

Jelena Kirejeva*Vilnius University**Universiteto 5, Vilnius**Tel.: (8-5) 2164614**E-mail: kirejevalena@hotmail.com***A LOVER'S FIGURES OF SPEECH IN THE TEXTS OF THE „BEATLES“**

KEY WORDS: discourse, figures, „syntactical aria“, stereotypes, verbal behaviour, non-verbal behaviour.

Roland Barthes' book „A Lover's Discourse“¹ appeared in Paris in 1977. In the short introductory part to his book the author wrote: „The lover's discourse is today of an extreme solitude. This discourse is spoken, perhaps, by thousands of subjects (who knows?), but warranted by no one; it is completely forsaken by the surrounding languages: ignored, disparaged, or derided by them, severed not only from authority but also from the mechanisms of authority (sciences, techniques, arts)“². There is nothing left but to agree to Roland Barthes' thought that neither linguists, nor sociologists have regarded a lover's discourse as a subject of investigation; although their common interest in the sphere could have lead to remarkable results. According to Rosenshtok-Chiussi, love songs are indicative of a nation's health and its mental functioning³, that is why, sociologists could have included the study of song discourse into the diagnosis of a society's spiritual state.

The present article aims at describing the way figures defined by Barthes are distributed and realized in the texts of the „Beatles“.

The subject of the analysis was predetermined by the following reasons: first, the fact

that linguistic structures of a lover's discourse have not been studied so far; second, despite the fact that the love song has not been studied so far, despite the fact that like any other type of discourse it is a social phenomenon; third, notwithstanding the fact that the love song is not a direct way of „speaking about love“, since the traditional communicative situation „speaker-hearer“ is absent here, it is still aimed at the expression of one's emotions. What is more, a certain imitation of addressing the object of love takes place, which in its turn means that a lover's discourse embodies typical for the epoch and society „stereotypes“ of speaking about love. Such stereotypes, or „syntactical arias“, should be regarded as the object of the present study.

It should be pointed out that earlier studies in this sphere have been carried out by professor Eleonora Lassan in her works „The Lyric Song as a Social Phenomenon“⁴ and „The Discourse of Love and Death in Contemporary Songs“⁵.

The texts of the „Beatles“ have been chosen as the object of the study due to the fact that this group has become a legend of the twentieth century. The Beatles' engaging personalities and the delicate harmonies of their music appealed to all ages.

¹ BARTHES, R. *A Lover's Discourse*. London: Vintage, 2002.

² BARTHES, сноска 1, с. 1.

³ РОЗЕНШТОК-ХЮССИ, О. *Речь и действительность*. Москва, 1994.

⁴ ЛАССАН, Э. Р. Лирическая песня как социальный феномен. In *Žmogus kalbos erdvėje*. Kaunas, 2001, psl. 137–142.

⁵ ЛАССАН, Э. Р. Дискурс любви и смерти в современной песне. In *Studia rusycystyczne akademii święto krzyskie*. Kielce, 2003, т. XII, 197–214.

In the book mentioned above Roland Barthes defined eighty figures, i.e. speech episodes, which organize a lover's discourse; they are expressed by a particular field of lexemes and whole phrases with a typical meaning. Figures are speech episodes spoken by lovers of all times and of different nationalities. Figures are fragments of a lover's discourse. Barthes defines such figures as, for example, „Clouds“, „Embrace“, „Crying“, „Contacts“, etc.. According to Barthes, „underneath each figure lies a sentence, it is only a 'syntactical aria,' a 'mode of construction'“⁶. For instance, if the subject awaits the loved object at a rendezvous, a sentence-aria keeps running through his head: „All the same it's not fair...“; „he/she could have...“. There are still a number of figures, which cannot be defined in terms of a typical phrase, they are defined by a typical behaviour.

One hundred songs of the „Beatles“ have been studied in the present study. For the analysis, I have chosen the following figures: „Crying“, „Body“, „Contacts“ and „Embrace“. The present stage of the study is devoted to the peculiarities of verbal expression of the figures mentioned above. It also aims at investigating the degree of the influence of a particular culture (in our case it's British culture) on a cognitive disposition and verbal behaviour of the amorous subject.

Figure „Crying“, defined by Barthes as „a particular propensity to cry: the functioning and appearance of tears in the amorous subject“⁷, is the first figure to be examined in the present study. It should be pointed out that unlike the tears running from the eyes of the amorous subject and only accompanying his verbal behaviour, the tears of the amorous subject who first writes and then sings about love change the sphere of the human body into the sphere of words, thus, salty streams are transformed

into the fields of lexemes with a typical meaning. „Since when is it that men (and not women) no longer cry? Why was 'sensitivity,' at a certain moment, transformed into 'sentimentality'?“ That is the question posed by Roland Barthes in his book „A Lover's Discourse“⁸. However, it should be pointed out that the singing amorous subject of the „Beatles“ is not afraid of being sentimental and easily bursts into tears to prove both to the object of his love and to himself that his pain or happiness is not an illusion. It seems that Roland Barthes' idea expressed in another his work „The Pleasure of Text“ concerning the fact that „while putting down his text, a writer uses the language of an infant; this language is mechanical, imperative and passionless“⁹ seems to be the best explanation of the origin of „childlike“ tears of an „adult“ amorous subject. „Where does the lover obtain the right to cry, if not in a reversal of values, of which the body is the first target? He accepts re-discovering the *infant* body,“ writes Roland Barthes¹⁰.

According to the Beatles' texts, a British lover's crying can be caused by the following reasons:

A. happy love:

Now you are mine, my happiness still
makes me cry.
And in time, you'll understand the reason
why,
If I cry,
It's not because I'm sad, but you're the only
love that I've ever had.
(„A Taste of Honey“)

B. unhappy love:

It's not the way you smile that touched my
heart.

⁶ BARTHES, сноска 1, с. 5.

⁷ BARTHES, сноска 1, с. 180.

⁸ BARTHES, сноска 1, с. 180.

⁹ БАРТ, Р. Удовольствие от текста. In БАРТ, Ролан. *Семиотика. Поэтика*. Москва, 1989, с. 463.

¹⁰ BARTHES, сноска 1, с. 180.

It's not the way you kiss that tears me apart.
 Oh many many nights go by,
 I sit alone at home and I cry over you
 („Baby, it's You“)

C. separation with the object of love:

Every night the tears come down from
 My eyes,
 Every day I've done nothing but cry.
 It won't be long yeh, yeh.
 Since you left me I'm so alone.
 („It won't be Long“)

The fact that „water“ metaphors are widely used in the Beatles' song discourse cannot be left unnoticed. These metaphors serve to express the state of a person experiencing the feeling of love, for example, «pools of sorrow», «waves of joy», or:

Please please me, like I please you.
 I don't wanna sound complaining,
 But you know there's always rain in my
 heart.
 I do all the pleasing with you, it's so hard to
 reason
 With you why do you make me blue.
 („Please Please Me“)

It seemed interesting to find out if this peculiarity was predetermined by British cultural traditions of speaking about love. In Shakespeare's „Romeo and Juliet“ we find the proofs that

Romeo is crying, he refers to his feeling as „a sea nourished with lover's tears“:

Love is a smoke made with the fumes of
 sighs;

Being purged, a fire sparkling in lovers'
 eyes;

Being vexed, a sea nourished with lovers'
 tears¹¹.

Thus, it can be assumed that „water“ metaphors should not be regarded as something outside the realms of British traditions.

The fact that Vladimir Visotsky, a singing person from a different cultural background, also perceives water element as a place, where love dwells or as an environment which can give birth to love: „Когда вода Всемирного потопы вернулась вновь в границы берегов, из пены уходящего потока на сушу тихо выбралась любовь...“¹².

Similarly to figures „Askesis“ and „Flayed“, figure „Crying“ is also described by Barthes in terms of a lover's typical non-verbal behaviour. For example, in „Askesis“ the amorous subject outlines an ascetic behaviour of self-punishment, e.g. cuts his hair, devotes himself to the study of some serious and abstract branch of learning to represent his unhappiness; in „Flayed“ the lover avoids situations when his „exquisite points“ can be bruised, or when he can be mocked at; in „Crying“ the amorous subject is simply crying. Barthes formulates the „syntactical aria“ of the latter figure as „Look what you have done to me“¹³. However this aria does not have its direct verbal expression, since it is a part of the inner monologue of the amorous subject. We will try to transform this „mental“ „syntactical aria“ into an „articulated“ one, thus formulating it as „I am crying, because I feel good, since I know that you love me“, „I am crying because I feel bad, since you left me“, or „I am crying because I feel bad, since you do not love me“. After having a brief look at the texts, we can assume that such crying is characteristic mainly of the lover in the Beatles' texts, since men in Russian songs usually do not cry.

The second stage of the study will focus on figures „Contacts“ defined by Barthes as „any interior discourse provoked by a furtive contact with the body (and more precisely the

¹¹ SHAKESPEARE, W. *Romeo and Juliet*. In SHAKESPEARE, William. *The Illustrated Stratford Shakespeare*. London, 1993, p. 702.

¹² ВЫСОЦКИЙ, В. С. Баллада о любви. In ВЫСОЦКИЙ, Владимир. *Сочинения в двух томах*. Москва, 1991, с. 492.

¹³ BARTHES, сноска 1, с. 181.

skin) of the desired being¹⁴, „Embrace“, which „seems to fulfill, for a time, the subject's dream of total union with the loved being“¹⁵, and „Body“, which, according to Barthes, is „any thought, any feeling, any interest aroused in the amorous subject by the loved body“¹⁶. It seems reasonable to unite all the three figures, since they all imply the situation of a certain bodily contact. „Every contact, for the lover, raises the question of an answer: the skin is asked to reply“, writes Roland Barthes¹⁷. It seems quite an interesting fact that this request to reply in the Beatles' texts is being transformed into a request, an inducement or even a demand to perform a particular „bodily“ action, such as a kiss or an embrace. This fact most probably accounts for numerous imperative constructions in the song discourse of the „Beatles“. What is more, it should be pointed out that it is the role of the amorous subject to ask and implore. „The skin is asked to reply“ and this reply for the lover is equivalent to the declaration of love:

It feels so right now, hold me tight,
Tell me I'm the only one.
Hold me tight,
Let me go on loving you,
Tonight tonight
Making love to only you
So hold me tight, tonight tonight.
(„Hold Me Tight“)

The amorous subject (in this particular case a man, since the lover of the „Beatles“ is a man) asks the object of his love to perform a particular „bodily“ action, which destroys a stereotyped view of a strong and active man. And despite the fact that at first Roland Barthes believed that the language of the amorous subject is sexually ambivalent: „The feeling of love is

like a feeling-unisex similar to present-day jeans. It is extremely important to me ... a man's love towards a woman, and a woman's love towards a man have the same tonality“, writes Roland Barthes¹⁸. Maybe their tonality could be the same, but not their verbal expression. However, later he will write that „the lover $\frac{3}{4}$ the one who has been ravished $\frac{3}{4}$ is always implicitly feminized“¹⁹, thus emphasizing the „feminine“ nature of the amorous subject. Where should one look for the origins of such „feminine“ behaviour of the „masculine“ lover? Why is the amorous subject of the „Beatles“ no longer the active ravisher, or somebody who wants to conquer, seize and capture his prey? Why does the lover of the „Beatles“ find it quite possible to say „I'm in love, but I'm lazy“, thus, attributing negative features to himself? Why does a woman, once a passive object of the rape, become the subject of kisses and embraces:

Honey pie, you are making me crazy.
I'm in love, but I'm lazy.
So, won't you, please, come home.
Oh, honey, my position is tragic
Come and show me the magic
Of your Hollywood song, or:
(„Honey Pie“)
Hold me, love me, hold me, love me
I ain't got nothing but love, baby
Eight days a week
(„Eight Days a Week“)

It might be the same writer „using the language of an infant“, he is unprotected, dependent, he needs love, he is extremely attached to his Mother, since only Mother is capable of eternal love. According to Barthes, „beside intercourse, there is that other embrace, which is a motionless cradling: we are enchanted,

¹⁴ BARTHES, сноска 1, с. 67.

¹⁵ BARTHES, сноска 1, с. 104.

¹⁶ BARTHES, сноска 1, с. 71.

¹⁷ BARTHES, сноска 1, с. 67.

¹⁸ ЗЕНКИН, С. Стратегическое отступление Ролана Барта. In БАРТ, Ролан. *Фрагменты речи влюбленного*. Москва, 1999, с. 24.

¹⁹ BARTHES, сноска 1, с. 189.

bewitched: we are in the realm of sleep, without sleeping; we are within the voluptuous infantilism of sleepiness: this is the moment for telling stories, ... this is the return to the mother... Yet, within this infantile embrace, the genital unfailingly appears; it cuts off the diffuse sensuality of the incestuous embrace; the logic of desire begins to function...²⁰: „I'm in love, but I'm lazy. So, won't you, please, come home“. Thus, it can be assumed that for a man a woman's declaration of love is equivalent to a performed physical action. The amorous subject in the songs of the „Beatles“ seems to believe that such an action is a sign of true love. Strangely enough it is not he who touches the skin of the beloved requesting for love, but it's his skin that is „asked to reply“, since he prefers to be the object of her touch.

Thus, the „syntactical aria“ should be formulated as follows: „If you love me, kiss me, embrace me, touch me and I will understand that you are really in love with me“.

In conclusion it should be said that the amorous subject of the „Beatles“ can easily burst into tears because of love, he is not afraid of being sentimental, vulnerable and unpro-

tected. He kindly shares the initiative with the so-called passive object of rape. What is more, he contributes to the creation of a new stereotypical view of a strong and active woman. He chooses for himself a position of the object of embraces and kisses, he kindly allows a woman to take care of him.

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ĮSIMYLĖJĖLIO KALBOS FIGŪROS
„BEATLES“ DAINŲ TEKSTUOSE

Santrauka

Straipsnyje yra analizuojamos keturios Rolano Barto apibūdintos įsimylėlio kalbos figūros. Pasak Rolano Barto, tos figūros tematiškai organizuoja įsimylėlio diskursą. Straipsnyje bandoma atsižvelgti į tai, kokią žodinę išraišką grupės „Beatles“ dainų tekstuose įgauna figūros „Verksmas“, „Prisilietimai“, „Kūnas“ ir „Apkabinimas“, taip pat bandoma atskleisti ypatingus Britų įsimylėjeliui būdingus bruožus ir jo kognityvines nuostatas.

REIKŠMINIAI ŽODŽIAI: diskursas, figūra, „sintaksinė arija“, stereotipai, verbalinė elgsena, neverbalinė elgsena.

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²⁰ BARTHES, *chocoka* 1, c. 104.