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THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL CODE OF DELIA OWENS' NOVEL “WHERE THE CRAWDADS SING” AND ITS FILM ADAPTATION

Alyona TYCHININA[1], Natalia NIKORIAK[2], Aliona MATIYCHAK[3]

[1]Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University
a.tychinina@chnu.edu.ua
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6316-2005

[2]Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University
n.nikoriak@chnu.edu.ua
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6658-0114

[3]Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University
a.matiychak@chnu.edu.ua
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8190-0427

The article analyzes the anthropological code in the novel "Where the Crawdads Sing" by D. Owens and its film adaptation by O. Newman. Owens' text is examined in the poetical perspective of econarrative. The study outlines anthropological principles of research, interpreting a person, her multifaceted essence, and interaction with the world (people, nature, things). "Where the Crawdads Sing" is analyzed through the prism of the author's autobiographical experience, which shapes the novel's and film's multi-vector problematics and the hermeneutics of the idea manifested in the title's poetics. In particular, the themes of survival, loneliness, children's bullying, abusive relationships, racial segregation, the issue of otherness, post-traumatic stress syndrome, learning, creativity, and love are clearly outlined. Moreover, the problem of interaction between man and nature is confocal. Accordingly, anthropological codes are most clearly manifested in the plane of imagery and tropology, both in the novel and in the film. The chronotopic image of the marsh is a central argument for the specific econarrative, since the order of nature appears as an axiological criterion (model) for human interaction in society. The basis of the genre matrix is a whodunit, with all relevant genre codes. Genre polymorphism is argued by the implication of the features of a family novel, a love story, a social-psychological novel, a coming-of-age novel, and an econovel. However, econarrative appears as a leading narrative thread, a true ode to nature and natural man. The image of Kya is analyzed as an example of a natural person, whose communicative interaction with ecosystems is realized through her feelings and freedom.

Keywords: *anthropology, genre, narrative, chronotope, film adaptation.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

The epistemological history of humanity is paradoxical: the deeper humans learn about the world and nature, the farther they distance themselves from it. Moreover, the current state of interaction between man and nature is increasingly clearly in conflict – the inhabitants of the Earth are constantly trying to alter natural processes, and as a result, they repeatedly find themselves on the verge of environmental disasters. Changes are also taking place in the existential plane – the daily urban routine has so overtaken the human mind that people have practically no time left for communication with nature, others, or even with themselves. Upheavals and crises of our time – ecological cataclysms, man-made catastrophes, climate change, pandemics, wars – are existential situations that inevitably affect the lives, fates, and thinking of people. They change the perception of themselves and their identity, and even reformulate relations with *Another/Alien*, modifying the imagological matrices of these stereotypes when *Oneself* becomes *Alien* and *Alien* becomes *Oneself* or *Another*. Accordingly, this issue is regularly addressed in both literature and cinema.

Thus, the novel *Where the Crawdads Sing* (2018) by the American writer Delia Owens (1949) outlines the process of adolescence (adulthood) and socialization of an individual who, from childhood, first survived in an unhappy family, then independently in the world of wild nature and unfriendly people, and afterward in abusive relationships. Of course, this led to certain traumas and a constant state of loneliness. It was communication with nature and adherence to its laws that helped the protagonist, Kya (Catherine Danielle Clark), survive in the hostile world of people. It is not surprising that both the book by Delia Owens and its film adaptation, directed by Olivia Newman (*Where the Crawdads Sing, 2022)*, became bestsellers.

The problems of the novel *Where the Crawdads Sing* appear polymorphic, as it includes a number of topical issues. In particular, the themes of survival, loneliness, children's bullying, abusive relationships, racial segregation, the problem of otherness, post-traumatic stress syndrome, creativity, and love are clearly revealed. However, the problem of interaction between man and nature is confocal (the one to which all thematic foci are reduced). Hence, the relevance of studying the anthropological code in the novel *Where the Crawdads Sing* and its screen adaptation in the context of econarrative becomes obvious.

Therefore, **the aim of the study** is to outline the anthropological vectors of Delia Owens' novel and their adaptation in the film *Where the Crawdads Sing,* focusing on their econarrative specificity. Accordingly, the methodology of the study comprises theoretical poetics, literary anthropology, and narratology, as these are precisely the methodological approaches of modern human sciences that enable the recording and interpretation of a person's relationship with the surrounding world and with *Another/Others.*

Anthropological vectors of research methodology. Modern literary studies pay great attention to the anthropological aspect in the study of literature and the arts. The image of a human in a literary text is regarded as the main object of research. In artistic anthropology, we interpret the holistic study of a human and the embodiment of the author's artistic and philosophical concept of a person in literary texts. Literary anthropology can combine the analysis of the text with the philosophical interpretation of the human existence that the writer creates. In this case, Man is at the center of the novel's poetics.

The methodology of literary anthropology, which in a broad sense refers to the study of the "human phenomenon", is based on a number of anthroponymic ideas of ancient philosophy – Plato and Aristotle, the theosophical teachings of Augustine the Blessed and Thomas Aquinas, concepts of individualization of the human personality of modern philosophers, theories of anthropogenesis by J.-B. Lamarck and Ch. Darwin, characterize the nature of man in multiple vectors – human, spiritual, physical, psychological, linguistic, intellectual, and creative development.

Wolfgang Iser, as the founder of anthropology in modern German human sciences, sought to define a person as an integral individual; he raised the issue concerning the historical purpose of

literary anthropology. Since literature, as a means of communication, has accompanied humanity in one way or another from the very beginning of its historical memory, it must be caused by certain "anthropological needs" *(Iser, 1993)*. The philosopher of existentialism, Martin Heidegger, substantiates the so-called existential anthropology; its leading tasks include identifying the main features and specifics of interpreting the "documentary" existential possibilities of existential structures (*Heidegger, 2010*).

In the period of postmodernism and post-postmodernism, "life is cultivated without truths, ideals, norms, and any custom, a person finds herself defenseless against the multiplicity of probabilities and fluidity of multiplicity" *(Tarnashinska, 2009, p. 49)*. Over time, a need arises to find a point of support. In it, a person finds herself and her natural and acquired experiences. Based on the scientific works of prominent thinkers, the following existential aspects of human existence are distinguished: loneliness, anxiety, absurdity, freedom, longing, fear, faith, hope, love, etc.

The anthropological prism through which the novel *Where the Crawdads Sing* and its screen adaptation are analyzed determines the methods of verbal expression of a person's inner state. D. Owens translates existential psychological experiences onto the plane of ethics and, by immersing her protagonist in various situations, depicts the vicissitudes of life as the most important conditions for the personality's "awakening" and its direction towards the search for "true" existence.

Therefore, the theoretical and methodological basis of the research was the works of literary anthropology; it includes the problems of existentials, trauma, and post-traumatic experience (M. Heidegger, P. Ricœur, M. Buber, C. Geertz, H.U. Gumbrecht, W. Iser, C. Lévi-Strauss, R. Nych); of narratology (R. Barth, Yu. Kristeva, L. Matsevko-Bekerska, G. Genette, W. Schmid).

It is worth emphasizing that Delia Owens' novels remain understudied, especially in relation to their texts and screen adaptations. But recently, Owens' naturalist writings have been the focus of renowned scholars and young researchers, including M. Ananthi, S. Vanitha, A. Carley, J. M. Swirsky, and M. Kimura.

In their study, A. Carley and M.J. Swirsky describe the physical and cognitive changes that occur during Kya's adolescence. The researchers also analyze the cognitive development of the character as a teenager, highlighting three specific mechanisms that Kya demonstrates in her life *(Carley, Swirsky, 2023)*: 1) working memory; 2) knowledge; 3) strategies. Working memory is the brain's ability to store knowledge or recall information about recently experienced events and use it to make decisions or solve problems. Kya was able to remember how her father used his boat and moved around the marsh. This knowledge allowed her to do the same when she was alone. Kya learned to read with Tate, who shared her devotion to the marsh. The strategy is illustrated by the fact that Kya was able to use her knowledge to explore the native terrain around the marsh where she lived, write and publish books about it, and save it and the animals from being destroyed by developers who came to the area with plans to drain the swamp and build hotels.

M. Ananthi, and S. Vanitha analyzed the novel in the interdisciplinary discourse of ecopsychology and ecocriticism, which helped emphasize the affinity between human and nature, contributing to understanding the harmony of the relationship between them by diagnosing the problem and giving a proposal; the researchers emphasized that the interrelation of human life with the ecosystem leads to a sustainable, healthy lifestyle *(Ananthi, Vanitha, 2022)*.

Researchers also emphasize the novel's environmental and feminist aspects. M. Kimura analyzed the novel from the standpoint of ecocriticism, examined Kya and Tate's attitude to nature, considering it an example of "healthy" relations with the world, in contrast to Chase Andrews', who illustrated an exploitative attitude toward the environment *(Kimura, 2019)*. Violence manifests itself when power is threatened. Chase sexually assaults Kya when she refuses to date him after learning of his engagement to another girl. He feels that he has lost control over her. Then she understands her mother, who left to save herself from her husband's physical violence. The researcher emphasizes that Owens reproduces the historical context in her novel because, at the time mentioned, violence in marriage was not considered a crime, and men treated women as their property.

Consequently, the range of issues covered by modern researchers is quite multi-vectorial, but one way or another, they are on the track of anthropological methodology.

II. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Autobiographical experience of D. Owens as the basis of the anthropological code of her fiction. For almost ten years, the writer nurtured the idea to write a book about a lonely girl who grew up in the marsh. In addition, both the novel and the film are deeply imbued with numerous biographical markers *(Mydrygan, Huychuk, Tychinina, 2024)*. Her biography indicates that Delia Owens lived in the southern part of Georgia, where she led a reclusive lifestyle with her mother. It was Delia's mother who taught her daughter not to be afraid of living creatures, even the most dangerous ones. Delia considered nature her best friend and companion from early childhood. The author transfers this boundless love for nature and life to her character, Kya. Delia's mother often sent her to walk alone in the oak forests, saying: *"Go way out yonder where the crawdads sing"*, – these words Owens extrapolates in the novel: *"Kya remembered Ma always encouraging her to explore the marsh: "Go as far as you can – way out yonder where the crawdads sing" (Owens, 2018, p. 103).*

Therefore, the chronotope of North Carolina depicted in the book is based on her own childhood experiences and memories, which make the factual background of the polymorphic novel that synthesizes features of several genre types. Since childhood, Delia has maintained a close relationship with the residents of the small town near which she grew up. It is also known that every summer her family spent in North Carolina, and Delia became attached to these unusual places, to the incredible and dangerous beauty of the coastal swamps with their flora and fauna.

In the text of the novel *Where the Crawdads Sing,* we find many parallels in the personal life, scientific and social activities of Delia Owens. As a student, she decided to pursue a career in science; she received a Bachelor of Science degree in zoology from the University of Georgia, and a Ph.D. in animal behavior from the University of California – studying zoology is mentioned both in the text and in the film – after all, Kya publishes her books (a clear example of metatext). Love for nature, interest in studying animal behavior determined her choice of profession. This interest brought Delia together with Mark Owens, who became her husband and research partner. Together they moved to Africa, to the national reserve in Botswana in the Kalahari Desert. They lived there for several decades. In the 1970s and 1990s, D. Owens lived in Africa and studied animal behavior there. By publishing books about her travels and publishing articles in magazines, she achieved authority in the scientific community.

Detective matrix: title, chronotope, genre. In the novel Owens uses a traditional detective matrix: murder is recorded (*"star quarterback and town hot shot"* Chase Andrews' corpse was found in the swamp under the old fire tower) and, accordingly, a mystery is related to it (Was Chase's death an accident? Did anyone kill him?); there are traditional images of a detective (Ed Jackson) and a doctor (Dr. Vern Murphy). The reader can unravel the mystery independently; in the end, the secret is revealed. In the text, the reader also encounters a description of the inspection of the crime scene, statements of the investigators (Sheriff Ed Jackson and Deputy Joe Purdue) about the suspects who could have committed the murder, the jury trial, testimony of witnesses, etc.

The key detail in the whodunit matrix is the necklace with a shell, made and presented by Kya, which Chase wore without taking it off, as he promised: *"I'll wear it forever, till the day I die" (Owens, 2018, p. 149)*. From here, the detective intrigue unfolds as the reader's expectation horizon gradually extends. In the film, the director makes vivid accents in this matrix: since the death of Chase and the arrest of Kya is shown at the beginning of the film, the trial becomes a kind of bifurcation center of the retrospective display of the events-memories that preceded it, and at the same time the place where the key mystery is solved (Did Kya really kill the boy? Was it an accident?); film viewers, on par with participants of the trial, put forward their versions; eventually they will get the clue they

need to get the full picture: *"A swamp knows all about death, and doesn't necessarily define it as tragedy, certainly not a sin" (Owens, 2018, p. 12)*.

However, the literary text has a pronounced confessional pathos, but in the film, we practically do not feel it – memory is the key technique there. D. Owens gradually extends the investigation of the murder, revealing the detective core of the polymorphic genre matrix, which also includes distinct features of the coming-of-age novel, love story, social-psychological novel, and econovel. Accordingly, this genre polymorphism is also preserved in the film. Although according to the cinematographic genre classification, the film is defined as a drama, a mystery film and a thriller film, such genre parameters do not capture the author's key idea – an ode to nature and natural man.

Such genre specificity is due to the peculiarities of the chronotope of the literary primary source and the film text. In general, the chronotope serves as an important criterion for genre creation, which has been comprehensively researched by such literary critics as N. Kopistyanska and S. Skvarchynska. However, today this issue is again being brought to the fore under the influence of the "spatial turn", so anthropology appears as a discipline that fundamentally depends on spatial thinking *(Baskar, 2013)*.

Thus, the time-space of the novel *Where the Crawdads Sing* appears retrospective and fragmentary – the story is told in the present tense, mentioning in detail the progress of the case, with turns to the past to tell the reader about adolescence and survival of the girl who was abandoned by her family in the swamp. In the novel, the events are dated by the corresponding year, such as 1969 or 1952. In this way, the author clearly distinguishes between the present and the past. Events unfold in the format of a time pendulum (1969 / 1952; 1969 / 1960; 1969 / 1961; 1965 / 1969, 1970), transposing the recipient to the corresponding time and space. In addition, each chapter is titled with the appropriate anthroponym and toponym of the person it details (e.g., Ma, Jodie, Chase, etc.). In the film, such architectonics is partially preserved – key events are interrupted by a retrospective display of the past, but without corresponding chronological marking.

The title is one of the novel's leading aspects, contributing to the realization of the detective matrix. The title *Where the Crawdads Sing* concisely summarizes the setting and the anthropological idea of the fiction. It can be asserted that the novel's paratext is the primary ideological and semantic signal that prepares the reader to decode the hermeneutics of the events described.

The title phrase is not revealed immediately in the novel, but is explained in the plot-climax points of the literary text. The meaning of this figurative expression is revealed by Tate: *"Just means far in the bush where critters are wild, still behaving like critters" (Owens, 2018, p. 103)*. In this way, the common title of both the novel and the film serves as an anthropological metaphor of alienation: the alienation of man from nature or, conversely, of nature from man.

The novel has a specific compositional ring – it begins and ends with one of the main images – the marsh, which is confocal. The motif of light is present at the beginning and at the end of the book. In the prologue, when describing the swamp, the writer emphasizes the light and the direction to the sky:

"Marsh is a space of light, where grass grows in water, and water flows into the sky. Slow-moving creeks wander, carrying the orb of the sun ..." (Owens, 2018, p. 12).

The main character, Kya, radiated her own light. In the last chapter of "The Firefly", after Kya's death, Tate goes to his wife's favorite beach. The seagulls that "the Marsh Girl" liked to feed, *"spiraled above his head"*, calling Kya. Night falls. And here the motif of light appears again – fireflies:

"When he reached the lagoon, he stopped under the deep canopy and watched hundreds of fireflies beckoning far into the dark reaches of the marsh. Way out yonder, where the crawdads sing" (Owens, 2018, p. 324). Kya was and remains an integral part of this unique ecosystem.

Overall, the novel *Where the Crawdads Sing* appears polymorphic: detective intrigue (murder mystery), features of love story (Kya's relationships with Chase and Tate), historical and psychological elements (issues of "otherness"), fragments of coming-of-age prose (emotional changes

within Kya on the growth from childhood to adulthood), econarrative (meaningful notes on the nature of North Carolina) are organically implied in the novel.

Communicative interaction of man with nature in the econarrative of the novel. D. Owens' novel describes the nature of the American South, the swamp of North Carolina. Not everyone can understand nature, but the laws of nature help anyone understand others, regardless of occupation or social position. The swamp space is filled with a large number of creatures (birds, squiggly sand crabs, mud-waddling crayfish, waterfowl, fish, shrimp, oysters, etc.) and natural features (ocean, river, estuaries, bays, islands, trees, bushes). Nearby are Barkley Cove, Colored Town, and a gas station with Jumpin's convenience store. All these locations influenced Kya, but not as significantly as the marsh.

Describing the North Carolina coast, Owens makes a historical digression, noting that it was called the "Graveyard of the Atlantic" (Owens, 2018, p. 15). She quotes from a seaman's journal from colonization times while depicting *"the Land … being marshy and Swamps"*. The author draws a parallel between nature and the people who settled in the area:

"This infamous marsh became a net, scooping up a mishmash of mutinous sailors, castaways, debtors, and fugitives dodging wars, taxes, or laws that they didn't take to" (Owens, 2018, p. 15).

According to her, the hardy men lived there: *"woodsmen tribe of several races and multiple cultures, each of whom could fell a small forest with a hatchet and pack a buck for miles" (Owens, 2018, p. 15)*. There was a strict law of nature – the law of survival.

Moreover, Delia Owens, someone who appreciates the wild, is concerned about environmental issues. By the mouth of Tate, she points to society's wrong attitude towards nature. He likes the way Kya is so interested in the marsh, but most people *"think it's wasteland that should be drained and developed. People don't understand that most sea creatures – including the very ones they eat – need the marsh" (Owens, 2018, p. 112)*.

Literary ecology is most often interpreted as "literature about the environment" *(Oleshko, 2016)*, which conveys our interactions with the natural world. Hence, it is appropriate to analyze the communicative interaction of man with nature in the Owens' novel from the aspect of econarrative methodology. After all, econarrative is a narrative specificity of the text that outlines the value of human existence in harmony with the chronotopes of nature, and econarration appears as a discourse about the environment, the dynamics of perception of the natural world, and the interaction between humans and the environment. This type includes fiction that reflects environmental themes, emphasizes the importance of nature preservation, and shows the consequences of a careless attitude towards the environment. Literary econarrative can encourage readers to think about environmental problems and search for ways to solve them. In poetics, the concepts of narrative identity and econarrative emerged three decades ago, primarily through W. Howarth's "Some Principles of Ecocriticism". According to his concept, nature is known through images and words *(Howarth, 1996)*, and thus reality can be known through words, image-schemas, or conceptual metaphors. Hence, there is the following division of literary narratives: literature about man and nature in ecosystems; adventure and research literature; literature on climate change, population, and global warming. Therefore, econarratology emerges as a methodological vector *(Marshall* and *Simpson, 2009; Riley, 2009; Watkin, 2015)*.

A. Stibbe in the book *Econarrative. Ethics, Ecology, and the Search for New Narratives to Live by* (2024), which provides a foundational theory of econarratives, based on narratology, human ecology, critical discourse analysis, and ecolinguistics, states: "Econarratives are all around us, describing and shaping human interactions with other species and the physical environment" *(Stibbe, 2024)*.

In the novel *Where the Crawdads Sing* and in the film, econarrative serves as a leading narrative thread. Kya becomes part of the natural world. Nature substituted for a lost family. The girl remembered every little thing from the life of the marsh and completely forgot her elder brother and sisters; the only exception was her sibling Jodie, who later returned to Kya's life. It is not by chance

that Owens compares Kya's books with a family album: *"She touched the pages and remembered each shell and the story of finding it, where it lay on the beach, the season, the sunrise. A family Album" (Owens, 2018, p. 192)*. The girl even learned to read according to *A Sand County Almanac* by the American ecologist, conservationist, and environmentalist Aldo Leopold. The first sentence she read and understood is significant; it accurately describes people from Kya's perspective: *"There are some who can live without wild things, and some who cannot" (Owens, 2018, p. 96)*.

The problem of the 20th century society of was that the majority perceived nature as a commodity that belonged to them, a property that could be used regardless of particularities, only taken, not given or interacted with: *"Like most people, Chase knew the marsh as a thing to be used, to boat and fish, or drain for farming" (Owens, 2018, p. 158)*. Exploitation of nature, as it was then, was even more characteristic of Western civilization at the time, as it was focused on the Industrial Revolution.

The deep relationship between the girl and the marsh is conveyed by the writer in the following Kya's statement: *"... I cain't leave the gulls, the heron, the shack. The marsh is all the family I got" (Owens, 2018, p. 73)*. Even Kya's nickname – "the Marsh Girl" – had a dominant negative connotation, it denoted a person who was *Another* (different from the inhabitants of the town), an *Alien*, inferior in intelligence *(Ricœur, 2002)*. Only in the last chapter her nickname changes its meaning, denoting a person who devoted her whole life to exploring the marsh and loved it. When Kya was abandoned by her family, she thought:

"Maybe I oughta walk to town and turn myself in to the authorities. At least they'd give me food and send me to school" (Owens, 2018, p. 73), but she couldn't leave the marsh, which became a source of strength for her.

As a master of verbal art, Owens presents vivid descriptions of the wild. The reader is not burdened with scientific facts but is given the opportunity to enjoy the beauty of the natural world, while simultaneously expanding their knowledge of the marsh's flora and fauna. As evidenced by numerous comparisons, in her descriptions of nature, the author revealed the most important feature of her artistic thinking – associativity, the ability to see the world of the marsh in all its diversity. In such juxtapositions, the communicative interaction of man and nature stands out among dominant outlooks and leitmotifs. The author is very successful at constructing econarratives, as she is primarily a biologist and has observed animal behavior across various parts of the world for many years. Therefore, nature is an important artistic element of this book. Kya perceives life through the prism of the wild, allowing readers to see it as such in their expectations.

The motif of the harmonious interaction of nature and man is transposed in the novel. Owens narrates Kya's perception of the natural world without evaluation, positive or negative, giving the reader the opportunity to place receptive accents:

"Some female insects eat their mates, overstressed mammal mothers abandon their young, many males design risky or shifty ways to outsperm their competitors. Nothing seemed too indecorous as long as the tick and the tock of life carried on. She knew this was not a dark side to Nature, just inventive ways to endure against all odds. Surely for humans there was more" (Owens, 2018, p. 164). Ultimately, this model of behavior is extrapolated to human relationships.

Anthropological codes are most clearly manifested in the plane of imagery and tropology, both in the novel and in the film. The most frequent forms of metalanguage are comparisons and metaphors in which human behavior is juxtaposed with nature:

1) a person like an animal/bird/fish/plant: *"They stood there like a rabbit and a coyote caught together in a yard fence" (Owens, 2018, p. 184)*; *"Once out of the store, head down, she scurried like a robber-ferret to the pier" (Owens, 2018, p. 185)*; *"Kya, when you see me out in the marsh, please don't hide in the grass like a spotted fawn" (Owens, 2018, p. 195)*; *"She's slipperier'n a damn eel" (Owens, 2018, p. 197)*, *"she's wild as a she-fox in a snare" (Owens, 2018, p. 176)*; *"She felt like seaweed dragged on a line" (Owens, 2018, p. 184)*; *"Quick as a mouse escaping a lidless box, she slipped out the porch" (Owens, 2018, p. 185)* etc.;

2) things and objects compared to animal body parts: *"His fancy ski boat was the same as the pumped-up neck and outsized antlers of a buck deer in rut: appendages to ward off other males and attract one female after another" (Owens, 2018, p. 188)*;

3) physiological processes, manifestations, results – the natural world: *"Sex under flashing neon lights, marked only by blood smudged across the sheets like animal tracks" (Owens, 2018, p. 241)*;

4) man as part of nature: *"Most of what she knew, she'd learned from the wild. Nature had nurtured, tutored, and protected her when no one else would … For Kya, it was enough to be part of this natural sequence as sure as the tides" (Owens, 2018, p. 320)*.

Therefore, the natural world appears to Kya as the only axiological criterion in interaction with people. Nature in the novel was never only an object of contemplation; it does not act only as a background. Owens resorts to philosophical awareness of nature as the primary basis, as the environment without which human existence is a priori impossible.

Gender and racial anthropologemes. Gender issues, emphasizing the differences in the hierarchical status of men and women in nature and society, constitute an important thematic segment of the literary text and the film. A man's violence against a woman is a recurring motif in the novel *Where the Crawdads Sing*. Julienne Maria, Kya's mother, suffered from family violence. Chase assaulted Kya. These two cases are very similar but have different consequences. The author uses an artistic detail that serves as a "bridge" between the illustrations of gender violence: the mother's dress, which Kya wears in significant moments of her life. Kya's mother wore it when her husband beat her: *"he slammed the poker across Ma's chest. Blood popped out on the flowery sundress like red polka dots" (Owens, 2018, p. 203)*. Mother's exit was an escape; Kya's exit was the destruction of her assaulter.

The reason for the father's violent behavior was physical and psychological trauma from war and his sense of guilt. Being a soldier, once he was with others in a dugout waiting to bat, someone shouted that their sergeant was shot and sprawled bleeding; other soldiers jumped at once, scrambling to save the wounded man, but Kya's father, Jake (Jackson Henry Clark), got scared and stayed in the dugout; a mortar exploded just beyond him. His left femur was caught by shrapnel and shattered. But those who went to save their comrade were not injured. In the chaos, they assumed Jake had been hit while helping the others to rescue their sergeant. He was declared a hero and awarded a medal. Later drinking and aggressive behavior towards his family were manifestations of post-traumatic stress syndrome.

After Kya's Ma had left her husband and five children, she never managed to return to a normal life. The psychological trauma inflicted by her husband eventually led to her mental and physical illness and untimely death from leukemia. The woman *"died much as she had lived. In darkness, in silence" (Owens, 2018, p. 208)*. Kya had her own explanation for her mother's behavior:

"In nature – out yonder where the crawdads sing – these ruthless-seeming behaviors actually increase the mother's number of young over her lifetime, and thus her genes for abandoning offspring in times of stress are passed on to the next generation. And on and on. It happens in humans, too. Some behaviors that seem harsh to us now ensured the survival of early man in whatever swamp he was in at the time" (Owens, 2018, p. 210).

V. Musiy draws attention to the circular structure of the novel *Where Crawdads Sing*. According to the researcher, it begins and ends with Kya's loss of her mother. Kya's siblings follow their mother's path, and one day her father did not return home either *(Musiy, 2023, p. 109)*. Moreover, in the novel's denouement, the adult Kya lets go of her memories of her mother, thereby freeing herself from pain. The director of the film preserves the novel's circular structure. The final shots show the viewer how her mother returns for her daughter when Kya dies.

The writer also raises the issue of school education. In the novel, school appears as a formal object. Kya stayed at school for only one day. She was enrolled in the second grade, despite the fact that the girl could not read at all. All because the first grade was overcrowded. The school

administration was sure that she would not stay at school for long. Kya's answers to the teacher's questions caused laughter and contempt among the children, which eventually turned into bullying outside school. The only positive aspect of school for Kya was the food – the children were fed well, but even that did not keep the girl there. Owens tries to show the problems hidden in both society and the very nature of man. She analyzes people's living conditions and inner worlds, exposing their flaws and strengths, and seeks to understand the reasons behind their behavior.

In this case, the well-known concept of "natural man" by Jean-Jacques Rousseau is actualized. Since modern man is corrupted by society, the only hope for his upbringing lies in separation from civilization, living "in the lap of nature". Therefore, education can be obtained from three sources: nature, people, and things. For the right education, all three factors should be in harmony and work in a certain sequence. Education by nature – free education – takes place through the "internal" development of human abilities and sense organs. Jean-Jacques Rousseau calls freedom the most important of the natural human rights. Kya appears to be the best manifestation of this freedom, which is why she chooses the appropriate behavior pattern.

Therefore, after an unsuccessful attempt at school education, Kya demonstrates the practice of informal learning and self-education. It was thanks to Tate Walker that Kya had the opportunity and motivation for study and research. Tate emphasized that progress in education depends only on a person's desire. He repeatedly said: *"Once you can read anything, you can learn everything" (Owens, 2018, p. 120)*. Her self-education was not limited to natural history discourse; Kya showed the drawing abilities inherited from her mother. Such fascination became a specific art therapy that revealed her creative potential, released hidden energy reserves, became a way to overcome family violence, human taunting, isolation, Chase's sexual assault, and establish communication with nature instead. The same concerns her appeal to poetry; her posthumous poem, "The Firefly," metaphorically reveals her confession of killing Chase Andrews:

Luring him was as easy
As flashing valentines
But like a lady firefly
They hid a secret call to die.
A final touch,
Unfinished;
The last step, a trap.
Down, down he falls,
His eyes still holding mine
Until they see another world.
I saw them change.
First a question,
Then an answer,
Finally an end.
And love itself passing
To whatever it was before it began (Owens, 2018, p. 323)

Delia Owens is also concerned with racial issues – the coexistence of "white" people and "black" African-Americans. American society was not yet ready to accept them as equals. The writer focuses on the racial stereotypes shown in a description of the town where Jumpin' lives with his family, and the corresponding attitude towards African-Americans there. Residents of the town treat African-Americans with contempt; even children allow themselves frank mockery of them. They taunt Jumpin': *"Here comes a nigger walkin' to Nigger Town … Jest an ol' nigger walkin' to town. Watch out, nigger-boy, don't fall down" (Owens, 2018, p. 95)*. The boys laugh, pick up rocks, and sling them at Jumpin's back. But Jumpin' does not even try to defend himself, since this attitude has

become a routine. This is another example of "otherness" in traditional society. The author uncompromisingly condemns racism and shows the groundlessness of the view of African-Americans' marginality, since in the novel, they are the bearers of the best human qualities: kindness, empathy, and a willingness to help, as shown by Jumpin' and his wife, Mabel, towards Kya.

III. CONCLUSION

The novel by Delia Owens and the film adaptation *of Where the Crawdads Sing* depict a person – her multifaceted essence and her interactions with the world*:* people, nature, animals, birds, insects, shellfish, and plants. In the complex, they form a single ecosystem, as shown in a confocal image. In addition, nature is implicated in the text's personosphere as a character, forming an inseparable whole with Kya. This interaction is shown in the title, which presents the hermeneutics of the idea. The time-space modeled by the author emphasizes the communicative interaction between man and nature in the econarrative. It provides the factual background for a polymorphic novel that contains many autobiographical reminiscences. Therefore, the text *Where the Crawdads Sing* is analyzed through the prism of the author's autobiographical experience, which interweaves Kya's childhood with the author's own biographical memories. The text's retrospective, fragmentary chronotope outlines events according to the principle of a time pendulum, transposing the recipient into the corresponding time-space. In the film, such architectonics is partially preserved – key events are interrupted by a retrospective display of the past, but without corresponding chronological marking.

The basis of the genre matrix of both the novel and the film is a whodunit, with all the relevant genre codes. Kya transfers the animal world's behavioral model to human relationships, which determines the detective matrix: either the predator eats its prey, or the prey kills the predator. The investigation of the murder is gradually prolonged, contributing to the realization of the detective genre. Its polymorphism is caused by the inclusion of features from a family novel, a love story, a social-psychological novel, a coming-of-age novel, and an econovel. However, econarrative appears as a leading narrative thread, a true ode to nature and natural man.

Hence, the novel's problems are characterized by diversity, revealing issues of "otherness", child bullying, education, abusive relationships, environmental problems, racial segregation, gender issues, and family relationships, which cause not only the protagonist's loneliness but also problems for other characters. Delia Owens translates existential experiences into the plane of ethics and, by placing Kya in various acute situations, depicts challenges as important conditions for the "awakening" of a personality and directs her towards the search for a "true" existence. The outlined issues require the presence of the appropriate anthropologemes.

Anthropological codes are most clearly manifested in the plane of imagery and tropology, both in the novel and in the film. Among the codes, the shell is emphasized as the main artistic detail. It is a comprehensive conceptual metaphor for Kya's image, worldview, and way of life. Having realized her "otherness" in a hostile society, the girl makes the natural world her shell, her fortress; she exists in the same rhythm with it. The Marsh Girl can be an example of a modern natural person, whose communicative interaction with ecosystems is realized through freedom and her own feelings.

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АНТРОПОЛОГІЧНИЙ КОД РОМАНУ ДЕЛІЇ ОВЕНС “ТАМ, ДЕ СПІВАЮТЬ РАКИ” ТА ОДНОЙМЕННОЇ ЕКРАНІЗАЦІЇ

Альона ТИЧІНІНА, Наталія НІКОРЯК, Альона МАТІЙЧАК

Статтю присвячено аналізу антропологічного коду роману Делії Овенс (1949) “Там, де співають раки” (Where the Crawdads Sing, 2018) та однойменної екранізації режисерки Олівії Ньюман (2022). У поетикальному розрізі еконаративності цей текст розглядається у літературознавстві вперше. У розвідці окреслено антропологічні засади дослідження, що інтерпретує людину, її поліаспектну сутність і взаємодію зі світом (людей, природи, тварин, речей). Роман Д. Овенс представлено у літературознавчому дискурсі; відтак текст “Там, де співають раки” розглянуто крізь призму автобіографічного досвіду авторки, що вплинув на багатовекторну проблематику роману і герменевтику задуму, що оприявнюється у поетиці заголовку. Зокрема, виразно окреслено теми виживання, самотності, дитячого булінгу, аб’юзивних стосунків, расової сегрегації, проблеми інакшості, посттравматичного синдрому, навчання, творчості, любові. Проте, конфокальною виступає проблема взаємодії людини і природи. Виокремлено антропологічні коди, що найяскравіше оприявнюються у площині образотворення і тропологічності, як у романі, так і у фільмі. Хронотопний образ боліт (маршів) охарактеризовано як центральний образ, що аргументує специфічний еконаратив роману, оскільки устрій природи постає важливим аксіологічним критерієм (моделлю) взаємодії людей у суспільстві. Основою жанрової матриці і роману, і фільму визначено детектив, з усіма відповідними жанровими кодами. Жанрова поліморфність аргументується імплікацією ознак сімейного, любовно-психологічного роману, роману-становлення, екороману. Проте провідним наративним стрижнем постає еконаративність, що оприявнюється як справжня ода природі та природній людині. Образ Каї проаналізовано як зразок природної людини (за Ж. Руссо), чий комунікативний зв’язок з екосистемами реалізується через свободу і почуття.

Ключові слова: *антропологія, жанр, наратив, хронотоп, екранізація.*

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