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## ON INTERPRETING THE USE OF ZOONYMS IN FICTION

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**Abstract.** *The objective of this article is to study the use of zoonyms in fiction. Poetic zoonymy is an important component in the onomastic structure of a literary work. The purpose of the functioning of animal names in a literary text is not restricted to the nominative function. Their use is almost always motivated by the necessity to complement the image of the character, which is somehow related to this animal.*

**Key words:** *zoonyms, fiction, poetic zoonymy, nominative function, characterizing function*

**Introduction.**

An adequate perception of a work of art occurs only when the reader manages to comprehend the communicative intention of the author. The task of interpreting the text is “to extract the maximum of the thoughts and feelings of the writer embedded in it. In other words, the task of mastering the deep essence of a literary text as a work of word art comes to the fore” [1, 311]. The interpretation of a literary text presupposes the ability to analyze all the peculiarities of a work of art, including its onomastic constituents. An important component in the onomastic structure of a literary work is often zoonyms, as evidenced by numerous studies in the field of poetic zoonymy (A. Kuzmenko, E. V. Minina, E. Ye. Mintsyys, etc).

**Main text.**

According to E. V. Minina, the use of zoonyms in a work of art is almost always motivated and makes the work more lively and expressive [2, 77]. A. Kuzmenko is sure that “zoonyms represent a very interesting layer of lexicology, where interrelations between the language and the mentality of the individual and ethnos are clearly revealed” [3, 196]. E. Ye. Mintsyys is of the same opinion, adding that “animal names are an attractive field of study in many regards as they perform various functions, among which rendering human traits of character is the most outstanding.” [4, 99].

In the texts under investigation, zoonyms are represented by the names of dogs and horses, i.e. animals surrounding humans. Consequently, their main function is to “finish” the portrait of the characters they belong to. For example, the dogs of the “quiet American” Alden Pyle, one of the main characters in G. Green’s novel [5], receive the names *Prince* and *Duke*, hinting at the “royal” disposition of their owner, who believes that he has the right to dispose of the fate of other people.

The dog of Fleur, one of the main characters of the novel by J. Galsworthy, is called *Ting-a-ling*. This dog’s name not only reflects the physical characteristics of the animal (*ling* means *sea pike*, i.e. long), but also the temporary predilection of Fleur, its owner, for the Chinese culture, since the structure and sound form of the zoonym echoes the Chinese language:

***Ting-a-ling***, long, low, slightly higher at both ends, was standing between them, with black muzzle upturned. “My pedigree is long,” he seemed to say; “but my legs are short – what about it?” [6, 41].

The use of zoonyms can be of an occasional nature, when their “actualization in the text is expected to be, so to speak, “once”- at best, for a pun” [4, 112]:

*We backed a hoarse named **Light For Me** that finished fourth in a field of five [5, 128].*

In the example above, the name of the horse, mentioned in the text in connection with the description of the race, not only indicates the color of the animal (light = fair), but can also be perceived as a name with a meaning that predicts victory (light = inspiration, celebrity), which creates comic effect, as the meaningful name turned out to be an empty phrase.

Sometimes a zoonym can act as a hidden means of unfolding the plot. For example, in the novel by I. Wallace "The Second Lady" [6], the beloved dog of Billy Bradford, the wife of the American President, was the only one who did not admit the impostor Vera Vavilova as its owner. The dog was named Hamlet by the author, thereby drawing a parallel with the famous character of W. Shakespeare. Shakespeare's Hamlet, having learned from the ghost the secret of his father's death, could not, due to the circumstances, tell the whole truth at once. A similar storyline is connected with the dog named Hamlet. None of the president's wife's entourage attached any importance to this episode with the dog at first. But later, analyzing other inexplicable facts related to Billy's recent behavior, her autobiographer Parker and her press secretary Nora begin to understand the reason for the dog's strange reaction, which alone at that time knew the truth, but, being an animal, could not tell anything.

### Summary and conclusions.

The presented examples highlight the anthropocentricity of a work of art, where everything works for the character, including zoonyms. The use of animal names in a literary text is not restricted to the nominative function, the need to name the animal. After interpreting the functioning of zoonyms in fiction, it is evident that their characterizing function comes to the fore because in most cases zoonyms are used to complement the image of the character, which, according to the plot, is related to this animal.

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