphrasis, rhythm, archisemes, and a lyrical self.*

*The author depicts the main tendencies in M. Atwood's poems, such as the use of ecphrasis, a creation of archisemes, the experiments on a genre, a graphical manner, and a rhythm, manifested itself as a musicality. It is stated that the theme of identity to a certain degree affects the types of lyrical self in M. Atwood's creative work. Hereupon, the origin of lyrical self's identity is considered as a self-reflective, and the genre diversity is outlined into two categories of poems: a «poem-meditation» and a «poem-sententia».*

**Keywords:** lyrical self, M. Atwood, ecphrasis, archiseme, rhythm.

### Introduction

M. Atwood is a modern Canadian author who is talented in writing fiction, essays, literature critique, and poetry. However, in Ukrainian Canadian studies her poetry is less explored than the prose: sporadic works are devoted to certain aspects of M. Atwood's oeuvre (M. Vorontsova, Y. Zhdanov, I. Tymeichuk, and I. Khabeta), and only N. Ovcharenko has significantly considered the dystopian novels. Nevertheless,

M. Atwood's poetry is in need of being disclosed, especially in the aspect of style. Unique lyrical semantics in M. Atwood's poetry originates from experiment with the models of lyrical self, grounded on the problem of identity. The dominant instruments to establish M. Atwood's poetry style thereby are ecphrastic tendency, archisemantics, musicality, graphical manner, and rhythm.

### Graphical manner and musicality as indicators of poetic style

The first feature to delineate the style of M. Atwood's poetry is a *remarkable graphical manner* to compose a text. Considering the graphical manner and the tendency to develop a lyrical self, two types of poetry texts might be designated as so called «*poem-meditation*» and «*poem-sententia*».

«*Poem-sententia*» is a short concise text with a condensed sense, whereas «*poem-meditation*» is a long poem with gradually metamorphosed themes and images. Surprisingly, «*poem-sententia*» is a rare one, while «*poem-meditation*» is a dominant type in M. Atwood's oeuvre. It is entailed by subjects and ideas to be enclosed in the poetry, as its lyrical self tends to be submerged into the microcosm of Self via the irrational trip into the space of privacy. However, although «*poem-sententia*» is short, it might be seen as a counterpart to a «*poem-meditation*» in the dimension of sense.

Besides a graphical manner, one of the most significant features of M. Atwood's poetry can be defined as *musicality*. Both types of poems have a specific rhythm provided through the alternation of long and short lines, partly detached by the system of clausulas, quantity of syllables, and the repetition (and variation) of strophic passages. The rhythmical musicality combined with a graphical manner are perfectly represented in M. Atwood's poetry books such as *The Circle Game* (1966), *Selected Poems* (1976), *Morning in the Burned House* (1995), and *The Door* (2007). It is supposed that a special graphical image and the musicality are used to adapt a reader to a corresponding emotional atmosphere, allowing to perceive the poetry successfully.

Bruhn M. [6, p. 449] in the article «*Margaret Atwood's Lucy Poem: The Postmodern Art of Otherness in "Death by Landscape"*» states that poet builds the «*poem-sententia*» on the principle of *grammar parallelism* that leads to multiplication of the senses hidden within and beyond the tropes. For instance, «*You Fit Into Me*» could be identified as a «*poem-sententia*»: «*you fit into me / like a hook into an eye / a fish hook / an open eye*» [1]. First of all, the graphical manner to construct a poem is provocative: the title contains all the words with capital letters, whereas the text includes solely small letters and only full stops for punctuation. By its function, the title is a thematic basis to explicate the further poem. The text is a quatrain, with two strophes, herewith the first strophe is a grammar parallelism to the second one. Indeed, through the metaphor of a fish eye and a fishing hook the

mechanism of human interaction is symbolically established. Hereby the pain, corporality, and cognition of the Other compose an *archiseme* in the poem.

At long last, this «*poem-sententia*» might be considered as a «*simile-poem*» and read via feminist criticism. For instance, J. Lilienfeld in her article «*Silence and scorn in lyric of intimacy: The progress of Margaret Atwood's poetry*» [11, p. 190] interprets this text as a representation of a love concept, actualized unexpectedly within a patriarchal symbol of successful fishery.

### Archisemes as the source to enrich the lyrical self

The archisemes in the poetry of M. Atwood are created via a combination of routine, sensualism, and intercultural symbols: a forementioned fish, a fishing hook, and an eye compose an archiseme of human search for cognition of the Other, provided through a pain and introspection. Moreover, an eye as a mean to visualize an image is an indicator of an ecphrastic tendency of M. Atwood's poetry style. In addition to this, the lack of punctuation marks degrades usual semantic limits and provides hereupon *unique aesthetical object* (in terms of R. Ingarden's [14] receptive aesthetics).

The archisemes in M. Atwood's «*poem-meditation*» are often at times created in search of lyrical self's or the Other's identity. A definite example of such type of «*poem-meditation*» is «*Against Still Life*» [3]. According to S. Juhasz's article «*Renunciation transformed, the Dickinson heritage: Emily Dickinson and Margaret Atwood*» lyrical self in this poem tries to find own self with the help of the Other via the union with the Other [10, p. 262]. The archiseme of identity is composed of the silent voice concept and an unusual simile – orange is compared to a man. Lyrical self represents the Other using an analogy to routine object (orange) and the Other (beloved man); it wishes to peel an orange in order to recognize a true nature of a beloved man.

The poem is completely based on the «*orange – man*» parallelism. Simultaneously it is developed by means of ecphrasis as a meditative voyage in-depth of the Other's nature. The strophic composition of the text facilitates the conflict between a speaking lyrical self and a silent man. The Other is symbolically depicted through an orange; as a normal image, it appears entirely by the end of the text.

The poem contains two strophes; the first one establishes the visual image of an orange laying on the table: «*It isn't enough / to walk around it / at a*

distance, saying / it's an orange: / nothing to do / with us, nothing / else: leave it alone». The second strophe entries with lyrical self's attempt to disclose the foregoing fruit: «I want to peel the / skin off; I want / more to be said to me / than just Orange: / want to be told / everything it has to say»; and it ends with an unexpected appeal of lyrical self to a silent man sitting nearby: «And you, sitting across / the table, at a distance, with / your smile contained, and / like the orange / in the sun: silent». Although lyrical self is open to communication, the object of its reflection stays silent, closed, and concentrated on himself. Correspondingly, the poem raises as an ambivalent one, created on the archiseme of communicative fall between the lyrical self and the Other; ecphrasis there allows demonstrating the collapse of intentions and expectations of both: a lyrical self and a potential reader.

Besides a lyrical self which fails to gain an understanding with a man, another model of lyrical self faces with a problem of a woman's silence. In support of this, it should be mentioned that J. Lilienfeld considers the concept of female voice and silence as a special feature of M. Atwood's poetry [11, p. 188]. An exact example of the silent voice archiseme might be demonstrated in «A Sibyl» [3]: graphically underlined, the two types of strophes are established as a voice (by lyrical self) and as a silence (another woman, so called «Sibyl»). The silence of Sibyl serves as an accompaniment to the first – lyrical self's – voice. In general, the poem states that every woman has hidden deep inside, a silent imprisoned Sibyl who has to survive in a closed space of despair and stubbornly remain silent about something. This “something” is delineated by lyrical self as a hint only: “The thing that calls itself / I / right now / doesn't care / I don't care”. Consequent on a composition, the poem appears as a metaphor of the life as a hint.

Combining the concepts within an archiseme, M. Atwood tends to experiment with *synaesthesia*. Synaesthesia is «the phenomenon wherein senses of modality are felt, perceived, or described in terms of another, e.g. describing a voice as velvety, warm, heavy, or sweet, or a trumpet-blast as scarlet» [13, p.1259]. The example of such poetry might be the poem «You Begin» [2]: there the poet represents child's perception and development through colors symbolized by routine objects. E. Ingersoll in «Evading the Pigeonholers: A Conversation with Margaret Atwood» states that the concept of fish is represented by the play of colors, and thereby the text unwraps as a rainbow, starting with cool colors and ending with warm ones [9, p. 526]: «You begin this way / This is your hand / This is your eye / That

is a fish, blue and flat/». The concepts of an eye, a fish, and a moon correspond to blue and yellow and are integrated into a concept of a hand, which holds a world and symbolizes a new human life: «This is your hand, these are my hands, this is the world, / Which is round but not flat and has more colours / Than we can see. / It begins, it has an end, / This is what you will / Come back to, this is your hand». Synaesthesia reaches a high point in these lines as the archiseme of a child's hand probably emblemizes the microcosm of an individual. Simultaneously, the poem is circled by the grammar parallelism to the first strophe: the perpetual beginning, end, and renewal of life are asserted.

Archisemes, grammar parallelisms, and special rhythm complete the musicality of the poem. It might be observed that the rhythm of «You Begin» [2] is composed analogically to a music piece: it contains variations (in the poem it is parallelisms) and includes the development, acme, and harmonic conclusion of the theme (the play of archisemes). The musicality of rhythm in M. Atwood's poetry is strictly related to a corresponding scheme to construct the strophes; the repetition of rhythmical passages means modification and enrichment of senses.

#### Ecphrastic tendency in relation to the lyrical self and the style

In M. Atwood's poetry, ecphrasis is one of the tools to connect the different levels of text. To generalize, ecphrasis is «an expository speech which vividly brings the subject before our eyes» [13, p. 320]. Moreover, «ekphrasis as a verbalization of the perceptive act is thus always a description with a certain intention, and as such it clearly cannot be purely uninterpretative» [7, p. 110]. The function of ecphrasis is to effect the reader causing a cognitive [8, p. 95] and emotional [8, p. 96] reaction and provoking self-reflection via visible sound [8, p. 104]. Therefore, ekphrasis «serves as a site where texts encounter their semiotic others and thus it is energized by difference» [12, p.153]. Such important elements of poetry style as archisemes, rhythm, and lyrical self are linked on ecphrastic basis. This conger of style elements produces uniqueness of audial and visual images of the poetry. To demonstrate the links between archisemes, rhythm, and lyrical self, the poem «This Is a Photograph of Me» [3] needs to be analyzed. The strophe structure of the poem might be described by the scheme (5 – 9 – 2 – 2 – 5 – 3), where the number means the quantity of lines in the corresponding strophe, and the dash infers the shift in graphical and archisemantic segmentation.

The poem's composition is based on three types of parallelisms. These are concrete *variation of rhythmical theme*, the *text as a genre of music variation*, and the *variation of sense*. The first parallelism means *the development of rhythmical intention* of the first strophe on the paradigmatic and syntagmatic levels of the poem. The eight-syllable strophe reduces into the six-syllable one, the primary rhythmical theme is articulated in the first and second strophes, then it is established in the third strophe, modified in the fourth one, and glorified by the fifth strophe. The sixth and final strophe is a harmonic repetition of the dominant theme. Being repeated and changed in each of the strophes, the six-syllable refrain symbolically composes the poem.

The second substantial parallelism in this poem is an approximation of its rhythmical scheme to the variation piece as a music genre. Correspondingly, the strophes containing refrains are developed one after the other and finally reach the point at the last strophe, which might occur similar to the coda in the music piece. The third parallelism includes the unity of rhythmical and archisemantic play, the coincidence of the refrain in aspects of sense and musicality. The coda in this parallelism is the created aesthetic object, in other words it foresees the shaping of lyrical self.

As mentioned previously, a detailed analysis should be provided considering the meaning and lyrical self. Graphically signed by parentheses, the twofold composition of the poem has a short part (first and second strophes) and a long part (from third to sixth strophes). The first part is built on ecphrasis: it names a photograph, a visual object well-known by readers. In accordance to this, the reader's participation is supposed and thereby the horizon of expectations, related to a mentioned visual object, is created. For instance, one can expect the description of the picture and how it might be attached to the poem. Consistently, the reader produces a concrete image, and the process of subjectification of the photograph commences.

However, lyrical self tells a story of a photograph being taken, and the origin of lyrical self as a character is disclosed: she is a drowned woman, and the picture of her was taken the next day after her death. Taking into account the nature of this lyrical self, who as a character is dead, the photograph itself embodies mystic content. The lyrical self becomes a visualized memory, provoked by an otherworldly voice of the dead person. The plot ruins the former reader's expectations of the photograph as the voice of lyrical self sounds as unreal. As a result, something that doesn't exist anymore

is again stated: the lyrical self tells that the water deforms the image and this makes it difficult to explain in details the appearance of the drowned woman and the conditions of her current residence: «*It is difficult to say where /precisely, or to say / how large or small I am: / the effect of water /on light is a distortion*» [3]. But the last strophe controversially informs that lyrical self's character might be seen in case the reader gazes attentively into the depth of the lake: «*but if you look long enough, / eventually / you will be able to see me*».

In the article «*Contemporary Poetry and Ecphrasis*», P. Barry mentions that taking into account the origin of M. Atwood's lyrical self, some critics consider this poetry book (*The Circle Game*) as one of the variants of Canadian gothics in literature [5, p. 162]. Certainly, the image of a drowned woman, who is simultaneously a lyrical self of the poem, leads to the plenty of associations. Primarily, it might be interpreted as an intertextual link to the Nietzschean abyss looking at a person and requesting one who might look straightly into it. Secondly, the choice of such lyrical self might be conducted by the implementation of an archiseme of delusive reality. Finally, the model of lyrical self is an element of poetry style of M. Atwood, based on a special technique to create an audial and visual image by different range of tools (ecphrasis, rhythm archisemes). By all means, the type of lyrical self particularly represents the author life philosophy as a personal world-view.

Another example of an ecphrastic poem from the «*The Circle Game*» poetry book is «*After the Flood, We*» [3]. The poem consists of 33 lines divided into six strophes. The strophe structure of the text is similar to the genre of music variation and can be described as (4 – 3 – 11 – 4 – 3 – 8), where the number indicates the quantity of lines and the dash means the graphical shift. Each strophe has functions similar to the elements of music variation. For instance, the first strophe as an expositional one names the theme: «*We must be the only ones / left, in the mist that has risen / everywhere as well / as in these woods /»*. Immediately the post-apocalyptic landscape is depicted, with the last human-beings supposed to survive there. Soon the lines become longer – it indicates the ongoing modification of the main topic. Thereafter, the second strophe includes parentheses to limit the lyrical self's comment (the tops of the trees are like islands). In the third strophe, the lyrical self picks the bones of drowned mothers; the comment of lyrical self is limited by parentheses (hard and round in my hands). This strophe is the longest; it is a sort of transfer from the first to the second part of the poem: lyrical self is covered with

the mist; she describes the silent drowned city. The next strophe contains the image of the Other; another human-being is not aware of the catastrophe, the Other continues to live in delusion, staying calm: «*You saunter beside me, talking / of the beauty of the morning, / not even knowing / that there has been a flood*» [3].

In such a manner, the poem represents the archiseme of life duality and a human-being's social and external alienation from the obstacles, human-being's concentration on the private emotions and images inclusively. The last strophe is the coda of negation: the Other does not see faces, does not hear steps; that is a complete dive into the microcosm of private existence. This sixth strophe is shortened; the theme of the flood is finally established by refrain of the word *slowly*: «*[you saunter]... not hearing the first stumbling / footsteps of the almost-born / coming (slowly) behind us, / not seeing / the almost-human / brutal faces forming / (slowly) / out of stone /*». Although the archiseme of delusion makes the Other deaf and blind, it simultaneously saves the Other from the post-apocalyptic horror. The lyrical self, conversely is aware of the catastrophe; open to the hostile world, she perceives the new life as it is, including the fish, swimming in the depth of the drowned forest, the lost city, and the white mist, which wraps her feet.

The last example of ecphrasis implementation is M. Atwood's poem «*Quattrocento*» [2]. In the article «*Quattrocento: On an Eclectic Poem by Margaret Atwood*», G. Banita states that the very title of the poem refers to the art epoch of Italian Quattrocento, and the plot itself refers to Michelangelo's fresco «*The Fall and Expulsion from Garden of Eden*». This fresco consists of two parts: the first visualizes the fall of humankind, another part demonstrates the expulsion first of human-beings from Eden. This scheme of composition is repeated in the poem of M. Atwood: she reconceptualizes the Bible plot through the prism of binary oppositions. As a result, boredom and love are considered as the antonyms, death is demarcated as a necessary condition to discover a true light which appears only after the loss of Eden, and the world duality is represented by the fact that the Kingdom of God is within the human [4, p. 101].

The first strophe introduces a snake, a man, and a woman in the garden; the lyrical self tells that the snake searches into the reader's dreams through the illustrations; and there the description of fresco starts. Surprisingly, the woman's appearance (the color of face and hair) is compared to the snake's features that might be interpreted as a slight hint of female guilt: «*The snake enters your dreams through*

*paintings: / this one, of a formal garden / in which there are always three: / the thin man with the green-white skin / that marks him vegetarian / and the woman with a swayback and hard breasts / that look stuck on / and the snake, vertical and with a head / that's face-colored and haired like a woman's*».

The depiction causes associations with the Fall of Adam and Eve, but conversely to the Bible story, the inhabitants of M. Atwood's Eden are unhappy, even animals, angels, and human-beings: «*There's no love here. / Maybe it's the boredom*». In details, the Eden is embodied as a place where nobody can love and where everyone is bored. The archisemes of heart and death are composed on the basis of antithesis: a traditional apple is substituted with a heart: «*And that's no apple but a heart / torn out of someone*». The heart is designated as the facilities to die: «*This is the possibility of death / the snake is offering: / death upon death squeezed together, / a blood snowball*».

Thereupon, the strophes are repleted with reflections on human deliverance from usual spiritual Eden life. The attention is driven to the new corporality with its diseases and perception: «*and you are no longer the / idea of body but a body, / you slide down into your body as into hot mud. / ... and you / must learn to see in darkness /*». The last strophes clarify that since now the human-being is foredoomed to carry the death inside a body; but such a death, however, makes the world shine the way it never could do before: «*Here you can praise the light, / having so little of it: / it's the death you carry in you / red* and captured, that makes the world / shine for you / as it never did before /». And this light is a prayer. The poem ends unexpectedly as the reflections turn back to the snake, love, and Eden: «*Love is choosing, the snake said. / The kingdom of God is within you / because you ate it*». Therefore, the result of choice is the new Eden, signposted as a red death to substitute an apple, and it is located inside of the human soul.

### Conclusion

By genre and graphical manner, M. Atwood's poetry can be divided into two categories: «*poem-meditation*» and «*poem-sententia*». On top of that, the poetic oeuvre tends to be ecphrastic: it contains two types of ecphrasis. The first one is to introduce a well-known object and then subjectify it (as could be seen from the poem «*This Is a Photograph of Me*»); the second type of ecphrasis is the engagement in context of a famous art object («*Quattrocento*»). Ecphrastic image correlates with the rhythmical theme which is developed through the strophes

similarly to variation in a musical piece's composition. Archisemes ruin the reader's expectations and together with ecphrasis and rhythm help to shape a unique lyrical self. The musicality of M. Atwood's poetry is considered as a feature to negotiate the barrier between poetry and music, and as a device to diversify the lyrical self.

To summarize, graphical, rhythmical, archisemantic, and ecphrastic experiments in the poetry of

M. Atwood might be supposed as the dominant characteristics of her poetry style. All in one, these stylistic features not only compose an aural aura of poems, but they shape an identity-based model of lyrical self who reflects on itself, the Other, and an understanding between them. One of the most substantial things is that archisemes in M. Atwood's poetry are manifested in both aspects: through sense and in the strophic structure of a text.

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## ЕКФРАЗИС, АРХІСЕМА, РИТМ І ГРАФІКА ЯК ЗАСОБИ МОДЕЛЮВАННЯ ЛІРИЧНОГО «Я» У ПОЕЗІЇ М. ЕТВУД

*Стаття є спробою систематизувати уявлення про віршотворчість канадської літератури. На засновках герменевтичної інтерпретації, структурного аналізу та рецептивної естетики окреслено підходи до формування ліричного «Я». Поетичний ідіостиль розглянуто як єдність формальних елементів (ритм, екфразис, графічна манера) та показників змісту (архісемантичність, жанрова поліфонія, варіації ліричного «Я»).*

*Визначено такі тенденції розбудови стилю, як експериментування з графікою поетичних текстів, диференціація моделей ліричного «Я» залежно від жанру віршів, розмивання меж між музичністю та поетичністю текстів, сполучення несподіваних концептів у межах архісеми, візуалізація образів, залучення синестезії. Поетичний ідіостиль М. Етвуд означено як упізнаваний у ліричній семантиці віршів, а експеримент із ліричним «Я», з огляду на це, окреслено як стильову домінанту. Виявлено, що архісеми репрезентують поєднання буденного та чуттєвого, ритм віршів розгортається за аналогією до композиції музичних творів, графічна манера оформлення текстів спричинена інтенцією поетеси змодельовати той чи той типаж ліричного «Я», а проблему ідентичності висвітлено завдяки саморефлексії суб'єкта лірики.*

*Екфрастичні й архісемантичні особливості розглянуто крізь призму версифікаційної будови поезій, водночас за допомогою структурного аналізу виявлено низку граматичних паралелізмів, які модифікують ліричне «Я». У статті запропоновано поглиблене розуміння художньої творчості М. Етвуд у контексті сучасної літератури. Автор статті наголошує на тому, що візуальна, аудіальна та музична іпостасі поетичних образів є засадничими для моделювання ліричного «Я». У роботі стверджено, що екфразис, архісемантичність і музичність є індикаторами ідіостилу поезії М. Етвуд.*

**Ключові слова:** ліричне «Я», М. Етвуд, екфразис, архісема, ритм.

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