

MANIFESTATION OF SIN AND REPENTANCE IN THE NOVEL "THE THORN BIRDS" IN COLLEEN MCCULLOUGH'S BOOK

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Annotation. *The purpose of this article is to discuss and show the sin and repentance of the characters in the novel "The Thorn Birds". It discusses how the characters deal with sin in different ways, whether they consider it sin at all, and how they repent in the end. Also, the attitude and thoughts of the author herself on this issue, showing it through the dialogues of the characters in the novel.*

Key words. *Sin, repentance, fate, love, hate, faults, religion.*

Coleen McCullough was born on 1 June 1937 in Wellington, New South Wales, Australia. From the age of five, she was gifted in drawing and poetry, but her parents, whose memories were vividly imprinted pictures of the Great Depression, insisted that their daughter chose a more prosperous path, so Colleen, who also showed a taste for science, received a medical degree and began to study neuropsychology. In Sydney, at the Royal North Shore Hospital, she founded the Department of Neuropsychology, which she headed for five years, then worked in London, and, moving to the United States, ten years of research and teaching at Yale Medical School. In 1974, Coleen McCullough's debut novel "Tim" was published, and three years later the light saw the famous "The Thorn Birds" - the book became an international bestseller, was translated into more than 20 languages and brought the author recognition and fame.

The work of Coleen McCullough - a romantic saga about three generations of a family of Australian labourers, about people who are hard to find their happiness. Eulogising feelings strong and deep, love for their native land, this book is full of true and colourful details of Australian life, pictures of nature.

Coleen McCullough's novel is unique in its way - it appeared in literature at a time when in love prose was in vogue the image of brutality, naturalistic details - all that later reduced the genre of love novel and made it the prey of mass literature. Against this background, McCullough's work clearly gravitates towards romanticism - almost all the characters are impeccably

beautiful, the characters are vivid and outstanding, the images are memorable. The love relationships of the characters are also written in a romantic way - with insurmountable obstacles, and therefore, filled with tragedy, with a stamp of suffering, which the writer understands as a measure of payment for the strength of feeling.

The novel explores the theme of sin and repentance in two ways, but the author's point of view is obvious.

The writer knows that Maggie and Ralph's love is considered a sin in terms of church and religion, but she explains to the reader that she does not consider it a sin, but a tragedy of loving people not being able to love each other freely. In addition, both lovers face punishment for their sin, but Ralph must be held responsible for repentance, while Maggie does not repent of her love or her sin. She sees her love as a victory over the harshness and cruelty of the church laws, and the birth of her son as a release from fate.

Most of McCullough's characters do not seek repentance; rather, they take deserved or undeserved punishment for granted, facing fate personally without complaining or lamenting. They do not repent, but neither do they rebel (with the exception of Maggie), and they dutifully accept retribution for their sins, believing it to be just.

Only Ralph of the main characters sees repentance as the same inherent payment for sins as punishment. Not only does he endure the punishment of God's hand, but he suffers himself. This causes Maggie, Vittorio, Dan, and Lyon to love him. "I don't think I have ever met another man with a soul so tortured as Ralph de Bricassard's. In death he will find a peace he never found in life" says of him Vittorio, his closest friend, who knew him better than anyone, even better than the woman who loved him.

Moreover, only Ralph de Bricassard feels the connection between repentance and faith, sin and fall, although other characters such as Dan, Justine, Lyon and Paddy are characterized by the agony of repentance rather than the suffering of punishment. Unsurprisingly, this is one of his professional traits. Dan feels it too, but he lacks the experience of lived suffering; he is too pure and untouched by life to fully feel the agony of repentance - the repentance of a true sinner, not a "guiltless" one.

Justina has the same thing: she accepts responsibility she doesn't deserve, but her suffering is heavier than her brother's. Her repentance also has little to do with religion, but it is not at all less important.

The novel emphasizes the theme of religion and the church as it is closely related to the theme. The writer clearly separates religion from faith. For example, Mary Carson, who appears to be very religious, has no faith, while

little Maggie and her brothers see religion more as a set of rules to be followed, and Father Ralph, who is deeply religious and loves his ministry, sees religion as his life's calling and nothing more. Paddy and Dan are the only characters who truly believe. We cannot claim that the author has divided his characters into categories of "good-believer" and "bad-believer". Fiona does not believe in any religion. Her broken life, lack of hypocrisy, and natural detachment of character made her abandon her family's religion and embrace her husband's religion. Nevertheless, the author does not condemn her, but expresses his sympathy for this fact through the mouth of Father Ralph, as we can see in his conversation with Fiona:

"-You're not Catholic, are you?"

- No. Paddy is a Catholic. The children, of course, have all been brought up in the Catholic faith, don't let that worry you.

- I don't think I'm worried. Does it bother you?"

- Really, I don't care.

- You haven't converted to the Catholic faith yourself?"

- I'm not a hypocrite, Father de Bricassard. I had lost faith in the church to which I belonged and did not wish to convert to another religion, equally meaningless.

- I understand."

She does not condemn McCullough or Mary Carson, outwardly a devout Catholic but inwardly a convinced atheist, but feels pity for this character despite his dark features.

Father Ralph, a devout man who does his job as a servant of God with integrity, was full of pride and ambition at the time. According to the character, he broke three vows of a priest when he entered the ministry: the vow of humility, which he broke by coveting a career in the church; the vow of poverty, which he broke by accepting Mary Carson's inheritance; and the vow of chastity.

The unbelieving Justin impresses the reader with his courage, boldness, and fierceness, while the unbelieving Maggie defies the church in her struggle for love. Is it safe to say that there is a motif of theophany in the work? (Perhaps...) evokes sympathy and love in the reader for her strength of spirit, true female longsuffering, and all the tragedy she experiences in her life.

We can see that matters of faith or unbelief are not an indicator of the value of the human soul to the author. There are almost no characters in the novel who are not Catholic. However, the only minor character who is not Catholic is a character who is rather negative and disliked. This is undoubtedly Luke O, Neil. This is the one character in the novel that even the

rebellious Maggie is capable of coming to repentance. Furthermore, there is clearly a connection between the insensitivity the author bestows on him and the fact that he belongs to another church.

While most of the characters are not prone to repentance, each of them has experienced it at least once, often without even committing the sin, like Justin. Maggie hasn't. Even at the most horrific moment - Dan's death - Maggie feels no regret or repentance. Gathering the strength to survive and endure, proudly raising her head in the face of this blow, is only a monstrous force of grief. This pride of Maggie's is similar to Mary Carson's arrogance. Yet, despite everything, Maggie continues to fight and keep her soul alive, unlike Mary Carson, embittered in her love-hate, and Fiona, weakened and irritable. However, Dan's death among his closest friends, the Cardinals and Lyon, is not seen as a tragedy but as a retribution. They believe that Dan is too pure to come to repentance, and therefore see his death as the Lord's mercy. "I am sure Dan met death with joy, no wonder the Lord did not delay longer and hastened to receive him into his bosom. Yes, I grieve, but not for Dan. I grieve for his mother - whose sufferings must be immense! And his sister, his uncles, his grandmother. No, I don't grieve for him. The Reverend Father O'Neill remained almost perfectly pure in mind and spirit all his life. What was death to him? - just an entrance into eternal life. For all of us, the transition will not be so easy," Vittorio tells Lyon.

Then only Justine experiences repentance over Dan's death, and she blames herself for his death completely unjustifiably.

The themes of sin and repentance are particularly vividly presented in the characters' images, their thoughts, relationships and ways of feeling their sinfulness and guilt.

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